



Products from  
Svetlogorsk  
are in great  
demand in  
Europe today

5



There were  
always countless  
windmills in  
our homeland  
in the past

9

INTERNATIONAL

# The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003

NO. 14 (828)

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2020

WWW.SB.BY



National Library of Belarus

## ‘Hold on! Together we’ll win!’

Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Belarus has launched a campaign of support and solidarity for our country with the states most affected by COVID-19.

The campaign has been broadcast on the building of the National Library of Belarus for a week, starting from April 2nd.

“‘Hold on! Together we’ll win!’ is our symbolic appeal which we hope will find a response in the hearts of our compatriots and foreign partners,” notes the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Belarus, adding that it’s only possible to live through challenge by uniting the efforts of the entire international community.



9 771991 297007

20014

# It all starts with economics

**Preparations for the upcoming Presidential election, the situation in the economy and measures to counteract the spread of viral infections — these and other important topics were discussed by Aleksandr Lukashenko with the Speaker of the Council of the Republic, Natalia Kochanova. The Head of State wasn't focused on economic issues by chance: the work of enterprises and people will help the country to cope with this difficult time.**

## Need to work

“There are a number of issues that we must discuss with you. We will not hide the fact that these also include political issues as we have the year of the presidential elections. The biggest problem is the economy. This issue will not go away. We need to not only discuss, but also plan the presidential elections. We still have no reason to postpone the presidential elections, as some here tell us.

As far as the situation in the economy is concerned, Aleksandr Lukashenko stated that in Belarus they are trying to make enterprises work and people get paid, “Here I have the Trump formula. I liked his recent statement very much when he sincerely said that if we do not start working immediately (he said this addressing the Americans, the country where the US Dollar is printed, the world's top economy), more people will die from unemployment and hunger than from coronavirus. He is right. What should we say? We need to work and use every possible option to save ourselves from this crisis.”

Moreover, the president added that the topic of viral infections needs to be kept on the radar, too. Against the background of the fight against the spread of coronavirus, we must not forget that there are many other categories of patients who also need medical attention.

The President said that he had asked Natalia Kochanova to personally deal with the situation in Vitebsk over the past weekend.

“You are a person of courage. A soldier who has worked during the weekend in a problematic region — your native area. What is your point of view about what's happening there? I'm not saying that there is some kind of catastrophe. The climate in the Vitebsk Region has always been different and this peak of illness frequency has shifted slightly. Yes, there were some mistakes. Today the Health Minister is working there, I sent him with specialists to pay attention, analyse and draw conclusions.”

## System was created

Nevertheless, the President doesn't support mass isolation.

“There are many problems that need to be worked on, rather than closing borders and driving people into their homes. We have always been taught, you remember: with ARVI, flu and so on, it's necessary to go outside, breathe fresh air and ventilate the room.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew attention to the fact that, isolating people in their homes and apartments, no one knows whether they are healthy or have already become infected with something, and not just the coronavirus. As a result, people are in their closed apartment in an atmosphere of viruses and it is often too late, people are already in too critical condition to be cured.



Andrey Sazonov

**Sowing campaign is in full swing in the country**

“Therefore, I don't understand those who advise to isolate, close, and block. We must continue as we always did.”

Mr. Lukashenko noted that in general more than a hundred people have already been cured of coronavirus in Belarus. He thanked the doctors for this.

In conclusion, Aleksandr Lukashenko said that, as in case with other events, be it a war, an epidemic or a pandemic, lessons should be learned for the future.

“We are learning a lot. I personally control several processes. It's too early to talk about this, but I already told people: the time will come, these lessons must be learned.”

## The situation is controllable

After the working meeting, Natalia Kochanova answered questions from

journalists. In particular, the Chair of the Council of the Republic said that the date of the election campaign will be determined after discussion with the Central Election Commission.

“The elections will be held in our country within a clearly defined time frame and in accordance with the law. There will be no postponement of elections, this is unequivocal.”

The Speaker also said that Belarus would invite WHO specialists to evaluate the performance of the health system, “In order for all our citizens to be sure that the authorities are not hiding anything and are not trying to smooth over the situation, I was instructed to contact

the specialists of the World Health Organisation and invite them to our country so that they give a real assessment of the work of our health care system.”

Ms. Kochanova commented on her trip to the Vitebsk Region. On the instruction of the President she went there to find out about the situation in the region. Health Minister Vladimir Karanik also left for Vitebsk. “The situation is controllable. Doctors understand what needs to be done,” she said.

The Chair of the Upper House of Parliament visited health facilities in Vitebsk and found out about the work of laboratories, where they have begun to issue tests for the detection of coronavirus. “Of course, there were questions that needed to be asked. Now a decision has been made: laboratories



## Press Secretary of the President of Belarus, Natalia Eismont, told us about the reasons for the President's order to invite WHO specialists to Belarus:

This assignment is due to the fact that we now live under the conditions of information coronavirus. Every day and every hour we observe numerous attempts to rock the situation in the media as much as possible. We all monitor and see a lot of conversations, attempts to misinform people and to use the situation in order to undermine confidence in the authorities.

First of all, in order to remove any charges and show that we are not hiding anything, the President instructed the Chair of the Council of the Republic to immediately contact the leadership of the World Health Organisation and invite their specialists here. Moreover, these should be specialists, a team formed at their discretion. They will be asked to evaluate both the work of the healthcare system as a whole and, I emphasise, the current situation and our mechanisms for countering the most dangerous infections. After that, the experts will give a public assessment of what they saw — openly and impartially. All this is done so that there will be no misunderstandings in the future.

will be opened in all regional centres in order to quickly give results on coronavirus tests. Therefore, the situation is controllable.”

The Speaker noted that amid problems due to the spread of the coronavirus infection in the world, various proposals are being made, including the closure of enterprises. However, Ms. Kochanova underlined that there are no grounds for such measures, “We understand that the epidemic will pass, and what will remain? We do not have such a situation that it is necessary to close some enterprises. Therefore, the economy is a priority: the work of businesses, the fulfilment of the tasks that confront us.”

**Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by**

# Collaboration for peace

**Last week, a power block gathered at the Independence Palace, with Aleksandr Lukashenko receiving reports from State Secretary of the Security Council Andrei Ravkov, Defence Minister Viktor Khrenin and Head of the Main Intelligence Directorate, Deputy Head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Belarus, Pavel Tikhonov. The President was interested in issues relating to the state of affairs in the army and to responding to NATO's *Defender Europe 2020* exercises. On this occasion, the Head of State underlined, “There should be no excesses. I instructed you last year to think of an appropriate response. This is about money, too. Therefore, no excessive measures should be taken.”**

## Peace-making line

Aleksandr Lukashenko, in particular, outlined the topic of what actions are currently being taken by the NATO bloc, “I don't want it to be seen as sabre rattling by us. So far, we do not perceive NATO's exercise near our borders this way. One of the reasons for that is that they largely dropped their initial plans. I think the intelligence will report about the situation there and we will discuss this matter and take further steps to respond to the developments at our borders,”



**Planned field exercise of special operations forces' artillery units held at Brest training ground**

Judging from the available information the President expressed confidence that Belarus will handle the situation. Furthermore, this should be done without over-reacting. Mr. Lukashenko paid attention to the fact that the army is functioning normally, no events are postponed or cancelled.

“The army is getting ready. Many units are on shooting ranges. I know about the exercise of peacekeeping units of the Armed Forces of Belarus and the UK Armed Forces in the Vitebsk Region. The feedback is good. No one should worry about it. We need peace,” stressed the Head of State. “Peacekeeping is the one thing where we should co-operate with everyone. I think that our main partner — the Russian Federation — is not winding down its activities in peacekeeping or other areas.”

## Systematic work

After the report to the Head of State, the Defence Minister Viktor Khrenin came out to reporters to reveal some details of the conversation. In particular, he

reported to the Head of State about the situation that is developing today at the Belarusian borders, including the conduct of the *Defender Europe 2020* exercise.

“On March 16th the intensity of the exercises was reduced due to the difficult epidemiological situation. A number of countries (Germany, Italy, the Netherlands) have already refused to hold them. The UK has completely reduced and withdrawn its forces and assets. The related exercises in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were cancelled. However, there are still no assertions that these exercises have been ended.”

At the same time, US and NATO military units are present near the borders. In this regard, Viktor Khrenin noted that Belarus is continuing the planned training of its Armed Forces. Our country is conducting these events independently, without any help.

The meeting with the President also discussed the spread of the coronavirus infection. Viktor Khrenin assured reporters: there is no panic in the army, all activities are carried out as planned, and the personnel involved in them are healthy.

“However, we are not relaxing.” Our sanitary and epidemiological services, our doctors are on guard, on high alert, in order to quickly and efficiently provide assistance,” said the Minister emphasising that at the moment there is not a single case of coronavirus infection in the Armed Forces.

Viktor Khrenin also recalled that preparations are underway for the parade in honour of the 75th anniversary of the Victory.

**Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by**

# People are the focus of attention

**The Head of State visited several enterprises of the Servolux Group of Companies in Smolevichi District last week. The main topics discussed during the working trip were the sowing campaign and the development of agricultural production. Aleksandr Lukashenko instructed them to increase production of buckwheat in the country and more actively start spring field work.**

## To work promptly

The Head of State was informed about the progress of spring field work in the country, the development of agricultural production in the Minsk Region, in particular in the Smolevichi District and the prospects for the development of the Servolux Group of Companies.

Aleksandr Lukashenko familiarised himself with the modern technology of raising and keeping cattle at the commercial dairy farm Mgle of the Smolevichi Dairies subsidiary of Smolevichi Broiler. This modern production facility includes three cowsheds and a milking unit, built in 2016 at their own expense. The cost exceeded \$15.5m.

The Head of State also visited Uni-meat which is part of the Servolux Group of Companies. A large meat processing plant has been established here. The President was interested in how it functions in the current conditions.

During the visit, Aleksandr Lukashenko was also told about the Antey-sad farm in the Myadel District, where berries, vegetables, fruits are grown and dried fruits and natural juices are produced. According to the President, food production is promising. “Examples of successful management of private companies should be distributed in the country,” he said.

The Agriculture and Food Minister, Ivan Krupko, said that — in accordance with the structure of sown areas — spring sowing is planned to be carried out on an area of 2.6m hectares. At the moment, all

regions have started sowing early spring crops, and the pace of work is good. The Minister spoke about the availability of mineral fertilisers, machinery, and fuel.

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that spring field work should be carried out quickly.



## To decide on the markets

The Chairman of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee, Aleksandr Turchin, briefed the President on agricultural development in the Minsk Region — which is ranked third among the Belarusian regions in terms of farming growth rates.

Aleksandr Turchin mentioned the further level of processing capacities, “Where are we going next, either expanding production or increasing efficiency?” The President replied, “We need to decide on markets. It is bad if we hold back the volumes. We need

markets to increase production.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also said that the food supply issue is of top priority. In this regard, it is necessary to focus on expanding production. The Head of State named China among a major promising market.

Further development of the Chinese market was also raised in a conversation with the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Servolux — Yevgeny Baskin. He said that the company he heads is guided by the ‘from field to shop floor’ principle: products are not only grown but also processed and 65 percent of them are exported, including to China.

Production of buckwheat in the country was also discussed. The Head of State was informed that, in previous years, Belarus covered its own needs by about half

and the rest was imported from Russia. However, recently there have been some difficulties with deliveries. This is the reason for the President’s order, “It is necessary to cultivate buckwheat for the needs of Belarus.”

At the same time, the President drew attention to the fact that it is necessary to systematically approach this issue, select the most favourable soils for this crop, study this culture well and the technology of its cultivation.

## To think about people

During the trip, Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed the opinion that private business should focus not only on using assets and getting benefits, but also on taking care of people: labour teams, residents of areas where a particular production is located. “If someone in Belarus wants to work, at least under the present authorities, the current President, they should first of all think about the people,” he said.

In particular, the President focused businessmen towards the development of nearby rural settlements. “We’ll always make a deal. And we will not stand for the price. The person is the focus.”

The criteria for evaluating the work of district managers should be focused not on quantitative indicators, but on the efficiency of production, the Head of State believes.

**Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by**

# Belarusian Parliament ratifies visa facilitation and readmission agreement with EU

**The Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus has ratified the visa facilitation agreement and the agreement on readmission of individuals staying without an authorisation with the European Union**

The readmission agreement was presented to senators by the Deputy Foreign Minister, Oleg Kravchenko, and the Chairman of the International Affairs and National Security Commission of the Council of the Republic — Sergei Rachkov. The officials stressed the importance of the document for Belarus-EU relations. “The ratification of the agreement will help strengthen bilateral relations for the sake of continuous development of economic, humanitarian, cultural, scientific and other ties between Belarus and the EU,” said Sergei Rachkov.

The Deputy Internal Affairs Minister, Aleksandr Barsukov, presented the readmission agreement. He noted that thanks to the country’s geographical position, the implementation of the agreement will make an effective tool to fight illegal migration.

Both the agreements were also ratified by the House of Representatives at the opening of the spring session. Belarus and the EU signed the visa facilitation and readmission agreements in Brussels on January 8th. The parties believe that this will facilitate human contacts and the development of international ties, including in tourism, and strengthen trust and mutual understanding between the nations.

The visa facilitation agreement provides for mutual facilitation of visa procedures for a broad spectrum of citizens and for reducing visa fees. Citizens will be able to apply for visas to embassies of European nations and to visa centres. The price for a Schengen visa for Belarusians will drop to 35 Euros while the decision to issue a visa or not will be made within ten days (30 days if additional background checks are required). Many categories of citizens will be able to apply for visas without paying the fee depending on the purpose of the visit and will be able to get multiple-entry visas with longer periods of validity using a simplified procedure. The cost of Belarusian visas for European Union citizens will drop to 35 Euros as well. The duration of stay for foreigners in Belarus will be doubled from 90 days per year to 180 days.

Once the readmission agreement comes into force, Belarus and the European Union will have to readmit their own citizens, third-country citizens and stateless persons who do not meet or no longer meet the requirements to legally stay in each other’s territory.

The documents are to be ratified by the National Assembly of Belarus and endorsed by the European Parliament. They will come into force on the first day of the second month after the parties have notified each other about the completion of the ratification procedures. The visa facilitation agreement is expected to come into effect in June 2020.

**Based on materials of belta.by**

# WHO to come to Belarus

**During a working meeting with the Chair of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly, Natalia Kochanova, the President asked to contact the World Health Organisation and invite its experts to our country — with the aim of getting an independent assessment of the coronavirus situation in Belarus and the domestic healthcare system’s operation. The request was promptly sent to the WHO Representation in Belarus. Natalia Kochanova held talks with the WHO Regional Director for Europe, Hans Kluge, and confirmed the invitation for WHO specialists to visit Belarus.**

In the format of a videoconference, the parties discussed a broad range of issues, including Belarus’ cooperation with WHO in general and the arrangement for the visit of WHO experts. Ms. Kochanova updated the WHO Regional Office for Europe on the epidemiological situation in Belarus and the measures the country is taking to curb the spread of the coronavirus. She also thanked WHO for close cooperation with Belarus. “Today we see a great number of false stories and fake news related to the measures taken by our country. Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko asked to extend this invitation so that WHO specialists will assess the ongoing developments in Belarus and the performance of our healthcare system,” she said.



Ms. Kochanova added that Belarus is doing everything to minimise the damage associated with the virus. “The Head of State reiterates that people are in the focus of our efforts. We are not hiding anything. Everything is being done to minimise losses for the people and the country,” she said.

In turn, Hans Kluge thanked the Belarusian President for the invitation. “It is very important that the Head of State is so involved in the matter. I am glad to hear it. Earlier, I sent a letter to the Belarusian Health Ministry saying that the Belarusian authorities are doing everything right. Now the moment has come to mobilise the public to overcome this situation,” he said. Hans Kluge added that he will discuss the possibility of sending WHO experts personally to Belarus.

The representative of the World Health Organisation to Belarus, Batory Berdyklychev, has confirmed once again that Belarus is adhering to WHO recommendations.

**Based on materials of belta.by**

FOCUS

# Many Swedish and British thanks

By Nina Romanova

The fact that 70 citizens of Sweden, the United States and other countries took off from Istanbul on the last day of March thanks to a charter flight of the Belarusian air carrier, with the assistance of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, has received a wide response. As diplomats note, Minsk is the only route that allows them to get to Stockholm...

In an interview to the *SB. Belarus Segodnya* newspaper, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Sweden to Belarus, Christina Johansson, commented on the situation, "We really, just like Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde on Twitter, sincerely thank the Belarusian side, the Foreign Ministry and Belavia for their help in organising a flight from Istanbul in an emergency. The Swedish side is very grateful to Belarus for responding and carrying out the flight, which allowed more than 70 Swedish citizens to return home. These are extremely difficult times and it's time to talk about international solidarity. Each country is looking for its own ways to help its own citizens. It is very important for us that Belarus has shown attention and assistance to foreign citizens in this situation. Speaking of solidarity, I would like to say that Sweden has allocated a large amount of money to the UN Fund for Developing Countries. International mutual assistance and support is important and necessary for everyone today."

The British side has also expressed gratitude to Belarus and Belavia for continuing flights to the UK. The British Embassy in Minsk commented, "At this alarming time, thousands of people around

## Belarus receives grateful thanks for assistance from foreign citizens



Aleksey Vaznitsynov

the world are trying to return home, while the number of commercial flights is constantly decreasing. Thanks to Belavia, Belarusians in the UK and British citizens in Belarus are not exposed to the stress and uncertainty that travellers stranded in other countries are subjected to. The UK was very happy to help a Belarusian citizen who ended up in Brazil return home, and we are very grateful to the Belarusian side for their assistance in our common work to overcome the unprecedented difficulties associated with COVID-19. The conclusions from this story are actually much more global than they seem at first glance. As UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, 'the coronavirus pandemic is a watershed moment for modern society. History will judge us not by how individual

governments have handled the crisis, but by how well we have managed to unite and coordinate efforts at the global level for the benefit of all humanity'."

