



Партизаны
Беларуси

A mobile
interactive
exhibition *Partisans
of Belarus*
began its work



How Belarusian
'babka' became
a prototype
of the French
'savarin'

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INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 11 (825) ● THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2020 ● WWW.SB.BY



Ulyana Oganessian and Anastasia Lagunovskaya

We are citizens of Belarus!

The country has celebrated Constitution Day which is among the most important public holidays for Belarusians. It's a good way to show how we honour and cherish the national values laid down in our Basic Law, while together doing everything possible for the well-being and prosperity of our native land. On the eve of the celebrations, the *We Are Citizens of Belarus!* official presentation of passports to 14 year old boys and girls — the best representatives of youth who have gained special merits in school, sports and social activities — took place. More than 4,000 young Belarusians have become fully-fledged citizens of the country. → **3**



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Solutions to benefit the people

How workers' rights will be protected, why the President has tested electric cars, and how much it's possible to earn from recycling: the results of the meeting at the Palace of Independence

The Government has prepared several draft decrees for the recent meeting with the President. All of them, without exaggeration, are strategic for the economy and the Head of State's key thesis relies on them. "The entire economic system of the country should be aimed at accommodating people's interests. I want to stress that there is no populism in it, as some may claim dramatically on TV channels, citing the elections as the reason. I want to reiterate what I have been saying since my first day in office: the whole system and the Government in general make sense only when they are for the good of people. Everything else is meaningless," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

Money at our fingertips but we don't make good use of it

Another pending issue deals with waste processing: creation of stimuli and infrastructure for collection, recycling and disposal of packaging. It's among the problems which the Government is neglecting and, accordingly, fair criticism was expressed by the President. Aleksandr Lukashenko mentioned Switzerland as an example: there, many goods are made from recyclable materials. Unsurprisingly, the President wondered what holds us back in following this trend,

"Belarus is a small country, not as big as Russia, so we can collect and recycle waste, can't we? It is expensive to produce glass using traditional methods, recycling of old glass bottles is also an option. Instead, we are

waiting for the grass to grow, just like with this oil. And only then we will go to extreme lengths to find alternatives, come to agreements, and so on. There are easier ways to make money."

"The Government has previously proposed the introduction of a deposit system for handling consumer containers used to store



water and beverages. However, even here, things are moving very slowly. You are suggesting that, in 2022, I should do something that has long been tested and done in the Soviet Union: collecting these bottles. All the experts, including the Presidential Administration, have given a positive conclusion. Amazing!" said the President indignantly.

Technologies with huge potential

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, electric vehicles have not yet achieved proper momentum in the country. However, the uncertainty with oil and fuel prices proves that electric vehicles have enormous poten-

tial, the President noted. "It is not just a tribute to fashion or a desire to keep up with advanced countries, though this may be true, too. This is an urgent need today," he said.

Many states are already developing this promising sector. "Countries such as Belarus which are export oriented,

which do not have huge mineral reserves, have long focused on electric transport. It is only fitting that we should focus on this, too. In the near future, we will launch two units of the nuclear power plant," the President said. "We can generate more electricity. So why are not we promoting, with time on our hands, electric vehicles and greater electricity consumption today? This is a replacement for hydrocarbons."

Aleksandr Lukashenko also recalled the instruction to the National Academy of Sciences to create a domestic electric car. He suggested discussing once again how effective the proposed measures to stimulate the use of electric vehicles are.

"The goal, considering the upcoming launch of the nuclear power plant, is to make electricity for cars cheaper than petrol and diesel. Then people will be happy to buy electric cars," the President said.

Responsibility as grounds for security

The President also suggested discussing proposals which ensure the sustainable operation of certain industries and help maintain legality in them — i.e. the improvement in the system of state monitoring of the technical condition of tractors, trailers, self-propelled vehicles and equipment. "You are familiar with my requirements concerning safety and maintenance of equipment. Mishandling of high-tech equipment, especially to those vehicles which were purchased using state support, is inadmissible. But the main thing is that properly functioning vehicles are a guarantee of people's safety," said Mr. Lukashenko.

In his words, it is a crime when expensive equipment is put on the scrapheap after two years. At the same time, the President warned that proposals to create new structures with hundreds of officials to breed mismanagement will not be approved by him.

New possibilities

Other documents submitted to the Head of State included draft decrees on additional stimulation of local authorities, on proposals to improve the bankruptcy procedure and protection of workers' rights, on state surveillance of the technical status of tractors and other equipment, on the container deposit system and stimulation of use of electric cars. Other topics on the agenda included amendments to the standards of duty-free import of goods by individuals.

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In January, an electric vehicle developed by specialists from the Joint Institute of Mechanical Engineering was presented at an exhibition dedicated to Science Day



Mikhail Mishustin and Sergei Rumas during a meeting in Moscow

Oil supplies, trading and Eurasian integration: Moscow hosted negotiations between the prime ministers of Belarus and Russia

By Vladislav Sychevich

The Belarusian side presented new proposals for oil companies to the Russians. Prime Minister Sergei Rumas told reporters after talks with the Russian Prime Minister, Mikhail Mishustin, in Moscow, "The situation has changed recently. Oil prices have fallen. In this regard, the Belarusian side has presented new pro-

posals for oil companies to the Russians. Russia has accepted them and promised to hold consultations with oil companies within a few days — and to give us a response. At first glance, those proposals were not rejected by the Russian side and I think we will make progress on resolving the oil dispute."

The Prime Minister did not specify what proposals the

Important agenda

Belarusians had made. At the same time, he stressed that our country had made a decision to search for alternative sources,

"Belarus has decided that we will take at least one tanker per plant per month, regardless of whether we agree with Russia or not. These are issues of economic security and supply diversification. They have been discussed and decisions have been made. There is a clear strategy here. The question is whether we will take a lot of this alternative oil, as we are doing now, or whether it will be a minimal batch in order for us to understand and feel the market."

Of course, during the talks, the prime ministers paid special attention to issues of mutual trade. The countries have recently managed to stabilise their trade turnover which is at \$35bn.

"We've received the topical figures for January. Trade turnover has decreased but the neg-

ative balance in trade, which reached \$8.4bn in late 2019, has also decreased to \$100m — which pleases Belarus. This means we are levelling our flows. At the same time, we understand why the balance has cut," Mr. Rumas said.

The part of the negotiations held in front of the media was 'positive' — as mentioned in official papers. The Russian Prime Minister, Mikhail Mishustin, gave a very important signal at the start,

"It is very important for us to interact with our Belarusian colleagues and promptly check the clock on all current issues. Belarus is our ally and strategic partner."

Mr. Mishustin was appointed Prime Minister of Russia less than two months ago but, since then, he has already held two meetings with Sergei Rumas, in addition to phone calls. The two prime ministers' agenda included a number of topical issues related to Eurasian integration.

"I think that — in many respects — the progress of our five EAEU states will depend on how much we bring our positions closer: the presidents of Belarus and Russia have set us the task of preparing documents on the integration strategy. Our deputy prime ministers have done much and only a few controversial issues remain; I hope we will discuss them today and move forward, so that on April 10th, when we meet in Minsk at a session of the Intergovernmental Council, we would be able to agree on this document and submit it to the heads of state at the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council," Mr. Rumas noted.

During his working visit to Russia, the Belarusian Prime Minister spoke not only with Mikhail Mishustin. He also held another unscheduled meeting: with the Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev.

The ceremony was held at the Palace of Independence which has already become a symbol of the Belarusian state and sovereignty.

Taking part in the event were 25 Belarusians over 14 years old. They came to Minsk from all over Belarus. Despite their young age, they have already achieved a lot in the academic field, art, and sports. Their parents, schools and the country as a whole have a right to be proud of them. A tour around the Palace of Independence and the opportunity to get one of the most important documents from the hands of the President was a real gift for them.

Aleksandr Lukashenko addressed the young Belarusians, “I am confident that your biggest victories are still ahead. The state has made sure that you will be able to take any road you want. Everything else depends on your personal determination, perseverance and hard work.”

The President personally handed a passport to each of the young people, noting that the receipt of this document is seen as the first step to adult life. “I know that you have achieved certain success in studies, sport, community leadership. It is great, you deserve the highest praise,” he said.

