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The Festival of National Cultures in Grodno is a kaleidoscope of cultural diversity

Symbol of friendship and unity

A unique event has taken place in Grodno — the 14th Republican Festival of National Cultures. The vibrant holiday, which is always eagerly anticipated by city residents, traditionally gathered a lot of guests. Bright and fascinating programmes reflecting the richness of the national heritage were presented on the streets of the picturesque city. This festival is a real kaleidoscope of cultural diversity, where representatives of different ethnic groups come together in order to share creative achievements, introduce each other to the traditions of their nations, and find new friends. Culture embodies the love for the world. Belarus has consistently emphasised this truth, while the festival is a recognised symbol of friendship, unity and spiritual liaison of more than 140 nations and nationalities living in peace and harmony on the Belarusian land. → 10



Import substitution, co-operation, reliance on high technologies

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, has visited Russia's Irkutsk Region with a working trip

The plane of the Belarusian leader arrived in Russia from Chinggis Khan International Airport in Ulaanbaatar. Aleksandr Lukashenko was in Mongolia on a state visit, during which the presidents of the two countries held official talks one-on-one and with the participation of their delegations. The parties reached an agreement on expanding co-operation in trade and economy, supplying the Mongolian market with food and industrial products of Belarusian enterprises, as well as joint work in the agro-industrial complex.

Aleksandr Lukashenko met with Governor of Russia's Irkutsk Region Igor Kobzev. The Belarusian Head of State was greeted with bread and salt and folk songs in front of the Irkutsk Region Government building. Veterans of war and labour, artists of the folklore group of the Irkutsk Association of Belarusian Culture and the Obereg folk group of the Irkutsk Regional Folk Art Centre came to welcome Aleksandr Lukashenko.

Igor Kobzev informed the President of Belarus about the region's capabilities and industrial potential. He dwelt on the economy of the region and talked about the major investment projects underway in the region. "Today we need and want the presence of our brothers, colleagues and partners. We are always open," the governor said.



President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko and Governor of Russia's Irkutsk Region Igor Kobzev

After the meeting with Igor Kobzev, Aleksandr Lukashenko talked to local residents as townspeople gathered near the administration building waiting for the President of Belarus. As it turned out, many of them have relatives in Belarus. "Visit us more often," Irkutsk citizens asked the President of Belarus while taking memorable photos with him.

Later, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko visited the Irkutsk Aviation Plant. At the plant, the Head of State got familiar with the stages of military aircraft production, and the assembly of the MC-21 passenger liner. By the way, aircraft for the Belarusian Air Force are also made here. The top executives of the

plant informed the President of Belarus in detail about the products and promising developments.

The Irkutsk Aviation Plant seeks to expand industrial co-operation with aviation enterprises of Belarus. Therefore, the topic of implementing joint projects, for example, in the machine tool industry and microelectronics, became the main topic during the visit of the Head of State. At the plant, Aleksandr Lukashenko was presented with a model of the Su-30 fighter jet. "My favourite aircraft," the President noted. "The most important thing is it is highly manoeuvrable," emphasised Aleksandr Veprev, General Director of the Irkutsk Aircraft Plant.

The Irkutsk Aviation Plant is one of the most modern and high-performance enterprises in the Russian aircraft industry.

Its major projects today are Su-30 fighter jets and Yak-130 combat training aircraft. In addition, the company is currently launching serial production of the first civilian airliner in its history — MC-21. In total, the plant has produced more than 8,000 aircraft of about 30 types and modifications. Irkutsk-made aircraft have been supplied to 40 countries over the years. Belarus is one of the company's key customers, operating both types of aircraft mass-produced at the Irkutsk Aviation Plant — Su-30CM multifunctional fighters and Yak-130 combat training aircraft. In addition, Belarus may become one of the first foreign operators of the newest MC-21 airliner, which is currently undergoing an import substitution programme and is being prepared for flight tests in the Russian configuration.

Dmitry Krutoi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the Russian Federation,

"The President of Belarus had a very busy programme. Over the past two years, we have been developing co-operation very intensively and have returned to the pre-COVID level. However, the President has stated that the level of trade turnover should be increased by 2-3 times."

Logistics

There has been considered a possibility of opening a wholesale and distribution logistics hub for Belarusian goods in Irkutsk Region, to ensure not only sales in the region but also export to China. Since the Brest Regional Executive Committee is assigned to this Russia's region, the President has set the task to explore the possibility of creating a Brest hub there. Based on the example of Brest, Belarus will implement this project in a pilot mode.

Industry

All leading Belarusian enterprises continue to successfully liaise with Irkutsk Region. BELAZ [Belarusian Automobile Plant's brand] is planning to deliver twice as much machinery to the region this year. MAZ [Minsk Automobile Plant's brand] is actively present on the region's market. Gomselmash [Belarusian manufacturer of agricultural machinery based in Gomel] has signed a five-year programme for the supply of combine harvesters. The first deliveries of AMKODOR machinery are also about to kick off.

Machine tool construction

Representatives of the largest machine building companies of Irkutsk Region travelled throughout Belarus in March 2024. The task of Belarusian manufacturers, which has been confirmed by the President during his visit, is to keep machine tool builders fully occupied at the first stage until 2030 and further until 2040, based on specific regional industries and large investment projects.

Aircraft industry

A lot has been done in a year. Two enterprises are actively co-operating with the Irkutsk Aviation Plant, and there are promising preliminary programmes for parts and components. The President has demanded to involve Horizont and Integral plants in this process — on micro- and radio electronics.

Agro-industrial complex

Two basic topics that have been discussed at the level of the President encompass seed production, where Irkutsk Region intends to significantly increase the share of elite seeds, and dairy farming in terms of increasing the number of dairy cows. Belarusian companies are already engaged in the supply of equipment and the design of dairy complexes. Supplies of veterinary medicines, amino acids and premixes from Belarus have also been discussed.

Housing and communal services

Belarusian manufacturers are involved in four pilot projects in this field. There are plans to build four municipal solid waste recycling plants, where Belarus is also ready to participate. In addition, Belarus takes an active part in the elevator replacement programme in Irkutsk.



Russia's MC-21 is a family of medium-haul passenger aircraft created by Rostec enterprises. MC-21-300 is a basic modification of the airliner with a capacity of 160–211 seats equipped with American engines, which made its first test flight in 2017. MC-21-310 is an import-substituted version of the MC-21-300 fitted with Russian-made PD-14 engines. Commercial supplies of the airliners are expected to begin in 2025-2026. The first recipient will be the Aeroflot Group.

Yury Slyusar, General Director of the United Aircraft Corporation (UAC),

has told Belarusian journalists that production volumes are constantly growing, which requires additional production capabilities, "We have previously co-operated with Belarusian enterprises, and have repeatedly visited the plant in Baranovichi [558 Aircraft Repair Plant — Editor's note], the Minsk Civil Aviation Plant No. 407, the plant in Orsha [Orsha Aircraft Repair Plant — Editor's note]. We really like these plants, we like the people working there. Throughout the post-Soviet period, these plants have continued to operate, having preserved the production aviation culture. Therefore, they are absolutely ready to expand collaboration." According to Yury Slyusar, the priority is placed on civil aviation. Russian partners are ready to place orders at Belarusian aviation enterprises for the amount of €3-5 billion annually. Technological and economic calculations have shown that all of this is feasible. "As Aleksandr Grigorievich [Lukashenko] has said, it is necessary to show the will and implement this project, to pass the point of no return. We have signed contracts. We are already co-operating — we are making nomenclature for a number of models, we need to scale it up," the UAC CEO concluded.

As for the supplies of MC-21 passenger aircraft and fully Russian-made medium-haul MC-21-310 passenger aircraft for the Belarusian fleet, such prospects definitely exist. Yury Slyusar has pointed out that due to the withdrawal of foreign Boeing and Embraer from the Russian market, the needs of Russian airlines will have to be closed first, yet Belarusian partners are also a priority. "Of course, we will not leave the fraternal people without airplanes... A fully Russian aircraft [MC-21-310 — Editor's note] provides the possibility of complete import independence and the absence of influence from world manufacturers, in terms of on what aircraft and where we can fly."

Belarus — Voronezh Region: \$1bn worth plans

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko met with Governor of Russia's Voronezh Region Alexander Gusev at the Palace of Independence in Minsk, on June 10th



Welcoming the guest, the Head of State recalled that two years had passed since their previous meeting, “At that time in Minsk, we outlined a range of important areas for our co-operation and agreed to liaise more actively in industry, agriculture, and the humanitarian sphere. Largely thanks to your efforts, the Voronezh Region has become one of Belarus’ most important partners. In 2023, the trade turnover exceeded \$0.5bn, which is a good indicator, although we must strive for the desirable \$1bn. Moreover, the dynamics remains good this year, and your region has reached the 13th place in Russia in terms of exports from Belarus.”

