



**Pilot from Mogilev
Valentina Bakuleva
is inspired
by the space flight
of Marina
Vasilevskaya**

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**Over the past
few years, the list
of architectural
pearls in Belarus
has become
wider**

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INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 21 (1027) ● THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2024 ● WWW.SB.BY



The start of the season was celebrated at the Minsk City Education and Recreation Centre Leader. About a thousand children will be able to enjoy the romance of the children's camp here during the summertime.

Bright, interesting, safe

The children's recreation season has kicked off in Belarus. Hundreds of children's camps across the country have opened their doors to thousands of boys and girls. Their managers and teams have undergone months of training and preparation. After all, it is important not only to create comfortable conditions for recreation, but also to develop a rich and varied programme, and take care of safety. Solemn assemblies, Zarnitsa sports games and Sportsland competitions, the celebration of Kupala and Neptune Day, the Mr. and Miss Camp contest, designing of squad corners — all this awaits the guys. The focal events include participation in patriotic campaigns dedicated to the National Remembrance Day of the Victims of the Great Patriotic War and the Genocide of the Belarusian People on June 22nd, Belarus' Independence Day on July 3rd, the 80th anniversary of Belarus' liberation from the Nazi invaders. As a bonus — fresh air, vitamin fortification, and high-quality and delicious meals. Almost 400,000 children are planning to enjoy a life free from parental care and find new friends this summer. The first shift has already started for them.



Belarus — Mongolia: on the threshold of a qualitatively new stage in co-operation development

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko has paid a state visit to Mongolia

Before the start of the official negotiations, a solemn ceremony with the participation of servicemen of the honour guard company and the horse guards was held in the square in front of the State Palace in honour of the Distinguished Belarusian guest. The soldiers of the honour guard company were dressed in historical costumes of the Chinggis Khaan era.

After the official meeting ceremony, the leaders of the countries proceeded to the building of the State Palace, where the President of Belarus made an entry in the Book of Honoured Guests, “I am impressed by the beauty of the country of the permanently blue sky and the hospitality of our Mongolian friends. Belarus is interested in strengthening co-operation with Mongolia in all areas. I am confident that our states are on the threshold of a qualitatively new stage in the development of bilateral co-operation.”

The negotiations started in a narrow format. A traditional Mongolian yurt, installed in one of the halls of the State Palace, was chosen as the place for the presidents’ meeting.

“Despite the fact that this is the first state visit of the first President of Belarus to Mongolia, our countries have long-standing friendly relations. The basis of our relations was definitely created by very close and warm relations during the Soviet Union times. We fought together against the invaders and occupiers, and restored our lives together. We have come today as ambassadors of goodwill, as your friends, in order to deepen and expand our relations,” the Belarusian leader emphasised.

Aleksandr Lukashenko pointed out that the backbone of any state-to-state relations is the economy.

The official negotiations continued in an expanded for-

mat. The two leaders discussed promising areas of collaboration to maximise the potential of Belarus–Mongolia relations. First of all, the presidents discussed the possibilities for expanding co-operation in the trade and economic sector, supplies of in-demand food and industrial products of domestic enterprises to the Mongolian market, as well as joint work in the agro-industrial complex.

“We do not suffer from gigantomania. We are well aware of our relations and our place in Mongolia’s relations with other countries. We would like to start with something good with you — three-four projects so that we can convince your people, the country’s leadership, journalists, and your opposition of what we are capable of. Let us determine three or four projects, and we will show you that we can co-operate with you no worse than you do with great empires [large and influential countries in the world — Editor’s note],” remarked the Head of the Belarusian State during the negotiations.

Aleksandr Lukashenko invited the President of Mongolia, Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh, and his team to pay a visit to Belarus in order to personally see the country’s level of development and welfare. The Belarusian leader is convinced that the talks in Mongolia will give a new impetus to the relations between the two countries. The President of Belarus recalled his first visit to Mongolia in 1992 as a deputy. “I can see amazing changes in your country’s development,” Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed, speaking about Mongolia’s positive transformations. “Today, looking at Ulaanbaatar, I am astonished. New buildings and structures have appeared. Progress is visible at every step, starting from the airport. I congratulate you on this huge progress.”

