



**Belarusian  
cosmos.  
Economy  
of space  
flight.**



**Rehearsals in  
the Belarusian  
State Circus  
don't stop  
even now**



INTERNATIONAL

# The Minsk Times

**Socio-political Weekly**

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Polotsk is the city with special charm

## Earthly and spiritual issues

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# Foundation of national security

## Ensuring national security, organising an election campaign and conducting elections: these are the topics of the meeting with the Head of State

By Dmitry Umpirovich

Last week, Aleksandr Lukashenko held a meeting tackling the activities of the state bodies of the national security system. Addressing the participants, the President stated, “We must provide each person with the opportunity to move freely around their land, and parents, as has always been the case in all our cities, to walk around peacefully with their small children by the hand at any time of the day and be proud of their country. The country should be calm, not involved in any stressful situations. This is the main thing that distinguishes us from others. This is the essence of our security. And we must save it, no matter what it costs us.”

### Law and order

Much was discussed at the meeting, which lasted almost two and a half hours. In particular, the President asked its participants how they assess the current situation and what proposals they have in aiming to strengthen stability? The conversation started, perhaps, with the most relevant political topic for the country.

“It is only three weeks since the election campaign kicked off. However, today we can already see that not all the candidates for the Presidential election intend to act in a civilised manner. There are violations of the law and of ethical norms, insults, lashing out at the authorities. There are also those who think that all means are good for achieving their goal,” noted Mr. Lukashenko. “They use populist slogans and unsubstantiated promises in a bid to win the people’s vote. Let people see for themselves, analyse and draw appropriate conclusions.

The people will sort things out.”

In this regard, the national security organs are ordered by the Head of State to ensure that no violations of the law are allowed.

**“We may have to pay a very high price for it afterwards. You know how a similar situation developed in Ukraine. Therefore, the law must be strictly observed.”**



### No to threats!

Another feature of the current political struggle is aggression and provocation. Constant threats against opponents have become a habit for many and they continue to be now. The reaction of Mr. Lukashenko is tough, “Those who take aggressive actions against representatives of law enforcement should be held liable. However, law enforcers are not the only ones who are threatened. Threats are coming from all sides today: against civil servants, heads of the precinct commissions that held the parliamentary elections, their fami-

lies. Threats are coming from all sides. What does this all mean? I will ask the law enforcement bodies, especially the Prosecutor General, the Chairman of the Investigation Committee and the Interior Minister to pay the most serious attention to this.”

**“If there are threats, this is a crime which must be prosecuted under criminal law.”**

### To prevent a split in society

What this ‘conflict’ might lead to is also well-known. Appointing the new composition of the Government, the Head of State recalled how many post-Soviet countries had to literally fight to defend their independence. But is it necessary to bring us to such radical actions?

“We all understand that all events develop according to a previously thought-out scenario. You’re aware of the scenario of the past days, weeks and months. No one is relaxing. Everyone understands that they must come up with something new. It is not these candidates

(the main ones as well as those who participate in the background), who come up with these new policies and ideas, it is wealthy people who pay money. They [candidates] act only as performers. You know that too.”

**“At first, representatives of a number of initiative groups abuse the right to hold pickets to aggravate and destabilise the socio-political situation. Then they will form groups of militants who may want to organise riots. This is what they are calling on people to do. The response is evident. You understand this perfectly well.”**

Aleksandr Lukashenko makes it clear to all those present that they are ready for everything and it’s better to pre-empt than to cope with the consequences, “We are dealing with the so-called ‘modern’ election technologies, which are often dirty. We have already gone through this. We did not allow a split in society at that time, and we will not allow it now. Today we intend to take adequate measures to maintain peace and stability in our state,” the Belarusian leader emphasised. “For this, it is necessary to clearly understand what individual candidates are ready to do to achieve their goals. What resources do they use to increase their rating? Won’t it create additional threats?”

**“Democracy is good, but there must be no lawlessness. There won’t be. You have seen how the super democratic United States and Western Europe countries (which, by the way, taught us democracy) treat protesters. The main task of the national security system is to preserve stability in the country and to ensure law and order. This is what the Constitution and the law require from you.”**

## Ordinary people should not be offended

The President has ordered work to be done on a system to inspect private companies in order to find out why they have fired employees in the last few months. Aleksandr Lukashenko made the relevant statement during the meeting focusing on topical social and political issues.

The President noted, “I’ve been recently getting complaints from people within the framework of the so-called election campaign. I am particularly outraged by the fact that private companies are firing people in Minsk or other cities (it typically happens in cities). I wouldn’t go as far as to describe it as mass layoffs but they seem to be firing a lot of people. I have already made a statement regarding the problem. Firing people is one thing, but some companies do this because they won’t sign in support of alternative candidates.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko asked the Head of Belarus President Administration, Igor Sergeyenko, the Chair of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus, Natalia Kochanova, and the Head of Belarus President Property Management Directorate, Viktor Sheiman, to help deal with the problem and work out a system of inspections to check private companies. “It does not happen at state-run enterprises,” the Head of State noted, adding, “I want you to find out why people were fired in the last three months. I would like to publicly state: if they want to work in Belarus and benefit the country without offending people,

they must give the jobs back to the people and give them their due salaries due to unreasonable dismissal.”

The President explained the reason for his concern, “I asked them not to dismiss people due to this pandemic at the beginning of the year. The election has nothing to do with it. However, they did start to fire people. The employers are brazen enough to tell people to feel free to quit if they support Lukashenko. What is all this? I received complaints from several people and wanted the reports verified. Accordingly, we should bring these companies to their senses. No one is allowed to offend ordinary people. Not because they put me in power once but because such things must not happen in our country.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko instructed the Prosecutor General, the State Control Committee and other agencies and municipal authorities to inspect these private firms. “What kind of a system is this? They can afford to go to Goa, the Canary Islands, or other places but they can’t pay good salaries to people and even dare fire them,” the Head of State pointed out.

Based on President’s press service



## Phone conversation

**Belarus’ President Aleksandr Lukashenko talked by phone with the President of the People’s Republic of China, Xi Jinping. The two leaders discussed bilateral co-operation, joint projects, the international agenda and issues of interaction in the context of the pandemic.**

Aleksandr Lukashenko thanked Xi Jinping for helping to overcome the virus of pandemic. The heads of state also noted the co-operation between the two states’ healthcare ministries.

**Another topic of conversation was the planned visit of the Chinese President to Belarus. Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that the country is greatly anticipating this visit which will further strengthen the iron brotherhood and all-weather friendship between Belarus and China.**

In addition, they also touched on the personnel issue. It’s common knowledge that the Ambassador to China — Nikolai Snopkov — will be recalled from his post in connection with his appointment as the First Deputy Prime Minister. Aleksandr Lukashenko promised that Belarus will choose a diplomat just as professional.

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Xi Jinping have also discussed co-operation as part of the Great Stone Park and the Belarusian leader noted with satisfaction that the Park already has 60 residents from 15 countries.

In turn, the Chinese President noted that he appreciates the order in Belarus and the way we have fought the pandemic. China supports it and is ready to share its experience — in particular, through the organisation of a Belarus-China video conference. Xi Jinping also thanked Mr. Lukashenko

for the humanitarian assistance that Belarus had previously provided to China in connection with the epidemic. He stressed that Chinese will always remember this.

Xi Jinping also stressed that he has known Aleksandr Lukashenko for a long time and is very well informed about the situation in Belarus and that the country will soon hold Presidential elections. He asked to convey words of support to Belarusians. “We support you, we are convinced you’ll win and we support your development path,” the Chinese leader noted.

In addition, Xi Jinping spoke about the decisions of the 13th convocation of the National People’s Congress, noting that the countries jointly face serious challenges. However, the outcomes of these are subject to fate.

