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Aleksandr Kulevsky

Symbol of Unity motor rally circled the whole country and ended at the Mound of Glory, near Minsk

We are united forever

The Republic of Belarus celebrated the Day of People's Unity on September 17th for the first time. Festive events were held throughout the country and even abroad where the Belarusian diaspora enthusiastically supported this new initiative.

The forum of patriotic forces — *Symbol of Unity* — held in the capital's Minsk-Arena was the culmination of numerous celebrations. Aleksandr Lukashenko also took part in this event bringing together many thousands of people. → 4



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Security is collective category

Risks of violent resolution of conflicts, economic underpinnings of modern threats, the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan... What else did the President talk about at the session of the CSTO Collective Security Council in Dushanbe.



By Dmitry Kryat,
Yevgeny Kononovich

The Afghan crisis is a concentrated expression of global world problems. Therefore, the conversation in the capital of Tajikistan was multifaceted. Aleksandr Lukashenko drew attention to the following threat,

“A dangerous tendency is the aggravation of the situation on the western borders of the CSTO. The US military presence in Eastern Europe is expanding, with combat capabilities of the coalition formations of NATO countries increasing... All these create conditions near our borders for military provocations and incidents.”

Destabilisation factors

Tajikistan has worked effectively as the chair of the CSTO, but this period was very difficult, which was accentuated by Aleksandr Lukashenko,

“We have to admit that this year did not contribute to the improvement of the international situation. The principles and norms of international law are still grossly ignored. The boundaries of regional instability are expanding... Global tension creates risks of violent options for resolving conflicts.”

The President of Belarus noted that overcoming the coronavirus pandemic has been a test for humanity while environmental disasters and irreversible climate changes are becoming a significant safety factor.

According to the Belarusian leader, the roots of the acute

challenges of our time lie in the economic situation. In particular, Aleksandr Lukashenko noted, “A pressing factor in breaking the system of international relations is the intensification of competition between the West and China. To strengthen its influence in Asia, the European Union has put forward the initiative, entitled *Globally Connected Europe*, which, in fact, is an alternative to China’s *Belt and Road*.”

the true motive of such measures is overt lobbying of their economic interests, amongst other things.”

Dialogue is important

The topic of migration was also the focus of attention of the heads of state. In this respect, the President of Belarus drew attention to attempts to distort issues, “They are trying to give the character of an international hybrid

At the same time, according to the Head of State, the migration crisis has become a pretext for building up NATO’s military potential on the western borders of the CSTO. A group of troops has been deployed on a permanent basis near the Belarusian borders, numbering over 10,000 people and more than 500 units of heavy military equipment.

It’s obvious that the only reasonable and effective option

border with Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, there have been incidents almost every day, during which immigrants from Afghanistan and other countries, e.g., Iraq, Syria, are brutally — with the use of weapons — pushed into Belarusian territory. I’m not even talking about how they deal with their own populations within their countries, which come out and legitimately express their opinions, for example, about COVID restrictions.”

Afghan knot

Speaking directly about the Afghan problem, Aleksandr Lukashenko said,

“There is a humanitarian crisis, which will be accompanied by a whole range of negative consequences, including challenges and threats for the CSTO collective security.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko said that the consequences of COVID-19 underscore the need to develop co-operation in the field of biological safety in the CSTO, “And not only from the point of view of countering the pandemic, but also in the context of international threats.”

Next year, the Collective Security Treaty turns thirty years, and the organisation itself is twenty years old. It’s necessary to approach these dates responsibly. Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed, “At a minimum, it is necessary to conduct an audit of what has been done and what needs to be done. Probably, to define new long-term tasks for the development of the CSTO, which acts as a guarantor and donor of security on the Eurasian continent.”



First of all, economic motives also explain the sanctions demarches of western countries. The Belarusian leader asserted,

“The collective West exerts pressure on sovereign states through restrictions, asymmetric actions and hybrid influence. All this is happening under the slogan of fighting for people’s rights. But we are well aware that

threat to incidents on the border with refugees and migrants. Attempts are actively being made to shift the responsibility for the migration problem onto the transit countries. And all this after what the United States and its NATO allies have done in Afghanistan and the Middle East. Moreover, they called Afghans to Europe by order of the United States, and now they refuse to accept them.”

for solving border problems is possible primarily through dialogue between neighbouring countries. However, Europe stubbornly refuses to move towards this path. The President noted,

“Western countries turn a blind eye to gross violations of their own obligations in the field of human rights.

Only in recent weeks on the



Emomali Rahmon

On the first day of his visit to Dushanbe, Aleksandr Lukashenko met with President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon

It was a warm meeting of friends. This is the impression formed from the protocol part of the bilateral meeting. They have not seen each other for a long time, so many topics have accumulated, alongside the rich agenda of the upcoming

summits. Therefore, in the presence of the press, the presidents dispensed with routine protocol speeches and rather quickly — without media representatives — moved on to negotiations behind closed doors.

The heads of state discussed the development of bilateral co-operation, the military-political situation in the region, as well as the agenda for the CSTO and SCO summits.

The Tajik leader received his Belarusian counterpart in his famous office decorated with wood carving in the Palace of the Nation. For the first time, Emomali Rahmon demonstrated the new interiors of the palace hall to Aleksandr Lukashenko in September 2018. They are deco-

Bilateral co-operation

rated with skilful handmade wooden carvings in the national style, using such types of wood as pine, oak and beech. It took less than a year from the start of the project of the final implementation. Aleksandr Lukashenko highly praised the work of the Tajik craftsmen. “It’s not just beautiful — it’s amazing work,” he said. Emomali Rahmon promised that, if necessary, Tajikistan is ready to share their experiences and carry out similar work in Belarus.

Moreover, there was another meeting with the leadership of Tajikistan: on his arrival at the airport in Dushanbe, Aleksandr Lukashenko talked with the Prime Minister of the country, Kokhir Rasulzoda.

In Dushanbe, Aleksandr Lukashenko met with Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan and President of Iran Ebrahim Raisi.

The Head of the Belarusian state said to the Pakistani leader, *“We are extremely interested in collaboration with a huge country such as Pakistan. I believe that your specialists and members of the Government will find a lot of interesting things for Pakistan in Belarus.”*

The President stated that now the trade turnover between the countries is very small. At the same time, he said, despite the difficult times — as they say in the world — the volume

of mutual trade in the past and especially this year has grown significantly.

By the end of the year, Belarus’ Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei will pay a visit to Pakistan. The parties agreed to intensify work on the preparation of the meeting of the intergovernmental commission.

“This will allow us to intensify our contacts in all spheres. We have no closed topics in relations with Pakistan,” stressed the Head of State.

Aleksandr Lukashenko also noted the successful development of Pakistan, which is not stopped even by the difficulties in the region. “We will be glad to contribute to this development,” he concluded.

Solve problems through kindness

In his speech at the SCO summit, Aleksandr Lukashenko put forward a number of major initiatives, also proposing an important formula for unravelling the Afghan ‘knot’.

“The Afghan state and its people should be treated as equals. We need to help Afghanistan... The problem should be solved through kindness.”

Fair world order

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised the potential of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation and its ability to play an independent game in global politics, saying,

“The SCO is one of the largest regional organisations in the world. This status gives it all the resources and opportunities to allow it to not play by the rules dictated by external forces — moreover, the disastrous results of such intrusion are obvious to all now.”

Belarus’ Head of State is convinced that the current situation in the region and in the world dictates special conditions for the development of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, “The acute global challenges of our time clearly indicate that the time is coming for an historic stress test for our organisation, perhaps the most serious in its entire 20-year history.”

Health is the most valuable resource

The coronavirus pandemic has plunged the planet into a new reality. The experience of the last two years has convincingly proved that closing ourselves in national ‘apartments’ is not an option. The President of Belarus stressed,

“We need to unite more than ever and work jointly to create an alliance in the field of healthcare.”

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, the SCO states need to intensify co-operation in the production of vaccines

Dushanbe was the venue for the Heads of State Council of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, as well as the SCO-CSTO meeting initiated by official Minsk



and medicines — not only against coronavirus.

The President said that — thanks to co-operation with partners, primarily with Russia — Belarus has established production of a vaccine and grants foreign citizens the right to visit the country without a visa for vaccination against COVID-19. He believes that,

“The vaccine should become a universal public good accessible to all.”

Financial co-operation

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew the attention of his colleagues to a number of issues that require the attention of the SCO heads of state. The President called cyber attacks and manipulation of consciousness via the Internet one of the most dangerous challenges for the SCO countries: they threaten the security of not only state institutions but also public interests and human rights. According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, one of the problems in this context is the lack of an international legal

system that establishes norms and rules of conduct in this area. Development of an appropriate international framework will make it possible to solve these issues, the President believes.

