



Loading of nuclear fuel started at the first power unit of BelNPP



Technologies of the future were presented at the *Intellectual Belarus* exposition



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Tatiana Stolyarova



BSU students: Stanislav Shchudrin, Polina Lazarevich, Aleksandr Pushkov

Belarusians have chosen their President

The Presidential election has been completed in Belarus. On August 9th, Belarusians decided the path of progress for the next five years. According to preliminary data of the Central Election Commission, the acting Head of State — Aleksandr Lukashenko — got 80.08 percent of the vote, with the exact figures still to be clarified. The turnout for the country as a whole was over 80 percent.



Belarus is within us!

Strengthening independence and sovereignty, security, and progressive development were the main topics of the President's Address to the Belarusian People and the National Assembly last week

The development vectors of the Belarusian state — what has been done and how to move forward — were announced by the Head of State during his annual address to the people and Parliament. More than 2,500 people from all over Belarus were invited to the event. Later, all participants of the important meeting admitted that the message was the most powerful and emotional they'd heard — which was not surprising: the President spoke about what the Belarusian people are concerned about in these times.

On foreign policy

Aleksandr Lukashenko stated that Belarus is now on a geopolitical rift. Living by its wits, it has become the only peaceful place in the centre of Eurasia. "That is why it's torn to different sides... Our response is well known: Belarus does not try to be friends with one against the other and remains committed to a multi-pronged and predictable foreign policy. Russia has always been and will remain our closest ally, whoever is in power in Belarus or Russia. It is an invincible factor, deep within our peoples, even though they have changed the fraternal relationship with us to 'partnership'. They should not have," he said.

On the economy

The President ordered the Government and the National Bank to channel all resources into the real sector of the economy. "It is necessary to continue working while clearly understanding goals and perspectives. It is not just a standard phrase. A crisis is not only about hardships. It is also a time for great opportunities. We can grow: the epidemic has left markets bare and many products can occupy new niches now. This is why, whatever the cost, the Government and the National Bank will have to channel all their resources and reserves into the real sector of the economy. There is only one goal — to save the country, save jobs without losing revenues... we shouldn't close down anything. We must protect people and move the economy forward by at least 3-4 percent annually. This will be the average global growth rate," he added.

On regional development and investments

"Over the next five years, we'll fully complete the modernisation of the villages. There should be no undeveloped villages in our country," the President said. "People living in rural areas should have a comfortable living environment, no worse than in cities. This is the key to our regional policy!"

The President believes that, when



forming a new five-year plan, we should take a good example from Soviet times, as well as the experience of China and Japan, "As you remember, these countries have always had a strict plan: investment objectives, large amounts of financing, and their sources were clearly outlined. Moreover, strict discipline was in place. Only through this, can we solve the problem of equal development of the regions and the distribution of productive forces."

On the IT industry

"Belarus is increasingly often referred to as an IT country. The most comfortable conditions have been enabled for the IT sector. The current accomplishments have been secured by the specialists themselves. They initiated and prepared the Digital Economy Development Ordinance in 2017," the President said, adding that the Belarusian IT industry's exports amounted to \$2.5bn in 2019 and the number of new residents in one year exceeded the number of new residents registered in all the 12 years since the Hi-Tech Park was established. The Head of State believes that it is necessary to put more efforts into introducing digital technologies in Belarus. "The powerful IT sector is evidence

of the nation's level of development. The future relies on it," he stressed.

On the Belarusian nuclear power plant

The President believes the advantages of the Belarusian nuclear power plant will help the country secure a breakthrough to the future. "The significance of the Belarusian nuclear power plant for ensuring energy security and for our economy as a whole is simply huge. The development of the education system and technology is connected to it. We don't want someone else to draw our attention to safety considerations. Belarus has been affected by the Chernobyl catastrophe. Belarusians have lived through a lot. We know the price of the consequences," he stressed.

Aleksandr Lukashenko reminded people that as much as \$19bn has been spent on the rehabilitation of polluted areas alone. This is why incoming inspections during the construction of the nuclear power plant were as strict as those employed during the war.

On the country's formation and reforms

"If society needs changes, they will be realised. All reforms must begin with the

Constitution: not from street actions, but from Basic Law. We must move forward, and this refers not only to the economy, but also to politics," the Head of State said.

He added, "I am personally ready for any changes, if they will benefit the people and if you are ready for them. However, the main thing is that the Constitution should not provoke a political crisis and cause paralysis of the management system, as it was in the mid-90s."

At the same time, changes should benefit the country — strengthening rather than destroying it.

On people's welfare

"The Government's main task is to increase the welfare and income of citizens. We will continue our balanced and steady work. Everything is achieved only by your own hard work. Especially in this terrible crisis situation," the President stressed.

He drew attention to the fact that there is no noticeable social stratification in the country and the welfare of citizens depends on the economy, "There are no secrets. If we produce and export more products that are in demand, then our prosperity will grow. Our plans, programmes and calculations proceed from this truth," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

The final point of the speech was heartfelt words, after which the full audience applauded for two and a half minutes to Aleksandr Lukashenko, who left the stage. The President said, "Today we hold the future firmly in our hands. The future of our independent Belarus... Independence is expensive. However, it is worth preserving and passing on to future generations. Belarus is within us: it's clean and bright, honest and beautiful, hard-working, a little naive and a little vulnerable. However, it is ours, it is our beloved. Nobody gives someone they love to others."

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Most Belarusians have voted for peace and stability

On August 10th, the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, met the Chairman of the CIS Executive Committee — CIS Executive Secretary, Sergei Lebedev, who headed the CIS mission of observers at the Belarus Presidential election

"I know the assessments of your mission and will be very happy to hear from you comments and suggestions, if there were any during the election campaign. But you have seen that we wanted to give people a holiday, and they really responded," noted Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The President noted that the elections were held with a high turnout, and people attended polling stations with their families, "To be honest, I'm very touched when voters come with little children. You see, it's a holiday but someone wanted to ruin it. We have recorded (you know this as a former intelligence officer) calls from abroad.

There were calls from Poland, the UK and the Czech Republic, they organised our, excuse me for saying so, sheep: they do not understand what they are doing, and they are already starting to organise them."

At the same time, the President drew attention to the fact that law enforcement personnel had to protect not only citizens but representatives of the staff of a Presidential candidate. "They gathered together in an office: there were some opposition reporters with them — about 60 people all in all. We received a tip from them (someone over there was smart) that a crowd had congregated around the office. It was a crisis situation and one of them asked the authorities for protection. I instructed the KGB to immediately send the strongest military personnel over there and quietly keep an eye on the office to prevent any casualties. We were in luck that someone from the united staff called police and asked for

protection. We protected them all night and still control the situation."

According to the Head of State, law enforcement officers acted carefully; however, once they had to use rubber bullets when the protesters wanted to storm one of the Regional Department of Internal Affairs and attacked the policeman, "They acted like wild animals! That is why the situation at night was intense but police officers did a good job. We only used Army units and the Presidential security service to evacuate election commissions from polling stations. What are those people guilty of? What is the fault of the teachers and doctors, who organised the elections? There were 33 election commissions like that



Sergei Lebedev

and we evacuated them without problems. They smoothly counted votes at polling stations and stabilised the situation," noted Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The Head of State also said that the Internet in Belarus was disconnected from abroad; this is not an initiative of the authorities. According to the President, they are

trying to purposefully press Belarus from different sides, "They are acting in all directions, but we will stand firm."

Sergei Lebedev noted that the majority of the population voted for peace and stability, as was confirmed by the mission and statistics.

Based on materials of sb.by

This is our own choice

After voting at the polling station, Aleksandr Lukashenko gave the traditional speech to journalists. Reporters literally 'bombarded' him with questions. Supporters of different political opinions still have to live together in the same land. This is one of the key theses of the Belarusian leader. He noted, "We're in the same boat. If we rock this boat we'll drown together. Therefore, everything will be fine. A process is underway. The process is not easy. But we're ready for everything."