Time moves fast and, soon, the present boys and girls will leave the school. With this in mind, the President advised them, “No matter what career you choose, remember: the main mission of a citizen is to serve their country. Patriotism is not about talking about love for the Motherland (although this should be discussed, too). It’s about everyday work in the interests of the Motherland, preservation of its historical and cultural traditions and protection of interests of the state and people’s lives — all the

A step towards adult life

Aleksandr Lukashenko presented passports to young Belarusian nationals in a solemn ceremony on the eve of Constitution Day

values that had to be defended by our ancestors with weapons in their hands. We must always remember that, 75 years ago, our grandfathers and great-grandfathers won the right to exist for Belarusians — at the cost of incredible sacrifices and unprecedented heroism. They defeated fascism, before which the whole of Europe was on its knees. Due to them we stayed alive and free. I am convinced that you will cherish this legacy the way we do.”

The President noted that the previous generations did everything so that these youth could be proud of their country. “Now it is your turn to develop Belarus and to bring fame to it, and to defend it in the future and in the present. Maybe, you have never thought about such important things as national identity or independence of the state before. However, as soon as you were born, you became part of the Belarusian nation who would shape

the country’s present and future. After realising that, you will find a new meaning in the first words of the Constitution: ‘We,

the people of Belarus’. After all, these people are everyone who lives now, who lived before and who will live on this land after

we are gone. Therefore, we are one and the future of our country depends on every one of us,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

When addressing the young citizens, the President noted that, looking at them, he sees a new, positive, talented and ambitious Belarus — which is pleasing.

“Go forward, towards your goal, never give up and, most importantly, never be afraid of anything or anyone. Believe in yourself, believe that if you go forward, you will always find someone who will help you in your native land, in Belarus,” he said.

All participants of the event received gifts from the Head of State — the book *I Am the Citizen of the Republic of Belarus* and chocolate sets. After the official ceremony, the students were taken on an excursion through the Palace of Independence.



Aleksandr Lukashenko presents a passport to Dmitry Ivanov - a pupil of Bykhov’s gymnasium



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REFERENCE

Initiated in 2004 by the Belarusian Republican Youth Union, the campaign *We Are Citizens of Belarus!* has received national status. This year, the official presentation of Belarusian passports to 14 year olds has taken place all over the country from March 10th to 15th, under the slogan #pa3AM. The campaign events brought together more than 4,000 young Belarusians. The important document was presented to the children by the heads of the legislative and executive authorities, public figures and other distinguished people of the country.

Spending on health care in Belarus will increase

The President was reported to by Health Minister Vladimir Karanik and noted the positive work of the health care system in the country

By Yevgeny Kononovich

The Head of State primarily asked about the manageability of the system, “Manageability always shows itself and is a litmus test in some unusual cases. The health care system is working well, of course, and the doctors are doing well.” As for certain shortcomings, according to Aleksandr Lukashenko, they are minor and are of a subjective nature.

The President also drew attention to the issue of prices when importing medical equipment and medicines, noting that previously they were sometimes imported at slightly inflated prices, “We should have brought these prices more in line. To do this, we need to not simply let the market take over. Competition is a good thing but we still need to know the minimum and maximum prices for certain equipment, especially expensive ones. We should do our best to

work below these prices.”

“As for medical equipment, we have worked hard to create a transparent procurement system, improve marketing and work with manufacturers to ensure that they directly enter our markets,” Vladimir Karanik said.

The two also discussed the situation with the coronavirus at the Palace of Independence and the Head of State noted, “I understand that we have been able to go through this period calmly. We should not relax, of course, but we have no reason to panic.”

In the same way, people should not create a stir and buy various kinds of medicines or medical masks. Aleksandr Lukashenko added that, at the moment, medical masks are manufactured in large quantities at several enterprises in the country, so everyone can buy them.

The President noted that — despite the concern about the

situation with coronavirus — the incidence of viral infections in Belarus, including influenza, is lower than in previous years. To successfully fight the spread of viruses, it is important that health care in a particular country works for a person, and not for any commercial purposes. In turn, people should observe basic hygiene.

Aleksandr Lukashenko advised those who feel unwell or have signs of illness to try not to spread the infection and take the necessary response measures. He also expressed gratitude to China, saying, “They do not hide anything from us, give us all the information, advise us — as they know better, they have been working on this problem most of all, and they are doing better than anyone else. They help us a lot with their advice and recommendations. We thank them very much for this. Meanwhile, our doctors are also performing well.”



DIRECT SPEECH

Health Minister Vladimir Karanik:
Last year, 12 CT scanners were purchased for various clinics. This year, we plan to buy the same amount. These are magnetic resonance imaging scanners. More transparent, more stringent competition for the purchase of equipment has led to the situation where the most powerful magnetic resonance imaging device at the moment costs 1.6 million Euros instead of 3.3 million Euros. A CT scan costs not 700-800,000 Euros but 350-400,000. This enables us to upgrade our medical facilities. No one is going to save money on medicine. Spending on it will increase but we must use the allocated resources effectively. Everything saved will be directed to the further development of the health system as a whole. The President’s instructions are strict: we must provide doctors not only with salaries (to ensure a twofold increase by 2025) but also with modern equipment.

New niches for Belarusian exports



What areas of Belarusian-Japanese co-operation are at the forefront at present?

These are politics, economy and humanitarian liaisons: Belarus and Japan have achieved good results in these areas in recent years.

In 2019, our exports of goods to Japan reached \$28.6m and mutual trade turnover stood at \$160.2m. So far, our negative trade balance with Japan remains significant but, last year, it decreased by more than 7 percent — owing largely to the expansion of the export range. In 2019, more than thirty new Belarusian products were sold to Japan — in particular, cheeses and cottage cheese, malt, machines and equipment for production of semiconductors and electronic integrated circuits, chocolate and sweets.

Another positive point is that, by late 2019, Belarus exported \$6.2m of services to Japan: 65.4 percent more than in the same period of 2018.

Do we have any high-tech contacts?

The Japanese are increasingly learning about Belarus as one of the leaders in the IT sphere. They are very interested in the activities of the High-Tech Park and the possibility of attracting Belarusian IT engineers to work on Japanese projects. However, we are interested in learning from Japan as a state with a highly developed digital trading system.

In general, we have witnessed an increase in mutual business interest. New

A significant event has taken place in Tokyo: on the initiative of business and public circles, the Belarusian-Japanese Business Club was established. Symbolically, its first meeting was held in the well-known Minsk restaurant of Belarusian cuisine in Japan. Ruslan Yesin, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Japan, shared the upcoming plans of the Business Club and of the development of bilateral co-operation in an interview to the Belarus Segodnya reporter.

ambitious projects are emerging in the trade, investment, educational, sports and cultural spheres. For example, the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee, the Bellesbumprom Concern and one of its subordinate enterprises — the Domostroenie branch of Shklov's Newspaper Mill Republican Unitary Enterprise (which delivered prefabricated wooden houses to the Japanese market for the first time last year) — have worked well. In Okinawa, there are plans to create a small Belarusian corner based on one of these buildings; this will become a kind of a 'Belarusian house' in the south of Japan.

Many interesting results are expected owing to the operation of the Belarusian-Japanese Business Club. Established in February 2020, it is actually an informal community of business representatives from Belarus and Japan. In the near future, the club will focus on the presentation of Belarusian products as part of the 2020 Olympic and Paralym-

pic Games in Tokyo, as well as on holding the Belarus — Hokkaido Forum.

Have plans to open four Belarusian fan zones been changed?

Japan is making every effort to hold the Olympic and Paralympic Games in a timely and safe manner and the topic of opening Belarusian fan zones in Tokyo, Tachikawa, Shiroyishi and Noboribetsu is still relevant.

The Belarusian fan zone in Tokyo is already launched and a fan zone in Tachikawa is next in line; here, Belarusian linen products and food — including cheeses, chocolates and honey — are expected to be demonstrated. The fan zone in Siroisi will start functioning on the eve of the performance of the national rhythmic gymnastics team. In turn, in Noboribetsu, the fan zone will be open during the walking race and marathon events.

Mr. Ambassador, you have the opportunity to observe the process of preparation for the Olympics... Can

you slightly open the veil of secrecy: what is Japan going to surprise the world with during the 2020 Games?

I believe that this country of the rising sun will be able to pleasantly impress sports fans! The organisers of the Olympics traditionally keep the secret and do not disclose what they are preparing for sophisticated viewers but, no doubt, we will see all the best and most advanced of what Japan is famous for.

All Japanese Olympic facilities are in a high state of readiness. The National Olympic Stadium has already been put into operation and can accommodate over 60,000 spectators. Its distinctive feature is the system for protecting viewers from the heat which can reach 40 degrees in summer in Japan.

Several competitions, such as the walking race and marathon, have been moved to the northernmost island of Japan: Hokkaido. If everything goes according to plan, the Olympians and their spectators will have an opportunity — apart from the sports festival — to visit the city of Hakodate where a family of outstanding Belarusians lived and worked over two centuries ago: Iosif and Yelizaveta Goshkevich.

