



More than
80 percent
of the products
manufactured
by Mogilevliftmash
are exported

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Tsvirko was called
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INTERNATIONAL

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Artificial Intelligence in Belarus exhibition showcased the country's own project of the anthropomorphic robot NEWMAN, a voice AI assistant in the Belarusian language and other R&D projects — in total over 100 developments in the field of scientific intelligence and robotics

Forward to the future

The 2nd IT Academgrad forum and exhibition *Artificial Intelligence in Belarus*, timed to the 95th anniversary of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, was held in Minsk. The event included a large-scale exhibition of significant domestic developments in the area of AI and robotics.

About 50 organisations from the country took part in the forum and demonstrated their achievements in the field of AI at the exhibition: R&D organisations engaged in research in the field of application of AI methods, representatives of educational institutions, and private companies. In total, more than 100 projects were presented at the exhibition, including the national artificial intelligence platform BELAI.BY and a voice AI assistant in the Belarusian language.

The winners of the open *Leaders of Artificial Intelligence of Belarus* competition — first held in our country — were also awarded.



Time for a powerful consolidation

The President of Belarus took part in the CIS summit in Bishkek

On the need to act together in the CIS and the resolution of conflicts

Aleksandr Lukashenko at a meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council in a narrow format said, “Let me remind you that the key purpose of creating the Commonwealth was to prevent the disruption of ties after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Our competitors in the West were and are not happy about that. The West keeps attempting to shake us loose, to weaken us, and subjugate us. Georgia was the first country to withdraw from our association. Ukraine is de facto no longer with us. There are big problems with Moldova. Regretfully, Armenia doesn’t always act in the spirit of partnership. It is impossible to calmly watch what is happening from the sidelines: otherwise, we will be simply torn apart. And ordinary people, the peoples of our countries will be the first ones to suffer...”

As a matter of principle, now is the time to take a more critical look at the situation in our Commonwealth. We shouldn’t bury our heads in the sand. After all, we see that all the chronic conflicts that we were saddled with back in the day inevitably produce very sad consequences. Thank god, a trend towards the resolution of these conflicts has emerged and some of the conflicts have been successfully resolved.”

On multipolarity and the request for a fair world order

The President emphasised the importance of adopting a statement on interstate relations in a multipolar world, “In general, it reflects our common vision of the world order, except for the paragraph proposing to express concern over the politicisation of international courts. But even this mild wording was not supported by everyone. Why do we need these international courts? Especially in our relations. Moreover, we understand, especially now, why they are doing this.

Apparently, someone hasn’t been affected by this yet. Someday you will want to help children, give them a piece of childhood, shelter them from bombings and shelling, and you will be put on the international wanted list for this,” the Belarusian leader noted.

The President stressed that in the context of the rapidly changing situation the demand for a more just world order, for the associations that are looking for ways to advance co-operation, peaceful coexistence, legal guarantees of development and elimination of discrimination on the basis of religion or income level is greater than ever.

“Our Commonwealth is just one of such associations,” the Head of State is convinced. “Why don’t we all appreciate it? We have accumulated vast experience in constructive work, which is of interest outside the CIS. Other integration associations have their eyes on it. But for many it’s like an eyesore.”

On a common language that cannot be lost

In his speech Aleksandr Lukashenko described the initiative of Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev for establishing an international organisation for promoting the Russian language as timely and in demand.

“You know, all of us speak Russian

The session of the CIS Heads of State Council was traditionally held in a narrow and expanded format. In total, the summit lasted about 5 hours. For a long time, the leaders of the countries communicated not only in an official format, but also in an informal setting. The meeting was attended by President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Russia Vladimir Putin, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and Secretary General of the CIS Executive Committee Sergei Lebedev.

In the Kyrgyz capital, Aleksandr Lukashenko presented Belarus’ position on the most pressing issues of interaction within the Commonwealth. The emphasis is on solidarity and unification. On the sidelines of the event, the Belarusian leader met with his Uzbek counterpart Shavkat Mirziyoyev.



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, has met with the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, before the CIS summit

CO-OPERATION

A bilateral meeting of Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko and Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev took place before the CIS summit in Bishkek. The Heads of State discussed the most important matters of Belarusian-Uzbek relations.

It was noted that trade is on the up, but its growth potential is much bigger. In this regard, governments should take the next step to build on positive momentum. It is important to expand and scale up economic co-operation. Uzbekistan is interested in Belarusian technologies in various sectors, primarily manufacturing.

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Shavkat Mirziyoyev thrashed out co-operation plans and discussed preparations for the upcoming visit of the President of Belarus to Uzbekistan.

It was agreed to hold a meeting of the intergovernmental commission in the late November — early December. The commission is expected to break down the tasks and identify additional points of growth in bilateral co-operation.

Interregional contacts are also important. Shavkat Mirziyoyev proposed drawing up a schedule for the 2024 regional agenda.

The Presidents also touched upon youth policy and co-operation in the humanitarian sphere.

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Shavkat Mirziyoyev discussed in detail the international agenda — the situation in the world, hot spots, and developments in the region.

The two leaders described their meeting as an opportunity to lay a foundation for a more vibrant co-operation in the future.

today, this is why we don’t feel this colossal problem so acutely. But look at the young people in our republics. Many speak Russian worse than they speak English and other languages. [Mastery of the Russian language] is our greatest treasure. If we let things slide, we may end up having to hire an interpreter in order to communicate,” the Belarusian leader stated.

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised that he has always said that the Russian language is not the Russia’s language, “It is our common language. We lived as one country for a long time. Proceeding from the concept that the language is a live thing that develops in creative ways, we also developed this Russian language together. There is a bit of Azerbaijanis, Uzbeks, Tajiks, and so on in this language. Not only Russians and Belarusians. This is why are we losing the Russian language?”

The President remarked that he is rejoiced by the trend in ex-Soviet Central Asia countries, including Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, where new schools and universities open and use Russian as the language of instruction.

“But more needs to be done. This is why this initiative concerning the Russian language is as important as some economic initiative. The situation with the Russian language is a disaster in [countries of] the former Warsaw Pact. Unlike them, we don’t want our young people to communicate with each other via an interpreter or only in English as I’ve already said,” the Belarusian leader stressed.

On expansion of the CIS’ influence zone, co-operation in SCO and BRICS

Speaking about expanding the CIS zone of influence, Aleksandr Lukashenko said, “Representatives of various international organisations participate in many meetings of the Commonwealth bodies, and today’s adoption of documents on the observer and partner status in the CIS will pave the way for legal regulation of such relations.

Belarus has always supported the alignment of activities of international integration associations that have similar goals and objectives. The basic condition is providing mutual support and not creating obstacles. I believe that the Commonwealth member states may be interested in considering other co-operation formats in such important areas as e-commerce, digital technologies, access to public procurement, reduction of roaming tariffs and many other areas,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

The President of Belarus is confident that partners are interested in co-operation within the framework of the SCO and BRICS, implementation of high-tech projects, development of new logistics routes to deliver goods to the far arc countries, including the active promotion of the North-South corridor, close coordination of efforts to ensure food security for the most vulnerable countries. It is necessary to promote such areas of activity without fear of falling under secondary sanctions of the West.

Aleksandr Lukashenko highlighted the new trend associated with the development of such large international organisations as the SCO and BRICS.

“There is no doubt that these are organisations of the future. But you see some backpedalling there. Indeed, the level of integration is higher when it



Bishkek

comes to the EAEU and the CIS. What if we were part of the SCO and BRICS as a single organisation, would that weaken our positions? No. And I am sure that Russia needs to be more active there, without looking at what the Americans or the West do and want. Russia should be a linchpin member of our association — the CIS. We must strive to act as a single organisation in BRICS and the SCO. We have a more advanced integration in politics, economy, and so on,” the Head of State noted.

On the situation in the world and the Middle East

“I should say that the situation is changing catastrophically fast. Shavkat Miromonovich and I talked about it for about an hour [during the meeting of the President of Belarus with the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev]. It is changing by a lot. More and more new challenges are emerging. Take a look at the Middle East. They no longer shake up us. They shake up the entire world. I hope to god it will stop before World War III begins.”

The Head of State remarked that in response to economic pressure Belarus and its allies, primarily Russia, have consolidated forces for the sake of sustainable economic development. Macroeconomic and financial stability has been preserved. Transition to a growth trajectory has been achieved.

“And then Russia has shaken itself and has become way more self-dependent in many areas of economic development.

“If we put a stop to these Western horrors shoulder to shoulder together with the Commonwealth, our common results would be much higher. If you recall, when we were part of the Soviet Union, everyone was afraid of us. They feared and respected us. Regretfully, the world respects only strength. And together with China, Iran, Brazil, and Global South now, we will not fear Western sanctions. They will reckon with our opinion if we stand together. And our opinion in international affairs will be the decisive one,” the Belarusian leader is sure.

