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Viyaleta Bardzilouskaya



Ivan Litvinovich



Yauheni Zalaty

Pride of Belarus

The end of the first week of the Paris 2024 Olympics turned out to be surprisingly eventful and pleasant for all of us: Belarusian athletes won three medals in Paris — gold and two silver. Ivan Litvinovich, who performed his trampoline jumping programme in a scintillating manner, became a two-time Olympic champion. Viyaleta Bardzilouskaya sensationally jumped onto the second step of the podium in the women's trampoline competition.

In an amazing and dramatic rowing race, Yauheni Zalaty fell just a little short of an award that would fully correspond to his surname ['zalaty' means 'gold' in Belarusian]. However, the silver of the Belarusian athlete is quite comparable to gold. President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko has congratulated our medallists on their success. → 11



‘There is no nobler deed in the world than working for the benefit of your country’

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, has conferred state awards on employees of enterprises making up the Belarus President Property Management Directorate system. The Head of State called the ceremony a special and unique one, as it brought together representatives of one big united team — the Belarus President Property Management Directorate, which was established 30 years ago, just a month after the first presidential election in the history of sovereign Belarus took place.

Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled that back then it was a small unit providing logistical support to the work of government bodies of the young independent country. Some people mistakenly believed that the Belarus President Property Management Directorate would be engaged only in solving everyday issues of the Head of State. In fact, this structure is in charge

of a wide range of areas. “These are thousands of people who not only provide catering and healthcare services, but also produce food. This is a huge ministry,” the President said.

Today, the organisation employs more than 20,000 specialists. Among them are employees of public utilities, construction, culture, healthcare, health resorts, trade, catering, diplo-



Irina Kovaleva, Director of Minsk Hotel, was awarded the Medal for Labour Merits

matic service and hotels. The President also mentioned the contribution of 6,000 farmers, thanks to whom the enterprises of the Belarus President Property Management Directorate have become leaders in many areas of the country’s agriculture. The employees of the Department of Humanitarian Activities also received accolades, as thousands of charitable initiatives and socially significant projects have been implemented over this period.

The President stressed that the most important thing is that the Belarus President Property Management Directorate preserves the national heritage of Belarus as this structure is re-

sponsible for the world-famous natural brands of the country.

“Belovezhskaya Pushcha and other national parks, Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve, boundless forests with amazing flora and fauna, blue lakes are not just a priceless gift from God and ancestors,” the Head of State noted.

He recalled how at the dawn of his presidency he made decisions to preserve this unique natural treasure. Back then, there were numerous attempts, including from abroad, to seize a part of the parks to use it for personal, selfish purposes. It was by the decision of the Head of State that the order was put in place there. “Our people, our neighbours, an-

none should be able to visit this place, for tourist purposes only. The ban was introduced on the division of natural reserves and parks,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said. “This is what we will pass on to our descendants in pristine condition”. It is also necessary to preserve and pass on the unique cultural code, which, along with the Belarusian language, includes folk crafts,” the President pointed out. “They are unmatched in the world,” he added.

The Head of State emphasised that dozens of ancient folk traditions had also been preserved, while Belkhudozhpromysly, which was once made part of the Belarus President Property Management Directorate, employs thousands of talented craftsmen. “All this would have disappeared if we had not taken care of it. I was the one who had to make the decision. Wherever I paid a visit, people asked me for help to preserve these invaluable things,” Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

The President expressed confidence that the awards ceremony would become a new incentive for everyone to work even better. **“There is no nobler deed in the world than working for the benefit of your country — Belarus. Time has chosen us to make our country even stronger and more beautiful,” the President said.**



State awards for distinguished employees

They received orders, medals and honorary titles for many-year service, high professionalism, personal contribution to the development of the agro-industrial complex, protection of flora and fauna, significant achievements in civil state service and production activities, merits in the construction industry, hotel services, promotion and protection of public health, culture and art. The Order of Honour was

awarded to Ivan Bobrovsky, head of the Ozerny health resort. A large group of employees was awarded the Medal for Labour Merits. The group included Marta Arutyunova, machine milking operator of the agricultural enterprise Voskhod, Antonina Isakova, leading artist of the art products enterprise Slutsk Belts, Vladimir Pretkel, forester of the Braslav Lakes National Park, Olga Savonchik, seamstress of the Bobruisk unitary production enterprise

Factory of Art Products. The medal of Francysk Skaryna was bestowed upon Sergei Kuntsevich, an orchestra artist - leading musician of the Belarus President Orchestra. Veronika Kutko, Head of the Department for Financing Government Bodies of the Belarus President Property Management Directorate, received the Medal for Impeccable Service III Class. Irina Abelskaya, Chief Doctor of the National Clinical Medical Centre, was awarded the Honoured Doctor of the

Republic of Belarus title. Viktor Milto, a tractor-machine operator of the agricultural production of the Staroselie machine yard of the agricultural company Aleksandriyskoye, and Marina Pus, Deputy Director General for Commercial Affairs of the Pinsk meat processing plant, received the Honoured Workers of Agriculture of Belarus titles. The letter of commendation of the President of Belarus for contribution to ensuring favourable conditions for

the stay and functioning of diplomatic missions, their staff and representatives of international organisations in Belarus were presented to the staff of the Main Department for the Service of Diplomatic Corps and Official Delegations Dipservice. The letter of commendation also went to the personnel of the President Hotel for significant achievements in hotel and restaurant services and high social and economic development indicators.

Aleksandr Lukashenko: with establishment of Security Council, importance of law enforcement agencies was raised to a new level

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko has congratulated the members of Belarus’ Security Council, as well as active and retired employees of the State Secretariat of the Security Council on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of this structure, sb.by reports with reference to the Belarusian leader’s press service

“The Security Council, formed on August 5th, 1994, has passed a path that became an integral part of the history of sovereign Belarus. By establishing this constitutional, supreme collegial co-ordinating and political body in the field of national security, we have raised the status and importance of all law enforcement agencies to a new level,” the congratulatory message reads.

According to the Head of State, the mechanism created in the country to protect against external and internal threats during periods of escalation of regional contradictions and global instability has repeatedly demonstrated its effectiveness.

The President thanked the retired employees who stood at the origins of the founding of the State Secretariat of the Security Council, building interdepartmental co-ordination of the activities of state bodies in order to protect Belarus. “You are an example of devoted service to the Fatherland, an example of true patriotism,” the Belarusian leader stated.

Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed confidence in the high professionalism and reliability of all those who — at an acute moment of confrontation with new hybrid threats — protect peace in their native land, bequeathed to their contemporaries by the generation of winners.

“The Security Council of the Republic of Belarus, relying on the State Secretariat, will continue to conscientiously solve the tasks assigned to it to ensure national security,” the President stressed. “Time has chosen us, and we will do everything to keep the sky over Belarus clear.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted Belteleradiocompany’s role in strengthening Belarus’ information sovereignty

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko has congratulated the staff of the National State Television and Radio Company of Belarus on the 30th anniversary of its establishment, sb.by reports with reference to the Belarusian leader’s press service

According to the Head of State, preserving the best traditions of domestic journalism, Belarus’ largest media holding has united real broadcast stars who are known and loved by millions of Belarusian citizens.

“Being at the forefront of information broadcasting, you always openly talk about the most important things while objectively showing the whole world the truth about the past and present of your native Belarus,” the congratulatory message reads. “It is gratifying that the name of our country adorns the names of channels of socio-political, family, cultural, sports and international

broadcasting. Together and individually, they educate and inspire their viewers to good and useful endeavours.”

The President expressed confidence that the high ratings of the TV and radio company’s programmes, the respect of its employees for the Belarusian audience and listeners, and the constant pursuit of self-improvement will continue to strengthen Belarus’ information sovereignty.

Aleksandr Lukashenko wished all employees of Belteleradiocompany strong health, well-being, further fruitful work and conquering new professional heights.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

President has the final say

His life was hanging by a thread — the sentence of an exceptional measure of punishment could be carried out at any moment. Rico Krieger, a German terrorist and spy of the Ukrainian special services, was convicted under six articles of Belarus' Criminal Code, and his guilt was fully proven. That is what the court decided. The German did not appeal the verdict or deny the obvious. Krieger now thanks heaven that he, by sheer chance, did not kill anyone... And that the only person in the whole world who, as it turned out, was concerned about him is the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, to whom he appealed for pardon.