There's dynamics

The Polish journalist also asked whether the President, if re-elected, has a plan to overcome the unfavourable forecast in the economy, given the possible economic sanctions against the country. Aleksandr Lukashenko responded, "Firstly, there is no need to scare us with sanctions; we're already aware of what sanctions are. Secondly, do you know how much GDP has fallen in Poland during this last half-year? Five times more than in Belarus... Our GDP fell by 1.7 percent for the first six months of this year while, in July, we've already added 0.1 percent and 1.5 percent on exports — which is very important. We can produce as much as we like, the main thing is to sell. That is, we have already a small dynamic of growth. We already boast gold

and foreign exchange reserves of almost \$9bn, having increased them during this time. This is a surprise, including to me. Therefore, there are also good things that we'll get out of this crisis."

The President expressed the hope that the businesses of Poland and Belarus will actively co-operate in the same mode as before the pandemic.

External vectors do not change

The representative of Polish Radio asked the Head of State whether our country plans to change its foreign policy in connection with the pandemic and various problematic issues in the oil and gas sector. Aleksandr Lukashenko reminded those present of words he honestly and sincerely said in his State of the Nation Address

to the Belarusian People and the National Assembly, "Belarus is a house in the centre of Europe with windows to the East and West, with access to the South and North. God predetermined it thus: due to our position, we are forced, being in the geographical centre of Europe, to liaise with everyone. We'll be co-operating."

The President added, "We'll never bow to anyone. Neither you, nor Russia, nor Ukraine, nor Germany, nor America will ever unsettle us. Never!"

About brotherhood and partnership

The Head of State told reporters about how relations with Russia will be built after the elections, "Relations will be built normally. Yes, I have reproached Russia that they switched from fraternal to partnership relations. It was clearly stated by the President of Russia that 'we will be building fraternal relations with you. And what is happening, Aleksandr Grigorievich, let's understand in detail. I will send you the information we have to date'. The next day I received a letter from the President of Russia, in my opinion, on five pages, outlining all the facts. Our Investigative Committee is considering these facts. As far as prospects are concerned, if some expect that our



relations with Russia have completely deteriorated, you are mistaken! The President of Russia and I will make a decision. And no media can influence this decision. This is quintessential; this is the essence of our conversations with the President of Russia."

Testing for the pandemic

The situation with coronavirus has stabilised and it's time to say a sincere 'thank you' to those who helped our country. Alas, our integration partners are not on this list. The Head of State considers the work of integration structures during the pandemic ineffective, "Nationalism and national interests, to put it mild-

ly, have prevailed and still prevail. Moreover, you affected the pandemic, I warned you three months ago that the disease is the simplest to control. There will be a confrontation, with strong states using this pandemic to unsettle the weak. Integration structures have worked appallingly badly, especially our integration associations. Did you see any unity? Everyone has closed in their world and tried to get out. Therefore, there is nothing to rejoice! The pandemic has shown that you have to look out for yourself and appreciate what is under your feet today."

Policy Department



Foreign leaders congratulate Aleksandr Lukashenko on his victory in elections

Chairman of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping, President of Russia Vladimir Putin, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, as well as heads of other states sent their congratulations.

The Chairman of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, was the first to send a message to President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko congratulating him on his victory in the Presidential election.

"On behalf of the Government of China and the Chinese people, as well as on my own behalf, I express warm congratulations and best wishes. I'm sure that under your leadership

Belarus will achieve great new successes in state-building," reads the congratulation. Xi Jinping noted that, in recent years, Belarusian-Chinese relations of the comprehensive strategic partnership have been operating at a high level. "China and Belarus are 'iron brothers' and all-weather partners. I attach great importance to the development of Chinese-Belarusian relations and cherish good working relations and personal friendship with you," stressed the Chinese leader. The congratulatory telegram of the Russian President Vladimir Putin reads, "I hope that your state activities will contribute to aid the further development of mutually beneficial Russian-Belarusian relations in all areas, the deepening of interaction within the framework of the Union State, the strengthening of integration processes through the Eurasian Economic Union and the CIS, as well as military-political ties in the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. Undoubtedly, this meets the fundamental interests of the fraternal peoples of Russia and Belarus." The telegram from the President of Kazakhstan says, "Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, on behalf of the people of Kazakhstan and himself, congratulated Aleksandr Lukashenko on his re-election to the post of President of the Republic of Belarus. The results of the elections, held in a difficult political situation, show popular

support for your strategic course aimed at strengthening the sovereignty and independence of Belarus." During the telephone conversation, Ilham Aliyev expressed his most sincere congratulations and best wishes in connection with Aleksandr Lukashenko's convincing victory in the Presidential election, underlying that friendly relations with the leadership of brotherly Belarus are especially appreciated in Azerbaijan.

Based on materials of belta.by



Elections were held strictly in accordance with the law

Public associations and political parties of Belarus that nominated their observers for the elections stated that the elections were held in strict accordance with the law

"On August 9th, the election campaign for the election of the President of the Republic of Belarus ended. Representatives of our public associations and political parties throughout the voting days monitored each polling station

without exception. Over 30,000 of our activists, and this is the absolute majority of all observers accredited to the elections, say: the elections were held strictly in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Belarus. Our observers monitored all processes — from opening polling stations, sealing ballot boxes to counting votes," said the statement from parties and public associations.

It is stressed that there are no significant violations that could affect the election results, and every citizen had the opportunity to freely and unhindered cast a vote for their candidate.

"At the same time, certain political forces, which also nominated their observers, purposefully and deliberately distorted information about the voting process, and the entire election campaign as a whole. They deliberately focused on provocations, threatened citizens and members of election commissions," continues the statement. "Obviously, all these actions are links in a chain aimed at destabilising the situation in the country and discrediting the elections. They failed to do so."

Based on materials of belta.by

Process is progressing

Loading of nuclear fuel launched at first power unit of the Belarusian nuclear power plant

The loading of nuclear fuel into the first unit of the Belarusian nuclear power plant began on August 7th as one stage in the process of commissioning the unit. A total of 163 fuel rod arrays will be inserted into the reactor in August.

On the eve of the process, the Department of Nuclear and Radiation Safety of the Ministry for Emergency Situations of the Republic of Belarus (Gosatomnadzor) issued a permit for the right to load the standard core of reactor No. 1 of the Belarusian plant. The office supervises the execution of license requirements and conditions by oversight and target inspections. The results of supervision, along with other documents, are analysed before

making decisions on issuing permits to the nuclear power plant.

The regulatory body will consistently issue permits for the stages of commissioning of the first power unit, taking into account the readiness of the Belarusian NPP: the first loading of the standard reactor core, testing in the subcritical state of the reactor facility, performing physical experiments at a minimum controlled level, power start-up and pilot industrial operation.

After all these stages are complete, the issue of issuing a license for the operation of the first power unit will be studied; this document is issued before a state commission for the acceptance of the facility into operation begins its work.



Aleksey Vyazminov

In accordance with the current work schedules and previously announced information, the first power unit of the Belarusian nuclear power plant is expected to enter the operational stage in the first quarter of 2021.

Gosatomnadzor emphasises

that public hearings have been held before issuing a license to operate the first unit of the Belarusian plant — with the aim of informing the public about the progress and results of the safety expertise and assessment of compliance with

the license requirements and conditions of the Belarusian nuclear power plant.

The Belarusian nuclear power plant is being built near Ostrovets (Grodno Region) using the Russian design AES-2006 featuring two VVER-1200 reactors with the total output capacity of 2,400MW. The engineering division of the Russian state nuclear industry corporation Rosatom is the general contractor. Generation III+ reactor units boast improved technical and economic parameters. A unique combination of active and passive safeguards is their main peculiarity.

Based on materials of belta.by

High-quality water

Belarus attracts grants of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) and the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P) to improve water quality in seven towns — as envisaged by the agreements signed recently at the Housing and Utilities Ministry of Belarus

The bulk of financing for the project *Belarus Water Sector Framework Third Phase* will be provided by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to the sum of almost 27m Euros. This money will be used to upgrade water-supply and wastewater treatment facilities in Kletsk, Lyuban, Fanipol, Baranovichi, Bereza, Zhlobin and Shklov. The project period is 2020-2024.

Additional financing will be possible owing to the grants of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) and the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P).

The Housing and Utilities Minister, Andrei Khmel, emphasised that Belarus is a member of many conventions on environmental protection. The country seeks to achieve the Sustainable Development



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Goals. One of these is access to quality water for all, and the framework will contribute to achieving this goal.

