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Monolit Radio
Components
Plant has joined
the National Board
of Honour

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of our *Heroes
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INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

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The first cosmonaut of sovereign Belarus, Marina Vasilevskaya, during a solemn ceremony at the State Flag Square

**People are proud to be Belarusians.
This is the embodiment of national unity!**

Last Sunday, the whole of Belarus celebrated National Flag, Emblem and Anthem Day. The state symbols reflect the aspiration of Belarusians for peace, independence and creation in their native land. On the festive day, a beautiful solemn ceremony with the participation of the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, was held in Minsk and brought together over 5,300 people from all over the country.

Soldiers of the honour guard company brought the National Flag (a 10x5m cloth) to the square to the sound of the National Anthem. Seven boys and girls representing each region and the city of Minsk, as well as the Hero of Belarus, cosmonaut Marina Vasilevskaya took a loyalty oath to the state symbols. → 4



Great Victory is a key moment in the history of the Belarusian nation formation

On May 9th — Victory Day — the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, took part in solemn events on the occasion of the 79th anniversary of Victory in the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War



In the morning, the Head of State together with the presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Cuba, Laos and Guinea-Bissau watched the military parade on the Red Square in Moscow.

In total, more than 9,000 people marched in the parade this year — participants in a special military operation, regiments, battalions and companies by types and branches of troops, crews from Suvorov, Nakhimov, cadet schools, women military personnel, Cossacks and a combined military band. Following the ceremonial regiments, a column of military hardware rolled through Moscow's Red Square. The mechanised column was traditionally led by the legendary 'Victory Tank' — T-34-85, followed by armoured vehicles Tigr, VPK-Ural, Taifun-K, and BTR-82A armoured personnel carriers. Launchers of Iskander-M operational and tactical missile systems and S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems passed along the paving stones of the Red Square. Yars road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers, the backbone of Russia's nuclear shield, were also demonstrated to the audience. Bumerang armoured infantry fighting vehicles and personnel carriers with flags of all military branches of the Russian Armed Forces concluded the mechanised column's procession. The parade ended with the flyover of the Russkie Vityazi (Russian Knights) and MiG 29UB Strizhi (Swifts) aviation groups in a unique Cuban Diamond aerobatic manoeuvre.

After the parade, the President of Belarus together with counterparts from other countries laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Alexander Garden near

the Kremlin walls. Then Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin jointly answered journalists' questions. The heads of states shared that on the Victory Day's eve they had worked until three o'clock in the morning. During the discussion of bilateral relations, the presidents also talked about the situation unfolding around the contact line, as well as about the difficult events related to Ukraine. The leaders of Belarus and Russia communicated with the Defence Minister of the Russian Federation, and the Chief of the General Staff. Journalists asked the presidents about the drills on the deployment of non-strategic nuclear weapon carriers. "Since non-strategic nuclear weapons are stationed on the territory of Belarus, this time we have invited our friends, our allies — and the President of Belarus asked for this — to take part in one of the stages of these drills. We hold them regularly. This time, they are carried out in three stages. Belarusian colleagues will join us at the second stage. The corresponding instructions have been given to the defence ministries and general staffs," Russia's President stated.

Aleksandr Lukashenko confirmed the statement of his Russian counterpart. "We held the first stage separately. Yesterday we decided that we should synchronise and conduct the second and third stages together. Vladimir Vladimirovich has correctly underlined that this is not the first time. This is our third training session, and there were dozens of them in Russia. That is why we have decided to synchronise. The general staffs of the two countries have already begun to fulfil the assigned tasks," the Belarusian leader clarified. "There is nothing unusual here. This is planned work," Vladimir Putin added.

The Head of State laid a wreath at the Victory Monument in Minsk. Those present honoured the memory of the Great Patriotic War heroes with a minute of silence. When making a speech at the ceremony, the Head of State touched upon such important topics as the value of peace for Belarusians and all mankind and the need to preserve historical memory. "Almost eighty years ago, the bloody tornado of the most terrible war in history was stopped by the sacrificial feat of the Soviet people. This fact is forever secured on the ruins of the Reichstag and in the Instrument of Unconditional Surrender of Nazi Germany. The German war machine crashed against the unparalleled heroism and valour of our fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers. The Great Victory was forged on the front lines and on the home front for four long years. Both old and young stood up to fight the enemy. Having paid for freedom with millions of lives of its sons and daughters, our great Motherland — the Soviet Union — saved humanity from enslavement, and some nations from complete extermination," Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised.

"The Great Victory is the main and key moment in the history of revival and formation of the Belarusian nation. Its lessons allow us today to look into the future as long as we remember and know the past. The zest for life and creative energy of the victorious generation who restored the country from the ruins are an example of how we should live and work. Belarus needs peace — tomorrow, in a year, and always. It is important for us to persevere and not let anyone draw us into conflicts. Time has chosen us to preserve the independence of our land and everything created by many generations before us," the President pointed out.

In the afternoon of May 9th, the President of Belarus traditionally participated in celebrations in honour of Victory Day held in Minsk

According to the President, the victorious May of 1945 brought invaluable peace to humanity. However, not everyone appreciated its value. The former allies of the USSR pictured themselves as the sole vanquishers of Hitler's Germany. Today, just like in the early 1940s, the West is ready to make a deal with any evil in order to maintain its dominance. "Without any hesitation, Europe glorifies and welcomes SS men and nationalists of all stripes. They are given a standing ovation by the heads of states who have forgotten the results of the Nuremberg trials. Without regard to history, morality and law, they have begun to pit countries and peoples against each other again. To this end, they have revived the ideas and methods of the Nazis," the Belarusian leader stressed.



Aleksandr Lukashenko added,

"The voice of all those who stand for peace, seek co-operation, and share the ideals of justice and global equality is more important today than ever before. Unfortunately, we do not hear those voices. We know how such silence ended in the last century. Today they want to push us into the same abyss again. Therefore, we must do everything to prevent a third world war. Otherwise, a nuclear apocalypse is inevitable. To preserve peace, we all need to stand together."

After participating in the celebrations, Aleksandr Lukashenko spoke with representatives of the media. Commenting on the issue of the deployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons, the Head of State observed, "Nuclear weapons are terrible weapons. We and the Russian leadership have repeatedly emphasised that we refer to non-strategic nuclear weapons. God forbid that

anyone should press the nuclear button again. Although tactical weapons today are many times more powerful than they were in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. One explosion would kill thousands of people. These are deadly weapons. In order to use such weapons, it is necessary to train and learn how to do it. It was my initiative, as Vladimir Putin said. I called him and offered to synchronise our efforts in this regard. There was only one goal — we wanted to see how the leading nuclear powers were doing this. After all, we are learning."

The President stressed that nuclear weapons for Belarus and Russia are exclusively weapons of deterrence. The inspection of non-strategic nuclear weapon carriers takes place in three stages. At first, the military trained to prepare warheads. Now the general staffs are synchronising their interaction. At the third stage, it is planned to summarise the inspection results.

During a conversation with journalists, the Head of State commented on the case of Polish judge Tomasz Szymdyt, who fled from his country to seek asylum in Belarus due to political persecution in Poland.

"This is a trend [when Polish officials flee from the country]. We have checked him — he is an absolutely normal, patriotic Pole. His colleagues have never said anything bad about him. He is not a traitor. He just takes a realistic view of things, compares Poland and Belarus and draws conclusions," Aleksandr Lukashenko noted.

"We had warned him that by speaking at a press conference he could put himself at risk. He said, 'I am not afraid. I need to speak the truth about what is happening in Poland.' So this situation caused a stir."

The Head of State has promised to consider the application of Polish judge Tomasz Szymdyt for granting him political asylum. The President also revealed that he had instructed law enforcement agencies to ensure the protection of Tomasz Szymdyt, "So that those scoundrels do not kill him. He says he knows what he is doing. He is a brave man and a normal person, with a clear mind, as far as I know by now."



EAEU should become a global pole of economic attraction

Speaking at the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council summit in Moscow on May 8th, the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, praised the successes achieved in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) over the past ten years and pointed to the issues which still needed solutions



“We can state with confidence that the first ten years have been quite successful. We have almost reached the final stage of the Strategy 2025,” the Head of State noted.

According to the President, the taken measures contributed to the increase in mutual trade of the EAEU member states. In late 2023, its growth amounted to nearly 5 percent. In absolute figures, this is about \$90 billion. This achievement has come amid the continuing complicated situation in the world markets. Along with that, Aleksandr Lukashenko added that unresolved issues and challenges still remained in the integration construction.

On industrial co-operation

The Head of State recalled that fundamental decisions were made last year in order to financially support industrial co-operation. Despite this, serious business activity has not yet gained traction. “I would like to note once again that work in the face of sanctions requires immediate decisions. Quick decisions. The leaders of the participating countries make such decisions promptly for the most part. However, the decisions are not always implemented quickly,” the Belarusian leader underlined. “I would like to draw the attention of all those present to the fact that such sluggishness really affects the financial results of our enterprises and leads to tougher competition from third countries.”

Given the new mechanism of financial support for industrial co-operation, Aleksandr

Lukashenko asked the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) to join the work and organise interaction both in the context of industries and with the involvement of business associations and unions of the EAEU member states. “Considerable funds have been allocated to subsidise projects. Therefore, they need to be used very effectively and in a targeted way,” the Head of State emphasised.

On unhindered access to public procurement

According to the President, the volume of public procurement in the EAEU countries is estimated at almost \$200 billion. In fact, the states as buyers of goods, works and services fully control this market and determine procurement policy and acquisition channels.