This high-profile event has stirred up the information field in Belarus. German national Rico Krieger came to our country with the intent to leave a bloody trail. In his criminal case, he was charged under six serious articles, the most terrible crime being the organisation of a railway explosion. It was only by a lucky turn of events that the conceived terrorist attack did not result in human casualties. The court delivered a verdict — the death penalty. Krieger submitted a clemency petition to the President. Prior to making a decision, Aleksandr Lukashenko invited experts deeply immersed in the subject to the Palace of Independence for discussions. The meeting was attended by State Security Committee (KGB) Chairman Ivan Tertel, Deputy Head of the Belarus President Administration Olga Chupris, the investigator in the case, Deputy Head

of the KGB Investigation Department Aleksandr Grib, lawyer Vladimir Gorbach and journalist Lyudmila Gladkaya, who covered the trial. During the conversation, the Head of State outlined,

“This is an extremely unpleasant topic for the President, but it needs very serious consideration. Rico Krieger is a German citizen. It turns out that he was born only in 1993. He was sentenced to an exceptional measure of punishment by a Belarusian court. According to our Constitution and laws, the President always has the final say.”

I have already said that the most difficult thing in the President's life is to deal with cases related to capital punishment. But the decision has to be made. I just want to consult with you in this regard and hear your opinion.”

‘The verdict is fair, but you feel sorry for the criminal in a humane way’

Among those invited to join the discussions was our colleague, journalist of the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House **Lyudmila Gladkaya**, who has covered the trial from the very beginning and knows the case materials well. After attending the meeting with President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko, Lyudmila talked to media representatives and said that the German authorities simply abandoned their citizen and might be even interested in having the sentence carried out. Lyudmila Gladkaya shared how, just a few minutes after the death sentence had been pronounced, German diplomats who came out of the courtroom hugged and smiled. “They were patting each other on the shoulder, smiling — it was strange to me. I was thinking: a citizen of your country has just been sentenced to death (even if we do not take into account what he has committed), and you have smiles... I also got the impression that these people maybe really do not care, since now we do not see any actions or hear any statements from the German authorities. So they have abandoned a citizen of their country,” the journalist said. “Anyway,

no matter what crimes a person has committed, he is a citizen of your country. As it seems to me, it is your duty to at least try to help him in some way, somehow contact him, at least do something for him. There was nothing of that here. I even caught myself thinking that maybe they want the death sentence to be carried out,” noted Lyudmila Gladkaya. She stated that there was no one to protect this person now. “So here he is in Belarus, appealing to the President for pardon. He understands that it is pointless to appeal to his authorities,” the journalist underscored. “It does not matter if he is a German citizen, what he did. Our President tries to thoroughly study any situation.”

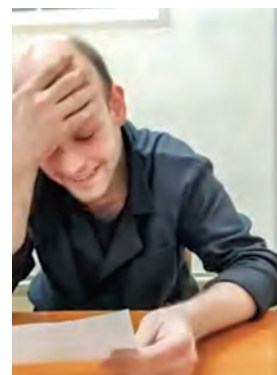
Egor Ermalitsky



President of Belarus has pardoned German citizen Krieger

Taking into account all the circumstances, the Head of State has decided to pardon German citizen Rico Krieger, as reported by the press service of the Belarusian leader.

When the convict was informed of the decision of the President of Belarus, his reaction suggested that he was prepared to hear the opposite. Yet, he got a second chance, his life was saved. This news caused tears, halting speech, hysteria and endless words of gratitude to Aleksandr Lukashenko, “Thank you, thank you, Mr. Lukashenko,” German citizen Rico Krieger muttered through tears. “Thank you for forgiving me. I prayed for it. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to see my daughter. Thank you very much... My hands are shaking. This is the best moment of my life. Thank you very much.”



BELTA

Russia and the West have swapped prisoners

Eight Russians who served sentences or were arrested in NATO member countries have returned to Russia, whereas convicted foreign citizens and Russians associated with Western intelligence services pardoned by the President of the Russian Federation have left Russia. The exchange of prisoners from Russia, the USA, Germany, Poland, Slovenia, Norway and Belarus took place in Ankara. One of the participants in the exchange was German citizen Rico Krieger recruited by the Ukrainian special services, who was sentenced to death for terrorism in Belarus. The President of the Republic of Belarus pardoned him, which allowed the German to return to his homeland. The Kremlin has expressed gratitude to Aleksandr Lukashenko.

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin talked over phone

The presidents of Belarus and Russia, Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin, had a telephone conversation, sb.by reports with reference to the Head of State's press service.

The Russian leader called his Belarusian counterpart to review the working issues that were discussed during their recent meeting on Valaam.

Vladimir Putin cordially thanked Aleksandr Lukashenko for his participation and assistance in the process of the prisoner swap that had taken place the day before.

The large-scale prisoner swap between the countries is the result of long-standing talks — Natalya Eismont, press secretary of Belarus' President, told RT

“The main thing is that such negotiations never go public, they require silence. The basis of these negotiations is the absence of publicity. In this regard, there were certain agreements, and we adhere to these agreements,” Natalya Eismont stressed.

Russia highly appreciates Belarus' assistance in the prisoner swap between Moscow and Washington and expresses gratitude to the country's President Aleksandr Lukashenko personally

This statement was made at a briefing by press secretary of the Russian President Dmitry Peskov. “Of course, we must give the highest assessment to the interaction that was carried out with the KGB, the Foreign Ministry of Belarus, and to the assistance that President [of Belarus Aleksandr] Lukashenko personally provided,” the Kremlin representative stated.

Aleksandr Lukashenko: US president had nothing to do with prisoner swap between Russia and Western countries

As he met with residents of the agrotown of Prudok, Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko explained how negotiations on the prisoner swap between Russia and the West had proceeded

Aleksandr Lukashenko said, “You saw that the guys have been extracted. We were asked to assist and did the best we could. People with life sentences in the West were freed. Truth be told, people like the US president inflate their authority with this event. The US president had nothing to do with organising the prisoner swap between Russia and Western countries, although he is now trying to ‘gain’ authority on this.”

According to President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko, “Security agencies conducted these talks. Even the diplomats were not involved. We agreed that we would proceed quietly — shouts all over the world began. These things are done quietly. After all, people's lives are at stake.”

The German citizen Rico Krieger, who has been pardoned by the President of Belarus, had been found guilty on charges under six articles of the Criminal Code and had been sentenced to capital punishment for committing a terrorist attack. “What would have happened if people had died, god forbid? It is good that they did not,” the Head of State noted. “We do not buy or sell people. We gave away the German in order to help people take away these poor souls. What is bad about it? And this German is alive and this guy was saved.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko stated that in such situations the authorities would act wisely in a way that benefits the country and the people. “This is why I ask only one thing from you: you have to take care of your own work, you have to do everything,” the President concluded.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



Hostages of someone else's ambitions

Poland, Lithuania and Latvia use migrants from Africa and the Middle East to get new weapons and intimidate their own citizens

Over three years, 50+ cases of refugee deaths have been registered on the Belarusian territory near the borders with the EU countries. Hundreds more tortured and beaten people thrown through the barriers to Belarus have been saved thanks to the personal involvement of Belarusian border guards, doctors and local residents. Why are Belarus' neighbours acting so ruthlessly and what motivates them?

By Anna Kurak

They do not feel sorry for anyone

Refugees maimed by European security forces on the border with Belarus have submitted appeals to the UN and the International Organisation for Migration calling on them to stop the violence and protect them. However, no response has been received so far. Meanwhile, the situation is taking on a terrifying scale.

The Belteleradiocompany's TV News Agency has recently presented a documentary with the telling title *Inhumans* that features migrants who suffered at the hands of the security forces of Poland, Latvia and Lithuania.

Each subsequent story is scarier than the previous one. A pregnant woman from Somalia was beaten with batons by the Latvian military and was left to die at the border — the baby could not be saved, but doctors from Belarus' Verkhnedvinsk miraculously brought the woman back to life. Another story is about the sisters from the Congo who were forcedly pushed into the Belarusian territory by the security forces using a stun gun. Just a couple of weeks ago, the Polish police unleashed dogs on five migrants from Syria, accompanying them with shots. When the unfortunate people could no longer move, three of them were thrown onto the Belarusian side of the border. It is not known what happened to the other two...

According to Anatoly Boyashov, an analyst at the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Research (BISR), international migration has become a serious problem for the European Union countries, "Historically, this has been facilitated by the purposeful attraction of cheap labour from abroad by the leading EU states. This topic has been used for a long time to build business, create careers, and start new political parties. The flip side of the coin is the problems of increased crime, social parasitism, interethnic communication, as well as security threats."