The President of Belarus also expressed support for Mongolia’s foreign policy, “This is the only right way. Sandwiched between two empires, the largest states, you conduct your foreign policy in a very subtle and careful manner, balancing between these forces. I know how difficult it is

for you to stay afloat and improve the well-being of your people.”



for you to stay afloat and improve the well-being of your people.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that the current period for Mongolia is associated with a very difficult, important and turning point, referring to the upcoming parliamentary elections. “You possess enormous resources and huge wealth. This is your great benefit. However, this benefit needs to be preserved and protected because the world has gone mad nowadays. Only force is respected. One needs to be strong in order to survive in this frenzied world. I sincerely wish you to be strong in order to survive in this world and make the Mongolian people deservedly rich and great,” the President of Belarus noted. “The great Ching-

The President of Mongolia, Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh, stated during the expanded talks, “It is very pleasant to recall that more than 30 years ago, you visited Mongolia at the very historical moment when diplomatic relations were established between our countries. Your state visit will open a new page in the good and trusting relations between our peoples. This is a historic visit that will strengthen our relations and co-operation.”

Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh noted the traditionally friendly and cordial relations between Belarus and Mongolia, and the intensification of mutual visits at various levels. The Mongolian leader also stressed that the true relations of co-operation between the Mongolian and Belarusian peoples had a much longer period than since the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Following the talks, an official document signing ceremony was held in Ulaanbaatar. The heads of two states, Aleksandr Lukashenko and Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh, signed an agreement on friendly relations and co-operation between Belarus and Mongolia. In total, 14 different documents were signed on the development of bilateral co-operation in various fields, following the official negotiations at the highest level. In addition to the agreement signed by the presi-

dents, the most significant is the co-operation roadmap between Belarus and Mongolia until 2026.

During a meeting with media representatives following the official talks, Aleksandr Lukashenko confirmed that Belarus intended to foster collaboration with Mongolia in a wide range of areas.

“Today we have identified strategic directions for bilateral collaboration. Not only strategic ones, though. We have discussed in detail specific economic and co-operation projects. I told you yesterday and today that we would like to have at least three concrete projects for development. However, the documents that we have signed today show that this is much more than three projects,” the Belarusian leader pointed out. “Each project meets the goals and objectives of such national programmes of Mongolia as Vision 2050, Food Revolution, Billion Trees, and more.”

The parties have agreed on the supply of Belarusian mining machinery, agricultural machinery and equipment, as well as emergency response vehicles. They have also discussed the possibility of training Mongolian citizens to work with this machinery, and increasing the number of Mongolian students in Belarus. The President of Belarus spoke in favour of the creation of joint assembly plants in Mongolia, including for tractors, cars, elevators, and dump trucks, where Mongolian youth would have a chance to undergo a traineeship. If the volume of supplies increases, the parties will set up joint ventures. Mongolian residents are familiar with Belarusian light industry and food products, and appreciate them for high quality and affordable price. Therefore, Belarus is interested in ramping up the volume and expanding the range of supplies. “We are considering the possibility of opening specialised Belarusian trading platforms,” Aleksandr Lukashenko noted. “Belarus is committed to long-term mutually beneficial co-operation, therefore we are ready to use preferential financing mechanisms for projects, among other things.”

Belarus supports Ulaanbaatar’s aspiration to conclude an interim trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) by the end of this year, which opens the way to boost mutual trade turnover, as well as increase Mongolian





exports not only to Belarus. Aleksandr Lukashenko believes that the time has come to focus efforts on that. “For our part, we will give back as good as we get. Our consumers are interested in your high quality products. Goods such as cashmere, wool and leather products enjoy great popularity in our country. We are ready to render support to the Mongolian side in opening branded stores in Belarus, including in Minsk,” Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised.

In addition to the economy, the talks also discussed interaction in the fields of science and education, environmental protection, culture, media, sports, and tourism. There is a common interest in liaising in the field of security, law enforcement, and emergency response.

The Head of Belarusian State drew attention to the fact that in addition to 14 bilateral documents signed following the official negotiations, over a dozen different contracts were concluded within the framework of the joint business forum in the Mongolian capital.