The Head of the European Union's Delegation to Belarus, Dirk Schuebel, noted that both funds were established thanks to the initiative of the European

Union, and the EU is the biggest donor. "We are glad that this project will help finance wastewater facilities in small towns. It will improve the quality of water provision and generate substantial transboundary benefits," said Dirk Schuebel.



BELTA

Figures beat records

Belaruskali — one of the world's major producers and exporters of potash fertilisers — reports record-high ore extraction and fertiliser production figures in July

"In June 2020, Belaruskali produced 5,004,057 tonnes of ore setting a new record high, however, the miners outdid themselves in July by extracting 5,064,332 tonnes of ore for fertiliser production. The company's ore-processing plants operated at full capacity, with the output of commercial products exceeding 1,140,000 tonnes (1,123,831 tonnes in June)," the company announced.

The company expects high performance in August as well. Daily record highs were recorded in the first few days: as much as 206,754 tonnes of ore were extracted on August 1st and about 46,000 tonnes of fertilisers were shipped on August 3rd.

Q2 2020 is now part of Belaruskali's history as a period of top production and shipment of potash fertilisers.

Diversification yields results

The share of non-CIS states in BelAZ exports exceeded 41 percent in January-July 2020

Despite the complicated situation in the world mining industry and unstable markets, the Belarusian Automobile Works (BelAZ) managed to carry out its July business plan, in particular, regarding the volume of shipment of ready-made products. As the company's press service asserts, this was the result of a purposeful work aimed at export diversification.

In January-July 2020, the company secured a genuine breakthrough in increasing the share of non-CIS states in its total exports. "This share exceeded 41 percent in January-July (33.6 percentage points up from the same period of last year). It is the highest figure on record in comparison with annual figures," the press service adds.

BelAZ's accomplishment is attributed to sales in 14 non-CIS states: India, Mongolia, Algeria,

Poland, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and others. In January-July, BelAZ products were shipped to 21 countries. The export share was close to 89 percent, including 34.2 percent to Russia.

The average monthly shipment to non-CIS countries in 2020 is the second in the history of BelAZ after 2011, exceeding the average monthly indicators of the record for the company in 2012 and 2018, the company announced.

BelAZ is now working to

ship vehicles to mining enterprises in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Armenia by the end of the year. Plans have been made to ship BelAZ vehicles to Indonesia, Serbia, India, Algeria, Mongolia, South Africa, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"Accordingly, taking into account the expected volume of exports, the share of non-CIS countries may approach 45 percent in the total volume of shipments," the press service of the enterprise concludes.



belmarket.by

Based on materials of belta.by



By Dmitry Umpirovich

A new six-car diesel train made by Polish PESA began travelling along the Minsk-Grodno route last month, and it's a good reason to talk about the updating of the rolling stock, what trains were used and what are planned to be launched. Almost every fifth train in the locomotive depots of the country is a modern model and specialists of Belarusian Railway eagerly told us how these changes have transformed Belarusian rail transportation, what new train service routes are planned and what prospects there are for the further transformation of the rail fleet.

What are the railway's plus points?

Of course, new trains differ from old versions — familiar to many generations of passengers for a long time — in the same way as a Zhiguli car differs from a Mercedes, owing to other technical solutions, higher speeds and a new maintenance level. Aleksandr Zakharevich, the Head of the Passenger Service at the Belarusian Railway, explains that, at all times, comfort, time and pricing have been always the most important criteria for passengers. Previously, people thought more about how to save money but now it's to get from A to B faster. Moreover, modern trains can give both minibus and private cars a head start in many respects. The dynamics of development of the Republic's regions,

increased mobility of the population, reassessment by potential customers of the concept of time and conditions of travel, healthy competition in the general transport system and modernisation of economic sectors have contributed to the strategy of passenger transportation.

The railwaymen explain: modern trains are indispensable in the daytime and enjoy the greatest popularity among passengers. "For example, a three-car diesel train for 147 used to travel along the Grodno-Minsk-Grodno route in the past, while a six-car train transported 331 passengers at once. The demand is predicted and, as practice shows, it will continue growing," Mr. Zakharevich adds.

In turn, night-time trains have a different philosophy. Passengers who need to be at work in another city in the morning, prefer to spend a night on the train — rather than to get up early in the morning. Therefore, standard locomotive-hauled trains with reserved seats and compartment cars will remain on night routes.

Will there be more new trains and what routes will they take?

By the end of 2020, the Belarusian Railway will put into operation two more six-car diesel trains for interregional business class lines — to travel along the Minsk-Grodno and Minsk-Mogilev routes. In addition, in 2020-2021, it is planned to purchase 10 electric trains to service interregional and international lines.

"The arrival of the new electric trains will make it possible to optimise routes to Gomel, Brest, Vilnius, and to approach the organisation of regional transportation in more detail," says Mr. Zakharevich. "An ideal scheme is that trains that connect Minsk with regional centres start moving towards each other at the same time — at least in the morning and evening, to make it convenient for both residents of the capital and residents of the regions to leave in the morning, for example, on a business trip and return home on the same day. In addition, the issue of purchasing seven electric trains of city lines is being considered. They, in turn, will be used to transport passengers on existing routes with the implementation of timing traffic, as well as — from 2023 — between Minsk and the satellite city of Dzerzhinsk."

Will old suburban and diesel trains go into the past?

The Belarusian Railway believes their

time will come. After all, the average service life of rolling stock is 30 years. "At present, electric and diesel trains are used mainly when travelling short distances, for example, to the country or to the place of work. Therefore, the price for such transportation cannot be too high. However, the trains that we are offered to buy today are quite expensive," the official adds.

Special attention is paid to single-car diesel trains



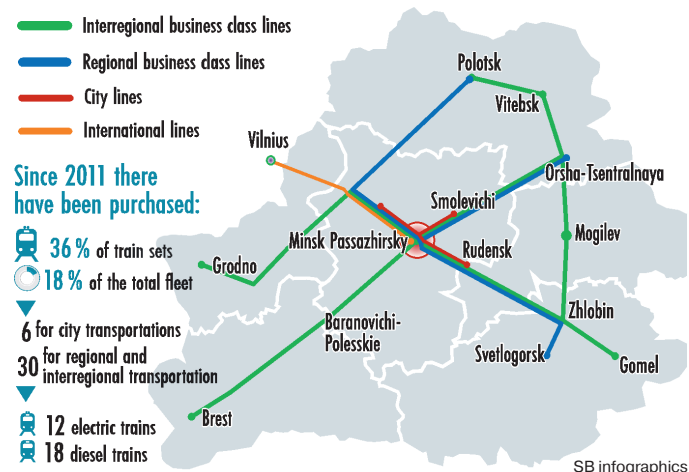
Engineer Boris Storzhev

produced by Polish PESA; these are so-called rail buses. Six of them already operate in Belarus — mostly at sections with a small amount of passenger traffic. These are considered as a fairly economical means of transport but Mr. Zakharevich notes, "We aren't buying them just at the moment, although they are optimal in low-activity areas. There is a need to service a number of routes — especially in the Vitebsk Region — with such trains. Therefore, we plan to return to their purchase. However, at the moment, our focus is different: we must concentrate on mass passenger traffic and buy trains primarily for these purposes."

What trains will go to Minsk national airport?

To travel to the airport, the Belarusian Railway plans to purchase new electrified rolling stock, similar in its characteristics to trains on city lines, but with passenger cabins that will be more comfortable and with a large number of luggage spaces. "The preliminary service scheme has already been developed," says Mr. Zakharevich, adding, "A total of three trains will be required, which will operate at hourly intervals from approximately 5am to midnight."

Routes serviced by modern motor-car trains



SB infographics

NEWS IN BRIEF

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Volodymyr Zelenskyy talk by phone



Aleksandr Lukashenko had a telephone conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the press service of the Belarusian leader has announced.

The heads of state discussed the development of bilateral relations and preparations for the 3rd Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine due in Grodno this autumn. The parties noted they want to make every effort to ensure that this event should produce significant practical results and intensify co-operation.

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Volodymyr Zelenskyy also discussed the epidemiological situation in the countries, measures to combat the spread of coronavirus, and exchanged the lessons learned in this regard.