The topic of refugees became relevant for Poland and the Baltic States during the coronavirus pandemic. "After the introduction of border crossing restrictions by the EU countries, the flows of illegal immigrants shifted from the southern to the eastern EU borders. Due to the fact that the route through Ukraine to Bulgaria, Cyprus and Greece was fraught with additional financial risks, carriers came up with alternative routes to get to Germany. The business, which relied on migrants of the first waves, shifted from the southern EU countries to the eastern ones, especially to Poland," the expert clarified. "As a result, from 2021 to 2023, Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued about 250,000 visas to arrivals from disadvantaged countries in Africa and Asia. Yet, the refugees did not stay in Poland. Due to the fact that multiple Schengen visas were used to travel illegally to Germany, the large-scale issuance of visas raised questions to Warsaw related to the threat of radical infiltration. Subsequently, the situation resulted in inspections and a loud corruption scandal, with the detention of Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland Piotr Wawrzyk on suspicion of taking bribes. This was followed by Olaf Scholz's threat to close the German-Polish border."



Is a no-holds-barred approach good?

Today, Warsaw, Vilnius and Riga are pursuing several goals at once, trying to leverage the hyped migration issue in a way that is favourable for them. "Citizens of EU countries are deliberately frightened by the possible dominance of migrants. That is why the question on the 'admission of thousands of illegal immigrants from the Middle East and Africa' was put to a Polish referendum on the same day as the parliamentary elections in autumn 2023," Anatoly Boyashov recalled. "What is the result? According to a sociological survey by the Polish Economic Institute, 86 percent of Poles believe that migrants pose a threat to local workers."

According to the BISR analyst, the struggle during the presidential elections in Poland in 2025 will be based on the migration problem. It is expected that the electorate will support those who more effectively stop migration flows from the East, and know how to negotiate with politicians in Brussels on the issue of migration quotas in the EU. "All this is purposefully linked to the enemy image in the person of Belarus and Russia. According to Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, 90 percent of illegal migrants 'have Russian visas' and 'are sent to attack the EU'. In Warsaw, politicians are competing for the title of 'the best fighter against Russian agents', and Polish observers even claim that there are Wagnerians among illegal migrants," Anatoly Boyashov noted. "This is despite the fact that, according to Western intelligence agencies, the situation on the borders is calm — this has been recently stated by Aurimas Navys, head of Lithuania's Information Security Agency."

It is obvious that politicians are escalating the situation to obtain additional funding from rich Western countries, primarily the United States and Germany.

"Hype around migration threats allows Warsaw to skilfully bargain with Washington and Brussels. In recent years, a coalition of 15 countries has been formed that does not accept the EU's migrant resettlement scheme," the expert elaborated. "Poland is actively militarising and creating the largest land army in the EU. Washington will provide Warsaw with \$2 billion to upgrade its troops, purchase F-35A Lightning II fighter jets, Patriot complexes and Abrams tanks. Against this backdrop, nationalist sentiments are growing in society. According to some reports, Poland is ready to send regular military formations to Ukraine under the guise of thousands of 'Ukrainian citizens living in Poland'."

Warsaw plans to increase military spending from 4.2 to 5 percent of GDP in 2025, as well as to triple the number of military personnel on the border with Belarus to 17,000.

TO THE POINT

A few weeks ago, Latvia and Lithuania imposed a ban on the entry of passenger cars with Belarusian licence plates. Estonia joined the ban later. The Belarusian Foreign Ministry, commenting on the Western authorities' actions, called those decisions inhumane.

The situation at road checkpoints is already tense, with queues at the borders not only of cars and trucks, but also of regular passenger buses.

According to Belarus' State Border Committee, queues of several hundred cars have been recorded in two directions: Lithuanian and Polish. As for heavy trucks, they stand in huge queues in all directions. There were 1,500+ trucks at two checkpoints in the Lithuanian direction. Queues of passenger buses were also observed, with 55 of them at the Brest checkpoint.

Only five checkpoints out of 14 operate on the border of Belarus and three neighbouring EU countries. Residents of European countries have also expressed their dissatisfaction. The Biała Podlaska Chamber of Commerce and Industry has sent a letter to the Office of the Prime Minister and other Polish government agencies demanding that they stop restraining passenger and cargo flows at the borders. Due to the imposed restrictions, dozens of Polish companies went bankrupt, thousands of jobs were lost as well as profits in the amount of €124 million.

Judge by the actions

Anatoly Boyashov believes that in this tricky situation, Belarus acts in a balanced and calm manner, "Belarus has introduced visa-free travel and simplified entry procedures for citizens of 38 Western countries. Such a policy is not aimed at mythical communication channels, as some foreign experts claim, since the visa-free regime does not apply to officials of Western countries. The Belarusian leadership is doing everything to prevent the fault for Europe's long-standing problems from being laid at somebody else's door and the Western propaganda from interfering with human contacts and the reasonable perception of our state."



Egor Ermaltsevsky

Since recently, Europeans have been able to visit our country with valid documents. The proposal made by Belarus' Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government agencies to establish a procedure for temporary visa-free entry, exit and stay in Belarus through all road and railway checkpoints for citizens of additional 35 European countries has been supported by the President and has entered into force. The unprecedented decision has caused a strong reaction from Western politicians. What do ordinary people, who despite numerous obstacles continue to visit our country each year for relaxation, medical treatment, and to see their relatives and friends, think about this unparalleled move? An MT correspondent has discovered this firsthand.

Welcoming those who come with good intentions

The possibility of visa-free entry enhances Belarus' attractiveness in the eyes of foreign citizens and simplifies travel arrangements for everyone wishing to visit our country

By Yelena Begunova

No doubts about the cordiality

About 20 Baltic citizens are currently undergoing a rehabilitation course at the Letsy sanatorium near Vitebsk. Aleksei Moiseichenko, the health resort's director, introduced the holidaymakers — friends Irina Sushina and Olga Kudrina came from the Lithuanian city of Visaginas. They heard the news about the expansion of the list of countries whose residents are granted the right to visa-free visits to Belarus from the journalist. Their initial reaction was enthusiastic and emotional, "Well done, Batka [father]! What a brilliant move! I wonder what the European politicians, who have become enmeshed in their opinions, decisions and prohibitions, will say about him now. People will definitely come to the country... With pleasure! So, right now we are going to call our friends in Germany, Italy, and France and suggest we all meet here in hospitable Belarus next time!"

This is the second time the women have taken a holiday in Vitebsk Region. Exactly a year ago, they were at the nearby sanatorium Zheleznodorozhnik. It was then that they set eyes on the Letsy sanatorium. The women expressed their deep gratitude to the management of the health resort, stating, "Due to political strife and bureaucratic barriers erected on the Lithuanian side of the border, we can never be sure whether we will be allowed to enter Belarus. Therefore, we faced challenges with the advance payment for the sanatorium. In this regard, we are very thankful to the administration of the sanatorium for taking our word and booking rooms for us, for which we paid immediately upon arrival. To be honest, we have already lost a climate of trust in our country..."

We promised our guests not to fully disclose their data — unfortunately, such popularity is not safe for them right now. Moreover, many of those who spend their holidays in Belarus every year claim that upon returning home, the relevant authorities pay special attention to them.

Trip to Belarus warms the heart

Irina and Olga shared insights into the 'democratic' life in Europe, "Books in Russian as well as Russian TV channels are all prohibited. Any violation is punishable by fines. At work, outside,



in the store, one must be cautious about everything they say. God forbid you express an unconventional opinion — you will immediately be accused of anti-state sentiment, with all the consequences that come with it."

That is why, in their opinion, it is so important to open the Belarusian borders to let everyone see that the country is not as it is depicted in a parallel reality. Belarus is completely safe and ready to welcome with open arms all those who come here with good intentions.

Irina and Olga have similar backgrounds. Both were born, raised and educated in Lithuania, and both women have mothers who are Belarusians. Shortly after the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War, driven by their hearts and Komsomol vouchers, their mothers went to help rebuild Vilnius, which had been destroyed by the German Nazis. So they stayed in Lithuania, marrying local men. Could it be that loyalty to Belarus is ingrained at the genetic level?

"Not really," the guests replied. "It is just that we grew up in the Soviet Union.

In recent years, we have managed to visit many European countries, yet everywhere you feel a lack of kindness, cordiality, and unity. Therefore, every visit to Belarus warms the heart. The people here are open and sincere, while the environment is comfortable and safe."