Thanks to you, more humanitarian bridges between Belarusians and Japanese have emerged in recent years...

I faced the 'unrecognisability' of Belarus in the initial stage of my work in Japan. However, time shows that everything is surmountable!

In 2019, more publications about Belarus in the Japanese media — including regional — were published. The Japanese are actively interested in youth exchanges, cultural events and the sports achievements of our athletes.

Interviewed by Marta Astreiko



The National Olympic Stadium has already been commissioned

NEWS IN BRIEF

Makei discussed bilateral co-operation with Pompeo



Belarus' Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei discussed issues of Belarusian-American collaboration in a telephone conversation with US Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo. They discussed the results of the February visit of the US Secretary of State to Belarus. Vladimir Makei and Michael R. Pompeo also considered issues of bilateral interaction, as well as regional and international agendas, including energy security. According to the website of the US Department of State, Michael R. Pompeo thanked Mr. Makei for his successful visit to Minsk on February 1st and confirmed US support for the sovereignty of Belarus. He also confirmed the readiness of US companies to immediately begin selling oil to Belarus at competitive market prices.

Centenary of Belarusian State University added to UNESCO anniversaries list

The decision was taken at the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference. In total, the 2020-2021 anniversaries list includes 59 of the most important events from around the world. The list



also features the 150th anniversary of the birth of the artist, Ferdynand Ruszczyk.

The 100th anniversary of the Belarusian State University will be celebrated on October 30th, 2020. The inclusion of the date on the UNESCO calendar gives this international status, confirming the significant contribution of the Belarusian university to international education and science. The university now officially has the right to use UNESCO's logo on printed and visual products celebrating its 100th anniversary.

An exhibition of treasures from Belarus and Latvia — The Prototype of the European Constitution — has opened in the Book Museum of the National Library

The exhibition is dedicated to Constitution Day. Belarusians were one of the first in the world to gain constitutional legislation. The Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, compiled in the Belarusian language and approved in 1588, actually became the prototype for the Constitution in Europe, built on the principles of democracy, equality, justice and the rule of law.



The exhibition first presents a list of the 1588 Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania translated into German, as well as printed copies of the 17th-19th century Statute in other European languages, testifying to the wide influence of Belarusian legal culture on the formation of international constitutional legislation.

Joint training of Belarusian peacekeepers with the British Royal Marines unit took place in Belarus

The event was part of the preparation of the peacekeeping 103rd Vitebsk separate airborne brigade for participation in the UN peacekeeping exercise.

"The first feedback from the British military shows that such events are really valuable, especially when they are held on a bilateral basis," said Jacqueline Perkins, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Belarus, during the official closing of the exercises.

The diplomat noted that the ancestors of Belarusians fought against fascism in the ranks of the Red Army, in the forests, as well as next to the ancestors of the British in Africa, Italy and Normandy.





Electric cars begin to be assembled on a large scale in the country. Which players are ready to enter the market?

By Vladislav Sychevich

The electric transport development was discussed in detail last week at a meeting of the Head of State with the leadership of the Council of Ministers. The President heard a report on a draft decree on stimulating the use of electric vehicles and Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that this is not just a fashion statement or a desire to keep up with advanced countries: it's an urgent topical need — especially for a country that will soon join the 'nuclear states club'. The National Academy of Sciences is now engaged in developing a domestic electric vehicle, following the President's order.

BelGee has recently demonstrated four new Chinese electric cars. The Belarusian affiliate of the Chinese auto giant has nothing to do with their development so far. The vehicles came to un-

dergo testing and study demand. The plant's Director, Gennady Svidersky, comments, "We've been tasked to test the electric vehicle technically and commercially — to decide on the next stages of development for this area at our plant. It is necessary to conduct comprehensive operational tests: to determine whether the consumer is satisfied with such a car, whether it is competitive on the market or not."

New electric vehicles consume an average of 13.5 W/h per 100km and there is enough power reserve for 500km. The cars are equipped with an adaptive cruise control system, pedestrian and cyclist response systems and an intelligent automatic parking system. As for the possible price in the country, Mr. Svidersky believes it's too early to talk about a specific figure, "We need to know the prime cost of the car and the market environment. In addition,

Movement of electro style

when importing an electric car to Belarus, it's necessary to pay customs duty, VAT and recycling fees — which lead to a rise in the price. Therefore, for mass use, it is necessary to create more comfortable conditions for electric vehicles, and the corresponding draft documents are being prepared."

One of the electric vehicles will be tested at the factory in Borisov and the remaining three will soon be delivered to dealerships. However, it is possible that their assembly will also be carried out in the country, though several factors need to be combined to achieve this.

"From the point of view of

the strategy, if there is a mass demand — about 10,000 cars a year, it is advisable to prepare production. Even 5,000 electric cars would probably be enough for us to make a positive decision," the official adds.

Another important factor is export markets. BelGee delivers cars domestically and to Russia, negotiations are underway with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other countries. Electric cars are also in demand in the European market. In the meantime, the company expects a full resumption of deliveries of components from China for the production of its cars in mid-April. The coronavi-

rus spread has contributed to some changes in the plans, though the situation is normal at the Borisov plant: only 20 specialists are from China out of a total of 1,500 employees. They were on vacation with other workers in December and didn't visit the country during the beginning of the coronavirus epidemic in China.



Aleksandr Kushner

TO THE POINT

In recent years, Aleksandr Lukashenko has paid special attention to the topic of ecology and a caring attitude towards nature. While in other countries these issues are often used for political PR or as a subject for discussion in society, real steps have already been taken in Belarus. Just a few days after the meeting, the President signed a Decree 'On Stimulating the Use of Electric Vehicles'. The progressiveness and timeliness of this document is recognised and appreciated by almost everyone. Having gathered all best that has already been accumulated in countries that have moved towards an electric future a little earlier, the Presidential decree has created a significant impetus for this future in Belarus as well.

The document envisages measures that are designed to stimulate the demand for electric cars and the creation of an appropriate charging and service infrastructure in the country.

Key points of the decree

- exemption from payment of a fee for the admission of electric vehicles to participate in traffic;
- VAT rate for import of an electric vehicle — 0%;
- charging stations are exempt from VAT;
- rental of land for the construction of charging complexes is free;
- parking of electric vehicles in equipped areas is free until 2026.

Figures

- Belorusneft Production Association plans to open **180** fast electric charging stations in 2020;
- Today in Belarus there are **251** fast electric charging stations;
- For each electric car in the country there are **1.4** fast electric charging stations.
- According to experts, by 2030 Belarus will have up to **300,000** electric vehicles

Point on the map famous for brands

The world economy erased geographical boundaries long ago. Companies are free to open production facilities and place orders on different continents: this enables them to reduce the price and be more flexible in competitive markets. Such a pattern can be clearly traced in light industry. For several decades, our country has been a well-known point on the map for famous clothing brands that place orders here. In recent years, the critical share of dependence on tax schemes has decreased, but our garment production still continues to serve the interests of large fashion houses. Bellegprom tells us more about the pros and cons of tariff schemes.

By Polina Konoga

How the work is organised

The work of Bellegprom's member companies in providing services for processing tax of raw materials began in the early 1990s. The Concern's Chairperson — Tatiana Lugina — explains that, more than two decades ago, the share of orders from foreign firms in the total production of light industry enterprises reached 80 percent but it has now been cut to 25 percent. This is due to an increase in the supply of finished products by the Concern's organisations to the domestic market and abroad.

Among the world brands that have been co-operating with Belarusian factories for many years are German Gerry Weber International AG and WUNSCH & Rudolph e. K, English Marks & Spencer and Shani Ltd, French Lener Cordier SA, Pierre Cardin and Lacoste, Finnish FLARE TRADING OY, Latvian Lauma Lingerie and many others. Some time ago, terry bathrobes were made for Armani in Rechitsa, women's drape coats for Next — in Kobrin, and products for Nike and Adidas — in Bobruisk.

Ms. Lugina tells us how work between a famous company and a Belarusian producer is organised, "As a rule, a foreign customer supplies new technologies and equipment in addition to raw materials. Co-operation with our companies shows that the quality of our products meets international requirements. I would like to emphasise that, in order to receive orders



Alekssey Vyazmitinov

from the world's most famous brand, the customer invites an independent international audit to the local company. Very strict requirements are put forward not only for the quality of products, and strict compliance with technology, but also for working conditions at the enterprise, compliance with fire safety rules and industrial sanitation. Only after all errors are eliminated, is an order placed at the company."

