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Andrei Sazonov

Kristina and Vladislav Prokudin are a married couple of doctors from the Cherikov District

Linked by a single goal

Kristina and Vladislav Prokudin, from Klimovichi, have been together since they were at school. They studied in the same class at the Gomel State Medical University and got married as students. Two years ago, the couple were sent to the Cherikov District under the postgraduate work assignment system — as general practitioners. Kristina joined the polyclinic department of the central district hospital, while Vladislav began working at the Veremeiki outpatient clinic. When the pandemic broke out, the young people became frontliners — consulting, discussing professional tasks, and rejoicing in each other's victories. The schedule has slightly relaxed and the couple now have some breathing time to think about their future.



Act commensurate with the challenges of the time



A scheduled meeting of the Security Council held in the Palace of Independence

The increase in the role of this collegial body in the life of our state was mainly in focus, in addition to the draft updated provisions on the Security Council and its State Secretariat. The President has previously spoken about the need to change the status and responsibility of these structures.

By Dmitry Kryat,
Varvara Morozova

Opening the event, the Head of State noted that this task also concerns the issues of protecting the independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty and Constitutional order of Belarus, maintaining civil peace and harmony, countering extremism and terrorism. Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed,

“Of course, the role and powers of the Security Council should be commensurate with the risks and threats that the times pose to us.”

Security: new approaches

The President provided an exhaustive answer to reflections on the recently adopted Ordinance No. 2, “The Security

position as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Naturally, the Security Council includes and will always include senior officials of the security apparatus.”

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, it’s fundamentally important that the new legislative act that specifies the work of the Security Council wouldn’t have any classified chapters and would be completely open to the public. He said,

“Every citizen of Belarus, especially in the current conditions, should know and see that all decisions are made collectively and openly.”

He also drew attention to the fact that the new Regulation on the Security Council is based on the Constitu-

tion always been and still remains the most important area of work of the Security Council. Moreover, the work of all bodies to overcome modern challenges and threats should be not only effective, but also as co-ordinated as possible.

Taking into account aggressive attempts to turn Belarus, in the terminology of the United States of America, into a ‘failed state’, we should give the Security Council new specific, important functions.

The President emphasised, “This extension of powers will help ensure stable and safe functioning of the entire state and each individual. All these are issues of the protection of sovereignty and Constitutional order mentioned in the Decree that I signed on May 9th.”

It isn’t difficult to forecast. I can imagine it quite well. The President’s Ordinance will be in force during this period. Of course, when a new President is elected, this Ordinance will no longer be necessary. It will be abolished by the new President or the Parliament with the President — depending on the new Constitution, I hope,” Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

The Head of State explained that the Ordinance is necessary because the members of the Security Council and millions of people supporting the current political course shouldn’t be concerned about their fate,

“Our enemies should also realise that they won’t manage to destabilise the country this way. This is a warning that they will not be able to turn the country, even in this way, from the path along which it is developing.”

At the same time, Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that, in an emergency situation, the heads of regions will participate in decision-making.

Border tensions rise

The State Secretary of the Security Council, Aleksandr Volfovich, told reporters about some details of the meeting. He noted that the event was pre-scheduled and focused on a wide range of issues.

“In particular, the meeting began with the consideration of issues and conclusions from the assessment of the military-political and strategic situation that is developing today around the borders of the Republic of Belarus,” he said. According to Mr. Volfovich, the situation is, unfortunately, escalating and becoming more and more tense. The Security Council registers the strengthening of the military contingent in the neighbouring states and the increase in the activity of its units in recent times. “This comes from the events that take place on the

territory of the neighbouring states — first of all, operational and combat training under the auspices of the United States of America, the NATO bloc and the armed forces of the neighbouring states. This cannot help but alarm us. The intensity and number of exercises that take place on the territory of the neighbouring countries, of course, causes certain military risks — not only in the depths of the neighbouring states but also along, near the borders of the Republic of Belarus,” he added.

The State Secretary of the Security Council gave concrete examples,

“In the last week alone, 25 flights of manned and unmanned reconnaissance aircraft were registered along the borders of Belarus. Also, in the Polish direction, the actions of special forces units were seen; these were engaged in studying approaches to the state border and passing through it for assessment and reconnaissance. Of course, all this cannot but cause concern.”

Mr. Volfovich also noted a significant increase in the number of initial deployment forces in the neighbouring countries — from 25,000 to 40,000 people. Their application period is up to 6 hours. Given the presence of a battalion tactical group on the territory of the Pabrade training ground (15km from the state border), the time of application is reduced to an hour. “Up to 10 combat aircraft are in constant readiness for departure and use,” he added.

“Our agencies monitor all these issues, analyse them and develop adequate response measures — primarily, in relation to the strengthening of the state border protection. Combat duty for air defence is in place, as well as other measures that will ensure the military security of our country,” Mr. Volfovich stressed.



ty Council is not only security officials, as some are assuming. Half of the permanent members of the Security Council are civilians: senior government officials, heads of the both chambers of Parliament and the Belarus President Administration. If we look at all members of the Security Council, we will see that two-thirds are civilians there. Let me also recall that this Constitutional body ensures the exercise of powers of the Head of State in the field of national security, including the powers stipulated by his

tion, the Law ‘On Defence’, the Military Doctrine, the Concept of National Security, other legislation of our country and international legal acts adopted during the entire period of independent Belarus. In preparing this Regulation, the experience of similar collegial bodies in other countries has been carefully studied and taken into account — primarily, in the allied countries. The Head of State recalled, “Domestic and foreign policy in the context of national security has

In only one case!

The President spoke about the mechanism of application of Ordinance No. 2. He reminded everyone that the document — granting emergency powers to the Security Council — will operate under only one condition: the death of the Head of State as a result of an attempt, the commission of an act of terrorism, external aggression or other violent actions.

“Just imagine: taking into account the experience of the previous year, what the situation will be like in the country.

The President approves amendments to the law on mass events

The organisation of mass events after simply notifying the authorities is no longer an option. Once the law comes into force, all mass events have to be authorised by municipal authorities.

Funds cannot be raised, money and other assets cannot be received and used, services cannot be rendered in order to compensate for the cost caused by prosecution for violating the established procedure of organisation of mass events.

Mass events, which take place in violation of the established procedure, cannot be covered in real time for the sake of their popularisation or propaganda. The prohibition also applies to reporters of mass media.

Reporters cannot act as organisers or participants of mass events in the course of their work.

Municipal authorities and law enforcement agencies are hereby authorised to suspend the operation of infrastructure (retail outlets, public catering, transport, fairs, organisations of all kinds) in places where mass events take place and along the routes their participants use.

Political parties and public associations will be held responsible if their leaders and members of governing



bodies make public calls for organising and holding a mass event before permission to organise the event is granted.

The main provisions of the law come into force one month after its official publication.

Based on materials of belta.by

Strength in unity

The meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council was held in an online format but this did not prevent the heads of the EAEU states from discussing all the current integration issues. Judging by the fact that the theme of security was the refrain in almost every speech, this is the number one issue for today.

The President of Belarus also spoke about the need to unite efforts in countering challenges and threats at the summit,

“It is obvious that the so-called collective West is not interested in the strengthening of our Union and supporting a new rival on the global market. Therefore, it’s important to assess the negative impact of such external pressure and to start mulling over response measures — from the targeted promotion of import substitution and mutual trade to, if necessary, the introduction of direct restrictive measures within the competence of the Union. We can use these measures like our rivals in the West do. I’m convinced that we can demonstrate unity and ensure the self-sustainability of the EAEU economy and its stable growth.”

It’s time to open up to each other

The EAEU was originally created to deepen partnerships and expand mutually beneficial trade on the external circuit. Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled this in his speech. The President of Belarus drew attention to the fact that we are still open to the development of relations with the centres of power and with those who still want to join our Union. The coronavirus pandemic, however, has made significant adjustments. So, it’s time to change the strategy.