The interlocutors emphasised that Lithuania was doing everything possible to block access to alternative information for locals, having banned Russian radio, Russian television, Russian books and newspapers. But is it possible to prevent a Soviet person from doing anything? Lithuanian citizens install pirated equipment and secretly watch whatever they want on TV.



Irina Sushina and Olga Kudrina came to the Letsy sanatorium from Lithuania and hope to return here again

The Pavlinka participants lamented that unfortunately, they could not even bring any gifts from Belarus to Latvia for children and grandchildren as those would be inevitably confiscated at the border due to the ban on importing Belarusian products. However, the guests sincerely hope that common sense should prevail. It is no coincidence that Belarus is step by step demonstrating its readiness for constructive dialogue — ordinary citizens who come to Belarus understand this. Maybe the politicians will finally understand, too?

Thanks for visa-free travel

A frequent guest in our country is the Pavlinka musical ensemble of the Belarusian song from the Latvian city of Liepāja. The ensemble unites people from Belarus who, by the will of fate, once moved to live in Latvia.

Antonina Konyshovich, who arrived with the ensemble on another tour, spoke of her nostalgia with tears in her eyes, "I have been living in Latvia for more than 50 years. At first I studied there, and then I got mandatory work placement. Later, I brought my elderly parents to Latvia. I had to bury them on Latvian soil, so now I cannot get away from their graves. My friends share similar stories — everyone has their reason to stay away from Belarus. Nevertheless, we strive to return here at the first opportunity and we greatly appreciate the visa-free travel facilitated by the President."



Antonina Konyshovich

Antonina Konyshovich recounted the joy they experienced this time, when despite many difficulties their bus managed to cross the border, "You know, we even receive warnings at the border crossing: Visiting Belarus is life-threatening. They claim we will be recruited and killed. Who would believe that? Who are they trying to scare? We have one request — take care of your Batka, our Batka! God forbid any Belarusian should experience the nostalgia we have felt for many decades."

Open doors

The representative office of the Vitebsk Regional Department of the Republican Centre for Health Improvement and Sanatorium-Resort Treatment of the Population has estimated that nearly 14,300 foreigners visited health resorts in Vitebsk Region during the first half of the year, with the majority being Russian nationals. Approximately 600 visitors were from Latvia, about 50 from Lithuania and Estonia, while an increasing number of holidaymakers included citizens from Germany, France, Israel, Austria, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan. Currently, the sanatoriums are operating at full capacity and beyond, hosting over 900 foreigners. Thus, over 40 Estonians and Latvians are gaining strength at the Lesnye Ozera (Forest Lakes) sanatorium, about 50 residents of the Baltic States and France are recuperating in the Lepel military sanatorium, and every second guest at the Lesnoye sanatorium is also a foreigner.

Svetlana Avik, Head of the Citizenship and Migration Department of the Internal Affairs of the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee, disclosed that the number of foreign citizens who obtained temporary residence permits in Belarus was also increasing. In the first half of the year, over 70 citizens from European countries — that are now included in the new visa-free countries list — were registered, including residents of Italy, Great Britain, Bulgaria, Spain, France, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Austria and Denmark. Twenty-two EU citizens received their temporary residence permits during the same period. The possibility of visa-free entry will undoubtedly boost Belarus' attractiveness for foreigners and simplify travel arrangements for those wishing to visit our country.

Expanding horizons

New investment projects are planned to be implemented in Grodno Region

It is common knowledge that the implementation of an investment project is a complex and time-consuming process, although the result is definitely worth the effort and money invested. It is instrumental not only to devise a realistic business plan at the initial stage and properly draw up all documents, but also to be ready to promptly solve the emerging difficulties at the project implementation stage. It is at this moment that the quick and coherent work of all interested parties is especially valuable and effective for the project initiator.



Sergei Stolyarchuk (on the left) during his visit to the Primemilk enterprise

The Development Bank today provides support for funded projects until they reach production capacities. Specialists are in close contact with representatives of organisations on a daily basis and render practical and methodological assistance. In addition, they consistently visit Belarus' enterprises, where investment projects important for the regions and the country as a whole are being carried out.

Sergei Stolyarchuk, Chairman of the Board of Belarus' Development Bank, has recently visited Grodno Region, where 168 investment projects worth Br1.4 billion are planned to be put into effect in 2024. Most of them are import-substituting. Serious attention in Grodno Region is paid to the implementation of the Head of State's initiative One District — One Project. A pool of 21 projects with an investment volume of Br187 million has been formed with financial support from the Development Bank.

By Vladislav Sychevich

Qualitative approach

At present, Primemilk is a unique and major manufacturer and exporter of whey-based ingredients for the food and feed industry in the Republic of Belarus, which is known far beyond the borders of the country. An import-substituting enterprise for the production of innovative whey-based products was created in Shchuchin in 2016 with the support of the Development Bank. "The constructed plant is one of the most modern not only in our country, but also in the CIS countries. It meets the most stringent international quality standards and requirements of international product safety management systems," noted Anatoly Belyavsky, the director of the enterprise.

It is the product quality and safety that are the key competitive advantages of any dairy industry enterprise. Primemilk attaches primary importance to these aspects — the enterprise features physico-chemical and microbiology production laboratories with highly qualified specialists and all necessary cutting-edge testing equipment. "In 2021, we implemented an investment project for the re-

construction of soft cheese production. It is made from whey, which is a by-product of milk-based cheese making," revealed Anatoly Belyavsky.

The director emphasised that the advantages of soft cheeses for the manufacturer include the efficient use of raw materials, the absence of maturation, the possibility to create and fill a niche in the cheese market promoting the idea of healthy and dietary nutrition.

The company processes about 900 tonnes of whey daily, and produces nearly 30 tonnes of soft cheese and 100 tonnes of dry powder. Its products are almost fully exported and in demand in more than 20 countries around the world. The main consumer on the domestic market is children. Primemilk supplies preschool educational institutions with environmentally friendly, safe and, most importantly, healthy dairy products, which are rich in protein vital for a young body.

The company plans to implement another investment project with the support of the Development Bank. "Today, in order to be head and shoulders above competitors and work comfortably in the industry, it is necessary to act ahead of



The Development Bank provides support for funded projects until they reach production capacities

the curve — enhance the staff skill level, introduce innovative technologies, occupy vacant niches, produce a wide range of high-quality products," stressed the Chairman of the Board of the Development Bank.

The construction of new and modernisation of existing production facilities is a significant contribution to the socio-economic development of the district.

Packaging matters

The progressive history of the Slonim-based enterprise Aquapack Industrial LLC began with a corrugated cardboard line, followed by equipment for the manufacture of corrugated cardboard products. Now, more than 3,000 types of boxes and packaging are produced at the factory. Up to 5 million square metres of products are produced there per month. The company is focused on the domestic market, while 20 percent is exported. "Our products are used in agriculture, food, chemical and other industries. The geography of supplies includes the

domestic market and the near abroad. Working in a competitive environment, we realised that it would be difficult to move forward without expansion and modernisation. That is why it was decided to implement a new project," said Viktor Mayevsky, the founder of the enterprise.

As a result, today, within the framework of the President's initiative One District — One Project and with the support of the Development Bank, the work is underway to create a new production facility for the manufacture of containers and packaging from paper pulp. The project's implementation will allow to organise a closed cycle and ensure practically waste-free production, as well as create about 50 new jobs in the city.

"The existing production of corrugated cardboard and various boxes leaves scraps. At present, we grind and pack them, then hand them over or sell. The new paper container production project will enable us to streamline our processes. By using waste, we will be able to produce new types of products, such as egg packaging, industrial and household containers," explained Viktor Mayevsky.

Almost everything is ready to launch a new production —

the facility has been built, the equipment has been purchased, and it only remains to complete the commissioning work.

"In the age of plastic, manufacturers are increasingly choosing eco-friendly packaging. Cardboard packaging is a convenient, economical and relatively inexpensive type. Therefore, we are not going to stop developing, and plan to continue both the automation of existing processes and mastering new types of in-demand products," Viktor Mayevsky pointed out.

The company is now getting everything ready for the implementation of another project. The leased areas, which now house the current Aquapack Industrial production, hamper the upgrading and further development of the enterprise. Therefore, the construction of a new factory for the production of corrugated cardboard and packaging will begin in the near future. "It will be built with the use of advanced technologies and fitted with state-of-the-art equipment with higher production performance and energy efficiency. We will have the opportunity to ramp up our production, lower manufacturing costs and expand the range of products," clarified the founder of the enterprise.

