



Name of Mikhail Vysotsky  
— the Hero of Belarus —  
is inscribed in the  
annals of domestic  
mechanical  
engineering

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In many places across  
Belarus, we can embark  
on a journey along  
streets named  
after great poets  
and writers

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INTERNATIONAL

# The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

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Ihar Boki — a 21-time Paralympic swimming champion — dubbed the new sports complex one of the best in the world

## Gift marathon

Sovereign Belarus continues the tradition of giving important social and economic objects as a present timed to coincide with November 7th. Various regions and cities of the country have received wonderful gifts. On the eve of the festive date, the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, took part in the solemn opening ceremony of an international standard swimming pool in Minsk. A real palace of water sports! It is stunningly beautiful externally and truly functional inside. This complex was built as part of the gratuitous technical and economic aid project from the Government of China. Notably, the National Football Stadium is being built in the Belarusian capital according to the same project. The emergence of such large-scale international-class sports facilities in Minsk is the result of a personal agreement between the Belarusian leader and Chinese President Xi Jinping. The construction of the swimming pool began in August 2020, and on November 6th, the new sports complex opened its doors to the first guests. This is another vivid example of the social orientation of the Belarusian state and its commitment to the principles of social justice, which is especially relevant at a time of geopolitical turbulence on the planet. → **2-3**



# Gift for the whole country

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, attended the opening ceremony of a new world-class swimming pool in Minsk in the run-up to the national holiday of November 7th

Upon arrival, Alina Zmushka, finalist of the Summer Olympic Games 2024 in Paris, and Vasilina Khandoshka, bronze medalist of the World Championship, presented a bouquet of flowers to the Head of State.

After the opening ceremony, Aleksandr Lukashenko familiarised himself with the swimming pool and its operation.

Attending the opening ceremony were representatives of the sports community, the Chinese Embassy and the general contractor Beijing Construction Engineering Group.

The swimming pool is one of the projects within the framework of humanitarian co-operation between Belarus and China. The construction started in August 2020. China designed and built the swimming pool on a turnkey basis in accordance with the technical requirements and standards of the People's Republic of China and with the technical requirements and criteria of the World Aquatics. According to the World Aquatics requirements, the facility's category is AC-5 (World and European Aquatics Championships).



**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Belarus Zhang Wenchuan**

The facility is expected to be used as a modern centre to train national teams of Belarus, hold national competitions in aquatic sports, provide services to the general public, and host competitions of high international level. It provides favourable conditions for training activities, nutrition, rest and recovery of athletes, scientific and methodological support.

## Special thanks to Xi Jinping for new swimming pool

Aleksandr Lukashenko warmly thanked the Chinese builders for their work.

"You are great!" the Belarusian leader stressed.

The Head of State noted that the construction of the facility was not a simple process, given that the pandemic burst out in 2020. However, despite various restrictions, the work continued. "It was progressing slowly, but it never stopped. Last year, I asked China to finish the construction by this holiday [November 7th] and made a



number of decisions for this to be done. China promised, and China has fulfilled its promise. This is an example of the discipline. This is an example for us to do what is promised, and we will then exist as a nation like China. Neither Trump, nor Harris, nor Biden will turn the Chinese people off the path then. We need to learn from them in this regard," the President said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed sincere gratitude to the Chinese people and stated, "You should know that we are reliable friends for you. We have been shoulder to shoulder for more than 30 years, and China has never reproached Belarus for moving away from the course we agreed to follow together."

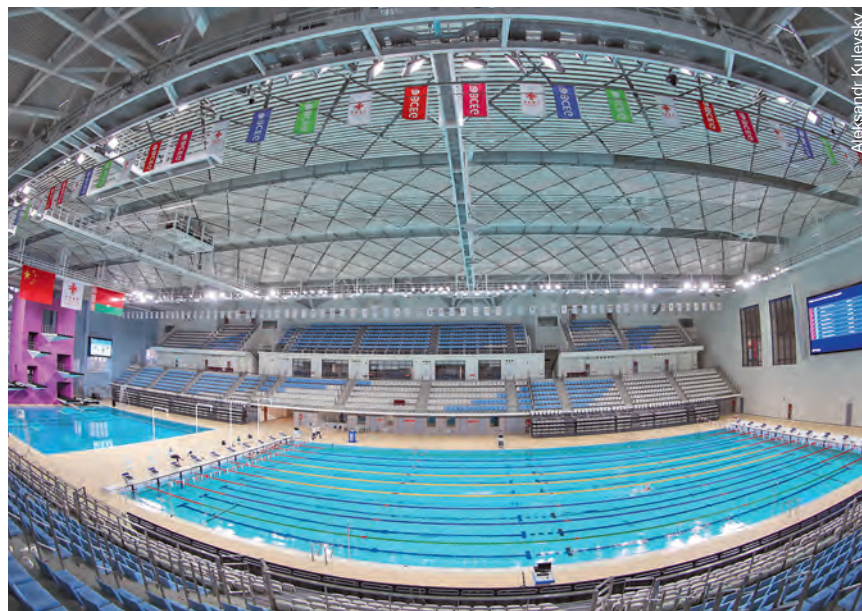
Commenting on how the decision to build a swimming pool was made, the Head of State said that, while visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing, he was shown models of a national football stadium and an international standard swimming pool. "The discipline in China is ironclad. I know that if Xi Jinping orders something, then no one will argue but start working. Actually, this [project] has

required much money. This is free technical assistance. They are ready to finance several more serious social facilities in our country. Therefore, we are indebted to this man and to the great Chinese people. We are very much grateful to them!"

## Social issues

During the grand opening ceremony, Aleksandr Lukashenko called Donald Trump the victorious President of the United States.

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that the new socially significant facility was built with the help of our friends from China, adding that our peoples are brought closer by their attitude to our history. "The peoples of Belarus and China share a respectful attitude towards the history of the socialist movement. Today, more and more people are talking about socialism, though they used to wipe their feet on it. In the mid-1990s, I remember, all these definitions were simply trampled on. However, even today it is an obscene word in the US, even from the mouth of the victorious Trump, the president who accused Kamala Har-



ris of being a socialist and a communist. Trump is an ardent capitalist, a billionaire," the President noted.

The Head of State stressed that Belarus, like China, had not gone down the path of redrawing history, "And what do we see? Europe is all oriented towards socialism, without calling it so. But it talks about social justice. We immediately said that we are building a socially oriented state. This is the basic principle of socialism. And our Chinese friends have never abandoned it. They talk about socialism and it did not stop them from following the main tracks of the capitalist movement, e.g., competition. It is very developed in China. Therefore, no one bothers anyone. It is necessary to proceed from realities."

## Fundamental requirement for athletes

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko demanded results from Belarusian athletes and urged them not to blame everything on sanctions.

Referring to the current situation in global sports, the Head of State stressed that this sphere has some problems, "However, I am sure that as soon as the politicians — who are too much carried away — move away from sports... Such a time will come, although no one prevents you from playing sports and winning even now. As I say, you can defeat Russians: they are open to us. Win over them, and I will not demand anything from you. Be winners in 'bad' Russian football, in hockey, in athletics, in any mass sports that are favourite among people. Win, and it will be a worthy result for us."

As noted by the Belarusian leader, a victory over Russian athletes in these sports will ensure the third place in the world, and maybe the second after the United States. "There is no need to say that we have been expelled from somewhere, and it's a trouble now. Biathletes (though not all of them) perform well, they defeat Russians, and we are grateful to them for that. What about the others, who is hindering them?" Aleksandr Lukashenko asked a reasonable question.

At the same time, the Head of State noted that Belarusian athletes showed up well at the World Cup in short course swimming competitions. "It's a hope. Of course, it does not directly mean that we will win at most distances in swimming. It is very difficult, since it's not only about physical training and so on. As you can see, not only politics, but also medicines play their role in sports today. I mean doping, for example, and other aspects. We can be 'banned', while others will be in the lead. Anything can happen, but it is possible to win. No one demands great victories from our athletes," the President stressed.

