



The upcoming year 2022, according to the Eastern calendar, will be marked by the Water Tiger

9



New Year's holidays are just around the corner, which means it's time to plan fabulous trips

10

INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ●

● NO. 47 (909) ●

● THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2021 ●

● WWW.SB.BY



For achievements and great victories



The presentation of the national team uniform kit for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing took place at a gala evening dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the National Olympic Committee → 11

It's not time to build walls

Sanctions, a wall on the Polish border, refugees, an alliance with Russia. What other topics were discussed in the interview of the President of Belarus to the correspondent of the Turkish TV and Radio Corporation TRT, Nisa Efendioglu.

By Dmitry Kryat, Polina Konoga

The series of the Head of State's interviews with foreign media continues. Although in the previous conversations of the President with journalists, many topics of the day were discussed in depth, interest in such meetings does not subside. In the dialogue that took place, one of the key issues concerned external pressure on our country. Aleksandr Lukashenko believes,

"Many of the reasons behind the pressure on Belarus are connected to the USA."

der near Smolensk for further pressure — and frankly speaking — move into Russia."

Addressing the journalist, the Belarusian leader noted that Turkey also lived through this period at one time, "You also had it under Erdoğan. There was an attempted rebellion in Turkey. With us it was somewhat different, but the mutiny there, in Turkey, and the mutiny here, you cannot call it anything else. It is not possible to break the country by force."

Therefore, the Head of State continued, the opponents switched to systematic pressure and hybrid war whose essence is as follows,

than me because you are close to those countries that they have destroyed," summed up the Head of State.

A 'stupid idea'

The journalist inquired about the President's opinion on the project of the Polish authorities to build a wall on the border with Belarus to curb the flow of refugees. Aleksandr Lukashenko suggested, "Apparently, some of the initiators of this project in Poland have run out of money. Therefore, they want to replenish their wallets using this project. If we talk about the wall, it will cost neither \$400m nor \$500m, as they plan, but about \$1bn."

smarter, more rational people will come to power and find better use for \$1bn."

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew some parallels with relatively recent events in modern history, "You know, in Germany at one time the wall between the GDR and western Germany was destroyed. It was a victory for European democracy. Everyone welcomed the destruction of dividing lines and walls on the border!"

Now they want to fence the European Union off with a 5.5m high wall? Somehow it does not fit into their ideology and democracy. This is a stupid, silly idea."



THE MT REFERENCE

The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) was established in 1964 to broadcast on behalf of the Turkish state and until the 1990s remained the only one in Turkey. Today it has an extensive network of television and radio channels on various topics, which broadcast to the countries of Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Australia. The TRT structure includes 14 television channels, including 6 national, as well as 3 international, 16 radio channels of national and regional coverage and two foreign ones. News is also published in 41 languages on the TV and Radio Company's website.

The origins of evil

Aleksandr Lukashenko added that he will not list all the reasons for the current situation, but outlined the main one,

"The main reason lies in the fact that we turned out to be the main link in US and NATO pressure on Russia. You know what happened in our country last year: they tried to make Ukraine out of Belarus just the way they demand of us today. I responded that we don't want to be a Ukraine, our nation does not want it, and we will never be."

The President recalled how, last year, they tried to turn our country into Ukraine 'through the so-called colour revolution and revolt', "They failed. Why do they need to turn Belarus into Ukraine? In order to completely create the Baltic Sea-Black Sea belt, which they have long dreamed of. They want to create this bloc with the eastern bor-

"Pressure and attacks against Belarus from various directions with different intensity are the essence of this hybrid war. It is manifested as pressure via mass media, via diplomatic and political channels. Now they have switched to tough pressure via economic channels. Five packages of sanctions have been introduced by Americans and Europeans against Belarus."

The President also added that ten attempts were made this year to commit terrorist acts against people, enterprises and military facilities 'by our fugitives who are now under the protection of Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine'.

"Did I understand you correctly: you think that the countries that are responsible for the crisis on the border are America and its allies?" clarified Nisa Efendioglu.

"Absolutely. You know this better

At the same time, the President drew attention to an indicative moment,

"They built such a wall on separate sections of our border with Poland. And, as the Polish special services admit, most of the refugees penetrated the country in the areas where this wall was built."

All in all, about 25,000 people. Therefore, does it make any sense to build such a wall? You know, there was an example: the Americans tried to build a wall on the border with Mexico. One president built it, the next administration is destroying this wall now. I think it will be the same in Poland."

The Head of State stressed that the Belarusian side is absolutely not concerned about this issue, "That's their problem. Let them do it. This will not hurt us. But the situation in Poland is very unstable. The current government may not survive. And I am sure that

Broad agenda

The refugee crisis took a special place in the conversation. For Turkey, as a leading country in the region where people are fleeing, this issue is extremely important. The Head of State gave exhaustive answers to accusations that are sometimes heard against Belarus and common fakes. In the context of refugee issues, the role and influence of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the Muslim world was also discussed. Moreover, issues related to Belarusian-Turkish relations in general were also raised.

Another topic was sanctions and further possible retaliatory measures. They also talked about building an alliance with Russia. Aleksandr Lukashenko spoke about the plans, terms and prospects of this integration project while also sharing his opinion on whether it will be similar to the EU.

OFFICIALLY

On December 9th, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko signed Decree No. 482 'On Approving the Main Guidelines for the Monetary Management Policy of the Republic of Belarus for 2022'

According to the document, monetary policy in 2022 will be aimed at maintaining inflation at 6 percent.

Control over the growth of money supply will continue. The average broad money supply will increase by 7-13 percent in annual terms while the Rouble monetary base — by 8-13 percent.

The National Bank was instructed to create conditions for lending at a level that would support economic activity and prevent an increase in systemic risks. At the same time, it is assumed that banks' claims on the economy will grow by 7-11 percent in 2022.

The exchange rate policy, as before, will be carried out in a floating rate regime, which is formed under the influence of supply and demand in the foreign exchange market. It is allowed to conduct foreign exchange interventions to prevent sharp fluctuations in the exchange rate of the Belarusian Rouble, as well as to replenish gold and foreign exchange reserves. Taking into account the forthcoming payments, it is predicted that gold and foreign exchange reserves will amount to at least \$7bn at the end of 2022.

On December 9th, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko signed Decree No. 481 'On the Most Important Parameters of the Socio-Economic Development Forecast of the Republic of Belarus for 2022'

The document was published in order to ensure stability in society and the growth of the well-being of citizens while defining the most important parameters for forecasting the country's socio-economic development for 2022.

In particular, the growth of GDP is planned at 102.9 percent against the level of the current year, that of the real disposable household income — at 102 percent, fixed asset investment — at 103.3 percent. Exports of goods and services are expected to grow by 6.3 percent over 2021 levels.

The National Bank, together with the Council of Ministers, was instructed to take the necessary measures to limit inflation at 6 percent in 2022.

Within two months, the Government will approve the target plan for the socio-economic development of Belarus for 2022, ensuring the full mobilisation of economic resources to achieve the goals set by the 6th Belarusian People's Congress. At the same time, all parameters that ensure macroeconomic balance must be observed.

According to the Press Service of the President of Belarus

Self-sufficient union

Countering the pressure of the collective West, the initiatives of Minsk, positive trends in the economies of the EAEU countries, the implementation of the strategic guidelines of developing the Eurasian economic integration until 2025. What other topics were tackled by the President of Belarus at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council.



By Dmitry Kryat, Dmitry Umpirovich, Polina Konoga, Svetlana Isaenok

The Belarusian Head of State began his speech with the most pressing issues. The Belarusian leader informed his colleagues about what is happening in our country and how relations with the West are developing. Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that the situation in Belarus is the first issue on the international news agenda,

“The United States and the collective West, as we call them, will not leave their policies. They need reasons to put pressure on our fraternal Russia, including us.”