It's good to have a house in Antarctica



The closest neighbours are a colony of penguins — what amazing things Belarusian polar explorers have seen on the icy continent

Antarctica was discovered just over 200 years ago but interest in it has not waned to this day. This is a unique area for experiments and scientific observations of rare natural phenomena. Belarus is among the states seeking to expand their presence on the mysterious continent. After returning from another expedition, our polar explorers have shared what is remarkable about the Antarctic way of life and what tasks are being solved thousands of kilometres from their native land.

By Inna Gorbatenko

An introvert's paradise

The Belarusian Antarctic station is located in the Eastern part of the continent, near Mountain Vechernyaya, on the coast of the Cosmonauts Sea. The location in the coastal zone is favourably distinguished by milder weather conditions than that in inland areas. The station has powerful modern infrastructure by polar standards. In addition to residential modules, there are diesel power plants for uninterrupted power supply, a fleet of vehicles, including snowmobile equipment for long-distance trips. The employees live in several modular houses. According to Yegor Korzun, a polar explorer and biologist,

everyone has their own room and workplace. "The daily routine has been formed over the years. We get up at 7am, have breakfast at 7:30am. The composition of the expedition participants is selected in such a way as to close the majority of technical issues — a mechanic, an electrician, an installer. Everyone, including scientific staff, knows their own range of work before the start of the expedition," he revealed the details.

Sunday is a day off. Polar explorers often spend it together, strolling around the oasis or visiting their neighbours — a colony of the Adélie penguin. The most enjoyable thing after lunch is the bathhouse. However, they joke that a day off in Antarctica flies by as fast as in Belarus.

Icebergs and the wind that knocks you down

Everyone knows that it is very cold in Antarctica. Yet, few people realise that the minimum temperature recorded on this continent is minus 79 degrees. Belarusian polar explorers are at the station during the Antarctic summer, which is a less harsh



period in terms of the weather. In addition, the polar day is established in the summer months. Scientists claim that white nights in Antarctica are even more awesome than in St. Petersburg! All we can do is take their word for it.

A person who comes to this continent for the first time is most impressed with icebergs and a huge space around. An equally interesting phenomenon is katabatic winds that can sometimes blow around the clock for weeks. "Katabatic winds bring powder snow, which covers houses overnight. That is why the doors at the polar stations always open inward. Otherwise, the house will get absolutely hammered with snow in a couple of hours so that you won't dig it out," Yegor Korzun disclosed a surprising fact.

Due to the isolation of Antarctica, the nature of the continent is unique. Many people dream of seeing whales and the polar explorers' dream has come true. The sea giants weigh about 30 tonnes and grow up to 13-14 metres. "Moreover, there

is an emperor penguin colony not far from our oasis, and they sometimes come to the station," continued Yegor Korzun. "This is the largest species. The average height of an individual is about 150 centimetres. Emperor penguins live on sea ice and rarely set foot on land, so it is an incredible luck to see them near our station."

The south polar skua also nests in Antarctica. These birds have a nasty character — during scientific research, Yegor Korzun even received a couple of powerful wing slaps on the head. Skuas like hanging around in the kitchen during lunch time in the hope of getting delicious goodies. It is a pity the birds do not know that under the rules in Antarctica, they are not allowed to be fed.

Polar explorers often go fishing — this is for scientific purposes, because the fish is heavily contaminated. Here are some figures from the research: scientists caught 106 specimens of fish, which contained nearly 9,000 parasites.

Expansion plan

Belarus is expanding the geography of research. During the expedition, a multi-day scientific trip took place to a remote and unexplored area of the Antarctic mainland, where the Nye mountain range is located. The length of the research route was about 700 kilometres! "The campaign lasted three days. We overcame two dangerous sections — the Hays and Rayner glaciers — and selected unique samples and specimens. It is incredible, but even in the ice desert, forms of biological life have been discovered," Yegor Korzun recalled.

It is too early to talk about the scientific results of the expedition in detail. Samples and materials are still on board the ship. Soon they will arrive in St. Petersburg to be delivered to Minsk, as explained by Aleksei Gaidashov, head of Belarusian Antarctic expeditions, during a solemn meeting of polar explorers at the Academy of Sciences. The long-term task envisages a year-round expedition which Belarus is already approaching. The construction of the second stage of the Belarusian Antarctic station is planned to be completed in the next couple of years.

BREAKTHROUGHS ARE QUESTIONABLE Extreme cold snap has been recorded in Antarctica

Despite the fact that last year was the hottest in the history of observations, extremely low temperatures — minus 79.4 degrees Celsius — were recorded in Antarctica during that period. There is no guarantee that the record will not be broken. Reaching the mark of below 50 degrees Celsius significantly complicates the work of research bases in Antarctica. In such conditions, flying on airplanes becomes unsafe.





The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"There has always been a theatre of military operations in the Middle East. If the battle flames up there, it will be hot for everyone. It will warm us up, as well as all countries further north. God only knows how the situation will develop there. It is Americans who are inciting confrontation there now."

During a working trip to Minsk Region, on October 27th, 2023

By Anton Popov

Lebanese trap

Another surge in violence began after the end of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to the United States, where he met with Joe Biden and Donald Trump, receiving assurances of support from both politicians. The end of his trip mysteriously coincided with an incident in the Druze town of Majdal Shams in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, where 12 children and teenagers aged 10 to 16 were killed and 42 people were injured on Saturday as a result of a rocket strike. The Lebanese Hezbollah movement was immediately blamed for the attack. The IDF reported that the strike was carried out with an Iranian-made 240mm unguided rocket Falaq-1 — this way Tel Aviv linked the alleged actions of the Lebanese with Iran's position. After that, a number of people, including Israel's Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and Prime Minister Netanyahu, vowed that Israel 'will not remain silent' and 'will hit the enemy hard'.

There are many oddities around the attack on the Druze settlement. Hezbollah, which has been shelling northern Israel with drones and rockets since October last year, denied any involvement in the strike and, according to the group's statement, informed the UN that the tragedy was caused by an Israeli interceptor missile. Identifying the culprit in this case is a very difficult task.

For Israel, the incident is an excuse to increase pressure on the group entrenched in Lebanon. In this regard, the Druze of the Golan Heights is a 'convenient' target. Locals consider themselves Syrians and their land occupied, and many have rejected Israeli citizenship.

However, the strike on the stadium was still used as an excuse to strike at Beirut. The fate of one of Hezbollah's key commanders is unknown, but the very fact of the attack that resulted in the death of at least four civilians, including two children, and the wounding of 74 civilians, creates prerequisites for a new round of escalation.

Now the ball is in Hezbollah's court, and the further development of the situation depends on how large-scale the movement's response will be.

The leadership of the Lebanese group has several options for action. On the one hand, it will certainly continue and even intensify the shelling of northern Israel, which will force the IDF to deploy more resources on that front and entail increased losses among the military of the Jewish state. However, it is unlikely that such a scenario will become a pretext for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. On the other hand, Hezbollah may raise the stakes and expand the strike zone, as well as leverage its missile arsenal — which, according to experts, can number from 100,000 to 150,000 missiles and drones — much more widely. Experts estimate the probability of the first scenario higher, yet the second one cannot be ruled out. In that case, Israel will have a hard time. During the spring and summer, there were published several videos of the destruction of the Iron Dome radars and launchers in northern Israel using FPV drones and Almas ATGMs.

One of the most troubled regions of the planet has once again become the main newsmaker of the world's news agencies recently. On July 31st, Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political bureau of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, was assassinated in Tehran. Earlier in the day, the Israeli Air Force attacked the Hezbollah stronghold in Beirut's southern suburbs targeting one of the group's main leaders — Fuad Shukr. So far nothing is known about his fate — according to the IDF, Shukr is dead, yet Hezbollah representatives claim that the debris clearing operations continue.

New round of escalation

Will high-profile killings in Lebanon and Iran cause a full-scale war in the Middle East?



Death in Tehran

The assassination in Tehran of the head of the Hamas political bureau, Ismail Haniyeh, who attended the inauguration of Iran's new president Masoud Pezeshkian on July 31st, became a much more dangerous incident. The circumstances are still not completely clear, but local media report that it may be a high-precision air missile strike. Officially, Israel did not admit guilt as of the time of handing over the material, while *The Jerusalem Post* newspaper has reported that Prime Minister Netanyahu banned ministers and Knesset deputies from making any comments on this topic.