“The time has come for our governments to agree on specific algorithms for joint action to resume the free movement of citizens in the EAEU space — certainly, taking measures to limit new outbreaks of coronavirus and other diseases,” the President of Belarus said, suggesting as an example... the EU — thus recalling the constant proposals of Kazakhstan to act in this regard, following the example of the European Union, more intensively.

The President named another important task of the Union. It deals with the working out of the issue of co-ordinated measures to maintain exchange rates and ensure the security of settlements. In this regard, our country welcomes the development of the common payment space of the

Union, including in order to encourage the transition to payments in national currencies. Aleksandr Lukashenko voiced his position on solving this problem,



“I am sure it is now the time to make a serious political decision on de-dollarizing the domestic trade in hydrocarbons in the Eurasian Economic Union.”

Barrier-free environment

The removal of barriers in the domestic market of the EAEU was also a topic that was mentioned in many speeches. Aleksandr Lukashenko did not ignore it either,

“Taking advantage of the complementarity of our economies we will be able to achieve quick and effective economic progress in the EAEU. In order to reach the goals set forth in the EAEU strategy, we should step up work to create common energy markets.”

The President of Belarus also touched on the topic of food security — speaking directly and with examples,

“At the start of the pandemic, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation projected food shortages and even famine in some parts of the world. These projections are already coming true. From various sources, we hear that about half a billion people on our planet starve and receive less food than they need. Within the framework of the Union, we should take every measure to ensure our own food security. While doing so, we should not miss out on

our benefits from international trade. We should avoid excessive barriers in trade inside our Union and in trade with other countries. In this regard, I urge our Eurasian Economic

Commission to finish work on the technical regulation ‘On Safety of Food Products’ in the near future.”

Ways to expand partnerships

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, despite all the complexity of the international political situation, it is necessary to continue working to position the EAEU as one of the centres of integration of the Great Eurasian Partnership, including through alignment with China’s *Belt and Road* initiative. He stressed,

“I call to intensify work in this area — putting it into practice. We are moving forward too slowly here. We need to identify specific projects. It seems, at the current stage of the dialogue with Chinese partners, it is advisable to focus on the development of digital transport corridors.”

The President believes it’s also necessary to promote exports of our products to China. With regard to food, there is the need to optimise veterinary, sanitary and phytosanitary control. He added that China has always shown and will continue to show interest in our Union, “I must say that, unlike other unions and countries, China is open to us. We feel it. That is why we need to develop further our co-operation with them, especially in trade.”

Protectionism is out of place

The President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in his speech focused on important and relevant goals for the members

of the Union. Touching upon the issue of barriers to trade, the leader of Kazakhstan stressed,

“Barriers limit the potential for growth and development of the Union. The Commission’s fight against barriers is ongoing. However, this is not particularly effective: it is a fight against the consequences of decisions taken at national level.”

Safety precautions

The Honorary Chairman of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, First President of Kazakhstan — Nursultan Nazarbayev — highlighted security issues in his speech. He stressed,

“We have passed a test of complexities both of a global nature and specific external pressures that are periodically exerted on parts of our Union. There are forces that do not want close integration in our association and we must not succumb to them. You have seen more than once how it ends up.”

Common gas market

Armenia, like Belarus, is concerned about the issue of the common gas market. It is not for nothing that the country’s Acting Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan, once again began his report at the meeting with this topic,

“We consider it necessary that, within the framework of

an international agreement, approaches are agreed not only to price and tariff formation in the common gas market of the Union, but also to establish tariffs for the transportation of gas from third countries for domestic consumption on the basis of transparency and a non-discriminatory approach.”

Shoulder to shoulder

The President of Kyrgyzstan, Sadyr Zhaparov, called on his colleagues in the EAEU to consolidate their efforts in countering the challenges. In his speech, he noted,

“The global challenges that we faced last year and in the first half of this year revealed the need to strengthen joint efforts aimed at overcoming the post-crisis consequences. The result should be ensuring the sustainable development of the Union through the introduction of new mechanisms of trade and economic co-operation that facilitate rapid response and adaptation to any changes in the external environment.”

Freedom of movement

The President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, shared Aleksandr Lukashenko’s concerns about restrictions on border crossings in the pandemic.

In his speech, in particular, he noted the project to create a digital platform: ‘Journey without COVID-19’,

“The goal of the project is to facilitate mutual travel of citizens of our countries, significantly speed up the procedures for crossing the state border in compliance with sanitary standards, taking into account the current epidemiological situation. For its part, Russia strives and will continue to strive to improve the conditions for citizens of foreign countries who come to work here, and, of course, first of all from the EAEU member states. In the near future, we will launch the unified ‘Work without Borders’ system and the corresponding mobile application that will make it possible to online process all the documents required for employment.”

Based on materials of sb.by

A heroic deed in Baranovichi: pilots Andrei Nichiporchik and Nikita Kukonenko steered their falling plane away from residential buildings at the cost of their lives

On May 19th, a Yak-130 military aircraft from the Lida Assault Air Base crashed in Baranovichi. Miraculously, casualties on the ground and serious damage were avoided: the aircraft fell on a small spot in the private sector, just a few metres from a residential building. In fact, a miracle has nothing to do with it, as it was the heroism, courage, professionalism of the pilots which saved the civilians. Both men died, largely repeating the feat of the first Hero of Belarus, Vladimir Karvat, who took his wrecking plane away from the village of Arabovshchina in the Baranovichi District and thereby saved many lives on May 23rd, 1996.

Fighting until the last second

"They took the trouble away from us!" says Valentina Vladimirovna, a local resident, unable to hide her emotions. "I was in the house when I heard the sound of a loud bang, I ran into the street. Opposite, across the street, is a pair of two-story houses, the plane fell between them. On approaching the site, I saw the scattered parts of the plane and a parachute hanging from the balcony. Several windows in the houses were broken and lumps of earth on the walls... A local resident was wounded. I saw him near the ambulance with cuts from shrapnel; there was a tyre on his arm. He was probably in his garden at that moment. The pilots were wonderful! There are so many people living here: some were at home and some were working in their yards. When I think about how many people could have died, my hands start to shake!"

"My brother was driving a car and saw how the plane began to lose altitude and manoeuvre," adds Gleb who lives not far from the tragedy. "There is a forest nearby; apparently, the pilots wanted to fly there but couldn't manage to reach it. The plane crashed between the houses. The impact was very strong, our house is several hundred metres away and it was possible to hear everything. I came running, saw the marks on the houses from the fragments of the plane, broken windows..."

Local residents called for doctors and rescuers who dealt with the aftermath of the crash.

The men who took trouble away on wings



Andrei Nichiporchik



Nikita Kukonenko

Deep condolences from the President

Aleksandr Lukashenko has expressed his deep condolences to the families of the deceased pilots and is keeping the investigation of the plane crash in Baranovichi under his personal control. This was reported to BelTA by the Press Secretary of the President of Belarus, Natalya Eismont, responding to the question of whether the incident was reported to the Head of State. "The President gave all the necessary instructions regarding the investigation of the catastrophe, is keeping an eye on it and waiting for the results," she said.

The Defence Minister has been instructed to convey support from the President and to provide any assistance to the pilots' families.

'All of us mourn today. We've lost heroes, who placed the lives of their compatriots ahead of theirs. There are no words capable of tempering the sorrow of the loss for the friends and families. But there is memory, which will forever stay in our hearts along with the pain and immeasurable gratitude for this heroic deed', the President's message of condolence reads.