Speaking about economic co-operation, Xi Jinping stressed that he will support Belarusian exports to China, especially those related to food: dairy products, beef and poultry. As for the visit to Belarus, he noted that if it were not for the pandemic, it would have taken place long ago.

On behalf of himself and his wife, Xi Jinping conveyed his warmest wishes to Belarusians and the President’s family. The conversation lasted about 50 minutes.

Based on President’s press service

The President made a working trip to the Vitebsk Region: in Polotsk, Aleksandr Lukashenko held a meeting on the development of housing and communal services, visited the Saviour and St. Yevfrosinia Convent and talked with local residents

By Dmitry Kryat

The Head of State first examined the exhibition of equipment available in the arsenal of Belarusian public utilities. The fleet is impressive: from small harvesting machines to mobile boiler rooms and compact water de-ionising modules. He was also shown equipment for the collection and processing of various types of household waste. The President has been paying close attention to this topic for a long time. In the next 2-3 years, it will be necessary to solve the problem of collection and recycling of household garbage. Aleksandr Lukashenko believes, “It’s a disgrace that we take garbage to landfills, bury it and create ‘mountains’ all around us. This is one of the areas that needs to be addressed. Firstly, it is more cost-effective and, secondly, we will protect the environment.”

Feedback

The relevance of the topic of housing and communal services for the top-level session’s agenda was pointed out by our fellow citizens in the process of collecting signatures for the nomination of Aleksandr Lukashenko as a Presidential candidate. This procedure has become an effective communication channel. The President recalled, “When meeting with the head of my initiative group, I asked him to continue with the collection of signatures, although the required number had already been reached. Thanks to the people who have already signed up for nominating the incumbent President as a Presidential candidate. I asked him to do this not because we lacked signatures. We get a huge amount of information at a local level about what’s going on there. All of it is analysed, and the main issues that are important for people are crystallised and submitted to the President. Up to a quarter of all issues concern housing and communal services.”



Topic number one

The Head of State notes the obvious progress in the development of housing and communal services in recent years, “So far, I’ve been informed, a lot has been done to make tariff setting more transparent, reduce the production costs, ensure cost recovery of almost all types of services, and improve the reliability of utility networks and equipment.”

The President made a special emphasis on the fact that the main criterion for the efficiency of the housing and communal services industry is the assessment of the quality of the services provided by the consumer — an ordinary person.

“While there is still criticism heard about the industry, it’s obvious that it’s too early to stop making improvements to it,” the Head of State emphasised.

**Own land**

The President spoke with particular warmth about the villages and the so-called ‘unpromising’ areas. He believes the time has come to revive them, and there is a simple motive for this. Mr. Lukashenko

# Earthly and spiritual issues

not refuse to communicate with them. In the conversation, he touched on the topic of coronavirus and drew attention to the fact that, in Vitebsk and the Vitebsk Region, this problem was encountered earlier than in other regions of the country.

“Vitebsk has been exposed to this virus and it is fortunate that it has already had this disease. This means that it’s not only providing donors, but also has those who no longer fear either the second or third waves, as they have acquired immunity... We will survive this,” noted the President.

Residents of Polotsk came to the Head of State with their questions and concerns, often, perhaps not all of them should be settled at the Presidential level. However, Aleksandr Lukashenko delved into all the details and gave instructions to settle each case and provide the necessary assistance.

A journalist from Mir TV Channel also took the opportunity to ask a question dealing with the President’s opinion on events surrounding Gazprom bank in Belarus. The day before, employees of the Department of Financial Investigations had worked all day in the bank.

“To be honest, I have not got to the bottom of it. I do not know in detail what is going on there. Currently, operational and investigative measures are being undertaken on a large scale...”

The Head of State stressed that law enforcement agencies have been working on this case since 2016, “They’ve found the withdrawal of money, foreign accounts and foreign property in Cyprus, in Latvia, in London... But foreigners provided us with information only in December last year. So, the law enforcement has stepped up these actions, and therefore, questions arose.”

The President said that he intends to invite Interpol and foreign experts to analyse the documents based on the results of the investigation, “I will invite Russians, Americans, Europeans and I will give them the documents. And let them draw conclusions on the compliance of the actions of law enforcement agencies with our laws.”

Holy place

Believers have been coming to the Polotsk’s Saviour and St. Yevfrosinia Convent for nine centuries. It’s the oldest in Belarus, being a cradle of spirituality and the keeper of the memory of the origins of statehood in the Belarusian lands. Moreover, it’s also the largest cultural centre and monastery for thousands of Orthodox pilgrims. Aleksandr Lukashenko came here to visit the cross and shrine with the relics of St. Yevfrosinia. The President lit a candle in the Holy Cross Exaltation Cathedral in memory of the heavenly patroness of Polotsk and the main patroness of the monastery. The monastery was founded in the 1120s. But the main thing here is not even the ancient foundations, but priceless frescoes: about a



thousand square metres of wall painting by unknown artists of the early 12th century. Since the 1990s, restorers have been working in the Saviour Transfiguration Church. All these years, with delicate tools, they carefully remove later paintings layer by layer

to reveal the images of the 12th century. Centimetre by centimetre — and all is done by hand. Most of the frescoes have already been restored and the vanished faces regained their clarity and colour. At the walls of the ancient monastery, the President talked with archaeologists from the Polotsk State University, working on the study of ancient layers of history. In memory of the visit to the convent, its Mother Superior Yevdokia, presented the Head of State with two icons with the face of St. Yevfrosinia. Another present — a book dedicated to the 440th anniversary of educational traditions on the Polotsk land — was presented to Aleksandr Lukashenko by student archaeologists of the Polotsk State University.



# Belarusian

## Economy of space flight

**There are 90 space powers in the world, including Belarus. We joined this prestigious club eight years ago but the history of the Belarusian contribution to the ‘common cosmos’ is much longer and its prospects are incredibly wide. The topic was the focus of the recent Belarus 1 TV broadcast from the TV News Agency’s special project.**

In terms of civilisation’s development, man has overcome Earth’s gravity only recently but Belarus has already been represented in orbit by five cosmonauts. The veterans of space flights — Piotr Klimuk and Vladimir Kovalenok — and a member of recent expeditions, Oleg Novitsky, are our countrymen. His colleague Oleg Artemiev and the first female cosmonaut, Valentina Tereshkova, have Belarusian roots. The first person in the world who experienced weightlessness in a laboratory-plane is also a Belarusian: Valentin Danilovich.

The latest space history of Belarus is being written today. Belarus-made equipment is now surveying the Earth from eight orbiters. The two-metre resolution makes it possible to solve many problems, including those of national security. The shooting equipment with a resolution of 70 centimetres was successfully tested and put into operation, while a new satellite has an even higher opportunity to view details.

The country’s aerospace industry has strong traditions that Belarus has not lost even in difficult times for its sovereignty. The fate of our space industry was decided in 2003, when the President asked whether Belarus needed a space system for remote sensing of the Earth.

The consequences of that meeting were later called a breakthrough and the beginning of a new space era for Belarus. The President stated,

*“We will create our own satellite to study the observation of processes on Earth. We’ll create ground infrastructure since it’s profitable — not only from the point of view of the state’s image but also from the point of view of the economy!”*

After the first failure with the Russian launch vehicle, the launch of the second Belarusian satellite caused a storm of emotions and resulted in a new round in the space history of Belarus. Years later, analysts — including those from outside the CIS — recognised that the Belarusian Head of State defended Belarus’ right for the economy of space flight. Sergey Zolotoy notes, “The space sphere is not simple. It relies not only on domestic issues. Here, wisdom and the courage of the leader to make important decisions are required, since this always entails a risk.”