## ALEKSANDR LUKASHENKO CONGRATULATED TRUMP ON HIS RETURN TO THE POST OF PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko has congratulated Donald Trump on his victory in the US Presidential election, sb.by reports with reference to the Belarusian leader's press service. "I cordially congratulate you on your return to the post of President of the United States of America. The results of the voting, which took place in an unprecedented struggle this year, have become the embodiment of your personal feat. You committed it primarily in the name of America and its citizens. I wish you good health and well-aimed political decisions that will make America great again," the congratulatory message reads.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE WORLD CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT

### President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko made a working visit to Azerbaijan on November 11th-12th, where he took part in the World Climate Action Summit

The global forum brought together tens of thousands of delegates, including many heads of state and government and was held under the auspices of the United Nations. In his speech, Aleksandr Lukashenko outlined Belarus' national position on the climate change agenda and the measures that the international community should take to address the challenges arising in this area.

The President also held a number of meetings and negotiations with his foreign counterparts on the sidelines of the summit.

For reference: The UN Climate Change Conference, or Climate Summit, has been held annually since 1995 and brings together countries that are parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The previous global forum was held in late 2023 in Dubai (UAE) with the participation of representative delegations from more than 150 countries.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



# Congratulations on new home!

Complete automation and everything necessary for training — what else is inside the new swimming pool in Minsk?

**“We never had our own home before. For many years, we dreamt of having a base where we could come and work. We rented premises. And now, we have our own home. Everything is magnificent here!” Igor Makeyev, the senior coach of Belarus’ national swimming team, did not hide his joy on the day of the grand opening of the international standard swimming pool in Minsk. In fact, not only swimmers have acquired a luxurious base, but also representatives of springboard diving, water polo, synchronised swimming, and modern pentathlon. What makes this new sports facility, which has just appeared on the map of Minsk, so impressive?**

By Tatiana Pastushenko

Even externally, the architectural grandeur of the building, rising to around 30 metres and covering more than 40,000 square metres, is captivating. The project, the construction of which commenced in August 2020 as part of the collaboration between Belarus and China, has been meticulously planned, including considerations for fire safety, ventilation and acoustic systems, eco-friendly building materials, water extraction and smart management systems.

This facility is truly unique for our country.

Belarus’ Sports and Tourism Minister

Sergei Kovalchuk noted that the new swimming pool was built specifically as a sports complex, primarily aimed at organising the training process for athletes of various ages. However, it will be accessible not only to athletes; from January 1st, it is planned to open its doors to sports enthusiasts as well. According to Sergei Kovalchuk, the sports complex features two 50-metre swimming pools, a 25-metre pool, a small pool for athlete training, and a hydrochannel — there are just a few such complexes in Europe and the world! Yet, this is far from being the only offering of the sports facility. The top floor boasts halls for fencing, which is part of the modern pentathlon programme, choreography necessary for synchronised swimming training, a separate room for water polo training, and gym facilities. Additionally, the building includes a recovery complex, a café, and relaxation rooms providing all the conditions required for training.

“This facility was built in accordance with the requirements of the international federation for hosting the most prestigious international competitions. Therefore, all nuances were taken into account during its design,”

recounted **Sergei Marchenko**, Director at Republican Cen-

tre of Olympic Training for Water Sports. “The central pools are intended for holding competitions in all types of sports. By the way, they can be transformed: a 50-metre pool, for example, can be converted into two 25-metre pools. They are equipped with underwater cameras that allow for the recording of swimming and synchronised swimming competitions.”

The complex is high-tech, with almost everything automated, even the cloakroom. The most significant feature, though, is that it is equipped with an automated water treatment system: the operator in the control room only needs to monitor all the systems. “Already today [November 7th], athletes will begin their training. They will be able to train under one roof all year round,” summarised Sergei Marchenko.

The athletes were delighted with their new home and said a lot of compliments about the new swimming pool on the day of its opening. **Ihar Boki**, a 21-time Paralympic swimming champion, shared his opinion, “This swimming pool is a fantastic gift for us. I thank the President for such a sports complex, one of the best in the world. I have only been to a similar one once, and it does not compare to ours. Representatives of all swimming disciplines now have even more opportunities for training: everyone will fit here.”

“The emotions are incredible! When I first got here, my first thought was: this is not a swimming pool, it is a whole football stadium — it is that vast!

I can only imagine the impressions of the children who will come to this arena. It is hard to express in words

how pleasant it is to receive such gifts!” underlined **Anastasiya Prokopenko**, an Olympic bronze medallist and multiple world champion in modern pentathlon. “The pools here are not the only impressive feature: on the third floor, for example, there are six halls — for fitness, fencing, trampoline jumping, and gym equipment. The training opportunities are excellent. Here we can engage not only in swimming and fencing but also shooting, for example: we can set up targets in one of the halls.”

**Ilya Shymanovich**, the winner and medallist of the world and European championships, was also impressed by the scale of the sports facility, “There are many different types of swimming pools. Usually, sports facilities of this size host world championships, European championships, and the Olympics. Other competitions are held in more modest venues,” commented the swimmer. “Of course, we want major events to be held here, supported by our domestic fans: it is incredibly energising!”

**Yelena Svetlichnaya**, the head coach of the national synchronised swimming team, also spoke about the prospects of hosting competitions in the Minsk’s swimming pool, “This is a facility where the largest competitions can be held. With its emergence, we have a much greater chance of taking on the responsibility of hosting major international events. We are grateful for such a gift!”

**Gennady Vishnyakov**, the senior coach of the national team for adaptive sports, is convinced that the appearance of the international standard swimming pool will bring forth new talents, “I am simply delighted with this complex! Here, not only the national team will be able to train, but also the reserves, our younger generation. Excellent conditions have been created for training. We will always come here with pleasure and, of course, we will strive to continue bringing joy to Belarus with high results.”



BELTA, Aleksandr Kulevsky

Despite the gloomy autumn weather outside, it was truly lively on the picturesque bank of the Vyacha River in Minsk Region on November 7th. For the third consecutive year, it has been evident that Belarusian journalists are equally good at speaking the truth and chopping wood, at one of the favourite events among the writing and filming fraternity — the wood chopping championship among the media. For us — journalists — it is a great opportunity to see and be seen: after all, we are skilled not only with a fine pen but also with an axe. It is particularly gratifying to see the attention given to the event by the President. For the Head of State, chopping wood is a familiar task. Therefore, receiving a masterclass from the Belarusian leader is worth a lot. On that festive day, such an opportunity arose: Aleksandr Lukashenko visited the third wood chopping championship among the media. Emotions and impressions from the celebration are captured in our material.

By Yevgeny Kononovich, Polina Konoga

**‘Remember this, especially you girls, so that you do not marry just anyone’. Life hacks from the President**

The Head of State arrived at the championship behind the wheel of a car, and immediately plunged into the thick of the celebration, among the people. The President was greeted with a loud burst of applause and approving shouts to the cheerful and groovy songs of Belarusian performers. Participants in the competition and numerous fans surrounded the Belarusian leader in a tight circle, and at one point, you could even feel sorry for the security staff. They clearly did not expect such attention and interest from the public, and it was not easy for them.

*Aleksandr Lukashenko communicated with people with pleasure, a keen sense of humour, jokes, and down-to-earth sincerity.*

“All right, girls, we are going to chop some wood now. Are you ready?” Aleksandr Lukashenko addressed the girls standing nearby. The President then conducted an improvised masterclass in one of the most challenging exercises of the championship — wood chopping in a Pres-

# With pen and axe

A masterclass from the President, a Belarus-made axe in action, and why Trump could be awarded the Nobel Prize:

Aleksandr Lukashenko has attended the third wood chopping championship among the media



Masterclass for Anna Kviloria, the presenter of the Belarus 1 TV channel

idential style — starting with the basics, “In order to chop wood, you first need to look at it and choose the appropriate axe.” The Head of State added with satisfaction,

*“Why am I doing this? To finally present the Belarusian axe! I assigned this task a long time ago. The first version made by MTZ was not good, worse than the imported one. So we have made a new axe. It is slightly heavier, but more efficient. After we have chosen the axe, we look at the log. Remember this, especially you girls, so that you do not marry just anyone.”*

Once again, there was an explosion of laughter at the site. Meanwhile, Aleksandr Lukashenko patiently explained the chopping technique, sharing life hacks and practical advice, “We have chosen the axe, taken a look at the log: on noticing a crack, you should split directly through this crack. The nature itself has defined where the fibres are weaker, so it will be easier to split there. There is no need to hurry. It is important to look at the point where you want to strike with the axe.”