Haniyeh's murder has already been condemned in many countries. The President of the Islamic Republic stressed that Tehran would make the 'terrorist occupiers' regret their actions. Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei also promised 'severe punishment'. The Hamas movement believes that Israel co-ordinated the attack with Washington, and the Houthis and Hezbollah are going to fight with even greater determination. The Pentagon head, Lloyd Austin, in turn, promised to defend Israel in the event of an attack, which indirectly indicates that both sides were interested in the murder.

Haniyeh's death is undoubtedly a heavy blow for Palestinians, yet it is far from being a fatal one. Hamas has an extensive structure with high interchangeability of even key members. In addition, Haniyeh was more involved in the political side of the Palestinian struggle for freedom than in military planning; therefore his death will not affect the course of the battle in the Gaza Strip.

The situation with the ceasefire and the hostage exchange negotiations risks reaching an impasse. It was Haniyeh who co-ordinated this process on the part of Hamas, and now the prospects for reaching agreements look illusory.

Whoever killed the Hamas leader clearly set an additional task of publicly insulting Tehran, because Haniyeh died as a guest of the Islamic Republic — more so, on the night following the inauguration of the country's president. The rhetoric of officials and the media sentiment suggest that retaliation will take place. The near future will show whether it will be large-scale; however, the trend towards escalation and attempts to involve Iran in a major war in the Middle East is obvious.

American trail

The situation around Haniyeh's death looks very suspicious. Those who follow the conflict may have noticed a curious tendency — as soon as a timid light begins to shine at the end of the tunnel, someone immediately pours gasoline on the fire. Whoever does this is trying to drag as many countries of the region as possible into the expanding Middle East funnel.

Haniyeh, who was appointed Israel's main enemy after the raid on October 7th last year, is dead, and even if there is no official recognition, Netanyahu will be able to put

down this victory on his account, which will increase the prime minister's rating.

However, this death is even more beneficial for the United States, which sees its number one goal as dragging Iran into a war with Israel and completely destabilising the already shaky system of checks and balances in the region.

It seems that it is impossible to achieve at least some kind of détente without excluding the American factor, since high-profile and well-timed murders neutralise all attempts to bring about peace over and over again.

Getting rid of the US dollar's stranglehold is the way to a just world order

Today, individual countries rampantly printing dollars and their local surrogates — euros — are thriving at the expense of the rest of the world. In this regard, at the recent summit of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) in Astana, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko once again urged his counterparts to switch to settlements in national currencies. Why is this important today?

Robbery on a planetary scale

By Valery Bainev, Doctor of Economics

About 'fake' banknotes

It is no secret that the United States, unlike many of its foes and allies, comfortably sat out the Second World War overseas. Moreover, not only did it preserve its economic potential, but it also significantly increased it. Cunning Americans managed to become prosperous on military supplies and loans.

As a result, the gold reserve of the post-war USA reached 22,000 tonnes, or 70 percent of all the precious metal available in the world at that time. It is no wonder that the U.S. dollar backed by gold was the most trusted among other currencies. Therefore, it became the basis of the Bretton Woods International Monetary System established in 1944.

In 1976, the Jamaican currency system was adopted on the initiative of the United States, which abandoned the dollar's gold peg. By doing that, the United States received the right to print their banknotes in unlimited quantities. Before that, however, Washington had agreed with Saudi Arabia — the second largest oil producer after the USA — that global energy contracts would be denominated in U.S. dollars. Smaller oil producers were forced to follow their example. This is how the buck, stripped of its golden armour, received a new filling — the oil one.

In other words, American tricksters arranged the matter so that their national currency turned out to be backed by world oil demand. Therefore, experts call the U.S. money issued after 1976 and used outside the United States petrodollars, which differ significantly from those 'real' banknotes that are in circulation in the United States.

Global confidence trickster

It is believed that the 'confidence trickster' specialisation is one of the oldest professions in the criminal world. Its owners skilfully ingratiate themselves with their victims and stealthily rob them. Alas, something similar is happening in the current global economy. As long as the United States observed the proprieties and did not abuse its printing press, trust in the country and its currency remained. However, the bounds of propriety began to be gradually violated. Washington, seeking to solve its problems by issuing money, started to print unbacked paper money more and more actively.

According to various sources, just over two pandemic years, Americans printed \$5.9 trillion and launched those candy wrappers into international circulation. This is the same amount as in the previous 40 years! Their European accomplices did not put on a modest air either, and created €2.5 trillion out of thin air. From an economic point of view, this means that the West has devalued the savings of citizens and states around the world by about \$10 trillion. If you call a spade a spade — the thieving Western tycoons robbed the rest of the world of the specified amount in 2020-2021 alone.

Many experts believe that taking into account the US exorbitant national debt of \$34 trillion and the amount of petrodollars that have flooded the global economy, Americans are now hatching plans to abandon dollars altogether — for instance, under the guise of monetary reform related to the introduction of digital money.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,
"Our organisation [SCO] alone has two of the most powerful leaders — China and the Russian Federation. But we still have awe for the U.S. dollar. Let us finally take certain steps to be less dependent on this currency. You will see that those who manipulate the 'dollar big stick' will understand that it can no longer go on like this. We see everything, but we do not take action. Meanwhile, people are waiting."
At the meeting in the SCO Plus format, on July 4th, 2024

In that case, the disposal of 'fake' dollars will undoubtedly become the most grandiose theft in the entire history of mankind. The assumed reform will not affect holders of 'real' dollars in the United States while users of petrodollars around the world will face severe disappointment.

Pragmatic interest

Aleksandr Lukashenko, insistently calling on the SCO countries to de-dollarise, has a purely pragmatic interest. After all, countries like Belarus that earn an honest livelihood are under the Western monetary pressure. It is not only stashed money of ordinary citizens that is being devalued, but the reserves of entire states. Due to the excess of U.S. dollars, world prices for raw materials are rising. The resulting inflation leads to an increased cost of loans and 'eats up' the savings of the population, funds and working capital of enterprises expressed in national currencies. Consequently, the country's socio-economic, scientific, technical, and innovative development is hindered, while its competitiveness as well as economic and national security are declining. Thanks to the dollar, the West

has the opportunity to arbitrarily manipulate global cash flows, hence harming the economies of other countries.

"This not only deprives us of competitive financial and economic advantages but also threatens national security," Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed at the SCO summit in Dushanbe in September 2019, comparing the dollar to a weapon.

Posing a deadly threat

Getting rid of the dollar dictatorship is not an easy path. The fact is that the demand for petrodollars is backed not only by hydrocarbons, but also by the banal fear of the US army. It is widely known that the United States spent \$916 trillion on the armed forces in 2023, or 37.5 percent of all global spending for these purposes. By the way, this is more than that of China, Russia, India, Saudi Arabia, Great Britain, Germany, Ukraine, France and Japan combined.


Admittedly, Americans use the army very effectively in order to maintain their dollar hegemony — by seizing or controlling hydrocarbon deposits and their transportation routes around the world, as was the case in Iraq, Libya, Syria, etc. To ensure this, the dollar hegemon has thrown a whole network of more than 950 military bases located in 80 countries around the world.

Should anyone question the purchasing power of the U.S. dollar and intend to trade in another currency, the deadly hammer of the American military machine falls on them. This is exactly what happened to the presidents of Iraq and Libya brutally assassinated by the United States.

Breaking free of the US dollar's stranglehold is obviously not easy. Today, the collective West has turned against Belarus and Russia, using sanctions and Ukraine as a kamikaze country. More than 90 percent of payments within the Union State are currently made in national currencies, which to the displeasure of the global hegemon, is a good example for the EAEU, SCO, BRICS and other countries of the world.

NUMBERS

Nowadays, according to various estimates, from 40 to 72 percent of all dollars issued by the United States are traded outside the USA. This refers to the amount from \$3 to \$5.4 trillion.



Every nation boasts places that are deemed holy, that have a sacred connection with the human heart. Their main feature is the ability to unite people around them, imbue people with strength, and give them a sense of belonging. Each of these sites has its own genius.

In a peaceful and calm manor...

The 180th anniversary of great artist Ilya Repin's birth is an excellent reason to go to Zdravnevo and immerse oneself in history

By Artemiy Vasilevich

On August 5th, the world art culture celebrated the 180th anniversary of Ilya Repin's birth. He is one of those artists whose name is known to everyone. The subjects of his paintings *Barge Haulers on the Volga*, *They Did Not Expect Him*, *Ivan the Terrible and His Son Ivan* are imprinted in the memory of even those who are distant from fine art. A significant chapter in the career and personal life of this great artist is associated with Belarus.