A Belarusian satellite with equipment which had not yet been sent into space went into orbit when China, France and America launched their own devices. Incidentally, our satellite served twice as long as it was expected to — which is indicative. The Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, academician Sergey Kilin, explains, “We actually saved money for another satellite due to the improvements made by the engineers and scientists who were servicing this device. It is used for many purposes. The system is developing in a multi-level direction, thus ensuring Belarus’ independence in receiving information from space.”

Roscosmos is interested in not making each device separate and unique, but finally finding the possibility of mass

***Cosmos is a force that drives sci-tech progress, attracts other industries and develops the national economy***



**Belarus’ connection with space is stable and permanent**

production. In this regard, the optical and mechanical research that is being conducted in Minsk could become the basis for the production of such mass-produced devices. Thus, Integral actually creates a ‘retina’ for the ‘eye’ of the future satellite. Aleksandr Ketko, the Director of Belmircosystems branch of Integral, says, “We



**Baikonur cosmodrome: here, the Belarusian satellite was launched into orbit**

carry out a full complex — including production of crystals and their installation in the target equipment. We conduct tests and measurements: high-precision equipment makes it possible to perform assembly operations with an accuracy of one micron.”

Overall, more than 20 teams work on space projects in our country. More than fifty developments were carried out by Belarusians as part of the *Monitoring-SG* programme alone and scientists have learned to determine the quality of rocket engines even by the spectrum of the flame during the vehicle launch.

A laureate of the State Award, academician Sergey Kilin, has repeatedly addressed the international community. According to him, it’s impossible not to notice changes in the attitude towards Belarus. “A remarkable example that demonstrates the level of space research development by the National Academy of Sciences is the Japanese satellite launched in 2018 for the study of Mercury. It was made possible due to an electromagnetic screen created by scientists of the NAS’ Institute of Materials Studies,” he notes.

In September 2018, Minsk hosted the 31st international congress of the Association of Spaceflight Participants which brought together 90 cosmonauts from 17 countries. The President then clearly outlined,

*“There was much resistance and debate. Nevertheless, I made decisions primarily because these are the latest technologies that have drawn the entire economic sector together. This contributes to the rise of Belarus to a higher level, so that the country will become one of the most highly developed and civilised states. Nuclear power and cosmonautics are new directions of Belarus’ development during the period of its independence and sovereignty.”*

China, Ukraine and South Africa want to work together with Belarusian scientists. Russia is considering expanding the cosmonaut squad: engineer-biologists, chemists and physicists are needed. The ISS can carry out many unique experiments with the participation of Belarusians. We have a horizon of interesting and non-standard tasks for the development of Belarusian space.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### **Aleksandr Lukashenko sends traditional Belarusian embroidered shirts to Volodymyr Zelensky and his spouse**

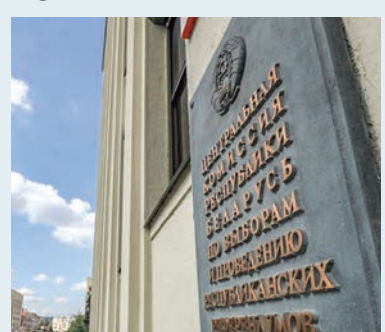
According to the Pool of the First Telegram-channel, Belarus’ President has sent Belarusian embroidered shirts to Volodymyr and Olena Zelensky. The accompanying letter reads: ‘In the course of history, we have stood shoulder to shoulder, protecting the rights to independent and free development’.



Earlier, Volodymyr Zelensky sent a Ukrainian embroidered shirt to the Belarusian President on the occasion of the day commemorating these traditional items of clothing.

#### **Elections-2020: Belarus to start inviting international observers once the Presidential candidates are registered**

It is standard practice: all elections in the country proceed under broad international observation. An action algorithm for inviting international observers is being worked out. As the epidemic situation in the country improves, the Foreign Ministry will send the relevant invitations to international organisations that traditionally monitor our elections: the OSCE ODIHR and the CIS. This is likely to happen after the registration of Presidential candidates is complete.



#### **Establishment of Eastern Partnership’s regional IT school in Minsk suggested by Belarus**

The meeting of the foreign ministers of the European Union’s *Eastern Partnership* participating countries was held in the form of a video conference. In the context of the vision of the *Eastern Partnership*’s further development, the Belarusian side emphasised the importance of contributing to the attraction of foreign investment, facilitating access of partner-countries to the EU market, developing energy and transport communications, and introducing ‘green’ and information technologies. A proposal was made by Belarus to establish the *Eastern Partnership*’s regional IT school in Minsk.



# Eco-friendly and economical

## Tariffs for charging electric cars in Belarus will be the lowest in Europe

By Svetlana Savelyeva

In Belarus, the test stage of creating a network of electric filling stations — where it will be possible to charge an electric car for free — is complete. From July onwards, Belorusneft will introduce charging rates for the Malanka electric stations. The company has announced that the cost of electricity will be the lowest in comparison with its neighbours and other European countries: about \$0.13-0.17 (equivalent) per 1 kW/h. The final price depends on the charging speed and refuelling at a super-fast station will be a little more expensive. However, it will still be almost half as cheap as petrol.

“We have been charging electric cars for free since 2014, while we were working in test mode. The introduction of a fee for the electricity used has been discussed since 2018, when Belorusneft became the national operator for the cre-



ation of an electric station network following a Presidential decree. However, it was decided to postpone the introduction of tariffs until 2020,” said Andrey Kotik, Belorusneft’s Deputy Director. “Today we can say that we have successfully completed the initial stage of development of this network in Belarus — arranging over 260 electric fuelling

stations, enough to service thousands of electric vehicles. Logically, we are moving to the next stage: the economically feasible development of the network.”

According to the official, electric fuel will still be significantly cheaper than petrol. A simple calculation indicates that a full charge of a Nissan Leaf electric car with the battery capacity of

24 kW/h will cost \$2.9-3.8 — depending on the charging speed. This reserve of energy is enough to drive 150km. Fuel consumption for the same distance for a similar car with a gasoline engine is about 10 litres which will cost \$7.6-8.4.

The difference in price is designed to make electric vehicles more attractive compared to gasoline cars. In recent months, Belarus has taken a number of measures to encourage the transition to eco-friendly transport: VAT and customs duties have been abolished, which has significantly reduced the cost of buying an electric car for individuals and businesses. At the current cost of petrol per year, about \$2.5-3.4 thousand is spent on filling up the car. Charging will cost \$1.25-1.5 thousand.

According to experts’ forecasts, the relatively low price of electric fuel will be maintained in the future due to obtaining energy from the Belarusian nuclear power station.

## Gadgets: for health and well-being

New resident company registered at Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park



By Arina Novikova

Delfidia company intends to make innovative electronic products for remotely monitoring the state of human health. A modern enterprise will be set up in the Industrial Park to make electronic devices (blood glucose meters, cardio-gadgets, pulmo-gadgets and others) and the test strips that blood glucose meters need to take measurements.

“The company’s operation will be aimed at creating and introducing innovative products in the spheres of healthcare, education, physical training, sport and self-testing at home,” the Industrial Park’s staff note.

The Great Stone is home to resident companies from 15 countries. The Industrial Park’s priority development areas include mechanical engineering, electronics and telecommunications, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, new materials, logistics, online trade, big data storage and processing.

## Launch of new oil project

**Construction of the Gomel-Gorki oil pipeline — which will connect two branches of the Druzhba main oil pipeline in Belarus and improve logistics for alternative oil supplies — to start in November at a cost of approximately \$126m**

By Igor Svetlov

To diversify oil supplies to Belarus, an investment project for construction of the Gomel-Gorki oil trunk pipeline will be implemented in 2020-2023. The design and construction is being carried out by Gomeltransneft Druzhba JSC, while Belorusneft Production Association acts as the general design and general contractor organisation.