Today, refugees are the main reason for stirring up tensions by the West. The President of Belarus noted, “We did not create this problem. Neither did you, the former post-Soviet republics, but this is used as a pretext for pressure primarily on Belarus.”

However, this issue is not only in our country. Yes, the EAEU countries are still subject to western pressure to varying degrees but the Head of State is convinced it will only grow, “We have information that visitors from western countries and the United States of America have already gone to your ministries of foreign affairs, persuading you to join the pressure on the Republic of Belarus.

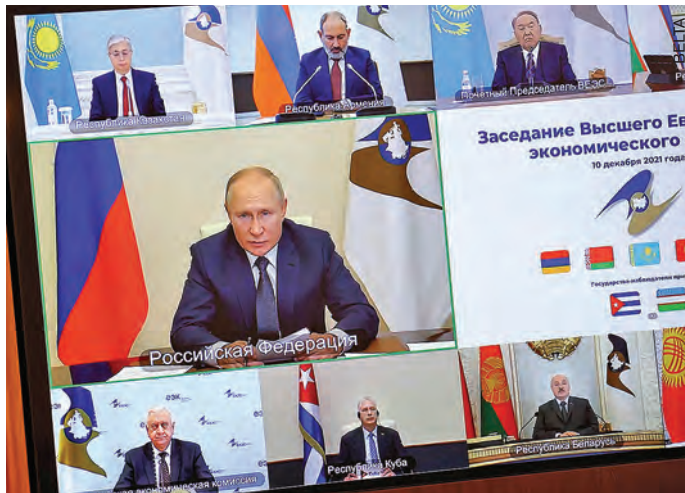
You know that this is the fifth package of sanctions against Belarus. They say that they are preparing the sixth and the seventh, and it is not known how far this will go. This is the economic pressure for strangling Belarus, for replacing, as they directly say, not only the authorities, but also the state system in the Republic of Belarus.”

The Head of State drew attention to the fact that Minsk has to confront all these destructive problems. The President of Belarus addressed his colleagues, “First of all, I thank Russia for its support in this regard and all the heads of state who provide us with all possible support.

However, I underline again: figuratively speaking, you will be strangled, incited against Belarus, so that you join these sanctions against our country. My request is that we must be together because this pressure will grow. The West will not be limited just to putting pressure on Belarus and Russia.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that, during the face-to-face meeting, there will be an opportunity to discuss some issues,

“One thing is clear: the real goal of the West is to methodically destroy its competitors. This situation clearly demonstrated that we have no friends there. Therefore, we must rely on our own strength.”



Good signals

The President of Belarus recalled that the EAEU is a self-sufficient union that can provide itself with everything necessary. In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko drew the attention of the meeting participants to the importance of the topic of import substitution, “It is enough for us to focus on western diapers and chips. We can even produce all these ourselves.”

Commenting on the key issues on the agenda of the integration association, Aleksandr Lukashenko noted the positive results in foreign and mutual trade despite the continuing difficult situation on world markets,

“Almost all countries of our Union have double-digit growth in exports to foreign markets: this is a good signal.”

Dictated by life

Referring to the signing of the agreement on the use of navigation seals in the EAEU for tracking shipments, the President of Belarus called this document one of the main elements of the unified customs transit system of the EAEU being formed,

“Digitalisation of transportation today fully corresponds to the spirit of the times, and the use of navigation seals will increase the level of trust in trade between the countries of the Union while optimising control measures at internal borders and increasing the transit attractiveness of the EAEU.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew attention to the fact that

countries, competition and state price regulation, collection of indirect taxes and the mechanism of control over their payment, technical regulation and much more: all that is dictated by life.”

On the external circuit

Effective protection of the economic interests of the EAEU should become an integral part of international activity both next year and in the long term. However, joint work on the external circuit and the activities of the Eurasian Economic Commission should be focused primarily on solving the practical problems of developing the export of goods and services. In accordance with the approved major priorities of international activities in the EAEU for 2022, Aleksandr Lukashenko proposed to focus on working with the following countries,

“China occupies a special place. I consider it necessary to focus on interaction with this country within the framework of the alignment of the EAEU development plans, the Belt and Road Initiative and the 2018 Agreement on Trade-Economic Co-operation.”

It is necessary to continue the dialogue with Egypt and Iran to complete the negotiations on free trade agreements, as well as to intensify it with Israel. We look forward to the early completion of preliminary work with Indonesia and Mongolia and a decision on the expediency of starting negotia-

tions with these countries on a free trade zone.”

Industrial co-operation is a priority

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew the attention of his colleagues to the need to implement the measures enshrined in the strategic guidelines of developing the Eurasian economic integration until 2025. The President is confident that, given the current favourable situation in foreign trade, which is cyclical, in order to maintain the positive dynamics of economic growth in 2022, it is necessary first of all to intensify industrial interaction in the joint production of new products that are in demand on the world market. The Head of State specified,

“An important practical step in this direction will be to agree on a list of joint large-scale high-tech projects, as well as to determine the conditions for their financing and implementation. We are already working on such projects with the Russian Federation.”

In conclusion, the President of Belarus thanked his colleague Kassym-Jomart Tokayev for the productive work and congratulated the Kazakh side on the worthy completion of the chairmanship in the EAEU bodies and the Independence Day of Kazakhstan. The Belarusian leader wished success to his Kyrgyz friends who are taking over the chairmanship next year.

DETAILS

- The key issue at the summit was the implementation of Strategy-2025 on the development of Eurasian economic integration. The heads of state supported the decision, according to which every six months after the completion of the plan, a detailed report will be presented for making decisions on the further implementation of the provisions of the Strategy. The presidents supported the Agreement on the Mechanism for Traceability of Goods using so-called navigation seals, enabling them to speed up transit deliveries in the EAEU from outside and to put an appropriate barrier to many existing ‘grey’ schemes.
- From January 1st, 2022, the Russian Federation will introduce restrictions on the export of timber. This ban also affected the EAEU member states, so the EEC Board had made a decision that all countries will agree to prohibit the export of round timber from the Russian Federation outside the EAEU perimeter. At the same time, the timber that is supplied for internal needs to the EAEU member states will go in the volumes necessary for business entities.



By Vladislav Sychevich

Forced measure

Despite the fact that the Belarusian side has repeatedly warned its western partners that it is not worth imposing various sanctions and restrictive measures against Belarus, they made their choice. Moreover, this choice is illegitimate since citizens and enterprises, about which they allegedly care so much, will mostly suffer from it. Our country was ready for this step. Now the West has to test its readiness. Belarus has postponed tough retaliation several times, counting on the prudence of the other side. It was not manifested, so the Government prepared and introduced a package of economic responses to the restrictive actions taken against our country.

The list is long. These are no longer so-called asymmetric, formal measures. These are economic measures in response to the pressure that Belarus is exposed to. The Press Secretary of the Prime Minister, Aleksandra Isaeva, clarified that according to the adopted decision, from January 1st, 2022, a food embargo will be introduced against a wide range of goods manufactured in countries that implement discriminatory policies and carry out unfriendly actions towards our country,

"In just ten months of 2021, Belarus imported over \$530m of food and food products from these countries. The positions that form the basis of these imports will be banned from the beginning of next year. The most important priority for the Republic of Belarus remains the interests of its citizens. The Head of State has repeatedly focused on taking retaliatory measures without harming the population. In the event of further destructive actions against

Appropriate response to sanctions

Belarus introduces a food embargo on the import of a number of western goods from January 1st, 2022: on December 6th, a resolution of the Council of Ministers was signed, approving specific measures in response to western sanctions



Postavy Dairy Plant JSC

our country, Belarus reserves the right to expand the list of prohibited goods."