The parties discussed the strengthening of control on the Belarusian-Ukrainian border and intensification of co-operation between the border agencies.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy touched upon the matter with the militants detained in Belarus. He said that they took part in the armed conflict in Donbass and the Ukrainian prosecutor's office is conducting an appropriate investigation. Aleksandr Lukashenko said that the law enforcement bodies would co-operate on the issue within the framework of the international agreements signed with Russia and with Ukraine.

President thanks doctors for their selfless and heroic work



Igor Karpov

At a meeting with healthcare workers at the Palace of Independence, Aleksandr Lukashenko thanked doctors for their selfless and heroic work during the pandemic and rewarded them with orders and medals. Among the honourees are pulmonologists and infectious diseases specialists, as well as doctors of other specialties who have urgently mastered a new specialisation for themselves, resuscitators, primary care and ambulance doctors, nurses and junior staff, assistants and paramedics, specialists of the sanitary and epidemiological service, doctors of laboratory diagnostics,

scientists, chief doctors and manager-organisers, employees of the Healthcare Ministry.

The President noted that, for the first time in the history of our independent country, we are awarding the honorary title of the 'People's Doctor of Belarus'; it has gone to a Professor, a Doctor of Medical Sciences, the Head

of the Infectious Diseases Department at the Belarusian State Medical University — Igor Karpov. During the coronavirus epidemic, it was he who took the lead in helping patients.

Addressing all those present, Aleksandr Lukashenko wished all medical workers and their relatives health, happiness and well-being. "Live long! If you live — the nation will live. We have gone through a difficult period, but thanks to this have been able to once again see and appreciate what extraordinary people live among us."



By Irina Sergeeva

The exhibition consisted of three areas related to the most relevant priorities for the development of the scientific sphere: ‘The IT Country. Scientific Support for Digitalisation of the Economy’; ‘Overcoming COVID-19’; and ‘Technologies of the Future’.

The Institute of Physics of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus presented a laser-optical defect analyser ‘Luch-54’ aimed to control the surface of polished plates used to create microelectronic products (chips, sensors, including for the space and military industries).

The Scientific-Practical Materials Research Centre of the National Academy of Sciences demonstrated electromagnetic and radiation protective screens based on composite materials which are of interest for minimising the impact of ionising radiation on the semiconductor component base operating in extreme conditions of Earth and near-Earth space.

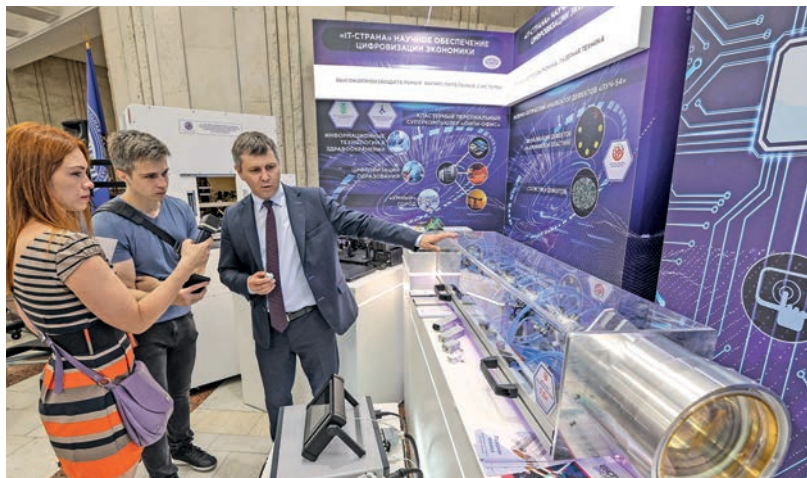
Visitors could familiarise themselves with a number of

Intellectual Belarus

The IT country, the fight against COVID-19 and technologies of the future: over 150 developments and technologies were presented at the *Intellectual Belarus* exposition at the National Academy of Sciences



unique scientific developments at the ‘Overcoming COVID-19’ show, while the NAS Institute of Physiology demonstrated equipment for heated oxygen-helium mixture in the complex therapy of respiratory and cardiovascular system pathologies for clinical and outpatient treatment of SARS-CoV-2, and the GPS-Cardio software and hardware complex. The Metal-Polymer Research Institute of the National Academy



of Sciences showed electret fibre filter melt-blown materials for respiratory protection and

promising filtration material for medical masks as well as cartridges for respirators based

on the ‘Griftex’ fibre-porous fluoroplastics.

The ‘Technologies of the Future’ section featured a multi-level remote sensing system of the Earth and a projected Russian-Belarusian high-resolution spacecraft of the NAS Geoinformations Systems Unitary Enterprise.

The Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented the country’s concept of the exhibition of science achievements: *Intellectual Belarus*.

Diagnosed by neural network



By Olga Kosyakova

The device itself detects and differentiates sounds coming from the lungs and, in some cases, it picks them up better than the doctor’s ear. This is especially valuable in difficult situations.

To analyse the general state of the lungs, pulmonologists around the world use a classic stethoscope. However, sometimes the human ear cannot recognise the nuances of the disease, which sometimes leads to an incorrect diagnosis.

For the first time in the world, the Belarusian start-up ‘Healthy Networks’ has developed the ‘Lung Passport’ — a system that assesses the state of lungs using an electronic stethoscope. “We decided to create a device that would help doctors in diagnosis and allow parents

at home to determine whether a child has a lung problem,” Maksim Zybko explains. “Similar developments are underway in Poland but there’s no exact analogue anywhere.”

The device resembles a small puck that connects via bluetooth to a mobile app. The doctor applies the device to clinically significant points on the body and records the sound. The file with the received data is sent to the server and processed by the neural network which recognises sounds natural to a particular disease. The results match CT and x-ray data to 93 percent. An electronic stethoscope is an aid for the doctor as it has a higher accuracy than the classic one: its microphone is more sensitive to sounds than the ear. In addition, a human ear can get tired after listening

The world’s first electronic stethoscope has successfully passed clinical trials at the Minsk Regional Children’s Clinical Hospital

to many patients; attention and hearing acuity can decrease.

The Minsk Regional Children’s Clinical Hospital is a multi-specialty institution which receives many different patients — often with unclear diagnoses, including in the field of pulmonology. This is largely the reason why the clinic has become the base for conducting clinical trials of a new electronic stethoscope for listening to sounds coming from the respiratory organs in children.

Irina Bezruchko, a pulmonologist, the Head of Paediatric Department No. 4 of the Minsk Regional Children’s Clinical Hospital, tells us of the advantages of the ‘Lung Passport’, “This system detects wet, dry wheezes, crepitation-small wheezes, normal breathing and extraneous noises. In addition, for a more accurate result, the patient is asked to fill out a questionnaire that includes information on their symptoms and medical history, developed in

collaboration with doctors. The device gives a brief conclusion, but does not make a diagnosis, and encourages the patient to

consult the doctor. An electronic stethoscope may be of interest to novice doctors who do not have enough experience to listen well. In addition, the patient can use the device themselves if they do not have the



opportunity to immediately contact the doctor. At the same time, we must understand that this is an auxiliary diagnosis.”

The medical device is now undergoing registration. Belarusian developers plan that the electronic stethoscope will go on sale just in time for the ARVI season: in September-October.

In addition, the designers of the project will add a function for automatic recognition of heart noises, which will expand the possibilities of using the unique device.

Gift from divine creatures

Forest beekeeping and secrets of the old craft of honey extraction

By Marina Kuzmich

Mankind discovered long before our era that honey is not only tasty, but also useful. It was not only a delicacy, but also the basis for traditional medicine and a 'must-have' treat during significant events. Honey was served on the table during weddings. The newly-weds were treated with honey, with candles lit, in their parents' house. Porridge with honey was an obligatory dish during Christian holidays. Honey was called a gift while a bee was a divine creation.

An old photo shows a family on holiday. Father, mother and children are sitting in white, embroidered T-shirts under the



Belarusian family on a festive day. Honey and bread are on the table. Early 20th century

es, linden, buckwheat and heather were blooming, beekeepers loaded the hives on sleds and took them many miles away to honey collection sites.

Whole villages of professional beekeepers were known in Belarus. This is evidenced by the names of the settlements Bortniki, Bortnovichi, Kolodniki. The hereditary beekeepers from the village of Stodolichi in the Mozyr District, where the traditions of honey collection from wild bees were preserved until the 20th century, were especially famous for their skills and mastery.