“If we really control it, then let’s ensure mutual access at least in the areas where the EAEU-made products can meet state needs,” Aleksandr Lukashenko remarked.

The President stated that national protectionism still persists in this sector. In reality, the market is protected not from imports from third countries, which account for almost two-thirds of the EAEU’s public procurement, but from goods and services produced in the countries of the union. “I am convinced that the issue of expanding mutual participation in public procurement requires urgent attention since it is closely related to import substitution and technological sovereignty. By and large, this is our security and independence,” the Head of State pointed out.

On digitalisation

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed the need to focus on the prompt recognition of the electronic digital signature, “We have been talking about it for years. All major agreements were reached long ago, but things are still where they started. After all, this is not a political but a technical issue. However, it often becomes an impassable barrier to the participation of Eurasian business in the economic processes of the EAEU member states.”

On technical regulation

The topic of technical regulation is closely related to the aforesaid issue. “Work on the technical solution is on the home stretch. The only thing we need to do is to digitise technical regulation,” Aleksandr Lukashenko stated. “I am sure that no one in this hall needs to be convinced that digitalisation of technical regulation will provide our industry with additional opportunities for development. It will simplify the receipt of information as well as certification and standardisation processes.”

On transport services

Aleksandr Lukashenko lauded the EAEU for the generally co-ordinated work in this area both at the national and supranational levels. “We have managed to find alternative routes for the supply of goods, make agreements (albeit temporary) on transshipment and on new terms for crossing borders,” the President remarked.

Nevertheless, the Head of State pointed out the need for the EEC to establish a perma-

nent channel for information exchange with the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) countries, primarily with China. This is required for more accurate management of cargo flows and organisation of the effective operation of border crossings.

On food security

The President believes it necessary to improve the work on unification of requirements related to the circulation of agricultural products, to actively introduce innovative approaches in the agro-industrial complex.

“It is extremely important for us to meet the EAEU’s needs for food of our own production. We can do this. For this purpose, our farmers need to have their own high-quality seed material,” the Belarusian leader added.

On the EAEU’s international positioning

“Our geopolitical opponents are trying to isolate us from advanced technologies and premium markets, to restrain our development. However, we are consistently moving forward despite this,” the President emphasised.

The Head of State recalled the full-fledged trade agreement with Iran. The EAEU has been building mutually beneficial co-operation with promising friendly countries — Indonesia, the UAE, Mongolia. “In our opinion, the work on partnerships with third countries needs to be systematised. In the current geo-economic realities, it is necessary to clearly understand with which countries, in what sequence and within what time-

frame we will form a free trade zone, and with which potential partners we will limit ourselves to interaction within the framework of memorandums,” Aleksandr Lukashenko urged. The President also believes that so far the EAEU has paid insufficient attention to dialogue with the African continent. “Africa needs a wide range of our goods, works, services and technologies,” Aleksandr Lukashenko noted. “Africa, like Latin America, has had enough of colonialism from the respective countries. This is the moment when we must come to Africa.”

In addition, the participation of the EAEU countries as well as the CIS partners in the SCO and BRICS opens up huge advantages. “We should not forget about our closest neighbours, friends, and brothers, though. Interaction with the EAEU observer states and the CIS countries should be in the zone of constant and close attention,” the Belarusian leader added.

On Russia’s role in strengthening partnership

“Active efforts of the Russian Federation to advance and strengthen our partnership have never been more important,” the Belarusian leader observed.

Aleksandr Lukashenko thanked President of Russia Vladimir Putin and the Russian side as a whole for the warm welcome and excellent organisation of the summit. “It is your first major international conference [after inauguration on May 7th]. We will certainly not fail you in this regard,” the President of Belarus assured.

Key takeaways from the EAEU summit

The presidents of Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Prime Minister of Armenia have signed a range of documents following the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Moscow. In particular, a decision was approved to start negotiations with Mongolia on concluding a temporary trade agreement between the EAEU and Mongolia. In accordance with the document, import customs duties in mutual trade will be reduced or eliminated on a number of goods. In addition, a draft protocol on the electronic information exchange on the origin of goods with Vietnam was approved. “This format of interaction with an external partner has been introduced for the first time. It will enable customs authorities to directly receive the necessary data in digital format, which will significantly speed up the customs clearance processes and have a positive impact on trade,” Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission Bakytzhan Sagintayev told reporters.



Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



Marina Vasilevskaya handed over to the President the flag that was flown to the ISS

National unity firmly cemented by memory of heroic past

The tradition of honouring the most important symbols of sovereign Belarus has become truly nationwide. This idea was stated by the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, at a solemn ceremony to honour the state symbols on National Flag, Emblem and Anthem Day on May 12th held in Minsk.

“This tradition has grown into our hearts on the fertile soil of love for the Motherland, becoming truly nationwide,” the Belarusian leader stressed. On this day, thousands of young people across the country take a loyalty oath to the state symbols.

“This is a sign of deep respect for the past, for the spiritual and moral values bequeathed to us by our ancestors. This is our sincere gratitude for the peaceful and happy present ensured by the older generation of our contemporaries,” Aleksandr Lukashenko underlined. “Most importantly, this is a demonstration of readiness to take responsibility for the fate of your country.”

The President pointed out that the youth representatives, relying on all the achievements like on the strong shoulders of their predecessors, took up the baton to preserve and strengthen the Belarusian statehood and committed themselves to cherishing the symbols of the independent country.

“For me personally, this day is filled with a special symbolism. Almost 30 years ago, on May 14th, 1995, the first referendum in the history of sovereign Belarus was held. Our people then determined their path of development and laid the foundations of the policy of the Belarusian state — a strong presidential power, a strategic alliance with Russia, and the equal state status of the Belarusian and Russian languages,” the Head of State emphasised. “Not succumbing to the threats of modern collaborators, or rather traitors from politics, remaining true to ourselves, our principles, ideals and history, we have jointly defended our true state symbols. Together we said ‘no’ to the symbols which became a real sign of trouble for us. The heirs of the people who survived the genocide, concentration camps and ghettos, who stood up to fight the enemy in numerous partisan detachments and the underground could not do otherwise.”

Thus, in 1995, an overwhelming majority of Belarusians voted for the continuity of heroic symbols.

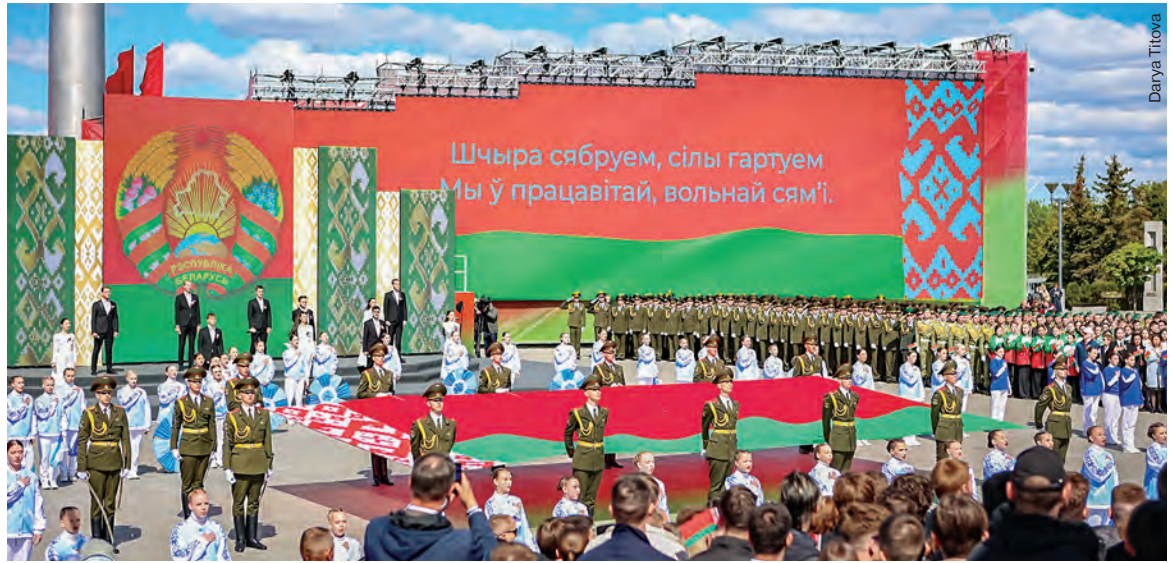
People started gathering at the State Flag Square in families long before the start of the celebration. Both children and their parents got a chance to admire an exhibition of folk achievements displayed by all the regions. The military personnel of the honour guard company brought the National Flag of Belarus to the square and placed it among the artists lined up to repeat the outlines of Belarus’ borders. Then the National Anthem was played.

After the speech of the Belarusian leader, seven boys and girls — representatives from each region and the city of Minsk — took a loyalty oath to the state symbols. They were joined by the first cosmonaut of sovereign Belarus, Marina Vasilevskaya. The most touching moment of the festive day was when Marina Vasilevskaya handed over to the President the very flag that had been in orbit and consolidated the status of Belarus as a space power.

Aleksandr Lukashenko gave a fatherly hug to the brave woman. Meanwhile, the space flag will take pride of place in the Palace of Independence.

During a conversation with journalists, the cosmonaut noted that she felt happiness and pride for Belarus — an independent, peaceful, friendly country,

“When you see your Homeland from space, you realise how much you love and appreciate it. The National Flag, Emblem and Anthem Day celebration reflects the patriotic, historical and cultural values of our country. It is symbolic that our National Flag flew around the Earth, making 224 turns. I proudly opened it over the territory of Belarus, and today I want to congratulate all Belarusians on the holiday!”