Latest trends

However, there are interesting trends in the global light industry today. By the end of the 20th century, the main production facilities of the textile and clothing industries had moved to Asian countries where there was cheap workforce. The

situation is changing now. Dresses and trousers made in Vietnam, Myanmar or China are increasingly competing with products manufactured in Europe or in the immediate vicinity of its borders. In 2018, this trend was recognised by the international consulting company McKinsey, in its *Is Clothing Manufacturing Returning Home?* survey. A group of experts from the United States and Europe came to the same conclusion: the workforce in China has ceased to be cheap, and 'Industry 4.0' will accelerate the process of returning light industry from distant markets to their homeland. Three-quarters of the 188 top managers of the fashion industry surveyed by McKinsey believe that, by 2025, the industry will undergo a radical change in fa-

vour of nearshoring: outsourcing (transfer) of business processes to countries located in geographical proximity to the customer. According to the authors of the study, the countries of Eastern Europe, and therefore Belarus, are among the potential regions where manufacturers can place orders.

Interestingly, Bellegprom notes that many famous brands are already leaving the market of third countries as the priorities for their productions are focused on environmental friendliness, working conditions for people, protection of their rights and non-use of child labour. As a result, they are turning to our market, placing orders here.

Advantages and disadvantages

In general, work with customer's raw materials enables enterprises to maximise capacity utilisation and, consequently, to maintain production and personnel potential, not to raise additional working capital for the purchase of raw materials, to ensure the output of competitive products and guaranteed sales. At the same time, experts state that excessive dependence on tariff schemes has a negative effect. The company is at risk of losing its niche in the market for commodity producers: its dependence on external customers is increasing, traditional sales markets and its own trademarks are being lost. In addition, the profitability of tariff orders is low in itself.

With this in mind, light industry factories note that the domestic market is always a priority.

Zhirovichi gaining a new look

Large scale reconstruction is underway in the satellite agro-town of the famous monastery

This spring, the Orthodox world will celebrate the 550th anniversary of the miraculous Zhirovichi icon of the Mother of God and the 500th anniversary of the founding of the Holy Dormition Stavropegic Monastery in Zhirovichi. Of course, the agro-town itself, which for centuries has been a faithful 'companion' to the monastery and whose history is inextricably linked with the miracle that occurred there, won't remain aloof from these significant dates and events. On the eve of the major holiday, Zhirovichi is experiencing a re-birth.



Visualisation of Grodnograzhdanproekt Institute

By Katerina Charovskaya

While the reconstruction of monastic buildings is being carried out at the expense of the Republican budget, the local authorities have seriously taken on board the improvement of the agro-town. The district is working to improve the quality of life: roads and houses are being repaired, communications are being laid anew and the fences of private farmsteads are being tidied. The district has also taken on the difficult task of turning the nondescript central square into a fully-fledged recreation area and an ideal start for the development of the hospitality industry.

Valery Sidorchik, who heads the Sports and Tourism Department at the Slonim District Executive Committee,

says Zhirovichi will become more attractive not only for pilgrims, but also for secular tourists after the reconstruction,

"The monastery welcomes about 100,000 pilgrims a year and two pilgrim hostels for 140 operate here. Passengers from three tourist buses can spend the night here every day. There is a canteen and souvenir shops. After the reconstruction, the agro-town will have a wonderful recreational area where private businesses can develop: i.e. open shops with secular goods and souvenirs or cafes with cuisine other than that offered at the monastery. It's also possible to increase the flow of tourists by arranging a camper parking lot."



Tamara Yemelina

In turn, the Head of the Department of Architecture and Construction at the Slonim District Executive Committee, Tamara Yemelina, describes the plan of works that are currently being carried out in Zhirovichi, "We are now observing the process of restoration of the historical buildings of the monastery complex: the Holy Dormition Cathedral, the fraternal building and the bell tower. In addition, the town's central square is also a historical and cultural heritage. On visiting Zhirovichi, one feels a special atmosphere, and it is very important that, after leaving the gates of the monastery complex, the visitor does not lose the feeling of warmth and peace — as it should be next to the shrine."

The plan of complex improvement at Zhirovichi was developed by specialists of the Grodnograzhdanproekt Institute, whose chief architect — Aleksandr Zakharchuk — commented, drawing attention to the fact that the central part of the agro-town will be modified in two stages, "The



BELTA



The first stage of reconstruction is financed by the regional budget and, last year, about \$100m (equivalent) was allocated for this purpose. In 2020, around \$500,000 will be invested in Zhirovichi's improvements.

first stage should be completed by the May holidays. The pond will be cleaned and its banks will be strengthened. An observation deck will open, enabling visitors to enjoy a beautiful view of the monastery complex and the bell tower. The square will be partially paved with concrete tiles that mimic natural stone. Benches and lighting are planned for the site. The sec-

ond stage involves modernisation of the Zhirovichi Agricultural and Technical College. Its facades will be painted in warm colours and the false roof will be covered; as a result, the old Soviet buildings will look more aesthetically pleasing. In addition, we plan to renovate the area behind the college: a playground and another recreation zone will also open."

A simultaneous (joint) operation was conducted in Belarus: a 23 year old girl, a resident of the Minsk Region, was simultaneously given a kidney transplant and a cochlear implant

By Olga Korneeva

A team of almost 30 specialists from the Minsk Scientific and Practical Centre for Surgery, Transplantology and Haematology and the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Otorhinolaryngology operated for six hours. The difficulty was that the girl was diagnosed with primary immune thrombocytopenia, which would not allow the patient to have a second operation. Belarusian doctors were the first to perform the operation, enabling the young girl not to have to choose between hearing and

Struggling for life and its quality



renal health.

According to the doctors, since childhood, the girl has suffered from a rare genetic disease. At some point, in order to save her life, she was forced to receive renal replacement therapy. Furthermore, from 10 years old, her hearing loss began to progress and, just a couple of years ago, she completely lost hearing. Fortunately, the patient retained her speech.

Such simultaneous operations have not been yet performed in the world. There is experience of cochlear implants performed six months after a successful organ transplant. In the case of this resident of the Minsk Region, the combination of diseases did not give her a chance to perform these operations in stages: it was possible to do either one, or both, but only the same time.

As far as the restoration of hearing is concerned, doctors expect that the girl will be absolutely free to understand speech and talk in two to three months. In the meantime, without the external part of the cochlear implant, she can't hear; she will be connected in a month and the device will be adjusted. The postoperative rehabilitation phase will take about three months.

According to the Director of the Minsk Scientific and Practical Centre for Surgery, Transplantology and Haematology, Oleg Rummo, Belarusian transplantologists not only increase the number of transplant operations of one or another organ, but also set themselves more difficult tasks. The treatment of this patient with combined pathology is vivid confirmation of this. To perform such interventions, the necessary base, equipment and personnel are needed. With this in mind, a project to build a new surgical building is being currently implemented on the site of the Minsk Scientific and Practical Centre. Moreover, an order was signed to create another module — the hematopoietic stem cell transplantation building.

Remembering all their names

A mobile interactive exhibition — *Partisans of Belarus* — began its work in Brest last week. The unique exhibition is the continuation of a large-scale Internet project launched last year by the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House jointly with the National Archive of the Republic of Belarus on the eve of the 75th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War.



By Aleksandr Mityukov

The official launch was combined with the ceremony of handing over passports to the city’s youth, and therefore a lot of ‘future generation’ viewers gathered in the lobby of the Belarus Cinema, where the exhibition is located. Yevgeniya Omelkovich — a student of Brest’s secondary school No. 8 — was among those present. She said, “I know that my great-grandfather fought, but I don’t know his military history. I hope that this information will become more accessible thanks to the project. To learn about the fate of ones relatives in a few clicks without correspondence and requests for archives is a dream of many people.”

The dream really becomes a reality. The National Archive scans documents, award lists, combat characteristics, and

background information about partisans and guerrilla formations in Belarus. This whole array is brought together on the partizany.by portal which already holds more than 82,000 personal electronic records of partisans. In the future, it is planned to publish information about all partisans and underground workers, the total number of which, according to various estimates, may exceed 300,000.

The exhibition was created in support of the project and features award lists of natives of the Brest Region and materials about the detachments that operated in the area. The Belarus Cinema displays 70 photographs based on the project materials, in addition to an interactive system enabling anyone to find information about their relatives and countrymen who took part in the guerrilla struggle.

Representatives of the older genera-

tion have their own attitude to the Great Patriotic War. Valery Tsapkov, from Brest, is an international soldier and a lieutenant colonel of the reserves. He recollects his parents and grandparents, saying,

“My father lived under the occupation for three years. I remember my grandmother’s stories: how they survived, how they hid a cow in the forest... My grandfather was mobilised in 1944 and took part in the fighting. Their memories are an emotional perception of the war. And here you see the other side: actual. Original photos, for example, feature samples of uniforms and clothing. You can find out here what they ate, what weapons they had, how they lived... Many small details that were previously considered unimportant look vital now.”