On the value of the CIS format

“Thanks to our common commitment, we have consistently developed multifaceted co-operation despite new unprecedented challenges. By and large, it was thanks to them that we shook things up, took a fresh look at the situation, and found solutions that were on the surface. Today’s results speak for themselves,” the Belarusian leader said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that the partners have done a lot for the future, “While the West is investing in the war, or, to put it more simply, squandering their taxpayers’ money, we are increasing long-term investments

in high-tech industries such as microelectronics, aircraft construction, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, information and communication solutions. Many problems can only be solved together. If we are not together, then it will be just talk and no action. Only we ourselves can guarantee our sustainable and safe development. To do this, we need to be self-sufficient in strategically important industries. We have the resources, potential and competencies for this. We need political will and understanding of the importance of the Commonwealth.”

The Head of State urged to preserve the unique formats of unity in the CIS at all costs, to prevent an internal split and joining the ranks of sanctions ideologists,

“It is also essential to prevent provocations aimed at inciting ethnic and territorial disputes in the post-Soviet space. It’s not to offend somebody, but you already feel that Belarus and Russia have now a full grasp of the situation they are in. And especially we, Belarusians... But the Central Asian republics and our legendary representative of the Caucasian republic are present here. I must say, difficult times await you. Just like us and the Russians. On the one hand, we have the big brother who is trying to help us. Naturally, he has his own interests. On the other hand, we have the United States, the West, and you have already felt it.”

On interregional co-operation

The Head of State mentioned with satisfaction that an agreement on trade in services and on making investments has been signed within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States this year, “I am convinced that it is a timely and important document. Bearing in mind these documents and in continuation of previously adopted documents, I suggest stepping up the work on expanding interregional economic co-operation. Shavkat Miromonovich [Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan President] said it right today: if we don’t stand in the way of regions but help them a bit instead, they will resolve many problems without us. It is our unconditional potential that is in demand. We have the relevant experience. The initiative put forward by the Republic of Uzbekistan earlier in favour of holding a CIS forum of regions is relevant and needs to be implemented in practice as fast as possible. It should become a priority task. The CIS states have the necessary experience and accomplishments in the bilateral format.”

RESULTS OF THE SUMMIT

A number of decisions were made and the relevant documents were signed as a result of the summit. It was decided that the Russian Federation will preside over the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2024.

A decision was made in favour of awarding a Badge of Honour of the Commonwealth of Independent States to Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in recognition of his contribution to the development of the CIS, the reinforcement of friendship, good neighbourhood, and mutually beneficial co-operation between the CIS member states.

Participants of the summit discussed and passed a treaty on establishing an international organisation for promoting the Russian language. Four statements were passed: on co-operation in digitising the state administration; on international relations in a multipolar world; on protecting rights of people and citizens to the freedom of religion; on supporting and promoting the Russian language as a language of interethnic communication.

Other documents passed by the summit participants include an agreement on setting up an international centre for evaluating the risks of legalisation (laundering) of criminal revenues and terrorism financing, an agreement on setting up a coordinating centre in the sphere of forensic examination activities, an interstate program on joint measures to fight crime in 2024-2028.

The Heads of State instituted a medal For Contribution to Peace Building. The award will become the only interstate mark of distinction to reflect personal merits of citizens of the CIS states and representatives of other countries in building peace and maintaining international security.

The city of Samarkand has been declared the cultural capital of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the year 2024.



STANDPOINT

The foreign ministers of the CIS states in Bishkek adopted a statement in connection with the situation in the zone of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The foreign ministers of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan express concern over the unprecedented escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which has resulted in numerous casualties among civilians on both sides.

The foreign ministers strongly condemn any form of extremism, terrorism, hostage-taking and other violent acts against civilians, along with the indiscriminate use of force during military operations.

The statement expresses concern over the looming humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip and emphasises the need to comply with the international humanitarian law and to ensure that all those in need are provided with the necessary assistance, including food, fuel and medical assistance.

The foreign ministers also call on the parties to immediately cease hostilities, to ensure a lasting ceasefire and open humanitarian corridors for civilians.

In addition, they emphasised the importance of stepping up international and regional diplomatic efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East in line with internationally acknowledged guidelines, including the relevant UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

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Kokhanovsky Excavator Plant attracts young specialists and enters a new stage of development



Planning Economist Anastasia Medvedskaya and Head of the Design and Technology Department Ivan Blagoderov



Anton Stepanishchev

Point of attraction

By Olga Bogacheva

“The meeting place cannot be changed,” the young addition to Amkodor-KEZ says half-jokingly about his enterprise. In recent years, the plant has firmly taken the top spot in the top city-forming enterprises of the Tolochin District and has become a desirable place of work for young people.

In the workshop we meet Anastasia Medvedskaya and Ivan Blagoderov. The guys are former classmates, graduates of Kokhanovo High School. Both have a year at the plant under their belts. The girl graduated from Vitebsk Technological University and returned to the plant as a planning economist. Ivan came to work as a process engineer after the Belarusian-Russian University. Within a year he rose to head of the design department, “I’m glad that they believed in me, although I was worried about how I would cope. The mentoring support of senior colleagues helped. The work is interesting, there are a lot of new things ahead. It’s good when small settlements like ours have such industries — it’s better to live and work in your native places.”

The interest of young people in working at the enterprise did not appear out of nowhere. Children from all over the area regularly come here on excursions. Many have relatives who work here and share their opinions about the prospects for production. The children of the factory workers were even luckier. From the 3rd to the 11th grade, for good grades (with an average quarterly performance of at least 9 points), they are paid a monthly stipend — one base value. Now 12 ‘Amkodorites’ are receiving it — that’s what they call here the potential successors of family labour dynasties. Everyone

knows how the plant lives, what prospects and opportunities it has, another young specialist, test driver Andrei Klimovich, joins the conversation. He is also a local, he got a job recently. The guy sets ambitious goals for himself, intending to improve in his profession, “Management provides the opportunity to improve qualifications, retrain, and acquire a related specialty. Before your eyes are vivid examples of other factory workers who built a career from scratch. Plus, a large social package, a good family atmosphere in the team. This attracts people, especially young people. Therefore, I consider the plant a good place to start. Then everything depends on me, I just have to try.”

In the welding shop we meet 18-year-old Andrei Alekhno. He’s been here since August. Originally from Kokhanovo, he graduated



Welder Andrei Alekhno

Anton Stepanishchev

Many people know first-hand what conditions are like at the plant, says Deputy Director of the enterprise Elena Podolitskaya, “The President came here, got acquainted with the production, and positively assessed what he saw. This stimulated the interest of young people in the plant, and for us, it became an additional incentive to work.”

Deputy Director — Chief Engineer Denis Alexandrov confirms, “The visit of Aleksandr Lukashenko last year largely predetermined the vector of production development. The discussion was about the market needs for land reclamation equipment. We focused on this in our future work, significantly expanding our product line. Volumes have also increased; at the moment our capacities are fully loaded. We try to fulfil plans and not let customers down.”

The implementation of two important investment projects is planned ahead. One is associated with the production of a 100 percent domestic bulldozer; prototypes of it are already being tested. The second will be implemented under the One District, One Project programme initiated by the President. It is planned to expand production capacity, which will triple the amount of equipment produced (up to 30 units per month) and create new jobs. Demand for the plant’s products is growing both in the domestic and Russian markets, so the company really needs new workers, emphasises Denis Alexandrov, “It is important that we are constantly

working on modernisation and development of production. For example, a new excavator model is currently being tested. It is used side by side with a similar imported machine to clean reclamation canals and shows itself with dignity. The sanctions prompted a quick reorientation in the purchase of necessary components from Europe to Asia. We are actively developing relations with China. As a result, we acquired new reliable partners who supply high-quality and cheaper products. Europeans can only sympathise: politics there decides to the detriment of the economy and the real interests of its own population.”



Test driver Andrei Klimovich



They're on the rise

How the famous Mogilev elevators are made



New elevator cabins

Mogilev elevators probably don't need a special presentation. Their reliability has been tested by time and by residents of high-rise buildings not only in Belarus, but also in Russia. More than 80 percent of the products produced by Mogilevliftmach are exported. The main sales market is the Russian Federation, where 9,000 lifts were shipped last year. The products of Mogilev residents are known from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok. After the introduction of sanctions, the plant was able to quickly rebuild its logistics, developing a clear development model: only flexibility and mobility allow us to move forward and... upward. Our correspondent assessed the current and potential capabilities of the enterprise, including work on the Russian market, on the spot, in the production shops.