The President of Belarus drew attention to the fact that during transitional epochs people often abandon symbols that expressed the ideas and values of the former socio-political system. “However, it was not our path. We cherish the connection of generations, continue the traditions of our ancestors, and are proud of our history. There are a lot of heroic pages in our history. We have never wavered or changed the line we are following today. We have always been faithful to the traditions of the past. We are especially proud of the fact that Belarus’ state symbols embody the unparalleled strength of spirit and contribution of our people to the Great Victory over the brown plague. They also show the labour feat of our fathers and grandfathers, who rebuilt the country on the principles of social equality and justice,” Aleksandr Lukashenko remarked. The modern national flag, emblem and anthem have already become symbols of sporting, creative and labour victories in the history of sovereign Belarus. The flag of Belarus was raised by polar scientists in Antarctica, paratroopers at the North Pole, and climbers on Mount Everest.



Among those who took a loyalty oath at Minsk’s State Flag Square on Sunday was Anna Kovalskaya, a future history teacher, a sophomore at the Maxim Tank Belarusian State Pedagogical University. The girl admitted that the ceremony made a lasting impression on her, “I am glad that I was entrusted to represent the youth of our capital. It was very exciting to pronounce the oath of allegiance to the state symbols in front of the Head of State and all residents of Belarus. I am going to be a teacher in the future, and my profession implies not only the preservation of history but also passing on the truth about it to new generations. I want everyone to know the history of our country so that no one repeats the mistakes of the past. After all, without knowledge of history, it is impossible to raise a true patriot and citizen. We, the younger generation, are obliged to preserve the memory of the feat that our grandfathers and great-grandfathers performed, and always remember thanks to whose victories we have a peaceful sky above our heads today.”

“This flag has been in space three times. First, with our countryman Oleg Novitsky, and most recently with the first Belarusian cosmonaut, Hero of Belarus Marina Vasilevskaya,” the President noted.

“Today, national symbols not only unite but also act as a source of confidence and inner strength. Our emblem, flag and anthem, just like all policy, are inspired by the ideas of national dignity and genuine people’s power.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko added that the state symbols had become a part of the life and achievements of the Belarusian people in various spheres. The Belarusian coat of arms and flag can be increasingly seen in the windows of residential buildings and cars. On July 3rd — Independence Day — which this year will also mark the 80th anniversary of Belarus’ liberation, millions of compatriots will fill the squares of cities and villages to sing the national anthem together.

“People are proud to be Belarusians. This is the embodiment of national unity — the one which is cemented by the lasting memory of the heroic feat of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers in the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War, patriotism, creative work and the desire for peace. This is the unity symbolised by the National Flag, the National Emblem and the National Anthem of the Republic of Belarus. The unity that we must preserve in order to protect our country. Because the time has chosen us!” the President stressed.

WHAT NEWSPAPERS DOES THE PRESIDENT READ?

The press secretary of the President of Belarus, Natalya Eismont revealed in the *Time of the First* heading of the *Main Broadcast* on the Belarus 1 TV channel what press gets on the desk of the Head of State.

According to Natalya Eismont, the main criterion is that the press should be fresh and up-to-date. Newspapers are delivered to the President early in the morning. “The President always familiarises himself with those,” the Head of State’s press secretary noted. “In addition, we prepare our own media review. This is a mandatory option. We take into account the specifics of the upcoming day and collect materials for the visits — everything that may be useful. As for newspapers, they always include our main Belarusian newspapers, like the latest issue of *SB. Belarus Segodnya* [Belarus Today], of course, and some additional interesting ones. The President is certainly familiar with our regional press. It can hardly be called regional, though, since its agenda is always very serious — for example, *Minskaya Pravda* [Minsk Truth]. The Russian press is also present on the desk of the Head of State.”

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

The Monolit Vitebsk Radio Components Plant has joined the National Board of Honour

Alloy of quality and craftsmanship

On April 24th, the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko signed Decree No. 174 on placing the winners of the competition on the National Board of Honour. Sixty-four organisations and regions were recognised by the decree as winners for the best indicators in the field of socio-economic development in 2023. Among the leaders is the only manufacturer of multilayer ceramic capacitors in the country, the Monolit Vitebsk Radio Components Plant (VZRD Monolit OJSC). This is not the first victory for the Vitebsk-based plant — three years ago, it was also listed on the National Board of Honour.

By Yelena Begunova

Irina Azarchenko, a supervisor of the measurement and inspection section of the enterprise, expressed the general opinion,

“Our enterprise is unique for Belarus. Years of uncertainty and doubt have passed. Now we are moving forward in leaps and bounds, production is developing, and our products are in demand both in our native country and abroad. The awareness of our value and support from the government is the best incentive for us, plant workers.”

A huge light workshop, divided into numerous separate sections, is a complex production mechanism that allows obtaining competitive products. Today, Monolit-made multilayer ceramic capacitors are used in a wide variety of industries, including for the production of radio equipment, kitchen appliances, TV sets, com-

puters and telephones, in mechanical engineering and even in aviation, space and nuclear industries. The volume growth rate is really impressive. Aleksandr Shumakher, a director of the plant, noted,

“At the beginning of last year we produced about 2.5 million capacitors per month, and by the end of the year — almost 4 million. Demand dictates supply. Belarusian enterprises actively use our products. Permanent shipments are made to large factories in Minsk, Vitebsk, Brest, Gomel, Mogilev and other cities. About 90 percent of our output is exported to Russia, India, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. The geography of supplies has expanded this year due to Azerbaijan.”

During Soviet times, Monolit was a plant of nationwide importance. Currently, there are two other similar enterprises operating in the CIS space

in addition to Monolit, which are located in St. Petersburg. Therefore, it is not surprising that all Monolit products have the status of import substitution.

The product range includes ten basic models of capacitors. They are the backbone for a wide product line in various design versions. “This is the section for initial operations,” Aleksandr Shumakher made a tour of the production. “Here we carry out metallisation of ceramic plates for future capacitors. The production is sterile, with all parameters of temperature, humidity, dustiness under the round-the-clock control. The new technological equipment that you see offers new opportunities. Earlier we could use a film with a thickness of 30 microns, but now, thanks to the upgraded production, the film is twice as thin.”

NUMBERS

In 2023, the growth rate of VZRD Monolit OJSC production volume amounted to almost 150 percent, more than \$20 million worth of goods were exported, and sales revenue soared by 48 percent. Along with that, the plant managed to reduce the cost of production and sales of products. The growth rate of labour productivity exceeded 109 percent. Investments in the core production made up over Br2.5 million (these are exclusively own funds of the plant), which surpassed the previous year's indicator by almost 4.5 times.



Cutting machine operator Nikolai Arkhipovsky



Finished products measurement site

For the layman, the explanation is like that — the smaller the capacitor and the larger its capacity, the better. Therefore, the constant renewal of the enterprise is a prerequisite for maintaining competitiveness in the global market.

Marina Gornak, a metallisation specialist of the sixth category, understands this very well — she has been working at the enterprise for over 30 years. She is one of the most experienced employees, an all-round craftsman who has mastered all the operations. Indeed, there is no higher category than she has. The specialist is sincerely glad to hear the news about another victory of her native plant in the republican competition. Marina Aleksandrova shared her thoughts,

“Like all my colleagues, I listened attentively to the President's speech at the Belarusian People's Congress. His words about Belarusians as a strong nation resonated with me, I liked this very much. In order to maintain this status, we need to become even stronger. This can only be done through the development of industry. After all, a solid economy has always been at the forefront.”

Marina Gornak is sure that the future of the plant depends on every worker of the Monolit plant today, while the fate of the country depends on each enterprise, “Great achievements are born from small victories. We went through the difficult 1990s, the collapse of the USSR. We survived the rupture of economic ties, and years of uncertainty... We thought our plant would never be revived, but the dark days are over. The company today successfully employs about 600 people and produces in-demand products. It is being upgraded and improved. The news about the next entry on

the National Board of Honour is a confirmation of this.”

Other employees of the section joined in the conversation. The main conclusion is that, given the difficult situation in the world, Belarusians should appreciate, cherish and multiply what they have. The plant workers were unanimous in their opinion that the adoption of the National Security Concept and the Military Doctrine at the Belarusian People's Congress marked a very important step towards further preserving the peace and strengthening the security of our country.

The work at the Monolit plant is boiling, both literally and figuratively. Thus, furnaces in the roasting section are capable of heating up to 1,300 degrees! The silvering operation follows, where an external electrode is applied to the capacitor. Mikhail Yatsuta, a leading process engineer, closely monitors the operation of the equipment — when subsequently connected to the circuit, small capacitors must reliably store and transmit energy. This will be scrupulously checked by specialists at the measurement site.

Surprisingly, the tiniest capacitors manufactured at the Monolit plant look like grains of sand. Their size ranges from 1.6 to 0.8 millimetres! Yet, they are able to make the most complex and large mechanism work.

The Monolit Vitebsk Radio Components Plant will turn 70 years old next year. It will celebrate its anniversary with dignity by setting new strategic plans. What is important is the consistently progressive dynamics of the company's development as it enables Monolit workers to strengthen their position in the market every year. Plant employees are working ahead of schedule in 2024, as well. The plant has already manufactured products for over Br20 million — this is significantly more than in the same period last year. Thus, the history of victories continues.