At the same time, measures will be taken to ensure a balance in the consumer market, including by saturating it with domestically produced products, explained Vladimir Koltovich, Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade, "Unfortunately, we have to react and respond adequately. In this regard, after the fifth sanctions package, the Government decided on a separate group of goods that are imported from such countries. These are more than 20 groups. It includes goods that are used both for production and for sale in the retail network. They can be divided into three areas. The first are goods that are com-



Slodych JSC

pletely replaced by domestic producers or industries located in countries that are friendly to Belarus. The second are goods that are produced in insufficient quantities and the third group includes goods of critical import. We hope that these measures will not be felt by consumers. In addition, they do not apply to goods for personal consumption and goods that are used in the production of medicines and baby food. I think this is an important measure. If we talk about the amount, then in nine months we import more than \$2bn in food and about a quarter of these products will be included in this list."

What's on the list

According to the government regulation, the import ban applies to a number of goods from the European Union and its member states, the United States of America, Canada, Norway, Albania, Iceland, North Macedonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Montenegro, Switzerland.

The list of prohibited goods includes pigs, cattle meat, pork, a number of by-products, salted meat, meat in brine, dried or smoked meat, flour made from meat or meat by-products, milk and dairy products (with some exceptions), vegetables, except for those intended for crops, fruits, pork fat and poultry fat, fat of cattle, sheep or goats, lard stearin and other animal oils, sausages and similar products, confectionery, salt and other goods.

The government regulation also approved the provision on quotas for the import of certain types of goods into the territory of Belarus.

The resolution will enter into force on January 1st, 2022. The Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade reported that the competent state authorities will carry out explanatory work with all suppliers and take measures that will ensure a balance in the consumer market.

Aleksei Dzermant, political analyst:

The main categories of goods from the food-counter sanction basket are quite significant. Despite the fact that Belarus produces both meat and milk in sufficient quantities, there are western players on our market who have serious interests here. Remember the French concern Danone with its once aggressive policy on the Belarusian market. I think it would be correct to recall the food embargo that Russia imposed in 2014 against the states that imposed economic sanctions. If we add our sanctions to this, western exporters will feel the cumulative damage that will amount to more than tens of millions of Euros. We are now keeping pace with Russia in responding to western sanctions pressure. Moreover, the Russian experience demonstrates that the mirror response to the sanctions has seriously spurred on both the quality and the range, and, in general, the production of agricultural products on the domestic market. We can also count on a similar effect, replacing imports within the country and filling vacant niches in the EAEU market.

That's not all...

It may seem that Belarus will be limited to only a food embargo against the West. But this is far from the case. In response to the illegitimate restrictions on the Belarusian aviation industry, which are based on unfair competition, our country will take similar steps with regard to air carriers from the European Union and Great Britain.

The lists of persons whose entry into the territory of the Republic of Belarus and the Union State is undesirable from countries that systematically discriminate against Belarusian officials, journalists and representatives of public organisations will also be expanded. As one of the most significant measures to counter external pressure from the collective West and strengthen the country's economic security, the Republic of Belarus will continue to implement Union State programmes and reinforce economic integration with the Russian Federation while building strong trade-economic ties with partners in the EAEU and with countries of the far arc. A number of other non-public steps will be also implemented.

COMPETENTLY

Mikhail Rusy, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus for Regional Policy and Local Self-Government:

As far as milk is concerned, we sell 60 percent of milk and dairy products for export. We fully meet the domestic demand for these products. If, for example, we talk about the cheeses that we import — parmesan, hard and soft cheeses — then the whole range is produced at our enterprises. Moreover, many of our products, both in quality and in price, are much better than European ones. The same refers to beef. We have enough beef and we export a lot. We also supply over 250,000 tonnes of poultry for export to different countries.

Moreover, both Europe and domestic poultry farms and factories use the same technologies. Our advantage is that we use fewer antibiotics and poultry growth inhibitors, which makes our products even better.

Therefore, these measures are a kind of protection of the domestic market and the provision of our manufacturer. They are justified, correct, adequate and timely.

Western intelligence agencies have launched another fake. What for?

But the main thing: where are the results of the ICAO investigation?

Inventing another fake, western intelligence services could be more inventive. Well, really. Why are you making fools of people? Both yours and ours. *The New York Times*, referring to the local special services, released some of the words of the former air traffic controller, who allegedly ordered the crew of the Ryanair plane to land in Minsk and did so on the instructions of the KGB officer who was supposedly in the control tower.



Artyom Sikorsky
By Lyudmila Gladkaya

What is interesting is that this stunning ‘revelation’ appeared just in time. As soon as the time came for the ICAO commission (for the umpteenth time, I note) to say at least something about their investigation of the situation with the Ryanair plane, another ‘sensational revelation’ appears. In fact, there seems to be nothing to say.

Director of the Aviation Department of the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Belarus, Artyom Sikorsky, rightfully called *The New York Times* article fake news,

The information that has appeared is primarily meant for the general public who are not familiar with the specifics of civil aviation. For us, professionals, this material is meaningless and even ridiculous.

He explained why. Firstly, on that day, May 23rd, the decision to land in Minsk was made by the aircraft commander. A dispatcher, according to all international rules and standards, cannot put pressure on decision-making, especially in the event of a possi-

ble threat to aviation security. He only transmits information and helps the pilot-in-command with navigation. Secondly, this fake news emerged at the time when the Belarusian side has asked foreign partners and the ICAO commission to provide objective control data, particularly, the negotiations between the Vilnius dispatcher and the pilot, as well as in-cabin negotiations between the crew members. After all, this is necessary in order to understand what exactly we are accused of.

“Present evidence asserts that we exerted some kind of pressure, threatened to use military aircraft, etc. But this is not the case,” said the Head of the Aviation Department. “On May 24th, we published all the negotiations between the pilot and the dispatcher, starting from entering the airspace of Belarus and ending with landing, taxiing and parking of the aircraft at Minsk National Airport. We showed it to everyone, held briefings and press conferences.”

Our western partners were not that open. Shy again?

This is what Artyom Sikorsky answered when asked why a fake about Ryanair was needed, “An excuse is needed for the authors and executors of illegal sanctions and the air blockade and in order to divert the investigation somewhere else, or to drag it out as long as possible.”

After all, any professional knows that there is more than one dispatcher in the dispatch office.

There are dispatchers, as well as a senior dispatcher and an air traffic controller, who has a huge responsibility for making decisions.

In general, Artyom Sikorsky is right. There is nothing to accuse us of, there is no evidence against us. So they are playing for time. There are no other reasons.

Although, it would seem, the Belarusian side provided all the information: a pile of documentation, video and audio materials. And then our dispatchers described everything in detail. Which, by the way, is also recorded, and the video is also available. Artyom Sikorsky reminded people once again that there is evidence of the correctness of our actions. In this whole situation, we acted impeccably and according to international standards.

We handed so much data to the ICAO investigators that they were overwhelmed, complaining that there was too much information to be studied. Of course, thoughtfully, objectively and impartially, according to the norms of international law.

As for the dispatcher who fled abroad, whom the Polish and US special services grabbed so quickly, Artyom Sikorsky confirmed that such a dispatcher really worked for Belaeonavigatsia and did leave Belarus, no one prevented him from doing this, “A person, being on the territory of a foreign state, when certain pressure is exerted on him, can agree to certain types of co-operation, to make a kind of deal, including with his own conscience. I have no right to judge him. He

COMMENT

Vadim Gigin, Chairman of the Board of the Belarusian Znanie Society, said on the air of the *Budni* (Weekdays) talk show on Alfa Radio:

Here you can answer with one word ‘nibyta’ (translated from the Belarusian language as ‘allegedly’). Our opponents, when they write their false information and launch fakes, often use it. I am convinced that the Polish special services worked for a very long time to get such a ‘dispatcher’, so that this ‘apparent’ witness would say something. But the most important question is where are the results of the ICAO investigation? The investigation of the international organisation has been continually postponed. Everyone understands why: there is no evidence of the guilt of the Belarusian side. The second point is that there were no claims from the passengers of this flight... The airline also did not express clear claims to the Belarusian side. What questions can there be? It does not matter whether it is a dispatcher, a passing passenger or a cleaning-woman (reports on the alleged details of the incident).