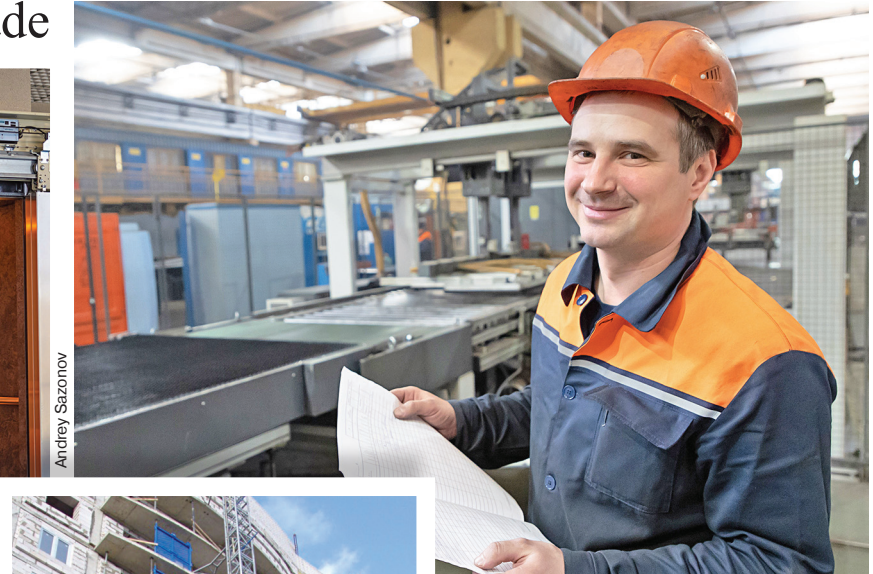
By Tatyana Sedunova

It is impossible to take in everything at once. Each elevator consists of several thousand parts. And the cabin, by the way, is not the most labour-intensive and technologically advanced unit. It is more difficult to manufacture a winch and control system — the 'brain' and 'heart' of the elevator, as the elevator builders themselves call them. And here imported components were needed, the production of which had to be established on our own. Mogilevliftmach's Director General Sergei Chertkov tells how we got out of the situation, "We began to work on diversification, to see what components we could produce locally. Despite some statements that the elevator industry will not cope with its tasks due to the departure of Western manufacturers from the market, our company has overcome all the difficulties that arose at the initial stage. Yes, previously manufacturers of elevator equipment of the Union State depended to varying degrees on the supply of imported parts. For us, such dependence was minimal, because the enterprise has a full life cycle. Raw materials and components that were purchased in Western countries were replaced with our own as soon as possible. For example, a new development of a currently in demand gearless winch, which is also used in the production of high-speed elevators, has already been put into mass production."

The history of the enterprise begins in 1966, when the Soviet Union began to actively build multi-story buildings that needed to be equipped with elevators. And if in the early 1990s only two models were manufactured, practically no different from each other, today there are more than 180 of them in the wide range of the enterprise: cargo, panoramic, hospital, cottage...

Modern equipment allows us to work flexibly and produce goods to order. Mogilevliftmach set a course for renewal at the start of the 2000s, including introducing the latest technologies. For example, the painting line was completely replaced. We also improved the mechanical part of the production process by installing powerful modern machines. Igor Glinkin works on one of these as a CNC machine operator. The guy studied at the Mogilev State Polytechnic College and was assigned to the elevator. Glinkin was assigned to a critical technological stage in production — processing the winch body. In the workshop, everything is controlled by a computer; you just need to set the settings correctly on the control panel.

"We receive parts from the foundry. The winch body must be sanded in order to transfer the part for a further production cycle. I understand machines of this type, and besides, I studied at the correspondence department of the Belarusian-Russian University to become an engineer. During my studies there was a lot of practice, we studied



Operator of computer-controlled machines Evgeniy Radyukov



the operating principles of such equipment. I began to better understand machine components, hydraulics, mechanics, and programs," Igor explains the complex process.

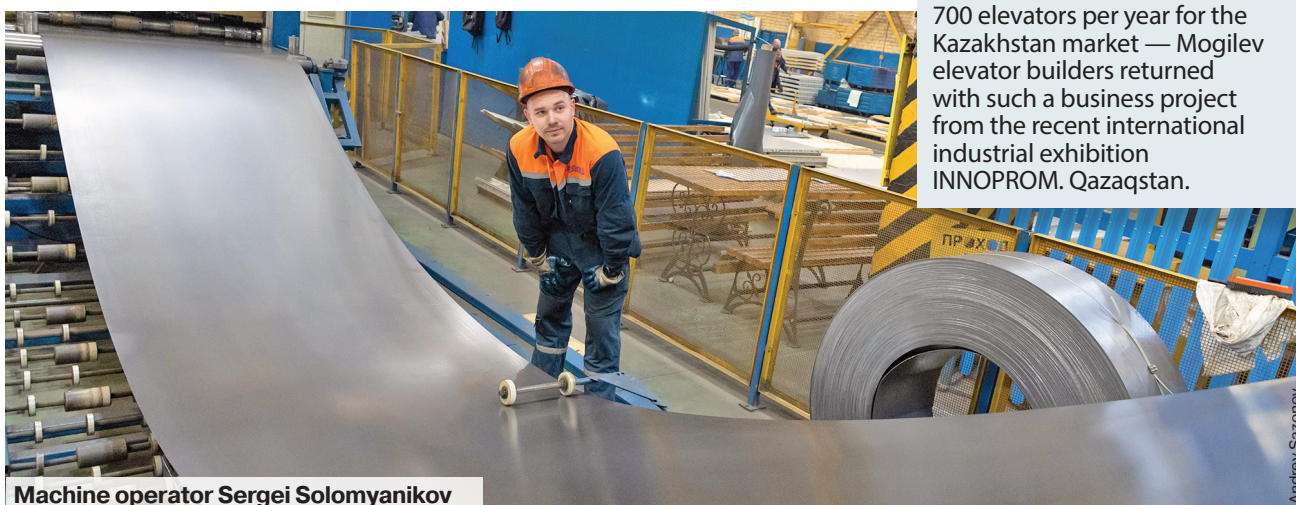
Exclusive in details

In the mechanical assembly shop, parts for the gearbox and other elements of future elevators are made. Turner and CNC machine operator Vyacheslav Martynenko has been working here for more than 30 years. He remembers well how the plant developed, "I was 16 years old when I joined the company. My father worked here at that time. I started by knocking together containers for finished products. And after the army I ended up working in a mechanical assembly shop. Over so many years of work, I saw different stages of modernisation, modern equipment appeared. A lot of manual labour has gone. And this is not only comfort, but also the quality of the product itself. How was it before? One drills, the other bores. There could be inconsistencies. Now cutting is done by lasers, parts are stamped by machines."

Vyacheslav makes shields for gearboxes, gears, and sliding bearings — one of the most important elements of the gearbox. They are responsible for the silent opera-

HOWEVER

700 elevators per year for the Kazakhstan market — Mogilev elevator builders returned with such a business project from the recent international industrial exhibition INNOPROM. Qazaqstan.



Machine operator Sergei Solomyanikov

tion of the cabin. But the cabin itself begins with rolls of metal. They are unrolled and cut to the required parameters into blank sheets. Every day — parts of different sizes, based on orders. Punching, laser cutting — all complex processes are performed by machines. Operators are under control. The final stage is assembly into containers. The elevators are delivered to the customer, like a Lego set, in disassembled form.

Previously, Mogilevliftmach produced lifts that moved at a speed of 1.6 metres per second, now it has been increased to 2.5 metres per second. The new development is intended for use in the construction of high-rise buildings — up to 45 floors. The carrying capacity of this line is 1400 kilograms. The company's exhibition pavilion features the latest developments: panoramic elevators for shopping centres, cabins with decorative panels in a space style. This model transports passengers from floor to floor in the Mogilev Regional Children's Hospital. Next door is an exclusive option with natural stone decor. Designers can implement the most unusual customer solutions. For example, elevators for cottages, which are compact. Mogilev elevators run in the building of the Supreme Court of Belarus and the Mir Castle, in the building of the St. Petersburg Mining University and at the Enguri hydroelectric station in Georgia. For successful activities in the Russian market, Mogilevliftmach creates and develops joint assembly enterprises. For example, the main such production facilities are in Nizhny Novgorod and St. Petersburg.

On the information board at the entrance — 153 elevators need to be built before the plan. By the way, about 1,300 ready-made lifts are shipped per month. Despite the difficulties, the company feels confident in the market. This is evidenced by production volumes: almost 9,000 elevators and platforms were manufactured in January-August 2023.

Speaking about prospects, Sergei Chertkov names guidelines for growth, "Sanctions, oddly enough, have opened up new opportunities for us. Foreign enterprises that have decided to leave the market are freeing up niches, and we are actively occupying them. But the competition is still tough. This means that you need to constantly develop. That is why we are actively involved in the production of new class parking lots. This is an opportunity not only to express yourself, but also to occupy your niche in the market with such a product. Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk have already become interested in the new product. In the summer, Russian governors came to us — they were impressed by our developments. We hope to have new orders soon."