History knew no leaders of the Orthodox Church awarded a Hero Star before. The exception is the Hero of Belarus, an Orthodox Church figure and an amazingly pure-hearted man — the first Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus Filaret, secular name Kirill Vakhromeyev. He went through all the stages of church service — from a seminarian to an archpastor. He is the theologian who received the Hero of Belarus title, the deputy who appeared everywhere dressed only in priestly vestments, the monk who loved white roses. May 20th marks the miraculous appearance of the Zhirovichi Icon of the Mother of God, one of the most revered shrines of Belarus. The icon is located in the Holy Dormition Stavropegic Monastery in Zhirovichi, where Metropolitan Filaret was Archimandrite and where he was buried.

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

Apostle of the Belarusian land



Kirill Vakhromeyev was born on March 21st, 1935 in Moscow. He began his church service in 1954 as a sub-deacon of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia. In April 1959, he took monastic vows in the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, received the name in honour of St. Philaret the Merciful and was ordained a hieromonk. In 1978, Filaret was appointed Metropolitan of Minsk and Belarus, Patriarchal Exarch of Western Europe, and in 1989 he became Metropolitan of Minsk and Grodno, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, a permanent member of the Holy Synod. Since February 1992, he held the title of Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, Honorary Archimandrite of the Holy Dormition Stavropegic Monastery in Zhirovichi.

AWARD

The selfless devotion and educational activities of the Honorary Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus Filaret, his colossal personal contribution to the spiritual revival of the Belarusian and Russian peoples were marked with high state awards — the Order of the Fatherland III Class, the Order of Friendship of Peoples, the Order of Honour, the Order of Francysk Skaryna, the Russian Order for Service to the Fatherland IV Class, and more. Metropolitan Filaret is an honorary citizen of the city of Minsk and the city of Polotsk.

By Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 137 dated March 1st, 2006, Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, was awarded the Hero of Belarus title for his long-term personal contribution to the spiritual revival of the Belarusian people, strengthening friendship and fraternal ties between peoples, and the development of interfaith dialogue.



Spiritual mentor of people

The beginning of Metropolitan Filaret's church service in Belarus took place during a difficult historical period. He stood at the origins of the revival of the Belarusian Orthodox Church, the restoration of its authority and role in society.

Reviving the Christian culture of the Belarusian people, preserving and strengthening its spiritual traditions, Metropolitan Filaret became a good pastor and wise mentor for several generations of clergymen and Orthodox believers.

As is known, the Head of State had a warm attitude to the Patriarchal Exarch. Metropolitan Filaret was a spiritual mentor and a good friend for Aleksandr Lukashenko. They traditionally met at Easter holidays to communicate warmly while drinking tea, and to exchange gifts. Based on the footage from previous years, one can see that their communication was truly sincere and heartwarming. The Belarusian leader invariably noted the knowledge, wisdom and moral authority of Metropolitan Filaret, which helped unite people with different opinions and aspirations, find the right solutions in difficult situations, and helped strengthen the authority of the Belarusian Orthodox Church.

Over 35 years at the helm of the Belarusian Exarchate, Metropolitan Filaret accomplished a lot. It seems that there was not a single deanery in the country where they did not know him personally. Through the efforts of the Patriarchal Exarch, historical dioceses were revived and new Orthodox dioceses were established, as well as 24 women's and 10 men's monasteries were opened. The Minsk Spiritual Seminary was reopened, the Minsk Spiritual Academy was set up, schools of theology were established in

Minsk, Slonim and Orsha, as well as a religious seminary in Vitebsk. Furthermore, a theological faculty was formed, which was eventually transformed into Saints Methodius and Cyril Institute of Theology of the Belarusian State University.

With the blessing of the Patriarchal Exarch, the relic of Belarus — the Cross of St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk — was recreated, which became a symbol of Belarus' spiritual rebirth. A unique social project of the Belarusian Orthodox Church — the House of Charity — was launched. The canonisation of local saints was actively underway.

On the initiative of Metropolitan Filaret, a new holiday — the Council of Belarusian Saints — was introduced into the church calendar. In addition, there were established general church celebrations of all Belarusian saints, including the names of St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk, St. Cyril of Turov, St. George Konissky and others. Metropolitan Filaret initiated the project to translate the books of Holy Scriptures into the modern Belarusian language.

'In today's Belarus, the main life orientations of society, which are equally important for the high leadership of the country and for ordinary workers, are social harmony, interfaith peace and the possibility of fruitful creative work. Our main task is to preserve and multiply the greatest achievement, the gift of God — peace on the Belarusian land.'



'To get to heaven, you have to perform a feat. The feat should be the whole earthly life of a person.'



OPINION

As a deputy of the Supreme Council, Metropolitan Filaret participated in the formation of independent Belarus. Vladimir Garkun, deputy of the Supreme Council of the BSSR of the 12th convocation, shared his memories of working together with the Patriarchal Exarch in the 1990s, "Metropolitan Filaret was a calm and well-balanced person, always open to communication. He had some kind of special attractive energy, he radiated kindness and warmth. It is not surprising that Metropolitan Filaret united people — they wanted to approach him, to be around him at least

for a while. He rarely spoke in the Supreme Council, but every word he said was succinct and to the point, worth its weight in gold. He possessed the gift of providence and reassurance. My colleagues and I always listened to him with interest, asked for his advice and guidance. Metropolitan Filaret was a patriot of Belarus and always worried about the future of our country."

Mother Superior Gavriila, abbess of the Holy Nativity of the Mother of God Stavropegic Convent in Grodno, "The contribution of Metropolitan Filaret to the spiritual revival of Belarusian society, the cultivation of charity and Christian values in people is difficult to overestimate. He is not just a man with the Hero of Belarus title. He is really a hero in every sense. He had charisma, and although he was descended from a noble family, he was humble in communication and talked to anyone on equal terms. The Patriarchal Exarch was highly spiritual, yet gentle. Metropolitan Filaret will forever remain our role model of mercy and love for our neighbour."

MEMORY

Metropolitan Filaret passed away on January 12th, 2021, but the bright memory of him continues to live in the hearts of Belarusians. The funeral of the Honorary Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus took place on January 15th, 2021 at the Holy Dormition Zhirovichi Monastery. On that day, white birds were circling over the Holy Spirit Cathedral in Minsk as a symbol of farewell to the one who undoubtedly became the heavenly intercessor of Belarus. In 2021, a part of Gorky Street in Grodno was renamed in honour of Metropolitan Filaret.

In 2022, a monument to Metropolitan Filaret was unveiled in Minsk. A bronze sculpture installed near the entrance to the Holy Spirit Cathedral depicts Metropolitan Filaret greeting and blessing Minsk residents with the Cross of St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk. It was here in 1989 that Metropolitan Filaret began his church service in the Belarusian land.

A team of authors led by sculptor Andrei Khotyanovsky worked on the creation of the monument.

Why do doctors need a smart electric scooter?

Unique exhibits have been unveiled at the International Medical Forum in Minsk

The 29th International Medical Forum Healthcare of Belarus–2024 was held in Belarus' capital at the end of April. The event was timed to coincide with the 105th anniversary of the healthcare system. This year, more than 160 exhibitors from eight countries, including Russia, China, Egypt, Cuba, Iran showcased their best developments that surprised even sophisticated visitors. The exhibition has highlighted the advancement of medical technologies in our country and worldwide. Below are some of the most extraordinary exhibits that will shape the future of the medical industry.

By Yelena Basikirskaia

Smart electric scooter

“Why would you need it?” you could ask in surprise. Here is the answer — this is a chair that gives people with limited mobility the opportunity to get moving.

It is Belarusians who came up with this novelty, about half of the components for which are domestic. Both handrails of the electric scooter have a control joystick that enables to adjust the speed, turns, and even set commands remotely from your phone. The device is also suitable for outdoor use, with the charge lasting for 20-25 kilometres. The main thing in this regard is that the patient does not accidentally ride away from the clinic to some sanatorium, carried away by enthusiasm...



Electric bed with weighing function

Electric beds have been produced in Belarus for a long time, and now they have been enhanced with an automatic weighing function. This feature is important for severe bedridden patients as it allows checking their body weight without moving. This information is needed in order to determine the necessary dose of medications and other prescriptions. The bed plugs to an outlet and can be controlled using a remote control. A panel for the medical staff is placed on the outside, and the one for the patient is on the inside. In other words, the patient can independently adjust the four-section bed by raising or lowering supports for different parts of the body. By the way, this is a domestic development and it is already used, mainly in rehabilitation centres.



ROBUST EXPORTS

Foreigners come to Belarus for medical care and education

Innovative technologies in the field of medicine are rapidly developing in Belarus, which lures more foreigners to our country. By the end of last year, the export of Belarusian medical services to 140 countries worldwide exceeded \$40 million. Belarus also provides high-quality medical education to students from more than 50 countries. Last year alone, the export of educational services yielded profit in the amount of over \$30 million.



Cardiopulmonary resuscitation device

This is an electromechanical German-made installation that automatically performs chest compression during cardiopulmonary resuscitation. It consists of an X-ray transparent backboard where a torsional actuator is attached. The frequency and depth of compression are adjusted on the display. The device is mainly used in intensive care units and ambulance services, and can be controlled using a defibrillator monitor. The X-ray transparent base does not interfere with computer tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

Daria Titova

Convection heating system

It is a Belarusian novelty which has no analogues in the post-Soviet space. Belarusian clinics previously used American, Dutch or German convection heating systems to maintain patient temperature. Currently our domestically produced device is undergoing a registration procedure. Its distinctive feature is that the disposable blanket is filled with warm air at different speeds. This function is necessary for long-term operations, when the patient's body temperature decreases significantly. The novelty has enough power to provide heat for two blankets by placing them on top and bottom. Thus, the patient is placed in a 'warm sandwich', the temperature of which can be adjusted. In addition to convection heating, the exhibition participants demonstrated an electric heating system where a heating module and a gel plate are put on the operating table.