No other casualties or damage

"During the training flight, the crew discovered a technical malfunction. Showing courage and heroism, the pilots tried to take the plane away from the village. After making sure that the trajectory of the plane's fall was outside of residential buildings, the pilots ejected. Unfortunately, they both died. There are no other casualties or damage," the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

The flight was performed by the flight commander of the combat training squadron, Major Andrei Nichiporchik, and Lieutenant Nikita Kukonenko — a pilot of the combat training squadron. 22-year-old Nikita has re-

cently graduated from the Military Academy. As a child, he spent a lot of time with his grandfather in Borovukha, where a helicopter base was sited, so the family constantly talked about aviation. After graduating from the Polotsk Cadet School, the young man decided to go into aviation and, by the end of his studies, the young pilot felt confident at the control wheel.

Major Andrei Nichiporchik was his pilot-instructor. He was born in the family of a military sniper pilot and graduated from the Aviation Faculty of the Military Academy as a pilot of the first class. Since 2016, he has been training young pilots to fly the Yak-130. At the air base, he was known as

a patient and attentive instructor who loved both the sky and the cadets.

The Main Investigation Department of the Investigative Committee has opened a criminal case under the 'Violation of flight rules or preparation for them, which resulted in the death of two persons by negligence' article.

The memorial service for the heroes was held with military honours. The bodies were escorted by a guard of honour through the people in attendance. Andrei Nichiporchik was buried in Lida, while the body of Nikita Kukonenko was sent by air to his homeland in the Polotsk District.

Based on materials of sb.by

Machinery of world standard

BELAZ shipped three 45-tonne haul trucks of 75473 series to Volnogorsk State Mining and Metallurgical Plant (part of the United Mining and Chemical Company)

“The assembly of a new batch of 45-tonne haul trucks was carried out by specialists of the certified service centre of the BELAZ distribution network in Ukraine. The trucks have already been assembled and launched into operation,” the company’s press service said. At present, the fleet of Volnogorsk Mining and Metallurgical Plant includes 30 BELAZ haulers.

The demand for haul trucks in the 45-tonne payload class is always high in the general rating of orders for the products of the Belarusian company. “The modern ‘BELAZ-75473’ is equipped with an air conditioner, on-board computer, video surveillance system, automatic oiling system and is in great demand among the mining and metallurgical en-

terprises,” the plant emphasised.

BELAZ — Management Company of Holding BELAZ-HOLDING JSC is the world’s leading manufacturer of haul trucks and transport equipment for the mining and civil engineering industries. It accounts for some 30 percent of the world market of haul trucks with an extremely large capacity.



The ‘AMKODOR FH3081’ harvester and the ‘AMKODOR FF1681’ forwarder are innovative heavy-duty and high-performance machines designed primarily for use in logging operations in Russia. “The vehicles fully comply with international standards, they embody the best technical solutions, and all systems are controlled by electronics,” announced the company’s press service.

The ‘AMKODOR 2310’ universal timber semi-trailer, with a load capacity of 10 tonnes, is equipped with another novelty: a forward manipulator of its own production, ‘AMKODOR KF4556’. The machine is designed for collecting, loading and transporting assorted materials and other round timber along logging areas and logging roads.

The semi-trailer is aggregated with

the ‘BELARUS M U L 1 2 2 1’ forestry tractor, as well as other tractors of the traction class 2.0. The prototype of the semi-trailer was tested in real conditions when working in forestry enterprises in Belarus. The reviews were positive and a number of cars have already been purchased by users, including in Russia.

The ‘AMKODOR FV20A1’ self-propelled mulcher is designed for tillage during reforestation and reconstruction of plantings, maintenance of forest territories, clearing of trees and shrubs of areas under power lines, in the right-of-way of gas and oil pipelines, roads and railways, as well as for creating fire-fighting lanes in the forest, construction and maintenance of forest roads and reclamation of agricultural land. When removing felling residues in cutting areas, the machine cuts off stumps with a diameter of up to 300mm and provides ploughing with a depth of up to 50mm.

AMKODOR Holding and MAZ took part in the exposition of the 19th International Specialised Exhibition of Equipment and Technologies of the Forest and Woodworking Industry — Lesdrevtech-2021 — and presented their new products

All forestry enterprises of the country traditionally participate in the exhibition. The Minsk Automobile Plant is a permanent participant of the forum, as the model range of products of the Belarusian flagship has a whole line of vehicles for the forest industry.

At *Lesdrevtech-2021* held at venues of the Minsk-Arena sports complex, the plant presented four vehicles. Among them was the ‘MAZ-6302S9-526-052’ all-wheel-drive short log truck with a small cab, a 6x6 wheel formula with a single-pitch tyre and a load capacity of 19,650kg for working in heavy road conditions. It is designed for the transportation of assorted wood with a length of 2-6m and is equipped with the YAMZ 653 engine of Euro-5 ecological class and a 16-speed ZF transmission. It also has the ‘MAZ-892630-0000020R451’ trailer with six lodgements made of high-strength steel of MAZ own production.

Another vehicle on show was the ‘MAZ-631228-0008528-

062’ short log truck with a 6x4 wheel formula, a 430HP WP12 430E50 engine and a 16-speed ZF transmission. The truck, with a load capacity of 22 tonnes, is equipped with the ‘MAZ-894700-0000010’ trailer-forwarder manufactured according to the technical specification of the Forestry Ministry. It can carry lodgements along the length of the frame to transport an assortment of different lengths.

In turn, the ‘MAZ-630228-0008526-012’ short log truck with six lodgements and a load capacity of 19,700kg is equipped with a 430HP WP12 430E50 engine and a 16-speed ZF transmission. A special feature of the model is its large cabin with a low roof, equipped with a lower berth.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Belarus, Barbados and the UN Conference on Trade and Development held a high-level online conference



The conference, entitled *Harnessing Interregional Integration for the SDGs*, has preparatory status for the 15th UNCTAD Ministerial Conference.

From the Belarusian side, Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei took part in the conference. Representatives from all over the world and the leadership of practically all integration associations, as well as major economic and investment organisations of the UN system also responded to the initiative.

In his speech, the Minister emphasised that the Belarusian side proceeds from the premise that regional economic integration should be most effectively used in achieving the SDGs and should promote coherence in the economic policies of the member states of integration entities in the interests of sustainable development.

Belarus is in the group of 30 most developed countries in terms of educational indicators

This was announced by the Deputy Prime Minister, Igor Petrishenko, during a joint meeting of the House of Representatives and the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the seventh convocation.



“The prestige and quality of national education is also evidenced by the growth in the export of educational services. At the same time, modern changes pose new challenges for the education system and require its constant renewal, based on the national interests and needs of the country’s economy,” said Mr. Petrishenko. “A new edition of the Education Code has been prepared. Today, the work on this bill continues in Parliament. The draft of the new version of the code has already been adopted in the first reading by the House of Representatives and parliamentary hearings on it are scheduled for June”.

Belarus exporting cheese to over 20 states

Belarus is ranked 4th in the world ranking of cheese exports — after the European Union, the United States and New Zealand. Today, Belarus exports its cheeses to 26 countries and the geography of supplies is expanding. Over the next five years, it’s planned to significantly increase milk production — up to 9.2 million tonnes per year, respectively, the production of cheese will also grow.

Last year, Belarus produced 276,000 tonnes of cheese, of which 230,000 tonnes



were exported. In the first quarter of this year, 60,100 tonnes of cheese were exported (plus 11.4 percent in physical terms compared to the same period in 2020).

In general, regarding exports of agricultural and food products, this year, supplies are expected to reach \$6bn and to make \$7bn by 2025. Dairy products traditionally account for about 40 percent of Belarusian food exports.

Scientists of Belarus’ National Academy of Sciences awarded the ‘Stars of the Commonwealth’ for R&D work in the area of space exploration

Scientists were awarded the prize for their significant contribution to the development and successful implementation of the Belarusian-Russian space programmes, the creation of a scientific and technical groundwork for the development of the space industry in Belarus, the expansion and strengthening of interaction between the CIS member states in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.