The Belarusian leader made one more important statement,

“Belarus resolutely and consistently supports the SCO proposals regarding expansion of the use of national currencies in trade and finance.”

According to the Head of State, the current situation in the world demonstrates an increasing vulnerability of the countries that rely entirely on a well-known currency. “This not only deprives us of competitive financial and economic advantages, but also threatens national security. Moreover, this lever is increasingly being used as a weapon,” Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

Lend a shoulder

The previous day at the CSTO Summit, the Afghan problem was the focus of the SCO leaders’

dialogue. For several decades, the country actually did not come out of a state of war, though all its neighbours are interested in a stable Afghanistan. With this in view, Aleksandr Lukashenko voiced Minsk’s initiative,

“Our country is ready to assist in the restoration of the Afghan infrastructure, ensuring food supplies... My experience as President enables me to draw a conclusion: all the problems that exist in Afghanistan today are to be solved by Afghans. History teaches us something: two major, most powerful states (the Soviet Union and America) have been trying to solve the problems in Afghanistan by force for 30 years. What happened as a result? You know this from recent events. Therefore, the problem must be solved through kindness. The Afghan state and its people should be treated as equals. We need to help Afghanistan.”

The President added, “However, we must all under-

stand that it will not be possible to solve these problems instantly. We should proceed calmly, patiently, offering various ways of helping Afghanistan. We should not impose our values on them, they will choose their future independently. The modern history of development of the region of Central and South Asia also teaches us this. I’d emphasise once again: Afghans will choose their future independently.”

Minsk’s position at the joint CSTO-SCO meeting was presented by Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei. All participants of the event reacted well to Aleksandr Lukashenko’s leaving Dushanbe earlier than others. After all, it was an historic date — Belarus was celebrating its most important holiday for the first time: People’s Unity Day. The Head of State could not but spend the date with his people!

On the fringe of the summit

Belarus’ Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei held meetings in Dushanbe with a member of the State Council, China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi, and India’s External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

Mr. Makei and his Chinese counterpart discussed a wide range of issues related to the further development of Belarusian-Chinese relations, including the organisation of contacts at the highest levels. The sides paid close attention to the priority tasks of enhancing co-operation in the trade and economic sphere.

With Subramaniam Jaishankar, the Belarusian Foreign Minister discussed issues of enhancing political co-operation between the countries, including prospects for resuming contacts at the highest levels, as well as interaction in international organisations.

The parties also exchanged views on topical issues on the international agenda, paying special attention to prospects for further development of Belarusian-Indian trade and economic co-operation.

Imran Khan agreed that the region is now going through difficult times: countries are struggling with the consequences of the pandemic, new security



Imran Khan

challenges have emerged after the events in Afghanistan, and various political issues must also be resolved.

The Prime Minister noted that relations between the two countries have existed for

a long time, especially when Belarus and Pakistan interact in agriculture and industry. He expressed the hope that the visit of the Belarusian delegation will contribute to the strengthening of bilateral interaction.

The interlocutors discussed in detail the situation in Afghanistan. Minsk and Islamabad intend to find new points of contact for mutual benefit. The President invited the Prime Minister of Pakistan to Minsk. There was also a response to the invitation, “We are looking forward to seeing you in Pakistan once again!”

Ebrahim Raisi previously visited Minsk, being the deputy head of the Iranian judiciary, and met with Aleksandr Lukashenko. Now the Belarusian Head of State first of all congratulated his colleague on his recent victory in the presidential election and noted,

“No matter how the situation in the world developed, what the circumstances are, Iran and Belarus always found the paths that led us to success.”

During the meeting, the leaders of the two countries paid special attention to the sanctions issue. The Head of State noted that Belarus has always lived under sanctions, but for those who introduced restrictive measures against the country, this did not bring any effect, as in the situation with Iran. The President of Belarus stressed, “If the sanctions did any harm to Belarus, Iran, and other countries, it was only because we ourselves are to blame for this. We were not always negotiable, we did not always find the path we had to follow under the pressure of sanctions. Therefore,

everything is in our hands.”

In his turn, Ebrahim Raisi noted that Belarus demonstrates good achievements in socio-economic development, which means that it successfully copes with pressure from outside and will overcome all difficulties.

“The Americans themselves always admit the fact that the policy of maximum pressure does not work. We believe that sanctions cannot stop Iran’s progress,” he emphasised.

The presidents of Belarus and Iran agreed that the level of relations between the two countries clearly does not correspond to the existing potential. An agreement was reached that the foreign ministers will soon update the roadmap for co-operation, according to which we will develop interaction, bearing in mind that we are connected



Ebrahim Raisi

by trade-economic, as well as strategic interaction. The task is to create, in every sense, favourable conditions for its development. By the next meeting of the leaders of the two states, there should be obvious positive steps forward and all problems that hinder interaction should be resolved. The presidents noted that they would be glad to meet in Tehran and Minsk.



By Maksim Osipov

The forum of patriotic forces — *Symbol of Unity* — held in the capital's Minsk-Arena was the culmination of numerous celebrations. Aleksandr Lukashenko also took part in this event bringing together many thousands of people. The President recalled that, back in 1939, Belarus was reunited within its national borders. For centuries, divided between principalities, kingdoms and empires, the people got the chance to build their own state on their historical land for the first time, "What does this day mean for us — living generations? This is our historical memory. Memory, which binds together people and epochs, conveys experience and warns against fatal mistakes. Our entire history of the sometimes difficult and dramatic path to gaining and preserving our statehood has repeatedly confirmed the ancient wisdom: strength is in unity."

The President stated that we, Belarusians, know what it means for the sake of other people's national interests, someone's exorbitant geopolitical ambitions, to lose half of their native land, to lose contact with relatives and friends,

"For long twenty years, over four million people living in the territory occupied by Poland were deprived of the right to speak their native language, study in national schools, develop their original culture and just be called Belarusians."

The facts speak

The Head of State recalled that on September 17th, 1939, the inhabitants of Western Belarus greeted the Red Army soldiers as liberators. However, today there are those who are not averse to rewriting history. In this regard, the President noted, "We are unable to silence nationalists of all colours, the descendants of collaborators who equated this event with the attack of Nazi Germany on Poland. However, we can and must answer with facts."

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised that this is what we have begun to do, recalling, "By mid-September of 1939, Poland suffered a crushing defeat in the war with Germany, with Polish troops being defeated. The government fled to the UK and the state ceased to exist. The shadow of Nazism hangs over Western Belarus. Over Western Belarus, which was part of the state that did not exist at that time! Having returned the lost native Belarusian lands, the Soviet government stopped the mortal threat to the inhabitants of the area for two whole years."

The Belarusian leader drew attention to the fact that in Poland they were very offended that the Belarusians in their state, according to their Constitution, decided to celebrate the day of the country's reunification on this memorable date.

"Why are they offended? Polish lands. It turns out that we 'occupied' them," said the President. In response to such accusations and reproaches, Aleksandr Lukashenko said that the historic decision to reunite the lands in 1939 was correct and just.



Formation of the nation

As the Belarusian leader noted, at that time our people once again acquired the right to live and develop within the borders of one country. In a short time, people in the western regions received free medical care, almost 6,000 schools began to work, and national universities and theatres were opened. Moreover, new factories and plants were built. Belarusian newspapers



and magazines appeared in all regional cities and centres.

"The reunification of Belarus in 1939 gave a powerful impetus to the development of the economy, science and culture. However, the main thing is that the Belarusians have united in the fight against the supporters of the re-creation of the 'great' Poland and in the fight against the Nazi occupiers," the President noted.

Aleksandr Lukashenko added that on the battlefields, in partisan detachments and underground, residents of Western and Eastern Belarus, without hesitation, died for their Fatherland, "In this most terrible and cruel war in the history

Symbol of unity

The Republic of Belarus celebrated the Day of People's Unity on September 17th for the first time. Festive events were held throughout the country and even abroad where the Belarusian diaspora enthusiastically supported this new initiative.

of mankind, the national unity of the Belarusians, Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Jews and other small peoples living in the Republic was strengthened and tempered. In unthinkable trials, the Belarusian people were formed into a single nation."



future generations, a behest to protect the sovereignty of the country, national unity and peace in the native land."

The Head of State stressed, **"Remember, Belarusians: this is the main holiday, which we did not feel able to mark for many**

decades. There would be no holiday — there would be no country and there would be no us!"