The Head of State highlighted construction when referring to the areas in which Belarus and the Voronezh Region successfully liaise,

“This area has traditionally been a leader in our trade relations. The total cost of projects implemented as part of our co-operation has increased 10 times over the past three years. In monetary terms, this is almost \$8.5 billion.”

The President noted that the joint projects carried out by the parties include industrial construction, in particular, tyre recycling production and well-known social facilities.

The Head of State noted that the Voronezh Region is familiar with the equipment manufactured in Belarus. According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, almost the entire range of Belarus-made machinery is used in the Russian region, to a greater or lesser extent. Belarus’ flagship MAZ constantly participates in tenders for the purchase of bus equipment, while MTZ [Minsk Tractor Works’ trademark], Gomselmash and Amkodor take part in tenders for the supply of agricultural, road and logging machinery.

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed,

“The current growing demand for machinery in Russia requires preliminary work between manufacturers and consumers. We rely on high-quality and timely service support, staff training, supply of spare parts and consumables. It is impossible to supply any machinery to the markets without this.”

Speaking of the interaction between Belarus and the Voronezh Region in the field of agriculture and food, the President mentioned Voronezh brands which contribute to Russia’s general volumes of agricultural products and help saturate the region and the Central Federal District.

At the same time, as noted by the Belarusian leader, there are always free niches and a place for a wide range of products that are necessary for consumers.

“We will be glad to bring you into the top five in terms of consumption and processing of our products,” Aleksandr Lukashenko addressed the Russian guest.

The President added that Belarusian enterprises and scientific organisations are also ready to exchange experience on the use of new technologies in agriculture,

and scientists of Belarus and the Voronezh Region are actively liaising in the field of seed production. “For our part, we can also offer technologies in the field of dairy production, including the design and construction of complexes, and their equipment,” the Head of State emphasised.

On new promising directions and true friends

The Head of State pointed out, “You could work more actively with our Government in high-tech industries — electronics, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, information and communication technologies, energy saving, and so on — and support production co-operation using domestic developments and component base. You know our economy and our enterprises well, hence there are no closed topics for agreements and negotiations. We are ready to make all kinds of decisions that will be of interest to you.”

Another area of co-operation is closely related to housing construction and maintenance of the housing stock in technically sound condition, as well as the provision of high-quality services to the population. It is possible to learn from Belarus not only how to organise work in this area: machinery and equipment for waste collection, sorting and recycling, water treatment and sanitation are produced in the country.

“I guarantee that we will implement everything that you agree on in the Government and that we decide upon together with you,” Aleksandr Lukashenko told the Russian guest.

“I think the time has come for us to work more closely with each other. Finally, thanks to circumstances, we have realised who is who: who are real friends, and who have been simply stuck to Russia and our co-operation for many years.”

What Voronezh Region Governor asked Belarusian leader to do

Belarus and Russia’s Voronezh Region have achieved significant success in construction co-operation and intend to continue liaison in this direction. During the meeting, Voronezh Region Governor Alexander Gusev asked Belarusian partners for support in the construction of a new football stadium in the regional centre. “This requires a decision by the Russian Government, enabling us to sign such a contract without competitive procedures. It seems to me this would be a very correct form of interaction,” Alexander Gusev noted. “As far as those successful projects that have already been implemented are concerned (particularly, the construction of the Sodruzhestvo mega-school — a large educational centre for almost three thousand students), we see that everything is being done efficiently and very quickly.”

In an interview with journalists, Alexander Gusev clarified that the stadium will boast the most modern format, seating 25,000 spectators and having very good

for its new production — *Passionate Memory Diary* — based on national opera and ballet performances of the 20th century dedicated to the Great Patriotic War.

The St. Euphrosyne Stavropegic Convent in Polotsk will use funds for reconstruction work. The implementation of these projects will make a significant contribution to the

Construction, agriculture and industry are main drivers for trade turnover growth between Belarus and Voronezh Region

multimedia content. “It will be a great field. We are sometimes criticised by the teams arriving in Voronezh. If they used to lose on a not very good field, now they will lose on a good field,” the Voronezh Region Governor noted with humour.

As for industrial interaction, he agreed with the Belarusian leader on the need to strengthen co-operation ties, “You have rightly noted that we have opportunities in the development of the radio-electronic industry. We boast a lot of competencies in the region, about two dozen enterprises are working in this direction. Of course, we could complement each other in this regard. This year we will bring a large delegation of business directors who could start liaising directly.”

Voronezh Region Governor listed spheres for co-operation with Belarus

Commenting on the tasks announced by the Head of State to achieve a mutual trade turnover of \$1bn, Mr. Gusev noted that this is a rather ambitious figure. He outlined two main areas, apart from construction, in which the parties would interact, “These include agriculture and industry. The Voronezh Region is among the leaders in agricultural production in Russia and the country’s important industrial region.”



Referring to the specific agreements discussed at the meeting with the President, the Russian guest said,

“We focused on the development of dairy farming and the use of Belarusian milk producers’ technologies. Our organisations were largely oriented towards foreign ones, and I hope the experience of our Belarusian colleagues will prove useful.”

Alexander Gusev added that a trip would be organised for representatives of Voronezh large dairy producers to Belarus in order to get acquainted with the capabilities of local companies. The provision of Belarusian and Russian farmers with their own seeds, as well as highly productive meat and dairy cattle, is another important area. Agreements have already been reached on the supply of sugar beet seeds from the Voronezh Region to Belarus, as well as on the supply of winter barley seeds from the republic to this Russian region.

According to the Voronezh Region Governor, construction, agriculture and industry are the main drivers for the trade turnover growth between his region and Belarus. Mr. Gusev also highlighted radio and microelectronics as the areas for mutual growth of trade turnover, since both parties have good competencies in this field.

Aircraft building is another promising area. Voronezh Aircraft Manufacturing Association is one of three enterprises in the world where wide-body aircraft can be produced. The company is now preparing to produce smaller aircraft, including military transport. “I hope we will be able to liaise in this area as well,” Mr. Gusev said.

BR1.25M TO BE ALLOCATED FROM BELARUS PRESIDENT’S FUND TO SUPPORT CULTURE AND ART

Head of State Aleksandr Lukashenko has signed a decree envisaging support for culture and art projects, and Br1.25m will be allocated for this purpose from the Belarus President Foundation for the Support of Culture and Art, the Belarusian leader’s press service reports.

The foundation will provide support to the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of Belarus

preservation of the historical memory of the heroic feat of the Soviet people-liberators through high academic art, and will allow the high-level implementation of events dedicated to the 900th anniversary of the St. Euphrosyne Stavropegic Convent.

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Review of Belarus' achievements

The 34th International Exhibition *Belagro-2024* unveiled in the Great Stone Belarusian-Chinese Industrial Park has demonstrated cutting-edge achievements in the fields of agriculture and industry. Advancements in the Belarusian agro-industrial complex (AIC), an exclusive from Russia's Ministry of Agriculture, know-how from Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Germany, China, Türkiye, new cultural varieties and innovations in biotechnology, as well as the selection of the best brood cow, tests for the most skilled plowman, a contest for the *Champion of Taste* title, a tour of the fish village, a tractor rally, britzka riding — the list is endless.

By Vasily Gedroits

Thanks to the personal attention of the President of Belarus, the hard work and dedication of AIC workers, the support of machine builders and agricultural scientists, Belarus has taken a leading position in the world in the production of agricultural products and foodstuffs. Belarus provides almost 100 percent of the country's food security. Ranking 97th in the world in terms of population and 84th in terms of territory, Belarus is one of the top five exporters of milk and dairy products, and is among the top 15 exporters of meat and meat products. Our country is one of the global

situation would be affected. Belarus produces a full range of machinery and mechanisms for growing and harvesting any crops, carrying out work on farms, transport and other operations."

At the main entrance to the exhibition, there was an exposition of the flagship of Belarus' mechanical engineering industry — Minsk Tractor Works [MTZ trademark]. It featured the machinery of not only the parent company, but also of all plants belonging to the holding.