The ‘Stars of the Commonwealth’ Interstate Prize is annually awarded to representatives of the CIS states for the most significant successes in the field of humanitarian activities, corresponding to the level of world achievements.

ECONOMY



Belarus' Healthcare Minister Dmitry Pinevich and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Belarus, Xie Xiaoyong

Beijing — Minsk: a supporting shoulder

China donates 300,000 doses of Chinese vaccine against coronavirus to Belarus

20 hours on the way, two crews, and 13,000 kilometres in both directions: last week, the Machulishchi airfield welcomed a plane with a valuable humanitarian cargo. The Chinese coronavirus vaccine has already established itself as an effective and safe drug with minimal side effects. The supply of Vero Cell in polyclinics will be replenished soon.

By Kristina Glushko

Representatives from the Healthcare Ministry, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Defence Ministry and the Chinese Embassy in Belarus arrived to meet the Il-76MD military transport aircraft. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Belarus, Xie Xiaoyong, emphasised, “It is very important that Belarusian friends have more opportunities to fight the terrible epidemic. Although you have your own ways and other vaccines, the more help the better. This is the second batch of the drug that the PRC has donated to Belarus as a continuation of the very glorious traditions of helping



each other during the epidemic. It is also evidence of the high level of relations between the two countries.”

Mr. Xie Xiaoyong said that mass vaccinations are also taking place in China, “As of May 16th,

about 400 million doses of the drug have been administered in the country. However, this is still not enough for the formation of collective immunity, because



the country's population is huge. We still have a long way to go to vaccinate a billion people.”

Several ministries organise the delivery of humanitarian aid. The spokesman for the Ministry of Emergency Situations, Vitaly Novitsky, noted that it is with the Chinese side that interaction is always the most effective, without any delays. At Beijing airport, the cargo was promptly formed, and already in Machulishchi, the cadets of the University of Civil Protection of the Ministry of Emergency Situations took the vaccine in order to quickly transfer it to the struc-

tures of the Healthcare Ministry.

“Today's event is a continuation of good relations and co-operation between the two countries,” says Belarus' Healthcare Minister, Dmitry Pinevich. “Our peoples are linked by friendly relations. A few months ago, Belarus received a batch of vaccine, which was used to fight the pandemic. Today we see another 300,000 doses of the drug for 150,000 patients. This vaccine is one of the best examples of the Chinese pharmaceutical industry and will make an important contribution to the fight against the virus. I'm ready to assure Mr. Ambassador that all Chinese citizens living in our country will also be vaccinated.”

Youth of the future

ProAtom Youth Forum held in Minsk

The ProAtom 2021 Youth Nuclear Forum was held at the National Library of Belarus — aimed at promoting information among young people about the development of nuclear energy, the implementation of the project for the construction of the Belarusian nuclear power plant, training programmes for the industry, as well as employment opportunities for young professionals who have received specialised education

By Sergei Novitsky

The event was organised by the Energy Ministry in co-operation with the Belenergo state production association, the Rosatom state corporation and the Belarusian nuclear power plant — with the assistance of the Education Ministry. It was attended by representatives of relevant ministries and departments, students, undergraduates

and postgraduates of leading universities of the country, as well as students of colleges and schools. The focus was on the development of nuclear energy and training of young professionals to work in this field.

The Energy Minister, Viktor Karankevich, made a welcoming speech, “Young people are the basis for the development and prosperity of our country. The future of nuclear energy is

impossible without an influx of new ideas and initiatives. The intellectual potential and commitment of young specialists and scientists ensure the successful implementation of promising projects not only in nuclear energy, but also in related areas: physics, chemistry, healthcare, radioecology and many others.”

The First Deputy Education Minister, Irina Starovoitova, said that Belarus has established a

system of training highly qualified personnel for the nuclear industry, “When the decision was made to build the Belarusian NPP, a system of personnel training was established in our country. Today, 900 graduates are ready for work and have the necessary competencies and another 500 people are receiving education in the relevant specialties in higher educational institutions.”

In addition, specialists for

nuclear power engineering are trained at the Belarusian State University (BSU), the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radio-electronics (BSUIR), the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU), the BSU International State Ecological Institute named after A.D. Sakharov. This year, a new specialty was launched at the BNTU to deal with the design and operation of nuclear power plants.



By Yekaterina Ivanova

The leading beekeepers of Belarus, Russia, Moldova and elsewhere took part in the work of the congress. The event was held with both a real presence and in an online format. During the forum, experts shared their experiences in the scientific support of the industry and the use of its products, including the latest technologies for maintaining and obtaining beekeeping products. The environmental aspect was also touched upon, contributing to the improvement of the quality of honey and the

promotion of the principles of a healthy diet. Specialists considered the problems of creating and using medical preparations, veterinary drugs, feed and additives based on beekeeping products, alongside methods of preventing diseases and treating bees. In addition, beekeepers discussed problematic issues and outlined ways to solve them while also identifying scientific tasks in this important branch of the agro-industrial complex.

The Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Piotr Kazakevich, noted the

continuing work and significant achievements of Belarusian scientists in the development of beekeeping and practical use of its products. In particular, he gave specific examples, “The Institute of Fruit Growing at the National Academy of Sciences is developing a system for using bees to increase the yield of fruit and berry agricultural plants while also studying new technologies for obtaining beekeeping products. However, the Institute of Genetics and Cytology has implemented a pilot project to find effective DNA markers to characterise genetic diversity of honey bees

in Belarus, which carries out a molecular genetic analysis and identifies subspecies of bees, the genuineness of their strain and degree of cross breeding. Moreover, new methods of treating bee diseases have been created at the Institute of Experimental Veterinary Medicine named after S.N. Vyshelesky. The Institute of Plant Protection has tested the insecticidal properties of herbicides while the Botanical Garden plans to conduct scientific research on the selection of new melliferous plants for beekeeping farms in Belarus. In addition, a decision has been made to create

This is the first such large international event in our country dedicated to the problems of beekeeping and the use of its products, as well as wide interaction of specialists and scientists of the industry

or expand apiaries in a number of organisations which belong to the Department of Agrarian Sciences and the Department of Biological Sciences at the National Academy of Sciences. Therefore, we also intend to make a worthy contribution to this good cause.”

In Belarus, as of January 1st, 2021, there were more than 210,000 bee families, including almost 33,000 in agricultural organisations and more than 4,000 in peasant farms. These are great prospects for obtaining high-quality bee products: honey, pollen, bee bread, propolis, royal jelly, bee venom and wax.

Merging of cultures

The literary exhibition — *Yakub Kolas and Omar Khayyam: Life Wisdom in the Words of Poetry* — opens at the Yakub Kolas State Literary and Memorial Museum

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Iran to Belarus, Saeed Yari, noted at the opening ceremony that the legacy of Yakub Kolas and Omar Khayyam is carefully preserved by the peoples of the two countries and passed down from generation to generation.

The diplomat also stressed that the two prominent writers are strong dominants of Belarusian and Iranian cultures. Their works are a kind of collection of philosophical thoughts and approaches to reality. The poetry of Yakub Kolas and Omar Khayyam is the culmination of their long and difficult journey to the truth. Although they lived in different times and in different countries, and belonged to different religions, the centre of their creativity was a person. They created the encyclopaedia of life, a wise code of life in poetic form.

The poetic wisdom of Omar Khayyam is rooted in one of the most complex genre forms of Persian poetry — rubaiyat; these are original philosophical and lyrical



quatrain. Omar Khayyam is an unsurpassed master of this genre. His works are characterised by the accuracy of observations and the depth of understanding of the world and the human soul, the brightness of images and the refinement of rhythm. In turn, Yakub Kolas' *New Land* became a

wise encyclopaedia of Belarusian peasant life in the late 19th-early 20th centuries. The wisdom of Yakub Kolas' life relies on his view of the world and is embodied in the detailed depiction of many life realities. His *New Land* is a personal Universe where everything exists in a harmonious

'nature — man' formula.