In turn, Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh noted when summing up the results of the negotiations, “We have thoroughly discussed and exchanged views on the implementation of projects and programmes aimed at enriching our relations with economic content. They will undoubtedly contribute to the development of our relations, bring economic benefits to both countries and become an iconic symbol in bilateral relations.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko responded to those criticising Belarus for its support of Russia in special military operation in Ukraine

Speaking to media representatives following the talks with President of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh in Ulaanbaatar, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko responded to those who criticise Belarus for supporting Russia in the war in Ukraine

The Belarusian leader was naturally informed on how the Mongolian society and the world as a whole react to reports about his visit. The Head of State traditionally receives information from a variety of sources and studies it in detail. The reaction of a part of society (actually, Mongolia’s society is heterogeneous and complex) was negative. In addition, the country is currently going through an acute political period, and parliamentary elections are soon coming. As a result, the local opposition tried to organise anti-Belarusian rallies in the centre of Ulaanbaatar — with classic false stories and theses focusing on the special military operation, aggression, support for Russia, and so on.

Definitely, Aleksandr Lukashenko could not ignore that. He reacted harshly when speaking to media representatives following the official talks. The Head of State set the accents very clearly and answered all the questions. It is necessary to admit that Mongolians heard the Belarusian leader’s message, and only five persons gathered for an anti-Belarusian rally as a result.

In his speech, the President noted, in particular, that a part of Mongolia’s population negatively perceived the assistance that Belarus had provided to Russia in connection with the special military operation in Ukraine. “They see it somehow one-sidedly,” Aleksandr Lukashenko noted. “I have read all [media] reports, and paid special attention to the journalists of Mongolia. I see that they are just engaged by one side. They do not see what is happening. This refers not to all

journalists, just to some of them. [Their position] is being thrown into society.”

In this regard, the President of Belarus drew some historical parallels. The Head of State recalled how Chinggis Khaan once fought for his Mongol Empire, how he defended his people, “Some time in the past, the Mongol Empire reached as far as the borders of Belarus. I know how he defended his people. Thousands of them were dying on the battlefield, but — if someone dared to offend his soldiers — he destructed those settlements and people with sword and fire. What happened between Ukraine and Russia? That was, actually, the same.”

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, the United States and its allies in the West dreamed of the USSR collapse and contributed to that process. “You [Mongolia] co-operated with the Soviet Union, and no one of those who remember that interaction says anything bad about it. Times were different, but it was good co-operation in general,” the Head of State noted.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, sovereign and independent states were formed. Aleksandr Lukashenko explained, “An agreement was reached that the West would not deploy any power bloc close to our — Belarusian and Russian — borders. In reality, they began to create a springboard in Ukraine for an attack against Belarus and Russia. Sanctions were immediately imposed against us, against Russia and Belarus. The first state that imposed sanctions against us was our close and friendly Ukraine. It acted that way, since the West had placed an order. After the sanctions were imposed,

did we have to still be friends with them? No. At the same time, we did not attack them, we did not instruct them how to live. Why should we mention Chinggis Khaan in this regard? I told you how he defended his people. When they began to burn people down in houses (look what happened in Odessa, how Russian people were burned there) in Ukraine, doing that in a new century, in our modern world, Russian society began to put pressure on President Putin and the authorities, urging them to protect those people. Do you see a parallel? Putin defended his people.”

The President recalled that, before those events, the parties had reached certain agreements in Minsk on the settlement of the situation in Ukraine and even signed them. However, Ukraine — at the suggestion of the West and using its support — refused to fulfil what had been agreed upon. The goal of the West was to play for time and pump Ukraine with weapons for war against Russia.

“How was Russia supposed to behave?” Aleksandr Lukashenko wondered. “Why do you, Mongols, having a parallel with Chinggis Khaan whom you worship (I also supported your President, this is a significant page in your great history), condemn Russia now — and even more so Belarus, which acted as a guarantor of the peace talks? We hosted three rounds of peace talks, an agreement was reached to end the confrontation and war. Ukrainians and Russians initialled that agreement, but then Americans and Brits came and told Zelenskyy to act oppositely and fight. He is fighting now as a result.”