The parent enterprise presented a tractor with an electromechanical transmission BELARUS-3523. Another novelty was the BELARUS-3322 model with

MAZ-X. This is an innovative development that has already been presented at the Crocus Expo in Moscow recently. After the presentation, the Internet literally exploded. Everyone was impressed by the out-of-the-box approach to the creation of tractor trucks and the applied design solutions. The MAZ-X tractor truck has been created based on a hybrid platform with an electromechanical transmission and an innovative design of an aerodynamic low-floor modular cabin using lightweight composite materials. The vehicle embodies great efficiency, high mileage and

Within the framework of *Belagro-2024*, the premiere of a brand-new 650-horsepower FS650 forage harvester has taken place, which confidently sets new standards in forage harvesting due to the range of advanced technological solutions.

Productive machinery alone is not enough to obtain high gross yields of all crops. First of all, good seeds are needed, according to Piotr Kazakevich, Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of Belarus' National Academy of Sciences. "In the field of grain production, Belarusian scientists aim to create varieties with a yield potential of over 100 centners

Among the delicious specialties from Volkovysk Meat Processing Plant JSC were venison products that were brought to light at the exhibition for the first time. They are in demand in branded stores, especially among guests of Belarus. Representatives of Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia, and Russia's regions have already shown their interest in those at the exhibition.

Rapeseed oil has long been a Belarusian brand and has found a lot of fans in the world. Representatives of Georgia, Libya, and Israel, who were interested in both packaged rapeseed oil for consumers and in tanks, visited the stand of Bobruisk Factory of Vegetable Oils OJSC. One of the delegations was interested in the product to ensure its state reserves.

Greenhouse plants are successfully coping with the instruction of the Head of State to provide the domestic market with fresh cucumbers and tomatoes in the off-season period — there are enough production capacities both to meet the demand of Belarusian consumers and to make export supplies. Thus, specialists of Rudakovo Greenhouse Complex JSC brought cherry tomatoes to the exhibition this year, the production of which is planned to be established on an industrial scale.

Conferences and seminars were held at the forum site. The list of key topics encompassed agricultural education, promising developments of Belarusian scientists for the AIC, technical maintenance, development of breeding and seed production, and much more. Sports and entertainment events, presentation performances, *The Best Plowman* professional skill competition, *Champion of Taste* tasting contest, demonstrations of brood mares, goats and sheep took place.

It turned out that 45kg is exactly how much milk per day is given by Beresteyka, the Grand Prix winner in *The Best Brood Dairy Cow* competition, which arrived at *Belagro-2024* from Agrosad Rassvet JSC in Brest Region. It became the first experience of participating in such a prestigious competition for the farm. What memorable one, though!



Aleksandr Kulevsky



leaders in the production of basic agricultural products per capita. This was stated at the grand opening of the 34th International Exhibition *Belagro-2024* in the Great Stone Belarusian-Chinese Industrial Park by Belarus' First Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Sergei Fedchenko.

The exhibition has become a brand of the country, bringing together many enterprises and organisations. This year, 490 domestic and foreign companies from 11 countries have showcased their achievements at the exhibition. A huge number of guests have arrived at the festive event.

Our country is proud of the fact that the lion's share of machinery working in fields and farms is Belarus-made. "Even if we imagine a situation that purchases abroad stop, we will be able to completely do without imports," noted Deputy Industry Minister Aleksandr Yefimov. "I assure you that no po-



a fully automatic transmission. "We are working in one more direction. We have created an upgraded chassis for road maintenance and work in public utilities," revealed Vasily Gnedchik, a lead specialist in advertising and exhibitions at MTW OJSC. "The vehicle can mow down roadsides and slopes, clean roadside barriers from rust and paint residues. It can wash fencing and roads with the help of special equipment, clean, sweep, clear snow and debris."

At the main agro-industrial forum, MAZ [Minsk Automobile Plant's brand] unveiled a novelty to the market — an absolutely unique hybrid tractor truck

load capacity, ensures a high level of comfort and safety for the driver, as well as environmental friendliness.

Another impressive exposition belonged to the Gomel-based giant of agricultural machinery — Gomselmash JSC. The GH810 combine harvester with a 450-horsepower engine, already produced on an industrial scale, took centre stage. The novelty has no analogues produced in the CIS countries. A spacious premium cabin attests to the fact that the vehicle belongs to a new generation of grain harvesting equipment. The climate control system creates additional conditions for comfortable work.

per hectare. And they have already succeeded in that. At the same time, plant breeders are solving a difficult problem that has arisen in recent years — the development of drought-resistant varieties. For this, they take the source material from countries with hot climates and cross it with our plants," Piotr Kazakevich pointed out.

The exhibition days were also busy for Belarusian companies of the Belgospishcheprom [Belarusian state food industry] concern. Representatives of many foreign delegations showed keen interest in both new products and recognised brands, which entailed lucrative contracts and expansion of the export portfolio.



Aleksandr Kulevsky

High-tech solutions for life

A smart city, immersive cinema and a robotic tour guide — what novelties amazed visitors of the annual exhibition TIBO



Virtual simulator assistant in car repair

tibo

The 30th International Forum on Information and Communication Technologies **TIBO 2024** was held in Minsk last week. More than 260 companies from 15 countries worldwide have come to the high-profile event showcasing innovative developments this year to see and be seen.

Minsk Arena has become a platform for the exchange of international best practices and the generation of innovative knowledge in the IT field. Last week, it brought together hundreds of companies striving to make the world around us even more modern from a digital perspective. Their booths had everything that embodied not only personal comfort, but also achievements in the economic sphere.

The main booth featured at **TIBO 2024 — Belarus is a Digital State** — was prepared by Belarus' Ministry of Communications and Informatisation. It unveiled the *Smart City* digital platform, the national information system for automated environmental monitoring, the showcase of digital projects, an artificial intelligence-based application *Digital Agronomist*, a general-purpose voice assistant for special agricultural equipment, and more.

The National Children's Technopark, as is customary, has presented a lot of interesting developments, including educational gadgets, a system of work with gifted youth, conditions for selecting candidates to study at the institution, and the *Scientific Weekends for Families with Children* educational programme.

Among the unconventional booths were a spider and mechanical robots from BNTU (Belarusian National Technical University) students. In the future, those developments will be able to work in the fields, cultivate the land and transport soil. By the way, the Belarusian State University has presented more than 20 innovative solutions at the international forum this year.

Minsk Automobile Plant [MAZ brand] has showcased several software products this time. At its booth, it was possible to study the diagnostic system of all electronic systems for MAZ machinery — both cargo and passenger vehicles. An automatic calibration system for the electronic air suspension system was also demonstrated there.

There were two software products at the BELAZ booth. Vladislav Rudoy, Head of Virtual Reality Application Development Bureau, described the novelties in detail, "One of our products is a virtual exhibition of innovative and mass-produced equipment. The second product is a virtual laboratory where large machine components can be assembled and disassembled step by step. The plans are to implement these developments in maintenance centres so that specialists could learn easier and faster."

Belarus' Ministry of Energy has brought to light over 40 innovative solutions, including state-of-the-art software complexes, smart grid distribution management systems, digital models of heating networks, as well as the latest developments in the use of artificial intelligence in the gas industry. A significant part of the exposition was traditionally dedicated to virtual and augmented reality technologies of RUE Vitebskenergo training centre. This year, Vitebsk energy specialists have showcased several new projects — a VR simulator for training staff in steam boiler operation rules, and a VR simulator for driving education.

In addition,

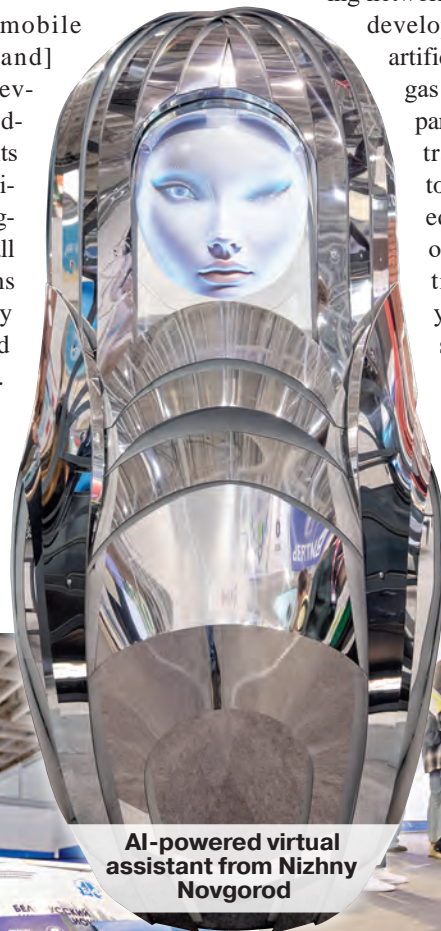
large-scale joint booths were demonstrated by Belarus' Ministry of Industry, Belarus' National Academy of Sciences, RUE Belenergo, BellSA (Belarusian Institute of System Analysis), the National Centre for Marketing and Price Study, and more. As part of the joint booth *Made in Moscow*, eighteen IT companies highlighted their innovative developments.