In Gigin’s opinion, it is not Ireland [Ryanair belongs to this country] that is interfering with the process, but Poland, because it has assumed the role of the main enemy of Belarus.

didn’t say anything specific. We see the interpretation of his words by the Polish special services, but not his words.”

We asked the Head of the Aviation Department about the fake news: they say, when the plane with Roman Protasevich on board was landing, there was a KGB officer in the control tower... Here, of course, a couple of ‘strong’ words would fit, but a person in such a position is not supposed to, so he answered delicately. The essence is as follows: instead of spreading outright nonsense, let western figures talk about the work in their traffic control centres, security systems and decision-making. It is especially interesting to listen to US specialists, for example, about September 11th, 2001.

Investigators are not very active even now. During the 224th session (it ended in November this year), the final report on the Ryanair incident was to be considered. But the ICAO commission was unable to prepare this document, and its consideration was postponed to the 225th session (this is from mid-January to March next year).

When and whether the final report will be considered at all, ICAO does not say.

The last request from ICAO was in October. Since then, no additional information has been requested. But they promised from January to March to consider our complaint against the actions of western countries on the illegal air blockade and sanctions against our carriers. But you could wait for three years for a response.

The Belarusian side has repeatedly stressed that the European partners are violating the relevant articles of the Chicago Convention and block flights of our aircraft on a national basis which is a direct violation of this convention, as Artyom Sikorsky told reporters.

And one more question: where, by the way, is the reaction of ICAO and the EU to the case with Belavia’s Boeing, which was returned to Kiev? At that time, there was a real threat of the use of military aviation. This is seen in the negotiations between the dispatcher and the pilots. This is also recorded. Have these events been forgotten or do they have a statute of limitations?

NEWS IN BRIEF

Centenary anniversary of the National Library of Belarus added to UNESCO list of commemorative dates



The ‘diamond of knowledge’ will celebrate its 100th anniversary on September 15th, 2022. The decision to include the centenary of the National Library of Belarus in the list of memorable dates was made at the 41st session of the UNESCO General Conference. The inclusion in the UNESCO calendar confirms the library’s significant contribution to the development of world culture and popularisation of the organisation’s activities. Such co-operation contributes to the integration of the National Library of Belarus into the world library community and will enrich the library’s activities for the preservation and use of the national cultural heritage.

In total, the calendar of events for 2022-2023 includes 67 of the most important events from around the world.

The Academy of Sciences develops software for doctors working in the red zone

The ‘Web-examination’ software for tablets of doctors working in the red zone of medical institutions is being developed at the Joint Institute for Informatics Problems of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

Automation of internal business processes in healthcare institutions, maintaining a patient record in digital form, providing access to it and automatic processing of the results of diagnostic and laboratory tests will provide a significant reduction in treatment costs and improve the quality of medical care. The tablets, which will be used by doctors, are functionally integrated with the automated information system of healthcare institutions (AIS Clinic), enabling doctors, at the patient’s bedside, to have online access not only to the patient’s medical history, but also to the results of laboratory and diagnostic studies.



Winter feeding of birds has started in Belovezhskaya Pushcha, which is available online

With the appearance of snow cover on the banks of the Pushcha’s Lesnaya River in the village of Uglyany, Kamenets District, a feeder with a webcam goes on the air for the fourth winter in a row. A lot of food has been prepared for the birds: berries of mountain ash, black elderberry, rose hips and viburnum have been dried, as well as grain, various seeds, apples, corn, walnuts, sunflower seeds and peanuts. In the afternoon, tits, chicks, bullfinches, blackbirds, waxwings, jays and woodpeckers arrive for feeding while a grey owl and a downy-legged owl are seen in the evening.

As statistics show, the largest number of views on <https://birdwatch.by/> is from Belarus, while the link is also actively used by those from the USA, Russia, Poland and Ukraine.



Orient Express gaining momentum

By 2025, exports to the People’s Republic of China may approach \$2bn: what new opportunities are opened by Directive No. 9 for our country

Directive No. 9 signed by the President will yield concrete results in all areas of bilateral co-operation, First Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Snopkov told BelTA in an interview

“Friendship and all-round interaction between the regions of Belarus and the provinces of the PRC and between cities, create the foundation for the joint development of our countries. The directive is of an applied nature and defines specific tasks for building up and deepening interaction across all areas. The regions have been set a target: to attract \$150m of direct Chinese investment by the end of the five-year period.

Nikolai Snopkov is convinced that the directive will generate concrete results across all areas of co-operation: from achieving exports of up to



At the FAST-MAZ enterprise

\$2bn by 2025 to creating joint feature films.

At the same time, he drew



The Kitgroup enterprise produces protective masks against viral infections

attention to the fact that collaboration with China has always been of particular importance

for our country.

“Since the 1990s, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko

has felt the power and progress of China’s development deeply. The two countries put the growth of citizens’ well-being at the head of their economic policy. We share the same development principles and ideology.”

Nikolai Snopkov also emphasised that Belarus and China supported each other during the difficult period of the fight against COVID-19, “Support is building up in a situation of political and economic pressure from countries that are incapable of accepting approaches to public institutions that differ from their standards.”

Towards common benefits

In early December, the President signed Directive No. 9 on the development of bilateral relations between Belarus and China. The document is another vivid reminder of the fact that relations with China are among the priorities for Belarus. The document is more or less a roadmap for deepening strategic partnerships of the two countries in a wide range of areas until 2025. Specific projects are defined, the implementation of which is necessary to achieve the set tasks. Among them are the promotion of Belarusian exports to the PRC, the construction of social projects through gratuitous assistance and the creation of additional conditions for the arrival of new residents in the Great Stone Industrial Park.

By Ilya Kryzhevich

A stimulus to expand activities

Directive No. 9 largely affects aspects of improving the activities of the Great Stone China-Belarus Industrial Park. The Head of the Park’s Administration, Aleksandr Yaroshenko, underlined that the new document focuses on creating special conditions for attracting innovative projects and start-ups to the park that can work in close co-operation, including with Belarusian enterprises.

“We are expanding the scope of economic activity, as envisaged by Decree No. 215. In particular, the expansion means the use of 5G technology and artificial intelligence. Moreover, special emphasis was placed on attracting anchor companies with an investment volume of more than \$50m. We plan to attract at least five such companies to the Great Stone Park by 2025. Also, by this time, according to the directive, the number of residents of the Industrial Park should be at least 170 companies.”

The Head of the Park’s Administration, Aleksandr Yaroshenko, noted that the topic of traditional Chinese medicine was also developed in Directive No. 9, “The document sets the task of attracting at least five residents in the field of traditional Chinese medicine to the Great Stone Park in the medium term. This will be facilitated, among other things, by work with our Chinese partners on the allocation of technical and economic assistance, which will also be di-

rected to the creation of a social base for the Industrial Park.”

According to Aleksandr Yaroshenko, one of the projects that will be built in the Park thanks to this free technical and economic assistance will be a polyclinic. It will also house a centre for the development of traditional Chinese medicine.

New supply opportunities

In turn, Kirill Koroteyev, First Deputy Director General of the Industrial Park Development Company CJSC, noted the high importance of Directive No. 9 for the development of the Great Stone Park and many Chinese-Belarusian projects in the current period, when the number of social contacts is decreasing due to the pandemic, “During this period, the intensity of contacts decreases. Accordingly, some projects are slowing down. In its turn, Directive No. 9 clearly demonstrates that it is

priority order of bilateral relations and their high status.”

He also drew attention to the fact that the directive stipulates the creation of a Chinese-Belarusian trade export-import company with the participation of China Merchants Group Limited at the Industrial Park. The main function of the new business entity will be to promote Belarusian food and non-food products.