*A swing — and the massive log splits in two, like a chip. The President deftly, almost playfully, dealt with the large logs, and there was not a hint of fatigue on his*

*face. This is, by the way, for those who are overly concerned about the Belarusian leader’s physical condition, portraying him as almost ‘sickly and frail’. We dare to assure you that the Head of State is in excellent physical shape and can outmatch even those much younger than him. Splitting enormous logs with a single blow requires a certain rustic toughness, strength, and endurance.*

“The axe is more or less okay, yet there is room for improvement,” assessed Aleksandr Lukashenko and reminded of his instruction that all necessary tools for the forestry industry — from axes to chainsaws — should be domestically produced.

**‘There are no idlers around me’. About those who has worked with the President**

Next, the Head of State decided to see who among his entourage could chop wood faster and more skilfully. This is also a typical feature of the Belarusian leader. Everyone around the President — from journalists and the press secretary to his personal doctor and protocol staff — must

work just as he does, and everyone must be able to do things well: chop wood, mow grass, plant trees, harvest potatoes, and more. “Semyonych, come here, don’t hide,” Aleksandr Lukashenko called to Sergei Teterin jokingly. “Here is a log for you. Don’t miss and don’t embarrass yourself. It is very important to look at the spot where you want to strike the axe... Well done, one more time!”

The President then passed the challenge onto doctor Svetlana Konoshenko, “You need to hit harder, I told you to warm up before,” Aleksandr Lukashenko remarked. “It is good exercise.”

The press secretary of the Head of State, Natalya Eismont, also took up the axe. “Come on, let the people see what you can do. You need to chop towards the core,” the President advised.

Next, it was the turn of Dmitry Baskov, Deputy Chairman of the Standing Commission on Education, Science, Culture and Social Development of the Council of the Republic, to demonstrate his skills. The President noted,

*“What did you think? You shine on screens, now go show the people so they understand that there are no idlers around me.”*

Whoever it was, they all chopped wood with the President that day. A farmer, a coach, and event hosts came to learn from the Belarusian leader. Even the delicate female staff of the protocol service had to step out into the lawn. The Head of State stressed,

*“You won’t get away with it. Whether you are Miss Belarus or not, you will still chop wood. Here, everyone is the same.”*

After that, everyone who wanted to join in took their turn chopping, as the President’s example proved to be so inspiring.

**Masterclass in wood chopping in a Presidential style**

The championship can truly be called international: the axe was taken up not only by Belarusian journalists and bloggers but also by colleagues from other countries. The Eurasia team par-



Aleksandr Kulevsky

Крысціян Шуміла

Aleksandr Kulevsky

BELTA

BELTA

ticipated in the competition for the first time, bringing together journalists from Moldova, Armenia, Russia, and Belarus. Among them was RT correspondent Konstantin Pridybailo. “Kostya, here you are — a Belarusian axe!” Aleksandr Lukashenko handed the chopping tool to the journalist. “That is exactly what I wanted,” our colleague readily responded.

In the sparring session, Konstantin faced a Belarusian participant. A brief masterclass in wood chopping in a Presidential style from the Belarusian leader: how wide apart to spread legs, where to hold the axe — and off you go. “Missed it! It seems you have not chopped for a while,” commented the Head of State. “It’s been a long time, about 15 years... You know, we have gas in Russia, so we have stopped doing all this [wood chopping],” Konstantin Pridybailo attempted to justify himself with a touch of humour.

The President patiently waited until the guys started to get the hang of it, and appreciated the result, “Well done! It is clear that you are well-fed in Belarus. Gas, oil — he has got everything, yet he is a Belarusian!”

**It is better to chop wood than to think about politics**

To loud applause and a resounding ‘It is necessary!’, the Head of State interacted with the teams that had begun competing. One of the main pieces of advice from the Belarusian leader was not to rush. Our Chinese counterparts from the Xinhua news agency also participated in the championship, and Aleksandr Lukashenko was cheering for them as well, “Turn it, turn the chopping block! Hit in the centre, even harder! Well done!”

By the way, the agency celebrated its anniversary on November 7th — it was established in 1931. Our heartfelt congratulations to our colleagues!

In turn, the agency’s journalists confessed to the President, “We are

very glad that we can take part [in the championship]. In fact, this is our second time here. Last year we finished in the 32nd place.” “This year you will be higher,” the President expressed confidence.

Notably, our Chinese friends were helped by the younger son of the Belarusian leader — Nikolai Lukashenko, who is studying at Peking University under an exchange programme. He had no difficulty in taking an axe and supporting one of the teams.

Next, the STV tent: journalist Grigory Azarenok pointed out that despite the festive atmosphere, one must also keep an eye on politics. He noted that on November 7th, the collection of signatures in support of nominating Presidential candidates had begun, “I have already left my signature.” “I am not asking for whom,” the President reacted. “Aleksandr Grigorievich, I will answer: for you, of course, for peace, for stability, for our country,” the journalist made no secret of his preference.

Grigory Azarenok also noted that opponents abroad became more active, trying to send some documents to our country remotely. Hence the question to the Belarusian leader — what does he think about this?

Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed his opinion, “I do not even think about it. Let them send it. They have probably seen it in the USA; half a million signatures were found in a rubbish bin there, yet it did not help — Donald [Trump] has still won. I am not thinking about politics today at all. Look at how many girls are here — our journalists, beauties. To be honest, I am looking at the people and not thinking about politics. I advise you, take your mind off it today. Chop some wood!”

At the same time, the Head of State highlighted that in the near future, it would be worth inviting the leaders of initiative groups for collecting signatures in support of nominating Presidential candidates and, if necessary, providing assistance.



**‘DON’T FORGET ABOUT THE WORLD’**  
Aleksandr Lukashenko commented on the US election and explained why Europe could become the main rival for the United States

**Journalists will be journalists: they like nothing better than asking questions. Seizing the opportunity, our colleagues from the First News TV Channel literally stopped the President and asked him to comment on the topic that the whole world was discussing — the results of the US presidential election — especially considering the fact that the Belarusian leader had essentially predicted Donald Trump’s victory.**

**On Donald Trump’s victory**

The Head of State did not hide his opinion, **“Trump, of course, is a power. No matter how I feel about him, he is great. It was hard to believe he could win. They shot at him, put pressure on him, wanted to put him in jail, and so on, but he made his way like a bulldozer — doing that after he had worked unsuccessfully, as it may seem. Seemingly (!) unsuccessfully. Therefore, it is his personal feat in the name of the American people. He has done well in that regard.”**

As for Kamala Harris, she is a heroic woman, and she does not need to be crying, as stated by the President, “As I have seen, she is upset: she has lost. The USA has matured to elect a black president, but it is not yet ready to elect a woman. She was running neck and neck with that ‘bulldozer’. She did everything possible and impossible. She did well, so she should not cry under any circumstances.”

One of the key points that the Belarusian leader emphasised is that the Democrats, after their defeat, did not call on their supporters to take to the streets with pickaxes or axes to go against the authorities. According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, this is a lesson for the exiled opposition,

**“After a failure, it is simply needed to keep working. This is a good example set by the Democratic Party for the whole world.”**

**On hope for peace**

Another theme that the Head of State has highlighted is hope. Donald Trump needs to do everything not only to make America great but to do so in the interests of the whole world. The Belarusian leader recalled that Trump had promised during his election campaign to do everything possible to end wars — and there are more than fifty conflicts worldwide — including in Ukraine and the Middle East,

**“If he does this, we will submit a petition for the Nobel Prize. He will be awarded it for doing a good deed. There is hope that he will keep his promises. However, the US is not Belarus: people there might forget, or something else. Nevertheless, we hope that he will fulfil his promise.”**

Aleksandr Lukashenko added that not everything will depend on Donald Trump. The Head of State is convinced that regarding the conflict in Ukraine, at least two sides of the conflict must be involved, “He will try to end the war in Ukraine, but this is not a one-sided process. This should be negotiated, and perhaps not only with Russia. This concerns a lot of countries.”