The business programme of the forum was opened by a plenary panel discussion *Digital Development. The Era of Artificial Intelligence*. The programme was very comprehensive, consisting of over 40 thematic events dedicated to the digital transformation of the key sectors of the economy and public administration.

The related events also took place, such as the awards ceremony for the winners of the *TIBO Internet Award*, *TIBO Internet Marketing* contests, and the International Scratch Creative Programming Olympiad (ISCPO) among schoolchildren.

With the support of the Ministry of Communications and Informatisation and the NGO BRSM (Belarusian Republican Youth Union), the Youth Forum *We are the Future of Digital Belarus* was held at **TIBO 2024** — an event involving lively interaction between prominent leaders in the IT sector and active, interested young people.

Within the framework of the Digital Technology Festival, *Digital Literacy* open lessons were conducted for schoolchildren, along with sports events, including the modern discipline on double event — a phygital tournament on basketball and racing.



AI-powered virtual assistant from Nizhny Novgorod



A new technique in the field of medicine — automated and safe — will simplify doctors' work



The bionic programmable robot is loved by both children and adults

● Dog of many talents

The 15-kilogramme bionic beast kept sending hearts to the children, stretched out to its full height and gave a paw, like a true faithful friend. No one will ever feel bored having this cute high-tech pet around. According to Hobby Park LLC experts, the robotic dog with voice recognition executes commands using Chat GPT. It is equipped with navigation, and allows easy control from any phone via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. Moreover, the digital dog can run no worse than a real one.



Sofia Prokhorova has developed a digital test site

TOP 5 INTERESTING, UNUSUAL AND USEFUL NOVELTIES

● Nina from Nizhny Novgorod

Nina, a 2.5-metre-tall mirrored matryoshka doll, greeted guests at the entrance to the Nizhny Novgorod booth. This is not just a virtual assistant, but a real employee. Nina can search for information using an internet connection. This modern development is only a year old, but it has already managed to tour in many cities. However, the art object has learnt to talk quite recently — especially for the **TIBO** exhibition.

● Become an agronomist in 5 minutes

Sofia Prokhorova, a 4th-year student at Brest State Technical University, had a long queue of schoolchildren who wanted to get an insight into her development. The girl brought to the exhibition a digital test site — an installation that tests agricultural machinery and trains young personnel to manage new equipment. The development has become very popular at the university, the guys agree after passing the test that it is not an easy job, the quality of sowing depends a lot on the person.

● Digital car maintenance

Sergei Shashenko, a lead engineer of the Transport and Technological Machines Faculty at the Belarusian-Russian University, used a virtual simulator to teach students how to carry out car maintenance, and repair the braking system and chassis of vehicles. "Virtual reality glasses enable us to see the full picture, including the garage, tools and parts that need to be repaired. The picture is duplicated on the computer screen. There are about 20 different scenarios in the simulator, and students scrutinise them in laboratory classes," explained the specialist.

● Oxygen box of the 21st century

The State Committee on Science and Technology has presented a new method of adaptive therapy for respiratory failure in patients with COVID-19 and those who undergo a rehabilitation process. The OxyBox device with automated selection and correction of oxygen therapy regimen is suitable for use both at home and in a medical facility.

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Operation that shook the world

Operation Bagration — prerequisites and significance for the outcome of the Second World War

MEMORY

MEMORY

Bagration in numbers

More than 4,000,000 people — human resources from both sides involved in Operation Bagration.

About 60,000 guns — artillery component of the operation.

Over 8,000 aircraft — air forces that took part in military activities.

Up to 270 km — length of the powerful defence line Vaterland (Fatherland) set up by German aggressors on the territory of Byelorussia.

More than 60,000 rails were destroyed by partisans in Byelorussia in June and early July 1944.

Over 15,000 — number of enemy soldiers and officers killed by Byelorussian partisans in close co-operation with the Red Army troops; more than 17,000 were captured.

147 enemy echelons were captured, defeated and derailed by partisans only in the period from June 26th to 29th.

105,000 people — number of the enemy grouping surrounded in the Minsk Pocket.

409,000 soldiers and officers died and went missing in the German forces.

More than 158,000 occupiers were captured.

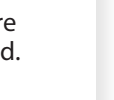
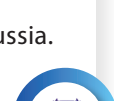
Over 700,000 people — losses of four fronts of the Red Army in the battles for the liberation of Byelorussia from June 23rd to the end of July 1944 (including almost 180,000 killed).

Over 1,500 participants of the Byelorussian operation were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

600,000 people were drafted into the active army from the liberated regions of Byelorussia (including 194,000 partisans).

2.9 million people — population of Byelorussia within its current borders decreased by that much since the beginning of the Great Patriotic War in 1941 until the end of 1944 (from 9.2 to 6.3 million people).

36 times — Moscow saluted the valiant troops that distinguished themselves in fierce battles during Operation Bagration.



The Byelorussian offensive, commonly known as Operation Bagration, marks its 80th anniversary this year. It had no equal in spatial scope during the Great Patriotic War and is rightfully considered an outstanding achievement of the Soviet military art. The defeat of the most powerful Wehrmacht grouping in the shortest possible time — from June 23rd to August 29th, 1944 — enabled the Red Army, with the support of partisans, not only to liberate Byelorussia from occupation, but also to significantly undermine the enemy's forces, bringing the collapse of fascism closer and paving the way for total victory.

Hitler starts and loses

The liberation of Byelorussia after three years of occupation was not an easy task for military experts of that time. Judge for yourself. By the spring of 1944, Soviet troops had already managed to push back the invaders from besieged Leningrad, retake Crimea, almost completely liberate Ukraine and reach the border with Romania. However, the enemy fortified the territory of Byelorussia with special care. The front line had the shape of an east-extending arc with an area of about 250,000 square kilometres, and was deeply wedged into the location of the Soviet troops. It was also called the Byelorussian Balcony, a salient that overhung the Soviet troops in Ukraine and prevented them from developing an offensive in the direction of Minsk, Warsaw, and Berlin. The heavily armed Germany's Army Group Centre was sitting relatively calmly on that 'balcony'. Hitler even arrogantly declared Vitebsk, Orsha, Mogilev, Polotsk and Bobruisk 'fortresses' and believed that the Soviet troops would not be able to break through the echeloned defence line in difficult terrain.

Moscow skilfully took advantage of the enemy's complacency. The mood of the latter was timely and competently assessed by the Soviet command. Having worked out various options for action, the decision

became 'a catastrophe of unbelievable proportions, greater than that of Stalingrad' for the German army.

The rapid advance of the Red Army was evidence of the growing power of the Soviet Union for the West. Bagration was the first major offensive of the Red Army at a time when the armed forces of the United States and Great Britain had just begun military operations in Western Europe. As further history showed, the allies did not seize the initiative from the USSR, although 70 percent of the Wehrmacht's ground forces continued to fight specifically on the Soviet-German front. Moreover, the German command transferred large strategic reserves from the west to our lands, which provided favourable conditions for the offensive actions of the allies after their troops landed in Normandy, and waging a coalition war in Europe.

The march of captured Germans held in Moscow on July 17th, 1944, known as the Parade of the Vanquished became one of the evidence of the crushing superiority of the Red Army in Operation Bagration. More than 57,000 German soldiers and officers, most of whom were captured in the summer by the troops of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Byelorussian Fronts, marched through the city centre. This way Soviet citizens were shown the scale of the Wehrmacht's defeat.



Ratio of forces and resources between the Red Army and the Wehrmacht before the start of Operation Bagration

Red Army
Troops — about 1.7 million
Tanks and self-propelled guns — over 5.8 thousand
Guns and mortars — 33 thousand
Aircraft — more than 5.3 thousand

German troops
Troops — about 1.2 million
Tanks and self-propelled guns — about 900
Guns and mortars — 9.5 thousand
Aircraft — more than 1.3 thousand

through the enemy's intermediate defensive lines, destroying its main operational reserves and occupying critical bridgeheads on the Vistula River. The goals set for the fronts were fully achieved. As a result, the general offensive front of the Soviet troops expanded from the Baltic Sea to the Carpathians. On July 17th-18th, Red Army units crossed the state border of the Soviet Union with Poland, and by August 29th reached a new strategic frontier — Jelgava, Dobeles, Augustów, the Narew and Vistula Rivers.