It becomes clear that only through joint efforts can we successfully overcome this challenge in connection with the pandemic affecting the whole planet. The Belarusian Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, recently had a telephone conversation with Estonian Foreign Minister, Urmas Reinsalu. The main focus of the conversation was on the situation with coronavirus. The effective interaction of the two countries in providing assistance to citizens in returning to their homeland was noted. The parties expressed their mutual gratitude for the constructive cooperation on this issue.

# Record size

**Belarusian largest concrete mixer, ABS-12DA, was produced by Axiom-Group together with the Minsk Automobile Works. The special machine boasts a record weight and drum volume, being able to produce 12 cubic metres of the finished mixture and transporting 26 tonnes of viscous concrete. The total weight of the vehicle is 44.8 tonnes.**

By Igor Svetlov

According to the creators of the innovation, concrete mixers on the MAZ chassis have been manufactured for thirteen years, but they haven't released anything like it in Belarus before.

The MAZ press service said that the Tigarbo attachments were installed on one of the best 8x4 chassis. It's powered by a YaMZ Euro-5 motor with a capacity of 42HP, which is produced using Renault technology. There is a 800-litre water bank with heating. Moreover, the innovation boasts a modern cabin with sound insulation and air conditioning. As expected, the new product will outperform its 'peers' in its capabilities, reliability and cost-effectiveness.

According to its developers, the vehicle will find application at large construction sites both in Belarus and abroad. The special machine is planned to be delivered to Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and other CIS states. Deliveries to the countries of Eastern Europe, particularly to Lithuania and Poland, are not excluded.



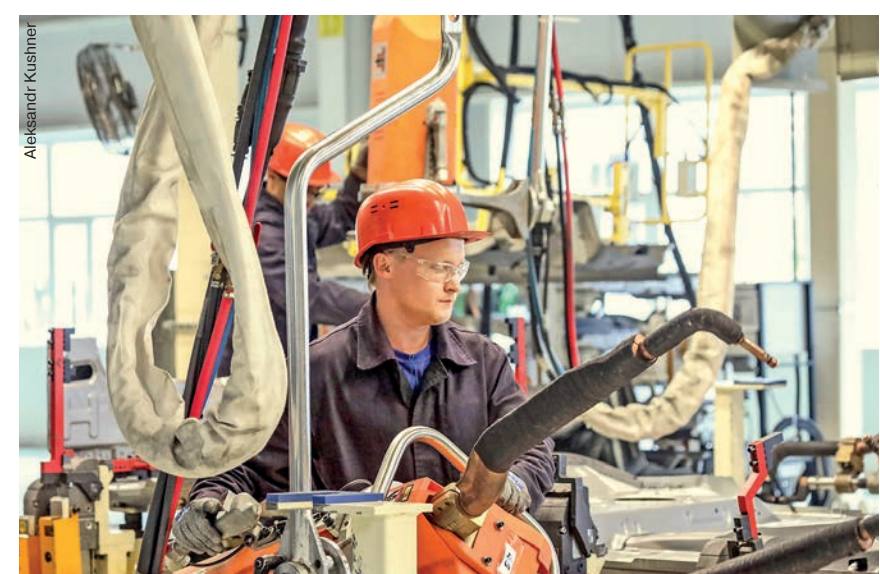
maz.by

## Why the economy should not be stopped

**The coronavirus pandemic is not a reason to kill entire industries. Moreover, the danger of this virus is greatly exaggerated and has a commercial background for a narrow circle of market participants — which is harmful for states. Aleksey Belyaev, associate professor of the Department of Political Science at the Belarusian State Economic University, asserts with confidence.**

In reasoning and assessing the impact of the virus on the life of society, several areas should be identified. On the one hand, the fight to preserve health and human life is very important. The person, their life and health are the most important priority. But at the same time, when we talk about the current coronavirus, it is impossible not to note a certain exaggeration on its negative impact on humans. We see that a significant part of society, especially the young, who are of working age, is affected by the virus but without serious consequences. That is, even if they get sick, they experience this disease in a mild form, or are even completely asymptomatic.

# We must move to live



Aleksandr Kushner

**BelGee Plant has not stopped, despite registered shortages of some components. The company hopes to ensure its production reaches a normal level in the near future.**

However, the danger of the virus is now overblown in the media and this leads primarily to a negative impact on the economic situation. Even before the pandemic was announced, in late February and early March, very disappointing macroeconomic forecasts were being made and it was said that, in 2020, the world's economic losses could amount to more than \$1.1 trillion. Huge losses were predicted — and, as we can see, this has begun to come true in such industries as transport and tourism. This leads to huge

financial losses, extensive staff cuts and the liquidation of entire businesses. How justified is this in terms of countering the virus? I don't think the virus is a reason to 'kill' entire industries. Please note that the production that stopped in China caused all cooperative chains to stop and ceased automobile production in Europe. The fall in demand from China for oil has brought down prices. In addition, the cost of other raw materials and metals is falling.

It would be a disaster for Belarus to lose our production capacity on the same

scale, since we are focused on producing real products. 60 percent of our economy is exported and we see also that even if we do not introduce draconian measures as the neighbouring countries do, we demonstrate a fairly low level of morbidity from an epidemiological point of view. This means that the health care system operates efficiently and we simply do not need to introduce strict quarantine, with the shutdown of all industrial enterprises.

Moreover, the global danger of coronavirus seems to be very exaggerated. If you look at the real consequences of this coronavirus, you'll see that mortality is present but mainly in the risk group, among the elderly. The death rate is about 3 percent, not more. Accordingly, we cannot say that coronavirus is a kind of modern plague that mows down entire cities and regions, as it was in medieval Europe. The impact of the virus is greatly exaggerated and, most likely, it was even done deliberately. It's an attempt to hit the global industry, an opportunity for certain speculators to play on the panic in the stock and commodity markets. The present information campaign to inflate the danger of the virus significantly exceeds its real consequences. For some, this is an opportunity to make capital, but for the main sectors of the real economy this is a serious blow which makes the countries focused on commodity production suffer first.



Ivan Yarivanovich

By Ruslan Proleskovsky

### Renaissance of spunbond

Spunbond is a non-woven material used in various fields: i.e. construction, agriculture, automobile and furniture manufacturing. However, the main area of its application today is the manufacture of sanitary and hygienic products and medical personal protective equipment. For these purposes, spunbond is ideal. The material produced based on polypropylene is easy to sterilise, non-toxic and does not cause allergic reactions, while having a number of protective properties. In addition, its low cost allows short-term and one-time use of products.

Svetlogorskshimvolokno has produced spunbond for over 25 years, under the 'SpunBel' trademark. However, a level of demand such as today was only seen in the late 1990s and early 2000s when spunbond was actively used in agriculture and was in short supply.

At the moment, the nonwovens workshops at the enterprise are working without breaks.

"We are at full capacity and sales volumes continue to grow," says Deputy Subdivision Head, Oksana Kugan. "Of course, the fact that our products help save people's lives imposes a special responsibility."

Masks, respirators, dressing gowns and shoe covers have become a commodity of strategic importance. In a short period of time, the demand for them in the domestic market has increased several times — as has the need for material. First of all, deliveries are made to Belarusian enterprises. In the foreign market, the same trend is noticed: demand is



**Svetlogorskshimvolokno JSC: extruder machinist Nikolay Vasenko and master assistant Viktor Mizhgorodsky work on spunbond production**

growing. Within a few weeks, more than two dozen new contracts were signed. Partners include the countries most affected by the pandemic. The first batch of products was shipped to China. Export geography includes Russia, Italy, France, Germany and Poland.

The Head of Sales Department, Aleksey Zhelezovsky, adds, "In Q1, 4,310 tonnes of non-woven materials were sold — almost 1.6 times more than in the same period of 2019. The order portfolio is set for several months ahead. Products are shipped only on full pre-payment terms."

All lines for the production of non-woven materials are now working non-stop. Their capacities allow them to produce up to 70 tonnes of products per day. This is enough to make more than 20 million disposable masks. One of the lines was only

# Materials of strategic significance

## Products from Svetlogorsk are in great demand in Europe today

**The spread of coronavirus around the world is negatively affecting the world economy. Six months ago, no one could have predicted today's force majeure. However, as they say, there is always a silver lining. Svetlogorskshimvolokno JSC is fully convinced of this: the demand for some types of the company's products has become truly excessive.**

an indefinite period, production is also closed by German Continental — the main consumer of arselon thread, which was purchased in Svetlogorsk. Nevertheless, in the first quarter, all plans for the sale of products were fulfilled, including due to the diversification of the product range — both by sales markets and by segments of it.

The company's management is constantly monitoring the market. In an environment of uncertainty and rapidly changing market conditions, it is difficult to make forecasts. The recent meeting of the Supervisory Board of Svetlogorskshimvolokno JSC was also devoted to the analysis of the situation.