As the granddaughter of the Belarusian classic, Maria Mickiewicz, stressed at the meeting, poets Yakub Kolas and Omar Khayyam are humanists. For them, man and his spiritual world are above all. Their poetry reveals the value of every moment of

human life. Omar Khayyam reveals this through generalisation, Yakub Kolas — through details.

Symbolically, Yakub Kolas kept a book by Alisher Navoiy — a poet and thinker who created his literary works in Persian, Turkic, Uzbek and Uyghur languages — in his personal library. This book was brought from Tashkent, where Yakub Kolas and his family were evacuated in 1941-1943. It's likely that the name of Omar Khayyam was familiar to the Belarusian classic.

During the presentation of the literary exhibition, the Iranian Ambassador spoke about the idea of translating the works of the Belarusian classic into Farsi, so that Iran would learn more about his work. Saeed Yari suggested that the project to translate Yakub Kolas' poems into Persian and Omar Khayyam's works into the Belarusian Language should eventually result in a book. He doesn't rule out that this idea will be implemented in time for the next Minsk International Book Fair. Iran traditionally participates in this exhibition presenting its rich book art on a large scale.

The painter's picturesque world

This year, *The Artist and the City* project has changed its location, with Leonid Shchemelev becoming the main character



The jubilee 10th season of *The Artist and the City* project has opened. This year, the popular exhibition in the public space format will be dedicated to the creativity of the People's Artist of Belarus, Leonid Shchemelev. For the first time in its history, the project is changing its location: from its usual place on Yakub Kolas Square, the Belarusian painting will move to the pedestrian Komsomolskaya Street — one of the favourite walking places for Minskites and guests of the capital.

By Irina Ovsepyan

The idea of *The Artist and the City* exhibition appeared in 2012 when reproductions of Marc Chagall's nineteen works were presented to the Belarusians in the street format. In subsequent years, the project was dedicated to Kazimir Malevich, Nikolai Seleshchuk, Valentin Gubarev, surrealist Georgy Skripnichenko, painters Zoya Litvinova and Zoya Lutsevich. The viewers could also see a panorama of both contemporary Belarusian painting, created by living masters, alongside works done by members of the UNOVIS association a century ago. Last year, due to the unfavourable epidemiological situation, the exhibition invited visitors to take a virtual tour on a specially created website. This year, *The Artist and the City* once again delighted the audience with a real embodiment of the event.



"Ten years is a significant period, and you always need to improve something," says Galina Ladisova, the Director of the Museum of the Minsk City History. "In its jubilee year, the project moves to the area of the Upper City, to the very heart of Minsk, where there are two beautiful galleries: that of Mikhail Savitsky and that of Leonid Shchemelev. Of course, this year is special. Leonid Shchemelev passed away in January, and it's very important that

the anniversary exhibition will be dedicated to his creativity. A peculiarity is that, for the first time, *The Artist and the City* displays a collection — entirely formed from the museum archives. Previously, we saw complex expositions from private and state collections while now a purely museum collection will go on show. It's wonderful that the museum is going into an urban, public space, because there's something to show and present to guests."

Thirty-four reproductions of Leonid Shchemelev's works were placed on specially made banners that are impermeable to rain and other vagaries of the weather. The visual component is supplemented

by the artist's biography and text description in Russian, Belarusian and English.

"The technology has already passed the test more than once. The banners are made of high quality polymer materials, resistant to weather conditions, and, most importantly, they perfectly

convey the colours," comments Galina Ladisova. "This is especially true for Shchemelev's painting, since it is not at all easy to convey his amazing pictorial world."

The Artist and the City project — running until September 20th — is being implemented by the Museum of Minsk City History with the support of the Minsk City Executive Committee and Belarusian business.

Spending the night in the company of art

Mini-concerts, quests and medieval battles: what surprised visitors on the *Night of Museums*

After a year-long hibernation caused by the pandemic, our museums offered visitors the chance to shake off sleep and invited them to spend time culturally during the *Night of Museums*. Belarus — as a member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) — has been taking part in this action for over fifteen years already.

By Nikolai Petrov

By evening, the National Historical Museum had been turned into an intergalactic space. The galaxy of the Belarusian costume surprised guests of the *Belarusian Costume: Traditions and Modern Design* exhibition. A large number of museum signs opened during the passage of the quest, entitled *The Space of Books and Meanings* — as mysterious as a black hole. Meanwhile, the history of space exploration appeared on the *108 Minutes: the Road to Space* project.

This year, the National Museum of Art returned to the format of the classic *Night of Museums* — not focused on activity — under the slogan 'Alone with Art'. The organisers gave viewers the opportunity to immerse themselves in art, be alone with it, enjoy it in silence, with a minimum number of people, with the ability to hear and feel the works. For this, the museum has opened a permanent exhibition of 18th-20th century Russian art, a special exhibition entitled *Why Did You Leave Me?* and the exhibition project entitled *Sea. Sky. Clouds*.

Regional museums haven't lagged behind either. *The Space / Space Between Us* programme was held in the Gomel Palace and Park Estate. In the palace's hall of columns a macro-installation — *The Tree of the Universe* — appeared lit by thousands of



filaments, while a garden of good wishes was located in the hall of solemn receptions, where visitors could exchange messages with an unknown friend.

As part of the *Night of Museums*, an exhibition from the museum collection — *Marc Chagall and Urban Artists* — was opened at the Marc Chagall Art Centre in Vitebsk, which also included the graphics of Rybak, Kaplan and Gershov.

A festival dedicated to culture, military traditions and music of the 16th-18th centuries was held on the territory of the palace ensemble in the Nesvizh National Historical and Cultural Museum-Reserve. The guests were greeted by 16th-18th century music, master classes in dance and historical fencing, as well as demonstration fights. The culmination of the holiday was the reconstruction of the episodes of hostilities with the participation of the regiment of Janusz Radziwill. The evening ended with a bright fire and pyrotechnic show.

India lashed by strongest cyclone



India was recently slammed by the strongest storm on record to reach its west coast, hampering authorities' response to the COVID-19 crisis in some of the country's hardest hit regions

Tropical cyclone 'Tauktae', a storm with wind speeds equivalent to a high-end Category 3 hurricane that formed in the Arabian Sea, made landfall in Gujarat. It strengthened slightly as it hit the western state with maximum sustained winds of 205 kilometres per hour. By next morning, it had weakened from an 'extremely severe cyclonic storm' to a 'severe cyclonic storm', according to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD).

Photos and videos show highways turned into rivers by the heavy rain, and trees and power lines toppled by ferocious winds. The cyclone has killed at least 38 people across the coastal states of Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra, ac-

ording to state authorities. The deaths were due to drowning at sea, house collapses, lightning strikes and other accidents linked to the severe weather.

This comes as India reels from its second wave of coronavirus, which has infected millions and killed tens of thousands since it began in mid-March.

COVID patients were among the hundreds of thousands evacuated from low-lying areas as the region braced for the cyclone's arrival. In Mumbai, 580 patients from makeshift care centres were moved to various hospitals, according to the city's municipal corporation.

India's National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has deployed more than

100 teams across six coastal states to help efforts on the ground. The Indian military has also been deployed; the Navy said it rescued 177 people from a barge that sank in an offshore oilfield off the coast of Mumbai.

"This cyclone is a terrible double blow for millions of people in India whose families have been struck down by record COVID infections and deaths," said Udaya Regmi, from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

It's not the first time India has dealt with natural disasters during the pandemic — last year, the country faced cyclones in late May and early June that also prompted mass evacuations.

Titanic replica now under construction in China

For those who have always wondered what it would've been like to be a passenger on the Titanic, a theme park in China is set to offer the closest experience one can get

A massive replica of the sunken ocean liner is now under construction in Daying County in Sichuan Province. Called the 'Unsinkable Titanic', the ship is the exact same size as the original — 269.06 metres in length and 28.19 metres wide.