Dip the brushes into the sky

In memory of People's Artist of Belarus Vitaly Tsvirko

He was called a poet of painting, a legend and a master. People's Artist Vitaly Tsvirko left behind a whole galaxy of magnificent students and a grandiose creative legacy over 80 years of his life, most of which, from childhood, he spent without letting go of his brush. He travelled all over Belarus, spending his time in plein airs even in the most inhospitable weather, carrying huge canvases with him and, creating one living, animated landscape after another, all his life he painted a portrait of his Motherland.

By Irina Ovsepyan

Vitaly Tsvirko was born in the Gomel Region in 1913, in the picturesque village of Radeyevo (now Buda-Koshelevo District). By the way, three years later, in the neighbouring village of Uvarovichi, another outstanding painter was born — Yevsey Moiseyenko: there is something special in this beautiful land that makes hands reach for the brush. Vitaly Tsvirko's parents were rural teachers (according to some sources, his father came from the noble Godytsky-Tsvirko family, distinguished by their passion for painting). One way or another, Konstantin Tsvirko was a good amateur artist and was constantly immersed in work with his easel; the boy received his first drawing lessons in the family circle.

Soon the family moved to Minsk, brushes and paints followed them in their luggage. Vitaly Tsvirko called the literary classic Kondrat Krapiva, who lived next door, one of his first teachers: 'Uncle Kondrat' himself was no stranger to painting and quite talented in this area. At school, the boy's success was noticed by art teachers Anatoly Tychina and Mikhail Stanyuta, future classics themselves, who undertook to teach the talented young artist privately.

A family environment, an internal craving for art and the influence of talented teachers are precisely what ensure not just the choice of a future profession, but success along the chosen path.



Revolt of Fishermen at Naroch Lake

Vitaly Tsvirko entered the Vitebsk Art College, which was directed by the enthusiast Mikhail Kerzin and taught by Ivan Akhremchik, who was in love with his native land. Then the Surikov School, a course by revolutionary realists Pyotr Pokrazhevsky and Georgy Ryazhsky, lessons from the master of narrative painting Sergei Gerasimov and the magnificent landscape painter Igor Grabar... When the Nazis approached Moscow, Surikov's students along with their teachers were evacuated to Uzbekistan. This is how Vitaly Tsvirko ended up in Samarkand, where his studies ended in 1942. But he had nowhere to return — his native Belarusian land was captured by the enemy.

He never remembered the years spent in evacuation, although they were reflected in a series of paintings. Samarkand, the very heart of the desert, kills with scorching heat during the day, and at night with a freezing piercing cold, from which the thin clothes



Motherland

of wartime could not protect. The artist's little son did not survive the hardships, and then his father died — these were years of great sorrow, the war reaped its harvest not only on the battlefields and in death camps, but also in the distant rear, seemingly protected from harm. There was not enough work, there was no bread, the students of Surikovka were going crazy with hunger, but they collected money for a tank column — everything for the front, everything for Victory. Perhaps it was there, in the hot heart of Uzbekistan, that the future unbending optimism of the artist was forged: it could no longer be worse than it was during the war.

As soon as the news of the liberation of Minsk arrived, Tsvirko rushed to his homeland. It is difficult to imagine what this journey through a war-torn country was like: more than four thousand kilometres through a hungry rear, exhausted by work, through lands devastated by the occupiers — to a city completely destroyed, where the artist was overcome by the realisation of both the horror experienced by the people and the unprecedented feat of the Belarusians. All

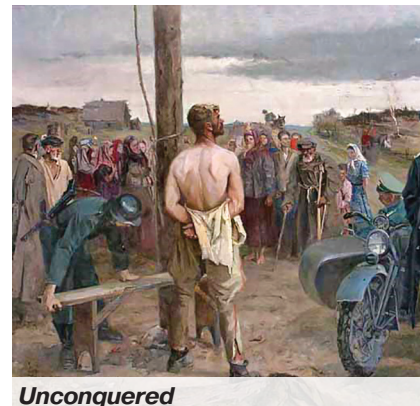


Vyazyinka

this — both grief and pride — spilled out after the Victory in a series of paintings on a military theme. The most important work of the 1940s for Vitaly Tsvirko was the canvas *The Unconquered*: the execution of a partisan who did not lose his strength of spirit even a minute before his death. The artist's student Leonid Shchemelev recalled how in 1948, captured Germans were sent to Germany through Minsk — and were brought to an exhibition dedicated to the horrors of war, "I remember one of his paintings especially well — a plot on the theme of occu-

pation, harsh, accusatory. And I remember the Germans discussing it admiringly. The expressiveness of the figures and especially the landscape in the background aroused their genuine delight. Among these Germans there were many educated people; they discussed art quite professionally. And although at that exhibition there were many works by other artists, they only talked about Tsvirko..."

There is another iconic painting in the artist's legacy — *Revolt of Fishermen at Naroch Lake*, painted in 1957: this is how the theme of the struggle of Western Belarus against the Poles was reflected in his work. A Polish officer reads out to fishermen an order banning fishing, which will deprive people of their livelihood. We see the anx-



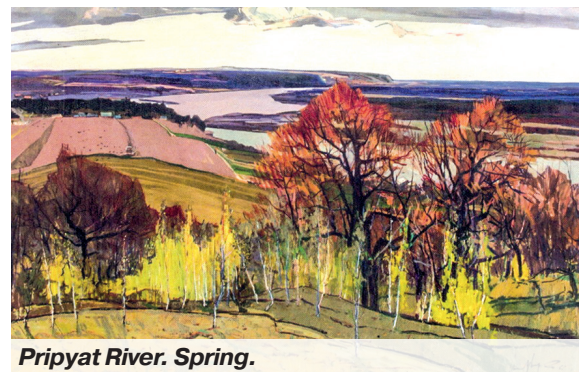
Unconquered



made snow alive. He could freeze on the street all day long, painting another landscape, but from the outside it seemed that everything was easy and simple for him. He gardened: apples, pears, apricots, pumpkins and corn cobs — these juicy, bright autumn fruits in his still lifes were grown by himself. As he worked, he hummed frivolous arias from operettas: something related him to the composer Imre Kalman, who composed his most sparkling melodies in a paroxysm of grief, melting mental pain into bravura marches and a dance whirlwind. So Tsvirko kept his experiences deep inside, as if building a light musical shield between himself and the world, and everything that accumulated inside he poured out onto canvas — nature is beautiful because in it you can always find consonance with any state of the soul. But only a true artist can capture this.

They say that Tsvirko had his own ritual — like a prayer: before starting work, dip the brushes 'into the sky'. He threw them high with a special sentence and, having caught them, got down to business.

He was a hard worker, but he easily gave gifts — either his paintings or fruits from his garden. His house was endlessly crowded with guests — everyone knew that Tsvirko could easily spend the night if there was nowhere to stay in Minsk. He did not pursue a career, perhaps that is why he was easily elected chairman of the board of the Union of Artists. He received the People's title in the prime of his life, he was only 50 years old — for an artist



Pripyat River. Spring.

ious, gloomy faces of women and stern men, barely restraining their rage. These are yet another unconquered people, another manifesto picture: no stranger will ever receive submission from those who are flesh and blood of the Belarusian land.

And yet, over the years, the true path of Vitaly Tsvirko crystallised — a painter of his native land, in the discreet, but so beloved appearance of which the artist discovered more and more new features.

He, like Byalynitsky-Birulya, rarely depicted a summer filled with bright colours: he was attracted by early spring, the time of arrival of rooks, red autumn, all in the rust of falling leaves, the abyss of mud, the bare trees of November and hundreds of tonnes of winter snow — Tsvirko even

this is almost youth. Four years later he was given the State Prize of the BSSR — deservedly, but no one can accuse Tsvirko of pushing his elbows. Creative squabbles and intrigues were alien to him, and although envy destroyed a lot in his life, he never complained: it couldn't be worse than it was during the war.

From his course at the Theatre and Art Institute (the current Academy of Arts), future greats emerged: of them, only three were national artists — Viktor Gromyko, Leonid Shchemelev, Georgy Poplavsky. Without Vitaly Tsvirko, the face of Belarusian painting would have been completely different, but he trained a whole generation of wonderful masters. His surname is consonant with the Belarusian pronunciation of the word 'cricket' — this is how he lived, a modest artist, drawing out with reverent strokes the long song of his native fields.

Deputy Culture Minister, “The sanctions have been beneficial — our enterprises have replaced the production of materials for restoration”

We regularly hear in the news: a church has been restored, reconstruction of a building of historical and cultural value has begun, another folk tradition has been added to the list of intangible cultural heritage and will now be protected by the state... How many unique architectural monuments have been saved, which domestic manufacturers have replaced foreign suppliers of materials for restoration work and what is being done in terms of cultural import substitution, Deputy Culture Minister Sergei Sarakach told *The MT*.