Caught off guard by the sudden start of Operation Bagration, the vaunted German army did not recover from the shock either a day, a week, or a month after the launch of the offensive. One of the confirmations of

this is the events that were taking place near Minsk in July 1944. Dozens of German divisions were trapped in a giant pocket there. There was a huge gap in the German defence, which the Wehrmacht command had nothing to close with. Moreover, the enemy had no idea where the Red Army would strike another painful blow. Therefore, the Hitlerite military command could not transfer a single division to block the bridgehead of the Western allies of the Soviet Union, who opened the second front in Normandy only on June 6th, 1944.

The feat of the people will live through centuries!

The events of the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War have forever remained in the memory of Belarusians, and Operation Bagration became one of the key milestones in the modern history of our country. It is for a good reason that at the nationwide referendum on November 24th, 1996, our fellow citizens overwhelmingly supported the celebration of the Independence Day of the Republic of Belarus (Day of the Republic) on July 3rd — the Day of Belarus' Liberation from Nazi invaders.

Our country, where every third person perished during the Great Patriotic War, has sites of memory dedicated to the events of those fiery years in every city and every district. About 10,000 monuments and graves are included in military-historical routes and excursions as places for reverence of the deceased and an eternal reminder about the priceless value of peace. However, there are in fact many more such sites of memory.

Dozens of museums and hundreds of exhibitions glorifying the heroism of the victorious Soviet people and revealing the atrocities committed by the Nazis in the occupied land have been opened across the country. Nevertheless, even after almost eight decades, there are still quite a few gaps in the chronicle of the Great Patriotic War. Historians, students, volunteers, and just non-indifferent people are trying to eliminate them.

One of the manifestations of national memory is the unique Internet project Partisans of Belarus (partizany.by) designed and developed by the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House in liaison with the National Archive of the Republic of Belarus. To date, it has been possible to collect on one virtual platform award sheets, fighting qualities and other documents of almost 220,000 partisans and underground movement members who contributed to the liberation of our republic. New names and archival documents are added to the historical record almost every day.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"The offensive operation Bagration is rightfully called the triumph of the Soviet military art. This battle went down in history as the largest defeat of the fascist troops in the Second World War. About 400,000 soldiers, officers, generals of the Wehrmacht and SS were killed and captured. They were shown to the whole world as they were made to walk a march of shame through the Red Square, where the traces of German boots were immediately washed away with water. It would do good for the newly-minted Nazis to review that newsreel footage. They want to forget, but you and I must not let them do it. No one must forget that. We must not forget so that it does not happen again."

During the wreath and flower laying ceremony at the Mound of Glory memorial complex, on July 3rd, 2023

Components of success

Troops of four fronts participated in liberation of Byelorussia in concert:

- 1st Byelorussian Front (Commanding General of the Army Konstantin Rokossovsky)
- 2nd Byelorussian Front (Commanding Colonel General Georgy Zakharov)
- 3rd Byelorussian Front (Commanding Colonel General Ivan Chernyakhovsky)
- 1st Baltic Front (Commanding General of the Army Ivan Bagramyan)

Also involved:

- long-range aviation
- formations and detachments of Byelorussian partisans
- Dnieper Military Flotilla
- squadron of French volunteer pilots Normandie (since November 28th, 1944 — Normandie — Niemen regiment)

AUTHORS OF OPERATION BAGRATION

 Konstantin Rokossovsky , Army General	 Aleksei Antonov , Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Army General, Main developer. A native of Grodno, Byelorussia	 Ivan Bagramyan , Colonel General
 Ivan Chernyakhovsky , Colonel General	 Georgy Zhukov , Marshal of the Soviet Union	 Aleksandr Vasilevsky , Marshal of the Soviet Union

Other experienced military leaders were invited to the meeting of the Stavka (General Headquarters) of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief when considering the deployment of the armed forces, maintenance and logistics support.

STAGES OF THE BYELORUSSIAN OFFENSIVE

- 1 **June 23rd — July 4th, 1944** — Vitebsk-Orsha, Mogilev, Bobruisk and Polotsk operations were carried out, the Minsk grouping of the enemy was surrounded.
- 2 **July 5th — August 29th, 1944** — Šiauliai, Vilnius, Kaunas, Bialystok and Lublin-Brest operations were carried out.

Lightning-fast operation

Operation Bagration kicked off several days ahead of schedule — it was necessary to support the partisans who suffered from violent actions of punitive and regular units of Nazi occupiers. On June 22nd, 1944 — exactly on the third anniversary of the German attack on the USSR — Soviet troops conducted reconnaissance by fire, and as soon as on June 23rd the main strike groups of the Red Army went on the offensive.

During the first stage of Operation Bagration, five front-line operations were carried out: Vitebsk-Orsha, Mogilev, Bobruisk, Polotsk and Minsk. The enemy's defence was breached throughout the entire tactical depth, which was accompanied by the breakthrough expanded to the flanks and the defeat of the nearest operational reserves. The Soviet troops were moving at breakneck speed for the Germans — an average of 20-25 kilometres per day! During the first 12 days of the offensive, the main forces of Army Group Centre were shattered. On July 3rd, a long-awaited event for all Byelorussians took place — the capital of the republic was liberated. In the districts of Vitebsk, Bobruisk and Minsk, a total of about 30 German divisions were surrounded and annihilated. The enemy's front in the central direction was crushed.

The second stage of the largest offensive campaign included five more front-line operations: Šiauliai, Vilnius, Kaunas, Bialystok and Lublin-Brest. The Soviet troops were tasked with developing success in depth, breaking

was taken to strike at the fascist flanks near Vitebsk from the north, and near Bobruisk from the south, as well as to cut off the enemy's escape route in the Minsk area. The operation was called Bagration.

Important: the plans of the offensive developed in the spring of 1944 were kept carefully under wraps. A complete radio silence regime was introduced in the Byelorussian direction, the deployment of troops took place away from the front, and the construction of a long-term defence was simulated to divert the enemy's attention. It was possible to form a decisive numerical superiority over the German grouping, and the Germans were caught off guard!

Demonstration of capabilities

In a little over two months of Operation Bagration, the Red Army pushed the once powerful Army Group Centre west by 550-600 kilometres. In addition to the liberation of our republic, a significant part of Lithuania, parts of Latvia and eastern regions of Poland were cleared of the enemy. Also, the conditions were created for the further advance of the Red Army into the German territory.

For many decades, Western analysts have not ceased to admire the brilliant idea of the Soviet command and the direct participants in Operation Bagration. Thus, British military historian John Erickson in his book *The Road to Berlin* emphasised that the destruction of Army Group Centre by Soviet troops

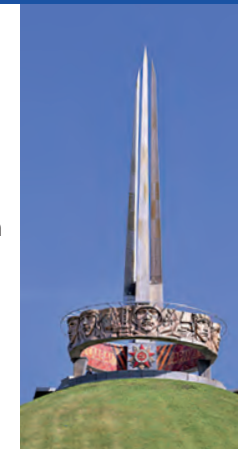
Mound of Glory memorial complex

(Smolevichi District, 21st km of Minsk — Moscow highway)

Memory in monuments

Sculptors — Andrei Bembel and Anatoly Artimovich, architects — Oleg Stakhovich and Lev Mitskevich, engineer — Valery Laptsevich

The total height of the memorial is 70.6m, the height of the mound is 35m. At the top is a composition of four bayonets lined with titanium, each 35.6m high. The bayonets symbolise the fronts that liberated Byelorussia, their base is encircled by a ring with bas-relief images of Soviet soldiers and partisans. The inside of the ring contains the text, 'Glory to the Soviet Army, the Liberation Army!'



Bagration memorial

(Svetlogorsk District, 71st km of highway R-31 Bobruisk — Mozyr — Novaya Rudnya, in proximity of Rakovich village)

Sculptor — Valery Kondratenko

The centre of the memorial sign features the figures of four generals — Konstantin Rokossovsky, Georgy Zhukov, Pavel Batov and Mikhail Panov, as well as figures of participants in the battles. From this line, the soldiers of the 1st Byelorussian Front delivered one of the decisive blows during the strategic Operation Bagration in June 1944.





Front behind enemy lines

Partisans made a huge contribution to the liberation of our country

In terms of its scale, military and political results, the nationwide resistance movement against the occupiers of the BSSR (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) became one of the crucial factors affecting the enemy's defeat. No wonder Belarus is still called a partisan republic. During its liberation, the people's avengers provided great assistance to the Red Army troops and, in fact, created a second front behind enemy lines.