The centrepiece of a theme park called Romandisea, it will have the same amenities of its namesake, including banquet halls, theatres, observation decks and a swimming pool. Guests will be able to pay to spend the night aboard the ship, which will be permanently docked in a reservoir in the Qijiang River, about 130 kilometres from the provincial capital Chengdu — several hundred miles from the sea.

An opening date has not yet been set.

It has taken 23,000 tonnes of steel and cost \$153.5m to build the replica.

Meanwhile, China's ship isn't the only proposed replica of the original Titanic. In 2018, Australian company Blue Star Line announced work was recommencing on the Titanic II following a lengthy delay. It has been promoted as an identical copy of the infamous liner, home to 835 cabins to accommodate 2,435 passengers.

The maiden voyage was scheduled to take place in 2022, however, the company's website hasn't been updated since 2018.

Galápagos rock formation Darwin's Arch has collapsed

Darwin's Arch, a rock formation south-east of Darwin Island in the Galápagos archipelago, has collapsed due to natural erosion, Ecuador's Environment Ministry said

Images on the Ministry Facebook page show two rocky pillars left at the northernmost island of the Pacific Ocean archipelago.

The post said: 'This event is a consequence of natural erosion. Darwin's Arch is made of natural stone that at one time would have been part of Darwin Island, which is not open to visits by land. This site is considered one of the best places on the planet to dive and observe schools of sharks and other species'.

The diving website Scuba Diver Life said visitors on a diving boat had witnessed the collapse at 11.20am local time, adding that no divers had been harmed.

The arch is famous as a diving spot for underwater encounters with sea turtles, whale sharks, manta rays and dolphins. The rock formation was named after the British scientist, Charles Darwin, who visited the islands in 1835 on HMS Beagle and developed his theory of evolution by examining Galápagos finches.

The Galápagos islands, declared as one of the first UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1978, contain flora and fauna not seen anywhere else on earth and are part of a biosphere reserve.



Agatha Christie's former home on sale for £2.75m

Winterbrook house, home to Agatha Christie for 40 years, for sale in England's Oxfordshire. The property, which encompasses 5 acres, is asking north of £2.75m.

It was here that Agatha Christie wrote many of her 66 detective novels, including *Murder On the Orient Express* and *Death on the Nile*, both of which have been turned into multiple movies, with a new Kenneth Branagh-directed version of *Death on the Nile* scheduled for release in 2022, starring Gal Gadot and Annette Bening.

Dame Agatha bought the house after she saw an advert in the paper in 1934. Immediately after she and her second husband Max Mallowan saw the home, they knew it was the place for them. The couple lived there until she died there in 1976, aged 85. The writer is buried in the nearby St. Mary's churchyard in the village of Cholsey and her husband was buried alongside her when he died two years later.

Dame Agatha, who was known locally as Mrs. Mallowan, wrote in her autobiography that they were very happy there and there is a blue plaque on the house in her memory.

For the past 20 years, this former house, which has the main bedroom overlooking the gardens and river, has been home to Gregor Kleinknecht, Karen Holterman, and their two sons. "It's been a privilege to live somewhere that has such a special place in the hearts of so many," Kleinknecht says. "We weren't aware of the Agatha Christie connection when we first saw the house, we only found out later on. Most importantly it has been a wonderful family home."

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Ivan Yarinovich



Ivan Yarinovich

Preserving traditions

When the village dances every day, it has no fear

The 2nd International Folk Dance Competition *MARA* in Minsk has brought three top awards in different age categories to Pobolovo's *Medunitsa* dance ensemble, from the Rogachev District. The most striking performance of the competition, the jury decided, was the Russian 'passing with manner' dance. Young dancers from Pobolovo have been showing their talent for several years already, at different venues throughout the country, while the local children's art school is the main breeding ground for creative youth.

By Stanislav Galkovsky

Everyone has talents

Fourth-grader Dasha Naidenaya has three creative subjects: choreography, guitar and piano. After her general education classes, the girl hurries to the art school. Classes last for at least three hours a day. "All our classmates are here. Teachers find talent in everyone. There are singers and artists but almost everyone dances; it's our tradition," she says.

101 boys and girls (aged 6-18) are mastering the basics of art in the Pobolovo Children's Art School, founded in 1992. Meanwhile, 118 children attend the secondary school. Accordingly, 85 percent of boys and girls in the agro-town are engaged in dancing and music! True, it's a high rate for public participation in art.

The main areas here are music (accordion, piano, guitar), choreography, art, folk art and pop vocals. Folk dances are separate to competitions, as everyone dances. Over 23 years, 15 school alumni have chosen the professional choreographic path — with an emphasis on preserving Belarusian, Russian and Ukrainian folk dances. Among them are 'taukachyki', 'mi-



tus', 'zhabka' or Belarusian dancing.

However, the main thing is to make it interesting for children, says choreographer Yuri Shevtsov, a graduate of the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts, "The basis is folk but it's not interesting without variations. Therefore, the creative process never stops. For example, during the pandemic, along with the children, we worked on various flash mobs, recorded them and placed them on the Internet. Sometimes high spirits are a useful emotional release."

Relying on origins

The dancing agro-town of Pobolovo is not a joke. Almost every local family enjoys the continuity of generations. Graduates bring new artists to classes. Olga Ivanchikova is a moth-



In the Rogachev District, the routine dances of our grandparents are popular: 'karapet' and 'matlet'. They are no longer danced at discos but are carefully preserved in the creative repertoire of the *Medunitsa* ensemble.

er of five children. Her three older daughters attend *Medunitsa* and the lady admits it's hereditary,

"In our family, the main dancer is the father, a graduate of the art school. The girls followed in his footsteps. On holidays, the whole family starts dancing and it's almost like a film shoot. It's great that there's such a release: the school for children and adults. Even the air is special here — full of childish joy."

Much can be said about *Medunitsa*. The walls are covered with diplomas from such festivals as *Belarus is My Song*, *The Land Under White Wings*, *Sozhski Karagod* and *Slavyanski Bazaar*. They open up opportunities for local schoolchildren not only to showcase themselves, but also to see the country and the world.

The founder and leader of the ensemble, Yulia Kozlova, is from Rogachev. However, she doesn't hide her love for rural life, "Why is it important to create such comprehensive cultural centres for the development of children in agro-towns and villages? Firstly, it is a great contribution to rural youth who still don't have such a wide choice of clubs as their urban peers. We also get to see what talents are around: dancing, playing, singing. Art aims to bring out the beautiful side of a person and we're doing this. Secondly, a city is multicultural and national features are vanishing there. However, a village is traditional and, for example, a folk dance here has a domestic basis: it was literally danced by the grandmothers of our pupils. There is an opportunity to

rely on its origins. Perhaps that is why our Belarusian dances are heartily welcomed in the Czech Republic, Russia and Ukraine.

"When the village dances every day, it is not afraid of anything. All these statements by Internet sources that the village is dying are nonsense! Come and see how we live here, how we relax, how we preserve our Belarus."

Mobility welcomed

The basis of not only the Pobolovo Children's Art School, but also many similar creative institutions countywide, is their teaching staff. Many teachers travel from a town to the village every day. This is a normal process that enriches all its participants, the school Director, Mikhail Larichkov, believes. He personally comes to work from Rogachev and comments, "It's a healthy working life. We have a compact country and this approach is relevant: doctors, teachers, and animal breeders travel to their work. We must become more mobile. The border between the city and the village has long been artificial, it is in our heads. Look at our *Medunitsa*: it successfully competes with any city folk children's troupe. Nevertheless, when we talk about the mobility of the teaching staff, problems remain. They are domestic. For example, this year, we don't have a transport route from Rogachev to the agro-town to be able to get there in the afternoon (for the start of our classes). It's not convenient for our teachers. Such routine problems need to be worked on so that everything runs smoothly."