Log hives were also made. They were called 'kolody' and were a double-bottomed section of a thick tree trunk scraped



Beehives near Grodno. 1925



Beehives in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha. Early 20th century

holy images (icons). Before them on the table is bread and a large plate of honey.

In the old days, the treat from these 'winged' workers was the only sweet food. After all, sugar appeared in our land only in the 11th-12th century and for a long time was available exclusively to the nobility. Therefore, peasants tried to get honey and were involved in keeping wild-hives.

Honey was a symbol of friendship among Belarusians. According to popular belief, even an enemy who was treated with honey could later become a friend. The custom of 'Syabryny' was known in the Belarusian lands. Its essence is that a beekeeper gave his fellow villager a swarm of bees. Then this person, having received honey for the first time, shared half of it with the donor. In this way the passion for the 'sweet craft' strengthened friendship for many years. It was really worthwhile to thank the neighbour for their bees. Beekeeping products — wax, propolis, pollen, bee bread and royal jelly — were used in the manufacture of various drugs. In addition, wax mixed with badger fat relieved skin complaints. Moreover, it was also used to make candles. In case of disease, people sculpted figures of the unhealthy parts of the body and took them to the temple, praying for speedy healing. Honey and wax were among the main trading products and even served as a cash equivalent.

Wild bees settled in clear pine forests. That is why they were called 'borovki'. In ancient times, in order to get honey, trees with bees were simply set on fire. People took the forest products, but the bees themselves died. Later, they came up with a way to collect honey without destroying the insects by making an attempt to tame them. The first written mention of the occupation by the Eastern Slavs in beekeeping in numerous sources dates back to the 10th century. In the forest, they looked for trees with hollow sides, where wild bees settled, smoked them and removed the honey. Later they began to make hives. People found pine or oak, aspen or lin-



A fair in Lida. Honey and honey cakes on sale. Early 20th century



Zhitin, Osipovichi District. Beehives on trees. Early 20th century

den and hollowed out a log. A bee colony lived on top while there was a space in the middle where they made honeycomb. A 'door' to the hive was closed with boards. A hole was drilled nearby through which the bees could fly out and return.

Beekeeping required a lot of attention, as well as knowledge about the behaviour and psychology of bees. Professional skills were passed from father to son. From childhood, future beekeepers learned the secrets of the trade. After all, not everyone had bees. The most cherished mysteries of the craft, the sacred

meaning of conspiracies and magical actions during 'communication' between bees, were passed on by the old beekeeper to the heir as a gift only before death.

In *The Description of Krichev County* (1789), Andrei Meyer reports on the frequent findings at that time in the Krichev forests of old beehives with long-term reserves of dark brown stale honey up to 150-200kg each. According to the ancient rite, a person who found a beehive in the forest, received the right of ownership to it and at the same time put on the tree a conditional mark. The peasants used not only natural hives, where bees settled, but also made new ones, cutting them in tree trunks on the sunny side.

Peasants, gentry and smallholders set up bee-gardens for hundreds of beehives on their estates. At first, these were mainly log hives. They were also called 'stoyaki' and 'lezhaki'. There were also straw beehives — 'solomyanki'. For them, unripe rye was used. The stems were twisted into bundles and intertwined with osier and coniferous roots. It turned out to be a kind of 'kufar' [translated as 'trunk' from Belarusian]. There were also houses for the 'winged workers' made from osier. Such hives were first lifted up to the trees and then they began to be placed near the estates. In summer, when meadow grass-

out from the inside. These were placed on trees at a height of up to 15m in linden and birch groves, near heather swamps and floodplain meadows — rich in 'honey-making' plants. The essence was that beekeepers climbed a tree by throwing a 'zhen' over a branch — a long, 30 metre rope, woven from strong belts or hemp threads. At one end was a beekeeper's saddle while a hook and two loops were at the other. Honey was collected into special dishes: 'lazben', 'beresten', 'livauka'. In favourable weather, the beekeeper received more than 32 kilograms of honey from each wild hive. Linden honey was considered the best; it was also called 'lipovey'. This honey was 'transparent and clean, like spring water'.

Wild hives were often placed in the landlord's forests. At the same time, the peasants had to pay tribute. At the end of the 19th century, it could be up to 50 Kopecks per hive.

To protect the wild hives from forest predators — bears and martens, who deftly climb trees and feast on honey — access to wild hives was blocked off with platforms into which nails were stuffed. Punishment was also thought suitable for people who decided to encroach on someone else's honey. The attackers were threatened with a considerable fine or even the death penalty.

Over time, beekeeping began to lose its popularity. The area of forests decreased, and, consequently, the number of wild hives. Moreover, when the technology for producing sugar from beets was developed, honey was no longer the only sweet product in the human diet. The price for honey fell and it was not profitable for beekeepers to engage in the craft. With the invention of frame hives, which made it possible to obtain honey without spending a lot of time and effort, beekeeping gradually began to be forgotten, being replaced by apiculture.

Photos from Vladimir Likhodedov's private collection



Mystery about Stonehenge solved

British scientists say they have solved a mystery involving Stonehenge, the world-famous stone monument in Wiltshire

The scientists reported that they have identified where many of Stonehenge's large stones, called megaliths, came from. Thousands of years ago, people used such stones to build markers, monuments and other structures.

The researchers said part of one megalith helped solve the mystery. The small piece of stone had been kept in the United States for over 40 years.

Chemical testing suggests that most of Stonehenge's megaliths, known as sarsens, came from an area called West Woods. It is about 25 kilometres away

from the ancient monument, the researchers said.

People set up the sarsens at Stonehenge over 4,000 years ago. The largest sarsen is 9.1 metres tall. The heaviest weighs about 30 tonnes.

David Nash of the University of Brighton led the study, which was published in the journal *Science Advances*. Mr. Nash said that researchers still do not know how people moved the stones to Stonehenge. "Given the size of the stones, they must have either been dragged or moved on rollers. We don't

know the exact route but at least we now have a starting point and an endpoint."

Stonehenge also has smaller stones, called bluestones. Experts believe these stones came from Pembrokeshire in Wales, around 250km.

A sarsen core sample, taken during repair work in the late 1950s, gave important information about Stonehenge's origins. It was given to Robert Phillips who worked for the company that was repairing the monument. It was similar to sandstone found at West Woods and all but two of the Stonehenge sarsens.



Genoa readies new bridge

Less than two years after the collapse of a highway bridge in Genoa took 43 lives and became a source of national embarrassment, Italy's leaders flocked to the city to inaugurate a gleaming replacement that they called proof of the country's resilience and prowess

"Today Genoa is starting again," Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte told a crowd of officials gathered in the port city, in an event broadcast live nationwide. "Our country can face and overcome difficulties, and can go back to racing."

Genoa's Mayor, Marco Bucci, called the new bridge 'a message of trust and competence for the future'.

The inauguration commanded national attention, offering a rare bright spot after months of suffering from the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting recession.

The Morandi Bridge collapsed shortly before noon on August 14th, 2018, during a torrential rain, dropping dozens of cars

as much as 150 feet into the ravine below.

With remarkable speed, the remains of the Morandi Bridge were dismantled and removed, and the replacement, the Genoa San Giorgio Bridge, was built by almost 1,200 workers for several of Italy's leading industrial and construction companies.

"We are suspended between grief and pride," Renzo Piano, the new bridge's architect and a native of Genoa, told the attendees with a broken voice. "The country showed its best side, competence, energy, resilience."

Mr. Piano, who has been seen on early morning strolls through the work site, said he hoped that this bridge would be loved.

Tickets to nowhere

Taiwan continues to cater to the needs of its travel-starved population by offering yet another aviation experience that doesn't actually take you anywhere

Following up on an offer in July, in which the public was able to check in and board a grounded airplane in Taiwan's Songshan Airport, one airline has just upgraded the faux travel experience by offering an actual flight — to nowhere.

EVA Air, one of the biggest carriers in Taiwan, offered the special journey on August 8th (Father's Day in Taiwan) to help satisfy its customers' travel itch.

The trip took around three hours, with the flight taking off from Taipei Taoyuan Airport, then circling the skies before returning to the same airport.

"The international travel market has been suspended for more than half a year," states a news release on EVA Air's website. "Citizens' cries for going abroad is getting stronger. To satisfy travellers' wishes, EVA Air has decided to introduce an 'alternative travel experience' on Father's Day."