Donald Trump has also stated that he is ready to put China in their place. However, the President of Belarus has emphasised that no person ‘able to put China in their place’ has been born yet,

**“Therefore, we should not take all words on trust. The promises voiced during the election campaign may be hindered by certain circumstances in the future. We will see how it goes when the euphoria subsides. If they — the United States — claim global leadership, then they must not forget about the world.”**

**On future of the EU and planet as a whole**

The President preempted possible accusations from opponents that he was fawning over Trump,

“I could not care less who won the US election. I know that I have a piece of land that I must care about and protect. I have my people. I am just sharing my opinion. **I do not care who won over there, but I do care about the policies the USA will pursue, because it accounts for a third of the world economy, and the economy is paramount.”**

Aleksandr Lukashenko remarked that, if Donald Trump and Kamala Harris participated in the election in Belarus, neither of them would garner any votes at all due to the weird policy they are pursuing in the USA, “This is purely an American version; and it has worked. It is their business. If they want peace and tranquillity here, in Europe, we will facilitate that. The US will continue to put pressure on Europe since it does not need competitors. It lives off this. **If Europe and the euro flourish, the dollar will have no place. The European Union has already begun to understand this.”**

The Head of State does not rule out that in the future, the EU may become truly united and start working with Belarus and Russia. After all, the EU leaders could combine their cutting-edge technologies with the resources abundant in Russia, “This will happen someday, you will see. Today, Germany has started to wobble. As soon as they throw Scholz out of office, Germany will come to its senses. [It had] cheap gas, cheap energy resources, [it was] the world’s leading economy, a global miracle. Where is all of this now? They have sunk below the knees. Germans are not fools; they will make their government work the way it should.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew the line, **“The world is changing tremendously. The way we reason based on today’s situation will be completely different tomorrow. They [leaders of the EU member states] will definitely stand for their countries, for Europe. And here, it is not China but Europe that can become the main rival for the United States. The Global South is on the rise, and India’s economy is growing at a rapid pace.** Do you think that Indians will just lay their fate on a platter for Americans to decide? No. They will have their own preferences. New circumstances may arise literally in a short while. They [the USA] will have to respond to it. Therefore, we are now reasoning from the perspective of today, but tomorrow we will reason based on the changed situation. It is changing before our eyes.”

In this regard, the President once again returned to the fact that, for him, Trump’s victory was still more preferable, “Because we see what is happening with these madmen in power [the former US authorities]. Old-new Trump will come, and there is still some hope that something will change. There is one more nuance, a human one: when people in power lack experience — that is one thing, but when people in power do not have children — that is a disaster. They do not care about what is going on in the world. Trump has a large family, he has children. Trump also has our Melania [Melania Trump is a native of Yugoslavia], who keeps him in check. **Therefore, the fact that he has a family and children makes a big difference. He thinks not only about his future, but also about the future of his children.”**



The Minsk Times project is dedicated to people awarded the highest Hero of Belarus title

# Scientist ahead of his time

The name of Mikhail Vysotsky — the Hero of Belarus, academician of the National Academy of Sciences, and outstanding design engineer — is forever inscribed in the annals of domestic mechanical engineering. He is credited with the creation of the first Belarusian automobiles bearing the Minsk brand. Under Mikhail Vysotsky's guidance, half a thousand models of Belarusian trucks were designed. He was hailed as *Person of the Year* in Great Britain, while the United States included his name in the list of scientists who made the most significant contribution to the advancement of global science in the 20th century.



## AWARDS

- By Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 135 dated March 1st, 2006, academician Mikhail Vysotsky was awarded the Hero of Belarus title in recognition of his exceptional contribution to the socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus, his personal input in the establishment and development of the national automotive and bus manufacturing industries, the Belarusian scientific school of mechanics and integrated design of mobile vehicles, as well as for conducting fundamental and applied research, and training scientific personnel.
- Order of the Red Banner of Labour
- USSR State Prize
- Order of Lenin
- BSSR State Prize
- Honoured Worker of Industry of the USSR
- Order of the Fatherland 3rd class
- Korolev Gold Medal
- Order of the Fatherland 2nd class
- Honorary citizen of Minsk
- Order of Honour



Mikhail Vysotsky was born on February 10th, 1928, in the village of Semezhevo, located in Kopyl District of Minsk Region. He commenced his professional journey as a worker at the Minsk Automobile Plant (MAZ), and after graduating from the Minsk Auto-Mechanical College, he continued his career as a design engineer, simultaneously studying at the All-Union Correspondence Institute of Machine Building in Moscow, which he completed in 1955. In his graduation thesis at college, Vysotsky proposed a project for the first assembly line for MAZ automobile production. The creation of special trailers, from which the world's first artificial Earth satellite was launched, marked the initial triumph of the young lead design engineer at MAZ — Mikhail Vysotsky.

The Minsk Automobile Plant became a kind of alma mater for our hero; it was there that Vysotsky ascended from a worker to the chief designer — head of the chief designer's department at the production association BelavtoMAZ, which encompassed all automobile plants in the country. Subsequently, he became the director of the Research Centre for Machine Mechanics Problems under Belarus' National Academy of Sciences (NAS) set up on his initiative, later serving as the general director of the Scientific and Engineering Republican Unitary Enterprise Belavtotractorostroyeniye under Belarus' NAS, and then as the general director of the State Scientific Institution Joint Institute of Mechanical Engineering under Belarus' NAS. Within a few years, he transformed this institute into a major research centre, where experts deliberated on prototypes of not only future trucks but also MAZ buses, BELAZ quarry dump trucks, and BELARUS tractors. All of these constitute a source of national pride today.

Vysotsky was the first in the USSR to create new-generation articulated trucks that rivalled the best global coun-

terparts, earning a gold medal at *International Fair Plovdiv* in 1988. Under his leadership, and at the behest of the Soviet Government, designs for dump trucks were developed for the Kama Automobile Plant, which were recommended for mass production by the State Commission in 1973. In 1974, Vysotsky was awarded the Order of Lenin for his creation of a new type of road transport — heavy-duty articulated trucks. He also made history as the only Belarusian to be bestowed with the Honoured Worker of Industry of the USSR title.



Famous MAZ-2000 Perestroika articulated truck

A remarkable achievement of design engineer Vysotsky was the creation of the renowned modular design for the MAZ-2000 articulated truck, dubbed *Perestroika*. That experimental vehicle with a fundamentally new layout was recognised as the vehicle of the 21st century, receiving a gold medal at *Paris Motor Show* in 1988 and patented in five countries.

Mikhail Vysotsky was half a century ahead of global automotive engineering. In Great Britain, he was once named *Person of the Year*, while the United States included his name in the list of scientists who made the most significant contribution to the advancement of global science in the 20th century.

Vysotsky's name is inextricably linked to the development of a fundamentally new design for heavy-duty ve-

hicles, known as cab over engine, which gained worldwide adoption. Vysotsky was one of the initiators of establishing large-scale domestic bus production at MAZ, overseeing the creation of the first models in collaboration with Germany's Neoplan. This laid the foundation for modern production of unified buses, aimed at meeting the needs of Belarus and facilitating exports. It can be stated that without Mikhail Vysotsky, MAZ would be an entirely different enterprise today.

Vysotsky engaged in extensive and fruitful research, organisational, academ-

ic, and community activities. Most significantly, he transcended the boundaries of pure science by integrating it with production. He is the author of over 450 scientific works and 145 copyright certificates and patents, the majority of which became the foundation for the creation and enhanced competitiveness of new types of automotive and tractor machinery. He mentored six doctors and 18 candidates of science, establishing the internationally recognised Belarusian school of mechanics and integrated design of mobile vehicles, which laid the groundwork in the country for the theory of design and accelerated testing of high-speed heavy-duty articulated trucks. The welfare of his Motherland was the guiding principle of Mikhail Vysotsky's life up until his final hour. He passed away aged 85 after a prolonged illness. However, the memory and legacy of this great man continue to live.



MAZ-SPORTauto team is one of the world leaders in international rally raids

Prepared by Svetlana Yevgenyeva

At a solemn event at Belarus' NAS celebrating Mikhail Vysotsky's 85th birthday, his audio address to friends, associates, and fellow countrymen was played. He could not be present in the hall, as he was gravely ill.

*"With all my heart and soul, I am with you in spirit. I am happy because my ten-million-strong country has the right to be called a powerful machine-building state, producing its own automobiles, heavy machinery, tractors, combine harvesters, and buses. I am also happy that my endeavours — along with the teams of plants decorated with honours, the legendary directors, design engineers, and workers — have contributed to the achievement of our common goal.*

*I take joy in visiting my native village of Semezhevo. I rejoice at high yields that increase every year, at the new look of this agrotown, the flourishing towns of Kopyl and Slutsk, where I have many friends. Every spring on Victory Day, I was honoured to march in the front line of veterans alongside the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, and his sons. I remember the President's visit to our institute and the much-needed support during difficult times, which we justified. I received the highest award of our Motherland — the Star of the Hero — from his hands. Please convey my gratitude to the President for the congratulations and let him know that I am proud of him, as if he were my own son. I can now afford such an informal expression. I can only imagine how much our scientists will achieve during their long creative lives, which I wish for each of them. My dear ones, live long, happy, and productive lives. I take with me — as a gift from fate — your words, smiles, and good wishes. How glad I am to have heard them while I am still alive. Thank you!"*

# From ideas to implementation

Import substitution and entry into the global market with a new generation of machinery: AMKODOR-LESMASH has spoken about its large-scale production modernisation and emerging prospects

Today, enterprises are making every effort to improve the quality of their products. AMKODOR-LESMASH Holding Managing Company — the only manufacturer of logging machinery in Belarus and the EEC — is no exception. A lot of money is injected into the modernisation of the enterprise, and the effect is felt. We have looked at how the equipment is being upgraded and import substitution programmes are being implemented.