Ivan Yarinovich



Kupala Night holiday

Festival-going in Belarus this summer

Fans of open air celebrations will definitely find an event to their liking

By Sofia Arsenyeva

Try on chain armour and brandish a sword

The spirit of the Middle Ages has been preserved in Belarus until today — confirmed by majestic castles and fortresses, unique archaeological finds at battle sites and authentic gastropubs with dishes from the past.

Moreover, dozens of festivals of medieval culture are organised countrywide: in Golshany, Krevo, Mir, Lida, Novogrudok and Polotsk. The largest of them — *Knight Fest* — takes place in early August in the ancient town of Mstislavl, on the border of the Mogilev and Smolensk regions. Hundreds of men in armour and helmets, armed with swords and bows, gather on the high Zamkovaya Hill near the excavation site of the 11th-13th century settlement. A stylised assault on the fortress, horse games and jousting matches are held from morning to night to the delight of the audience. Jesters, acrobats and travelling artists hurry through the streets of the ancient city. Famous folk groups entertain on the city square, and performances are staged. Traditionally, there are many craftsmen and merchants' rows stretch for kilometres.

When: early August

Price: free of charge

See a mermaid on Kupala Night

The Slavs believed that, on the night of July 6th-7th, the forces of nature flourished. That's why they organised mass festivities on the banks of rivers and lakes, paying tribute to the patrons of the earth and the sky. It's believed that this most archaic holiday has been preserved in Belarus and still follows the tradition of burning bonfires after sunset and leading round dances. It's common to weave wreaths of forest and field plants and let them float on the water, making wishes.

Holidays in honour of *Kupala Night* are still held in many cities and towns but the largest and most intense activities from a historical point of view are concentrated in the village of Ozertso, near Minsk. Employees of the Museum of Folk Architecture and Everyday Life immerse guests of the *Kupala Night Wheel* festival in the world of Slavic mythology with mermaids, water, and goblins.

According to ancient pagan traditions, under the forgotten ritual songs, they dress a 'kupalka' [*Kupala Night* mermaid], weave medicinal herbs into the braids of girls and burn bonfires. Jumping through them for good luck is a must! Our ancestors believed that it helps purify the soul. Another belief is to go to *Kupala Night* in search of the fern flower which will give its owner eternal happiness, youth and wealth. Is it real? No-one knows, but every year the festival participants go on a mysterious night adventure.

When: June 26th-27th

Price: about \$10

Sing a rock wave

Lovers of heavy music have long chosen airfields near Minsk. For a long time, the *Rock for the Beavers* festival was held at the Borovaya site — a former base for Belarusian paratroopers. Over the old MiG and Yak planes, the popular BI-2, Okean Elzy, Splin, Basta and Mumiy Troll have performed in the past.

This year, the organisers have even bolder plans — to bring together very different artists at the functioning Lipki airport. LittleBig, Zveri, Louna, Noize MC, J:Mors and others will perform near Minsk. There are more than a hundred names in the list. The festival also has an inter-

esting tradition: the name of one of the main guests is kept secret by the organisers until the last moment.

When: August 7th

Price: from \$17

Taste the berry

In the south of the country, in the Luninets District, endless strawberry plantations are found. From mid-May to the end of June, the sweet aroma of ripe berries can literally turn heads. Huge queues of trucks from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kursk and other Russian cities line up for the 'red gold' (Belarusian strawberries are always in demand among our neighbours). However, the most interesting thing happens at the end of the season: on the shores of a forest lake, crazy strawberry growers arrange a grand celebration — with songs, dances and, of course, a sea of sweet pleasure! Local housewives cook all possible treats from strawberries — including all sorts of cakes and pastries, jams and wines, ice cream and smoothies. Berry workers also know a lot about entertainment and annually name a strawberry queen; she is chosen from the local beauties who parade through the rural streets.

Don't like strawberries? Then you'd better go to Glubokoe, in the north of Belarus. Here, in late July, the *Cherry Festival* is held annually. Juicy berries are not just a way of earning money for the city residents but also their main inspiration. People compose songs and dedicate poems to cherries, their images adorn clothes and houses, and a monument in honour of the berry was even erected in the city centre.

When: early July

Price: free of charge

Dance on the beaches until morning

The main resort in the country is the Braslav Lakes. The region is also famous for its nightlife and hosts the *VivaBraslavOpenAir* two-day outdoor party.

Only the stars of youth discos (Zivert, Monatik, SvoboDA will perform this year) and top European DJs will be on the stage. Next to the dance area and a huge food court, a comfortable campsite will be set up. After a hot dance under the moon, party-goers can plunge into the water: the central beach of Braslav is just around the corner.

A rich healthy lifestyle programme is planned: beach volleyball, soccer, and tennis competitions, SUP surf races, touch rugby and even motorcycle gliding. In 2019, the festival attracted 26,000 people — 2.5 times more than the population of Braslav.

When: July 23rd-24th

Price: from \$18



Knight Fest



Cherry Festival



VivaBraslavOpenAir



Rock for the Beavers

Great heights

Olympic champion Gennady Avdeenko tells us about his life near Lida and prospects for our athletes in Tokyo

During the Vytoki sports and cultural festival — recently held in Lida, it was hard not to notice the Olympic champion in the high jump, Gennady Avdeenko. Surrounded by children, he looked like a real-life good-natured giant. The 204cm tall sportsman moved to Belarus in the early 1990s and, four years ago, settled near Lida — in Berezovka. After his successful career winning gold medals at the Olympics and world championships, he didn't become a coach for the sport as you might expect. Instead, he decided to work with children — simply put, he believes they are much more sincere.

By Tatiana Pastushenko

“The idea of the Vytoki festival is very good,” Gennady began. “The atmosphere here is pleasant and children will learn what sports are. Just imagine, of all the children who approached me, no one knew about the Fosbury flop! I tell them about it, about our sport in general. This is a great opportunity to promote the sport, while children can choose which club to go to.”

Gennady Avdeenko is now a coach-teacher at the local sports school No. 2. However, he specialises not only in high jump but also helps children improve their skills in long jump, triple jump, sprint...

“I run track and field clubs, a sports class in Berezovka and a specialised section, basketball and volleyball clubs. Are there enough talented children? There are some: for example, a boy who has recently turned 14 years old but already jumps 2.80m in length. He has won regional competitions and has good prospects. There is also a good boy who is showing great interim results: he was placed third in the region in the 800m sprint in which he participated for the first time. Guys specialising in high jumps trained some time ago but there are not many of them now: it's a very specific sport actually...”

Gennady Avdeenko follows the high jump closely, though this wasn't always the case. When he left the sport, he didn't watch the competitions at all as he admits he had no desire to. Gennady was full of high jumps by then. However, the situation has changed and, at present, he acts as a judge at Republican competitions and follows the success of our guys on the world arena.

Speaking about the brightest modern high jumper of our country, Maksim Nedosekov, Gennady notes, “He is a super guy! Two or three years ago, at the Christmas high jump tournament, he was said, “You will jump well.” He's not as tall as I am, but there's no need to be two metres tall in our sport. Maksim is smart and, in extreme situations, he can pull himself together and



Maksim Nedosekov



Aleksey Vyazmitinov



Karina Demidik

show great results. Recall the recent European Championship, where he took gold in his last attempt! For a champion, such qualities are important. I also like the way he creates a show during his performances. I, for example, couldn't do this: I concentrated, I needed silence and calmness. I can't even say which of the jumpers of my time he resembles. In the past, probably, only the African-Americans would dance in the zone.”

Mr. Avdeenko admits: the competition in the men's high jump could hardly be called high but, in his time, everything was different. At the 1988 Olympic Games, the standard was 2.36m and it was reached by

four people. At present, however, the national indoor record isn't much higher: at 2.37m, it belongs to Maksim Nedosekov.