Passengers were able to take in views of several Taiwan attractions including Guishan Island and the scenic Huadong coastline, as well as other nearby islands.

Foreign nationals are still banned from visiting the island but Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it would gradually adjust entry regulations in response to worldwide efforts to resume economic activity.

New penguin colonies

Satellite images reveal guano patches, boosting known emperor penguin colonies by 20 percent

Satellite images have revealed 11 previously unknown emperor penguin colonies in Antarctica, boosting the number of known colonies of the imperilled birds by 20 percent.

The discoveries were made by spotting the distinctive red-brown guano patches the birds leave on the ice. The finds were made possible by higher-resolution images from a new satellite, as previous scans were unable to pick up smaller colonies.

Two of the colonies were a particular surprise. They were found far from the coast, living on sea ice that is anchored to grounded icebergs, a location never seen before.

The new colonies are thought to number a few hundred penguins each, which is smaller than average, so the discoveries increase the total population of

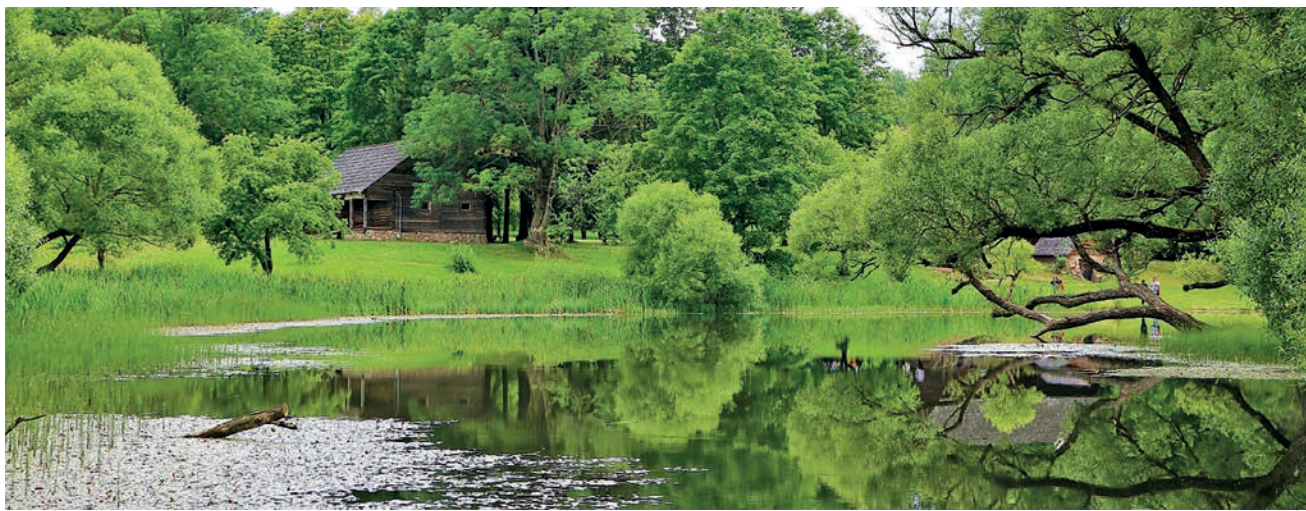
emperor penguins by a smaller proportion of about 5-10 percent.

Emperor penguins are the only penguins that breed on sea ice, rather than land, making them especially vulnerable to the climate crisis. All the new colonies are in areas that are at risk and researchers say these will be the 'canaries in the coal mine' as global heating increasingly affects Antarctica.

"The [new colonies] are an exciting discovery," said Peter Fretwell, at the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), who led the research. "Whilst this is good news, the colonies are small and so only take the overall population count up to just over half a million penguins."

Philip Trathan, also at BAS, said, "The new breeding sites are all in locations where recent model projections suggest emperor penguins will decline."





Great national poet's inspiration

By Lyudmila Rublevskaya

Almost exactly 75 years ago, shortly after the Great Victory, on August 4th, 1945, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus and the People's Commissariat of the BSSR adopted a resolution 'On Perpetuating the Memory of the People's Poet of Belarus, Yanka Kupala'. Among other points, it reads: 'to restore the Yanka Kupala country house in Levki (Orsha District, Vitebsk Region) which was burned by the German fascist invaders and to establish a branch of the Yanka Kupala Literary Museum there; to include in state ownership the house in the former Vyazyinka village where the poet was born and to open a branch of the Yanka Kupala Literary Museum there'.

Yelena Leshkovich, the Director of the Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum, recollects, "Vladislava Lutsevich, the poet's wife and the first director of the restored Kupala house, was the creator and inspiration of the honourable and responsible establishment of our museum and its branches."

Let's take a fascinating trip to these places, currently celebrating the anniversary of their founding with the help of some unusual artefacts — following the recommendations of the chief curator of the Kupala Museum's archives, Nadezhda Saevich, and the Head of the Department of Scientific and Exhibition Activities, Maria Bartkova.

VYAZYNKA Monument to Yanka Kupala

The first artefact that welcomes us at the Vyazyinka Memorial Reserve is the monument to Yanka Kupala, whose story is a true historical detective mystery that began in 1881. It was then that the family of the new tenants, Dominik and Benigna Lutsevich, settled in the Vyazyinka estate, and in the same year the Emperor Aleksandr II died. On January 7th, 1901, a monument to Aleksandr II was erected in Minsk's Sobornaya Square — placed on a majestic pedestal made of black granite by the Minsk stonemason, Abram Sprishen. The great powers were changing and, instead of the sculpture of the Emperor, a plaster Red Army soldier with a rifle appeared on the same pedestal in 1918. Later, it was replaced by revolutionary Hirsch Lekert and then a fountain was installed instead of the monument — worked on by the son of Abram Sprishen. The black granite pedestal was used in 1949 to install a bust of Yanka Kupala — sculptured by Zair Azgur — in Central Park. Representatives of the same Sprishen dynasty engraved Kupala's lines on the pedestal devoted to the commune that came from the Kremlin, to perpetuate happiness in the world. The bust was moved to Vyazyinka in 1972, after a sculptural ensemble was created at Yanka Kupala Park. At present, the statue with such a complex history is decorated with Kupala's lines from his *Young Belarus* poem (translated by Vera Rich):



BELTA



*Arise from the depths, thou of falcon-born race,
O'er sires crosses, their woes, degradations,
O young Belarus, come thou forth,
take thy place
Of honour and fame among nations.*

Tenants' house

The largest exhibit at the Vyazyinka Memorial Reserve is, of course, the house above the Vyazyinka River where the poet was born. Owner Stanislav Zambzhitsky used the house as accommodation for tenants. The Lutsevich family lived there in 1881-1883. The house was built in the 1830s, much damaged by time and war, but several of the wooden parts of the old house have been preserved in the wall of the memorial room. The building was restored in 1972 based on archival documents and memories of old residents. It's now possible to clearly imagine where little Yaska grew up.

The chest

The atmosphere of life in the house where the Lutsevich lived is created by authentic items of the late 19th-early 20th century. These were collected from area around Vyazyinka and among them is a huge chest: the

Museum staff name main artefacts of Kupala's residences in Vyazyinka and Levki

bride received a dowry in it and, in the future, the family used it to preserve family heirlooms and documents. Such a chest was especially useful during the Lutsevich's frequent travels. No doubt, this is a true symbol of the poet's travelling life.

LEVKI The Chevrolet car

The building on the bank of the Dnieper River, near the village of Levki, is sometimes called the 'golden cage of the poet'. It's Yanka Kupala's summer house built by the BSSR Council of People's Commissars on December 11th, 1935 to mark the 30th anniversary of the great poet's creative activity. The poet himself chose this place: more than once he holidayed there to write many great lines. Kupala also came here on June 24th, 1941, on his way from a burning Minsk. The car he was driving is now kept at the museum: it's a black 1937 Chevrolet, number 5720BH. The car was presented to Yanka Kupala in 1939 by the BSSR Government and, as poet Sergei Grakhovsky recalls, "This was the first personal car in the city... The owner had to hire a driver. However, Uncle Yanka hoped to learn how to drive himself. He came to the Writer's House with books on automobiles, enthusiastically telling us how he was mastering the theory. However, I never saw him driving..."