By Yulia Ushchenchik

## Betting on domestic components

AMKODOR-LESMASH Holding Managing Company has everything to produce the machinery of tomorrow — advanced equipment, technologies and qualified personnel. The emphasis is on the reliability of the machinery, modern design and comfort for the operator. In order for the products to be competitive and capable of vying with the world's leading brands, serious attention is paid to the quality and modernisation of machinery, taking into account the latest requirements of the 21st century.

A large-scale upgrading of the plant in Logoisk is currently in full swing. All elements have been thoroughly thought through: in addition to creating comfortable working conditions for employees, each aspect of the technological process has been streamlined, the cutting-edge equipment amounting to over Br50m has been purchased — this will ensure 100 percent quality of each product.

Before starting the tour of the modernised workshops, Andrei Yarotsky, General Director of AMKODOR-LESMASH Holding Managing Company, recounted what difficulties the holding had to face several years ago, “The main problem that befell us after 2020 is sanctions. We were confronted with a dilemma as to what components to use for the products we manufacture. After all, our plant was embedded in the supply chains of global companies, with leaders in the production of hydraulics, engines, axles... We worked closely with Europe. Nearly the first package of sanctions was imposed against AMKODOR — many companies refused to supply critical components to us. It was the forest line of business that suffered the most.”

Incidentally, only 13 countries in the world today produce timber machinery.

Belarus is the 14th in a row, and Russia is the 15th, thanks to the AMKODOR plant based in Petrozavodsk. “We had to make a decision in the shortest possible time as to either to leave this market altogether — which would mean losing factories, personnel, competencies — or to get engaged in an import substitution programme. We set ourselves the task of actively engaging in the development of our own component base,” shared Andrei Yarotsky.

Thus, for nine months — in parallel with the production, which did not stop for a single day — the work had been ongoing to create tandem drive gearing axles, resulting in AMKODOR becoming the third company in the world that now boasts unique technologies for their production; to this day, over 200 items have already been produced. In addition, with the support of the Minsk City Executive Committee, a plant for the production of a model range of harvester heads will open soon. To ensure their operation, the specialists have written 1.5m lines of code. “It is going to be an extraordinary situation when one small company will independently produce almost all components for the most complex and knowledge-intensive machinery that exists. An investment project is being implemented, in which \$42m is invested,” noted Andrei Yarotsky.

## Everything is thought out to the last detail

AMKODOR has achieved a stable design solution and reached reliable suppliers. There was a lot of trial and error, but the Belarusian specialists have successfully coped with challenges. The plant has developed unique technologies and purchased expensive state-of-the-art equipment to ensure high quality of products.

A gantry-type machine with a 2.5 by 8 metre table for processing assem-

bled metal structures has been acquired; it provides the reliable articulation of all frame structures.

The delivery of a modern automatic sheet metal storage warehouse is also expected. There has been purchased a rare sheet-cleaning machine, which processes the product with a fraction to obtain a clean sheet that goes to the laser. There is a modern machine for stripping edges from metal deposits after gas plasma cutting. The list of new equipment is huge.

Before our eyes, specialists from a Chinese company that supplies machines to many of the world's leading manufacturers are installing the latest robotic welding systems. There are two of them in the workshop, and the price for them is impressive — such devices cost a million dollars in total. To be able to operate them, AMKODOR specialists were trained in Russia and China.

Mikhail Slepachenko, Lead Quality Engineer at AMKODOR-LESMASH, continued to introduce new equipment, “In order to prepare parts for painting, we have purchased a specialised automated shot blasting chamber.”

The specialist demonstrated the products that get into the chamber and those that come out — the difference was striking. This technology will help cars look like new even after 10-20 years. Moreover, this complex ensures a tenfold increase in labour productivity, when compared with its manual analogue. “Two special chambers are mounted for painting and drying products,” Mikhail Slepachenko clarified. “We plan to fit the plant with new equipment that will considerably enhance the quality of products by the end of 2024. The entire investment programme is being implemented in parallel with the production ramp-up, the plant does not stand idle for a minute. The team shows understanding in case of some hiccups and believes in a bright future: modernisation is an excellent reinforcement for it.”

## Forecasts are favourable

The maximum possible production volumes are now 12-15 cars per month. With the introduction of new equipment, the capacity will grow significantly enabling to manufacture 35 items. The output growth rate in nine months is 143.5 percent in monetary terms. According to the forecasts for the next year, the production volume will go up by at least 20-25 percent, and this is only for the Belarusian market. Andrei Yarotsky added, “Our most in-demand machinery has an enormous export potential. Both Asia and Africa are interested in it, and we are currently working on logistics issues. There will be large shipments to Russia. For example, 20-21m<sup>3</sup> of timber are harvested in Belarus per year, while in Krasnoyarsk Krai alone — 25m<sup>3</sup>, and in the next four years, it intends to double the volume of harvesting.”

A big competitive edge is high-quality, fast maintenance service and availability of spare parts. For machinery that works in tough conditions, reliability and speed of repair are important criteria.

Notably, at a meeting of the Board of Directors of AMKODOR-LESMASH, the holding's growth strategy until 2026 was approved. The strategy sets ambitious goals for the company to strengthen its position in the market and expand its activities, and involves the active use of the potential of each enterprise within the holding, as well as the introduction of innovative approaches to achieve strategic goals. The meeting participants emphasised, “Confidence in the chosen course and readiness to implement the tasks outlined in the growth strategy allow us to expect bold and innovative solutions that will continue to improve the quality and efficiency of the holding's activities in the coming years.”



Andrei Yarotsky

# It's just a shame!

## or Who decides the fate of Moldovans?

There is the president of Moldova, and there is a pro-Western 'president of the diaspora' — this election result was summed up by Moldovans themselves. In those days, the whole world witnessed a crime against the Moldovan people, who, as it turned out, no longer decides anything in its own country and who — as the West, along with the president who holds a Romanian passport, was convincing the world on November 3rd — does not seem to exist at all, with hundreds of thousands of citizens. They just were not allowed to vote.



In fraternal Belarus, Moldovans from Kursk and Belgorod regions, Kaliningrad, Moscow and Moscow Region voted in Minsk



By Lyudmila Gladkaya

The Moldovan people deserves special mention. I admire Moldovan citizens who performed a real deed that Sunday, November 3rd: realising that Maia Sandu would not allow them to vote in Russia in the second round, people went to the polling stations in Minsk, Baku, Chişinău... Not without difficulties along the way, especially for Moldovans living in Kaliningrad who were going to vote in Moldova — Lithuanians did not let them through at the border. Other people recounted how they travelled to Russia through the Baltic States, and Latvian border guards threw away all the food, water, and cigarettes bought in Belarus. The 100km road through Latvia took three days due to queues and inspections. In addition, the polling stations in Moldova would suddenly be 'mined', then the Rîbnița — Rezina bridge, along which voters from Transnistria were going to vote, then the polling station for Transnistrians at the lyceum in Varnița. On the other side, 30 polling stations were opened for residents of the left bank, traffic on the bridge was blocked. These are just a few examples. Imagine how many citizens were actually detained to prevent them from voting! Stealing precious time from them.

...That Sunday, November 3rd, together with Belarusian Moldovans and Moldovans who came from Kursk and Belgorod regions, Kaliningrad, Moscow and Moscow Region, we were freezing in a queue at the Moldovan embassy in Minsk. It is there that Sandu allowed to open the only polling station in the whole country, allocating, as they say, two thousand ballots. "Are there any Moldovans from Kaliningrad?" I asked the voters in the queue, having heard the phrase: 'Oh, it seems our Kaliningrad residents have arrived'. "We are all Moldovans here," the woman smiled. She is a Moldovan from Minsk. Our locals did not mind getting a little cold because of the guests who arrived. On the contrary, they supported them. Volunteers treated them to tea and pies. Belarusians came up to cheer people up; we remember the attempts of Westerners to deprive us of our Motherland. We remember how Lithuanians and Latvians did not let the Moldovan children's choir return home from Belarus after the tour.