“The project will be financed from Gomeltransneft Druzhba’s own funds and the approximate cost, including filling the pipe with process oil, will be about \$126m,” said Andrey Karaban, the Deputy General Director for Capital Construction and Repair at Gomeltransneft Druzhba JSC.

The total length of the new oil trunk pipeline will be up to 207km and the



maximum volume of oil pumped will reach 6m tonnes annually.

“The first ‘expert consultation’ stage of the project will be ready on October 30th this year and, on November 1st, we plan to start construction and installation work. Accordingly, design work has already begun, geological surveys and geodetic works are underway, including the preparation of technical conditions for the intersection with communications. After creating a preliminary scheme for the placing of the sites, we will start performing preliminary land allocation,” Mr. Karaban adds.

Belneftekhim explains that the Gomel-Gorki oil pipeline will help organise the delivery of alternative oil by pipeline to the Mozyr Refinery and Naftan. The Druzhba oil trunk pipeline branches off into northern and southern branches before the border of Belarus. The planned bridge will connect these two branches across the territory of Belarus. If the reverse is used from Poland, the new oil pipeline will allow alternative oil to be delivered, including to Naftan. The Mozyr Refinery already enjoys such an advantage.

## Regional specifics considered



By Irina Sergeeva

The contract provides for the delivery of over 70 special vehicles: firefighting tank trucks, ladder trucks and vehicles for foam firefighting. Some oth-

**MAZ and Borisov-based Pozhsnab ship first batch of firefighting, rescue and emergency response vehicles to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) of Mongolia**

er vehicles — such as command vehicles and a mobile hospital with a decontamination station — are part of the shipment. In addition, the Mongolian side will receive

Minsk Automobile Works’ crew buses for delivering personnel to their work areas. The vehicles have been adapted taking into account the climatic and geographic peculiarities of the region.

All the special-purpose vehicles are

based on MAZ chassis. “The Minsk Automobile Works has extensive experience of creating adapted or special-design chassis for emergencies. The products that have been shipped to Mongolia represent the result of joint efforts by the Belarusian Emergencies Ministry, engineers of JSC MAZ and the managing company of BELAVTOMAZ Holding and Pozhsnab,” note company staff. All the vehicles have been tested in real emergency situations and have scored highly.

# Preserving for heirs

By Natalia Yemelyanova

On June 5th, President Aleksandr Lukashenko signed an order approving the decision of the Board of the Fund of the President of the Republic of Belarus for Support of Culture and Arts. According to the document, the Culture Ministry will receive more than \$1.26m (equivalent) from the fund. The money will be used for various needs related to the preservation and return of the country's cultural heritage.

It is planned to restore the Estate and Park Ensemble in the village of Zakozel (in the Drogichin District), Golshany and Krevo castles, and the Roman Catholic Church in Mstislavl which is part of the former Jesuits' Collegium including a church, a monastic building with narrative paintings in the



Golshany Castle

interiors of the cells and a refectory (1745-1750).

The collections of the National Library will be supplemented by a complex of handwritten and printed book monuments. These are very expensive and especially valuable copies — such as one of Meletius Smotritsky's lifetime publications. Among the acquired rarities is also the most valuable manuscript of the Tatars of Belarus — *Khamail* — written in the Belaru-



Krevo Castle

In Belarus, Golshany and Krevo castles are being restored and unique book publications and archival documents will be purchased for the National Library



Roman Catholic Church in Mstislavl

sian-Polish language in Arabic letters.

The library will also receive archival documents from different regions of Belarus. There are two unique charters of the kings of Poland and the grand dukes of Lithuania: Sigismund Vasa and Vladislav IV who ruled in the late 16th-early 17th century. One document is written on paper and the other on parchment. One is in Latin, the other — in Belarusian.

## Kupala Night receives support



*Alexandria Gathers Friends* festival in the Shklov District to be held this year under the UNESCO patronage

By Olga Korneeva

"An international organisation made the proposal and the Culture Ministry of Belarus supported the idea," noted the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee. Patronage is the highest form of moral support from UNESCO, for which the organisation bears neither financial nor legal responsibility.

This year, all regions of Belarus and the city of Minsk will present their exhibition-themed courtyards at the festival in Alexandria, enabling guests to enjoy brand markets, creative contests,

open airs and other events that reflect the unique image of each region in the country.

Historical and cultural values, as well as traditional crafts and dishes of each region will be showcased. One of the major peculiarities of this year's celebration will be the holding of a folk costume festival during the *Alexandria Kirmash* event. Each region will show its traditional decoration and tell about its origins and traditions.

The *Kupala Night* holiday is planned to be held in the agricultural town of Alexandria on July 11th-12th.

## In high positions

Belarusian State University demonstrates highest position in the history of its QS participation. The latest QS ranking of the world's best universities was published on June 10th.

By Irina Sergeeva

This time, the BSU is placed 317th, improving its performance by 34 positions among 1,002 ranked universities — which is the best result in the history of participation in the rating bringing the Belarusian university closer to the prestigious 1 percent of the best universities in the world. In 2019, the BSU was 351st, in 2018 — 354th, in 2017 — 334th.

Another Belarusian higher education establishment in the rating is the BNTU. The Belarusian National Technical University is in the 801-1,000 group. Overall, about 30,000 universities are established around the world.

The QS Global University Ranking is the most popular and frequently mentioned source of information about the world's higher educational estab-

lishments. Among its criteria are quantitative data on higher education institutions, citations of scientific works over the past five years, the number of foreign teachers and students, surveys of about a million independent academic experts and employers from around the world.

For the first time, the BSU is ahead of Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian and Ukrainian universities: the University of Warsaw is 321st, Vilnius University 423rd, Kharkov's V. N. Karazin National University is 477th and Riga Technical University is 701st.

The Lomonosov Moscow State University (74), St. Petersburg State University (225) and Novosibirsk State University (228) lead in the post-Soviet space, while the top three are represented by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University and Harvard.





By Yuliana Leonovich

Chamber format, humour and facts ‘not from textbooks’

One of the organisers of the *Guides Fest* event, a member of the Belarusian Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), professional guide Timofey Akudovich, has been conducting unusual excursions in Minsk for more than a year. Eight thematic areas envisage eight two-hour stories: through separate streets of the city, medical Minsk or visiting the addresses where the most famous Belarusians of past centuries were born. In the chamber format, there are a lot of humour and facts that are not mentioned in textbooks — the demand for such ‘trips’ around the city is only growing. However, they also talk about popular tourist places. It’s done in such a fascinating manner that a visitor immediately understands that Minsk sometimes remains unknown even to its native inhabitants. Timofey Akudovich has been taking Belarusians and foreign tourists throughout our country for many years.

“Once I realised that sometimes a person wants to get to know a place or an era a little closer than during ordinary sight-seeing tours. So as not to hurry through it or ‘squeeze’ the centuries into five-minute stories, but to take a closer look at the moments that make up our history, the *Nablizhenne* project was born: original author’s excursions from me and my colleagues. They are mostly historical and primarily take place in Minsk and its suburbs, but always in the direction of the most important places,” explains Mr. Akudovich.

The route is built

Such historical marathons are designed primarily for residents of Minsk, who daily pass by the same places, but don’t know anything about them. Meanwhile, Minsk — especially its centre — holds dozens of stories: from those well-known from school textbooks to very personal ones.