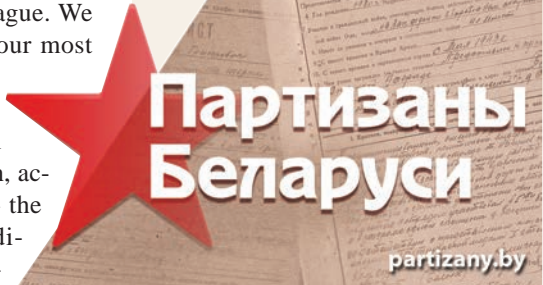
Anatoly Markevich, the Aide to the President and the Inspector for the Brest Region, attended the ceremony to comment emotionally, “Once again, we admire the heroism of those who passed through the terrible roads of war and gained a Great Victory. We are well aware that it was thanks to the Soviet soldier that the entire world community was freed from the fascist plague. We must always remember that our most important asset is peace and tranquillity.”

In Brest, the exhibition will run until March 22nd and then, according to Ivan Sinichkin — the Deputy Director and the Editor-in-Chief of the Belarus Se-

godnya Publishing House, it will move to other cities, “We plan to travel to all regions of Belarus, open an exhibition in Minsk and, perhaps, show it in other countries, because there were many people of different nationalities and natives of other countries in the partisan groups. The war knew no borders: everyone ‘forged’ a common victory.”

THE MT REFERENCE

On the territory of the Brest Region, the partisan movement developed from the first days of the war. In 1943-1944, three partisan units operated within the modern borders of the region. The most significant operations included the ‘rail wars’ which took place in 3 stages. Partisans actively participated in the ‘Bagration’ campaign.



Unique scientific material from Antarctica

Belarusian polar explorers get a unique paleogeographic core in Antarctica — useful for studying the Earth’s climate

By Igor Svetlov

According to the Belarusian Antarctic expedition head — Aleksey Gaidashov, as part of the scientific programme to study changes in the natural environment and climate of Enderby under the influence of anthropogenic and natural factors, work has been carried out on Nizhnee Lake, near the Belarusian Antarctic station, to extract a paleogeographic core consisting of bacterial mats and bottom sediments.

“Using our own method developed by the Belarusian Antarctic expedition employees — Aleksey Gaidashov and Aleksey Khatkevich, with the complex use of technological fixtures and special equipment, we’ve managed to extract a record core for this region of Antarctica with a full vertical section of bacterial mats and bottom sediments, up to the underlying bedrock that forms the primary bed of Nizhnee Lake. The height of the core column filling is



Photo by National Academy of Sciences



1 metre 95 centimetres, the approximate age of the lower part of the core varies from 14 to 20,000 years. The study of

FOCUS

A core is a sample of rock extracted from a well by means of specially designed drilling. It is a cylindrical column of rock that is strong enough to maintain its solidity.

the extracted sample will help characterise different phases of physico-geographical conditions of past geological and climatic development of this region of Antarctica — from the last glacial age to the present time,” explains the press secretary of Belarus’ National

Academy of Sciences, Natalia Martseleva. “All employees of the 12th Belarusian Antarctic expedition, performing tasks of the state programme at the Belarusian Mount Vechernaya Antarctic station, have taken part in technical support for core selection.”

After selection, the core was frozen. It is now stored in a specially equipped ice tunnel.

Russian experts have already expressed their interest in the extracted scientific material. The issue of safe core transportation is now being studied.



India has celebrated Holi, the spring festival of colours

Explosions of pink and purple powder. Rainbow dust tumbling through the air. Faces, hair, hands and clothes rendered in a kaleidoscope of colours.

Although the festival originated in India and is still widely celebrated there as a religious festival, it has been adopted in many places around the world.

Every year, the festival celebrations take place over two days, beginning around the time of the full moon that comes in ‘Phalgun’ (between the end of February and the middle of March).

Not even fears about the coronavirus could stop many people from taking to the streets in India to celebrate Holi, one of the world’s most photogenic religious festivals.

Usually a huge draw for tourists,

Holi is traditionally celebrated across India, South Asia and among the Indian diaspora as the spring equinox approaches in the northern hemisphere.

With participants ranging from the old to the young, irrespective of class, the Hindu festival generally is viewed as a bringing together of the community, with swathes of people collectively taking to the streets of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and other regions of India to celebrate.

Bright powders and water balloons are launched in the air by participants of ‘the Festival of Colors’ with the aim of smearing and throwing as much gulal —

a fine powder offered in several shades — as possible on friends and family.

Celebrated for centuries, the festival symbolises the triumph of good over evil and commemorates new beginnings.

Over time, however, Holi has found a place in popular culture. It’s now celebrated globally each year and inspires events such as ‘The Colour Run’ race series, and clothing design, such as Pharrell Williams and Adidas’ Hu Holi shoe collaboration.

Before taking part in the fun, though, people are often advised to protect exposed skin with oil to avoid staining.

Asteroid approaching Earth will not annihilate humanity

Scientists say that sensational headlines about an asteroid approaching Earth in April are misleading

There is indeed an asteroid that is expected to pass ‘near’ the Earth on April 29th, 2020 but James O’Donoghue, a planetary scientist, says that the asteroid will not threaten humanity.

The asteroid, formally known as 52768, was discovered in 1998 and is listed by the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) on a list of objects that will approach Earth.

It has an estimated 4.1 kilometres in diameter — much larger than the most common asteroids — which generally do not exceed 100-200 metres in diameter. NASA diagrams appear to show the asteroid crossing the Earth’s orbit.

It’s also true that the object is on NASA’s list of ‘potentially hazardous asteroids’ but the definition of these asteroids is broad and technical. Mr. O’Donoghue says that asteroids are classified in this category based on distance, size and future orbit. The asteroid is expected to pass at a distance equivalent to more than 16 times the distance that separates us from the Moon.

Astronomers estimate such objects have a one in 50,000 chance of hitting Earth every 100 years. The Planetary Society lists the following impacts: ‘A crater of 10km or more: global devastation and possible collapse of civilisation’.

Dr. Bruce Betts from the international group of astronomers said, “Small asteroids — few metres — hit frequently and burn up in the atmosphere and do little damage. Chelyabinsk size asteroids — about 20m that hit in 2013 — create shock waves that shatter windows and cause injuries.”

Original Salvador Dali woodcarving found at thrift store

of other paintings lined up on the floor, and I said: ‘This is old, this is something special’,” she explained. She asked the thrift shop whether she could get it checked out by an expert.

Most of the artwork that’s donated to the shop comes from people who are remodelling their beach cabins, according to Michael Lewis, the Executive Director of the Outer Banks Hotline, which runs the thrift shops. The pieces usually end up selling for about \$10 to \$50. “We’ve had situations where we thought something was original and was amazing and it wasn’t, and I was still expecting her to say ‘Oh no, it wasn’t really anything’,” he said. “But it was.”

It turns out, the piece was a wood engraving from Dali’s series called *The Divine Comedy*. It’s even signed by the artist.

“This matches all the information, all the reference and so it checked off all the things in order to confirm it was an original,” Melanie Smith, an accredited fine arts appraiser with the International Society of Appraisers, said.

The series was commissioned to celebrate poet Dante Alighieri, who wrote *The Divine Comedy*. “This series has 100 different images, because Dante wrote 100 different verses, or cantos,” she added.



Float above NYC at Edge, the city’s newest observation deck

The development in Manhattan’s far West side, marked by shiny high-rise buildings and the Vessel, a curiously-shaped landmark with a lot of stairs, presents a new offering

One hundred floors up, and over 1,100 feet in the air, Edge has built-in bragging rights: it’s, after all, the highest outdoor observation deck in the Western Hemisphere.

The outdoor space edges out into Manhattan, approximately 80 feet, with head-spinning 360 degree views of the city’s skyline and beyond.

Adrenaline seekers will want to beeline to the triangular glass floor at the centre of it all, the space’s indisputable showstopper.

The glass floor is basically indestructible. You can jump up and down on

it, lie flat and watch the cars moving below like ants. Or you might simply marvel at how surprisingly challenging it is to take that first step — even if you’re not afraid of heights, even if you know the floor is totally solid.

Walk on the glass, take a picture for the ‘Gram’ or just enjoy a flute of Champagne as you look out over Manhattan, New Jersey and Brooklyn.