“This will be a major project through which Chinese compa-



Sergei Mitsevidch



Vladimir Shlapak

nomie entity that will be able to purchase Belarusian products from the manufacturer and carry out their targeted sale to China. Also, the main partner — China Merchants Group — has its own networks with access to the ‘shelf’ in China, which will simplify the conditions for the appearance of Belarusian goods there. The company is scheduled to appear in 2022. The technical issues for getting started have already been identified.

“We have agreed with China Merchants Group on the formula for establishing this company. Apart from the Chinese side, the participants will include the Belarusian Agency for Foreign Economic Activities, recently created on the site of the Development Bank. Both participants will own 45 percent of the shares. A ten percent stake will be owned by the Industrial Park Development Company, which acts as a player balancing and linking the interests of the two parties. The company will be registered in the park, and its warehouses will also be located here.”



necessary to increase trade and to work to achieve key parameters. The document underlines the

nies can work with any of their spheres in Belarus. Accordingly, this operator will receive the

green light in all areas of regulation in China. We are talking about customs issues, phytosanitary control and opening a representative office in China. It should be noted that not all Belarusian enterprises know how to buy the necessary goods in China, especially for industrial purposes, at a time when the country is facing sanctions. The new project, which is now entitled China-Belarus Trade House CJSC will be able to solve this issue, e.g., to control the loading, unloading and quality of products.”

The Chinese-Belarusian Trade House will be an eco-

National Art Museum is planning a book series dedicated to stock collections. The album of icon and altar painting, prepared by the National Art Museum, is the first in a new unique series.

Volume by volume



By Irina Ovsepyan

It is now possible to learn about Belarusian icon painting in all its diversity by picking up a unique album from the album-catalogue *Icon and Altar Painting of Belarus in the 16th-Early 19th Centuries*, prepared by the National Art Museum. Orthodox, Catholic and Uniate icons — all areas and periods of the history of the national school of icon painting have found their place in the new edition.

The collection of ancient Belarusian icon painting and sacred painting — kept in the archives of the National Art Museum — is one of the most valuable in our country. This is the largest collection in Belarus, which reflects the history of the development of the Belarusian icon from the end of the 15th to the first decades of the 19th century. The pearls of the collection are presented in the pages of the publication. The book, published by the Belarus Publishing House, already claims to be among the bibliographic rarities: the circulation of the album is only 700 copies. The text, prepared by the National Art Museum researchers, is printed in three languages: Belarusian, Russian and English.

The album opens a fundamental scientific and educational project: the *National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus* series, in which specialists and connoisseurs will be presented the best works of art from the museum's collection. In future, the publication of eleven more volumes is planned, revealed the Director General of the National Art Museum, Vladimir Prokoptsov, "Alongside exhibition activities, construction, expansion of areas and expositions, we are actively conducting research work. Soon we plan to commission half of the museum's archive. I hope that the second half will be introduced in 6-7 years, and before that we will have time to publish the complete collection of our collections."



The finest masterpieces kept in our collections will be published. We are very grateful to the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Culture and the Belarus Publishing House for supporting our idea. This is a long-term project, which we plan to implement in 5-6 years, releasing two albums a year. Of course, the work is not easy, and the museum is not a research institute, as our art workers are engaged not only in writing scientific articles, but also in preparing exhibitions and projects, as well as conducting excursions, in a word, they work in several different guises. Nevertheless, they are ready to work on subsequent volumes, to show the collections in their own editions."

The National Art Museum has been liaising with the Belarus Publishing House for over two decades. Years of joint work resulted in significant projects: the two-volume 'National Art Museum' (a favourite of diplomats and tourists), the 'Glorious Masters from Belarus' series, which has already published about 40 books dedicated to domestic artists... 'The Icon and Altar Painting of Belarus in the 16th-Early 19th Centuries' catalogue marked a new milestone in this successful partnership.



The album has been waiting in the wings for several years: the materials were prepared back in 2016, when Belarusian icons went to an exhibition in the Vatican and made a splash there. However, in subsequent years, art historians were not idle; on the contrary, they conducted a number of serious studies.

"It's probably good that the book was not published in 2016," admits the curator of the project Yelena Karpenko, who heads the Ancient Belarusian Art Department. "Because during this time, many new attributions, clarifications of the topography of some icons have appeared, and, in comparison with previous publications of Belarusian icon painting and altar painting, there are several innovative discoveries. We tried to pick up items that were not published as often. For the first time, a whole volume, in which 114 icons and works of altar painting are published, is dedicated only to the collection of our museum."

The appearance of the album is a great event, including from the standpoint of the development of science. Of course, such a serious project would have been impossible to implement without the help of restorers.

"This is a large team led by Arkady Shpunt, who helped us in everything," said Yelena Karpenko with gratitude. "They fully revealed the works that made up the core of the *Belarusian Iconostasis* exhibition from late additions and layering, and in the process of their work, helped us in everything, including preparing works for shooting, which is extremely important for such a high-quality publication."

Research, of course, does not end there. The National Art Museum continues its scientific work.

"Opening the curtain, I want to say that, for example, the Shereshevsky iconostasis, which is published here and which we attribute to the 18th century, is likely to be re-attributed by our employees to an earlier date," shared the curator of the project.

So, the first volume is devoted to sacred images, the next album will be devoted to the traditional folk culture of Belarus, then Vladimir Prokoptsov and his staff plan to prepare a two-volume book representing contemporary Belarusian art of the 20th-21st centuries.



A military plane of the similar model passed at a critical distance from the passenger airliner

Unfriendly manoeuvres

NATO and Ukraine stage provocations in the sky

By Mikhail Vasiliev,
Anton Morozov

An Aeroflot aircraft, flying from Tel Aviv to Moscow with 142 passengers, changed its direction to avoid a collision with US military aircraft CL-600 Artemis and RC-135 over the Black Sea.

“There was less than 20m between them vertically. The controllers gave the command to the civil aircraft to descend 500m and take a safe path. The military

aircraft did not respond to inquiries from the ground,” say sources familiar with the situation.

Russian fighters Su-27 and Su-30 were urgently lifted into the air in order to prevent violation of the air border. The intruder retreated.

“If a catastrophe in the airspace over the open waters of the Black Sea has been averted, this does not mean that the United States and NATO can continue to risk people’s lives with impunity,”

said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova with indignation.

Ukraine has gone even further. The Ukrainian military helicopter Mi-8 demonstratively violated the state border of Belarus over the checkpoint. The official representative of the Mozyr frontier detachment, Sergei Pavlov, has already stated that henceforth the Belarusian side will react ‘in a tough manner’. In other words, the offender can simply be brought down.

Short-sighted policy

The Hungarian Foreign Minister pointed to the short-sightedness of Europe because of the crisis on the Belarusian border

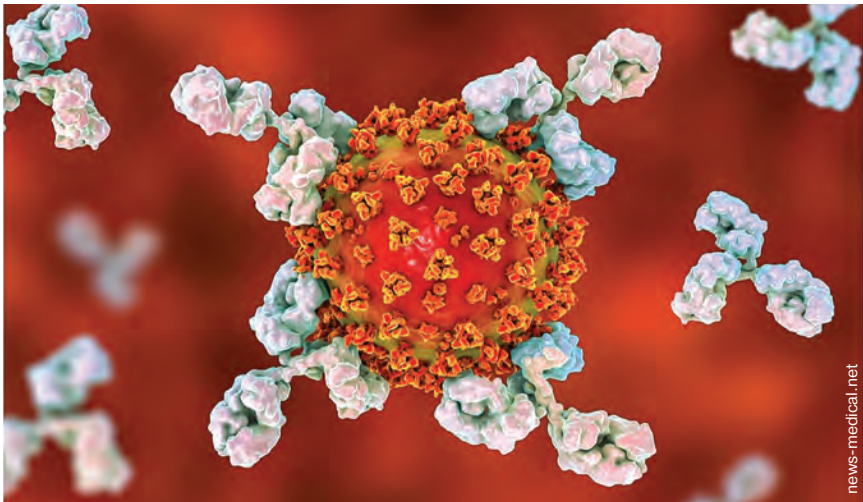
The current migration crisis could have been avoided if the EU had gone for rapprochement with Belarus, Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said in an interview with Latvia Radio, RIA Novosti reported.