The Chairman of the State Control Committee, Leonid Anfimov, took part in the meeting to note, "Our economy has a unique opportunity, taking advantage of the coronavirus pandemic, to enter the markets of countries where production has been quarantined and stopped. As a result, there are no products that are necessary for the normal functioning of society."

It's well-known that if there is a decrease somewhere, it always appears somewhere else. The situation with the coronavirus pandemic is no exception. The task is to accurately and quickly determine the right direction, quickly navigate in unusual circumstances. This approach will not only keep companies afloat, but also benefit them — both in the interests of an individual enterprise and the entire state.

installed at the beginning of last year. By mid-2020, it's planned to reach full capacity, though the goal has already been met.

### Time for non-standard solutions

The company does not hide the fact that coronavirus disasters that shake foreign markets are affecting ours as well. In some countries of Europe and the United States, textile production is being stopped and this will inevitably lead to a decrease in demand for polyester thread — another product Svetlogorskshimvolokno makes in the production of textiles for the automotive industry, furniture and clothing. All these market segments are currently stagnating. In China, several car making factories have closed. Conveyors stopped at the enterprises of famous corporations Ford, Fiat, Porsche, Scania, Skoda. For

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Belarus 24 launches broadcasting in the Asia-Pacific Region

On April 1st, the channel began broadcasting from the AsiaSat 5 satellite, which covers the territory of the Asia-Pacific Region — from Russia to New Zealand and from Japan to North Africa. Accordingly, the channel's signal will now be available from three satellites: ABS-2A (Russia, CIS and Baltic States), HotBird (Europe, Middle East and North Africa) and AsiaSat 5. The international satellite TV channel of the media holding is distributed in packages of satellite and cable TV operators, in online broadcasting on the official website belarus24.by, mobile services. Its team comprehensively broadcast to foreign TV viewers Belarusians lives, successes they are proud of and how they perceive their history and culture.



### National Historical Museum in Minsk and Nesvizh are among the top 5 best museums in the CIS

The rating of the CIS best museums of history and culture for visits and virtual excursions, online tours and exhibitions was compiled by Turstat Agency based on the results of an analysis of the popularity of museums and offers of virtual tours. Moscow's State Historical Museum tops the rating, followed by Minsk's National Historical Museum. Third place is occupied by the National Mu-



seum of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Nur-Sultan. The Nesvizh National Historical and Cultural Museum-Reserve is fourth, followed by the Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Almaty.

### 30 Days of Biking campaign starts in Minsk

The Minsk Bicycle Society invites anyone to join the annual *30 Days of Biking* campaign in April, with the aim of supporting a healthy lifestyle and improving the environmental situation in Minsk and Belarus. "The campaign was first held



30 Days of Biking

several years ago in the United States but Belarus is among the world leaders in the number of participants every year. The event, timed to the beginning of the mass cycling season, clearly demonstrates that a bicycle is not only a convenient option for an interesting holiday, but also a comfortable transport for the city," note the organisation's staff. Everyone can participate in the campaign. They simply need a bicycle, roller skates, a scooter or any other means of individual mobility.

### Special Europe Shine A Light concert to take place instead of Eurovision Song Contest 2020



The organisers of the *Eurovision* International Song Contest, which was cancelled this year due to coronavirus, are preparing a special show — gathering the musicians from 41 countries who were expected to perform at this year's show. "Unfortunately, there will be no *Eurovision* contest this year. Instead, we intend to unite Europe on May 16th with a unique prime-time television programme. We call on all broadcasters to present this show in a spirit of unity," said Jon Ola Sand, the *Eurovision* Song Contest's Executive Supervisor. The artists are expected to perform the *Eurovision* 2019 hit song with a unifying text suitable for the current world situation.



Nikolay Bordzov

By Aleksandr Mityukov

**Ancient treasures and icons, a mammoth's tooth and a harrier eagle feeding its chick with a snake, military aircraft and awards have something which unites them: it's art. Since late March, Brest residents and guests of the city have been welcomed at the Brest Regional Local Lore Museum and its branch to enjoy two original exhibitions: one of elegant holograms and another a collection of unique wildlife shots.**

The hologram exhibition has been brought to the regional centre by Magiya Sveta JSC and features dozens of works devoted to our country, its history, culture and modern life. Flora and fauna, spiritual relics, art holograms, educational tools and much more are on show. Of particular interest is the 'Cross of St.

Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya' hologram which reproduces the greatest Orthodox relic lost in 1941 and revived in 1997 by Brest jeweller, Nikolay Kuzmich. Moreover, holograms from other Orthodox shrines are on show, as well as an 18th century Slutsk sash, the Book of Kingdoms published by Frantsisk Skorina in Prague in 1518 and other national treasures.

The hologram of St. Athanasius of Brest icon was donated to the Brest diocese by Nikolay Bordzov, the Head of Holographic Production at Magiya Sveta. Alla Rossinskaya, a senior researcher at the museum, stresses that the exhibition has become possible thanks to the scientific and practical activities of the founder of this organisation, Leonid Tanin



# Worthy of admiration

## A rare shot as a work of art

— a world renowned Belarusian scientist, an academician of the International Engineering Academy, winner of the State Award in science and technology and the founder of the Belarusian school of holography.

In addition, the Nature and Ecology section of the museum invites everyone to look at a collection of unique photos. These feature a woodpecker in a hollow, a lizard in a pond, a hare in the snow... Rare shots featuring the wildlife, birds and even reptiles that live in our country have been brought to Brest by Pavel Lychkovsky, from the Belarusian wildlife photography club. He explains, "These are the best work of the club over the past two years. The exhibition will travel all over the country and it presents a very specific type of photography. We need long-focus lenses or the ability to sneak up close enough to a bird or animal

not to frighten it off. We need to set up hides where the subject of the shot will be: a watering hole, feeder or habitat. We disguise ourselves in a tent and sit there all day so as not to give ourselves away."

To take a photo of a harrier eagle feeding a chick with a snake, Pavel spent more than a day in hiding. "I live in the city, it is difficult for me to search for the shot myself, but friends from all over Belarus help. This snapshot was taken at the Vygonoshchansky Reserve. Its employee Aleksandr Ivanov noticed the nest and I set up a hide on a fir tree 20 metres from the nest. I climbed into it in the dark and came out in the evening, when the bird was not there, so as not to disturb it and it didn't know that someone was hiding there. I was waiting for the bird to bring the snake. It took 3-4 hours and it was important not to get tired. You might sit there for two hours and nothing happens; as the fledglings are sleeping. Suddenly the bird arrives and it's important to capture the moment — as it could fly away in a minute," says Pavel.

The exhibition will be open until late May.



# Monument to the city's patron

## Sculpture of St. Hubert to be unveiled in Grodno by the *Festival of National Cultures*

By Natalia Yemelyanova

New sculptures are unveiled every year and immediately make their own legend and enjoy interest from city guests. A sculpture of St. Hubert at the intersection of Sovetskaya and Oktyabrskaya streets is likely to become a new attraction.

Vladimir Pantelev is working on the creation of the monument. This well-known Grodno sculptor admits that he created sketches mostly for himself but they drew the attention of the city authorities. The figurine of the saint stands next to a deer, as the deer of St. Hubert is one of the symbols of Grodno.

"The idea of a sculpture has been around for a long time, ten years, or more. For a long time, this was simply an idea. However, this year, everything has worked out: we are preparing for the *Festival of National Cultures*. According to tradition, new sculptures and art objects are installed in the city for every similar event," says Vladimir Pantelev.

The 3m high monument will have a granite column at its base. The sculpture itself, made of bronze, will be about 1m wide.

Grodno is a compact city with low buildings, and a small sculpture would look incongruous, believes Vladimir Pantelev.

It is planned to unveil the monument at the opening of the

*Festival of National Cultures* which Grodno will host on June 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>. The tiles around the monument will be laid out in the form of a seven-colour flower which is a symbol of the festival.



## THE MT REFERENCE

St. Hubert is a Catholic saint who lived in the 7th-8th century in France, the patron of hunters, fishermen and foresters. He became a devout Christian and later a priest and bishop of Liege — after he saw a sign in the form of a stag with a golden cross between its horns, while hunting. The deer of St. Hubert jumping over the fence is depicted on the coat of arms of Grodno and is a symbol of the city.



# Saved to rejoice

By Arina Novikova

**An exhibition of rescued pictorial icons — *The Light of Orthodoxy* — has opened in the Gantsevichi District Museum of Local Lore. This collection was donated to the cultural institution for permanent storage by Brest customs officers, preventing the export of cultural property abroad.**

The exhibition is dedicated to one of the most important Christian holidays: Easter. It showcases thirty-five icons of the 18th-19th centuries from the museum archives with the image of the Virgin, the Saviour and Orthodox saints.