Centrifugal force installation

An R&D and production organisation, Belarus' National Academy of Sciences and Belarusian State Medical University have jointly come up with an unconventional capsule, with the dominance of centrifugal forces inside. It quickly rotates the patient, due to which the blood is redistributed in the body — it flows from the upper extremities to the lower ones. This method is used for treating orthopedic, neurological, and vascular problems, as well as diseases of the genitourinary system. The procedure duration depends on the medical prescription and lasts on average from 5 to 30 minutes. The head remains stationary on the axis of rotation during the session, hence there is no vertigo. The biggest load is exerted on the legs. Depending on the patient's height, the programme automatically calculates the required number of revolutions. The creators of the installation are now in the process of obtaining a certificate to register the innovation as medical equipment.

Robotic complex

Russian manufacturers have come up with a robotic complex enabling rehabilitation and improving quality of life for people after stroke, spinal cord injuries, and operations on large joints. The uniqueness of the device is that it allows the immobilised patient to move along a free trajectory and even to practise foot rolling. All sensory organs are involved in rehabilitation, which ensures the correct flow of impulses from the lower extremities to the brain. As a result, the lost motor functions are quite often taken over by healthy parts of the brain. Among the unmatched exhibits are also exoskeletons for children with cerebral palsy and degenerative diseases.



Magnetic therapy capsule

The patient is placed inside this capsule, and the magnetic field rotating around the body improves blood circulation, affects the musculoskeletal system, and increases immunity. The device is used in oncology and in post-COVID-19 rehabilitation. Such capsules have been used in Belarus for 15 years already in many health resorts. They used to be imported from Nizhny Novgorod, Russia. The new model with wireless control and improved design is a joint development of Belarusian and Russian specialists.



Yekaterina Ustinovich from Vitebsk has learnt to shape nostalgia into a tangible object. Based on the photo, she can make miniature copies of houses and flats that sell like hot cakes. That is because there are only a few miniaturists in Belarus and even far beyond its borders. The master's works have already caused a sensation at the presentation of a network of urban cafés. Yekaterina's miniatures were ordered for a film set of a Russian fantasy series, and her TikTok videos fly into trends no worse than the content of the first magnitude celebrities.

Nostalgia in miniature

A childhood home recreated by a woman from Vitebsk that makes unique room boxes with favourite interiors

By Olga Nevmerzhitskaya

From idea to action

Many people are surprised that it is possible to create from improvised materials a miniature house that both externally and internally looks like a real home — the one from childhood. It is enough just to provide the master with a photo, and she will bring to life almost any idea.

Yekaterina took up creating room boxes while on maternity leave. Like many young mums, she got bored with her daily household chores, “I started with dollhouses. It was something very basic. It worked for the first time, the second... I made a dollhouse for my friend's daughter. And then, I liked it so much that I did not want to go back to work. During my parental leave, I learnt how to monetise my hobby.”

Yekaterina held a highly paid position — she worked as a manager in an information security company. Yet, this did not stop her on the way to her dream. A lawyer by profession, she plunged into a completely new world. Now she feels like Santa Claus all year round, giving genuine emotions to those who are waiting for them.

Revealing the cards

Everyone has their own secrets of mastery. Yekaterina shared some of hers. In her hands was a room box with the plot familiar to millions of people — a Soviet flat on New Year's eve featuring a Christmas tree, a festive table, and a TV set. To bring a person back to the happy moments of the past is the goal behind the creative and painstaking work.

“Just look at the glowing Christmas tree!” the master drew attention to the delicate object. Indeed, everything was shining like in a fairy tale. How did she do that?

In the manufacture of room boxes, all things that needlessly clutter your home space and get dusty while not in use — cardboard, fabric remnants, paints — will come in handy. However, in order to create a really solid piece of art, you still cannot do without going to a DIY store. It is possible to buy the necessary materials for the creation of one room box in the range of Br50-100. It all depends on the imagination and the degree of detail.

The common room box scale is 1 to 12. Before implementing

the idea, Yekaterina draws a future home on paper. “I outline an approximate façade and cut it out from cardboard with a stationery knife. The roof, the door, the windows and so on are all the obligatory details. Next, you need to carefully glue them together. Then paint with acrylic paints. Voilà!” the master demonstrated the sample.

As for the tiny elements, the work is more meticulous. Furniture is made of cardboard of different density. The most interesting thing is the dishes. The master sculpts them with polymer clay. After that, she paints them by hand and covers with acrylic varnish.

According to our interlocutor,



Anton Stepanishev



you can sculpt literally anything. The more experience you have, the more elegant the item will be. By the way, Yekaterina started her polymer clay sculpting experience not even with dishes but with pets. Cats and dogs of different colours and breeds began to work fine gradually, followed by other new elements. Now, the Vitebsk woman manages to make people miniatures out of clay based on photo.

Test purchase

It takes time to purchase the materials necessary for the future room box. Yekaterina sometimes



clay sculpting, an hour later I already work on furniture layouts, after another hour I set up lighting in the room box,” the miniaturist explained. The last element gives a special flair. Technically, it is possible to highlight any object — a Christmas tree, a nightlight, a fireplace. The master uses a miniature garland that runs on batteries. The key point is to hide the power supply to ensure secrecy on how everything has been done.

“Lighting often plays a crucial role. When the composition glows, it creates a feeling of magic. I have read a lot of comments on my works on social networks with a similar idea, ‘It feels like I plunged into my childhood’,” Yekaterina noted.

The interviewee mentioned that people often ask to reproduce the exact copies of their interiors — with a specific wardrobe, table, sofa... “Let's say they need a bookcase, the same as in the photo. The first thing to do is to draw it and cut it out from thick cardboard. Then, insert the spines of mini-books. Glass is replaced by transparent plastic. The same story with the TV — cardboard, polymer clay or wood putty, paint on the top. Truly speaking, you need to get a knack for doing this. It is unlikely that you will get a decent room box from the first or second time.”

Composure is above everything

Looking at miniatures is a therapeutic activity, it relaxes and relieves stress.

One of the most popular themes that owners want to see in their future room boxes is a country house, like the one their grandmothers used to have. In order for the finished product to convey the right atmosphere, it is important to thoroughly think through all details. A rural house can hardly do without a stove. It is a symbol of cosiness. Yet, when making a miniature of a city flat, which Yekaterina reproduces based on a photo, a lot of details should be taken into consideration as well. The rule that helps her stay accurate and precise in her work is to find out in advance

and in every detail about the customer's most cherished childhood memories.

“Nuances are everything. In order for the room box to sink into heart and become a favourite interior piece, it is necessary to approach its implementation with all scrupulousness and attention to detail. The main thing for me is to elicit the information from the customer about the things or toys that were once more important for them than others. A teddy bear, a doll, a book of fairy tales — one detail can make all the difference, giving priceless emotions.”

Yekaterina believes that the work is finished only when it causes a strong emotional response.

The stars follow suit

People learn about the creative works of a talented Belarusian mostly from Instagram and TikTok. Some of Yekaterina's videos and photo posts on social networks have gained millions of views and collect lots of comments from those who want to share their childhood story, admire the miniature plot or just leave emojis with smiles and hearts.

Orders sometimes come from the most unexpected individuals, and even organisations. A couple of years ago, the producers of the *Magic Police Station* series approached the master from Vitebsk. They saw her project for a sushi bar chain where Yekaterina made miniatures of restaurants. Having trusted a professional with an impressive portfolio, they did not go wrong. Yekaterina sent extraordinary glass showcases — three miniatures of the dwarf's room, one of the film characters — to Moscow by mail, and received a photo from the series presentation in response. “Room boxes perform a lot of different functions. They bring back the best moments of life, charge with positive emotions, or just make the interior unique. Knowing how important it is for most customers, it is a real joy to work. Also, it is not difficult to take up this hobby as it does not require art education or draftsman skills. Just give it a try!”

By Aleksei Avdonin,
analyst at Belarusian Institute
for Strategic Research (BISR)

Global clash

Broken chains

The ways of delivering goods have traditionally determined the level of economic development. Poor road quality, the lack of access to the sea, the dominance of bandits sharply slowed down trade and did not provide opportunities for advancement. Therefore, rulers paid the utmost attention to the protection of their roads and sea lines of communication.

Nothing has fundamentally changed in this approach so far. It is important not only who produces what kind of goods, but also who controls the logistics corridors. Recent events in the global economy have indicated massive disruptions in the established system of global delivery of goods and services. It is worth taking into account the destructive actions of some powers, damage to the Red Sea undersea cables that deeply affected the internet service provision, the explosion that disrupted the Nord Stream gas pipeline, sabotage against port infrastructure and overpasses.

The DAVOS 2024 economic forum on navigating global business challenges has shown that owners of key global corporations consider the destruction of supply chains for critical goods and raw materials and the interruption of global food supply chains to be among the most likely threats for the international economy.

This year, in particular, such threats have already manifested themselves in the form of attacks by Yemen's Houthis in the Red Sea on commercial vessels of western companies as a response to Israel's military operations in the Gaza Strip. Such attacks have already become systemic in nature and are aimed not only at merchant ships. Thus, it became known on April 7th that Houthis launched drones to attack US Navy ships in the Red Sea, and also hit the British ship MV Hope Island. They also carried out operations against two Israeli commercial ships MSC Grace F in the Indian Ocean and MSC Gina in the Arabian Sea with anti-ship missiles. In January 2024, the US media reported that Iranian Navy ships that may be somehow connected with Houthis were located in the Gulf of Aden close to the grouping of US Navy ships.