“We have several routes that will be of interest primarily to people who like to ‘dig deep’: historians and local lore specialists. These, for example, include a tour of the places of the Minsk underground, where we recreate a chain of tragic events in the early 1940s. The Minsk underground is an almost forgotten topic, but it is incredibly interesting, especially, it seems to me, for those who live in the streets named after Kedyshko, Kazinets, Kabushkin and Omelyanyuk,” Timofey notes.

Timofey also includes a walk through



18th century Minsk to routes not designed for everyone. How did the city live 300 years ago and where did the people of Minsk go to work? The guide also gives an answer to the main question of what, in fact, has been preserved from those years. Another unusual excursion explores places from the childhood of Adolf Bogdanovich — the father of poet Maksim Bogdanovich.

“Not everyone knows that Adolf by birth turned into Adam at 16 years old, as the name given to his son at birth seemed to the family too Catholic. And all his life Bogdanovich was strict — a teacher, an official, a scientist, a socialist. But at the end of his life, little Adolf remembered his youth and Bogdanovich sat down to

**Sometimes, in the ‘Nablizhenne’ (Drawing Closer) project there are excursions that are no longer repeated. For example, restorer Fiodor Soroka recently spoke about the oldest church in Minsk: the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral.**



selves sometimes share interesting memories. Once in the group there was a couple from New York — Minsk residents who had emigrated to America many years ago. The man’s father worked in the brigade which, in the early 1950s, erected a monument to Stalin in the Tsentralnaya Square of Minsk (now it is called Oktyabrskaya). He shared several interesting facts on this subject and I now include information about them in the walk along Engels Street.”

Dozens of completely different people look for meetings with *Nablizhenne* guides every week: historians, office clerks and humanitarian students. One thing unites them all: these are people who are interested in the history of Minsk.

“This is the concept of the project: to make the city a little closer to the people who live here and to help them take a fresh look at their daily roadmap. Such stories are not usually interesting for visitors. What can they say about walking along Dominikanskaya Street (which today is named after Engels) or about our excursion hit, entitled *I Was Born Here?* They simply won’t understand what is the charm of various city objects, each of which has its own story: personal or public,” sums up Timofey.

write very warm and lyrical memories of his childhood. Thanks to them, today we can walk around the provincial Minsk of the 1870s and look at the city through the eyes of little Adolf, but through the prism of experience of adult Adam,” explains Mr. Akudovich.

Walking along Dominikanskaya Street

The guides take about five days to develop a fully-fledged tour: there are not only many thousands of steps on a round-trip route, but also work in libraries. Timofey Akudovich finds top stories in the old newspapers and the recollections of eyewitnesses, “Tourists them-

# Along the falcon’s path

**This year, three Belarusians have been awarded the honorary title of ‘Wildlife Defender of Belarus — 2019’ by the BirdLife International environmental association. Among them is Ruslan Shaikin — the Director of the Centre for Environmental Education and Development research-educational institution, the author of many books and publications about birds in particular and wildlife in general, a founder of the Sokoliny Reserve near Minsk and an ordinary teacher.**

By Yulia Demeshko

When Ruslan began working at the Machulishchi secondary school as a young specialist, birds were his hobby. “We didn’t spend time in classes but went on trips, hiking and exploring. Once we discovered a nest of kestrels who lived in the pines. They are not an endangered species since kestrels live everywhere in our country, but they still are listed in the Red Book. To save that nest site, we decided to create a reserve and wanted the

children to feel involved in the idea. To begin with, we created a small children’s movement to protect these birds and later prepared an application for funding to support the project. We received a small grant, thanks to which we were able to conduct a scientific and technical-economic study of this reserve and hold meetings and discussions with local residents,” he explains.

The locals appreciated the idea. As a result, a group of like-minded people united. They had a great deal of work



to do at the reserve: to clean the area, plant rare plants listed in the Red Book, to weave nesting baskets for falcons and owls. Interestingly, falcons and long-eared owls do not make nests and, if there are not enough baskets, then the birds will simply move to cities — to balconies, attics, in crevices, niches...

“From time immemorial, birds have lived in trees. This is a natural, ‘wild’ population that we would not want to lose over time,” adds Mr. Shaikin.

Any teacher who wants to show

children the Red Book falcon can take a guided tour in the Sokoliny Reserve, walk along the two eco-paths: one devoted exclusively to falcons (birds can be studied by their call here) and the other is of a general ecological theme.

Ruslan Shaikin has also taken an active part in the establishment of the ‘City of Birds’ eco-path, in Serebryany Wood, near the Loshitsa Park. The route passes through a swampy area with fallen trees, stumps and, most importantly, several Red Book bird species.



# World's worst food crisis

Governments urged to act to avoid disaster from recession caused by coronavirus

The world stands on the brink of a food crisis worse than any seen for at least 50 years, the UN has warned as it urged governments to act swiftly to avoid disaster.

Better social protections for poor people are urgently needed as the looming recession following the coronavirus pandemic may put basic nutrition beyond their reach, the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, said.

"Unless immediate action is taken, it is increasingly clear that there is an impending global food emergency that could have long-term impacts on hundreds of millions of children and adults," he said. "We need to act now to avoid the worst impacts of our efforts to control the pandemic."

Although harvests of staple crops are holding up, and the export bans and protectionism that experts feared have

so far been largely avoided, the worst of the impacts of the pandemic and ensuing recession are yet to be felt. Mr. Guterres warned, "Even in countries with abundant food, we see risks of disruption in the food supply chain."

About 50 million people risk falling into extreme poverty this year owing to the pandemic, but the long-term effects will be even worse, as poor nutrition in childhood causes lifelong suffering. Already, one in five children around the world are stunted in their growth by the age of five, and millions more are likely to suffer the same fate if poverty rates soar.

Mr. Guterres laid out a three-point plan to repair the world's ailing food systems and prevent further harm. These are: to focus aid on the worst-stricken regions to stave off immediate disaster,

and for governments to prioritise food supply chains; to strengthen social protections so that young children, pregnant and breastfeeding women and other at-risk groups — including children who are not receiving school meals in lockdown — receive adequate nutrition; and to invest in the future, by building a global recovery from the pandemic that prioritises healthy and environmentally sustainable food systems.

Maximo Torero, the chief economist of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, said the world's food systems were under threat as never before in recent times, as the pandemic and lockdowns hampered people's ability to harvest and buy and sell food. "We need to be careful," he said. "This is a very different food crisis than the ones we have seen."

## Banksy artwork found in Italy

**An artwork by British graffiti artist Banksy that was stolen last year from the Bataclan music hall in Paris has been found by police in central Italy**

The work, which depicted a young female figure with a mournful expression, was painted as a tribute to the victims of the 2015 terror attack at the venue. It was cut out and removed from one of the venue's emergency doors by a group of hooded people using angle grinders.

It was found in a farmhouse in the Abruzzo Region. The District Attorney of the Italian city of L'Aquila, Michele Renzo, said, "The finding was possible following investigations conducted by the district prosecutor in collaboration with the police and the French judiciary."

The mural had been stolen in January 2019. After it was taken, the Bataclan posted on Twitter: 'Today we are deeply indignant. Banksy's work, a symbol of memory and belonging for everyone — locals, Parisians, citizens of the world — was stolen from us'.



Ninety people were killed in November 2015 when armed militants targeted the Bataclan during a concert by rock band *Eagles of Death Metal*.

The stencilled mural, described by the venue as 'a symbol of recollection', was one of a series of artworks attributed to Banksy that appeared around Paris in June 2018.

## China to open panda park

The Giant Panda National Park, one of China's first national parks to be set up chiefly for a single species, will be officially established before the end of the year

The park, covering 27,134 square kilometres, will span parts of Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces. With 18,056 square kilometres in the park serving as habitat for giant pandas, it will also be among the first national parks to integrate the habitat of a single species.