The jewel in the collection is the oldest icon of the Annunciation. The exhibition consists mostly of images of the Mother of God: the Mother of God of Vladimir, the Mother of God of Kazan, the Mother of God Hodegetria, the 'Joy of All Who Sorrow' Mother of God, the 'Unburnt Bush' Mother of God, 'The Sign' icon of the Mother of God, the Mother of God of the

Three Hands, the 'Unexpected Joy' Mother of God. Of the rarer icons, is a miniature icon 'Icon of the Beheading of John the Baptist', 'John the Theologian in Silence' and the 'Four-Part' icon depicting Christ the Almighty, the Mother of God, the Apostles Peter and Paul, and the Archangel Michael. There are also several feast day icons — 'The Resurrection of Christ with 12 feast days' and 'Menaion for October'.

"The museum's premises do not allow us to constantly keep icons on display. But we try to exhibit them annually for major holidays — Christmas or Easter. In addition, we have a travelling museum. We have already visited almost all organisations and enterprises of the town with individual copies of this collection. This year, we planned to visit nursing hospitals with the project *The Road of Mercy*," said the director of the museum, Natalia Kulesh.

*The Light of Orthodoxy* exhibition in the district museum of local lore will last until April 21st.

# Green message to followers

Belarus has hosted the Republican Forest Week voluntary campaign to enable everyone to make a contribution to increasing the wealth of subsequent generations of Belarusians

By Olga Korneeva

The campaign — initiated by the Forestry Ministry for the 13th time — was dedicated to the year of the Small Homeland and the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory. State bodies and thousands of citizens who love nature have taken an active part.

On the first day, employees of the President Administration joined the Forest Week to actively work in picturesque locations of Kolas: the Okinchitsy forestry near Stolbtsy. After taking a short break at the request of journalists, the Deputy Head of the President Administration — Andrei Kuntsevich — shared his opinion about Forest Week, “This great event brings together many people every year, mainly through its important message. After all, each participant has an opportunity to make their own contribution to the formation of the wealth of subsequent generations of Belarusians. If you like, this is a kind of message to those who will come after us. Its meaning boils down to



Chief Adviser of the President Administration’s Ideological Department — Irina Rakhvalova

simple truths: protect nature, always think about what will remain after us, and love our country. I am sure that it is here, in the homeland of the classic of Belarusian literature — Yakub Kolas — where this message is felt especially vividly.”

Forest Week opened by laying flowers and planting an alley of blue spruces at the Mount of Glory Memorial Complex. The Forestry Minister, Vitaly Drozhzha,



noted that this is not just one of the reforestation events, “It’s an important part of environmental education. Almost all departments of the country and many citizens have supported our campaign.” According to the Minister, this year, foresters started their planned spring planting early, and 50 percent of the work has already been completed. “We have sustainable forest management: we plant more forests than we cut down,” he noted.

After the official opening and planting of the spruce alley, the staff of the Forestry Ministry went to work in the Volma forestry, in the south-west of the Smolevichi forestry on the territory of the Smolevichi and Minsk districts.

Here, heads of Belarusian forest industry planted 2.3 hectares of new forest from pine and birch seedlings. In the Gomel Region, a team — led by Chairman of the Regional Executive Committee Gennady Solovyov — worked in the Teryukha forestry over 1.3 hectares, and another — on the memorial complex being built on the site of the burned village of Ola, in the Svetlogorsk District.

In the seven days of the campaign, volunteers together with foresters planted more than 18m seedlings. The main forest-forming species have traditionally been pine, spruce and birch. Volunteers were also engaged in garbage collection and renovating recreation sites.

## Returning to our native land

By Irina Sergeeva

### Storks and barn swallows return to Belarus after wintering

“The white storks carry spring to us on their wings. APB-BirdLife Belarus has already received 281 messages about their return to Belarus. Up to now, the birds have already appeared in all regions of the country. The barn swallows have not been seen much yet and the first bird was noticed on March 20th. This is very early: usually barn swallows return from Africa in April,” note the organisation staff.

White storks are true symbols of Belarus; they leave the country in late August. These birds fly thousands of kilometres away to overwinter and then return home in spring.

Cuckoos are expected to return in Belarus in early April and, in early May, bank swallows and black



swifts are expected. European bee-eaters will return in late May. Belarus is currently holding a live spring bird-watching event — an international project that aims to attract the attention of children and adults to the protection of migratory birds. This year, the campaign will run until July 1st. These messengers of ‘Live Spring’ are seven easily-recognisable birds: white stork, barn swallow, black swift, common cuckoo, European bee-eater, bank swallow and ringed plover. People from different countries of Europe and Africa watch them and make an online map of the birds’ journey from warm lands to their homeland.

APB invites everyone to participate in the campaign. If you notice a bird of one of the seven species, you can inform the organisation through the ‘Add Observation’ form on the ‘Live Spring’ website, or leave a message on the pages dedicated to the project in Facebook and Vkontakte.



## Reserve awarded diploma

By Svetlana Savelieva

For the first time, the European diploma of the highest category A was awarded to the reserve on September 11th, 1995 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. It confirms that the territory of the nature protection institution has exceptional value from the point of view of nature conservation and is characterised by a high level of management. If all the criteria are met, the right to hold a diploma is confirmed every five or ten years. The last time the document was issued to the Berezinsky Reserve for ten years was in 2010. Another inspection by European experts was held in June 2019.

“The members of the group noted that the Berezinsky Reserve is an excellent example of a typical holder of a European diploma, so the document



must be renewed for this territory,” said the environmental institution.

Experts also issued a number of recommendations. Based on the results of studies of the impact of the M3 road on the fragmentation of the biosphere reserve passing through its territory, it is planned to create at

least three crossings for large fauna by late 2022. Viaducts will be populated with vegetation characteristic of the area to make them more natural and encourage animals to use them. Also, by 2021, the management plan for the reserve’s territory will be updated with a view to its long-term protection, including specific provisions related to climate change.

In addition to the Berezinsky Reserve, another holder of a European diploma in Belarus is the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park.



## Scientists believe they found potential coronavirus vaccine

**Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine report initial success in animal trials for a vaccine to neutralise the virus that causes COVID-19**

During tests in mice, the vaccine was shown to produce antibodies specific to SARS-CoV-2, known as the novel coronavirus. University researchers said the mice responded with antibodies sufficient to neutralise the virus.

The researchers released their findings in a paper published in *EBioMedicine*, published by *The Lancet*, a leading British medical journal.

The authors said they are now in the process of seeking investigatory new drug approval from the US Food and Drug Administration with expectation of beginning human clinical trial within the next few months.

Dr. Andrea Gambotto, co-senior author of the paper, said the university researchers were able to move so quickly because they were already working on vaccines for similar viruses.

“We had previous experience on SARS-CoV in 2003 and MERS-CoV in 2014,” Gambotto said. “These two viruses, which are closely related to SARS-CoV-2, teach us that a particular protein, called a spike protein, is important for inducing immunity against the virus. We knew exactly where to fight this new virus.”

The researchers are calling the vaccine PittCoVacc, short for Pittsburgh Coronavirus Vaccine. The process uses laboratory-made pieces of viral protein to build immunity, similar to the process of annual vaccinations for the flu.

This differs from the experimental vaccines, which focus on RNA development, that have recently entered clinical trials.

For delivery, the vaccine uses a microneedle array, a fingertip-sized patch of 400 tiny needles that deliver the spike protein into the skin. The patch, similar to an adhesive bandage, is affixed to the patient and the needles, which are made of sugar, dissolve into the skin.

“Our ability to rapidly develop this vaccine was a result of scientists with expertise in diverse areas of research working together with a common goal,” said co-senior author Dr. Louis Falot, a Professor and Chairman of Dermatology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and University of Pittsburgh Medical Centre.

## Response gesture

**More than 2,000 express tests for coronavirus have arrived from China to Belarus. Medical glasses, protective suits and remote thermometers were also delivered to Minsk National Airport from the People's Republic of China.**

According to Belarus' Health Deputy Minister Boris Androsyuk, the assistance was initiated by the Chinese side, “When the PRC was in a very difficult situation, our country rendered assistance sending two humanitarian planes. Now China has taken the initiative in gratitude, as a sign of friendship between our two countries and peoples. We are very grateful.”

Tests will be sent to the Scientific and Practical Centre of Epidemiology and Microbiology while protective equipment will be sent primarily to those clinics where the largest number of patients are located. This is the Minsk Infectious Diseases Hospital and 6th city clinical hospital.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Belarus, Cui Qiming, emphasised that joint work in the fight against coronavirus is necessary, “After the outbreak of the epidemic, the Chinese Embassy in Belarus established working channels to maintain close contacts with the Foreign Ministry and the Health Ministry. We exchange timely information on the prevention and control of the epidemic and coordinate our actions. We



also thank Belarus for the help you previously provided to our country. We plan to deliver another ten thousand tests, as well as masks, protective clothing, infrared thermometers and other medical materials.”



## Van Gogh painting was stolen from Dutch museum

**Thieves have stolen the £5m *Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring* by the famous artist from the Singer Laren Museum**

A painting by Vincent van Gogh with an estimated value of up to £5m has been stolen from a Dutch museum currently closed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The thieves took Van Gogh's *Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring* after smashing through the front glass door of the Singer Laren Museum, in Loren. No other art is believed to be missing.