In this car, the poet and his wife went to the evacuation from Levki, then from Moscow to Tatarstan. The poet's widow made a great effort to save the black Chevrolet and move it to Minsk and, in 1950, she gave it to the museum.

Barometer

Those coming to Levki will definitely be shown a barometer attached to the wall. A thermometer, above which a bear is carved, is placed in a wooden carved frame above the round window of the barometer. Yanka Kupala liked to wander around the neighbourhood, watch the waves of the Dnieper, walk through the pine forest... Through the interactive window in Levki, visitors can see the poet's 'ghost' walking among the apple trees. It is not difficult to imagine how Ivan Dominikovich approached the barometer every day to calculate whether the weather was expected to be favourable for walking.



Lion-formed ink set

Another thing which the poet often used, was a glazed, dark brown coloured writing set decorated with the figure of a lion. It was produced at the Kopy's Ceramic Plant. Kopy's has long been famous for its ceramics and figures of bears and lions are traditionally made here. Perhaps when the poet was about to take up his pen, he was recalling his *Lion's Grave* poem.

The exhibitions in Vyazyinka and Levki offer their guests many more wonderful exhibits. Director Yelena Leshkovich admits, "I dream that every Belarusian will get to the Kupala houses, to famous Vyazyinka where the poet was born, to Levki which was his 'golden cage' and further through these places to the whole Kupala collection."



Mesmerising sunset on Naroch Lake

By Sofia Arsenieva

Plunge into silver water

The Naroch Lake area — place of the largest natural reservoirs of the Republic surrounded by century-old forests — is the main attraction point for beach lovers in Belarus. The pure waters of Naroch is so huge that it's hardly possible to see the opposite banks, while the depths are full of fish and even salmon is fished there. With this in view, the lake is known as the 'Belarusian sea'. Naroch neighbours Myastro, Batorino and Blednoe lakes whose picturesque banks have long been given comfort and practicality by the addition of local health resorts, modern recreation centres and camping sites. Those wishing to plunge into nature can admire its riches and the unusual landscapes of the Belarusian lakeland on a unique eco-route. High hills alternate with deep lake basins — creating a fascinating sight.

The locals' secret place is a small forest lake — Rudakovo, 4km north-west of the city of Myadel. Scientists have discovered that the local water is healing, as it contains trace silver elements. The old-timers say this is because a church once was buried under the water here.

Look into Bozhie Oko

Those dreaming of beautiful sunsets and parties by the water until sunrise should head to the Braslav District. It is here that one of the most exciting open-air — *Viva Braslav* — is held annually. For two days, the provincial district turns into a huge dance floor with incredible natural scenery.

About six dozen lakes — small and large, shallow and deep, surprisingly regular in shape and with numerous islands — appeared in the north of Belarus as a result of glacier melting fifteen thousand years ago. The natural reservoirs are now united into a national park, which is unique for the CIS. So, after a break-away party, it's great to enjoy a secluded vacation in the bosom of nature.

Interestingly, each of the Braslav lakes has its own mystery and virtually the most unusual is called Bozhie Oko [God's Eye]. This tiny lake — which is no more than a hundred metres in diameter — resembles an eye from above and changes its colour depending on the weather.



Du Island



Bozhie Oko Lake. The forest surrounds the lake and makes it look like an eye



Lakes are connected by rivers making them ideal for kayaking

Sink to the bottom

Belarus also has its own company of divers. Some rivers boast truly transparent water and it's a pleasure to scuba dive to a depth of a couple of dozen metres to enjoy the amazing world of freshwater flora and fauna.

Blue-eyed Belarus

Five reasons to visit Belarusian resorts



Blue-coloured arthropod shells look very amazing

Paradoxically, the deepest lake in the country is called Dolgoe [Long]. Diving fifty metres down is not for the cautious. Intrepid divers love this place for its 'urban' bottom: it's impossible to find a Titanic, but there are old boats, bicycles, and even crosses here. It's wonderful to return to the surface where a campfire and fragrant fish are already waiting!

Become a Robinson Crusoe on Du Island

On the border of three states — Belarus, Russia and Latvia, there is the magnificent Osveiskoe Lake. So far, few tourists know about it and, accordingly, there is a chance to truly plunge into the world of wildlife: see a herd of deer at dawn, seriously engage in birdwatching or eat wild berries straight from the bush. It's a pleasure for true connoisseurs of country recreation.

The main feature of Osveiskoe Lake is Du Island. The area of five square kilometres is great for photo shoots as many Red Book animals and birds live here. However, there are no people at all. Once there was a village on the island, but now Du is completely uninhabited — with no bridges or ferries. It's only possible to get there by boat. There is no mobile communication or power lines on the island and it's an ideal place for those who are tired of the hustle and bustle of the city.

Catch shrimps and blue crayfish

Belarusian seafood has long been the stuff of legend. Some might laugh, saying it's impossible as Belarus has no access to the sea, although there are reservoirs in the Republic which boast exotic water inhabitants. Fishermen of the Brest Region appreciate Lake Beloe [White] since, at night, they can fish for river shrimp which are still a delicacy. An unusual catch is also possible in the Vitebsk Region. Fishermen come here for the unique blue-coloured crayfish. The mineral composition of the water in local

Lake Borovenok is special, so the shells of the arthropods look very colourful — turning from blue to green. Scientists say that eating this miracle of nature is completely safe. So, keen fishermen set up tent camps here every weekend.



Maksim Nedosekov

Oars on the water

The Canoe Sprint Championships Belarus: leaders confirm their status while youth are approaching

By Tatiana Pastushenko

Belarus' Canoe Sprint Championships has ended on the rowing canal in Zaslavl. One of this season's few events was held on the days when the Olympics were planned to be held in Tokyo, and the results shown by the athletes at the tournament gave their coaches many reasons for both optimism and thought.

To assess the functional readiness of the leaders and view the reserves, who in the coming years will be stepping on the heels of the favourites is one of the tasks set by the coaches of our team at the last championship.

All the leaders are in the ranks. Once again, Olga Khudenko and Marina Litvinchuk, Oleg Yurenya, Artem Kozyr, Olga Klimova, Nadezhda Makarchenko and Yelena Nozdreva, who became multi-medallists of the competition, as well as other leaders of our team, showed their high class. The head coach of the squad, Vladimir Shantarovich, was also pleased with the youth, "A lot of promising young athletes took part in this championship. Their level has increased greatly over this winter. If they continue to progress next year, then at the national championship in 2021 we will see a real battle. Then we can safely go to Tokyo and tell ourselves that we represent a very serious country that will fight for medals."

Next year, the Belarusian Championship is to be held six weeks before the Olympics. There are several reasons for this: this will enable us to assess the readiness of the rowers for the main event of the four-year period while also leaving time to polish some points.

In the meantime, according to Mr. Shantarovich, the rowers will be given a small break, and soon they will start working again: canoeists will gather in Minsk while kayakers — in Mozyr. In this situation, it is difficult to make long-term plans, so for now they are as follows: on August 30th, the athletes will complete their next training camp, and then everything will depend on the decision of the international and European federations; at present, the September World Cup and the October European Championship are not deleted from the calendar.

Female face of the kayak

One of the squads with which our medal hopes are pinned in Tokyo is the national

women's kayak team. Olga Khudenko and Marina Litvinchuk, Nadezhda Popok and Margarita Makhneva proved at the national championship that even in conditions when international events with the highest level of competition don't take place, they continue to systematically prepare for the Games.

The senior coach of the team, Gennady Galitsky, says that he had only good impressions from the tournament in Zaslavl, "Olga Khudenko performed consistently, having won two distances in the kayak singles. This is not surprising, since for the past three years, she has claimed medals at top tournaments: In 2017, she won the World Championship at K500m singles, in 2018, she clinched bronze and, last year, took silver. Now, she has confirmed her status, and this allows us to look to the future with optimism. Marina Litvinchuk is also close behind her. But due to the fact that she took a short break to treat her injuries, she is now about 80 percent ready. Nevertheless, she finished twice behind Olga, and at the K200m distance they were literally hun-



Olga Klimova

dreds of a second apart. Margarita Makhneva had a fruitful season, improved her performance in the singles and, of course, will affect the performance of our four. Nadezhda Popok is also our stable and experienced athlete who knows how to train. In total, I enjoyed the four very much; today it's one of the strongest crews in the world."