Our heritage: keys to the cultural code



By Irina Ovsepyan

Restoration is a delicate matter — Sergei Aleksandrovich, how many and what objects of historical and cultural value are being reconstructed at the present time?

— The state today pays special attention to objects of historical and cultural heritage. During the current period of 2023 alone — from January to September — repair and restoration work was completed at 38 sites throughout the country. The construction of a museum in the Khatyn Memorial Complex was very important this year — this is an object that is necessary for our citizens and guests of the country as a symbol that no one is forgotten and nothing is forgotten.

Among the significant landmarks where repair and restoration work continues is the Church of the Corpus Christi in Nesvizh. It suffered from flooding — moisture constantly accumulated in the crypt. Work was carried out to drain groundwater, waterproofing the walls and foundation was completed, so the issue of flooding is closed. We completed the crypt in 2022, this year we are finishing work on the belfry and chapel, and in 2024 we will put the church into operation. And the second unique object is the Transfiguration Church in Polotsk, which will celebrate its 900th anniversary in 2025.

In this temple, the preservation of the fresco painting of the 12th century ranges from 75 to 90 percent: this is the only temple of its kind among all the religious buildings of Ancient Rus' that have survived in such preservation to this day. The uniqueness of the work carried out by the restorers lies in the use of a unique technology for peeling off later paintings, which were transferred



Sergei Sarakach

for exhibition to the Polotsk Historical and Cultural Museum-Reserve. And if earlier we attracted Moscow specialists, now we work also with the help of Belrestavratsiya.

The church is included in the Tentative List of UNESCO sites.

Restoration work on it began back in 1992 and has continued for more than 30 years; we plan to complete it by the anniversary.

The UNESCO Tentative List also includes the Kolozha Church in Grodno, sacred defence-type architecture and wooden architecture of Polesie.

Also, in accordance with the instructions of the Head of State, we are completing work in the Zhirovichi Holy Assumption Cathedral. By 2025, in addition to current repairs, we plan to restore the iconostasis, one of the oldest in Belarus. Specialists from the National Art Museum and employees of Belrestavratsiya visited the site to study the situation, conduct an examination of the condition of the iconostasis, and identify those elements that needed to be restored or completely replaced. There is serious work ahead, I think we will find funds for it.

— Will we restore icons in Belarus?

— The National Art Museum today accepts orders throughout the country: the state has invested significant funds in the creation of a new restoration centre, now they need to be justified, so that the Zhirovichi icons will be restored in our country.

Mixtures, bricks: all is our own

— What other historical objects will be the focus of attention of the Culture Ministry in the coming years?

— Work is ahead at such facilities as the National Academic Drama Theatre named after M. Gorky, the Belarusian

State Academy of Music, and the National Art Museum. This year we are doing design work, and next year we will begin repair and restoration work. The buildings, let's say, are not young. We even raised the category of the conservatory — it is already an architectural object of national importance. We also do not lose sight of the castles: Novogrudok, Krevo, Golshansky, Ruzhany Palace, the Old Castle in Grodno, the former Volovich Palace in Svyatsk, Grodno Region.

— Do sanctions against our country complicate the restoration of architectural monuments?

— Today we can do almost everything using Belarusian enterprises: we have many organisations that produce building materials suitable for restoration and reconstruction. In Belrestavratsiya there are currently many craftsmen who are even capable of restoring authentic chandeliers: they were the ones who made the choirs for the Church of the Transfiguration. In a sense, the sanctions did us good: enterprises quickly reoriented themselves and replaced the production of necessary materials. For example, the Gorynsky plant produces bricks, the quality is very good, laboratory tests showed good results. We also try to use our Typhoon dry mixes as much as possible, where possible. If suddenly there is something missing — for example, copper, then we purchase it in the Russian Federation. So we don't feel any shortage.

— In every village there is a memorial to those who died in the Great Patriotic War — what measures are being taken to protect and renew these memorial places?

— Now, as part of changes to the Code of Culture, the Culture Ministry has transferred the authority to approve work on historical and cultural values of regional significance to local authorities. One application is enough, according to

which the Culture Ministry issues a permit to carry out repair work, then all approvals take place at the local level. And today we have a huge number of requests for repairs at places of military glory: regional authorities are very attentive to this issue.

Raise patriots of your country

— Recently the *On the Other Shore* film was released, dedicated to the liberation of Western Belarus from Polish oppression. Share your opinion about this film.

— It is difficult to describe all the experiences that you experience while sitting in the hall; it is a real emotional explosion. The Culture Ministry is now receiving numerous positive reviews and words of gratitude, including responses from young people. I think Belarusfilm will not stop there: this is only the first film in a planned trilogy dedicated to significant events in the history of our state. I can say with confidence that the *On the Other Shore* film will beat the acclaimed *Avatar* at the box office; today it is the highest-grossing film of the National Film Studio in modern history. Therefore, a decision was made to extend the screenings until December 29th.

In the Address to the Belarusian people and the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, the Head of State made an absolutely correct proposal about the need for cultural import substitution. This is the direction in which we must move, to educate our citizens, starting from kindergarten. And today, the Culture Ministry, together with Belarusfilm, is working on creating a number of animation projects dedicated to our state symbols: these cartoons will be shown to children in kindergartens and schools in order to instil a love for our symbols in an accessible form from childhood. After all, it is at this age that the education of a patriot of our country begins.

An old wound in the Middle East is bleeding again. Few doubted that this would happen sooner or later. Too many unresolved problems and contradictions remain in this region. Therefore, a new round of the Palestinian-Israeli (and in a broader sense between Israel and the Arab world) conflict was historically and politically inevitable, and at its core, as has often happened, lies the struggle for land and faith.



The Gaza Strip is full of hurt today

Land and faith



October 10th, 2023. Israeli soldiers carry out the bodies of victims of a Hamas attack on Kibbutz Kfar Aza

By Yevgeny Kononovich

The Jewish Legion and the Balfour Declaration

For several centuries, Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire. Everything changed after World War I, when the British, with the help of Arab rebels, defeated the Turks and began to rule what is now Israel and Palestine. In addition to the Arabs, the British were helped in the fight against the Ottomans by the Jewish Legion, a unit of Zionist volunteers who wanted to create a Jewish state in the Middle East. The British authorities gave tit for tat. In November 1917, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour wrote a formal declaration called the Balfour Declaration. It reported that ‘His Majesty’s Government is considering with approval the question of establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine and will make every effort to promote the achievement of this goal.’

The Balfour Declaration became the starting point of the modern conflict between Jews and Arabs. In Palestine, they believe that the British thus betrayed the Arab rebels, who were promised lands in exchange for help in the fight against the Ottoman Empire.

The implementation of the Balfour Declaration led to mass immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe to the Promised Land of Palestine. By 1917, about 85 thousand Jews lived in Palestine. From 1919 to 1923, about 40 thousand more immigrants arrived in the country.

The Arab population of Palestine was unhappy with the growth of the Jewish community. Anti-Semitic sentiments in the 1920s resulted in numerous pogroms. With guns in their hands, Arab men killed Jews and women plundered their homes.

Arab revolt

In August 1929, a new wave of unrest swept the Holy Land, during which ancient Jewish communities in Gaza, Hebron, Nablus and other cities were destroyed.

The British authorities began to investigate what happened and came to the conclusion that the cause of mass discontent among the Arabs was Jewish repatriation and the development of new lands by Jews and the expulsion of Arab peasants from there.

The commission that conducted the investigation recommended limiting Jewish immigration, prohibiting Jews from buying land from Arabs, creating an Arab-majority legislature, and building up the British Mandate military.

But all this did not stop the repatriation of Jews. From 1929 to 1939, about 250 thousand Jews from all over Europe moved to Palestine. They fled both from the Nazis, who then came to power in Germany, and from the anti-Semitic actions of the states of Eastern Europe.

In 1936, the Arab Revolt occurred. At first, Arab parties demanded that the British stop Jewish immigration and create a Palestinian democratic government, as well as

stop transferring Palestinian lands to Jews. However, in response, the mandate authorities proposed the creation of a council in which the British would have the final say. Both Arabs and Jews were against this. Negotiations stalled, and the Arabs began a general strike. Militant organisations on both sides began a series of murders and terrorist attacks. Italy and Germany actively supported the Arabs.

Nevertheless, the British military was determined to restore order. The practice of collective punishment was introduced by law, and mass executions became the norm. Military courts were launched, the verdicts of which could not be appealed.

During the two years of the uprising, more than 5 thousand Arabs, about 400 Jews and 200 British were killed, about 15 thousand Arabs were wounded.

The White Paper and the Road to the Holocaust

In 1939, Britain, interested in good relations with the Arab world, de facto banned legal Jewish immigration to Palestine. There was even a so-called White Paper — a document that established a resettlement quota of 75 thousand people for five years. The further fate of the repatriation of Jews had to be decided by Arab leaders.