Designed by KFP and Rockwell Group, Edge is more than a place to get a stellar view of the city.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



A piece of art donated to a North Carolina thrift shop ended up selling for \$1,200 after a sharp-eyed volunteer found out it was created by Spanish surrealist Salvador Dali

Wendy Hawkins said that she volunteers twice a week at the Hotline Pink Thrift Shop in Kitty Hawk. She spotted the artwork in the shop’s sorting room, where it was waiting to be priced.

“One day I saw this, with a bunch



By Yuliana Leonovich

Ferdynand Ruszczyc will be kept in mind throughout the year — in Belarus and abroad. The good news came from Paris in late November, when the UNESCO General Conference included the 150th anniversary of the birth of the famous landscape painter in the calendar of memorable dates for 2020. Two countries — Belarus and Poland — initiated the application, supported by Lithuania and Russia. Each state has its own right to do so: Ferdynand Ruszczyc was born and died in Bogdanovo (the present Volozhin District in the Minsk Region). He became a qualified painter after graduating from the St. Petersburg Higher Art College and held his first exhibition in Vilna. The artist received the title of Professor in Krakow, Poland. Such wide geography of his creative activity, on the one hand, can easily explain why Ferdynand's landscapes are now kept primarily outside of Belarus. Surprisingly, almost all of them - including the well-known *The Land* and *By the Roman Catholic Church* — were painted on a small piece of land, in the vicinity of Bogdanovo and Vishnevo — the Belarusian towns where many famous personalities were born and worked.

Recently, the National Art Museum officially launched the Year of Ferdynand Ruszczyc. There are many projects for 2020 but the goal is to ensure that all Belarusians get to know the local genius.

Not lost among others

The collection of the National Art Museum now holds four pictures by Ruszczyc. Three small paintings were donated to the museum by the Embassy of Belarus in Switzerland last year. That was a real 'royal' present devoted to the 150th anniversary

sary of the master's birth. The works were purchased from the artist's grandson who bears the same name as his famous relative.

However, the most popular picture of the master of national Art Nouveau — *By the Roman Catholic Church* — was bought by the first director of the museum, famous collector Yelena Aladova, at an auction in Leningrad in the late 1950s.

Several more works by Ruszczyc are kept in the corporate collection of one of the Belarusian banks. So far, these paintings, examples of the great heritage of our compatriot, are available for 'live' study, not in textbooks.

Vladimir Prokoptsov, the General Director of the National Art Museum, hopes that work on returning Belarusian cultural values to their homeland will continue — in partnership with private businesses, of course. "We continue ne-



Ferdynand Ruszczyc

gotiating with the Ruszczyc family. Of course, we would like to have at least a few more works by the artist in our collection since he is the pride of our land," Mr. Prokoptsov notes.

The traditional Night of Museums international event will also be dedicated to the memory of Ferdynand Ruszczyc this season.

To be continued

Vladimir Prokoptsov has great plans for art this year. Those already officially confirmed include a scientific conference, the continuation of an international open air workshop, the release of a silver coin, a stamp and an envelope dedicated to the



famous native of Bogdanovo. New original music is also expected: a suite based on Ruszczyc's works. The richly decorated art album will also be released by the Petrus Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House.

The jubilee year will close with a large scale exhibition at the National Art Museum. Mr. Prokoptsov explains, "It will open on November 5th to showcase not only the master's works — which we take for temporary display for foreign museums and our partners — but also paintings by five artists who took part in the international open air workshop in Bogdanovo. We also hope to welcome the master's descendant: Ferdynand Ruszczyc. Perhaps he will donate a work by his grandfather to the museum."

It's still not known whether Minsk will be able to see *The Land* — the master's famous painting. The Acting Director of the National Museum in Warsaw, Lukasz Gawel, honestly admits, "This is a tricky question but discussion is ongoing. I will not rule out the possibility. The 150th anniversary of the birth of Ferdynand Ruszczyc — who is considered their own by both Belarusians and Poles — is a truly significant event. This is grounds to once again turn to our common history, culture and traditions."

People in the Volozhin District are also unlikely to forget about their famous countryman and the Local Lore Museum is now preparing a special exhibition for the anniversary of the painter.



The painting by Ferdynand Ruszczyc — *By the Roman Catholic Church* — attracts the attention of Lukasz Gawel, Vladimir Prokoptsov and the Polish Ambassador to Belarus, Artur Michalski

Sand glass for a twin city

The park of a large Chinese city will be decorated with the work of a Mogilev sculptor

By Olga Kislyak

Famous Mogilev sculptor Andrei Vorobiev recently returned from the Chinese city of Nanjing. He did not go to the Heavenly Empire as a tourist: for the city, which in 2016 became the twin city of Mogilev, he created a unique composition, entitled 'The King and Queen, or the Sand Glass of Time'.

During the Ming Dynasty, Chinese Nanjing was the capital of the empire, and today it's a large industrial and cultural centre with a population of more than 8 million people. Andrei Vorobiev's creation will become a striking decoration of the Park of Peoples' Friendship in the Asian metropolis.

"The Chinese side an-

nounced a tender for the creation of a sculpture park and sent letters to mayoral offices of the twin cities," the sculptor said, explaining his luck. "I suggested two ideas: the composition-fountain 'The Little Prince' and the work 'The King and Queen, or the Sand Glass of Time'. The organisers liked the second option. The sculpture symbolises the love between a man and a woman, the exchange of energy between them and the eternal movement of time.

Everyone will see something of their own in it. Some will recall the phrase of Antoine de Saint-Exupery: 'Love does not consist of gazing at each other, but in looking outward together in the same direction'. Others may see a symbol of

infinity in the sand glass, and some will see a metaphor for the Mogilev-Nanking friendship.

The three-metre Sand Glass was created by the Belarusian sculptor in Nanjing over 3 days, made from clay on a special frame. Today the composition is already being cast from bronze. According to rough estimates, this will take about a month. It is planned that, in spring, the first five works of artists from the twin cities, including Vorobiev's composition, will grace the new Park of Peoples' Friendship.

It's not yet known whether Andrei Vorobiev will attend the grand opening of the park. Because of the coronavirus, several cities were quarantined in the country and local authorities



called on all departments to refrain from holding mass events. However, the sculptor is not upset. He is already working on sketches for future projects. He dreams of presenting Mogilev with a sculpture of a noble robber — protector of the poor and oppressed Masheka (according to one legend, a city was founded near his grave) and a fountain in the form of a kissing Romeo and Juliet and presenting Vitebsk and Paris with a flying Chagall each.

FACT

Andrei Vorobiev is the author of many famous works in the Mogilev Region. He designed the lions on the bridge over the Dnieper River in the regional centre, a monument to the cucumber in Shklov and a horn of abundance in Klichev.



By Lyudmila Minkevich

Unfortunately, the national Belarusian cuisine, both for ourselves and among foreigners, is associated exclusively with ‘draniki’ (potato pancakes), ‘machanka’ and other simple peasant dishes. However, this is only a small part of the rich culinary heritage of Belarusians. For kings and magnates, many dishes were cooked according to refined and original recipes. It’s just that this layer of expensive cuisine was lost due to war, revolutions and other historical upheavals. A chef, a culinary historian, an expert of Belarusian and Slavic cuisines and an author of several culinary publications — Yelena Mikulchik — is trying to revive these forgotten dishes. Each of her books is a discovery, not least for Belarusians themselves.

The last book by Yelena Mikulchik — *The Taste of Belarusian Cuisine* — was released last November. The chic publication with colourful photographs received two ‘Golden Folios’ at the Republican *Book Art 2020* Contest. Publisher Denis Romaniuk was awarded a prize in the ‘Photo View’ thematic category while the author of the photographs, Andrei Shchukin, was recognised best in the category ‘Mastery is the Best Photographer’. In the book we find unique recipes for 37 dishes and 9 drinks in three languages: Belarusian, Russian and English. Recipes are ordered according to the seasons, based on the fact what Belarusians of all different classes ate and drank in winter, spring, summer and autumn. Each meal and drink is accompanied by a vivid photograph, as well as an entertaining historical note.

“Sometimes I don’t even know what is more delicious — the dishes or the stories,” smiles Yelena. “Of course, we cannot say that it was exactly like that. Even culinary books were written for a long time without specifics: add a little bit of this and a little bit of that ...”

Nevertheless, the stories are very interesting, and their characters are often kings, aristocrats, and other nobles.

“Yes, Belarusian cuisine is not only the dishes of the village. Conventionally, it can be divided into five areas,” the expert explains. “Peasant cuisine is the one we know best and which we are used to considering our traditional food. Then urban cuisine goes next, which used different

ingredients, so it was different from the peasant products. Another type of cuisine is that of the taverns. Jewish culinary traditions had a great influence on it. And finally, gentry and royal cuisine comes.”