The burglar alarm had been triggered by the break-in but the thieves had fled by the time police officers arrived.

During a press conference broadcast on Youtube, the museum's di-

rector, Jan Rudolph de Lorm, said he was ‘incredibly pissed off’ by the loss of the painting, which had been on loan from the Groninger Museum. The painting was stolen on the day Van Gogh was born 167 years ago.

De Lorm said, “This is exactly what you don't want as a museum that has a painting on loan. A beautiful and moving painting by one of our greatest painters, stolen from the community ... This must come back as soon as possible, so that we can enjoy and be comforted by this beautiful art again. Art deserves to be seen and shared by us, the community.”

## Winners of the *Nature TTL Photographer of the Year 2020* competition

**The winners of the inaugural *Nature TTL Photographer of the Year 2020* competition have been announced**

The competition saw 7,000 entries come in from 117 different countries, and the judges have been working hard to figure out who will take the grand prize.

This year's Overall Winner, sponsored by Skylum Software, is Florian Ledoux with his image *Above the Crabbeater Seals*. The image features an aerial view of a group of crabbeater seals resting after a nighttime feed.

Taken with a DJI Phantom 4 Pro+, Ledoux's image brings a unique angle to wildlife photography that is rarely seen.

“I'm so excited to be chosen as the overall winner, I was never expecting this,”

said Ledoux. “For me, it's very important to show the state of the Arctic and Antarctic regions, and to have an image from there win this award is important exposure. It's important that anyone inspired by this style of drone image understands the importance of wildlife and being ethical in your approach. Ensure that your drone does not spook animals or disturb them, and always conduct yourself in accordance of local regulations.”

Ledoux will take home a £1,000 cash prize and a camera bag from F-Stop Gear, the sponsors of our Wildlife category.

Taking the winning position of the ‘Landscape’ category was Marek Biegalski with a rural scene taken in Italy.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

# A windmill

There were always countless windmills in our homeland in the past

Perhaps most of us know what our country was called in ancient times. Yes, the country of castles. Already in our time, Belarus has begun to be called ‘blue-eyed’ since there is an incredible number of rivers and lakes in our homeland. There are more than 10,000 lakes and about 21,000 rivers.

Vladimir Tsvirko’s  
author project

What else could our country be called? The country of windmills. Unfortunately, of course, this name is more suitable for the past, because today these mills can be counted on the fingers of one hand. And before? Previously, there was one huge windmill for two or three settlements. Then estates and even small households used to have two or three mills: large with four floors or small, which worked with only a few yards of space. ‘Kozlovka’ mills, tent-type mills, ‘paltraki’ mills and so on. These are only windmills and if we also add ‘water works’... Such mills used to stand on almost every river, and you know how many rivers are there in our land!

Today, only a very few windmills have been preserved in the country, and of those that work, there are almost none.

Much can be said about these beauties. I’d like to touch on my childhood memories in which a good page is dedicated to the windmill.

The space outside my childhood room was always free from trees and shrubs, as the garden and other large vegetation spread across the other side of our manor house. On this side a strip of pasture stretched, beyond which was the field; behind it could be seen a meadow, which then slowly climbed a gentle hill. Locals even called this hill a mound. So, behind this mound, apparently, also on a certain elevation a huge windmill used to stand. Because of the hill, its bottom was not visible, but its main part — four majestic and incredibly large and wide sails — were clearly seen from my window. For some reason, I remembered that it was always in motion. Its sails were constantly spinning in the air: going down



and then rising into the sky. I really enjoyed watching the movements of this mill. In the morning I greeted it through the window, and in the evening, before it completely disappeared at night, I said goodbye as if to a very good friend.

I’d like to tell you about the unusual and at the same time mysterious peculiarities of the mill. The mill was silver. Yes, it was silver; the roof, and its walls, and especially the wings, were fabulously silver. It was all silver. In the sun it shone like the ploughshare of my father’s plough after a long day in the field. When it rained, the windmill cast silver light and threw unusual shadows. When it was foggy or gloomy, it generally dissolved into the environment, which at that time also acquired a similar colour. The faint

## THE MT REFERENCE

The first mention of windmills in Belarus dates back to the 16th century. The most common are the so-called ‘kozlovka’ mill. Their peculiarity is that the whole structure was based on trestles (‘kozly’ — hence the name), consisting of powerful bars, into which an axial vertical column was cut. The ‘kozlovka’ mill turned in the direction of the wind with almost its entire body. In the contrast to the ‘kozlovka’, the main part of a tent-type (Dutch) windmill remained motionless: only the upper ‘cap’ moved along with the sails in the wind. Such a mill had three to four layers and a height of up to 18 metres. There were also ‘paltraki’ windmills, combining elements of both of the above-mentioned structures. Water constructions, of course, were attached to rivers and lakes, therefore, they were often located within the general settlement. Water mills consisted of several floors. At the bottom there was a wheel or a turbine, above it there were stone millstones, even higher there was a barn (sometimes there was also a shop), and the miller himself sometimes used to live at the very top. The mill mechanism was located directly inside the building, only the water wheel remained outside, reaching a diameter of 4 metres. Sometimes large mills had several wheels: they set in motion not only millstones, but also machines for carding wool and saws. There were floating mills at the rivers Pripyat and Goryn, installed on a barge or ferry.



contours of its sails flashed from time to time through the grey veil.

Why was the mill silver? Later, when I was a little older, my father revealed the secret of where the mill got its colour. The reason is in the timber which was used to cover the mill. This tree was an ordinary aspen. At first, of course, when the mill was ‘dressed’ in such clothes, it was still a long way from this fabulous colour. But in the course of time, the sun’s rays, rainwater and winds bleached this board, leading to the appearance of such a magical and unusual colour. Especially against the blue sky in sunny weather, this construction on the top of the hill seemed almost fabulous to me.

When I was close to it... Oh! And how many times I ‘rode’ on those silver wings. Of course, it was dangerous. My parents punished me, but could it stop me from such fun?

The mill also disappeared unusually. It was during a big thunderstorm with very heavy rain. Some said that the mill caught fire from lightning, others that during this thunderstorm a local shepherd hid in it and lit a fire there... Few saw how this wooden miracle disappeared. And those who saw, said that there was no fire, but only

silver puffs of smoke that occasionally cut through the silver sails. When the thunderstorm was over and the rain stopped, there were only cracked millstones and iron parts in the place where the mill had stood.

The residents of the village today still say that when there is a heavy fog, one can see the image of the mill (though not very clear) on the hill where the mill used to stand. They say they’ve even seen how its silver wings move through the fog. I’d like to get myself there at a time when there is a fog to see this ghost with my own eyes, but somehow it has never worked out because of urgent matters...

Something is needed here and now, and there is not enough time for a kind of miracle or a ghost. But I cheer myself up that one day I will surely give up everything, go and tirelessly wait for this fog and the miracle...

It seems that I began, as usual, with childhood memories, which are so tender, so bright and realistic, so warming to the heart. And at the very end of the story, it seemed that this was not just a memory, but a retelling of a beautiful legend, the legend of a silver mill. Anyway, looking from either side on this story is still very good.



A portrait of Narkevich-Iodko by Anatoly Belyavsky on show at Uzda District Museum of History and Local Lore

By Yulia Vasilishina, Ivan Apanasenko

### The effect of Iodko

The debate about primacy in the invention of radio is complex: in those days there were simply no way to quickly exchange information. Priority was determined by a report at a meeting of the scientific community, a record in the minutes of the meeting and then a publication. Moreover, the history of this invention itself can be divided into two parts: the idea of receiving electrical signals and the creation of radio as a kind of material object.

“Many countries had their own pioneer-inventor of radio, including the name of Yakov Narkevich-Iodko, whose superiority was recognised by the French Physical Society after the appearance of reports on the experiments of Aleksandr Popov,” says Olga Gaponenko, a Candidate of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, one of the authors and drafters of the book *Yakov Ottonovich Narkevich-Iodko (1847-1905)* — the most complete biographical and bibliographic index published by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus in 2010.

The publication, in particular, provides excerpts from the minutes of the meetings of the Russian Physicochemical Society about the impressive demonstration made by Yakov Narkevich-Iodko of his experiments in the field of wireless transmission of electrical signals at a distance. The stunning effect that they produced in Prague is also mentioned: the present luminaries of science put their signatures on the official minutes of the discoveries made by the scientist. Meanwhile, a record made in 1898 at a meeting of the French Physics Society, which was dedicated to Popov’s work can be viewed as key to determine priorities: ‘Lodge had the idea in 1894 to connect the tubes filled with sawdust with a Hertz Resonator for recording signals at short distances using a relay and a recorder.

## RETURN FROM OBSCURITY

Yakov Narkevich-Iodko affects the development of science even after two hundred years. Thanks to him, a powerful impetus was given to the development of research works in the field of the history of science.