*Hundreds of people with their families came to vote, as if in the last battle for their Motherland. Some were in a good mood, whereas others lost all hope, realising the inevitable. You cannot envy the fate of the Moldovan people.*

Judging by the way the second round was going, Moldova should have had a chance in the morning. Had the votes been counted honestly — even taking into account how many people were not allowed to vote. Sandu had no chance to win. Therefore, dirty tricks were used.

A few hours before the polls closed, she called on the diasporas to decide for the whole of Moldova, "Those who vote in the next few hours can decide who will be the president of the country." In the following hours, as you understand and remember the first round, and the US elections, both the living and the dead were going to 'vote' in the USA and Canada. Subsequently, Moldova's Central Election Commission (CEC) announced a certain 'incident with the voter registration system' — allegedly, it was subjected to a cyber attack. By the night, it became known that Alexandr Stoianoglo had won domestically with a preliminary result of 51.19 percent, while Sandu received 48.81. However, the alleged 300,000 who voted in the West did their job.

After night calculations, Sandu was made president (55.33 percent vs 44.67). According to the voting scenario in the referendum on European integration and following the example of the Americans. Left in the presidential chair, she declared that 'Moldova was victorious'. No, it is the West.

The legitimacy of the lame duck and the 'president of the diaspora', as the Moldovans dubbed her, will be very weak, judging by the actual results.

*"She has divided citizens into classes in a Nazi way," people comment. "The highest grade is in the West, the second is in Moldova, the third is in Russia, the fourth is in Transnistria. Yet, even in Europe and North America, not as many people voted for her as the CEC drew. There are plenty of reasons not to recognise the election."*

It's a shame, of course. The fate of Moldovans — the way they can live — is not decided by them, inside their country. It is decided for them by others, from the outside.

Zelensky has also congratulated Sandu... As they say, a 'happy' European journey!

## 'President of emigration'

Maia Sandu has lost the election in Moldova, yet will become president allegedly at the expense of the foreign diaspora votes

By Anton Popov

Not that the sad result of the second round of the election held in the republic on the Dniester banks came as a surprise. Just three weeks ago, when supporters of European integration, using the votes of the diaspora, managed to claw out a victory from those who want a normal balanced development of Moldova, it became clear that the West had seized Chişinău with an iron grip.

Sandu is happy to be of service: she, a Romanian citizen, does not care about Moldovans, by and large. Much more important is the opportunity to serve the Western masters for another term. "Moldova, today you are victorious. Together, we have shown the strength of our unity, democracy and commitment to a dignified future," she wrote on her X account, as if in mockery of the people whom she robbed of the future.

On Monday afternoon, November 4th, Moldovan Socialists announced that they would not recognise the election results. Their leader, Igor Dodon, stressed that Sandu had lost the trust of citizens and became the 'president of the diaspora'.

Alexandr Stoianoglo called on supporters to remain calm and unite to 'put an end to the hatred and division imposed on us'. "There is no

place for senseless conflicts in the future of our country, but there is a place for unity and mutual respect," emphasised Stoianoglo.

At the same time, the ex-candidate stated that his team had collected information about violations and would publish it after processing.

This election in Moldova will also be remembered for the dramatic division of the country, which creates the basis for the continuation of the confrontation and even for its aggravation. In Gagauzia, Sandu lost with a deafening crash, and even in her native Făleşti, Stoianoglo achieved a result of 61.8 percent.

The big question is whether the diaspora voted for Sandu with one accord. Thus, videos of half-empty polling stations in Italy raise suspicions, which are only reinforced by information about a mysterious 'malfunction' in the electoral system. It is quite possible that Sandu is not even the president of the diaspora, but a mere fraudster.

Sandu's second term is fraught with existential risks for Moldova. Having retained power with the help of shameless cheating, the president will take revenge on the people who rejected her. Dark times are coming for Moldova, and Moldovans will need to muster up all their will and courage to survive the night over the Dniester.



### Awakening process

The parliamentary elections in Georgia have demonstrated a completely new trend — the country has become the personification of the people's awakening after the long dominance of the West's colonial policy.

Western interest in Georgia has been excessively high since the mid-1990s and 2000s. Suffice it to recall that the first 'velvet revolution' in the post-Soviet space — named *Rose Revolution* — was held with the support of the Soros foundation in Georgia in 2003. The technology of controlled street protests proved effective. The White House was inspired and moved to active 'development' of other territories — Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, etc.

NATO, led by the United States, threw hordes of its military advisers and representatives of special services into Georgia to train its army, provide it with weapons, and form non-governmental funds to covertly raise money. This was followed by the tragic events of August 8th, 2008: Georgia, pushed by the West, under the command of Saakashvili launched a military campaign against South Ossetia. Everything ended badly for Washington and Tbilisi, with tonnes of captured military equipment and unjustified casualties among the military and civilians.

*The failure of that military venture laid the foundation for the current turning point in this Transcaucasian country. The victory of the ruling Georgian Dream party is the result of a deep understanding by the local population that the West does not want peace, but only a war between Georgia and Russia.*

For Washington, London, and Brussels, the current loss of the opposition forces — headed by the Western proxy ruler, President Salome Zourabichvili — in the parliamentary elections marks the beginning of the collapse of the strategy to seize the post-Soviet space. The propaganda of Euro- and NATO-integration is no longer working. Georgians, being an ancient and wise people, have identified what all those sugary Euro slogans really mean.

### Propaganda in action

On October 28th, the mouthpiece of British propaganda — the *BBC* radio station — began a series of broadcasts about how Georgians are suffering from the fact that the ruling party is taking away their dream of European integration. Ostensibly, the focus on BRICS implies the integration with poor countries, while Georgians want to unite with the US and the EU. As if this would lead to wealth. It sounds funny, doesn't it?

**Western propaganda sows illusions of a bright future in the minds of the population, and then forces people to move from emotions to actions — to take to the streets and protest.**

Nowadays, the dream management technology is recognised by experts as the most effective for rocking the masses. The Maidan of 2013/2014 in Ukraine also rose in the wake of the refusal by Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich to sign agreements on European integration. It ended with colossal casualties and destruction.

**The current Georgian parliamentary elections have shown what mechanisms Washington and Brussels engage to impose their will on other peoples. However, the usual political techniques of seizing power are increasingly failing. Countries are learning to defend their independence.**

# When colour revolution fades away

The West is trying to shake up the situation in Georgia to ignite a new fire of confrontation



### They vote for development

The White House is going all in and allows the situation in Georgia to worsen, as it is interested in the civil war in this country and the escalation of the situation in the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea region.

*However, the people of Georgia are waking up to a clear understanding of the true goals of Washington and Brussels. People are tired of permanent 'velvet revolutions' and manipulations, they want to strengthen the economy and develop trade relations with the EAEU, SCO, and BRICS.*

The West is trying to destabilise the situation and lead to a direct clash between Georgians and Georgians, although the country just wants to become independent. The United States, in turn, strives to create 'Ukraine number two' there and set the whole Caucasus on fire.

### FOR REFERENCE

The opposition coalition, consisting of four parties, has refused to recognise the vote results. Its leader — President Salome Zourabichvili — has announced the start of indefinite mass protests. The USA and the EU agree with this position. The TASS news agency has reported that snipers trained in Ukraine are arriving in Georgia for provocations.

### TO THE POINT

**The main political intrigue of recent times has been resolved. Donald Trump has been re-elected president of the United States. This election campaign turned out to be one of the most difficult and contentious in the history of the United States. The amount of mudslinging and insults that the candidates hurled at each other was unprecedented.**

The outcome of the election is an assessment by American citizens of the policies conducted by the Biden-Harris administration. Not only did Trump win electoral votes, but he also won the popular vote. The Republicans have already gained a majority in the Senate and are leading in the race for the House of Representatives. Thus, the newly elected president of the United States will be able to control both the executive and legislative branches, which will untie his hands.

The victory of Donald Trump will inevitably lead to a reset of the entire ruling elite and a revision of the political line that it pursued. The period of such turbulence will last long enough and will not in the least end on January 20th next year with the inauguration of the 'new old president'.