The latest statistics show that 1,631 wild giant pandas are now living in the national park, accounting for 87.5 percent of the population of wild pandas nationwide. The park is also home to more than 8,000 types of

wildlife, such as snub-nosed monkeys and scarlet ibis, making it a nationally or possibly globally significant place for the protection of an ecological environment.

To better protect the wildlife in the park, the Giant Panda National Park Administration has invested 4.7bn Yuans (\$660m) in infrastructure construction, the restoration of the ecological corridors and the protection of crucial habitats. About 1,800 monitoring lines and 4,839 observation points have been set up.



## London's oldest theatre discovered

Archaeologists have discovered London's oldest theatre — an Elizabethan playhouse constructed in the mid-16th century

Known as the Red Lion, it represents a major 'missing link' in the history of English drama. In medieval, and indeed often in Tudor times, performances that were dominated by Biblical subject matter — while by the time of Shakespeare, many purely secular plays were being performed, often in purpose-built theatres. They were usually staged in inn courtyards and in university and other halls.

The new discovery, in Whitechapel, helps fill in the gap between those two traditions. The Red Lion was a drinking establishment which, in 1567, allowed London's first purpose built theatre to be

constructed on its property. However, it's likely that many of the plays performed there were still Biblical, rather than purely secular in nature.

Certainly, the Red Lion's very first performance was a spectacular (now long-lost) drama called *The Story of Samson* — an account of the action-packed exploits of the Biblical superman who sacrificed his life to oppose paganism.

The discovery is also important because it was the Red Lion which paved the way for the slightly later theatres where the secular plays of Shakespeare, Marlowe and others were performed.

# Circus: closed rehearsal

‘We miss the audience very much’: rehearsals in the Belarusian State Circus don’t stop even now

Parades, striking costumes and breath-taking tricks: the Belarusian State Circus’ audiences have always associated it with a magical show and a complete immersion in a special atmosphere. But the coronavirus pandemic hasn’t passed over this temple of art either and the hospitable walls have not heard children’s laughter or enthusiastic applause for two months already. Artistes and animals, accustomed to people’s love, are finding it especially difficult to survive this period. We learnt about the current conditions for rehearsals, how they protect their horses and tigers from stress and what they most dream of.

By Kristina Glushko

## Stars on the arena

Grey Talant and white Malysh: the big horses are prancing round the circus ring and defiantly standing on their hind legs, effectively posing in front of our photographer’s camera. It’s clear to see from their big black eyes that they miss the attention of outside observers.

“No one could have thought that it would be such a long break,” says Stage Director Alla Nikolaeva-Aliyeva, recalling the mood of the artistes at the last concert. “On March 29th, we performed, said goodbye to our audience and told ourselves that nothing catastrophic had happened. Everyone thought we would open again in May-June, so no one felt any disappointment or fear and the situation was taken for granted.”

At the request of the leadership, the artistes suspended mass rehearsals and only animals remained in the circus. Every day, trainers go to the arena to warm them up.

“We have big breaks so that people don’t run into each other, keep a distance and put antiseptic everywhere. For animals, this is generally a blessed time, as they can run around the arena as much as they like. Usually they spent half a day at the rehearsal, then the artistes filled the space, and now the animals are being given maximum attention.”

Malysh is in the arena, while behind the fence there is a dynastic artist, the head of the ‘Belarusian Riders’ performance, Ruslan Lazarov, who has been working in the circus since he was 7 years old. He seems to understand every one of the horse’s thoughts and can decipher any of its movements: from time to time he calls the animal, strokes and carefully feeds it bread.

“He has such sad eyes,” I try to stroke the horse.

“He has cunning eyes!” Ruslan immediately saw through Malysh’s pretense. “He’s still an actor. Seriously speaking, the animals lack work, as they have nowhere to release their emotions. Wind-ing in circles around the arena is



nothing for them; a true rehearsal is completely different, envisaging a stunt part with riders. The artistes aren’t rehearsing with their four-legged partners because of the pandemic; after all, the programme involves many more than just three or five people, so we are trying to avoid such crowded meetings.”

The horses are fed with hay, oats, bread and sugar, but recently they have been put on a diet so as not to gain weight. However, their ‘colleagues’ — the white tigers — like the new reality: the diet of each is usually 10 kilograms of meat. Monkeys also don’t complain about the food: a rich buffet can be made of yoghurts, avocados and grapes.

## ‘What do you mean that I can’t train? It’s my life!’

Most of the circus artistes have switched to remote work: some rehearse at home, others go to trampoline centres and gyms, yet others meet with the director outside the circus.

“I think, as soon as the

situation normalises, festivals will immediately begin and I want our artistes to be ready for them,” says Alla Nikolaeva-Aliyeva outlining her plans. “Not a single person has said that he refuses to rehearse and wants to relax. It’s understandable: it’s unpleasant



Vitaly Pivovarchik

to lose the feeling of muscle tone. And what does it mean ‘I can’t do it’? It’s in our nature, to live and to breathe the circus. But while the animals see everything normally, it’s more difficult



cult for people to adapt: different thoughts arise and questions like ‘what will happen next?’ and ‘do I need this profession?’. There is a reassessment of values, so it is important to support each other during this period.”

Everyone perceives the time-out in their own way: the circus team, for example, uses it efficiently, preparing new performances.

“Our artiste Aidyn Israfilov, during this time, has changed his monkey to a younger one and is preparing a completely new performance with it. This period has benefited him as there is the opportunity to work with the animal for 2.5 hours every day,” says the director, lifting the veil of secrecy. “Our aerial gymnasts are preparing a complicated performance for the festival, while the clown, Daniil Minkevich, is also going to surprise the audience with his tricks. Of course, we are also thinking about what our autumn and winter programmes will include, there are lots of different ideas. Most importantly, we have all the animals ready, and people only need two weeks to recover. It is important for our ‘airmen’ to rehearse at altitude, as the first time after a long break there may be muscle cramps or

dizziness. But the artistes are happy to be here from morning to night, the main thing is to work.”

Alla Nikolaeva-Aliyeva admits that there has never been such a situation in the life of the circus, “But we are not depressed, everyone is at a low start, waiting for the go-ahead. At the same time, we don’t want to rush, as our health is more important.”

## ‘Enough finances to hold out until autumn’

Circuses around the world are currently in a difficult position. Their main resource is ticket sales, and these are now blocked. Olga Bosyakova, the Deputy Director of the Belarusian State Circus, talks about how the management manages the situation, “We always felt that difficulties might be ahead for us, therefore we were able to accumulate a safety cushion, thanks to which we can now live. Annually, we receive a subsidy of 10-13 percent of our total revenues from the state and, even at this difficult time, no one has cancelled it. We’ve calculated that there would be enough finances until autumn, so for now we’ll survive somehow.”

According to Olga, a great deal of money is spent on keeping the animals, and there are a lot of them in the circus: six tigers and a lion, three bears, monkeys, donkeys, camels, horses and llamas.

“Almost all the administration staff and artistes officially have their rest time now — they don’t come to the circus. Their time is paid, but, of course, not in the same amount as before. The whole team is suffering, it’s hard to live idle. At the same time, the artistes want to return, but we worry about their health.”

Before the pandemic, the Belarusian State Circus was performing a beautiful water show, which was planned to be completed only on May 10th. But the concerts had to be cancelled much earlier: the audience began to hand over tickets on a massive scale.

“There are 1,625 seats in the hall and 100 people must be involved in the performance. Only 3-5 percent of tickets were sold, so giving a concert was not economically feasible. Can you imagine the artistes? It’s morally difficult to work for an empty room. Of course, it’s a pity that such a beautiful programme closed: we showed 40 performances out of 65, many did not have time to watch it. But we hope everything will be fine and soon the hall will be filled once again with spectators,” Olga adds.