Stop sign

The situation in the area of the key transport artery — the Suez Canal and the Red Sea — continued to heat up in the first quarter of 2024. At the end of March, a Russian Navy detachment consisting of the Varyag missile cruiser and the Marshal Shaposhnikov frigate entered the Red Sea as part of the long-range sea campaign. Earlier, Houthis had informed China and Russia about the possibility for their vessels to sail through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden without being attacked.

The West has made every effort to cut off Belarus from global trade routes having blocked the road to seaports, imposed a ban for foreign companies on flight connection with our country, and closed border crossings for vehicles from the side of some neighbouring states. However, Belarus has managed to replace the dropped out commodity channels within the framework of the Union State.

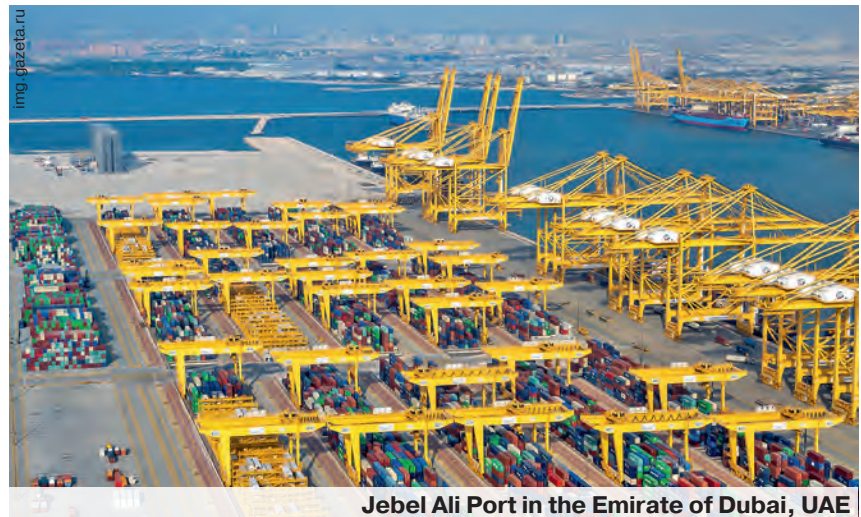
The struggle for control over logistics corridors is escalating

However, the situation extremely aggravated after the Israeli Air Force had carried out an airstrike and destroyed the Iranian consulate in Damascus on April 1st and Tehran had subsequently taken an act of retaliation against Israel in the form of a massive missile and UAV attack. On the same day, Iranian special forces seized the MSC ARIES container ship near the Strait of Hormuz. The Portuguese-flagged ship is related to Zodiac Maritime, which is part of Zodiac Group owned by Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer. The special forces troops rappelled onto the vessel from a helicopter, after which the ship was transferred to the territorial waters of Iran.

Against this backdrop, the United States urgently moved warships to positions to protect Israel and American forces in the region, hoping to prevent a direct Iranian attack on Israel. The United States also redeployed two destroyers, one of which was already stationed in the region. It is known that at least one of the ships is equipped with an Aegis ballistic missile defence system.

Further escalation of the situation in the Red Sea may put a stop sign on the key logistics corridor of the global economy — the Suez Canal — which will inevitably block goods supplies from the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region to Europe.

Attacks by Yemeni Houthis on merchant ships in the Red Sea have already led to an overload of Jebel Ali Port in the UAE, the world's tenth largest seaport, which affected the speed of cargo handling operations. The average time of sea delivery of goods from the UAE to Europe has almost doubled — from 20 to 55 days.



Jebel Ali Port in the Emirate of Dubai, UAE

Support ports

NATO's activity in the Baltic and Black Seas, as well as the situation in Ukraine — first a series of Maidan protests [the mass anti-government uprising in the centre of Kiev that resulted in coup d'état] and then military actions since 2014 — are also elements that have undermined Russia's and Belarus' trade routes to supply our goods to foreign markets.

Back in 1912, Russian writer and military intelligence officer Aleksei Vandam wrote in his treatise *Our Position* that access to the seas is a continuation of internal roads while the absence of access to the sea significantly hinders the development of industry and takes away the source of wealth from people through impossibility of delivering products abroad.

The closure of the port infrastructure for Belarusian goods and products by the Baltic States after 2020 as instructed by Washington should also

be considered as an attempt to strangle Belarusian trade and, therefore, our country.

The current problems at the border with significant queues of trucks are, among other things, elements of fierce competition on the part of western corporations — this is how they try to restrain the flow of goods to their market, which is in fact a distorted form of protectionism.

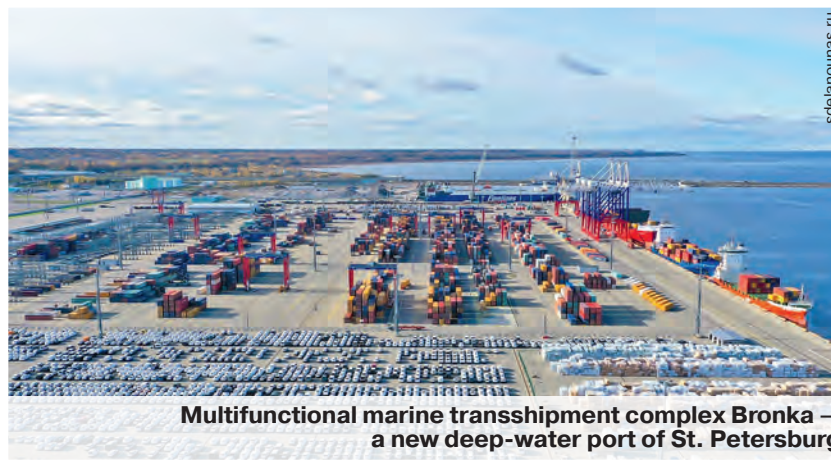
However, sanctions and Western pressure have failed to splinter Belarusian ties with trading partners thanks to the support of the Russian Federation and the development of its Northern Sea Route (NSR) [the shortest shipping route between the western part of Eurasia and the APAC region].

During the recent talks, the President of Belarus has expressed gratitude to the Russian leader for providing Belarus with access to the port infrastructure of the Russian Federation, including in St. Petersburg and Murmansk.

"I appreciate your support on the ports. We are working, we are looking into other ports. The Russian ports are helping us to ship products. In a word, there is no such thing as goods being neglected or left unattended making us unable to ship them. We have already shipped goods along the Northern Sea Route. Several thousand tonnes have already been delivered. It is very convenient for our manufacturers. Therefore, your support in this regard has been very important and relevant for us," Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised.

In May 2023, Belarus' Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko inspected the port area in Murmansk. Two months ago, Belarus' Minister of Transport and Communications stated that our country had decided to build port facilities in Murmansk. There have been offered three possible sites for the construction of a terminal. The issue of building specifically our own Belarusian port is under consideration.

Global players are actively trying to control logistics corridors and block them for their competitors. Nevertheless, Belarus in liaison with Russia has its own trade routes and, despite the attempts of unfriendly countries, is not affected by external interference.



Multifunctional marine transshipment complex Bronka — a new deep-water port of St. Petersburg



Murmansk Commercial Seaport

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,
"Special attention should be paid to the development of transportation through seaports. We should also continue the work on building efficient transport and logistics chains in the eastern direction. We need new routes in order to expand trade, and a further upgrade of transport infrastructure is required."
At the meeting of the Council of Ministers, on March 10th, 2023

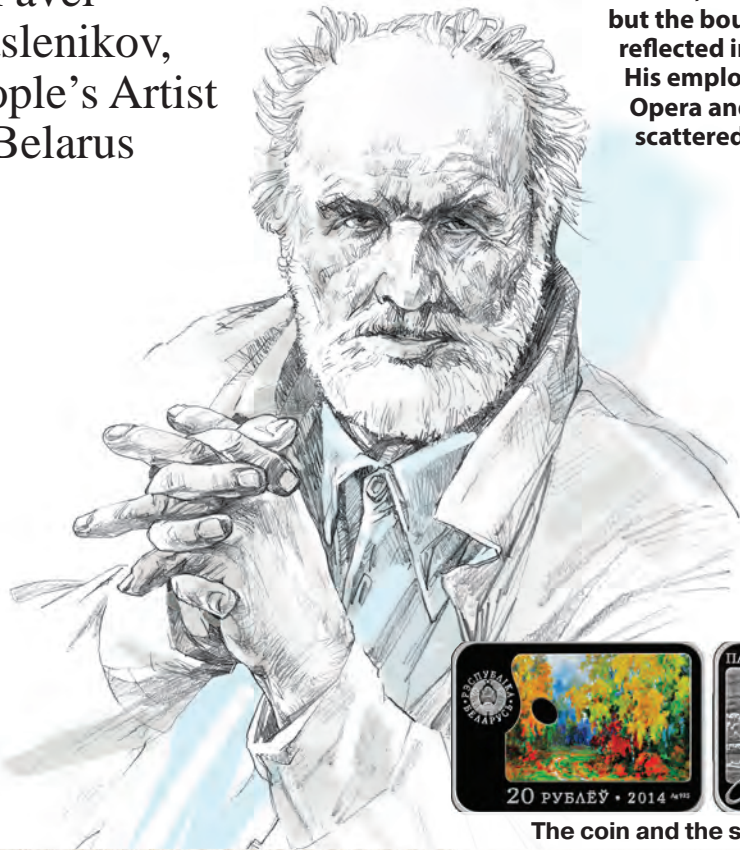
Attracted to the sky

In memory of Pavel Maslenikov, People's Artist of Belarus

Pavel Maslenikov is an iconic figure for Belarusian painting. It is not the halo of recognition surrounding the People's Artist of Belarus, or even the galaxy of his countless students, or the creative dynasty he founded that makes his personality so outstanding, but the boundless love for life and his native land that permeated his entire being and was reflected in the landscapes painted by the master with amazing warmth and tenderness. His employment book contained only two entries throughout his entire life — the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre and Belarus Theatrical Institute. Hundreds of his paintings are scattered around museums, though.