Recalling that in our country they are proud to say that the Soviet republic, which became a co-founder of the UN in 1945, took an honourable place in the international community and emerged as a Belarusian national state with equal rights for all citizens, the President noted that the national unity was tested more

than once in the 20th century. In the 1990s, the Belarusian people rejected an attempt to build an extremely radical nationalistic state ('Belarus for Belarusians' was the motto back then), prevented the disintegration of the country and its pillaging, and preserved peace and accord in society."

"Last August and September, in the acute period of the hybrid aggression unleashed against us, the Belarusians defended their independence. We, true Belarusians, didn't let them repeat the blitzkrieg of the 1940s," said Aleksandr Lukashenko. "But we return to the dramatic lessons of the first half of the last century without intending to reproach anyone. I will repeat what I have said time and time again. Our neighbours are given by God just like to any other country. We are intent on peace and friendship in relations with everyone. We've never craved someone else's riches or land. We have plenty of our own. We don't even remind them today that Bialystok and the lands around it are Belarusian lands, that Vilnius is a Belarusian city, as well as the lands around it. We don't talk about it. Intra-confessional

balance and interethnic unity represent the unshakable foundation of our society."

The Belarusian leader stressed, **"All of us, all the people, who live in this land, make up the Belarusian nation. We have one state, one law, and the common historical memory for all. It is unbreakable. It is forever."**

We must not forget

At the same time, the Head of State clearly noted, "We will never allow glorifying Bury [the nickname of war criminal Romuald Rajts] and other murderers of the Belarusian people. They will always stay unchanged in our historical memory. There is no place here for those who are dragging these criminals out of oblivion, those who are trying to stomp out, to tear apart our sovereign country, to make it part of the buffer zone around the brotherly country of Russia."

It is in vain that sometimes voices are heard that, perhaps, we should forget everything that was less than a hundred years ago.

"Well, Khatyn is immortalised by a monument. There are thousands of such monuments where our people were savagely murdered. We can forget it but you, Belarusians, must not forget one thing: as soon as we forget the road to these monuments, as soon as weeds grow all over the road to Khatyn, these atrocities will be repeated, these atrocities will once again come into our homes. We live as long as we remember it. There is a simple truth to life: if we forget them, we will be forgotten in the same way. This is why we shouldn't let it happen. It is in our Slavonic hearts and thoughts."

The date will live in our hearts!

Addressing both those present at the forum and the entire Belarusian people, Aleksandr Lukashenko said, "I want to congratulate you on a new public holiday, which will take the same worthy place in our modern history as Victory Day and Independence Day. But I will stress once again: if it were not for this reunification, we would not have had either Victory Day or Independence Day. We wouldn't be here because there would be no land on which our ancestors were born and which they cultivated with their labour. The date of September 17th has lived and will live in the hearts and memories of the Belarusian people."

The President summarised, "And we, the citizens of modern independent Belarus, know that we are forever bound by the original fate of different generations of Belarusians who have been living on this land for a thousand years, on our native Belarusian land."

Establishing new traditions



By Tatiana Bizyuk

The morning of September 17th began with gifts for the residents of Mogilev. Firstly, the first stage of the new road was officially opened, then the Unity Square and a commemorative sign dedicated to the holiday.

The Head of the Administration of the President, Igor Sergeyenko stressed that September 17th, 1939, was an act of historical justice, when the reunification of Western and Eastern Belarus began, the formation of a single nation, "The idea to establish a public holiday was born during the preparation for the 6th All-Belarusian

Belarusians from all regions of the country received gifts for the Day of People's Unity

People's Congress and was first voiced and supported at this forum. By establishing this holiday, we are engendering new traditions in our country. There are actually three gifts in Mogilev: the opening of a new road, which

the city needs so badly, a square with a new name and a memorial sign. Despite the rainy weather, we are in a festive mood!"

Construction of a backup overpass is one of the largest transport infrastructure projects in the regional centre. This is the first concrete road in Mogilev, created using modern technologies. Its total length is seven kilometres.

As far as the renovated square is concerned, even before acquiring the official name, located in the centre of the city near the Mogilev Regional Medical and Diagnostic Centre, it really united people, bringing together young people, married couples and hosting holidays. Therefore,

it is logical that this place has been given such a wonderful name: Unity Square. About two thousand people gathered here: youth and veterans, representatives of public organisations and labour teams of the city, alongside guests of Mogilev.

A memorial sign has also been erected. The sculpture is made of Mansurovsky granite, its height is 330cm, width is 100cm, total weight is 1.5 tonnes. The composition is made using the artist's own technique, the memorial sign is crowned with a cornflower, on either side of it there is a Belarusian decoration — the same as on the State Flag. Each element is sym-

bolic: the cornflower means holiness and purity while the decorative elements are a symbol of spiritual wealth. All that is inherent in us, Belarusians!



Andrei Sazonov

Memorial plaque unveiled in Brest dedicated to those who died for the reunification of Belarus

A memorial plaque appeared at the obelisk opposite the main entrance to the city's park of culture and recreation.

"At this place, 82 years ago, soldiers of the Red Army were buried, who gave their lives for the reunification of the Belarusian people. Here lie the heroes who liberated our city in 1944 from the brown plague. Back in 1939, Brest found itself at the epicentre of the most complex geopolitical processes. The main events of that period took place in our region.



Therefore, we consider today's holiday to be the restoration of historical truth, a powerful factor uniting Belarusians for the sake of the country's future," stressed Aleksandr Rogachuk, Chairman of the Brest City Executive Committee.



The opening ceremony of the city children's and youth action project *We are United* took place in Minsk

It gathered more than 300 participants, a consolidated pioneer squad of Minsk in the park named after Marat Kazei.

More than a thousand students of Vitebsk State University held a festive event

The event was held at the Candle of Memory memorial sign in honour of teachers and students of the



university who died during the Great Patriotic War. More than one thousand students, together with the leadership of the university and guests of the event, lined up near the educational institution in a long chain, embracing Vitebsk State University.

Ministry for Emergency Situations cadets became blood donors on the Day of People's Unity

Representatives of the Faculty of Prevention and Elimination of Emergencies, as well as the Department of Physical Training and Sports — more than 30 people in total — made a decision to donate blood on this significant day. Donor Day was held at the City Transfusion Centre of the 6th City Clinical Hospital of Minsk.



A capsule with a message to our descendants was laid in Grodno on the Day of People's Unity

In Grodno, festive events dedicated to the Day of People's Unity were opened by



a solemn meeting at the Mound of Glory. The venue was not chosen by chance since the memorial complex was opened on the 30th anniversary of the reunification of Belarus: September 17th, 1969.

On that day, a capsule with a message to our descendants was laid on the mound. It was opened on the eve of the holiday: the text and the capsule itself will be exhibited in the Regional Historical and Archaeological Museum. During a rally at the memorial complex, they laid a time capsule with a message for future generations. It will need to be opened on September 17th, 2050.

Plaques in honour of the reunification of Belarus installed on the Old Bridge in Grodno

The history of the bridge is more than 100 years old. In 1944, the spans of the old bridge were blown up by retreating German troops. The building was restored by autumn 1949. The opening of the bridge was timed to coincide with a memorable date: the 10th anniversary of the reunification of Belarus.

For decades this was remembered by the plaques installed at the bridge entrances. In 2008, the structure was reconstructed, making the bridge wider, taller, more convenient and increas-

ing its carrying capacity. The plates were dismantled but they were kept on the site of one of the city enterprises.

On the eve of the Day of People's Unity, the plaques were restored to their original form and returned to the Old Bridge.



People's Unity Public Garden appeared in Gomel

A new green corner was built in the new building of the regional centre. A

public garden was laid in a picturesque place. Representatives of enterprises, public organisations and residents of the Novobelitsky micro-district planted dozens of thuja in honour of the new state holiday.

Here a new tradition was born, which they plan to continue every year on September 17th. According to local residents and authorities, they will continue to look after the plantings and improve the territory. The public garden will be supplemented with young seedlings.

Sculpture of the Mother of God installed in Zhodino while recreation areas opened in Smolevichi

Metropolitan Veniamin solemnly blessed a new sculpture of the Mother of God at the entrance to Zhodino from the side of the capital. Meanwhile, a wonderful recreation area with a skate park, gym and sports grounds has opened in the new district of Smolevichi along the



Alena Drozdovskaya

embankment. Despite the cool weather, a festive concert took place on the Smolevichi embankment.