By Vyacheslav Danilovich,
deputy of the House of Representatives,
Doctor of Historical Sciences

Intelligence reported accurately

In the autumn of 1943, the operational groups of the Byelorussian Headquarters of the Partisan Movement (BHPM) under military councils of the fronts became the centres of planning, co-ordination, and logistical support for the interaction of partisans and Soviet troops. As a result, the Voroshilov detachment, as an example, actively assisted the Red Army in building a crossing over the Dnieper during the liberation of the first regional centre of the BSSR — Komarin, on September 23rd, 1943. The people's avengers at the offensive lines of our military units struck blows, blocked large enemy garrisons and destroyed small ones, ambushed and blocked roads, as well as disrupted communication lines.

A brilliant example of operational and tactical co-operation in the liberation of the eastern regions of Byelorussia is the second stage of the 'rail war' held in the first two autumn months of 1943, when 90,000 rails were blown up. Enemy echelons were derailed, retreating enemy units were destroyed, and their movement was interrupted.

The intelligence work of underground fighters was carried out in close co-operation with 184 special groups of state security agencies, as well as SMERSH counterintelligence and military intelligence. Thus, since January 20th, 1944, constant monitoring over the deployment of Nazi troops on 19 critical sections of the railway network was established. Special attention was paid to the intelligence on the five frontiers and fortified areas of the Nazi defence constructions, the total length of which was 2,200 km. Having summarised all the information received, the BHPM intelligence department compiled a detailed map of the enemy's defensive lines for the Soviet command at the end of June 1944. The location of 28 enemy headquarters, including Army Group Centre, was detected. In addition, the intelligence managed to obtain information about the work of Hitler's scientists and engineers on V-1 cruise missiles and V-2 ballistic missiles, as well as on the production of jet fighters in Rostock and Brandenburg.

From October 1943 to April 1944, 35 partisan brigades and 15 separate detachments with a total strength of more than 50,000 people joined the Red Army units.

A joint blow

The Stavka (General Headquarters) of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief provided for the active participation of Byelorussian partisans in Operation Bagration. By the time it began, there were 150 partisan brigades and 49 separate detachments in the rear of Army Group Centre, numbering more than 140,000 people.

In June 1944, before the start of the offensive operation Bagration, thousands of acts of sabotage were carried out, which considerably hampered the enemy's actions. Thus, on the night before the general offensive, a powerful diversionary raid on all important roads deprived the German troops of any control for several days. That fact was admitted by the head of Army Group Centre transport communications, Colonel Hermann Teske.

By the way, a significant number of settlements, including the district centres of Kopyl, Uzda, Starobin, Krasnaya Sloboda, Ostrovets, Karelichy, Svir, Vidzy, were liberated by the partisans on their own. This generally contributed to the high pace of the offensive. Great attention was riveted on the routes used by the enemy for retreat. Many sections of highways and the majority of earth roads were blocked, and attacks on large enemy columns were inflicted on a regular basis. The Zheleznyak partisan detachment particularly distinguished itself, having seized a bridgehead on the Berezina River along a front of 17 km and held it until the arrival of the Red Army units, thus providing the necessary assistance in establishing crossings.

The capture and retention of many river crossings by the people's avengers, as well as assistance in building log paths in difficult-to-pass places was of paramount importance for the advance of Soviet troops. One of such episodes was vividly embodied in a new feature film *Time to Return* by the Belarusfilm National Film Studio, the scientific consultants of which were scientists from the Institute of History of Belarus' National Academy of Sciences. The partisans of Vileika Region alone built 312 bridges and 15 crossings for Soviet troops.

In addition, during the liquidation of the Minsk Pocket — a 105,000-strong enemy grouping southeast of Minsk — partisans fought hard with the enemy together with regular units for several days.

In the parade formation

The idea of holding a partisan parade appeared almost immediately after Minsk liberation, to pay homage to the living soldiers and pay tribute to the memory of those who laid down their lives to turn the fight against the occupiers into a truly nationwide war.

Already on July 3rd-5th, in accordance with the instructions of the Chairman of the BSSR Council of People's Commissars, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia (Bolsheviks) Panteleimon Ponomarenko, partisan formations began to arrive in Minsk and its surroundings to cover the city and safeguard critical enterprises and facilities. Initially, it was planned to hold a rally and a partisan parade in Minsk on July 9th. However, due to the threat of a breakthrough by the enemy grouping surrounded east of Minsk, the tim-

ing of the parade was postponed until the enemy's complete defeat.

Thirty-one partisan brigades — 20 from Minsk Region, nine from Baranovichy, one from Vileika and one from Gomel regions, the headquarters of the Minsk regional partisan unit and two separate detachments with a total number of more than 30,000 people — arrived in Minsk. Never in history have so many partisans gathered in one place. On Sunday morning, July 16th, a parade kicked off in the bend of the Svisloch River on the wide square of the city hippodrome, which had been cleared of mines before the solemn event. About 50,000 people came to see it, almost all residents of the Byelorussian capital and its environs. The ruined city was decorated with banners, portraits of Soviet leaders and flowers. The parade was started by Konstantin Budarin, Chairman of the Minsk City Council Executive Committee. Then, Panteleimon Ponomarenko took the floor. The parade was attended by Army General Ivan Chernyakhovsky, Commander of the 3rd Byelorussian Front, whose troops liberated Minsk, as well as envoys from Russia's industrial city of Gorky who brought an echelon of gifts to Minsk residents. The right to open the parade was granted to the People's Avengers brigade named after V.T. Voronyansky, led by Commander Georgy Pokrovsky, Hero of the Soviet Union. That unit distinguished itself in recent battles by breaking through the German defensive lines in the area of the villages of Zherdyazhye and Okolovo.

After the liberation of Byelorussia, over 180,000 partisans joined the ranks of regular Soviet troops. It is our duty today to cherish the memory of the unprecedented heroic feat of our ancestors and pass it on to our descendants.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,
"We are proud of the indomitable will of those who did not submit to the anti-human regime, of those who went underground, fought a liberation guerrilla war, and resisted the policy of forced assimilation."
At the patriotic forum
We are Belarusians!
on September 17th, 2023

Servants of Thanatos

Death in the West is a business, and the business is going well

Euthanasia — voluntary departure from life of a person suffering from an incurable disease assisted by medical specialists — is growing in popularity in the 'golden billion' countries. While some time ago it was a drastic measure that a patient unable to fight a losing battle could resort to, today death has become a business that is promoted not only by private structures, but also by the state itself.

By Anton Popov

Dead zone

The euthanasia market is now one of the promising and fast-growing industries.

This is facilitated by the lively support from the authorities of the countries that have decided to legalise the so-called 'mercy killing', and widespread propaganda among target groups of the population of various ways to leave this world under the supervision of specialists.

Why are Thanatos assistants lobbying tirelessly? There are two fundamental reasons for this — the provision of euthanasia services has become a profitable business, which, in addition, helps, along with other measures, to control the population and hence, optimise public budget spending.

In the field of promoting voluntary departure from life, Canada is ahead of the curve today. They do things on the big figure there — the benefits have been calculated, the necessary infrastructure has been created, the legislative framework is being improved, expanding the list of those who can turn to doctors for assistance in shuffling off this mortal coil.

Thus, Canadian economists estimated back in 2017 that doctor-assisted deaths helped the country save **\$136.8 million** in the healthcare sector over a year, and by 2024 this figure has more than doubled to reach about **\$300 million**. At the same time, according to the *Dying With Dignity Canada (DWD Canada)* lobby group, which is the foremost assisted suicide and euthanasia advocacy organisation in the country, the market for life-ending services will become even more promising and will grow significantly in the coming years.

It is so much easier to kill than to fight for a person's life, support and be present with them throughout their final journey.

In 2022, 13,241 people in Canada received medically assisted deaths. Compared to 2021, this figure jumped by 31 percent. The authorities are already registering complaints from patients with serious illnesses about pressure from doctors who incline them to voluntarily receive death.

The second component of the euthanasia programme in Canada is government support for voluntary medically-assisted death called *Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)*. Legally capable adult citizens suffering from an incurable disease can use this service. The list of grounds that can serve as a reason for approving an application for euthanasia is quite large and is constantly expanding.