Remarkably, dishes that were served to kings and magnates were also prepared in ordinary people’s homes but using simplified recipes. “Take, for example, ‘vereshchaka’. This is a dish of royal origin. It was cooked on white sausage from finely ground veal with beer and special onion sauce,” says Yelena. “Information about this dish was wide-spread so that ordinary people wanted to cook it. But not everyone had the right sort of sausage and beer was not always at hand. They started to cook from what they had. Instead of sausage, ribs and lard were laid down first and instead of beer, kvass or water was added. Thus, gradually, ‘vereshchaka’ turned into ‘machanka’ — gravy, in which people dip potatoes, bread or pancakes.”

Yelena recalls another dish that survived metamorphoses — ‘bigos’. “Initially, this was chopped bird, fish or meat with a sour taste, which was made thanks to lemons and limes. Later, expensive citrus fruits began to be replaced with sauerkraut. And gradually, ‘bigos’ turned into a combination of fresh vegetables and sauerkraut with the addition of meat and sausage.

Some dishes from the tables of Belarusian nobles were adopted by foreigners. “In the 18th-19th centuries, a dish such as ‘babka’ was very popular. Not made from potato. It refers to a dessert: a cake made from wheat flour with various additives,” the historian of Belarusian cuisine explains. “King Stanislaw Leszczynski’s cook was very fond of making this pie as he wanted to somehow ease his difficult life. However, the cook did not know that the king actually did not really like this dessert, as it was very dry. One day, when the cook prepared the ‘babka’ again, the king got so angry that he wiped off the table everything on it, including a carafe of wine. They say it was madeira. Madeira poured out on the ‘babka’ and completely saturated it. The king ate the pie — and found a completely new taste! From that time on, he ordered the chef to cook

History with a taste

How Belarusian ‘babka’ became a prototype of the French ‘savarin’ and how ordinary peasants used to replace lime



‘babka’ only with wine. When Stanislaw Leszczynski lost his crown, he gave his daughter in marriage to the French king and went himself to France, taking with him a cook and a recipe. Savarin, the famous local culinary specialist, spied this recipe, changed it a bit and so France got a well-known national dessert called ‘savarin’. And this is our ‘babka’!

According to Ms. Mikulchik, Belarusians are also responsible for the

famous French croissants, albeit indirectly.

“In 1683, the combined forces led by Jan III Sobieski recaptured Vienna from the Turks. As a trophy, the winner received 300 bags of coffee. No one knew for sure what to do with it. The bitter drink didn’t enjoy much popularity. One of the heroes of the battle, Franciszek Kulczycki, decided that coffee should be served with something sweet. Having opened a cafe, he co-operated with a neighbouring bakery and began to offer crescent-shaped cookies with coffee — as a sign of the defeat of Turkey. Over time, the French picked up the rec-

ipe, slightly changing the composition of the dough.

Yelena Mikulchik believes that we are living in a very interesting period now, as we ourselves discover Belarusian cuisine, “We know only the one layer of peasant cuisine. Most of us do not know anything about the gentry and royal tastes. Nevertheless, this is a very exquisite cuisine that meets our modern tastes and desires. An ordinary Belarusian will not eat simple dishes like ‘machanka’ in cafes and restaurants. They will go there only if foreign guests visit and they want to show them Belarusian cuisine. The gentry’s cuisine will become a revelation. Everyone wants to feel like gentlemen, trying what kings and magnates used to eat.

Yelena plans to devote her next book exceptionally to noble cuisine, which will include recipes of the famous Radziwill family.

“I’m working on a copy of the 1888 *Radziwill Cuisine* publication. The recipes are unique!” Yelena believes. “The Radziwills could afford almost all products that were known in their time. The goal was not so much to feed as to surprise, hence such unexpected combinations as, for example, veal and peaches or pike fillet, peanut butter and marjoram. Even with my many years of culinary research experience I can’t imagine the taste of such combinations. Our ancestors were truly able to surprise! And they continue to do so today.”

Do you know that...

Belarusians have never eaten as much meat as they do today. They primarily ate fatty foods in winter, when animals were killed. In summer they consumed lighter meals.

We were not always ‘bulbashi’. Potatoes appeared for the first time under the rule of Jan III Sobieski in the 17th century. Its distribution began under August III in the middle of the 18th century. Potatoes became an ordinary food and dish of simple people only during the period of the last King of Poland and the Grand Duke of Lithuania — Stanislaw August Poniatowski — at the end of the 18th century.

‘Kolduny’ are made not only of potato, but also of dough. ‘Kolduny’ from the dough are known since the 16th century. This is a dish of Tatar origin of small size with a very thin dough, which is usually mixed with onion juice.

Yelena Mikulchik on her favourite Belarusian dishes:

My favourite dish is oatmeal jelly. Official medicine recognised this Slavic dish as a means of prevention and treatment of many diseases. Moreover, oatmeal kissel contributes to weight loss. Why do you think I, a practicing chef who cooks from morning to evening, have such a small waist? This is all oatmeal jelly. I almost live on it. I respect Argas very much among the desserts. This is a favourite dish of Jan III Sobieski. There’s nothing tastier for me. This is a very soft cheese, which is cooked at home and served with whipped cream and cinnamon.



In sport, winter has ended. The biathletes who held the World Cup stage in the Czech Nove Mesto have two more stages left before the finish. Skiers, if circumstances allow, also have to run a couple of significant events. But for most Belarusian athletes, the end has already happened. So how did the past winter work out for them?

By Dmitry Komashko

Freestyle
ACHIEVEMENTS: Aleksandra Romanovskaya claimed victory at the World Cup stage, two silver medals and third place in the World Cup standings while Pavel Dick earned two medals at the World Cup stages in his debut season.

Ski acrobats closed the season in Krasnoyarsk. Anna Guskova and Aleksandra Romanovskaya, who were injured before the stage in Raubichi, did not appear on the slopes. However, in their absence, a positive was revealed. Even after the home performance, the head coach of the national team of Belarus, Nikolai Kozeko, said that the current season allowed us to fully appreciate not only the leaders, but also those who will replace them over time. Before the Raubichi event, Snezhana Drebenkova, for example, had only won at the European Cup. Her home debut at world level was not very impressive: with only 18th place, but the two remaining events allowed the athlete to believe in herself and convince the audience. She boasted eighth place in Astana and sixth in Krasnoyarsk! She is still far away from Aleksandra Romanovskaya (who finished the season with third place in the overall standings, claiming one gold and two silver medals at the World Cup stages) and Anna Guskova. However, Snezhana has already outstripped Alla Tsuper and, next year, she seems set to take her place in the national squad.

The men's results were also interesting. In the absence of Anton Kushnir, Maksim Gustik and Pavel Dik were considered to be the leaders of the team. Both finished the season on the border of the top ten of the World Cup standings, but



Aleksandra Romanovskaya

FREESTYLE. WORLD CUP STANDINGS	
Men	
1. N. Roth (Switzerland) — 386 points, 2. P. Krotov — 334, M. Burov (both — Russia) — 323 ... 9. M. Gustik — 204 ... 11. P. Dick — 192 ... 22. D Mazurkevich — 82 ... 40. A. Kuzmin — 11 ... 45. Y. Bely (all — Belarus) — 5 points.	
Women	
1. L. Peel (Australia) — 469 points, 2. X. Mengtao (China) — 351, 3. A. Romanovskaya — 260 ... 9. A. Guskova — 173 ... 23. S. Drebenkova — 85 ... 25. A. Tsuper — 63 ... 29. V. Balmatova — 24 ... 34. A. Deryugo (all — Belarus) — 12 points.	

both went up and down during the winter. It did not work out in Krasnoyarsk (the best of the Belarusians Igor Drebenkov came only sixteenth). Gustik was twice one step away from the medals podium, but at the same time he was close on a couple of occasions to taking his place in the first thirty. If we recall that two years ago, he stood on the medals podium and steadily held on to places in the top-8,

there are questions about him. Against this background, the season for Dik is, on the contrary, a sight for sore eyes. Two third places is very cool for a debut in the World Cup! Nikolai Kozeko is convinced that over the summer it's possible for the young people to work on their mistakes and start jumping, which means that by autumn we can easily get an updated, but no less promising team.



Marina Zueva

SKATING. WORLD CUP STANDINGS	
Women. Long distances.	
1. M. Sablikova (the Czech Republic) — 357 points, 2. I. Weidemann — 353, 3. I. Blondin (both Canada) — 314, 4. N. Voronina (Russia) — 311, 5. A. de Jong (Netherlands) — 274, 6. Ye. Lalenkova (Russia) — 245, 7. M. Zueva (Belarus) — 237 points.	