Literary critic, Adam Maldis, describes finding a book by Marius Decrespe, entitled *La vie et les oeuvres de M. de Narkiewicz-Iodko* — a lifetime biography of Narkevich-Iodko, published in Paris in 1896. Are many scientists given such an honour even now? It was in the 19th century, and he was a landowner of the Minsk Province... Adam Maldis trans-

# On the radio waves of memory

Belarusian researcher demonstrated radio transmission experiments four years earlier than Popov

**Who invented the radio? The Americans will say Edison and Tesla, the Italians will name Marconi, the British — Lodge and the Russians — Popov. In 1890-1895, dozens of researchers were approaching the goal in parallel. Belarusians also have something to add to this story. One of the first to ‘hear’ an electric discharge in the atmosphere was the landowner of the Minsk Province, an outstanding natural scientist Yakov Narkevich-Iodko — an ‘electric man’ whose works the European scientific community in the 19th century put on a par with the works of Louis Pasteur and William Roentgen. He conducted research in the family estate of Nadneman, near Uzda, turning it into a superbly equipped laboratory.**

So, the first idea of telegraphy without wires belongs to him, if we do not want to get to Narkevich-Iodko, who two or three years earlier made very interesting transmissions in Vienna with the Ruhmkorff coil connected to the ground, antenna and receiver... If the first two authors did not transmit over distances exceeding hundreds of metres, it is only due to the use of a low-sensitivity receiver’.

This means that our fellow countryman is mentioned in world scientific sources four years earlier than Popov, who conducted experiments on radio broadcasts in 1895 and then patented his invention.

“First of all, Ya. Narkevich-Iodko was a physician, and not the inventor of radio. He had a lot of interests, but the main thing was to cure people. He was looking for opportunities to help them using physical methods and electricity. His major result is the method of electrography that he developed, known today as the Kirlian effect, as well as the method of electrotherapy, which in the 19th century was known in the scientific community of Western Europe as the ‘Iodko system’. Radio turned out to be an accidental discovery.”

### History is nearby

One can now see the Ruhmkorff coil in the Uzda District Museum of History and Local Lore. The exhibition boasts several items related to the Narkevich-Iodko estate: a ‘kanapa’ (sofa), chairs, a wicker suitcase, a French dictionary from the family collection and a number of scientific instruments from the time when Yakov Narkevich-Iodko was making his discoveries. True, these specimens did not belong to the scientist: unfortunately, the equipment from his laboratories has not been preserved. But the devices themselves are rare and antique, being collected by physicist professor Vladimir Samuilov, the head of the Narkevich-Iodko Foundation, now teaching in the USA. Later, when the Nadneman manor is restored and a scientific museum dedicated to Narkevich-Iodko opens there, these artefacts will be displayed. Now, a

ferred the book to the Academy of Sciences and when specialists studied it, it became clear: there is a huge layer in his life that has never been studied! In 1984, on the instruction of the President of the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR, academician Nikolay Borisevich, a special research programme was launched. As a result, the names of 2,500 people of outstanding figures of science and culture were returned almost from obscurity; these represent our national pride while their scientific legacy was written down in the Belarusian context of national history.



Olga Gaponenko demonstrates Narkevich-Iodko’s lifetime biography published in Paris, in 1896

## A PERSON OF MANY TALENTS

The range of Yakov Narkevich-Iodko’s interests was very wide: physics, medicine, biology, music. In Nadneman, he equipped the first weather station in Belarus and began to conduct regular observations, set up a park and an experimental field, where he studied the effect of electricity on plants. He established the Nad-Neman sanatorium where patients with pulmonary diseases were cured with kumis and mineral waters from local springs. He also arranged a solarium in a greenhouse and an aeolian harp, which sang in the wind, in one of the towers of the manor house. Moreover, in his youth, he studied at the Paris Conservatory and successfully performed as a pianist, also teaching music theory at the Mariinsky Yermolov educational institution (Moscow).

small but carefully composed exposition at the Uzda museum will help visitors learn more about the life of this famous researcher.

“The name Narkevich-Iodko was known in Rome, Paris, and Vienna. This was a unique person with the broadest interests. Even when he studied at the Minsk gymnasium, he proved himself a talented musician and composer. He was fluent in many languages, knew Latin, German and French well. Of course, his estate brought him income and allowed him to study science, make discoveries and travel. During the years of Soviet power, he was perceived as a landowner and this was a story they chose to forget. We take off our hat in front of the local historian Vladimir Kiselev, who revived this name from the ashes and over more than 40 years restored the history of this family. According to the observations of Tamara Lukhverchik, Director of the Uzda Museum, now the name of the Narkevich-Iodko is already publicly known. The film of Vladimir Bokun’s *Workshop Tamer of Lightning, or Electric Man* from the series 100 Names of Belarus, as well as the painstaking work of many researchers, did much to popularise his name.

### Raising from the ruins

The place where the Nadneman estate is located is amazing, with three rivers merging: the Nemanets, Losha and Usa, while the River Neman originates here. The manor is being revived by the

local charity fund for the development of science, innovative technologies and culture (named after Professor Yakov Narkevich-Iodko) with the help of sponsors, including the *Science around Us* international foundation. Support is also provided by the Culture Ministry and the Uzda District Executive Committee, alongside volunteers, students of the International Sakharov Environmental Institute of the Belarusian State University and many others.

After the restoration of the buildings, the reconstruction of the interior will also require serious expense, including furnishing in line with the spirit of the mid and late 19th century, as well as the delivery and installation of a collection of scientific equipment. It is planned to create the museum-laboratory of Narkevich-Iodko in the estate which is given the status of a historical and cultural value. It’s expected that Nadneman will become a venue for seminars and meetings, talented youth who are passionate about physics and mathematics will be invited here to participate in international educational programmes. Moreover, the Nadneman has excellent potential to become an attractive travel brand and part of popular tourist routes. Why not link its visit with Nesvizh, located just 40km away? The connection here is not only territorial: the Nadneman estate was once bought by the grandfather of Yakov Narkevich-Iodko from the Radziwills...

There is a lot of talk about Belarusian football today even far beyond the country's borders. The list of TV companies that have acquired and continue to buy the rights to broadcast is growing and expanding: from India to Israel, from Kazakhstan to the Balkans. Recently, a well-known Russian businessman and owner of Spartak Moscow, Leonid Fedun, shared his opinion, "Football players, including 30 Russians, who were lucky to get into Belarusian Premier League clubs are fiercely envied by 99.99 percent of the world's population. It's now the second season that Russian players have not been considered foreigners in Belarus, so it would seem there should be more of them. However, even 30 is a good figure." Against the background of such increased interest, it's time to talk about other figures from our championship.

By Sergey Kanashits

### From 17 to 37

The youngest players who have already taken part in the championship are 17 year old German Barkovsky from Belshina and Vladislav Lozhkin from Dinamo Minsk. They are still far from taking leading roles in their teams, of course, but the fact itself is remarkable: it suggests the guys are clearly promising. Speaking about youth who, despite their tender age, are already very noticeable on the field, we must highlight several footballers under 20. Among them is 19 year old central defender of Energetik-BGU, Daniil Miroshnikov. It was his goal in the second round that brought the 'students' victory in Brest over the local Rukh team. That was a very good start! A left-back defender from Isloch, Godfrey Stephen — a 19 year old Nigerian, has also already proved himself last season (29 matches and 4 goals). He started 2020 with the same confidence: two matches in the main team and productive actions. It's also worth looking at another Isloch player, 19 year old defender Vladislav Glinsky, who holds great promise.

Speaking about the other 'pole' — the oldest players in the championship, these

are the goalkeepers of Slutsk and Slavia: 37 year old Boris Pankratov and Mikhail Baranovsky. Two other goalkeepers — Vladimir Bushma from Torpedo-BELAZ (36) and Artur Lesko from Energetik-BGU (35) — are slightly behind. The list of main veterans from field players is headed by Isloch defender Pavel Rybak (36), followed by a list of 35 year old players: Kirill Pavlyuchek (Gorodeya), Aleksandr Papush and Nikolay Yanush (Isloch), Artem Milevsky (Dinamo Brest) and Vitaly Trubilo (Slutsk). To complete the topic, let's take a look at the coaches. The youngest of them represents Isloch: Vitaly Zhukovsky (35). The oldest is Yuri Puntus (59), from Torpedo-BELAZ.

### Money doesn't play football

The most expensive club in Belarus (according to transfermarkt.ru), if we consider the total value of players in the transfer market, is BATE: 14m Euros. However, this team are clear outsiders in terms of 'price — quality': having the most expensive players in its line-up, BATE has not scored a single point. The three most representative clubs in the country include Dinamo

# Score is key in football

Amusing figures from the Belarusian championship



Minsk Energetik-BGU players defeat Brest Rukh — 1:0 — in away match

Brest (12.12m) and Shakhtyor (10.9). Energetik-BGU is in third place from the bottom (the transfer value of its players is only 3.05m). However, clarification is needed in this respect: if Minsk footballers continue playing so well, they will soon rise significantly up this rating ladder. So far, only Belshina (2.5m) and Slutsk (2.85m) are behind the 'students'.