Thus, an attending physician approved the application for euthanasia of a low-income disabled man, Amir Farsoud, who faced eviction from social housing and, therefore, between living on the street and death, chose the latter. Lester Landry, a 65-year-old wheelchair user, who was deprived of pension benefits, a service apartment and a dog by the authorities, found himself

in a similar situation — the unfortunate man who had to stay in a van for \$120 a month sent a request for euthanasia. Kayla Pollock, a 37-year-old mother, who was paralysed after being vaccinated against COVID-19, was recommended to use the *Medical Assistance in Dying* service due to lack of progress in the treatment of spinal cord injury.

Christine Gauthier, a retired army veteran and a former member of the Canadian Paralympic Team, received a kind offer from the authorities to euthanise her in response to her request to install a wheelchair ramp in her home.

Ticket to the next world

Nevertheless, Ottawa still lags behind some 'civilised' countries in terms of providing assistance to teenagers who have decided to die. Thus, euthanasia in the Netherlands is already legal for children aged over 12, albeit the consent of guardians or parents is still required in cases a teenager has not reached the age of 16.

Belgians have gone even further in this regard — since 2014, age restrictions have been lifted there.

Thus, among children who have gone to the next world in Belgium are, as an example, nine- and eleven-year-old infants suffering from a brain tumour and cystic fibrosis.

Switzerland went another way. The legislation there is structured so that direct active euthanasia is prohibited, while passive and assisted suicide, as long as it is not driven by selfish motives, is allowed. This conflict of law has been in force since 1937. In fact, the country has the most liberal euthanasia rules in the world — neither gender nor age of a life-ending person is limited. All that is needed to secure the necessary drug is reasonably explain a wish to die and have the physical ability to take a lethal dose on one's own.

It is Switzerland that has developed euthanasia tourism — 'one-way trips'. The mountainous country offers several assisted dying groups that can arrange death tours for a reasonable fee, Dignitas being the flagship. This organisation has been operating since 1998 and by 2020 facilitated the death of 3,248 people, a significant part of whom were foreigners.

BUSINESS AND NOT ONLY

There are three main beneficiaries of euthanasia — the state, which saves funds allocated for healthcare; direct service providers; as well as the notorious Big Pharma, which supplies drugs for killing. Thus, in 2009, the price of 100 capsules of Seconal (one of the drugs used for euthanasia) was **less than \$200**, but the price of the drug steadily rose over the last years. Today, the same amount of the barbiturate can only be obtained for **more than \$3,000**. In total, according to the latest known data, Seconal or its analogues were sold for the amount of **over \$65 million** in the USA, Canada, the Netherlands and Belgium in 2021.



However, another motive is easy to discern in the actions of the authorities of such countries as Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands, and others engaged in calculating the profits received from killing their own, albeit terminally ill, citizens — the desire to control the population in order to optimise costs.

ASHES OF HADAMAR

Turning euthanasia into a population control tool and a type of business takes humanity back to the days of the Third Reich and its infamous T4 Euthanasia Programme. Its implementation from September 1st, 1939 to August 24th, 1941 resulted in the murder of 70,273 people.

The Führer's rise to power was the reason for the launch of a mass campaign to forcefully sterilise those whom the Nazi ideologues listed as 'unworthy of life'. At the same time, a more radical idea was born, which Hitler learned from prominent supporters of eugenics. The initiative consisted in purification of the German nation from 'defective and inferior' persons, in the opinion of under-educated fascists.

The Nazis brought a solid pseudoscientific and socio-ideological base to suit their fabrications, which eventually led to the wholesale extermination of psychiatric patients and children with physical and mental disabilities. The executors who worked in the centres of 'merciful death' in Hadamar, Grafeneck, Sonnenstein and other locations also had an economic interest — doctors received considerable sums of money for each death sentence, while the staff who did the dirty work could take away some belongings after the unfortunate had been euthanised.

Many methods were worked out as part of the T4 Euthanasia Programme, which were later used in the mass extermination of people in concentration camps — suffocation by carbon monoxide, extraction of gold teeth from people's remains, burning bodies in crematoriums.

The modern West is rapidly moving backwards in its mental development. The expansion of euthanasia programmes transforms it from a method of ending a person's suffering into a powerful tool for managing society in the hands of the state in alliance with pharmaceutical giants. Skilful propaganda instils an idea in a person that the wish to die is the norm, while specialised institutions kindly offer their 'mercy killing' services.

Indeed, death has become a business in the West, and this business is going well.



Let's go on a festival spree in Belarus

Historical, musical and ethnic festivals abundant around Belarus in the summertime are conducive to spending a lot of time outdoors



Enjoying a royal rest

The best scenery for a ballet or opera performance in summer is natural landscapes or façades of a real castle. That is why Belarus' Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre is completing its season at the Nesvizh Palace and Park Complex for the fourteenth time. Actors, musicians, costumers, directors have already come to consider the ancient residence of the Radziwill family their second stage.

Performances and concert programmes traditionally take place on several stages — in the courtyard and the Theatre Hall of the castle, in the City Hall and in the walls of the splendid Baroque Temple of God's Body. This ensures you will get double pleasure admiring sophisticated frescoes to musical compositions by Giacomo Puccini — sheer delight!

DATE: June 14th–16th

By Sofia Arsenyeva

Bringing together those who are far and near

All people are brothers — you can readily believe that this statement is true at the Festival of National Cultures in Grodno. Thirty-five diasporas gathered in the city above the Neman River last weekend so as to walk hand in hand through the ancient streets in a colourful carnival. Russians and Tatars, Uzbeks and Azerbaijanis, Chinese and Iranians, Argentines and Egyptians live in peace and friendship on the Belarusian land. In terms of its format, the festival has no analogues in the world. The major theme of the 14th Republican Festival of National Cultures 2024 was family and family traditions.

At numerous farmsteads, hostesses presented authentic dishes and drinks absolutely free of charge. The Belarusian site was the largest and noisiest. Grodno Meat-Packing Plant JSC was responsible for the delicacies. It was possible to communicate not only with Belarusians from all over the country, but also with those who have been living abroad for a long time. Fellow countrymen came to the festival from Russia's Kaliningrad and Tomsk, as well as from Latvia and Poland.



Visiting the berry 'Palace'

Luninets District is famous for its sweet, fragrant strawberries. Endless strawberry plantations stretch literally behind every private house, and residents have long been nicknamed 'berry barons'. The local wholesale market is located in the village with a self-explanatory name — Dvoretz ['Palace' in English].

After the working season, hard-working strawberry growers arrange a noisy and large-scale festival. Songs, dances and plenty of sweet enjoyment add to the vibrant atmosphere. Visitors can indulge in delicious strawberry cakes and stewed fruit drinks, a variety of jam and wines, salads and ice cream. In addition, the festival features a beauty contest — the Strawberry Queen is chosen not only based on her appearance but also taking into account how many kilogrammes of berries she has collected. The award for the winner is a crown and a chance to walk through the rural streets in a luxurious dress.

If strawberry is not quite to your liking, do not worry. In July, a cherry fest is going to be held in the town of Glubokoe, Vitebsk Region, while in August, Cucumber Day is celebrated in the town of Shklov, Mogilev Region.

DATE: the end of June



Strumming a guitar

The farther into the forest, the brighter impressions you get. Fans of Russian (and not only) rock music will gather for the second year in a row in the small town of Pruzhany on the edge of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha. The names on the event posters speak for themselves — *Bravo* and *Moral Code-X*, *Chizh & Co* and *Kino*, *Gorky Park* rock bands and Joe Lynn Turner from *Deep Purple*... The *Solntsestoyaniye [Solstice] Rock Festival* features thirteen cool bands in total and promises to become one of the brightest and high-profile music events of this summer.

All-inclusive bus tours are arranged from Minsk to Pruzhany for those who prefer not to bother about where to park their car or how to find their tent among hundreds of strangers.

DATE: June 29th–30th

Bowing the head to the heroic feat

The Bobruisk City Day is celebrated with gunfire and the whistle of bullets. Fake ones, though. Exactly eighty years ago, at the end of June 1944, the city was liberated from the Nazi fascist invaders by efforts of the troops of the First Byelorussian Front. The valiant Red Army blocked several Wehrmacht divisions (more than 25,000 soldiers) in the Bobruisk Pocket and opened the road to Minsk. This is how one of the largest offensives during the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War — Operation Bagration — began.

In memory of those events, a large military-patriotic rally will take place near the village of Shchatkovo. Hundreds of reenactors from Belarus, Russia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Estonia, and Israel will arrive there to show the visitors those crucial events.