“The EU had the opportunity to achieve rapprochement with Belarus and make relations closer. I would even say that if it had used the opportunity, this migration crisis would not have happened. However, the strategic decision by Brussels was different, the European Union decided not to develop its partnership with Belarus further, and we see the result,” noted Péter Szijjártó.

The policy of integrating migrants in Western Europe has failed, and the European Union cannot cope with the current migration crisis either, added the Minister. As a possible solution, he suggest-



ed returning control over the solution of migration issues to the participating countries themselves.



New monoclonal antibody

Chinese scientists claim to have isolated an antibody which can effectively neutralise all strains of COVID-19, referencing both lab experiments and those performed on a living organism

In a study, Chinese scientists from a variety of institutions, including Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou and Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, suggested that they may have the panacea to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The authors claim that monoclonal antibody 35B5 has been shown in both in vitro (laboratory or test-tube experiment) and in vivo (performed on living organism) studies to neutralise wild-type COVID-19 (without mutations), as well as variants of concern (VOCs). The in vivo tests were carried out on humanised mice.

The scientists noted that the antibody also works on the highly mutated Delta variant, which has been responsible for deadly waves of infection around

the world since it first emerged in India earlier this year.

“35B5 neutralises SARS-CoV-2 by targeting a unique epitope [part of the antigen molecule which the antibody attaches itself to] that avoids the prevailing mutation sites,” explains the study. In other words, 35B5 targets a unique part of the virus that does not change during the mutation process.

The part of the antigen targeted by antibody 35B5 is also present in the Omicron variant. The research could prove particularly valuable amid the spread of Omicron, which is highly mutated. Leaders and scientists around the world are concerned the mutant virus could evade vaccine-induced immunity and immunity gained from previous infection.

Unavoidable losses

Lietuvos Geležinkeliai (Lithuanian Railways, LTG) may need around 49m Euros in subsidies annually to compensate for the loss of Belaruskali’s fertiliser shipments, according to Mantas Bartuška, CEO of the state railway group

“Based on updated estimates, we may need around 49m Euros in subsidies if we stop handling Belaruskali fertilisers as of January, even though we have already been doing a lot of things: optimising processes and staff and halting certain investments. The fact is that the impact is very significant,” Bartuška told the Parliamentary Committee on Budget and Finance.

The CEO noted that it had already been preliminarily estimated that the railway group would lose around 60m Euros in revenue.

“Because overall we are losing around 60m to 70m Euros, and, at the same time, we have other negative

trends: Russian metals are leaving the port of Klaipėda and [shipments of] other Russian products are on the decline. Some Belarusian products, oil products, Grodno Azot products have already left,” he told the committee.

Belaruskali’s advance payment to LTG, made in November, will be sufficient to cover the cost of rail shipments in December and, possibly, part of January, according to Mr. Bartuška.

The CEO added that the situation was uncertain.

“At any moment, the whole logistics chain could face some challenges, because it includes not only us, but also the terminals, the ship charterers,” he noted.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Under the sign of the tiger

By Yelena Begunova

The upcoming year 2022, according to the Eastern calendar, will be marked by the Water Tiger — a majestic and graceful feline predator. A rare species of this animal is the white Bengal tiger, which some call a mistake of nature, while others will simply admire its snow-white coat with black-brown stripes and proud blue eyes. Five of these Shere Khans serve as artists of the Belarusian State Circus: at a wave of the hand from the trainer Sergei Nesterov, they stand on their hind legs, turn around on the spot and deftly jump from pedestal to pedestal. We looked behind the curtains of the circus arena and learned how predatory cats are taught their tricks, what is included in their diet and what taboos exist in communicating with them.

Blondes with blue eyes

Sergei Nesterov's trainees owe their spectacular appearance to a congenital mutation which leads to a white fur coloration. In the wild, it is almost impossible to meet such a tiger: adults cruelly deal with babies that do not have a protective coloration and endanger the offspring. The trainer explains that most of them are bred in captivity, "Take my team. The tigers with whom I perform came to the circus in different ways: some were born within its walls, one was brought from a nursery in Tanzania. They are all about the same age: 10-12 years old. And this is good, because otherwise, older individuals would suppress the young."

They begin to teach a tiger tricks at the age of two. Young tigers have very strong reflexes, they are disorganised, think less and do more, Sergei Nesterov details the intricacies of his skill, "Up to two years old, they are just like children: they see a toy and run after it. Older animals (by two and a half years a tiger becomes a sexually mature individual) are more disciplined. A good trainer is a zoo-psychologist above all: he must understand his pet, pay attention to what the animal is capable of and encourage disci-

We went backstage at a circus arena and learned how predatory cats are trained



Photos provided by the Belarusian State Circus



pline. Learning tricks takes place in a playful way while the learned commands are reinforced by rewarding delicacies and stroking. But here, too, everyone needs an individual approach: some like to receive meat more, while others, on the contrary, prefer treats, but are not indifferent towards affection or want to frolic in the pool. The animal is ready to go on stage when it clearly fulfils all commands and is not distracted by external stimuli (sound, light, and audience applause)."

However, over the years of working with tigers, Sergei Nesterov has also met completely unteachable specimens. Such an animal does not make contact with humans and his fellows, being closed and cowardly. Trying

to teach him can only be tried up to a certain age. If it fails, the animal is sent to the zoo or nursery.

In a cage with bare hands

As an educational tool, the trainer uses a clicker — a device that emits a click. A sound signal confirms that the animal is doing everything right. Sergei explains, "During the performance I am absolutely open — I do not have any hooks, sticks or whips. The only attribute I use is a small plastic stick. It is needed in order to serve meat and regulate the distance between me and the tiger."

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the trainer is completely devoid of a sense of self-preservation and fear. As in any other profession — be it a miner or a

STROKES TO THE PORTRAIT

► Sergei Nesterov comes from the circus dynasty: his grandfather, grandmother, dad, mom, older sister and wife worked or continue to work in the arena. His daughters Anastasia and Alisa also followed in their father's footsteps.

► Before becoming a famous tiger trainer, he tried different genres: he was an acrobat on horseback, a balance artist on the Russian Bar and a gymnast on a trapeze.

► In 2020, he was awarded a prize at the 44th International Circus Festival in Monaco — one of the oldest circus competitions in the world.

pilot — in his business there are also certain unwritten rules that are important to follow, "Each step must be deliberate. If you know that the animal is aggressive and not loyal to you, you should not go to it. You should always pay attention to your pet's mood. What signs help you understand that the beast is clearly out of sorts? When it begins to beat with his tail, turns away, pulls back its ears and hisses. The bulging scruff of the neck and the narrowing pupils say that the animal is hunting. However, if an animal fidgets and makes contact, lets you touch its nose, this is an indicator of a certain trust and a sign of a good mood."

Despite the fact that the performance with tigers has been

rehearsed hundreds of times, impromptu acts during the performance are not excluded. The trainer notes, "Of course, we have a certain route or scheme that we adhere to. But if something doesn't go according to plan, you have to improvise. For example, if the day before, the animals have quarrelled with each other, they do not want to interact with each other until their passions subside. Then I exclude a performance with them, so as not to provoke a fight or clashes. In this situation, I act as a controller doing everything possible to ensure that the performance is safe for both humans and animals."

When asked if he has a dream performance that he always wanted to bring to life, Sergei Nesterov speculates, "Put your head in the mouth of a tiger? I think this is a relic of the past. It is much more important for me to show the gracefulness of animals, how flexible they are, how they jump, how wonderfully they do certain tricks and know how to balance. I would like people, coming to the circus, to be touched by the animals and see how beautiful they are. Therefore, I never force predators to perform tricks that are alien to them."