Gennady Galitsky was also pleased with the youth team: Alina Svita, Alina Nevmerzhitskaya, Inna Savchuk and other girls. The coach says that they need a little more time to get stronger. He also views the transfer of the Olympic Games from the viewpoint of time, "Young athletes still have a whole year to train, so the transfer was a bonus for them. Undoubtedly, the girls grow and improve their skills with every year."



Vitaly Pivovarchik

Done superbly

Belarusian Athletics Championship: the best result — a true delight

The Belarusian Athletics Championship, which ended in Minsk, was the largest and most high-profile event in the sporting world's season of 2020. Athletes overseas and in Europe have only recently begun to train seriously. A real rehearsal for the Olympics was held in Minsk! The tournament was planned to help understand what Belarusian athletes could claim in Tokyo if the quarantine apocalypse hadn't happened in the spring.

By Dmitry Komashko

Irina Zhuk

Irina Zhuk was crying while sitting in the pole vault area but these were tears of joy. At the last Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, the Belarusian jumper was happy just to be in the starting list. She reached only 4.15m, however, as she was too nervous. This time, she started her performance with 4.40m and getting into her stride after setting a new Belarusian record (now 4.72m!), she complained that the season has been a blur.

"I'm so happy. I had an injury in February. Then the postponement of the Olympics, then — another injury. It was so serious that I trained lying down, through pain and tears. I can't even express what this record means to me!" Irina aimed for 4.80m at the Dinamo Stadium, but so far this height has eluded her.

Tatiana Kholodovich and Aleksei Kotkovets

Tatiana Kholodovich's results in javelin were 66.85m. She had even bigger figures this season, but even these exceeded the result of the Croatian Sara Kolak by almost 70cm (which had enabled Kolak to become an Olympic champion in Brazil in 2016). Tatiana made it easily at the first try, thus removing all the questions about her, and she wasn't even out of breath. However, good results had been expected from her, as the Belarusian is one of the recognised world leaders. Meanwhile, Alexei Kotkovets' throw at 86.05m was a real sensation. In Rio, with such results, he would have beaten Johannes Vetter from Germany, as well as the silver medallist of the London Olympics, Finn Antti Ruuskanen, and many more strong athletes who are usually considered favourites. Moreover, Kotkovets is only 22 years old. In throwing standards, he is young, but it seems that his ambitions are already those of a mature man.



Tatiana Kholodovich

Anastasia Mironchik-Ivanova and Maksim Nedosekov

Nastya and Maksim impressed not only with their results. Of course, both the 6.81m of Mironchik-Ivanova, and the 2.30m of Nedosekov are absolutely top level, including in Olympic standards. However, both have interesting backstories. Nedosekov began to train only relatively recently, so it's better not to talk about courage and

peak form at all as he has now achieved — 2.30m — which is just 3cm lower than his result at the World Championship. The same 3cm could have been enough for the Olympic medals in Rio. But, having jumped at Dinamo Stadium, Maksim almost took 2.35m. We can only guess where he will reach after full preparation and with an Olympic atmosphere.

Many were also ready to put Mironchik 'out to grass'. Photo sessions for Instagram were supplemented by a singer's career and the development of her own clothing line. Usually in such cases there is no room for good results. However, this summer, Anastasia posted 6.93m in July and 6.80m at the main start.

Vadim Devyatovsky

The holding of the competitions this season is a risky event, but the athletes managed it. The Chairman of the Belarusian Athletics Federation, Vadim Devyatovsky, emphasises that everything turned out even better than planned, "The Championship of Belarus showed that if the Olympics were held on the previously scheduled dates, the Belarusian athletics would come to it fully prepared and could win medals. The current competitions can be safely considered a starting point on the way to Tokyo. After all, we understand that due to the pandemic, the athletes were forced to interrupt training camps and undergo quarantine, not to mention lost motivation. But we held out and showed what we are worth."

All participants of the Champions League quarter-finals determined

Atalanta will play with PSG, Leipzig with Atletico, Barcelona with Bayern, Manchester City with Lyon. The remaining matches of the season will be held in the format of the Final Eight in Lisbon: the quarter-finals will be played on August 12th-15th. The semi-final meetings are scheduled for August 18th and 19th, while the decisive match of the 65th main club

tournament of the Old World will be held on August 23rd on the field of the Lisbon Estádio da Luz.

Canadian hockey player Brandon Kozon officially moved to Dynamo

"This will be my sixth season in the KHL," says the player. "I have often been to Minsk. This is a great place for a hockey player: everything is convenient for both play and leisure. There are great fans in Minsk who understand

the game and create a superb atmosphere in the arena."

Last season, the Canadian forward spent his time in another KHL club — Magnitogorsk Metallurg. He has also played for Jokerit and Lokomotiv (Yaroslavl). In total, he played 308 games in the league and scored 230 points. The forward's biography also includes matches for the Canadian national team, in which he won silver medals at the 2010 World Youth Championship. He also boasts bronze from the 2018 Olympic Games.



Photo of the week

A girl with sunflowers

BELTA

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



August 13th is International Left-Handers Day. It was proclaimed in 1984 on the initiative of the International Confederation of Left-Handers.

According to statistics, from 3 to 10 percent of the world's population is left-handed. The purpose of the action is to draw public attention to the problems faced by left-handers in a right-handed world.

On August 14th, 1385, the Krevo Unia was concluded — a dynastic alliance between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland, according to which the Lithuanian Grand Duke Jagailo, marrying the Polish Queen Jadwiga, became the Polish king. This alliance was a continuation of the long-term joint struggle that the two states waged against the Teutonic Order in the 13th-14th centuries. Both the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were interested in the agreement signed in the Krevo Castle (now the Smorgon District).



On August 15th, 1840, an agricultural school was opened in the town of Gorki, Mogilev Region, to train managers for state and private estates. Now, it is the Belarusian

State Agricultural Academy. The Academy occupies a leading position in the country among universities in its profile for the development of international relations, actively liaising with leading universities and research centres in the UK, the USA, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and elsewhere.



August 15th is Homeless Animals International Day. It is celebrated at the invitation of the US International Society for Animal Rights on the third Saturday in August. This date is not considered a holiday, but an occasion to address the problem of homeless animals and to tell as many people as possible about their tragic fate.

August 15th is the national holiday of the Republic of India: Independence Day. On this day in 1947, the Indian Independence Act came into force, and the tricolour flag of independent India was raised over the walls of the Red Fort in Delhi by the first Prime Minister of the country, Jawaharlal Nehru, in front of a huge crowd



of people. Thus, a new stage in the history of the ancient country was marked.

On August 16th, 1920, Leonid Beda was born (Kustanai Region, Kazakhstan) — Lieutenant General (1972) and twice Hero of the Soviet Union (1944, 1945). During the Great Patriotic War, from August 1942, he was a pilot, a squadron commander of an assault aviation regiment at the Stalingrad, Southern, 4th Ukrainian and 3rd Belorussian fronts. He took part in the Battle of Stalingrad, liberation of Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania, as well as offensive operations in East Prussia and Poland. He flew 214 combat missions. After the war, he commanded an aviation regiment, division, aviation of the Belarusian military district. Streets in Minsk and Lida, alongside aviation clubs and youth construction teams are named after him. He died in 1976 in a car accident.



August 16th is the Day of the Air Force in the Republic of Belarus. Military pilots and ground specialists of the Belarusian Air Force celebrate their professional holiday on the third Sunday of August. In its formation and development, the Air Force has travelled a difficult path from piston aviation to jet



aviation, with modern aviation systems appearing in service,

embodying the latest scientific achievements. Today, the modern generation of defenders of the air borders of Belarus is worthily continuing the glorious traditions of the older generations of military pilots, improving their flying skills and clearly demonstrating their constant readiness and ability to solve complex combat training tasks.

On August 19th, 1960, the first successful orbital flight of living beings into space was made. The Soviet satellite Sputnik-5 with the dogs Belka and Strelka on board was launched into low-earth orbit and returned to Earth 25 hours later. This stellar odyssey paved the way for man into space.



August 19th is World Humanitarian Day. It's celebrated in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution of December 11th, 2008, to pay tribute to UN humanitarian workers and those who lost their lives while helping others.