The Zdravnevo Museum Estate, buried in verdure of lime trees and oaks, is located twenty kilometres from Vitebsk, near the village of Koitovo. The setting is quite modest — a house, a cellar for liqueurs, a well, a small manager's house and an apple orchard. Just as it was many years ago, the artist's presence is palpable in the estate. "In 1891, Tsar Alexander III purchased the painting *Zaporozhian Cossacks Write a Letter to the Turkish Sultan* from the artist. By that time, Repin had already achieved fame within the artistic community. The result surpassed all expectations — the royal family paid the artist P35,000 for the canvas measuring two by three metres. The amount was staggering at that time," said Aleksei Sukhorukov, the guide and permanent head of the Zdravnevo Museum Estate.

Repin spent part of the proceeds from the sale of the painting to buy the estate, located fifteen versts from Vitebsk upstream of the Western Dvina River.

After the purchase, Repin began to improve his Belarusian estate and devised a project for the future manor house. In his letters to Lev Tolstoy's daughter Tatiana,



Ilya Repin



The Belarusian



Zaporozhian Cossacks Write a Letter to the Turkish Sultan

the artist described that period in this way. "At present, I am busy with building a tower above the house. The yard is bustling with craftsmen — carpenters, sawyers, stove-makers. Our lovely courtyard is impassable because of logs, chips, shavings, sawdust; the clatter of axes, the screech of saws, and the rustling of jack plane begin at 4 a.m. and end at sunset."

In addition to the house construction, Repin took an interest in landscaping the estate. Following the traditions of the early 19th-century manor culture, Zdravnevo got a park designed in the classic French style, decorated with alleys and tranquil ponds.

The artist often went out into nature, where he made sketches of rural landscapes. During his first visit to Zdravnevo, Repin painted a portrait of his elder daughter

Vera — *Autumn Bouquet*. Subsequently, the paintings *Duel*, *Hunter*, *Sunrise over the Western Dvina*, *Young Ladies' Walk among Herd of Cows* were created. On warm summer nights, Repin went to the Western Dvina, where he would think about life and art, gazing at the water flowing away into the distance. It was perhaps during those moments that the artist conceived the idea for the work *Moonlit Night*. The painting depicts the dark waters of the Western Dvina, which the artist so often admired. Today, Repin's *Moonlit Night* is part of the collection of the National Art Museum in Minsk.

The State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg houses a painting *The Belarusian* by Repin, which was painted by the artist in Zdravnevo in 1892. A local peasant named Sidor Shavrov posed for the artist. This is what Repin wrote about the creation of *The Belarusian*:

There lived a peasant — Sidor Shavuro — across the river. He posed for me, standing in the open air in front of my workshop's window. The Shavuros are a family of several brothers and sisters. Sidor, as the eldest brother, inherited the seniority upon his father's death; the house was spacious... according to his younger brother, Sidor knew many poems by Lermontov and Pushkin by heart and would recite them with passion even in the field and on the road.

The descendants of that very Sidor Shavrov still live near Zdravnevo, proud of their family's history.

Repin's house was always full of guests flocking from the two capitals. Stasov and the Tolstoy's often visited Ilya Repin at his Belarusian estate. Sometimes the Repins took on the role of guests themselves, coming by for coffee at Vitebsk artist Pen, whose creative work the head of the family appreciated, or visiting local peasants. Based on Repin's records,

Some of Ilya Repin's instructions to novice artists

- Watch more, paint longer, write simpler.
- Expression is above all.
- Nothing in excess.
- Look for where large planes meet.
- A sense of measure! A sense of measure!
- Make sure that a body looks like a body, and water like water.
- The way it came out, stop.

one can conclude what attitude the artist had towards Belarusians: Yesterday we went 15 versts to visit familiar peasants. Their son works for us as

an employee. They live well, like farmers, and how delicious their dishes are! The village of Zezdrino is idyllic: apples and cherries are ripening, and the road there lies through a forest.

...Belarusians are a glorious people, very similar to the Little Russians, only more hardworking, modest and good-natured.

The Repins spent 12 summer seasons in Zdravnevo. Ilya Repin visited his Belarusian estate for the last time in 1904.

Repin's connection with Zdravnevo did not end with the artist's departure from these places. Vera Repina and the artist's children — Vera, Nadezhda, Tatiana and Yuri — continued to come there on vacation. It was in Zdravnevo that Repin's father, Yefim Repin, died and was buried.

After the October Revolution, Ilya Repin's daughter, Tatiana, gave away several rooms of the manor house to accommodate an elementary school, where she taught local children herself.

In 1988, Repin's estate was restored based on drawings. Now, as in the old days, Repin's manor house is again filled with guests, eager to visit the welcoming host — to have a conversation, to drink tea with jam, and those who are lucky may see a celebration in honour of the artist's name day.

BOTH THE MASTER AND THE ARTIST

The exhibition *Repin as Master and Artist*, timed to coincide with the 180th anniversary of the painter's birth and the 160th anniversary of Tatiana Sukhotina-Tolstaya's birth, has opened in Zdravnevo.

The exposition includes over fifty items from the collections of the State Museum of Lev Tolstoy in Moscow. Sketches, portraits of Tolstoy's family members and their inner circle, scenes of life at Yasnaya Polyana, personal correspondence, are dedicated to the creative and friendly relations between Ilya Repin and Tolstoy's elder daughter — artist and memoirist Tatiana Tolstaya. Zdravnevo features copies of the works.

According to Olga Frantsuzova, a senior researcher at the museum, Ilya Repin sent a lot of messages to his student from his country house near Vitebsk. Their dialogue lasted for decades, with the master encouraging his younger colleague never to abandon painting. They also discussed artistic vision, works and creativity. It is this correspondence that provided insights into the artist's leisure time in Zdravnevo. The exhibition at Zdravnevo will run until September 30th.

Medal for the capture of Paris

Ivan Litvinovich, Yauheni Zalaty and Vyaleta Bardzilouskaya are Belarusian Olympic heroes

The end of the first week of the Paris 2024 Olympics turned out to be surprisingly eventful and pleasant for all of us: Belarusian athletes won three medals in Paris — gold and two silver. Ivan Litvinovich, who performed his trampoline jumping programme in a scintillating manner, became a two-time Olympic champion. Vyaleta Bardzilouskaya sensationally jumped onto the second step of the podium in the women's trampoline competition. In an amazing and dramatic rowing race, Yauheni Zalaty fell just a little short of an award that would fully correspond to his surname ['zalaty' means 'gold' in Belarusian]. However, the silver of the Belarusian athlete is quite comparable to gold. President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko has congratulated our medallists on their success.



By Sergei Kanashits

Vyaleta Bardzilouskaya is only 19, and she is a new star that was lit on the Olympic firmament by Olga Vlasova's coaching staff. Vyaleta is a trainee of the Mogilev trampoline school, which is rich in traditions. Vyaleta performed the qualification above all praise, and despite feeling nervous in the final, she managed to pull herself together and complete her programme almost perfectly. Great job! She might have won gold — and some experts expressed the opinion that British Bryony Page, who became the champion, was clearly overestimated — but silver for someone who made debut is a clear success.

neither spoilt nor changed him at all. Being an Olympic champion, he continued to work in the gym harder than anyone else and regularly went on an ordinary route taxi or a train from Vitebsk to Minsk and back to attend sessions and pass exams at the Belarusian State University of Physical Culture, spending seven hours on the road. Ivan has never demanded a special approach or business class, and has remained the same humble guy from Vileika. Now Ivan is a two-time Olympic champion, but you can be sure that this status will not change him, either.

The competitions in Paris have clearly demonstrated that modern trampolining has two leagues — the one of Ivan Litvinovich,

born to fly, not to crawl. It is impossible not to admire Olga Vlasova's coaching talent and skills, as well as all other specialists who have put their hearts and knowledge in this triumph of Belarusian sports.