CULTURE

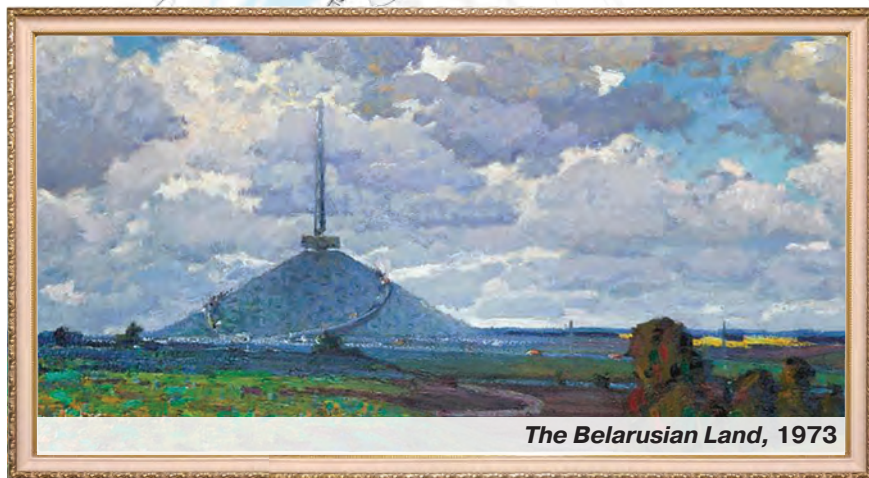
Oleg Karpovich



Nepal. In the Foothills of the Himalayas, 1976



The coin and the stamp issued for the artist's anniversaries



The Belarusian Land, 1973

By Irina Ovsepyan

Pavel Maslenikov was born on February 1st, 1914 in Mogilev Region, in a family of sturdy peasants who had two more sons and a daughter. He knew since childhood what he wanted to do — to join the ranks of creative people, to become a musician, a writer or an artist and not just a layman observer. Since childhood, he felt the magic of his native Belarusian nature and was inspired by all natural phenomena that seemed mysterious and beautiful.

He swallowed books, tried his hand at drawing, dreamed of playing the balalaika and begged his parents to buy him this musical instrument. However, such expensive purchases could not be made out of simple desire and although the family was not poor, his parents did not have spare money. So his father refused. Then Pavel made a balalaika himself using a plank, a piece of plywood, and a copper wire for strings, and thus tried to extract the music that fascinated him so much. One of the boy's brightest childhood impressions was an excursion that the village teacher arranged for the class to the museum in Mogilev — a mesmerising place with paintings by Ilya Repin, Vasily Surikov, seascapes by Ivan Aivazovsky...

After finishing four classes in the village of Knyazhitsu, Pavel went to Mogilev where he continued his studies. This is how a ten-year-old child got an independent life. His parents rented a room for their son having paid the owners with potatoes. The rest was for Pavel to cope on his own, and he did well. He finished school, and when the question arose about continuing his education, he entered the Mogilev Pedagogical College and later studied at

the literary faculty of the Mogilev State Pedagogical Institute.

An overwhelming passion for painting was typical of Belarusians in those years. True, Marc Chagall and Kazimir Malevich had already left Vitebsk, but young people were still eager to attend the school the prominent artists had created. Pavel Maslenikov also went to Vitebsk. Upon graduation, he was hired as a scene designer at the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of the BSSR, where famous Sergei Nikolayev — the future People's Artist of Belarus — was the leading stage designer at that time. Nikolayev was one of the best-known masters of his trade, who laid the foundation of Belarusian stage design. Thus, two main passions of Pavel Maslenikov — painting and music — merged into one profession, and he forever acquired a special love for decorative and applied arts and not only for pure painting. In 1940, he was already trusted with independent design of theatrical productions. *Trilby*, the opera by composer Aleksandr Yurasovsky, became his debut.

The happy course of life was interrupted by the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War. It found Maslenikov during his vacation in the Caucasus, making it impossible to return to Belarus. The theatre was evacuated to Volga Region, and the young artist went off to war to defend his Homeland. Maslenikov fought on the Western and Northwestern Fronts, as well as participated in the Battle of Moscow as part of a special signal squadron. The fate favoured him and kept him safe.

Maslenikov not only survived — he went through the entire war without a single wound, even when a shell hit the body of the car he was riding in

A GENEROUS GIFT

People's Artist of Belarus Pavel Maslenikov left an extensive creative legacy. He presented about 140 of his paintings to the Mogilev Regional Art Museum as a gift. In the accompanying dedication, he wrote, *'To my native Mogilev land, to my dear unforgettable parents, to wise and hardworking countrymen — with a profound reverence and filial gratitude'*. By Decree of the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, dated January 22nd, 1996, the museum was named after the artist.

with other soldiers. Most of them died or were injured, but Pavel, thrown back by the blast wave, survived and remained unharmed.

He was lucky in one more aspect — he found his soulmate at the front, a signal-woman named Nina, originally from Penza, Russia. They met in Iran, on the border with Türkiye, where their detachment was redeployed. The artist brought his young wife to his native Belarus after demobilisation.

Having returned to liberated Minsk and got off the train at the station, the artist saw sheer ruins instead of the beautiful and well-groomed capital of the country. It was only the Bolshoi Theatre that towered over the ruined city — damaged, but preserved... So he walked there, to his place of power.

The artist gave two decades of his life to the Bolshoi Theatre, having designed the stage for 16 operas and 7 ballets. He also happened to be a decorator at the Kupala Theatre. The classics of music and drama — *Tosca* by Puccini and *Pagliacci* by Leoncavallo, *La cenerentola* by Delibes and *Iolanthe* by Gilbert and Sullivan, *La Bayadère* by Minkus and *The Corsair* by Verdi — blossomed and materialised thanks to his skilful hands. Stage design of national Belarusian performances occupies a special place in the master's creative work — opera *The Haunted Manor* by Stanisław Moniuszko, ballet *Nightingale* by Mikhail Koshner, opera *Mikhas Podgorny* by Yevgeny Tikotsky and opera *Clear Dawn* by Aleksei Turenko, and more. While

working in the theatre, Maslenikov did not neglect his studies. He graduated from the famous Ilya Repin Leningrad Institute for Painting, Sculpture and Architecture where he studied in absentia as an art expert, after which he embarked on postgraduate studies at the Institute of Literature of the BSSR Academy of Sciences.

In 1960, Maslenikov became rector of the Belarusian State Theatre and Art Institute (now the Belarusian State Academy of Arts), founded after the war. Back at that time, the university had only two faculties — theatre and art. He opened new departments and simultaneously solved economic issues, such as the construction of a dormitory and a new academic building, repairs and reconstructions, as well as was engaged in the creation of a boarding secondary school for music and fine arts (now the College of Arts named after Ivan Akhremchik). He was going around the Soviet Union looking for teachers, checking, persuading, proving...

Already at an advanced age, Maslenikov set off on a journey through Altai alone. He got to Biysk by train, and then on foot. He occasionally stayed overnight at shepherds' or slept in a tent without thinking about such trifles as hearty food or comfort, being just focused on how to capture and portray as much beauty of the amazing region as possible. He returned home emaciated, with overgrown hair, but brought with him 70 picturesque canvases that made up a single powerful *Altai Cycle*. India, Nepal, Egypt, Sweden, Finland, Italy and France, Ukraine, the Baltic States and Russia — the artist could be seen everywhere invariably wearing his black beret and a chunky knit sweater, with a Hemingway beard, and a sketchbook on his shoulder.

"A person needs rest, spiritual renewal, purification... we need a quiet, cosy corner of nature..." Maslenikov believed in that. He travelled Belarus both on foot and by car to the most secluded and hidden corners, never ceasing to admire the beauty of his Homeland. He painted it at any time of the year, in love with his native land as a true romantic — from the changing seasons to the architectural beauties and panoramas of industrial life.

The cycle of landscapes *Around the Native Land, Ancient Minsk, Streets of Minsk, Rakov, Forest Thicket, Golden Autumn, Near Svisloch, Lonely Sail* on the surface of the Minsk Sea — whatever you take, every painting conveys a long, loving look of a genuine artist.



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Success through learning and teaching

Who are they, creators of victories? The brightest Belarusian coaches in team sports

Great victories of athletes come from years of hard work by their coaches. Although a mentor in sports is a mainstream profession, a talented and successful mentor is a rarity and always worth its weight in gold.

Belarus is rich in wonderful sports teachers and the Belarusian coaching school has a deep history, including in team sports. The names of Eduard Malofeyev and Spartak Mironovich are known all over the world for being pioneers, innovators and leaders, specialists who were ahead of their time and worthy of monuments during their lifetime for the remarkable achievements in their profession. Who sets the main trends and directions in Belarusian team sports now? Who is the most fashionable, successful and decorated? Let us look at those whose names dominate the news, and the mere mention of whom makes trainees shiver.