CULTURE



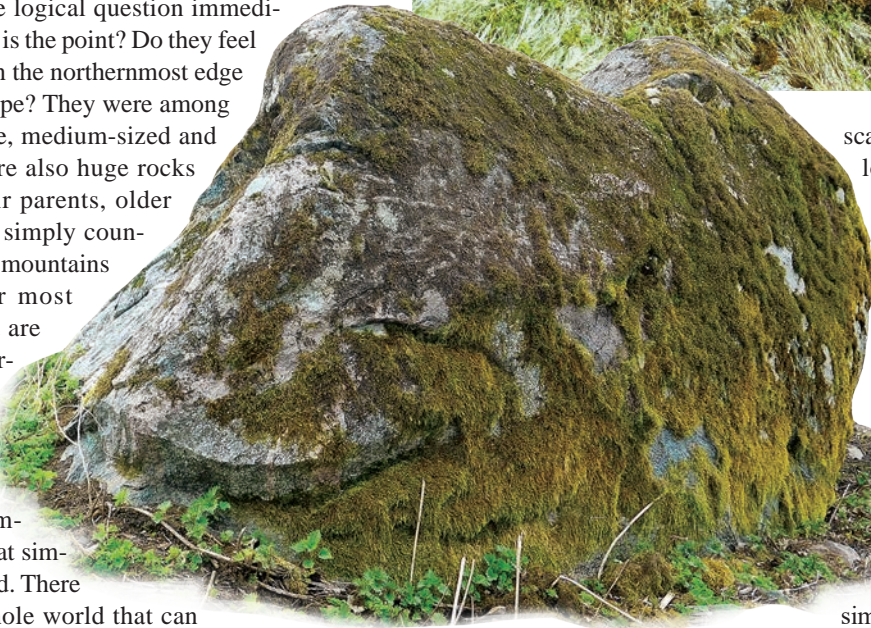
The strength, weight and inviolability of boulders will always astonish and surprise

# Stones

Author's project of Vladimir Tsvirko

Could they ever have imagined that they would have such a future? I'm pretty sure they couldn't. Even if it's possible to imagine this future, for example, in the most fantastic dreams, then the logical question immediately arises: why, what is the point? Do they feel uncomfortable here, on the northernmost edge of what was then Europe? They were among similar stones — large, medium-sized and very small. There were also huge rocks nearby that were their parents, older brothers, relatives, or simply countrymen. However, the mountains themselves are their most revered ancestors and are even, without exaggeration, their gods. The greatness of mountains is so reassuring in its immutability. Mountains are the embodiment of a force that simply cannot be destroyed. There is no power in the whole world that can stand against their gods. However, as it later turned out, the stones were very wrong.

Even further to the North, to the uppermost part of the Earth, something which dramatically influenced the fate of stones, rocks and even mountains appeared: that was a glacier. It was small initially but then started growing, gaining strength, weight and size. After a while, it became so large and heavy that its height alone reached about four kilometres. The glacier began to slide along the Earth down to the equator, paying no attention to anything in its path. It was destroying and rebuilding the surface of our planet beyond recognition. It was filling in old and forming new lakes, changing the course of rivers and creating mountains. The glacier was destructive, pushing ahead of itself or even swallowing an incredible number of rocks and stones — so that it carried all these in its icy belly far away from their homeland, from the modern Aland Islands or from the wilds of Finland. The glacier's path was so slow that it took a long time to reach about the middle of the territory of our modern country. It was here that the huge ice creature stopped. Why? It so happened that, on our beautiful planet, there existed, still exists and I hope will remain an even more powerful force: it's so great that it can stop even a glacier with a single touch. That force was mother-nature which touched the glacier with its warmth and the ice began



to gradually transform into streams and rivers with pure clear water. The glacier was losing its volume and retreating; it released large and small stones, boulders and even whole rocks, which remained in the places the glacier had left them.

As for stones, having no ability to move, they literally froze in the places where they had been left. They are still here. Most likely, having forgotten about their former homeland, they consider only these places — our incomparable country of Belarus — to be their native land.

Since those distant times, the stones have become an integral part of our landscape. Moreover, they were cult objects for our ancestors — belonging to the most ancient faith. Man came to a land free of glaciers and everything that was beyond his control at that time, everything that was incomprehensible and inaccessible to his mind frightened him and eventually transformed into his own gods and idols. The list was long: the sun, wind, rain, mountains, lightning, thunder, rainbows and more. Stones were also on the list — though it might look strange: their strength, weight, inviolability, colour and size also surprised man and, as a result, stones were given the status of higher beings, generic totems, amulets and protectors. Like all other gods, stones were also given offerings and worshipped — from generation to generation. The tradition lasted for many generations.

As time went on, beliefs and people were changing and new gods have replaced old idols. Those changes were not simple and the stones were affected as well. People learnt how to destroy them, while pushing those they didn't want into rivers or lakes. Times changed and modern people are less hostile to stones. They even recollect what stones once were for them. People are attracted by boulders and feel need of them. Once again, inscriptions, symbols or works by various celebrities are being placed on them.

It is interesting to look into the future: what will happen to these newcomers from the North which we no longer view as strangers?

"How do you like this story?" said grandfather Avdey, turning to me. It was he, from a village conveniently located on the banks of the Neman, who agreed to lead me to a local landmark: a huge boulder which bears the modest name of the village near which it lies.

"It's all very nice and really unusual," I answered with pleasure. "Everything is so neat and orderly. However, all the inanimate characters in your story seem somehow alive... It's interesting and unexpected..."

"Why is it unexpected?" said the old man, seemingly offended. "Of course! They are alive, it's true! The sun, wind, rain, lightning, rainbows, trees, rivers and lakes — all are alive. As for the stones, believe me, they also probably have a

mind and a memory... They are even able to help us when we treat them with respect and gratitude."

"How do you know all this? Where did you hear it? Who told you about this? Have you read about this?" I wondered.

The answer was short and succinct. The old man quickly replied, "We all have to believe in the impossible. Our life belongs not only to work, we also do many things which are good both for our heads and hearts. Be sure of that."



# Catch up if you can



The Belarusian Athletic Federation plans to organise the Belarusian Athletics Championships – gathering the strongest sportsmen together at Dinamo Stadium on the days scheduled for the 2020 Olympics

By Dmitry Komashko

### It will be fast

The postponement of Tokyo Games has seriously affected the training of athletes around the world. Scheduled for the dates of the Olympics, the national championship should help coaches and athletes evaluate and correct their training. According to the Chairman of the Belarusian Athletics Federation, Vadim Devyatovsky, all the strongest athletes will take part in the competition; there has not been such a representative championship in Belarus for a long time. The programme will include all disciplines, except for the marathon.

“It is important for us to check the shape of our leading athletes who continued training all these months. We are not saying that we need to show Olympic results at any cost at the national championship. Some, on the contrary, use the break in the international calendar for recovery and, only in August, will they gain momentum. However, for those who are on the move, the main domestic tournament should be a test and an opportunity to realise their accumulated potential. As a reference point, we’ve chosen the results shown by the world’s leading athletes at the Rio Olympics four years ago. For those who can get closer to the Brazilian metres and seconds, our partners have prepared additional significant rewards. Foreign athletes are already showing interest in participating in the Belarusian championship — not only those from neighbouring states. If everything works out, it could be a very serious competition,” Mr. Devyatovsky says.