Unique Belarus

By Victoria Derzhanovich

Auroch

Our country ranks first in the world in terms of the number of free-living bison. Most of them are registered in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha. Belarusian educator and poet, Nikolai Gusovsky, was the first to glorify the strength and courage of this forest giant in literature. Five centuries ago, he wrote *The Song of the Auroch*, describing the appearance, habits and behaviour of this animal and also revealing the secrets of hunting. The poem was also devoted to the history of our native land and its people. Gusovsky appealed to all princes, urging them to stop internecine wars and unite and he asked Queen Bona Sforza to think about the intellectual potential of the earth.

Images of this animal are now found on the coats of arms, logos of enterprises and the Dinamo hockey



club. The auroch was the mascot of the Ice Hockey World Championship which our country hosted in 2014. This beautiful and strong animal is non-aggressive but if its herd is in danger, it will come to defend them. This fully corresponds to our national character: Belarusians are not a hostile nation but are able to stand up for themselves and their independence.



Stork

This bird has been a symbol of Belarus since the times when our ancestors believed in different gods. They thought that, after death, a person's soul moves into a stork and flies away to 'vyrai'

— an unknown land. In spring, people waited for the birds to return. Belarusians considered storks to be harbingers of happiness and well-being, pinning their hopes for good health and wealth for the family on them. For a long time, villagers built platforms on the roofs of their houses or pillars to make it easier for the birds to nest. Although the stork population in Belarus is far from being high, many people still believe the bird is associated with our country. For us, the stork is a bird-patron of the nation which is pure in soul. Belarusians have never been conquerors, have not unleashed religious wars and have not organised persecutions. Tolerance is distinctive for us and, in literature, the image of Belarus — as a land under white wings — is immortalised in the story of the same name by Vladimir Korotkevich.



Cornflower

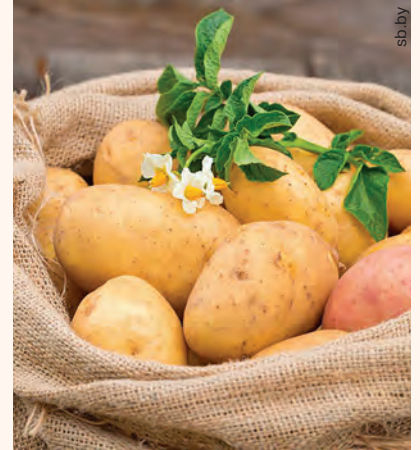
The 'modest' cornflower does not pretend to be a king among flowers. Similarly, Belarusians are hardworking, friendly and hospitable people who are not used to putting themselves forward out. A symbol of loyalty and reliability, this flower usually grows on ploughed land occupied by winter cereals. The ancient area of grain crops has given rise to many legends, the main idea being that farmers should

admire not only the plants that feed them but also seemingly inconspicuous and modest flowers. In a series of everyday chores, a person should not forget about beauty. Belarus has always been an agrarian country, which created rituals and traditions associated with peasant life: for example, during the harvest, in between heavy physical labour, boys and girls wove wreaths with cornflowers and led round dances.

The State Emblem, the State Flag and the State Anthem are symbols of our country. They reflect the main national spiritual values of Belarusians: civil unity, work, striving for the improvement of each person and the whole of society, peacefulness and at the same time readiness to stand up for their freedom and independence. However, apart from the symbols of state sovereignty, the Republic has other significant ideas and phenomena, which make it known and appreciated and which have become symbols of independent Belarus. Irina Kazakova, Professor of the Department of Theoretical and Slavic Literary Studies at the Belarusian State University's Faculty of Philology, tells us more.

Potato

In the 19th century, this South American root crop became the main national product and agricultural culture of Belarusians. Until now, potatoes have been in the leading position in agriculture: our country ranks first in the CIS in production and consumption of this 'other bread' per capita. In addition, Belarus is a major exporter of potatoes. Incredibly, an average Belarusian eats about 183 kilograms of potatoes annually. Moreover, our national cuisine could hardly be imagined without potato dishes, the most famous of which are 'babka', 'draniki', dumplings, 'kolduny' and



'tsybriki'. In 2013, new potato varieties were grown: of purple, blue and red colours.



Lakes and swamps

Belarusian marshes are commonly called 'the European Amazon' and 'the lungs of Europe'. Swamps cover huge areas of our country (14.1 percent of the total area) and produce more oxygen than forests. They play an important role in maintaining the stability of ecosystems and preserving biodiversity. The largest swamp-lake complex in Belarus is the Yelnya Republican Landscape Reserve in the Vitebsk Region. However, one of the most ancient swamps in Europe is the Dikoe swamp in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha — being more

than 6,000 years old. There are only four similar swamps on the planet! A classic author of Belarusian literature, Maksim Bogdanovich, subtly reflected these two natural elements — forest and water — in his works. In addition, many legends about the origin of Belarusian cities and towns are associated with their geographical location near water. The image of Belarus as a blue-eyed beauty (whose eyes are the bottomless lakes, a braid the colour of ripe wheat, a green sundress the colour of our forests) has become firmly established in our minds.



Rushnik

A towel made of homespun cloth has been common in Belarusians' daily life for centuries — playing an

important role in various calendar and family rituals. In many regions of Belarus, the first or last harvested sheaf was necessarily tied with a beautiful rushnik. It was put in 'a red corner' so that next year there would also be a good harvest. Family rituals, covering three main stages in a person's life (birth, marriage and seeing a person off to another world), were accompanied by a rushnik which was also used as a gift, a talisman, a veil, a decoration and symbol of a holiday. It had the meaning of a path, a road or a connection. People wove their own rushniks in each region of the country — to avoid crop failure, drought or war — but all wished for their troubles to pass by.

At the forefront of the world

World's best cardiologists and cardiac surgeons meet at BSMU

Cardiology does not stand still, with new technologies in this area appearing almost every day. Their development raises a lot of questions, therefore, domestic specialists exchange experience with foreign colleagues and adopt the best techniques while sharing modern developments. The Belarusian State Medical University (BSMU) hosted the 2nd Congress of the Eurasian Arrhythmological Association, as well as the 8th Congress of Cardiologists, Cardiac Surgeons and X-ray Endovascular Surgeons of Belarus.



By Olga Nevmerzhtskaya

The forum was attended by speakers from Russia, Ukraine, Canada, Argentina, and elsewhere. About 1,200 doctors shared the most significant achievements in the field of cardiology, conducted 38 symposia, 3 plenary sessions and countless lectures.

The issue of preserving people's health is a topic of concern to many. Moreover, our state pays special attention to the field of medicine. The Chair of the Council of the Republic Natalia Kochanova spoke at the forum, reading a message from the President of Belarus. In particular, it says,



After all, these are hundreds of thousands of saved lives."

According to the Speaker of the Council of the Republic, the healthcare system in our country is developing quite effectively, "With state support, new healthcare facilities are being built, existing facilities are being reconstructed, modernised, and medical facilities are being equipped with new modern equipment. The President pays close attention to the development of medicine in our country."

Today, substantial funds have been allocated for the development of the cardiological service in Belarus, which gives a visible result. In future, more care for patients with heart disease will be available. Healthcare Minister Dmitry Pinevich announced, "In the near future we will open a new transplantation building at the Minsk Research and Research Centre for Surgery, Transplantation and Haematology, which also has a powerful cardiac surgery service. Moreover, the Republican Clinical Medical Centre of the Administration of the President operates at a very high level as an innovation centre. There are plans to build (this has already been agreed) a new building for cardiac surgery in the Minsk Regional Hospital, and we will also open a new building in the Mogilev Regional Hospital in November."

"The development of the cardiological service is the most important area of state policy in the field of healthcare. Our highly qualified specialists, who are trusted by Belarusian and foreign patients, are always ready to exchange experiences with foreign colleagues. I'm convinced that your meeting will help strengthen professional ties, international sci-tech co-operation and improve the quality and availability of medical care while also increasing life expectancy."

Addressing the participants of the forum, Natalia Kochanova especially noted, "Healthcare and the health of the citizens in our country have always been and remain a priority area of social policy. I'm sincerely grateful to our cardiologists, and we are proud of their work.

Belarusian doctors have a great deal to share. Their achievements deserve high praise, the Director of the Cardiology Republican Scientific and Practical Centre, Natalia Mitkovskaya, says, "For twenty years, our country has made breakthroughs in cardiology. Last year, my Canadian colleagues told me that they didn't even imagine that Belarus would advance so much in the treatment of heart diseases. But it really is. We are now at the forefront of the world."

It's noteworthy that the COVID-19 pandemic practically didn't affect the provision of medical care, including surgical assistance. Heart transplants were still performed on time.

"We, of course, need now to more actively restore planned cardiac surgeries, as well as interventional," believes Natalia Mitkovskaya. "As far as emergency assistance is concerned, against the background of European countries and the United States, we have reduced the activity of conducting planned operations by less than 10 percent whereas in some countries this is 50 percent," she noted.