DATE: June 28th–30th

PLACE: Shchatkovo village, Bobruisk District



Holiday in a new format

The sports and cultural festival is back! For three years in a row, *Vytoki* has travelled all over Belarus and taken place in each of the country's regions, gathering tens of thousands of people. The festival, which combines sports, culture, history, education, fashion and more, has become one of the most anticipated events of the summer. Last week, all roads led to Pruzhany — it is this place in Brest Region that was chosen by Belarus' National Olympic Committee as the next centre of cultural and sports attraction. The unique festival *Vytoki* was in full swing and gave joy to all participants for three days.

By Tatiana Pastushenko

Festival with flair

The history of the *Vytoki* festival began in 2021 — the Year of People's Unity and the 30th anniversary of Belarus' National Olympic Committee. The first place to host the festive event was Lida, Grodno Region. The idea was to hold the holiday in small towns in order to unite people, while showcasing not only sports but also a cultural component.

The event proved to be unique. Already in the first season, residents and guests of the festival were offered a very rich and eventful programme, which included excursions, seminars, round tables, exhibitions of local manufacturers and modern Belarusian artists, concerts of famous performers, Olympic quests and much more. The 'filling' of *Vytoki* changed with each new season, and subsequent festivals gathered more and more guests. Thus, 152,000 people visited *Vytoki* in 2023, and over 359,000 in three years in total!

Vytoki has become a nationwide festival and is loved by the participants. After all, its diverse programme offers a range of captivating activities to everyone's liking. The organisers — the National Olympic Committee, the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus, ArtHaos LLC and Bel-BrandAudit LLC — have tried to make sure that the events unfolding at the festival venues will be remembered even years later.

Pruzhany surprised

In previous years, *Vytoki* travelled around the country, making a stop in each region. This season, the format has changed — the only festival of this summer has taken place in Pruzhany.

President of Belarus' National Olympic Committee Viktor Lukashenko explained why this particular district centre was chosen to host the large-scale event, "Pruzhany is a town with a rich culture, history and great sporting achievements. It is no coincidence that the festival is being held for the 20th anniversary time and for the first time in a new format in Brest Region, which is the first region of the country."



This year, the organisers have also prepared lots of fascinating things. All attention of participants on the first day of the festival was drawn to the tourist potential and history of the region — the nationwide campaign *Travel! Experience! Get Inspired!* and the presentation of the *Pearl of Pruzhany District* route were held there. An art interactive activity arranged by the ArtHaos gallery gathered more than 200 people, who took part in the design of the roller skate park, which had been opened before. It was a great show with the participation of leading Russian skateboarders, Belarusian representatives of roller sports and breakdancing!

The programme of the second day began with an introduction to the sports infrastructure available in Pruzhany. President of Belarus' National Olympic Committee



Viktor Lukashenko, Minister of Sports and Tourism Sergei Kovalchuk, Chairman of the Brest Regional Executive Committee Yuri Shuleiko visited Youth Sports School No. 1, Specialised Youth Sports School of the Olympic Reserve No. 2 and the Ice Palace, and assessed the conditions created for training young athletes, volleyball players, footballers, hockey players and figure skaters, swimmers and representatives of other sports developing in the region. The facilities enjoy popularity — the occupancy rate of the Water Palace, which provides not only a swimming pool, but also a water park, is about 98 percent. The Ice Palace boasts a very busy schedule, too. By the way, the delegation came to the schools with gifts — the heads of the facilities were presented with cash certificates from the Ministry of Sports and Tourism.



gathers a large number of children and parents, which, first of all, promotes communication. In addition, guys try different sports and can choose the one that is interesting for them."

The programme of the anniversary holiday featured a lot of novelties, such as a football match with the participation of sports stars. Football veterans Roman Vasilyuk, Dzmitry Mazalewski, Radzislau Arlouski and others took the field in one team, while the Olympic team was represented by Aliaksandr and Andrei Bahdanovich, Kiryl Maskevich, Maksim Nedasekau. "It wasn't easy on the field, but I hope everyone enjoyed it!" noted Aleksandr Hleb, who also played in the match. He shared his opinion about the festival as a whole. "Grandiose, beautiful and spectacular! There are a lot of people, the atmosphere is amazing — I really liked it."

Several other special events took place at *Vytoki*. Thus, the first Belarus' Olympic champion, Sergey Makarenko, presented his book *From the Brest Fortress to the Olympic Peak*. Amid the festive atmosphere of the festival, two-time Olympic champion Ekaterina Karsten handed her first Olympic medal — a bronze, won in 1992 in Barcelona — to Viktor Lukashenko. The outstanding athlete admitted that she wanted to take it to the National Olympic Committee's museum, but the fact that the medal transfer took place in such a vibrant environment made it even more joyful.

A gala concert with the participation of famous performers, a spectacular colourful light and pyrotechnic show and a disco party — the participants will undoubtedly remember the end of the holiday for a long time. We say goodbye to *Vytoki* until next summer!




Darya Titova


Photo of the week

Vileika State College students Piotr Yermakovich and Nikita Shilko were recognised as the best team of *The Best Plowman* national contest. Piotr Yermakovich also became a leader in the individual championship among college and university students.


DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



On June 13th, 1825, New York mechanic Walter Hunt patented a safety pin. Hunt's idea was not new, because the safety pin had been invented long before him. Similar products, the so-called 'fibulae', were used by many ancient and medieval peoples (Greeks, Romans, Celts, Germans, Slavs, etc.) as fasteners for cloaks and other types of clothing. After its revival in the 19th century, the safety pin proved to be indispensable in the household.




June 14th is World Blood Donor Day. It has been celebrated since 2004 on the date of birth of Karl Landsteiner (1868-1943), an Austrian scientist, the Nobel Prize winner in Physiology or Medicine for his discovery of human blood groups. Transfusion of blood and blood products saves millions of human lives every year.



June 15th, 1979 is the date of birth of Yulia Nesterenko, a prominent Belarusian athlete (track and field athletics), Honoured Master of Sports of Belarus. The main success in her sports career is the victory in the women's 100m at the 2004 Summer Olympics in

Athens. It was this victory that brought the 24-year-old Belarusian world fame, after which she was dubbed *White Lightning*. Yulia dispelled all stereotypes about the invincibility of black athletes, having proved that neither nationality nor skin colour affect the final result.



June 16th is celebrated as the Day of Medical Workers in the Republic of Belarus. From time immemorial, a doctor has been considered one of the most revered and responsible professions. Population health management, disease prevention, help in returning patients to a full life — all this gives a special status to medical workers, people of high social duty.




June 16th, 1894 marks the birthday of Fyodor Tolbukhin (1894-1949), Soviet military commander, Marshal of the Soviet Union, Hero of the Soviet Union (posthumously). During the Great Patriotic War, he was Chief of Staff of the Transcaucasian, Caucasian and Crimean Fronts, Deputy Commander of the troops of the Stalingrad Military District. The troops under his command took part in the Battle of Stalingrad, in the liberation of Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Austria.



On June 16th, 1925, the Artek Soviet Young Pioneer camp was opened in Crimea. The world-famous children's health resort Artek is located on the southern coast of Crimea, 12 kilometres from Yalta. Today Artek is the world's largest international children's centre. Its territory is 218 hectares, of which 102 hectares are occupied by parks. Over almost 100 years, Artek has turned into a complex of 10 children's camps with a developed infrastructure, its own educational technologies and cultural traditions.



On June 16th, 1963, the world's first female cosmonaut, Valentina Tereshkova, made a space flight aboard the Vostok 6 spacecraft. She became the sixth Soviet cosmonaut. Valentina Tereshkova orbited the Earth 48 times and spent almost three days in space, where she kept a logbook and took photographs of the horizon, which were later used to detect aerosol layers in the atmosphere.




June 17th, 1934 is the date when the Bereza Kartuska concentration camp (the settlement of

Bereza Kartuska, now the town of Bereza, Brest Region) was set up by order of the President of the Polish Republic, aimed to isolate communists, Komsomol members and leftist elements. It was known for a brutal regime. It was liquidated only in September 1939 after the arrival of the Red Army in the territory of Western Belarus. During the five years of the camp's existence, more than 10,000 prisoners went through it.



On June 18th, 1889, a baby buggy was patented. William H. Richardson came up with a reversible stroller model in which the baby could face either forward or toward the person pushing the stroller. The wheels in Richardson's stroller could rotate 360 degrees completely independently of each other. Since then, the baby buggy has undergone a whole evolution, turning from a bulky structure into a convenient means of transportation.



June 19th is World Children's Football Day. It was established on the initiative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA) in order to attract the attention of the global community to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle among young people.