Meat diet and clean cages

What happens behind the scenes of the arena when the fanfare sounds after the performance? The four-legged artists go home to the spacious open-air cage, where the five of them live. Occasionally, if one of them starts to brawl, the bully is temporarily resettled in a separate cage, says the trainer, "White tigers have a rather weak immune system, so ours drink exceptionally pure filtered water. The basis of their diet is meat: a mix of chicken, from which all skins and fat deposits are removed, as well as beef — about 50kg daily. Once a week, we arrange a detox for our pets: they drink milk with freshly squeezed carrot juice and quail eggs. This cocktail helps to cleanse the body."

Traveling from place to place during a tour is quite easy for tigers: most of the time they sleep and wake up only to eat and drink.

By Kristina Khilko

Trying on a general's coat

Guests are greeted by Father Frost with ... shoulder straps in the Stalin's Line Historical and Cultural Complex! Army 'accessories' decorate the red festive fur coat: astrakhan collar and golden epaulettes. There is a bright star in the centre of the cap. It seems that the stately and stylish wizard has already risen to the rank of general!

Among the legendary machinery of the Soviet era and modern armoured vehicles, guests practice their agility and accuracy, passing unusual tests. Together with Father Frost they play 'snow artillery', 'funny snowman' and 'snowballs'. For the most daring there is riding a T-34 tank with a breeze or shooting from a 'Maxim' machine gun. The most active children will receive gifts. This is not only a box with the usual sweets, but also a real army helmet in a khaki colour. They will not let you go without an obligatory ritual: you need to leave a letter with your dreams and wishes in a hefty sleeve. Father Frost and Snow Maiden bury the 'piggy bank' under a fluffy Christmas tree until next December.

Where: Stalin's Line Historical and Cultural Complex, Minsk Region

Grinding bad deeds to dust

Children and adults alike had to worry: a vacancy for the country's chief magician appeared in Belovezhskaya Pushcha in autumn. What if by the holidays they did not find 'that very' Father Frost?! They worried in vain. He is already waiting for guests! The New Year's train from Minsk to Father Frost and Mother Winter first left on December 10th. When visiting the magician, there is lots to see: a two-story carved tower sparkles with bright lights



Father Frost's Residence in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha

Visiting winter wizards

New Year's holidays are just around the corner, which means it is time to plan fabulous trips around our blue-eyed country for the whole family

Racing off on a striped voyage

The symbol of the coming year is the tiger. It's time to visit the graceful striped beast. For almost two years, a predator from Penza, Yaroslav, has been living in the capital's zoo. The Amur tigress does not like slush, but she walks in the snow and frolics like a kitten: she playfully throws a pine branch with her paw, then she watches the visitors with interest. Next door is a Bengal tiger named Simon. The fluffy handsome tiger has an unusual colour: snow-white fur with stripes that shimmer from dark brown to black. Of course, you won't be able to stroke him, but you are welcome to take a picture. The tailed beasts will surely appreciate such attention and will give you success and luck next year. Closer to the holidays, children are invited to the New Year's performance, entitled *How a Bee Decided to Become a Tiger*.

Where: Zoo, Minsk, 40 Tashkent-skaya Str.

Finding out where the wood spirit walks

Ded Zimnik and Baba Zavruckha are waiting for guests in Nalibokskaya Pushcha, as well as Kikimora, Nightingale the Robber, Baba Yaga, Leshy (wood spirit) and other characters that frighten naughty children. Fairytale characters roam the forest paths, making riddles for visitors and handing out tasks. Here you will not get bored or freeze. The grey-haired Ded Zimnik



Khovanshchina Memorial Complex



Belovezhskaya Pushcha

in the evenings, creating a special atmosphere. True, naughty children will not get inside: the entrance to the residence is guarded by wooden knights: Dub-Dubovich and Vyaz-Vyazovich. Another interesting place is the magic mill. Here you can leave all bad deeds from the year and grind them into dust. Meanwhile, you can meet handsome bison in the snowy forest. They are almost tame. After a fascinating excursion, warm yourself with vitamin tea on Pushcha's herbs and taste fragrant pancakes.

Where: Kamenyuki agro-town, Kamenets District, Brest Region

Being a partisan in the swamps

Finding the path to the partisan Father Frost is not easy. We'll give you a tip: go to the Polesie bogs at the Khovanshchina Memorial Complex. The children there are greeted by a rough Father Frost: in a hat with earflaps, a sheepskin coat belted with a leather belt, a staff in his hands, crowned with a star from a tin can and covered with red bunting.



Stalin's Line Historical and Cultural Complex



Estate of Zimnik and Baba Zavruckha

Behind his back he has a cloth bag, but these are not the usual toys and sweets for children, but fragrant gingerbread cookies according to an old 'partisan' recipe. They are 'accompanied' by exotic tea with marsh herbs from a samovar. On the forest edge not far from the 'base' the *Scouting is Looking for a Partisan Father Frost* quest is organised. After all the tests, the guests go to the headquarters, where a Christmas tree, round dances and treats await.

Where: Khovanshchina Memorial Complex, Brest Region, Ivatsevichi, 7 Pochtovaya Str.

himself greets the guests in a stylish purple fur coat, high felt boots, and in his hands he holds not a painted staff, but a wooden stick. Every year, a new interactive performance is prepared for young guests here, and after the performance they are treated to hot tea with snacks. After a fabulous show, you can go to Nalibokskaya Pushcha. Such animals as royal deer, roe deer, wolves and bison are there to amaze you in these wonderful places.

Where: Estate of Zimnik and Baba Zavruckha, Grodno Region, Iyve District, Zaleiki village

Greats seen at a distance

A gala evening held dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the National Olympic Committee

If, thirty years ago, we had been told that Belarus would have such an amazing sports infrastructure as it does now, that it would brilliantly host the 2nd European Games, the IIHF World Championship and a number of other mega-large tournaments, that ice palaces would grow across the country, that sport halls and stadiums would be built countrywide, that a huge number of medals will be won, that mass and children's sports will develop, many would probably not believe it. Indeed, in those difficult conditions in which the formation of Belarusian sports took place, one could only dream of these achievements. However, today it is a fact: Belarus is rightfully included in the elite of world sports and the National Olympic Committee has much to be proud of for 30 years of fruitful work.

By Sergei Kanashits

The gala evening, which gathered many guests in its warm and cozy atmosphere, was the final note in a series of bright events timed to coincide with the anniversary. In the year of its 30th anniversary, the National Olympic Committee of Belarus (NOC) has implemented a number of projects. One of the most notable was the *Vytoki* cultural and sports festival. This holiday of sports, science, culture and education resounded throughout the country, being enjoyed by both audiences and participants. On the day the organisation was founded, March 22nd, a documentary film about the 30th anniversary of the NOC was screened. The Olympic team performed at the Tokyo Games in the Team BY brand outfit, which was developed by domestic designers together with the National Olympic Committee staff. An important part of the event was the organisation of the photo exhibition, entitled *The National Olympic Committee of Belarus: 30 Years. The Stories of Our Victories!* The photo project contains works of the most significant events over thirty years while also presenting the highlights of the performances of the champions and prize-winners of the Olympic Games of sovereign Belarus. Another amazing media project — the *TEAM BY* glossy sports magazine — released on the creative and production platform of the Belarus Publishing House just before — was also timed to coincide with the festive date: the 30th anniversary



Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko presents the President of the National Olympic Committee of Belarus, Viktor Lukashenko, with an honorary diploma from the Council of Ministers

of the National Olympic Committee. The celebration ceremony was attended by famous Belarusian athletes, Olympic champions from different years: Andrey Barbashinsky, Yelena Belova, Andrei Bahdanovich and Aliaksandr Bahdanovich, Uladzislau Gancharou, Dmitry Dovgalenok, Ekaterina Karsten, Aleksandr Karshakevich, Anton Kushnir, Ihar Makarau, Sergei Martynov, Aleksandr Medved, Aleksandr Romankov, Leonid Taranenko and many others. Of course, there were also heroes of modern times: Alina Harnasko, Maryna Litvinchuk and Volha Khudzenka, Vanessa Kaladzinskaya and Iryna Kurachkina... It seems that not long ago we worried about them at the Tokyo Games, rejoicing at their successes, but now it was nice to see them young, happy and fit, replacing their usual sports

attire with elegant evening dresses. There were also our famous, legendary coaches, without whom our success would be unthinkable: Irina Leparskaya, Vladimir Shantarovich, Gennady Galitsky... The leadership of the sports industry, well-known public figures and artists, media representatives — this evening they all became one friendly team of like-minded people, united by the Olympic spirit. The official part of the gala evening was opened by the President of the National Olympic Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Viktor Lukashenko. He noted, “The National Olympic Committee is not just a temple of sports, it is our common home, in which we must share the joy of victory and the bitterness of defeat. Difficulties only temper and unite us, awaken colossal strength of mind and open the

way to the most difficult heights, because the Olympic movement is more than sports, it is a philosophy of life. We would not have achieved much if we thought it was impossible. Each of you has made a great contribution to the development of the national Olympic movement and sport of highest achievements.” Viktor Lukashenko also expressed his sincere words of gratitude to all athletes, coaches, medical workers and employees of the sports industry. The official part was continued by Prime Minister of Belarus, Roman Golovchenko, who took the stage with a pleasant mission: the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus decided to award the National Olympic Committee with the Certificate of Honour of the Council of Ministers for its significant contribution to the implementation of state policy in the field of physical culture and sports. The Head of Government congratulated everyone on the anniversary and said, “The past thirty years have been a time of the formation of the Olympic movement, overcoming difficulties on this path and, of course, a time of achievements and great victories. This became possible, among other things, due to the state’s attention to the development of sports.” There were a lot of smiles, informal communication and a good atmosphere throughout. During the event, there were gifts and awards, as well as a presentation of uniform kit for the national team for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing.

A kick into new season

Belarusian football summed up the results and set new goals

Without any unnecessary drama, but in a serious and fairly optimistic atmosphere, the official closing of the football season took place in the country, with the results of the outgoing year being summed up and the best footballers being announced at the *Star Ball-2021* ceremony

By Sergei Kanashits

There’s nothing significant to be happy about since the national team didn’t make it to the World Cup, our squads fail to qualify for the group stages of European competitions, and sadly no new stars shone on the Belarusian football horizon. Therefore, no one threw their caps into the air; it was less like a party and more like a business meeting of allies and like-minded people in the format of a dinner party. Football was and remains the number one game in the world and our country is no exception, but crises always happen in any business. It’s important to discover its reasons and be able to find constructive ways to speedily normalise the situation. The Belarusian Football Federation has been actively engaged in this throughout the season and is not going to turn from its planned path. Who your friends are becomes clear when you’re in trouble and, at a time when

knocking Belarusian football is a trend, it is important to reach out and support them in difficult times. This was the atmosphere that was in the air during the Star Ball ceremony. There are many problems and they are apparent. However, we should not close our eyes to the plans outlined for improvements. The Chairman of the Belarusian Football Federation (ABFF), Vladimir Bazanov, puts it this way, “This year, Belarusian football had to live in very difficult conditions: the teams were forced to play home matches of European competitions on neutral fields while the national squad played only one World Cup qualifying match in Minsk. The rest, because of the unmotivated political pressure, played away matches. Therefore, the result is not what we would like. Nevertheless, it is impossible not to notice that all these scrapes pulled the guys together and hardened them, making them stronger. I think that the Belarus Championship was also a suc-

cess, being unpredictable and tense.” — **The ABFF is now actively promoting reforms aimed at getting out of the crisis. Not everyone likes them. In your opinion, is the result noticeable?** — We are only at the beginning of a long journey. The plans are long-term and I am sure that they will bear fruit. We are not going to stop and continue moving in the same direction. **Starting from next season, another mandatory rule for all teams will be introduced at the Belarus Championship: at least seven players in the squad should have Belarusian passports, with at least one of them being under 21.** We do not pluck all these rules from the air; they have been tested in other countries e.g. Serbia. Look, how this team performed in the current selection for the World Championship: it took first place in its group, ahead of even the Portuguese!



Isn’t it an example to follow? The main thing now is to put young players on the wing who will soon have to take Belarusian football to a new level. — **A lot of controversy at the beginning of the season was caused by the introduction of the limit for young players.** — There is nothing unambiguous in the world, you can always find both pluses and minuses. I will say that this is a forced measure for Belarusian football. At this stage, it is necessary and fulfils its role, making the clubs pay much more attention to the development of young players. Shifts for the better are already definitely there, they are noticeable. Football players began to get more game practice in the teams and they are now the leaders of the youth team on the field. When there are more such guys, the competition will grow, and with it the results. I’m sure we are on the right course.



Viktor Drachev

Photo of the week

Bronze medallists of the European Youth Dance Sport Championship Nikita Buel and Maria Moiseeva

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



December 17th is the Day of Belarusian Cinema in the Republic of Belarus. It was established by Presidential Decree in 1994. On December 17th, 1924,

the State Administration for Cinematography and Photography — Belgoskino — was founded. In 1926, Belarusian viewers saw the first domestic 'action movie': *Forest Truth* by Yuri Tarich, based on Mikhas Charot's *Swineherd*. More than 500 feature films, as well as several thousand documentaries and about 100 cartoons have been created at the Belarusfilm Studio. The largest film forum in Belarus, which takes place in November for a week in Minsk, is the *Listapad* International Film Festival.

On December 18th, 1941, the first serial T-34 tank emerged from the gates of the Ural Carriage Works, which was the biggest vehicle in the history of tank building and, without exaggeration, the best medium tank of WWII. In some countries, for example, in Yemen, it is still in service today.



December 18th is International Migrants Day, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly on December 4th, 2000, on the recommendation of ECOSOC. On December 18th, 1990, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was adopted.

On December 19th, 1906, Leonid Brezhnev (1906-1982) was born — General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1966-1982), Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1960-1964, 1977-1982), Marshal of the Soviet Union and four times Hero of the Soviet Union. During the years when Brezhnev was in top leadership positions, a policy of detente began, the USSR participated in the so-called Helsinki Process and Soviet-American agreements on the limitation of strategic offensive arms were concluded. At the same time, negative processes in the economy, social and spiritual spheres of life were growing in the country. Under Brezhnev, Soviet troops were sent to Czechoslovakia (1968) and Afghanistan (1979).



On December 20th, 2001, the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus has put into circulation 'The Tower of Kamenets' commemorative coins from the *Architectural Monuments of Belarus* series: a silver coin with denomination of Br20 and a copper-nickel coin with denomination of Br1.

December 20th is the Day of Employees of State Security Bodies in the Republic of Belarus. These people ensure state and national security, protecting vital interests of citizens, society and the state, as well as national values and way of life from a wide range of external and internal threats.



On December 21st, 1896, Konstantin Rokossovsky (1896-1968) was born — Soviet military leader and commander, Marshal of the Soviet Union and twice Hero of the Soviet Union. In the history of the Great Patriotic War, the name of Rokossovsky remained not only due to the fact that he brilliantly carried out many offensive operations, but also because on June 24th, 1945, he commanded the Victory Parade in Moscow. He took part in the battles in Belarus during the Great



Patriotic War and commanded a mechanised corps, an army on the Western Front and the troops of the Bryansk, Don, Central, 1st and 2nd Belorussian fronts. He was awarded the highest military order of the USSR: the Order of Victory.

December 21st, 1966, the Soviet Union launched a space rocket with the 'Luna-13' automatic station on board. On December 24th, the station made a soft landing on the lunar surface.



On December 21st, 1991, the independent states of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine signed the Agreement on the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on equal terms.



December 22nd is Power Engineers' Day in the Republic of Belarus — a professional holiday for all industrial workers, covering the generation, transmission and sale of electricity and heat to consumers.