That is, Britain, in fact, refused to implement the Balfour Declaration. And this had very sad consequences.

Restrictions on Jewish repatriation amid the triumph of Nazism in Europe contributed greatly to the Holocaust during World War II.

Nevertheless, the future co-founder of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, then said, “We will aid Britain’s war as if there were no White Paper, and fight against the White Paper as if there were no war.”

The Mossad LeAliyah Bet organisation was created to help Jews with illegal immigration. By 1945, the Jewish population of Palestine had grown to 33 percent.

Stages of confrontation

In 1947, the UN adopted a plan for the division of Palestine and the formation of two states — Israeli and Palestinian. The Arab League opposed it. From that moment on, open military clashes began, which lasted for several decades and led to the outbreak of the intifada (the uprising of Palestinians against the Israeli administration) in December 1987.

But before that, in 1967, Egypt, Syria and Jordan called for ‘throwing Israel into the sea’. As a result of the Six-Day War, the Israeli military defeated Arab opponents, occupying many territories — including the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In 1973, the Yom Kippur War occurred when Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on Yom Kippur, an important Jewish holiday. The IDF suffered significant losses due to the surprise attack, but was able to repulse the attack.

The current escalation is the most serious in terms of the number of militants involved and civilian casualties. Israel declared a state of war for the first time in 50 years. The situation is very serious.

Experts do not rule out that the entire Middle East region could flare up as a result of the conflict. The main factor in the confrontation is the American-Israeli alliance.

The United States actively supports Israel politically, economically and militarily. This fits well with general geopolitical trends. Against the backdrop of the breakdown of the previous world order, the United States and its satellites will strive in every possible way to maintain their dominance on the world stage through destabilising the situation in different parts of the world.

EXPERT OPINION

Piotr Petrovsky, political analyst (in the ‘Weekdays’ talk show on Alfa Radio),

“The conflict between Arabs and Jews seemed to have been resolved back in 1947 with the creation of the State of Israel. However, failure to implement the UN decision, failure to respect international law and incitement of a known hegemon from across the ocean to not implement this law is one of the central reasons why the Middle East remains a powder keg of the world. The United States now, instead of bringing the parties to the negotiating table, is inciting them to escalate the armed struggle. This is one point.

The second is that the world has ceased to be unipolar. Look who supported Hamas. These are completely different forces. For example, Qatar, which is a US ally in the region, and Iran, for which the US is the devil in all official documents. This suggests that there is a certain solidarity among the countries of the Muslim world in the need to resolve the issue of providing the Palestinians with real statehood. But the United States does not want to resolve it peacefully. Why? The Middle East is the gateway to South and Central Eurasia. These are ports connecting the West with China and India. And while the BRICS countries and the SCO are trying to unite the continent and solve security problems, the United States, in its desire to maintain its hegemony, creates and manages conflicts in Eurasia in order to divide it. Eurasia is a huge sales market, 70 percent of the planet’s population, a powerful hub and source of the entire periodic table. To control this market, the Americans are using the classic ‘divide and conquer’ scheme, fuelling conflicts in different regions.”

Perish yourself but start a war

The Baltic states are drowning in problems, but they do not stop supplying arms to Ukraine

Today, a coalition of 50 Western states is behind the Kiev regime. In fact, it is the regimes that rule in them that are vitally interested in the large-scale conflict that has unfolded on the territory of our southern neighbour. Representatives of the Western establishment themselves do not even hide the fact that they have not waged such a profitable war for a long time, which does not force them to send their own soldiers into the heat of battle — instead, Ukrainians are dying at the walls of the impregnable redoubts of the Russian defence in Zaporozhye. Consider, for example, President Duda, who told the *Washington Post's* Marc Thiessen that 'Russian imperialism can be stopped cheaply right now because American soldiers aren't dying'. Here's an even more recent quote from Dutch Defence Minister Kaja Ollongren, "It is very much in our interests to support Ukraine. Because they are fighting this war, not us."

By Anton Popov

Hopes are the last to fade

Experts working on 'Ukrainian' topics most often come to the attention of countries that trump the volume of their supplies: Poland (until the Duda regime decided to curtail supplies before the elections), the United States (until interruptions with the state budget began), Great Britain and Germany. Of course, in absolute terms, these four are ahead of the entire collective West, but there are countries that spend simply gigantic amounts compared to their GDP.

We are talking, as you guessed, about the unforgettable three Baltic 'superpowers' — Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. With the start of the special military operation, their cavernous Russophobia finally found a way out and poured out a stream of generosity to the Kiev regime.

There is not much help from them in absolute numbers, but the current situation with the American budget and the beginning of a new Arab-Israeli war makes it significant.

Sprats and helicopters

Let's start with Latvia. Firstly, this country, apparently, in the opinion of local politicians, had previously not been vile enough towards Belarus and Russia, so a decision was made to urgently make up for lost time. Minsk was immediately accused of a hybrid attack using migrants and closed one of the two border checkpoints, while Moscow was allegedly punished by ceasing to allow Russian cars across the border in compliance with EU sanctions. Secondly, Latvia occupies one of the 'honourable' first places in terms of the percentage of assistance to Ukraine from national GDP — the total amount of support to Ukraine in monetary terms in 2022 exceeded 1.3 percent of GDP, of which 1 percent of GDP was the supply of military products. Latvia was among those who, even before the start of the conflict, began supplying Stinger systems to Ukraine, and after February 24th, they increased their share in fuelling the war. Thus, Riga transported cars, dry rations, bulletproof vests, fuel, medicines to the Zelensky regime, and in August last year the country's Ministry of Defence completely threw four transport and combat helicopters into the furnace of the conflict — all Mi-8, which at that time were part of the Latvian Air Force.

In an effort to show the West how committed it is to the common struggle against Russia, Latvia took a step unprecedented even for US-subordinate Europe. The country's authorities began to give back to the Ukrainian Armed Forces cars confiscated from their own citizens for drunk driving.

However, by sending its weapons to Ukraine, Latvia is carrying out rapid militarisation, bringing the defence budget to 3 percent of GDP. Western weapons are actively purchased with this money.

Well, while the political and military elite in Riga are diligently adding fuel to the fire of a great European war, the population is forced to endure deprivations that are not at all illusory. In terms of consumer price inflation, Latvia is in 'honourable' 1st place in the EU with a result of 12.3 percent, while in the European Union as a whole this figure is at 6.1 percent.

More than half of the adult population is unable to provide even basic needs, and this, in turn, leads to mass migration, with people aged 20 to 39 leaving the country, who, even if they wanted to, cannot imagine a future in Latvia.

Beloved wife of the overlord

Among the three Baltic republics, Lithuania occupies a special place — as the flagship of Belarusophobia and Russophobia. Judging by the range of purchased military equipment, the West is going to make a small copy of Ukraine from our northern neighbour: several batches of light armoured cars have already been received from the United States, contracts have been concluded for the supply of HIMARS systems, 155-mm howitzers, air defence and electronic warfare systems, as well as a whole range of other weapons. In addition, there are plans to create a



new division in the country by 2030, which is going to be equipped with German Leopard tanks. Well, where would we be without the omnipresent NATO presence? The air base in Siauliai has long been the centre of the alliance's intelligence operations in the Baltic states.

However, Vilnius does not forget about the contribution of common sense to the struggle of the Zelensky regime. As recently announced, Lithuania has spent €1 billion on aid to Ukraine since February 24th last year, which is 1.42 percent of the Baltic republic's GDP.

Meanwhile, the main danger emanating from Lithuania still does not lie on the Ukrainian plane. The fact is that the republican elites are dreaming of how to 'change the regime' in Belarus. Provocative materials periodically appear in the

Lithuanian media, which directly express the hope that Lithuania and Poland should make the 'necessary intervention' in Belarus in order to 'have a predictable and stable democratic neighbour' in the future.

Although, in the place of the Lithuanian authorities, it would be nice not to build Napoleonic plans for Belarus and not to dream of conquest, but to take a closer look at the abyss into which their country is falling.

Over the first 9 months of this year, the country's GDP fell by 2.1 percent, and industrial production by 7.6. Only due to the unjustified closure of two crossings on the border with Belarus, Vilnius will lose from 0.7 to €1 billion, which will be a blow primarily to local carriers.

Dark horse of Estonian suit

Estonia's elites have chosen a strategy of double standards as old as time. At the official level, Estonia, as a disciplined part of the Western world, imposes sanctions against Belarus and Russia, destroying its own industry and railway system, and underground continues to deal with the 'aggressors' and 'occupiers'. Thus, in the summer, quiet Estonian life was shaken by a scandal: it turned out that the husband of Prime Minister Kai Kallas was a co-founder of the company Stark Logistics, which, after the imposition of sanctions, quietly continued to operate in Russia. But those who were unlucky enough to be related to the prime minister had to experience the retroactive effect of the sanctions for themselves.