**The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,**

*"A permanent hybrid war is being waged against our peoples. Each of the CIS countries has already experienced at least one colour revolution, which in fact meant an attempted coup d'état... Let's stand together — we will not be afraid of any colour revolutions or other uprisings."*

**At a meeting of the Council of Ministers of Internal Affairs of the CIS member states, on August 8th, 2024**

### FOR REFERENCE

On October 29th, 2024, mass protests began in Georgia. The major problem for the opposition is that the abdication of mandates by four of their parties does not allow them to seize power through parliament. The

OSCE's statement on the election recognition also does not play into the hands of the protest stratum. Therefore, the United States needs to escalate — to provoke the authorities to take harsh measures in order

to play out the scenario of Ukraine in 2013, when a nicely orchestrated provocation allowed the seizure of power. If the Georgian opposition does not spin such a scenario, it will not be able to stage a coup.

The BBC presenters reported that the ruling party got the main points precisely because of the 'war and peace' theme and the reluctance of Georgians to repeat the fate of Ukrainians in a potential armed conflict. In reality, it was the incumbent President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili — a former French citizen and

ex-French ambassador to Georgia in 2004 — who called for a riot under

the slogan of combating voting violations, throwing her citizens to the slaughter. This is not the leader of the nation, but merely the proxy ruler appointed by the West.

The new exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Belarusian Statehood is dedicated to the history of our country's monetary system. The project titled *Belarusian Rouble: 30 Years of National Currency* showcases samples of banknotes from different years, commemorative notes, coins, and more. Our journalists have attended the exhibition opening and prepared an overview of the most interesting exhibits for our readers.

**Banknote featuring Yanka Kupala**

The National Bank's collection includes samples of notes featuring images that, for various reasons, never went into circulation. One such banknote from 2004 — specifically worth Br100,000 — was slated to have the portrait of Yanka Kupala. Had it come to fruition, it would have marked the first instance of a known personality being depicted on currency in the Belarusian history. Ultimately, the note featured the Nesvizh Castle instead. The artist, who transferred the landmark from the painting by Napoleon Orda onto the banknote, initially illustrated an Orthodox cross on the building's spire, although the original featured the Radziwill family crest. This was subsequently corrected.



Alisa Drugakova



Alisa Drugakova

**Metallographic plate**

This is the form used for printing banknotes through the metallographic method. First, ink is applied to the plates, filling the surface and the engravings with varying intensities. The ink is then transferred to the paper — it is pressed into the plate with a powerful press, which allows producing the necessary elements. The embossed design is created on both sides of the banknote.

Why such complexity? Isn't it possible just to print money using a conventional printer? In fact, countries worldwide strive to protect their national currencies from counterfeiting. Therefore, the more unique the appearance, the greater the guarantee that the banknote cannot be forged.

**Commemorative coin UNOVIS**

UNOVIS is an avant-garde artistic association founded by Kazimir Malevich in Vitebsk. The coin was released in 2020 and stands out for its extraordinary concave-convex shape. It is available in two variants — one made of copper-nickel with a denomination of Br1, and a silver version valued at Br20. Both sides are bordered with a rim that stands out along the circumference. The sides of the coins are textured. Notably, they feature a QR code — by scanning it, one can access a digital



page containing information about the Vitebsk-based avant-garde group.

# Time and money

A bear from afar and a QR coded coin: what you did not know about Belarus' national currency

By Olga Nevmerzhtskaya

**'Hares' and 'squirrels'**

Many people remember the banknotes featuring animals — these were Belarus' first national currency. But why did they depict specifically animals? The answer is simple: back at that time, there was no consensus in the country on which historical figure should be depicted. The option featuring animals was adopted as a compromise. The inspiration came from... Dutch guilders adorned with sunflowers! Thus, the creators of the Belarusian currency turned to the book *Animals and Birds of Our Country*, published in 1957. The banknote worth Br1 quickly earned the popular nickname 'hare', which subsequently extended to all Belarusian banknotes, although there were other animals on the 1992 notes as well.

Interestingly, the Br50 banknote featured a baribal — a species of black bear that has never existed in Belarus. The bear's origins lie in North America, yet few people paid attention to this fact at the time.



Alisa Drugakova

**Coupons**

The museum unveils samples of coupons that could have served as temporary currency following the dissolution of the USSR. The project was proposed by British company De La Rue — the world's leading commercial security printer that was collaborating with numerous countries at the time. However, Belarus' National Bank deemed the idea insufficiently viable and rejected the proposal.

In general, the matter of currency was fraught from the outset. In 1992, the Soviet rouble was still in circulation within our country. There were discussions about transitioning to the Russian currency, but, as you know, the famous 'hares' were ultimately adopted.



Alisa Drugakova

**BY THE WAY**

In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Belarusian rouble, the museum has presented two commemorative coins titled *Belarusian Rouble. 30 Years* made from precious metals. The gold coin weighs two grammes and has a mintage of 10,000 copies, while the silver coin weighs five grammes with a mintage of 20,000 copies. Both coins are made from 999 fine metals. The obverse depicts the building of the National Bank, while the reverse showcases a bison framed

**Master punch**

A benchmark tool for coin minting that determines the size and specific details of the product's appearance can also be found at the exhibition. The use of punches ensures stylistic consistency, uniformity, and recognisability of the coins. The tool is equipped with a pressing function, resulting in the familiar coin that meets all the requirements for legal tender.



**Commemorative coin for Ignat Domeyko's 200th anniversary**

The exhibition reveals two coins — a smaller copper-nickel coin with a denomination of Br1, and a larger silver coin valued at Br20. The mintage for the smaller coin is 2,000 copies, while only 1,000 silver coins were produced, making the silver version the rarer of the two. On the right side of the coins, there is an embossed image of the prominent Belarusian scientist's portrait, and on the left — a geological hammer. Interestingly, the silver coin includes an inlay of stone similar to the copper arsenide mineral domeykite — which the scientist first discovered in Chile — along with its chemical formula. In contrast, the copper-nickel coin lacks this inlay; instead, it features an embossed image of mountains.



BELTA

by the Belarusian national ornament. The appearance of the coin obverse resembles the front side of the Br20 banknote issued in 2000. A similar bison previously adorned the front of the Br100 banknote from 1992. Both coins were gifted to the Museum of Contemporary Belarusian Statehood by representatives of Belarus' National Bank.



The crimson forest sheds its attire... Scarlet maples drop their leaves... A dreary time — yet, enchantment for the eyes... In autumn, it is so easy to catch rhymes, when leaves rustle so delightfully and soothingly beneath your feet, when everything around is getting ready for a long winter sleep, reminding us of the fleeting nature of time and the inevitability of the coming calm. In many places across Belarus, we can embark on a little journey along streets named after great poets and writers. From Griboyedov Street to Chekhov Street, then we turn from Pushkin Street and find ourselves on Gogol Street. Vitebsk is one of those 'literary' cities.

# In search of inspiration



By Artemiy Vasilevich

## In Pushkin's footsteps

Pushkin was the first of the celebrated figures to visit Vitebsk. It is well known that the poet's first journey across the Belarusian land took place in 1820 when, for the audacity displayed in his ode *Liberty*, Alexander Sergeyevich [Pushkin] fell into disgrace with the emperor and was sent from St. Petersburg to Chişinău in Moldova for his 'southern' exile.

As is often the case, his initial visit was merely introductory, leaving practically no recollections behind. Pushkin would pass through Vitebsk again in 1824, this time heading to his 'northern' exile at the ancestral estate of his mother — Nadezhda Osipovna Pushkina — lost amid the endless forests of Pskov Region, known as Mikhailovskoye.

After passing through Mogilev, where the townspeople could not help but notice the eccentric poet, who, according to locals' memories, strolled around the town wearing a traditional Russian shirt and boots, with a yarmulke on his head, and was followed everywhere by a servant dressed up as a Tatar boy, Pushkin continued his journey. After passing through Orsha at the beginning of August, Alexander Sergeyevich arrived in Vitebsk.

During his stay in the city, Pushkin took a keen interest in the local architecture, the appearance of the townspeople, and their dialects. Subsequently, Belarusian toponyms and dialectisms would become part of the poet's literary works. In the drama *Boris Godunov*, written during his time in Mikhailovskoye, one can find phrases, such as: 'Drink, but do not forget yourself', 'Let us drink a cup to the tavern keeper!'

In 1832, the poet finished the novel *Dubrovsky*, the work on the drafts for which had begun during his exile in Mikhailovskoye. However, the novel received its final title after Pushkin's death, when his close friend and



mentor — Vasily Andreyevich Zhukovsky — was reviewing the poet's archives. Initially, the work was titled *Ostrovsky*, which also alludes to the story that happened in Vitebsk.