Russian experts participating in the forum plan to develop preventive measures. Vyacheslav Baikov, a cardiovascular surgeon from Russia, specified, "We'll share best practices. It's easier to develop new approaches with an international team, and most importantly, more experienced colleagues will always help. Concrete actions to highlight the problem will help cardiologists in all countries. I really want people feel sick less and get better more often."

NEWS IN BRIEF

The procedure for visa-free entry to Belarus has been changed



This is provided for by decree No. 345 signed on September 14th, which will come into force on October 17th, 2021.

Alongside Minsk National Airport, the visa-free procedure for entering Belarus for a period not exceeding 30 days and leaving Belarus is extended to the following checkpoints: Airport Brest, Airport Vitebsk, Airport Gomel, Airport Grodno, Airport Mogilev.

Taking into account the fact that mutual visa-free travel for citizens of Belarus and China is regulated by an intergovernmental agreement on a mutual visa-free regime, and citizens of Belarus and Albania — by an intergovernmental agreement on the mutual abolition of visa requirements — these countries are excluded from this list.

The United States of America was also excluded from the list of states. However, the visa-free entry procedure will now apply to citizens of Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Pakistan, South Africa.

NAS of Belarus has developed a satellite service for fire detection

The service enables the monitoring of fires in real time. With its help, it is possible to determine not only the array in which the flame appears. It is superimposed on the GisLes information system, which makes it possible to determine



from mobile devices where and what is occurring accurately. This is especially important when it comes to fires in hard-to-reach areas and border areas, as well as at night.

"If we talk about Russia and Ukraine, we have signed an agreement within the CIS on interaction in the event of transboundary fires. Over the past five years, no questions have arisen with either Poland, Latvia, Lithuania or Russia. In 2019-2020, the bulk of the fires were caused by transboundary ones, which crossed from Ukraine. In 2021, the situation returned to normal, we found solutions and established co-operation."

China donated medical equipment to Belarus

The Belarusian side was presented with the latest generation of donor chairs, which will be sent to the City Centre of Transfusiology of the 6th Clinical Hospital in Minsk. Donating blood will become even more comfortable for patients. Modern armchairs will go to the mobile team, which is carrying out the collection of a vital component at Belarusian enterprises. Thus, two more will be added to the existing ones.



The donor chair transfer was initiated by the Association of Chinese Companies, a resident of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park. They have the financial ability to sponsor and help those in need. And in the future, these joint projects are expected to continue. Fan Zhiyi, a representative of the charity committee of the Association of Chinese Companies, is confident that interstate co-operation will only gain momentum from year to year.

Museum-settlement of primitive people opened in Yurovichi

The museum was built on the site of the Yurovichi archaeological complex — a late Palaeolithic site — as well as an ancient settlement from the Middle Ages. Archaeologists have been conducting research work in Yurovichi for almost a century.

The open-air museum includes an exposition pavilion, a terrace, and an observation deck. The exposition covers 150sq.m, which has already been studied by archaeologists. "In the pavilion, we tried to recreate a panorama that corresponded to the ice age of the life of primitive people, with elements of their life and work. Here you can also see the remains



of a mammoth," said the Kalinkovichi State Museum of Local Lore. Temperature conditions don't enable to store many artefacts in an open-air museum. However, information about them can be found, including through the information board.



Flash floods submerge southern French villages

Special water rescue teams on stand-by as two months of rain falls in just six hours in parts of the Gard, flooding streets and homes in more than 60 communes. Red alert lifted but six departments remain on orange alert.

Around 30 people were rescued — some by helicopter — after vehicles were trapped on the motorway in the communes of Langlade and Gallargues le Montueux.

At least 10 people were airlifted to safety by helicopter in the municipality of Aigues-Vives, one of the hardest hit areas. Rescues were also carried out in the towns of Uchaud, Bernis, Calvisson and Boissieres. Part of a building collapsed in Caissargues. No injuries were reported.

Gard Fire Department report that one person was injured in Vergèze. Other affected areas include the communes of Mus, Codognan and parts of the city of Nîmes.

Flooding and damage to railway tracks have also interrupted rail services between Nîmes and Montpellier.

France's Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin visited some of the affected areas and expressed the government's intention to declare a state of disaster. The Minister said, "I give all my support to the inhabitants

who have suffered these bad weather conditions and call on them to be extremely vigilant in the coming days. The state will be reactive with a rapid recognition of the state of natural disaster."

Météo France has now lifted most of its orange alerts across the country, with the exception of four departments in the southwest (Gers, Tarn-et-Garonne, Haute-Garonne, and Ariège). Orange alerts were previously in place in 32 departments due to the risk of storms and flooding.

The flooding comes after a season of extreme weather that saw devastating wildfires near the French Riviera and around the Mediterranean, record-breaking flooding in Germany and Belgium and droughts or heatwaves in other areas around the world. Scientists say such events are expected but happen more frequently now as the planet is warming because of human-caused climate change.

Faberge Easter egg put up for auction

The family heirlooms of the Romanovs' House, including an Easter egg by Carl Faberge, were put up for auction in Moscow. The total cost of historical items is about 300 million Russian Roubles, according to the Literary Fund auction house.

"Each lot of the collection has an amazing history, e.g., a golden Easter egg with a surprise from the collection of Empress Maria Fedorovna was created by Carl Faberge in 1892. The starting price of this unique lot is 28m Russian Roubles," noted the press service.

The auction collection includes three unique icons. One of them was presented in 1891 to Emperor Alexander III and his wife Maria Fedorovna on the 25th anniversary of their wedding. The starting price is 8m Russian Roubles. Another — 'The Ascension of the Mother of God to Heaven' — was presented by the nuns of the Gethsemane women's community to Tsarevich Alexei Nikolaevich. Bidding will start at 5m Russian Roubles. The icon of St. John of Tobolsk was handed over to her maid of honour, Anastasia Gendrikova, by Empress Alexandra Fedorovna.

Another item in the auction catalogue is a one and a half metre banner, hand-painted to commemorate the salvation of the royal family in a train wreck on October 17th, 1888.

The auction also includes a selection of handwritten rarities, for example, a letter from 11-year-old Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna, addressed to Aunt Ella (Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fedorovna). The price of a letter at the auction is 150,000 Russian Roubles.

In total, 300 lots were collected for the auction, including items from the collections of representatives of the Romanov family, famous Russian princely families, the military and political establishment of Russia. The auction will take place on September 30th.



Wrapping of Paris' Arc de Triomphe

Celebrated late artistic duo Christo and Jeanne-Claude had first planned to wrap the Parisian landmark sixty years ago. Now, the project has finally been realised.



For almost 60 years, the artist known as Christo dreamed of wrapping the Arc de Triomphe. Now, a little over a year after Christo's death at the age of 84, *L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped* is a reality. Some 270,000 square feet of silvery blue fabric, shimmering in the changing light of Paris, hugs the monument commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 at the giddy height of his power. The polypropylene material, its tone reminiscent of the city's distinctive zinc roofs, is secured but not held rigidly fast by almost 1.9 miles of red rope, in line with the artist's meticulous instructions.

"He wanted a living object that, with its moving folds, would turn the monument's surface into something sensual," noted Vladimir Yavachev, Christo's nephew and the project director.

Roselyne Bachelot, the Culture Minister, said, "The Arc de Triomphe is taken away from our gaze and at the same time overexposed to our gaze. This subtraction and this overexposure lie at the core of the work. Thank you, Christo, for offering us the gift of looking in another way, in a new way, at masterpieces built by other artists."

The wrapping will stay in place until October 3rd.

Egypt opens ancient tomb

Egypt is showcasing an ancient tomb structure belonging to the cemetery complex of King Djoser, a pharaoh who lived more than 4,500 years ago, following extensive restorations of the site

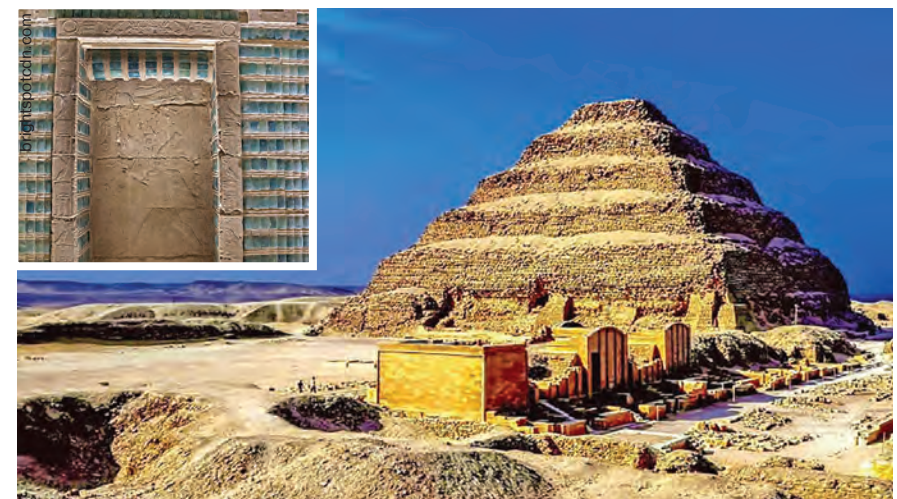
The structure — known as the Southern Tomb — is largely underground and includes a labyrinth of corridors, decorated with hieroglyphic carvings and tiles. A central funeral shaft houses a massive granite-clad sarcophagus from Egypt's Third Dynasty.