Rail carrier Operail lost 83 percent of its profits and was forced to halve its workforce. Cargo turnover at Estonian ports decreased by more than 43 percent. Accordingly, GDP fell by 2.9 percent and industrial production by more than 9 percent.

However, the military budget is planned to be increased to 3 percent of GDP in the near future, and the army is to be strengthened with a number of the latest systems, including the notorious HIMARS. The pumping of weapons into Ukraine will not stop either.

However, the Estonians had an unexpected problem with the last point. As Politico writes, the EU is dissatisfied with the fact that the republic is shipping outdated and stored weapons to Ukraine, while it is purchasing new ones with money from the European Peace Fund.

The participation of the Baltic states in financing the Ukrainian regime and their guilt in prolonging the fighting should not be lost against the background of the crimes of the Kiev security forces or their Western masters. Moreover, it was the active support of the Russophobic governments of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, acting in conjunction with Poland, that made the triumph of the Maidan and subsequent events possible. And now, in fact, taking part in the conflict at the behest of the United States, imposing sanctions against Belarus and Russia, arranging provocations at the borders, they are quite consciously pushing the world to a dangerous line.



Nature is calling

Ecotourism is a great opportunity to get to know your native country better



A more thorough study of flora and fauna and increased environmental protection have led to a logical result — the tourist potential of Belarusian forests and swamps, rivers and lakes is growing. The MT reporter took a closer look at the most interesting services and routes.

By Anna Kurak

Eco we need

Belarus is actively working to protect and increase the population of rare animals, birds and plants. And it is very successful at it. At the same time, specially protected natural areas are not some kind of closed space, but places that can and should be visited. Specialists of the Ministry of Nature and Natural Resources and Environmental Protection have repeatedly emphasised that ecological tourism is a powerful educational tool. It not only provides knowledge and broadens one's horizons, but also leads to an increased awareness of the value of the country's natural heritage. If a person does not have a clear understanding of the fragile beauty of the world around us, then there is no motivation to protect it either.

All over the world, specially protected natural areas, as accumulators of the main resources of biological and landscape diversity, are of the greatest interest for

the development of ecological tourism.

In Belarus, the system of specially protected natural areas includes more than 1,300 objects, which occupy a little more than 9 percent of the country's total land. At the same time, according to experts, there is an uneven distribution of tourists along eco-routes. For example, almost 518 thousand tourists visited the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park last year. This in itself is not bad, but there are many other equally impressive places in our country, the beauty of which is worth seeing. Moreover, the development of domestic tourism in recent years has helped bring the infrastructure for recreation in the regions to a decent level.

Meeting in the forest

Our country is an ideal place for a peaceful safari. Each season of the year can give you amazing encounters with animals and birds in protected forests. The main thing is to know where to apply for organising a tour.

So, in the fall, tourists are lured to the Pripyatsky National Park by a 'natural performance'. In the main roles are male red deer, who arrange spectacular mating battles at dawn and dusk. For several weeks, dozens of males with luxurious horns arrange a real massacre to find out who is stronger and who can gather girlfriends around him. There is a lot at stake: the losing individuals remain alone until next autumn. Since deer are not as careful during the mating season as at other times, you can watch them from the observation tower equipped in the national park.

A winter feature in Pripyatsky is the Night of the Wolves. The unique programme includes a wild lecture, a quest and an excursion to the habitat of the pack. Moreover, for 3-3.5 hours on forest stitches in the dark, there is a great chance to hear the wolves themselves. At the end — a picnic by a large fire and a master class on making a souvenir from felt.

In a similar scenario, you can visit owls, badgers or beavers. In summer, experts invite you to take part in bird ringing or birdwatching. It is important that meetings with wild forest dwellers are safe both for humans and for the animals themselves.

Ecotourism is also being actively developed in the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve. There is an opportunity to watch moose and red deer during the rutting season, get on a grouse lek in the summit bogs and even see how brown bears go hunting for... oats! Yes, yes, the diet of club-foot is 3/4 vegetable.

"We have been engaged in ecological tourism for a long time. At the same time, in order for us to be successful in this market, we must follow a number of rules and move in certain directions. First, you need a good team. To implement this task, we have created a tourism department, where highly qualified specialists work. Secondly, infrastructure is needed. We have it well developed, but we are not resting on our laurels. In particular, we offer walks along ecological paths, cycling routes, horseback riding, a number of demonstration objects - the Museum of Nature, the Museum of Honey and Beekeeping," says Andrei Prokoshin, Director of the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve.

One of the most interesting locations of the reserve is the forest zoo, where animals have found shelter, which, for various reasons, cannot survive in the wild.

Where does the trail lead

At the end of September, lovers of walking in the swamps gathered the ecological holiday *Zhurauli i Zhuraviny Miyorskaga Kraju*. In autumn, the cranberry picking season starts in the Yelnya Swamp, at the same time thousands of cranes stop here, which tend to go south before the cold. You can even see grey-winged birds against the background of bright scarlet berries even from the eco-trail, 1.5 kilometres long. At the same time, travel services are becoming more personalised every year and cover a wide variety of social and age groups. So, in the state environmental institution (GPU) Yelnya, a weekend tour for people with disabilities called the Byaskontaya Tayamnitsa was developed, and an ecological quest called Who Lives and What Grows in the Yelnya Swamp appeared.

Today, 53 ecological trails and 185 tourist routes have been laid on the territory of the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve, four national parks, 29 reserves of republican and six local reserves, as well as the natural monument Golubaya Krinitsa, in addition, there are 284 tourist camps. The essence of this infrastructure is not only to facilitate the stay of tourists in the forest. Eco trails are always laid taking into account the least human impact on the environment. Remember, in the forest we are not masters, but only guests!

Specially protected natural areas of Belarus



The Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve



National Parks: Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Braslav Lakes, Narochansky, Pripyatsky



Reserves: 99 nationwide and 275 local



Monuments of nature: 322 nationwide and 634 local

They occupy 9.1 percent of the total territory of the country

Ahead of the curve

Football club FC Minsk topped the world rankings. Is their success an example to others?

An impressive dose of witchcraft has just been thrown into the abyss of debate about what is happening with Belarusian football and which road it should take in order to develop in the right direction. The International Centre for Sports Research, known as CIES, analysed the rosters of major league teams in 53 countries and concluded that FC Minsk and Energetik-BGU have the youngest squads this season. The average age of FC Minsk players is 20.97 years, and that of the other capital team is 21.46!

The International Centre for Sports Research regularly studies world football and collects data on various topics. In its new publication, the centre studied 851 clubs (major teams only) and calculated the average age of each player. A huge amount of data has been compiled into a single table, which ranks clubs according to several factors: the percentage of minutes played by players under 21, aged 22-25, 26-29, over 30 and the average age of the squad. The calculations included all players who appeared on the field during the current or last completed season.

And here's literally stunning news.

For the first time in history, two Belarusian clubs topped the world football rankings at once.

But that's not all. The top 30 youngest on the planet also includes three more Belarusian clubs. This is FC Isloch (23.33), which is in 12th place, 22nd on the list is FC BATE Borisov (23.79) and 27th is FC Naftan (24.04).

Across the five biggest European leagues, the average age on the pitch ranges from 24.16 for France's Toulouse FC to 30.19 for Spain's Rayo Vallecano. It should also be noted that in only eight teams in the world, players under the age of 21 spent the

majority of minutes on the field. These include, in particular, the Austrian FC RB Salzburg (60.7 percent), the Danish FC Nordsjælland (56.1 percent) and the Amsterdam AFC Ajax (53.3 percent), famous for their constant reliance on youth. Nevertheless, even compared to these clubs, FC Minsk has a simply cosmic indicator — players under 21 years old spend 83 percent of the playing time in Belarusian championship matches.

“An excellent result of the club's strategy. I'll tell you more: if we didn't use experienced goalkeepers in the main lineup — 33-year-old Vladimir Pyatigorets and 29-year-old Alyaksandr Nyachayew — the club's indicator for using youth would be even better. Despite the fact that last year



Sergei Yaromko

many of our players did not even play for the reserve team, today they constantly play in the first team of the major league club and receive calls from the youth and junior national teams,” says FC Minsk head coach Sergei Yaromko, commenting on the championship in the CIES ranking.

Among those who are now in Portugal preparing for the qualifying match of youth national teams are FC Minsk defenders Maksim Kasarab, Gleb Yakushevich, midfielders Yuli Kuznetsov, Daniil Dushevsky, Rodion Pechura and forward Timofey Martynov.

“The progress is obvious. It is clear that the boys have matured and become bolder. And although questions still remain in terms of skill, I cannot help but address them with respect,” Yaromko, who managed to lead the Belarusian youth team, knows what he is talking about.