Skating
ACHIEVEMENTS: Second place for Marina Zueva at the final stage of the World Cup.

The skating season that symbolically started in Minsk seemed to promise hope for our athletes. But it flew by quickly and ended last weekend in the Dutch town of Heerenveen. There, Marina Zueva managed to finish second in the final race of the season — the mass start! If something like this happened at the World Cup, the impressions of the season would have played differently. Alas, even the athlete's personal record did not help her reach the only step left on the medals podium. But at the same time, hardly anyone would call this winter unsuccessful for Marina. She boasts speed and medals are within reach. The last World Cup almost turned into a sensation thanks to the performance by experienced Vitaly Mikhailov (fourth place in the mass start!) while Ignat Golovatyuk managed to maintain his position in the sprint elite, so our skaters can easily call the season a success.

Skiing
ACHIEVEMENTS: None.

In previous years our skiers weren't often pleased with their success either. But last winter, hardly anyone heard of them at all. They were competing and did take some places. As a result, the main hope of our skiing team — Polina Seronosova — is ranked only 136th in the 'sprint' rating of the International Ski Federation and is placed 58th in the 'long' standings. It's still too far away from leading Johaug and Bolshunova, especially if we take into account that during the season Polina took part in all major international events. The best Belarusian sprinter — Anastasia Kirillova — is placed 63rd. At first glance, things are worse for the men. The fastest 'distance skier' this season — Mikhail Semenov — is currently placed 172nd in the world ranking and only a

couple of times broke into the top-40 at the World Cup stages. The next is Timur Laskin, who is ranked 554th in the classification. But Belarusian skiing is the kind of sport that needs to be evaluated so far only in comparison with itself. Seronosova, for example, finished the past season five places below (the current one, however, has not yet ended), while Semenov was 304th at the end of last winter. How much these advances and achievements correspond to the ambitions of the Olympic sport is an open question...



Polina Seronosova

THE MT REFERENCE

Until the last shot, the Belarusian national men's team was in the group of applicants for the relay race medals at the World Cup stage in Czech Nove Mesto, but Roman Yeletnov went to the penalty loop at the final shooting range, enabling Belarus to be placed seventh in the final standings. Nevertheless, this is one of the best results of our men's squad in recent years. Other results in the Czech Republic upset rather than pleased. The best of Belarusians in the sprint, Anton Smolsky, took 18th place. Among the women, Anna Sola rose above everyone in the final protocol (ranked 37th). Failures in shooting almost cost the Belarusian women's relay team a withdrawal due to a lag behind. To the two penalty circles of Anna Sola, three more were added by the Kruchinkiny sisters. Irina Krivko at the last stage managed without a penalty, but this was no consolation for her. In the race with a mass start in Nove Mesto, the Belarusian was selected (she is 27th in the overall World Cup), but she missed four times and ended up finishing in 25th position.

ARENA



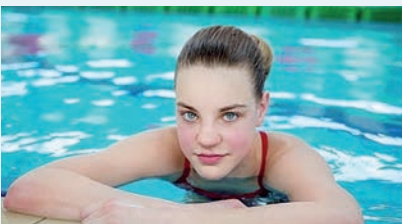
Aleksandr Hleb

● Famous Belarusian footballer Aleksandr Hleb decides to end his playing career

The announcement was made at a press conference in Minsk after the presentation of the documentary entitled *Our Hleb*. The film is the story of the life and career path of the most famous Belarusian football player of the post-Soviet period. Aleksandr Hleb, together with the ATN film crew, shows the audience how his dizzying career began: from Stuttgart and Arsenal to Barcelona. At 17, he signed a contract with Borisov BATE, after which he managed to play in the Bundesliga. It was in Germany that Aleksandr Hleb grew into a world-class footballer and then became the star of London's Arsenal. He is the first Belarusian footballer to play in the final match of the UEFA Champions League and win.

Moreover, he played for the English team, Birmingham City, German Wolfsburg, Turkish Genclerbirligi (Ankara) and Konyaspore, as well as Russian Krylia Sovetov (Samara). Last season, Aleksandr Hleb played in Isloch (Minsk).

Aleksandr Hleb spent 80 matches in the national team of Belarus, scoring 6 goals.



Anastasia Shkurdai

● Belarusian athletes win 15 awards — 11 gold and four bronze — at the international swimming tournament Swedish Grand Prix, held in Malmo

Brest's Anastasia Shkurdai climbed onto the highest step of the medals podium in the 100m backstroke, as well as the 50m and 100m butterfly. Yevgeny Tsurkin earned gold in 100m and 50m butterfly, as well as 100m freestyle.

Alina Zmushko came first in the 50m and 100m breaststroke. Her teammate, Ivan Adamchuk, won the 200m backstroke. He also claimed bronze in the 50m and 100m backstroke.

Alena Semizhon was placed third in the 50m backstroke, while Ilya Shimanovich won in the 50m breaststroke. The athlete was also a bronze medallist in the 200m breaststroke.

The Belarusian team were first in the mixed relay 4x100m freestyle.



Photo of the week

The National Beauty School hosted the annual *Spring Fashion Day Festival*

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM
20 Lenin Street
Until 22nd March. Olga Sazykina's project:
About Glass
Until 15th April. *We'll Be Understood in 100 Years: Lazar Khidekel*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM
12 Karl Marks Street
Until 22nd March. *Mikhailovskoe. Pushkin's Office*
Until 31st March. *Young Talents of the Capital*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS
116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 23rd March. *Return*

GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY MUSEUM
8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 27th March. *Heirs of Great Victory*

BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY MUSEUM
13 Maksim Bogdanovich Street
Until 25th March. *Wisdom of Centuries*

YANKA KUPALA LITERARY MUSEUM
4 Yanka Kupala Street
Until 28th March. *Valeriana Zholtok: Passion for Life*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS
47 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 29th March. *Jazz! Cats! Spring!*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS
3 Nekrasov Street
Until 26th April. *I'm Monet; I'm Shishkin; I'm Malevich*

TROITSKY SUBURB
7A Bogdanovich Street
Until 26th July. *Live Exotics*

GALLERY ARTEL
58 / 1-6 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 30th March. *Unknown Van Gogh*

LIBRA
37 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 7th April. *Sand and Blood: Francisco Goya and Pablo Picasso*
Until 7th June. *Pop Art*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY
15 Svobody Square
Until 22nd March. *Victor Mikita. Well-Portal*
Until 29th March. *Dreams of France*

MUSEUM OF MAN
1 Oktyabrskaya Square
Until 31st December. *Museum of Man*

THEATRES

BOLSHOI THEATRE OF BELARUS
1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square
19.03. La Traviata
20 and 22.03. The Nutcracker, or Another Christmas Story...
20.03. Opera Scenes from Family Life
21.03. La Bohemia
24.03. Salome
25.03. Giselle, or The Willis
26.03. Tosca

BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE
44 Kropotkin Street
19.03. New Drama Fire
20.03. Ticket for Brest's Train
21.03. Everything is OK
22.03. Serezha
24.03. Portrait
25.03. Marriage with Wind
26.03. The Mad Woman

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS
33 Masharov Avenue
19.03. Battlefield
20.03. ...Forgetting Herostratos!
26.03. Oh, Anna

CONTEMPORARY ART THEATRE
5 Oktyabrskaya Street
21.03. House Upside Down 2
22.03. Dragon
25.03. Empery of Beauty

YANKA KUPALA THEATRE
7 Engels Street
19.03. Comedy of Unhappy Villager, His Wife Malanka, Jew David and the Devil Who Lost Sense of Life / Elza's Land
20.03. ART
21.03. Nobleman Zavalnya, or Belarus in Fantastic Stories
22.03. Prudok Radio / School of Taxpayers / Paulinka
23.03. The Lent concert of the Saint Elisabeth Convent's choir
24.03. King Lear / Elza's Land
25.03. The First / Inspector
26.03. En Souvenir de Chagall

NEW DRAMA THEATRE
16 Liza Chaikina Street
20.03. Zhanna

MAKSIM GORKY THEATRE
5 Volodarsky Street
20.03. Oscar and Pink Lady
25.03. Husband Leaving His Wife

YOUTH THEATRE
17 Kozlov Street
19.03. Not Invented by Us
20.03. Skeletons / Love of Three
21.03. Sanya, Vanya and Rimas
22.03. A House in the Middle of Spring / Skeletons
24.03. Trickster Club
25.03. Caught by Love
26.03. Warsaw Melody