By Sergei Kanashits

Dmitry Kravchenko — harsh enough to tie hockey skates with reinforcing rods

For the last three years, HC Metallurg Zhlobin knows no equal and keeps winning the President's Cup in brilliant style, under the management of Dmitry Kravchenko. They say that each team acquires the personality traits of its coach, and the 'Wolves' [nickname for Metallurg hockey players] from Zhlobin are a vivid confirmation of this. The core of steel, the ability to put pressure on the opponent, sporting craftiness, boldness and anger are somehow miraculously intertwined with poetic lightness, self-confidence and positive energy, with which the coach and his team look forward regardless of the circumstances.

Dmitry Kravchenko's name has been in the top of the best hockey specialists in the country for ten years. It is even strange that he has not yet received a serious offer to work as a head coach at the KHL level or to lead the national team, at least a junior one. After all, both his results and authority make Kravchenko a worthy candidate for such a post. What is important is the fact that Dmitry Aleksandrovich has gone all the way from the very basics, without missing a

single step. He began working with children and young men, after which moved to the adult level and now continues to hone his skills and enrich himself with knowledge year by year.

Kravchenko is not a local — he was born in Novokuznetsk, Russia. In 1993, he relocated to Grodno, Belarus together with his coach who was invited to work at HC Neman. The guy was 17 years old at that time, and the main incentive for him was not really hockey but studying at a local university. "Back in Novokuznetsk, hockey players tie their skates with rein-

forcing rods," the mentor smiled. "It is a city of metallurgical production, a harsh one. So my character corresponded to the surrounding conditions." Kravchenko's career as a player did not work out, though. At the age of 21, he had to hang his skates on the wall and put the stick in the closet. "I dislocated my shoulder," he recalled. "I thought it was okay, but it turned out to be relapsing dislocation. Any careless movement made the shoulder pop out again. I underwent one operation, the second, the third... It was the year 1996. I was left without money. I left the university, but I did not leave Grodno. I had got married by that time, and got an offer to work with children. So, I took groups with children of different ages and moved forward by trial



Ivan Yananovich

and error. As a result, I found a second homeland here, which has now become the first. It turned out the way God had disposed, and I am happy to have ended up here. All my children are Belarusians and I consider myself a Belarusian, too."

The coach calls diligence one of the secrets behind his successful results. "I followed this principle when I was on the ice. When everyone ran fast, I tried to run even faster; when everyone jumped 20 times, I jumped 40. Sometimes I did drills not just better but more. This is hard work and diligence, and it still helps me now."

In addition to direct coaching talents, Dmitry Kravchenko has a poetic one — his comments are always figurative and scintillating, and his style is metaphorical. The phrase, 'I looked at the stands and saw one big heart' became a meme and people's favourite. Bright, charismatic, unhackneyed — a figure that makes Belarusian hockey clearly better and livelier.



Dmitry Nikulenkov — a hot heart and a cool head, or vice versa



Aleksandr Kulevsky

Nikulya, as handball fans affectionately called him, has been a leader and a fighter throughout his life. He was the captain of almost all the teams he played for — in Minsk clubs Arkatron and Dinamo, Meshkov Brest, in the Belarusian national team and SKA Minsk. After finishing his career, Nikulenkov remained true to himself and at the helm as he took the post of head coach of the legendary handball squad, in which he finished his career.

Nikulya has increased in status by becoming Dmitry Olegovich, but he has not changed a lot — he is still the same restless and emotional leader who does not recognise

any other results except for the maximum. He has a rich and very eventful career behind him, including European and World Championships, as well as Champions League matches, and knows almost everything about handball. Most importantly, when playing, he was simultaneously preparing himself to become a coach. Nikulenkov started working with young men but did not stay long at this level, taking over the reins of the young and daring SKA Minsk. The Belarusian national handball team could not do without him, either. Niku-

lenkov is an assistant to Yuri Shevtsov, and this is not just a prestigious and honourable mission for him now, but a real storehouse of prospects and opportunities. Working alongside such a master as legendary Shevtsov is like studying unique folios with secrets of the coaching profession and craft, and Dmitry Olegovich surely absorbs new knowledge like a sponge. If we have to speculate about who is capable of replacing Yuri Shevtsov as coach of the Belarusian national team in the near future, we could bet this is going to be Dmitry Nikulenkov. There are almost no other options.

However, this is a future that we are not destined to know. What is known is that Dmitry Nikulenkov today is one of the most prominent figures in Belarus' team sports.



Aleksandr Buda

Igor Kovalevich — sincere and uncompromising

In Guy Ritchie's film, Igor Kovalevich could well be given one of the main roles. It is a pity that the iconic film director who made Vinnie Jones, the main bully of British football, a movie star simply did not see what tricks with the ball Belarusian Igor Kovalevich was doing on the field when he was a player. If Kovalevich and Vinnie Jones had happened to cross paths on the field, it would have definitely resulted in some amazing football thriller.

Kovalevich has always stood out from the rest. He can hardly be called an intellectual coach or an



expert in millions of tactical schemes, or a master of the strategic part. He is one of those who put a stake on strength of character and fighting spirit of the team — he is like a battery commander. At the same time, Kovalevich as a coach has not lost his individuality over the years of practice and has not unlearned how to surprise.

The mentor who led FC Neman Grodno to the silver medal of the Belarusian Premier League last year has called Eduard Malofeyev ('No one can see the soul of a football player like him') and Yuri Kurnenin, who passed away before time ('It was very interesting to work under his leadership in Brest') his role models in the



Aleksandr Kulevsky

art of coaching. Igor Kovalevich will undoubtedly become a role model for young coaches, too.

Photo of the week



Andrey Sazonov

A 99-year-old Great Patriotic War veteran, Grigory Berdnikov from Slavgorod District shares his memories with the children

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



May 17th is World Telecommunication and Information Society Day. Information technologies have significantly shaped

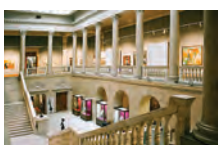
the face of civilisation. They have marked a real breakthrough in the global economy resulting in a sharp increase in the quantity and quality of products. Humanity has received an incredible luxury unknown before — information and knowledge have become the main riches, opening up unprecedented opportunities for self-education.

May 18th marks the Day of Physical Culture and Sports Workers in the Republic of Belarus, celebrated on the third Saturday of



May every year. This day unites all those who choose a healthy and active lifestyle, rejoice in the success of Belarusian athletes and continue the good sports traditions.

May 18th is International Museum Day. Museums serve as a means through which society expresses its attitude to the historical and cultural heritage. By collecting and



storing monuments of material and spiritual culture, museums conduct extensive scientific and educational work.



May 19th, 1944 is the founding date of the Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum. Since 1959, it has been located in a building

erected on the site of the house where Yanka Kupala's family lived in 1927-1941. All museum pieces are distributed among 16 collections. The most significant of them are Yanka Kupala's autographs, manuscripts and correspondence of the poet's relatives and contemporaries, photographic documents, as well as personal documents of the poet.

May 20th, 1884 is the date of birth of Konstantin Aleksyutovich (1884-1943), a Belarusian ballet master and choreographer. He staged dances, including round dances, games, and ritual scenes in dramatic performances. He made a significant contribution to the development of Belarusian stage dance. Aleksyutovich created the *Bulba* [potato] dance, stage versions of many traditional folk dances, among which are *Lyavonikha*, *Mikita*, and quadrilles.



May 20th is known as World Bee Day. Bees and other pollinators make it possible for plants to reproduce over great distances. They make an additional contribution to increasing crop yields, hence to ensuring food security.



On May 20th, 1570, the world's first modern geographic atlas was printed in Antwerp. It was compiled and developed by Flemish cartographer

Abraham Ortelius, and was called *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (in Latin, *Theatre of the World*). The publication portrayed highly developed scientific and geographical knowledge, unparalleled at that time. The atlas became a kind of 'geographical bible' for navigators of the late 16th – early 17th centuries.

On May 20th, 1742, Russian explorer Semyon Chelyuskin reached the northernmost point of Eurasia during the Russian Kamchatka expedition by dog sled. Chelyuskin made a discovery that was ahead of geographical science and time. The cape was subsequently named after him — Cape Chelyuskin.



May 20th, 1873 is the birthday of blue jeans. The history of denim dates back over 200 years. The first jeans were produced in the USA by a man named Levi Strauss in 1853. They were sturdy canvas trousers with double-stitched seams and lots of pockets. Today, jeans are available in a variety of colours, designs, fabrics and sizes.



May 22nd, 1856 is the day when the State Tretyakov Gallery — the national museum of Russian fine art of the

10th-21st centuries — was founded. Pavel Tretyakov, a collector, merchant and textile manufacturer, devoted over 40 years of his life to create the museum of the Russian national school of painting. The gallery was opened to the public in 1881. In 1892, Tretyakov donated his entire collection to Moscow. The Tretyakov Gallery has become one of the world's largest museums and is visited by millions of people annually.

May 22nd, 1859 marks the birthday of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930), an English writer, one of the luminaries of detective literature of the 20th century. He created the character of Sherlock Holmes, an amateur detective who uses close observation, logic, and deduction to solve mysteries. The Guinness Book of World Records has called Sherlock Holmes 'the human literary character most frequently portrayed on film and television', with 299 depictions as of 2015.



On May 22nd, 1892, a toothpaste tube was invented by Washington Sheffield, a dentist from New London, Connecticut.