After the gold medal performance in Tokyo, Ivan Litvinovich admitted that he felt emptiness — he was holding the gold medal in his hands and, having realised his dream, did not know what to do next. What dream would be the next one? So he decided to strive to become as titled as Chinese Dong Dong, who is a six-time world champion and a participant in four Olympic Games, where he won gold, two silver and a bronze. Ivan has two gold medals now, and the same number of

our athlete, but he managed to cope. He won a ticket to the Olympics, despite all the obstacles and discrimination. In Paris, he had to get used to a new rental boat since the Belarusian equipment was not allowed through the border due to sanctions. That is not all. On the way to the water area from the Olympic village for the final race, the bus broke down. The future silver medallist could not arrive in time for the start, but fortunately he managed to contact a representative of the International Olympic Committee and the time was shifted. Then it was a matter of technique, iron nerves and skill. Yauheni Zalaty trailed along at the back for one third of the distance, making everyone think that the



The circumstances in which this medal was won, and the difficulties that had to be overcome on the way to the podium undoubtedly attach special significance to this award. In an atmosphere of total political lawlessness and discrimination, the Belarusian trampolinists managed to show their best qualities and prove that nothing can break people having moral power.

After his first victory in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, Ivan Litvinovich returned home a hero. Yet, the fame and success that suddenly fell on the young man's head

where he is alone and inaccessible, and the other of the rest, who are trying to keep up with him, but so far their efforts are comparable to the attempts of a sparrow to fly like a swift. Litvinovich's Paris gold is the case when one does not need to be an excellent specialist to appreciate all the shapes, twists and somersaults in the athlete's magic flight. It was pretty clear even to a layman that Ivan's programme was so packed with complex technical elements, and executed with such amazing precision, grace and ease that there is no doubt — this guy was

Olympics. And he is only 23 years old... Yauheni Zalaty is a new name in Belarusian rowing. This sport is strongly associated with Yekaterina Karsten, who was named Great for a reason — two gold, two bronze and a silver at the Olympics speak for themselves. There were other successful performances in women's rowing, but men so far stood modestly on the sidelines. Now this gestalt in Belarusian sovereign sports is closed thanks to Yauheni Zalaty.

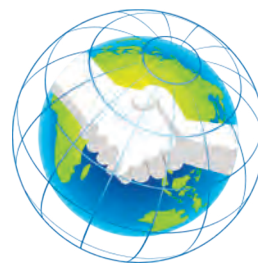
It seemed that everything was against

steep Olympic rides got the best of him. Yet, it turned out to be tactics — to row according to your power, not paying attention to the rivals, and to spurt at the finish line. The water was boiling under the oars and it seemed that a motor was attached to the Belarusian's boat — it was moving forward like a cruiser, with his rivals falling off one by one. Zalaty's silver finish was indescribable, as well as the delight of the whole country. Well done!

We are waiting for successful performances by other Belarusian Olympians.

Talking about dates

The International Friendship Association (IFA) has proposed postponing the World Friendship Games to 2025



WORLD FRIENDSHIP GAMES

What has been discussed on the sports sidelines over the past few weeks has taken the form of official messages. After consultations with a number of athletes and international sports federations, the IFA has put forward the initiative to postpone the World Friendship Games to 2025. The main reason for the revision of the tournament date is insufficient time for the recovery of leading athletes participating in major international tournaments in the summer of 2024.

By Kirill Knyazev

As stated in the IFA communiqué, postponing the Games will allow for a more representative participation of athletes, as well as will provide an opportunity to expand the programme of the World Friendship Games with cultural and entertainment components. If the Russian government approves the postponement of the Games, the organising committee, together with the IFA, will propose new dates for the tournament.

Initially scheduled for Sep-

MEANWHILE

Following Games of the Future held in Russia with great success, the IOC has approved the decision to create the Olympic Esports Games. The decision was made unanimously at the 142nd IOC Session, which took place in Paris. The first Olympic Esports Games will be organised in Saudi Arabia in 2025.

tember, the World Friendship Games have received applications from almost 2,500 athletes

from 127 countries to compete in 36 sports in Moscow and Yekaterinburg. However, IFA Secretary General Jérôme Valcke has now explained to the website insidethegames.biz that the postponement requested by the IFA is logical, "Why have the Games this year, which is in terms of a multi-sport event focused on Paris 2024? I always thought that 2024 was not the correct year to have them and definitely 2025 is much better."

Valcke served as FIFA Secretary General from 2007 to 2015. According to him, "Russia

is a country that has organised many major international sporting events over the past decades. The FIFA World Cup in 2018, as well as many other international competitions, such as the Winter and Summer Olympic Games. Today Russia is in a different situation, and the idea behind the World Friendship Games was to organise another important multi-sport event." Valcke has denied that there are any reasons for the postponement other than those mentioned, and confirmed that 'all the organisational structure is in place'.

Valcke admitted that 'there are always challenges when you want to start a new project'. The manager remained adamant towards those criticising and boycotting the Friendship Games, "I thought sports is about friendship

without politics or discrimination involved. The Russian athletes have the right, as the Belarusian, to be part of competitions. They can have an event organised in their homeland in 2025 and again not against other event organisers."

The media, including Russian ones, now agree that it may be strategically more important for the Friendship Games organisers not just to tick a box and report on their holding despite the opposition on the part of the IOC and WADA, but to create a strong foothold on the basis of the World Friendship Games so as to unite forces advocating for sports outside politics. It is hard to argue with that.

However, the Russian government has not yet made an official decision on the IFA initiative.

Photo of the week

Aleksey Bibikov



Grain growers have a hot harvest season. In the photo: Sergei Kosilo, assistant combine operator of the Plemzavod Ross agricultural enterprise in Volkovysk District

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

August 8th is International Cat Day. It is celebrated not only to honour fluffy homebodies but also to draw attention to the problem of stray cats. Cats remain the most common pets all over the world — about 80 percent of the world's population own a pet, more than half of whom gave their preference to cats, followed by dogs.



August 8th marks International Mountaineering Day. On this day back in 1786, the highest peak in the Alps — Mont Blanc — was conquered. Its height is 4,810m above sea level. Since then, enthusiasts have conquered many more mountain peaks. The first successful ascent of the world's highest peak — Chomolungma (Everest) — was made in 1953. This day is also considered a holiday by people engaged in industrial mountaineering.



On August 9th, 1984, Minsk Zoo was opened on Tashkent Street. Its predecessor was a pet corner, created earlier on the initiative of Minsk Automobile Plant's employees, where



animals in trouble found shelter. Minsk Zoo's animal collection contains about 400 species of exotic animals and rare representatives of Belarus' fauna.

August 9th is the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Currently, the total number of indigenous peoples on the planet is about 476 million people. Although indigenous peoples make up only 5 percent of the world's population, they account for 15 percent of the world's poorest people. They continue to face numerous problems, and their rights are often violated. Indigenous peoples have the right to define themselves or their ethnicity in accordance with their customs and traditions.



On August 9th, 1173, the first stone of the bell tower of the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta was laid on Pisa's Cathedral Square, which went down in history as the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Due to the vertical deviation of the tower, its construction was going on in fits and starts until it was completed in 1360. The current height of the Leaning Tower of Pisa is 56.7m, while its top is about 4.8m distant from the vertical and the



span continues to increase. The Leaning Tower of Pisa was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The famous tower is also included in the Guinness World Record Book.

On August 10th, 1793, the Louvre was first opened to the public as a national art museum. It is an architectural monument and one of the largest art museums in the world. At present, the museum's collection contains over 400,000 exhibits and is based on former royal collections, as well as collections of monasteries and individuals. The Louvre houses unique collections of Oriental antiquities, ancient Egyptian, antique, Western European (especially French and Italian) art.



August 11th is Builder's Day in the Republic of Belarus. A high level of construction is an indicator of the country's development and welfare. Today, Belarusian builders fulfil their great mission building new neighbourhoods and reconstructing historical centres, erecting houses and creating entire architectural ensembles, mastering new heights and skyscrapers, using advanced technologies and materials to ensure beautiful and solid results that last for centuries.



August 12th is International Youth Day. It is celebrated to raise awareness of the role of young people in developing and building the world, as well as everyday problems that stand in their way. Nowadays, a record number of young people live in the world — half of the world's population are people aged 30 and younger, and this figure is expected to reach 57 percent by the end of 2030. Young people make up one quarter of the global workforce, yet they account for half of the unemployed.

On August 12th, 1981, IBM released the first personal computer — the IBM PC 5150, which marked the beginning of the era of modern computers. There are about a billion PCs in the world today. A significant part of the world's population cannot imagine their lives without smart machines that allow them to roam the Internet, send and receive emails, store huge amounts of information, listen to music, watch movies, edit photos and much more.



August 13th is International Left-Handers Day. It is intended to draw public attention to the problems faced by lefties in the right-handed world. According to statistics, from 3 to 10 percent of the world's population are left-handed.