The fact is that it was to the Vitebsk prison that Pavel Ostrovsky was taken for the deeds that Pushkin would describe in his novel. Whether the poet learnt about the story of the impoverished Belarusian nobleman turned bandit during his stay in Vitebsk, or from friends who had estates in Vitebsk province, remains uncertain. Yet, the fact that the name of the main character was retained in the drafts clearly indicates that the Vitebsk story had a significant impact on Alexander Sergeyevich.

Today, Vitebsk cherishes the memory of Pushkin. In the very heart of the city, near the Yakub Kolas Theatre, you can find a cosy Pushkin Quarter, where Pushkin Street seamlessly flows into Pushkin Square, culminating in Pushkin Bridge.

## FOR REFERENCE

The current year — 2024 — is a year of great anniversaries for literature. In spring, we marked the 215th anniversary of Nikolai Gogol's birth. In June, we celebrated the 225th anniversary of Alexander Pushkin. On October 15th, we noted the 210th anniversary of the birth of poet Mikhail Lermontov.

Vitebsk greets autumn. The gusty wind blowing from the Western Dvina River drives dry leaves along the cobbled streets. The autumn sun, curled up like a huge warm cat, dozes on the roofs and squares. Tourists and locals delight in the unseasonably warm weather and admire the city, dressed in luxurious golden attire. It is quite possible that one of them will find a pen dropped among the fallen leaves by some writer, to continue the literary history of Vitebsk.



## Recalling romance of Lermontov's parents

If you cross Pushkin Bridge and ascend the steep steps to the Assumption Cathedral, to your right you will see a building of a semicircular shape. Today, it houses the Vitebsk Theological Seminary, but during the Patriotic War of 1812, both the cathedral and the seminary building served as military hospitals. The only difference was that the former was a hospital for the French army, whereas the latter provided care for Russian soldiers recovering their health.

Among those who were patients at the Vitebsk military hospital was a young officer in the Russian army — Yuri Petrovich Lermontov — the father of the future poet. With the enemy invading his homeland in September 1812,



Maria Lermontova, Mikhail Lermontov's mother

Yuri Lermontov, Mikhail Lermontov's father

Yuri Lermontov joined the Tula militia as a commander of a rifle regiment. In the ranks of the Russian army, he participated in the expulsion of Napoleon's army from Russia, and his detachment played a significant role in the capture of Vitebsk. In April 1813, Lermontov fell seriously ill, suffering from injuries sustained during battles. The illness was so severe that the young man had to stay in the hospital for over six months.

In 1810, Yuri Lermontov met the only daughter of landowners Mikhail and Yelizaveta Arsenyev — Maria. The young girl fell in love with the handsome young man and wrote him poetic messages expressing her warm feelings for him. When Lermontov found himself in the Vitebsk hospital, Maria Mikhailovna [Arsenyeva] came to visit her fiancé. To this day, there is no confirmed information about the exact date of the marriage of Mikhail Lermontov's parents. According to one version, it may have taken place in 1813 in Vitebsk when Yuri Petrovich was on the mend. However, no official document has been found to substantiate this. Nevertheless, in Vitebsk, which was always at the forefront of significant and, at times, tragic historical events, the marriage certificate could have simply been lost, giving rise to yet another, very plausible, legend of the city.

## In the town of NN

Many Vitebsk residents have connected their hometown with world classics. One of the brightest examples of this connection is Marc Chagall's illustrations for the poem *Dead Souls* by Nikolai Gogol. Gogol's town of NN continues to raise quite a few questions. According to cultural scholar and art historian Mikhail Kazinik, the prototype for NN is Nizhny Novgorod, but even here, the scholar's arguments are not entirely straightforward. Chagall depicted the province town in such a way that the image of his Vitebsk and Gogol's NN become one. Even the boundaries of the town, deliberately limited by Chagall with a fence, a river, and an electric pole — which clearly does not belong to that time — do not contradict Gogol's text.



It so happens that two talents are needed for a true discovery. Gogol travelled through Vitebsk several times on his way from St. Petersburg to Poltava and back. He knew the city well, often staying in Vitebsk for long periods while waiting for horses. Could Nikolai Vasilievich [Gogol] have taken notes about the place? Absolutely. Did he? Today, very few could definitely answer this question. However, the fact that looking at Chagall's etchings for the poem *Dead Souls* provides the best understanding of Gogol's text is an undeniable truth. Coincidence? Very doubtful.



## Photo of the week

**Dazhynki-2024 nationwide festival-fair honouring rural workers is being held across Belarus' regions. The holiday is dedicated to the completion of agricultural work and harvesting, and is celebrated on a grand scale. In the photo: during Dazhynki-2024 in Polotsk**

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**On November 14th, 1939**, the 3rd extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR adopted the law

On the Incorporation of Western Belarus into the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. As a result of the unification of Western Belarus and the BSSR, the population of Belarus increased to 11 million people.

**November 14th** marks Blacksmith's Day in Belarus. It is associated with the national holiday of Kuzma — the patron saint of blacksmiths. Blacksmithing is one of the oldest and most respected crafts.

Among people, a blacksmith is considered a strongman, in whose hands iron and fire become obedient. In addition to hot and cold forging, blacksmiths carried out welding, various fitter's and soldering work. Although modern industry has long displaced primitive trades, the blacksmith profession remains respected.



**On November 15th, 1971**, Intel introduced its first microprocessor, which started a revolution in electronics. The concept was to construct an almost complete computing

device on a single chip. The Intel 4004 microprocessor was the size of a fingernail, and had the same computing power as the first ENIAC electronic computer, created in 1946, which occupied an entire room.

**November 16th, 1884** is the date when the Belarusian State Circus was founded as a stationary circus tent in Minsk. World famous artists performed there: Scipione Ciniselli, Anatoly Durov, Ivan Poddubny, Ivan Zaikin, the Nikitin brothers, Ferroni, Tanti, Truzzi. The first premiere in the new stone building of the circus took place on February 11th, 1959. In 2008-2010, a grandiose reconstruction of the building was carried out, after which the Minsk arena became one of the best in Europe and the world. It is the only circus in the world, located in the centre of the capital, on the central avenue.



**On November 16th, 1965**, the USSR launched the *Venera 3* unmanned spacecraft, which successfully landed on the Venus. The automatic interplanetary station *Venera 3* became the first spacecraft to reach the surface of another planet. Magnetic fields, cosmic rays, streams of low-energy charged particles, solar plasma streams, and cosmic radio emissions were studied.

**November 17th, 1869** marks the date when the Suez Canal, connecting the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, was officially opened for navigation. It had an immediate and invaluable impact on world trade, allowing water transport to travel between Europe and Asia without having to go around Africa. The canal also played an important role in the expansion and further colonisation of Africa. To date, the Suez Canal is Egypt's main budget-generating project.



**On November 17th, 1948**, the cruiser *Aurora* was permanently moored in St. Petersburg. Its crew actively participated in the revolutionary events

while the cruiser itself became one of the symbols of the October Revolution, as well as in the subsequent civil war and repelling foreign intervention. During the Great Patriotic War, *Aurora's* personnel and guns participated in the heroic defence of Leningrad. Later, the cruiser became a museum ship, and a cultural heritage object of the Russian Federation.

**November 17th** is Day of Agricultural and Processing Industry Workers of the Agro-Industrial Complex in



the Republic of Belarus. Agriculture is one of the crucial branches of Belarus' national economy, which has centuries-old agricultural traditions. Currently, Belarus is one of the leaders among the post-Soviet countries in terms of production of the main types of agricultural products.

**On November 18th, 1870**, the first official pigeon mail line connected Tours and Paris. Pigeons were first officially adopted by the postal administration as a means of delivering correspondence during the siege of Paris by Prussian troops during the Franco-Prussian War. Carrier pigeons fly well and can travel long distances at high speed. People noticed this ability of pigeons and began to use it for their own purposes.



**On November 18th, 1885**, the world's first motorcycle ride took place in Germany. It was a very original bike with a motor. The frame, like the wheels, was made of wood. It had four wheels that were covered with iron instead of rubber tyres. An internal combustion engine with a capacity of 0.5 hp was located under the seat. The motorcycle moved at a speed of 12 km/h, incredible for that time. The motorcycle was designed by Gottlieb Daimler and his partner Wilhelm Maybach.