This situation is a true gift for Belarusian athletes. One of our leading hurdlers — Alina Talay — notes that she hasn’t previously run at Dinamo in a fully-fledged competition but has now got the chance. “Two years of my career were almost lost due to injury, I wasn’t able to perform at the 2nd European Games and I’ll be very happy to run in front of my fans during the Belarusian championship. This is a very serious challenge. It has always been a revelation to me to see how the US championship is held. The importance of the tournament

is simply off the scale and the selection is more serious than for a world event. All the stars prepare first for the US championship and only then for other tournaments. There is also serious competition in the hurdle sprint in Belarus, so it will be very important for each of us to prepare for the national event. At least I will prepare as seriously as for the European championship,” she comments.

Anastasia Mironchik-Ivanova echoes her. The athlete won a medal at the 2nd European Games and plunged into the atmosphere of Dinamo in full. However, like most sportsmen, she is now looking for any opportunity to perform. “No one talks about fantastic results at any cost, but we need to test our form and show it. It’s also useful to feed on the emotions. Every event matters now, especially if guests from other countries can come,” Anastasia explains.



Alina Talay



Anastasia Mironchik-Ivanova

### It will be colourful

Another non-standard move by the organisers is the entourage. Several years ago, national championships ceased to look like parochial tournaments for representatives of the second tier. At present, the Belarusian Athletics Federation is aiming at world level — which is no exaggeration. Lifting the

veil of secrecy, Mr. Devyatovsky gives an example of the major events: the world and European championships, or the 2nd European Games and the Europe vs US match held in Minsk a year ago. Both tournaments caused a serious stir and turned into a celebration bringing exciting emotions to both athletes and fans. They are still an example to

follow, even though nothing like this has ever happened in Belarusian athletics before. Mr. Devyatovsky explains: the event will not only be sporting.

“After the 2nd European Games, we asked for data from the Belarusian TV and Radio Company to learn that athletics had the highest ratings among the sports included in the Games. Belarusian viewers love this Queen of sports and we now wish to invite them to the stadium to appreciate athletics live. At the Belarusian championship, everything will be centred round the Belarusian language and traditions — including the presentation, athletes’ performances and the award ceremony. Everyone will be able to run along the track at the stadium, throw a potato during fun contests and hold real athletics javelins in their hands. It is also planned to place a large-scale city around the arena — similar to those that usually surround the major athletics tournaments around the world. Guests will be entertained by the mascot of the Belarusian Athletics Federation: Bafik. Tickets will cost a symbolic price of \$0.85 (equivalent) for adults and half as much for children. Track and field schools will be able to send their trainees to the stadium for free,” Mr. Devyatovsky explains.

## ARENA

### American basketballer Kristopher Clyburn joins Tsmoki-Minsk

The Belarus champions’ recruit began his professional career in the University of Nevada team, where he played three seasons. Kristopher Clyburn spent last season in the Polish club Astoria Bydgoszcz, gaining 15.3 points on average and making 4.6 rebounds in one game. 24 year old Clyburn is the younger brother of the star of Moscow CSKA — and winner of the Euroleague — Will Clyburn. According to the head coach of the Minsk ‘dragons’, Rostislav Vergun, the team of newcomers wants to take the next step in their career and help achieve success in the new season.



### Belarus Boxing Cup scheduled to be held on July 6th-11th in Gomel

“This will be the first competition for the national

team after a long downtime. The tournament will be a qualifying event for young athletes for the CIS Games that are to take place in September,” said Denis Sabalevsky, the Executive Director of the Belarusian Boxing Federation. He also noted that the Championship of Belarus and the Viktor Liventsev Memorial Tournament are planned for autumn.

At present, Belarusian boxers are training at Stai-ki, until June 30th, where all the necessary conditions have been created.

According to Denis Sabalevsky, much attention is being paid to the preparations for the global forum. The athletes who will represent Belarus at the event will be determined closer to the date.

It has been announced that the 2021 AIBA World Boxing Championships will be moved to Belgrade (Serbia) in 2021.



### Raubichi bids to host 2025 IBU World Championships

The Belarusian Winter Olympic Centre at Raubichi has made a bid to host the IBU World Championships in 2025, reads the official Instagram



account of the International Biathlon Union (IBU). IBU has announced the bids it received for the 2024 and 2025 World Biathlon Championships. Nove Mesto, the Czech Republic seeks to host the event in 2024. Apart from Raubichi, Lenzerheide, Switzerland and Nove Mesto, the Czech Republic would like to host the 2025 competition.

The hosts of both events will be selected at the 14th Ordinary IBU Congress in Prague, the Czech Republic in November.

Raubichi hosted the World Biathlon Championships in 1974, 1982, and 1990.



Andrey Sazonov

Slavgorod cheese traditions are well known far beyond Belarus

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**June 19th** is World Children's Football Day. It was announced by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA) to attract the world's attention to the problems of children and promote a healthy lifestyle among young people.

**June 20th** is World Refugee Day. It has been celebrated since 2001 simultaneously with African Refugees' Day, following the decision of the 55th session of the UN General Assembly in accordance with the resolution of December 4th, 2000.



**June 21st** is Medicaws' Day in the Republic of Belarus. It's celebrated annually on the third Sunday of June. For centuries, medicine has been considered one of the most revered and responsible professions. Daily care for the health of the population, the prevention of diseases, the return of patients to a full



life — all this gives special status to medical workers, people to whom we owe a high public debt.

**June 21st** is International Yoga Day. It was proclaimed on December 11th, 2014 by the UN General Assembly. Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. Today there are several different areas of yoga that are practiced around the world and continue to grow in popularity.



**June 22nd** is National Remembrance Day of the Victims of World War II in the Republic of Belarus. At dawn on June 22nd, 1941, fascist Germany, treacherously violating the non-aggression pact, started a war against the Soviet Union. The most powerful group of German troops attacked the territory of Belarus — the Army's Centre. From the first day of the war, Belarus became the scene of the largest battles. The day to mark the start of WWII recalls all those who died, were tortured by the fascists in captivity, and who died in the rear from starvation and deprivation.



**June 23rd** is International Olympic Day. It's celebrated annually in different countries on different days in commemoration of the anniversary of the creation of the International Olympic Committee (June 23rd, 1894, Paris).



**On June 24th, 1945**, Red Square in Moscow hosted the historic Victory Parade of Soviet soldiers to mark victory over Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. The parade was hosted by Marshal of the Soviet Union, G.K. Zhukov, while Marshal of the Soviet Union, K.K. Rokossovsky, commanded the parade. During the solemn march through Red Square, in front of the consolidated regiments of all fronts, the Victory Banner was hoisted on a specially equipped car, as it was raised on April 30th over the Reichstag. Following the regiments, a consolidated column of Soviet soldiers brought to Red Square 200 banners lowered to the ground by the defeated Nazi troops and threw them to the foot of the mausoleum under the thunder of drums. The parade was completed by military equipment of various types. The Victory Banner is kept as a sacred



relic in the Central Armed Forces Museum in Moscow, embodying the immortal feat of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War.

**On June 24th, 1900**, Kuzma Chorny (Romanovsky Nikolai Karlovich) was born in the village of Zhabchevo (Kopyl District, Minsk Region) — a Belarusian writer. He was a member of the Maladnyak literary association and chaired the Uzvyshsha literary association. In 1941, he was evacuated to Moscow, and participated in the publication of the newspaper-poster *We'll Crush the Fascist Beast*. In 1944, he returned to Minsk and worked on the *Belarus* magazine. He is the author of novels entitled *The Earth*, *The Fatherland*, *The Third Generation*, books of stories *Levon Bushmar*, *Lyuba Lukyanskaya*, as well as short stories. He also performed in dramas and translated many works by A. Pushkin, N. Gogol, M. Gorky, Y. Gashek and others into the Belarusian language. He died in 1944.



**June 25th** is International Day of the Seafarer. It's been celebrated on the initiative of the United Nations since 2010 under the auspices of the International Maritime Organisation.