Let's turn to personalities. The three most expensive players of the Belarusian championship at the moment include Mikhail Gordeychuk and Aleksandr Noyok (both from Dinamo Brest), as well as Stanislav Dragun (BATE). Each is estimated at one and a half million Euros. The most valuable young player (under 20) is a Nigerian from Isloch, Godfrey Stephen. Those who want to see him in their team will have to fork out 350,000 Euros. Of course, this price is conditional. The player's agent and his current club believe that he is already worth much more. Stephen and

the main scorer of the club — Momo Yansane — since the beginning of the championship have grown in price by 200,000 Euros: Yansane is now estimated at 600,000 Euros. Before the start of the current championship, the main and most expensive star of our championship was a Ukrainian defender from Dinamo Brest: Yevgeny Khacheridi; he was estimated at 1,750,000 Euros. However, so far, the former Dinamo Kiev star has not played a single match for his new team, and his quotes have rapidly collapsed, losing almost 40 percent of their value since January.

### The length of the reserve bench and foreign players

In the opening two rounds of the championship, Isloch involved only 14 players in the game; these came with one and the same line-up. Does this mean that the team has a short reserve bench and there are no options for strengthening and reorganising

the game? It's possible. However, if we look at the other side of the coin, we can say that, on the contrary, Vitaly Zhukovsky has a strong and experienced team, in which each performer knows his role and his place. Whether they have enough strength for the entire championship (especially considering their age) is an open question, and only time will answer it. Incidentally, the largest number of players in the two rounds involved Slavia and Shakhtyor: 18 each.

As for betting on foreigners, Slutsk is in the lead here: out of 17 players who took the field, 10 were not Belarusian passport holders. That's 53.8 percent. Slavia had 8 legionnaires on the field (55 percent). Meanwhile, the most 'Belarusian' teams of the championship are Dinamo Brest, Torpedo-BELAZ Zhodino and Isloch with only 4 legionnaires each.

We continue to follow the Belarusian championship. For sure there will be more interesting news!



# Olympic solidarity programmes extended until 2021

**Four Olympic solidarity programmes that support more than 1,600 athletes worldwide have been extended until the start of the Summer Olympics in Tokyo in 2021. This decision was made following a video conference with the IOC athletes' commission.**

The programmes include Olympic scholarships for athletes, grants to support national teams, support for refugee athletes and grants to prepare for the Olympic Games. Kirsty Coventry, the Chair

of the IOC Athletes' Commission, said the decision to extend the programmes will ensure that the principles of solidarity and universality are respected and will not affect the training of athletes due to the postponement of the Olympic Games in Tokyo. All Olympic solidarity programs related to the 2020 Games will be extended until 2021. In total, more than 1,600 athletes from 185 national Olympic committees will be involved.

The IOC has officially confirmed to the Commission the conditions of qualification for

the Games. All athletes eligible to compete in Tokyo will retain their places after the event is postponed. These quotas will not be reviewed.

The IOC was represented at the conference by its President Thomas Bach, the Deputy Director General, the Director of Olympic Solidarity — James Macleod, Executive Director Christophe Dubi, Sports Director Kit McConnell and Medical Director Richard Budgett.

Based on materials of belta.by

# Tennis tournaments delayed

By Irina Sergeeva

**Women's Tennis Association (WTA) and the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) extend suspension of all competitions related to coronavirus pandemic**

Previously, tennis tournaments were stopped until June 7th and it's now been decided that the pause will last at least until July 13th. For the first time since 1945, when the All England Lawn Tennis Club was subjected to German bombing, the Wimbledon tournament — scheduled to take place from June 29th to July 12th — will not take place. The organisers plan that the next 134th tournament will be held from June 28th to July 11th, 2021.



'Uppermost in our mind has been the health and safety of all of those who come together to make Wimbledon happen — the public in the UK and visitors from around the world, our players, guests, members, staff, volunteers, partners, contractors, and local residents — as well as our broader responsibility to society's efforts to tackle this global challenge to our way of life. With the likelihood that

the Government's measures will continue for many months, it is our view that we must act responsibly to protect the large numbers of people required to prepare the championships from being at risk', a statement on the Wimbledon website reads.

As for another Grand Slam tournament — the French Open scheduled to run from May 18th to June 7th, has been postponed until the autumn.

During the current quarantine, the WTA and ATP have frozen player ratings.



People’s Artist of Belarus — Svetlana Skovyrko — continues the ‘malyavanya dyvany’ (decorated carpets) painting tradition included in Belarusian List of Historical-Cultural Values, in Glubokoe’s House of Crafts

EXHIBITIONS

**NATIONAL ART MUSEUM**  
20 Lenin Street  
Until 15<sup>th</sup> April. *We'll Be Understood in 100 Years: Lazar Khidekel*  
Until 3<sup>rd</sup> May. *Exhibition of Yuri Platonov: Travel*  
Until 21<sup>st</sup> May. *Sacred Images*

**NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS**  
116 Nezavisimosti Avenue  
Until 19<sup>th</sup> April. *Prototype of European Constitution*

**BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY MUSEUM**  
13 Maksim Bogdanovich Street  
Until 25<sup>th</sup> April. *Frantishkek Bogushevish's Blessed Kushlyany*  
Until 5<sup>th</sup> May. *Volozhin District: My Land — My Origin*

**NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS**  
3 Nekrasov Street  
Until 26<sup>th</sup> April. *I'm Monet; I'm Shishkin; I'm Malevich*  
Until 26<sup>th</sup> April. *Personal exhibition of Sergey Grinevich*

**TROITSKY SUBURB**  
7A Bogdanovich Street  
Until 26<sup>th</sup> July. *Live Exotics*  
Until 5<sup>th</sup> October. *Born by Sea*

**LIBRA**  
37 Nezavisimosti Avenue  
Until 7<sup>th</sup> June. *Pop Art*

**NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM**  
12 Karl Marks Street  
Until 22<sup>nd</sup> April. *War and Peace. Return*

**MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY**  
15 Svobody Square  
Until 3<sup>rd</sup> May. *Porcelain Stories: Famous People in Porcelain*

**MUSEUM OF MAN**  
1 Oktyabrskaya Square  
Until 31<sup>st</sup> December. *Museum of Man*

**PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY**  
11 Sovetskaya Street  
Until 3<sup>rd</sup> April. *March Cats*

**LEONID SHCHEMELEV CITY ART GALLERY**  
10 Revolyutsionnaya Street  
Until 19<sup>th</sup> April. *Leonid Shchemelev is 97: Graphics from Family Collection*  
Until 19<sup>th</sup> April. *About Women and Spring*

**MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY**  
4 Sverdlov Street  
Until 12<sup>th</sup> April. *Live Sound*

THEATRES

**BOLSHOI THEATRE OF BELARUS**  
1 Parizhskey Komuny Square  
09.04. Traviata  
10.04. Spartacus  
11.04. Rigoletto  
12.04. Little Prince  
14.04. #Fashionable. Talks About Perfection

**BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE**  
44 Kropotkin Street  
10 and 11.04. Profit  
12.04. Serezha / A Mad Woman  
14.04. Medea's Syndrome  
15.04. A Ticket to Brest Train  
16.04. If There's No Tomorrow

**THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS**  
33 Masharov Avenue  
09.04. Concert on Attic  
10.04. Abduction of Yelena  
11.04. False Note  
12 and 14.04. Nobody Promised Easy Life  
15.04. Jubilee / Proposal  
16.04. A Very Simple Story

**YOUNG SPECTATOR'S THEATRE**  
26 Engels Street  
09.04. Belarusian Vaudevilles  
10.04. Eight Women in Love  
15.04. On Account of Dead Souls  
16.04. Doctor Upon Not One's Own Will

**YANKA KUPALA THEATRE**  
7 Engels Street  
09.04. ART  
10.04. Prudok Radio / Seagull  
11 and 12.04. Black Lady of Nesvizh  
12.04. King Lear / Harvest  
13.04. Musical Nights at Kupala Theatre. A Letter to Chopin  
14.04. Weltmaster-Accordion / Paulinka  
15.04. Evening / Prudok Radio / Pinks Gentry  
16.04. Closeness / Elza's Land

**MAKSIM GORKY THEATRE**  
5 Volodarsky Street  
09.04. Oscar and Pink Lady  
14.04. Dangerous Liasons  
16.04. A Husband Leaving His Wife

**CHAMBER DRAMA THEATRE**  
5 Frunze Street  
11.04. A Night at a Hotel  
15.04. Luxurious Wedding  
16.04. Veronica Decides to Die

**MUSICAL THEATRE**  
44 Myasnikov Street  
09.04. Tristan and Isolde  
10.04. Truffaldino from Bergamo  
11.04. Mister X  
12.04. Once in Chicago  
14.04. I Want Your Husband  
15.04. My Dear Friend!  
16.04. Ball in Savoy