FC Minsk is doing amazing this season.

Due to the lack of the required number of natural grass fields in Minsk, home matches are played in Gorodeya. Yaromko also



The recent match between FC Minsk and Energetik-BGU ended in a draw — 1:1

called his team the poorest in the major league several times during the year. It's time to ask how they manage to keep the football players from running away?

— The club's recipe, and mine in particular, is working with people, the ability to find contact and interest. We don't talk about money as a team. If you constantly return to them, then from the outside it will seem that you are crying. And we are moving forward, everything is fine.

— After one of the recent matches, you talked about how you take advantage of the fact that your players are students at universities in the capital and don't want to leave while they're studying.

— And we have not only students, but also schoolchildren. Because of this, it is not always possible to conduct training twice a day. However, we don't complain. We are working. The goal set for the season to maintain a place in the major league has already been almost completed, now we will work for the future, give playing time to younger guys.

Interesting, though. Sergei Yaromko responded to an attempt to project the experience of FC Minsk onto the entire Belarusian football with a categorical refusal (“I work in a club, and the federation is responsible for football in the country”), but how can one not note that the salary limits introduced in our clubs have led to the fact that young football players are getting more and more chances to express themselves?! FC Minsk, Energetik-BGU (whose last year's tournament march, although it ended fatally, definitely went down in the history of our football), FC Isloch (which has been in the top lines of the CIES ratings for the last five years) are definitely examples that in football the gods are not pots burn. At the same time, it must be admitted that without experience it is still impossible to achieve a serious result. FC Dinamo Minsk, whose average player age is 26.94 years, and even more so FC Neman Grodno (29.31), seem to be leading the championship in part because of these indicators.

Average age of the line-ups fielded
Domestic league matches, season 2023 or 2023/24 until 09/10/2023

Age		≤ 21 yrs *	22 – 25 *	26 – 29 *	≥ 30 yrs *
20.97	FK Minsk (BLR)	83.0 %	7.9 %	8.7 %	0.4 %
21.46	Energetik-BGU (BLR)	49.1 %	50.9 %	0.0 %	0.0 %
21.72	MŠK Žilina (SVK)	60.2 %	31.6 %	8.3 %	0.0 %
21.96	RB Salzburg (AUT)	60.7 %	29.1 %	8.2 %	2.0 %
22.18	FK Voždovac (SRB)	46.6 %	49.3 %	4.2 %	0.0 %
22.35	Rukh Lviv (UKR)	55.9 %	26.9 %	17.3 %	0.0 %
22.57	NK Aluminij (SVN)	45.2 %	37.9 %	16.9 %	0.0 %
22.62	AFC Ajax (NED)	53.3 %	34.1 %	8.3 %	4.3 %
22.99	Envigado FC (COL)	38.8 %	47.3 %	9.6 %	4.3 %
23.04	NK Bravo (SVN)	35.5 %	46.0 %	11.2 %	7.3 %

* Presents the percentage of minutes by player age category (21 or under, 22 to 25, 26 to 29, and 30 or over)

According to football-observatory.com

There is an alternative

Belarusian and Russian biathletes were offered to compete in a new tournament

The Cup of the International Club Biathlon League, which is planned to be held from November 18th to November 19th in Khanty-Mansiysk, is a completely new tournament in the biathlon schedule. The news of his appearance caused a lot of noise. Now it's time to talk about the details.



The first tournament of the International Club Biathlon League will be hosted by Khanty-Mansiysk

By Tatiana Pastushenko

The League was recently established by the Regional Biathlon Club of the Moscow Region and the Belarusian Biathlon Club. These organisations are not members of the International Biathlon Union (IBU), so they can create a new organisation and hold competitions, inviting athletes from any country to them. Looking ahead, we

note: athletes not only from Belarus and Russia showed interest in the first start of the ICBL.

“Since March 2022, both Belarusian and Russian biathletes have been deprived of the opportunity to compete at international competitions under the auspices of the IBU; there are no clear prospects for reversing this unfair decision in the foreseeable future. The search for ways out

of the difficult situation in which domestic biathlon finds itself has been ongoing at different levels for more than a year. Waiting has a bad effect primarily on the motivation of athletes. We understand that under the influence of these circumstances many may leave the sport. Initially, it was planned to create an international league to hold youth biathlon competitions, but, seeing the negative development of the sit-

uation, an idea emerged on how to support adult athletes: create a league that would unite biathlon clubs and hold among them international competitions of a new type for Belarusian biathlon with a significant prize fund,” General Director of the Belarusian Biathlon Club Evgeniy Chmil said.

It is stated that the first MLKB Cup will consist of four races — large mass starts (in which 60 biathletes will compete, and not 30, as in the classic ones) and pursuit races among men and women. The total prize fund is 8 million Russian rubles. The funds were allocated by Alexey Nuzhdov, the President of the Moscow Region Biathlon Federation, who supported the idea of creating the league, actively contributed to the implementation of the project and was appointed General Director of the ICBL. The winner will receive a million rubles, the athlete who took second place — 500 thousand, 3rd — 250 thousand, 4th — 125 thousand, 5th — 75 thousand, 6th — 50 thousand Russian rubles. In the future, we intend to form the prize fund through advertising and interested sponsors. Subsequent starts have not yet been included in the calendar. Evgeniy Chmil explained: holding such competitions is not an easy task. There are a number of organisational issues to be resolved and the status of the league to be sorted out. Thus, active work continues.



Photo of the week

TractorSHOW was held in Industrial Park Great Stone in honour of the 70th anniversary of the Belarusian tractor industry

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



On October 20th, 1733, Adam Tadeusz Stanislaw Naruszewicz (1733-1796) was born, a Belarusian historian, poet, translator, religious figure, was born. He gained fame as a poet, author of odes, lyrical works, idylls, fables, and satyrs. He was a close associate of King Stanislaw August Poniatowski and accompanied him on trips to Belarus and Ukraine, which he described in his diaries. The 231 volumes of historical materials he collected, the so-called *Naruszewicz's Folders*, are of great scientific value.

On October 20th, 1943, the Byelorussian Front was formed by decision of the Supreme High Command headquarters.



Front troops operated in the Gomel-Bobruisk direction, carried out the Gomel-Rechitsa Offensive (1943) and the Mozyr-Kalinkovichi Offensive (1944), liberating the regional centres of Gomel and Mozyr and many other settlements in the south-east of Belarus from the Nazis. On 02/17/1944 it was renamed the 1st Belorussian Front. The commander of the Byelorussian Front was Army General Konstantin Rokossovsky.



October 20th is International Day of the Air Traffic Controller — a professional holiday of air traffic controllers and workers involved in air traffic control. The safety of passengers in the sky is in the hands of not only the pilots and technicians, but also those people on the ground. Air traffic control specialists are required not only to have perfect professional skills, but also to have special psychological preparation.

On October 21st, 1833, Alfred Bernhard Nobel (1833-1896) was born, a Swedish engineer, chemist, inventor of dynamite. He is the founder of the Nobel Prize. The chemical element nobelium is named after Nobel.



October 21st is Father's Day in the Republic of Belarus. In Belarus, there has been a long-standing tradition of celebrating Mother's Day on October 14th, and now there is an opportunity to celebrate parent's week from October 14th to October 21st. If a mother gives her child tenderness,



affection, love and warmth, then a father provides protection and confidence, helps determine life priorities, and shares wise everyday advice.



On October 22nd, 1938, the American inventor Chester Carlson made a photocopy for the first time in history. His attention was drawn to the description of a Hungarian scientist's experiments with substances that change their electrical properties when exposed to light. This is how the idea of electrophotography arose. However, it took more years to perfect the electrical copying technology.

On October 23rd, 2000, Chinese archaeologists discovered a museum of musical instruments created 2 thousand years ago, during the Han Dynasty. Despite their venerable age, almost all 150 exhibits found were in good condition. Chinese music is one of the oldest in the world.



October 24th is Special Intelligence Day in the Republic of Belarus. The intelligence officers demonstrated

steadfastness and heroism during the Great Patriotic War, covering themselves with unfading glory. The servicemen of the special forces units of sovereign Belarus are worthy successors of the heroic traditions of the legendary special forces and successfully solve the tasks they face.



October 25th is Millers' Holiday in Belarus. From time immemorial, the work of a miller has been respected and honoured. The quality of the bread consumed directly depended on the representatives of such an ancient profession. And to this day, many mills, both water and windmills, have survived in Belarus.

October 26th is World Ballet Day. Traditionally, on this day, online broadcasts of rehearsals of the world's largest ballet companies are held. About 50 theatres from all over the world take part in this event. For many, this becomes an opportunity to plunge into the real world of ballet, to see and understand that going on stage is a bright, colourful and amazing result of hard work, incredible efforts, diligence and love for your work, without which it is impossible to withstand all these difficulties.