However, the pharaoh was not actually buried there but in the famed Step Pyramid nearby. The two structures make up part of the Saqqara complex near Cairo — one of the country's richest archeological sites. The Step Pyramid is the oldest known pyramid and one of

the first examples of monumental architecture from the ancient world, according to UNESCO. It is believed to have been the inspiration for the Pyramids at Giza.

Egypt's Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism said the opening of the tomb structure marked the completion of restoration work that started in 2006 and included reinforcing of the underground corridors, refurbishing the carvings and the tiled walls, and installing lighting.

The Saqqara plateau hosts at least 11 pyramids, as well as hundreds of tombs of ancient officials and other sites.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Thanks to the efforts of Minskmetrostroy experienced specialists the Minsk metro continues to grow steadily

By Inna Gorbatenko

The second stage of the construction of the third metro line — the Aerodromnaya, Nemorshansky Sad and Slutsky Gostinets stations — is in full swing. These three stations of the Zelenoluzhskaya line are planned to open in two years. At the moment, the Aerodromnaya station is at the most advanced stage of completion. The finishing works have already started. Our reporter was one of the first to visit the site and find out the details.

Rigid attention at construction site

The construction of the stations at Aerodromnaya, Nemorshansky Sad and Slutsky Gostinets is planned to be completed in 2023. Of them all, Aerodromnaya station is almost complete: a platform and stairs leading to it have already appeared. The platform width is the standard 10 metres. The length of the entire station complex, together with service and auxiliary premises, is about 300m. Aerodromnaya is a station with two lobbies, one of which is located in the centre of the Minsk Mir complex while the second is at the intersection of promising streets.

We are met by Pavel Fateev, who heads the section of the tunnel unit No. 1 at Minskmetrostroy. He has been working on the construction of metro facilities for the tenth year and took part in the construction of the Vokzalnaya, Malinovka and Petrovshchina metro stations. There are now about 100 people in his team. Everyone is busy with their own business: for example, electricians are laying communications cables while plasterers finish the walls for office premises.

“Of the monolithic works, only the construction of the entrance groups remained. The first and second entrances have been completed, now we are finishing the construction of the third and fourth,” explains Pavel Fateev. “The construction and installation works are almost completed. Architectural and finishing works have already begun inside. When the rough finishing is completed, finishing materials will be delivered to the station: granite tiles for the floor and walls. The architectural solution may still change slightly in the process. We are currently working in the premises in which the complex electrical equipment of the step-down substation will be installed. It will provide the station with electricity: lighting, traction for trains, ventilation and drainage installations... In the near future, we expect the delivery of equipment.”

The station can be accessed by both stairs and an elevator. On the left there is a special lift for people with disabilities. We pass through the lobby, where finishing works are in full swing and we get to the station. The descent to the platform will be carried out by four escalators: two for the descent and two to ascend. The bases for their installation are already in place.

Growth of capital underground

Slutskoye electric depot and the interchange hub to the fourth line: how the construction of new metro stations is progressing



The first thing that catches your eye inside is the design of Aerodromnaya station. It's vaulted, like its neighbour Kovalskaya Sloboda station. That is, there are no columns, which makes the platform very spacious.

Aerodromnaya is located on the site of the former Minsk-1 airport, right under the take-off field. The theme of the sky and flights is reflected in the interior. According to the architects' idea, a stylised runway will even appear on the platform. The colour scheme of this station is a cold bluish colour interspersed with white, dark blue and grey, as well as stainless steel elements.

“To build is half the battle. You still need to adjust and test everything,” continues Mr. Fateev, slowly walking along the platform. “For example, all stations of the third metro line are equipped with automatic station doors. These are glass safety rails around the edge of the platform. It is necessary to install and secure these structures, while also adjusting them with the automatic train movement. Each station will have 40 sliding double doors. Installation of such equipment at the first four stations of the third metro line is our first experience of it. All works were accompanied by specialists from the Turkish manufacturer of protective screens. We have mastered the installation of automatic station doors. We will install them at the Aerodromnaya station independently and



This is how the Slutsky Gostinets metro station will look

sky Gostinets station (project name — Korzhenevsky) is not proceeding at the planned pace. The issue of the sheet piling — necessary for the construction of the excavation — was decided only a few days ago. Construction works will shortly return to the schedule.

Another important facility is the Slutskoye electric depot for servicing the third metro line. It will appear in the area of Kizhevato and Serov streets. Yuri Ruset-sky, an engineer of the Production and Technical Department of the Minskmet-rostroy enterprise, tells us more, “This is, one might say, a fully-fledged plant for servicing the rolling stock of the third metro line. There will be a slop-repair building, an administrative and amenity building, and a train washing chamber... To provide the entire complex with electricity, a separate transformer step-down substation will be erected.”

“We will work in this area in an open way. At this point there is a complex system of tunnels at different levels. There are not only tunnels that connect Loshitskaya and Korzhenevsky stations, but also a branch of the exit to the electric depot,” stresses Mr. Grechkin. “If everything goes according to plan, then the tunnels between the Loshitskaya and Korzhenevsky stations will be ready by the end of the year.”

Meanwhile, the Alesya tunnel boring shield helps metro builders construct metro tunnels. With each new penetration, the cutting equipment is improved, enabling Alesya to accelerate. They managed to reach a maximum speed of 310m per month, while they started from 100m. Now Alesya has ‘overcome’ more than 300m underground between the stations Aerodromnaya and Nemorshansky Sad of the third metro line. The length of the tunnel is 1,800m. It is planned to complete it by February next year.”

At the same time, the specialists of Minskmetroproekt JSC are preparing design estimates for the preparation of the site for the construction of a section of the third metro line from Bangalor Square to Melnikaite Street. These are four stations: Prospekt Pobediteley, Masherov Square, Vera Khoruzhaya and Bangalor Square.

“The first thing to do is to prepare the area. There are certain requirements for the arrangement of engineering networks and communications for the construction of the metro,” Mr. Grechkin explains. “The second stage is to build an assembly and panel chamber. It will be located in the area of the Friendship of Peoples Park. From there Alesya will start tunnelling to Pobediteley Avenue. The next construction site is towards Zeleny Lug.”

Thanks to the efforts of Minskmet-rostroy experienced specialists, the Minsk metro continues to grow steadily. In total, 14 stopping points are planned on the third line: from Kurasovshchina to Zeleny Lug through the city centre, thus making road traffic in the capital more comfortable.

start the installation of protective fences when the station is finished, in particular, when the granite floor tiles are laid.”