“I think Maksim will be able not just to compete at the Olympics, but to fight for medals, including gold. I don't think anyone will jump higher than 2.40m. Speaking about the favourites for the competition, I don't know whether Mutaz Barshim will perform, but — for me — he's a perfect jumper, with super technique and results. Although he's already in the twilight of his career, at the home World Championship in 2019, he did everything possible to win gold. There may be a lot of surprises at



Gennady Avdeenko

the Tokyo Olympics in general, since there has been no competition for a long time. Results might be very low, but at the same time some can show an unexpectedly perfect result,” notes Gennady.

Unfortunately, there is no one to compete with Karina Demidik in the women's high jump in our country. Mr. Avdeenko says: this type of track and field programme is so unpredictable that many circumstances must develop in order to achieve a result here, “You can be well prepared physically, but mentally break down. Girls now clearly lack competition. Last year, at the Belarusian championship, there was a situation when only Demidik demonstrated a result, while the others were of a junior level. Even in Soviet times, this also happened. After the Moscow Olympics, there was a decline. Later, my generation came, and the competition became huge again. Rudolf Povarnitsyn jumped 2.4m high and Igor Paklin — 2.41m. My Olympic record was 2.38m. A year before the Olympics in Seoul, I showed the same result at the summer and winter world championships and was only second...”

While we were talking, children were still near Gennady: some were asking for an autograph, some — to put a mark for completing the test of the Olympic quest prepared by the Vytoki organisers. The sportsman didn't refuse anyone. When asked whether he's comfortable with his life, Mr. Avdeenko replied, “I'm totally fine. The main thing is that the soul is comfortable and work brings happiness. I never wanted to get involved in big sports. There are many unpleasant aspects to it — like the doping. There is no such purity there as in children's sports. Boys and girls come to me and their eyes are shining. I say, for example, to a child who jumps 160cm in long jump that, in three months, he will show a 2m result and he can hardly believe it. However, you'd better see his face when this happens: emotion radiates from it! This brings pleasure to children and myself. So I enjoy both my life and my work.”

ARENA

● BATE wins Belarus Football Cup for the fifth time



In the decisive match of the 30th Cup, the Borisov team defeated Isloch from the Minsk Region — 2:1. The start of the meeting on the field of Gomel's Tsentralny Stadium saw an equal fight. Both teams attacked a lot but there was no quick win. Gradually Borisov footballers took the initiative and, in the 31st minute, their captain Stanislav Dragun opened the score, closing the pass from the right flank.

BATE footballers became five-time

Belarus Cup winners, and it was the tenth time they'd played in the final while Isloch made it to the final of the Cup tournament for the first time in its history.

Thanks to BATE's victory, Dinamo Brest — which finished fourth in the last Belarus Championship — got a ticket to the qualification of the UEFA Conference League.

● Belarusian shooters successfully start at the European Championship in Croatia

At the start of the tournament, which will continue until June 6th, Belarusians won two gold, three silver and one bronze medals.

In the team competition in junior air pistol shooting, Ivan Kazak, Vladislav Demesh and Nikita Kavalenok took first place.



Another gold medal was earned for our team by the junior duet of Aleksandra Petrova and Vladislav Demesh in air pistol shooting. Second place was taken by rivals from Italy, followed by Vasilisa Naumova and Ivan Kazak of Belarus.

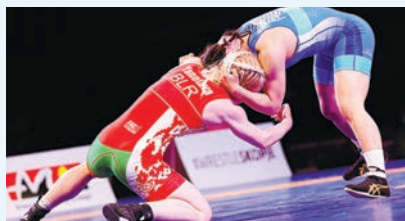
Vasilisa Naumova and Ivan Kazak also claimed silver in the 10m air pistol shooting in the individual tournament.

● Belarusian wrestlers capture nine medals at the U-23 European Championship

The greatest success at the continental forum was achieved by the representatives

of women's wrestling, claiming two silver and two bronze awards. Anastasia Yenotova and Tatiana Pavlova stopped one step away from the highest step of the medals podium. Moreover, Kristina Sazykina and Anastasia Zimenkova won bronze medals.

In the Greco-Roman wrestling competitions, Belarusians won three bronze



medals, earned by Vladislav Pribylsky, Aleksandr Pechurenko and Yevgeny Yurov. The freestyle representatives did not leave without medals either, with Aleksei Parkhomenko and Yaroslav Slavikovskiy snatching bronze.



Photo of the week

Sakura is in blossom in Minsk's Sendai Park. The mountain Sakura alley was laid in Minsk by representatives of Japan to honour the anniversary of the establishment of twinning relations between Sendai and Minsk.

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



On May 28th, 1946, Mikhail Demchuk was born — a Belarusian scientist in the field of instrument and mechanical engineering, a corresponding member of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Honoured Scientist of Belarus. He worked as Head of the Department for Automation of Scientific Research at the Belarusian State University, Head of the Department of Science and Educational Institutions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus, Minister of Education of Belarus, Rector of the Belarusian State Polytechnic Academy, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus. He is the author of over 400 scientific papers and 40 inventions, being also a laureate of the State Prize of Belarus. He died in 2016.

May 28th is Border Guards Day in the Republic of Belarus. At all times, the defence of the borders of the Fatherland was one of the most responsible, difficult and honourable tasks. Border guard soldiers conscientiously carry out the most important tasks to ensure the border security of the Republic of Belarus while protecting its economic interests and combating transnational crime.



On May 29th, 1946, the construction of a tractor plant with a capacity of 50 tracked tractors per day with diesel engines of 37HP began in Minsk, with the start of their production in 1948. In 1949, the chief designer of the Minsk Tractor Works, Ivan Drong, proposed to assign a noble and majestic name to the new machine 'Belarus', with which it began its journey on planet Earth.



May 29th is International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, proclaimed by the decision of the UN General Assembly

on December 11th, 2002. On May 29th, 1948, the UN Security Council, by its resolution, established the first UN peacekeeping operation. This date is intended to pay tribute to the self-sacrifice and selfless dedication of peacekeepers serving around the world.

May 29th is the Day of the Military Motorist of the Armed Forces of Belarus. The appearance of the holiday is associated with the history of the



appearance of this type of troops in tsarist Russia. It has been celebrated in Belarus since 2017. For the Armed Forces of the country, automotive technology has long become the main means in performing most of the tasks: moving personnel, evacuating the wounded, providing the wounded with first aid, transporting artillery and missile-artillery complexes, air defence systems, delivering ammunition, cargo for various purposes, etc.



Republic of Belarus. In 2002, a memorial sign was unveiled to those died at Nemiga station on May 30th, 1999.

May 30th is Chemist's Day in the Republic of Belarus. It's a professional holiday of workers in the chemical and petrochemical industry, which traces its history back to Soviet times and is celebrated on the last Sunday of May. The products of the chemical industry are very diverse: from mineral fertilisers, polymeric materials, dyes to household chemicals, cosmetics,

May 30th is Day of Remembrance of those who died in the underpass at the Nemiga metro station (1999) in the



automobile oils, textiles and chemical and pharmaceutical products.



May 31st is World No Tobacco Day. It was proclaimed in 1987 on the initiative of the World Health Organisation in

order to draw attention to the spread of tobacco smoking in the world. The global goal of the day is to help protect present and future generations not only from devastating health consequences, but also from the social, environmental and economic disasters associated with tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke.

June 1st is International Children's Day. It's one of the oldest international holidays. The decision to hold it was made in 1925 at the World Conference on the Welfare of Children in Geneva. This is not only a fun holiday for the children themselves; it is also a reminder to society of the need to protect the rights of the child, so that all children grow up happy, study, do what they like and in future become wonderful parents and citizens of their country.