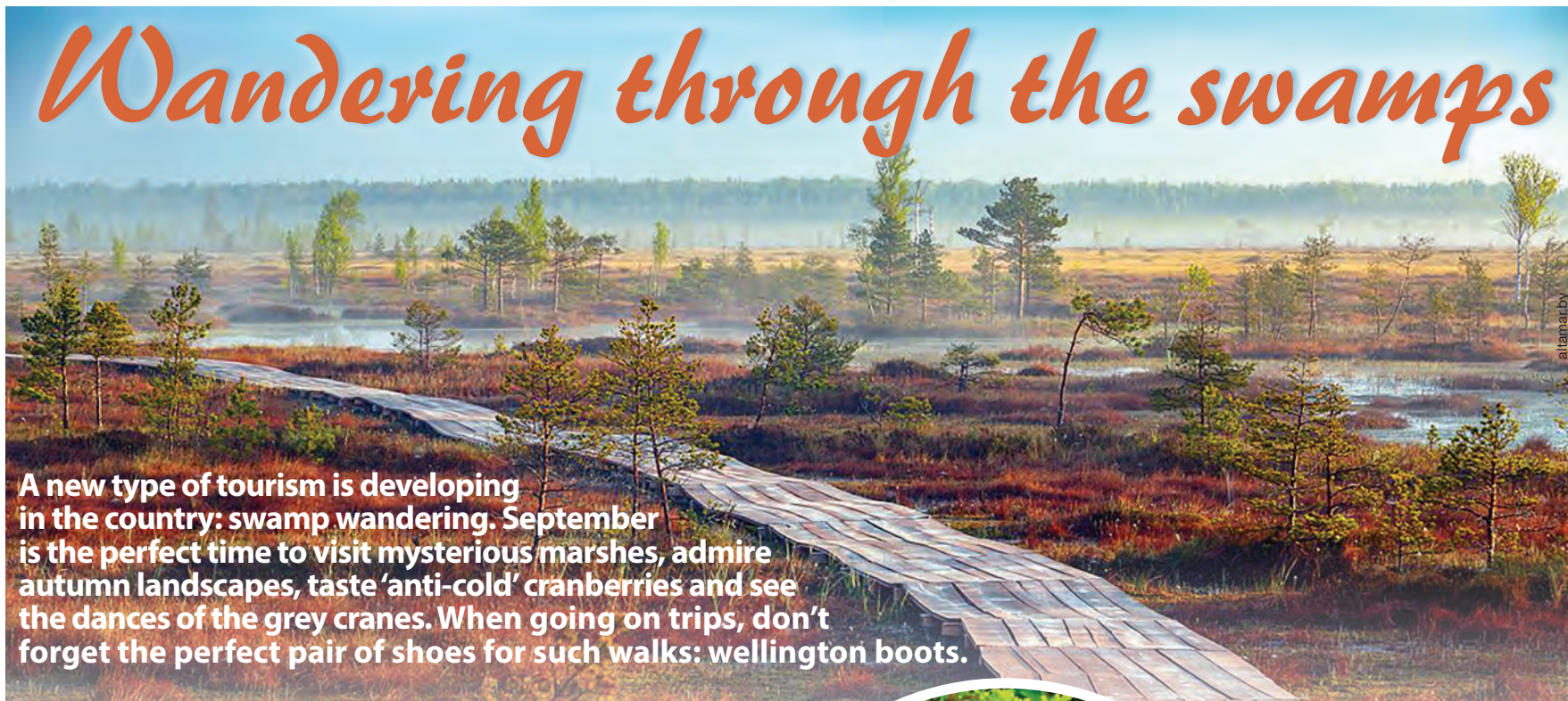
The key feature of Aerodromnaya is that at a particular stage of its construction, a transfer hub will be laid to the fourth line of the Minsk metro. It will be located just under this station. It is also already built. It will be mothballed until the beginning of the construction of the fourth metro line. According to the Minsk general development plan, it is planned to be a circular one.

News from the construction site

Nemorshansky Sad station (its project name is Loshitskaya) has more than half its structures built. Head of the Production and Technical Department at Minskmet-rostroy Sergei Grechkin describes the progress of construction on this site, “Half the monolithic works at the station have been completed. Loshitskaya is located at a depth of about 12m. For some time we were restrained by the presence of a heating main in the area of work. It provides heat to the nearest micro-district, so we didn't touch it until the end of the heating season. We have already switched over the existing heating main and are dismantling the old one. After that we will be able to complete the construction of the station structures. We expect to begin finishing works by the end of the year.”

Construction works at the Slut-

Wandering through the swamps



A new type of tourism is developing in the country: swamp wandering. September is the perfect time to visit mysterious marshes, admire autumn landscapes, taste 'anti-cold' cranberries and see the dances of the grey cranes. When going on trips, don't forget the perfect pair of shoes for such walks: wellington boots.



ter once drowned herself here as she was not allowed to marry a commoner. After the tragedy, the repentant father ordered the lake to be consecrated and crosses erected. In spring, the nearby marshes are filled with water and turn into a single blue surface. According to legend, they are part of the Herodotus Sea from medieval maps. The place is worth being a film location since the local sights are wonderful.



By Katerina Charovskaya

Watching cranes dancing

The largest upland swamp in Europe is located in the north of the Vitebsk Region. The Yelnya Nature Reserve is more than nine thousand years old! It's not for nothing that protected places are called the lungs of the European continent. If you want to take a photo of an unusual, pristine Belarus, you're welcome here. The swamp is home to numerous lakes with picturesque islands of bizarre shapes. The dwarf birch grows here and, in the moss, it's possible to find a rare 'guest' to Belarus: the traditional forest berry of Karelia — the cloudberry. This huge swamp is a natural environment for hundreds of species of plants and animals listed in the Red Book.

You won't get bored here at any time of the year, but autumn tours are especially popular with tourists when thousands of cranes soar in the sky over the marshes. During the bird migration period, Yelnya turns into a 'transit hub' for birds. Grey cranes come here to rest and gain strength for a flight to hot countries. The reserve's staff track where birds concentrate most of all and offer daytime

tours to feed them. In turn, in the evening, it's possible to enjoy birds flying in sunset — which looks even more spectacular. With the help of binoculars, watching over graceful dancing grey cranes can last for hours.

Playing reed football

The Sporovsky Nature Reserve in the Brest Region is a unique complex of low-lying marshes that have been preserved in their original form. The places untouched by land reclamation were chosen for nesting by the rarest bird: the twirling reed warbler. 123 species of birds nest in the reserve and around three dozen of them are on the Red Book list. It's not surprising that a fashionable and eco-friendly pastime is popular here: birdwatching.

To remind people about a careful attitude to this unique nature, it was decided to hold an unusual agro- and eco-festival — *Sporovsky Hayfields* — here. Its participants deftly swing the scythe and compete with excitement until the finish line. Another fun event at the festival is the swamp football competitions. Daredevils playfully kick the ball, but every now and then they slip and literally fall face down in the dirt — which is an amazing sight!

Gathering a basket of cranberries

The marshes around Miory are rich in berries and cranberries are most valuable here in autumn. This 'red gold' — hidden in a thicket of moss — is a natural source of vitamins and minerals. The medicinal berries strengthen the immune system and, in times of the pandemic, they are the best choice. Even in the season of colds which is approaching, doctors recommend drinking cranberry juice more often.

In Belarus, the marsh berry is called 'zhuraviny' [a derivative from 'zhuravl' — a crane]. This is because its stem and flower resemble the head of a crane. In

INFORMATION FOR TOURISTS
It's 125km and a 2-hour drive from Minsk to the Berezinsky Nature Reserve. Staying in a hotel is possible — for little more than \$20 per night. 240km separate Minsk from the Yelnya marshes: 3 hours by car. A bus runs from Minsk Tsentralny station, taking four hours. Accommodation prices in local farmsteads vary from \$22 per night.

September, an eco-festival dedicated to this beautiful bird and useful berry is held in the Miory District. Guests are told about the medicinal properties of cranberries, are treated to a delicious fruit drink and pie and learn how to make a rejuvenating face mask from scarlet berries. They can also taste different versions of this useful delicacy: cranberries in powdered sugar with cocoa, ginger, cardamom and cinnamon, in chocolate glaze, with peanuts and coconut.

Relaxing on the shores of the Herodotus Sea

Those tired of 'hackneyed' eco-routes and wishing to plunge into the atmosphere of the mystical swamps are welcomed to the Olmany marshes. Of course, it's better not to go alone into these wild swamps. This entertainment isn't for everyone, but the excitement boils over when the ground sways under your feet.

Not far from the village of Olmany is Bolshoe Zasominoe Lake. A wooden deck leads to the shore, where crosses are found. According to legend, the prince's daugh-

Arranging a trip to drygva

A trip to drygva [swamp], as it's called in Belarus, can be organised in the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve. The route through the Rozhnyanskoe upper swamp and eco-paths is perfect for beginners. The most popular tour is entitled 'Along the Forest Protected Trail' which is 3.5km long. On the way tourists can see cages with forest inhabitants — such as bison, bear and wolves. In turn, a 15m tower opens up a breath-taking panorama of the swamp shrouded in fog. Sphagnum moss, dewdrops and cranberries are spread out as a soft carpet.

Unspoilt nature can be explored not only by treading solid wooden floors, but also from the water. Here, the ancient waterway 'from the Varangians to the Greeks' passed through and wanderers had to move along the Dnieper and Zapadnaya Dvina rivers. Moreover, a watershed of the Black and Baltic seas is here, in addition to the source of the Berezina River — the largest tributary of the Dnieper River. Kayaks are now gliding along the water surface. On the road, travellers can see beaver huts and their inhabitants, as well as elk and deer that go down to the river to drink.





Champion emotions from Mikita Borykau

At the Canoe Sprint World Championships, the Belarusian national team won four gold medals to be placed second in the overall rating. Aleksandr Lukashenko congratulated the athletes and coaches on their brilliant performance.

Finish is true feast for the eyes

By Sergei Kanashits

It seemed there wasn't even time to wave an oar before sports fans were treated to a new water arena. Only recently, the whole world was anxiously following the turbulent vicissitudes at the Tokyo Olympics. Meanwhile, slightly more than a month later, the long road to Olympus began anew: the Canoe Sprint World Championships in Copenhagen opened a new Olympic cycle.

Rowers boldly and resolutely plunged into a fresh wave and the world competition among kayakers and canoeists was the first really big event after the Games. More will follow soon: in early October, the World Wrestling Championship will be held, while weightlifters will compete in December... Actually, these are events of the future. In the meantime, all the attention of sports fans was drawn to Lake Bagsværd: in its watery mirror, everyone tried to see a medal reflection of the future Olympics.

Athletes in Denmark were representative. Although not all champions and medallists of Tokyo Games came, there were many famous sportsmen from Hungary, Germany, New Zealand, the UK, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Cuba,

China and elsewhere. Almost all the teams brought their 'stars' and the Belarusians were no exception: Uladzimir Shantarovich's trainees went to Copenhagen to win as well. Happily, they succeeded!

The Belarusian national team has long accustomed us to the fact that we need to expect only the highest results from it. In addition, our rowers probably wanted to rehabilitate themselves for a relatively unsuccessful performance in Tokyo where they captured only one medal. They did it and



Maryna Litvinchuk and Volha Khudzenka added silver in K2 to gold medals earned in K4 Women 500



Women's four crew 'exchanged' Olympic silver for gold medals

the final day of the competition turned out to be the most striking: on Sunday, Belarusians won four golds! Medals went to Mikita Borykau (K1 Men 500m), Volha Klimava (C1 Women 5,000m), Alena Nazdrova, Nadzeya Makarchanka, Aliaksandra Kallaur and Volha Klimava (C4 Women 500m), and Marharyta Makhneva, Nadzeya Papok, Volha Khudzenka and Maryna Litvinchuk (K4 Women 500m). The latter four

were especially great. Firstly, the sportswomen performed on an Olympic distance and, secondly, they took revenge for silver in Tokyo, leaving the reigning champions of Tokyo 2020 from Hungary behind by 16 hundredths of a second in an incredibly intense race!

Silver went to Alena Nazdrova and Nadzeya Makarchanka in canoeing at a distance of 500m, and also to Volha Khudzenka and Maryna Litvinchuk, who lost to Hungarian Danuta Ko-

zak and Tamara Csipes in the 500m sprint kayak double event.

Bronze medals were captured by Aleh Yurenia in the 1,000m kayak and Alena Nazdrova in the 500m canoe events.

The national team's success was recognised by the NOC President, Viktor Lukashenko, and also the Minister of Sports and Tourism, Sergei Kovalchuk, who sent congratulation messages to our rowers.

ARENA

● Beijing Winter Olympic Games motto unveiled

The Organising Committee of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing presented the motto of the competition: "Together for a Shared Future".

It said that 79 options were proposed as a motto, but it was decided to choose this one. The motto was chosen, in particular in the context of the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We believe that this motto will attract a lot of public attention and allow us to join forces for successful Games



that will be held in a pandemic," said Beijing Mayor Chen Jining, Head of the Games Organising Committee, quoted by Xinhua News Agency.

It is planned that the Winter Olympics will be held in the capital of China from February 4th-20th, 2022. A total of 109 sets of medals will be awarded.

● Belarusians claim bronze at the FIBA 3x3 U17 Europe Cup 2021 in Lisbon

In the match for bronze medals, the Belarusian national team (U17), in a bitter struggle, defeated their Ukrainian counterparts — 15:10. At the first stage of the competitions in the Portuguese capital, Andrei Navoichik's trainees defeated the Israeli team (16:9) and lost to the Dutch basketball players (11:14). In the quarter-finals, the Belarusians defeated the Russians — 16:9, and in the semi-final match they lost to the Spanish na-



tional squad — 11:16. Yekaterina Novik, Polina Kostyukovets, Polina Verabei and Yevgenia Bernatskaya were members of the Belarusian squad. In the game for first place, the Spaniards confidently beat the Germans 15:7. According to the results of the competition, Yekaterina Novik joined the symbolic team of the tournament.



Photo of the week

A pond and a bathhouse in the vicinity of the Adam Mickiewicz museum-estate in the village of Zaosie, Brest Region

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



On September 25th, 1971, the Brest Fortress-Hero Memorial was opened — one of the iconic places in Belarus, a symbol of courage of Soviet soldiers shown during the Great Patriotic War. The memorial was created by a group of authors: sculptors A.Kibalnikov, A.Bembel, V.Bobyl, architects V.Korol, V.Volchek, V.Zankovich, Yu.Kazakov, O.Stakhovich, G.Sysoev. The architectural and sculptural ensemble of the memorial includes a monumental main entrance in the form of a star cut out of a concrete block; the main monument, Courage; a bayonet-obelisk; a sculptural composition, Thirst; a Ceremonial Square and three rows of monumental slabs with the burials of the dead, alongside terraces, ruins and the surviving structures of the fortress, as well as a museum.

On September 25th, 1996, Miranka and Shvakshty hydrological reserves of Republican significance were established. This was done in order to stabilise the hydrological regime of the Nieman and Usha rivers, as well as in the upper reaches of the Stracha River while preserving a unique natural complex with populations of rare and endangered plants and animals — listed in the Red Book of Belarus — in the natural state.

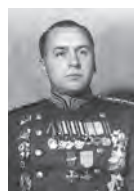


September 26th is Machine Builder Day in the Republic of Belarus. Mechanical engineering is the leader of the national economy in many respects. It is distinguished by a high share of new and high technology products. The goods of MAZ, BelAZ, Atlant, BelOMO, Gomselmash, Minsk Tractor Works and Minsk Motor Plant, Mogilev Elevator Engineering Plant, Borisov Avtogidrousilitel Plant and other enterprises of the industry are known far beyond the country's borders.

September 26th is European Day of Languages. It has been organised on the initiative of the Council of Europe and the EU since 2001, with the support of the UNESCO Education Commission, aiming to raise public awareness of the importance of language learning. The most common language in Europe (by the number of native speakers) is Russian, both geographically and geographically. In general, Russian is considered native by about 150 million Europeans.



On September 27th, 1896, Aleksei Antonov was born in Grodno — a military leader, General of the Army (1943). He took part in WWI and the Civil War. During the Great Patriotic War, he served as chief of



staff on a number of fronts and was also Deputy Chief of the General Staff and Chief of the Operations Directorate. Moreover, he participated in the development of the plan for the Belarusian operation (1944), and other important operations. Since 1945, he was Chief of the General Staff. He was a participant of the Crimean and Potsdam conferences. From 1955, he was Chief of Staff of the United Armed Forces of the Member States of the Warsaw Pact. He died in 1962.

September 27th is World Tourism Day, established at the session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organisation in 1979 to promote tourism. Its aim is to draw the attention of the international community to the importance of tourism and its social, cultural and economic importance.



On September 29th, 1936, the Minsk Palace of Pioneers and Schoolchildren named after Nikolai Gikalo was opened. During the Great Patriotic War, the building of the palace was completely destroyed, being restored in 1947-1950. The venue is a centre for extracurricular activities for pupils. In 1976, the Minsk Palace of



Pioneers and Schoolchildren was transformed into the Republican Palace of Pioneers and Schoolchildren of the BSSR. Later, it was transformed into the National Centre for Artistic Creativity for Children and Youth.



September 29th is World Heart Day. It was first organised in 1999 on the initiative of the World Heart Federation.

The purpose of the date is to raise public awareness of the danger posed by the epidemic of cardiovascular diseases in the world.

On September 30th, 1891, Otto Schmidt was born in Mogilev — a Soviet scientist in the field of mathematics, astronomy and geophysics, academician and Hero of the Soviet Union. He researched the Soviet Arctic and was one of the founders and editor-in-chief of the 1st edition of Great Soviet Encyclopaedia. His mathematical works on group theory gained worldwide fame. Moreover, he developed a new cosmogonic theory of the origin of the Earth and the planets of the solar system. He died in 1956. An island in the Kara Sea, a peninsula in the northern part of Novaya Zemlya, a cape in the Chukchi Sea, a peak and a pass in the Pamirs, a plain in Antarctica, craters on Mars and the Moon are all named in honour of Otto Schmidt.