The Belarusian leader stressed

that there is a chance now to end this confrontation. There is no one left in Ukraine to fight and use Western weapons. Russians do not want this war, either. It seems wise to sit down at the negotiating table now.

“Americans want to drown Russia in this war with Ukraine. [They want] Russia to continue fighting against Ukraine, while they will at the same time deal with China alone. This is the essence of their policy,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said. “I would like Mongolia to understand this, so that you listen not only to what Americans and Westerners are telling you. Come to us. You will be able to see the real situation in this region, and then you will condemn me less for supporting Russia.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that Belarus has close allied relations with Russia in all spheres, “They are our closest brothers. We think and speak the same language. Therefore, I acted in line with all legally signed agreements. Westerners and Americans knew of that. Actually, I do not want people to die, and we are doing — and will do everything — to ensure that there is peace. If Americans agree to ensure peace there, it will reign there virtually tomorrow. However, they do not need it, so you should figure out who is to blame and who is right. Do not make of us enemies of Mongolian people. We are your closest friends and brothers. Together with the President [of Mongolia], we will confirm you in the economy that we can do a lot here, no less than the empires you border, and the developed states. I really want this, and we will do it.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko dismissed fake stories about the purpose of his visit to Mongolia: not just for our own benefit

Speaking to media representatives following the talks with President of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh in Ulaanbaatar, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko commented on some fake news spread by opponents about the purpose of his visit to Mongolia

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that he was very well acquainted with the coverage of his visit, “[I am aware of] positive and negative responses, as well as the opinion of your opposition. I need to address the latter: we have come here not to find any benefit. Our trade turnover is about \$30m, which is scanty for our countries. We want to increase it, but not just for our own benefit. Our country is high-tech, and the President [of Mongolia] knows this since the Soviet times. If Mongolia is interested in our technologies, we can compete fairly with any state that is located nearby: China, Russia, Japan, Korea, and others. That is why we have come not to gain profit. We want to restore our

relations, which have always been brotherly and warm. This is the basis of our visit.”

The President stressed that Belarus supports Ulaanbaatar’s aspiration to conclude a temporary trade agreement with the EAEU by the end of this year. The document will open the way to an increase in mutual trade turnover, as well as Mongolian exports to Belarus and beyond.

“I think the time has come to pay special attention to this issue. I would like to once again address your opposition. What benefit will we get here if we support your contacts with the Eurasian Economic Union? It is your nearest neighbour, and you should develop broad inter-

action with it. We are ready to lend our shoulder. Without our consent, the EAEU will not conclude any agreement with Mongolia or any other state. So what is wrong with that? For our part, we will give back as good as we get. Our consumers are interested in your high-quality products — such as cashmere, wool, and leather. They enjoy great popularity in Belarus, so you just need to bring and sell these products. We will support your aspirations. We are ready to assist the Mongolian side in opening branded stores in Belarus, wherever you wish — including in Minsk,” Aleksandr Lukashenko noted.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

About 6,000 kilometres separate Belarus and China, but even a huge distance does not prevent the countries from building high-level relations with each other. This is largely due to the far-sighted and wise policy of the leaders of both states, as well as the vigorous work at the level of parliaments, ministries and departments. Thus, an official Belarusian delegation headed by Chairperson of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus Natalya Kochanova paid a visit to the Chinese capital last week. The programme of the visit was eventful — after all, Belarus–China bilateral co-operation is developing in almost all areas. On the first day of the visit, the focus was made on the legislation and interaction of women's organisations. On the second day, Chairperson of the Council of the Republic Natalya Kochanova met with Vice President of the People's Republic of China Han Zheng and Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee Zhao Leji. Special attention was paid to trade and economic partnership, parliamentary interaction and co-ordination of a unique *Belarus–China: Partnership 2030* co-operation plan. The initiatives concerning many other areas of collaboration were also announced during the events.



In the framework of the official visit, the Belarusian delegation visited Chaoyang Hospital in Beijing to get an insight into the advanced Chinese experience in the field of healthcare

Route: Minsk – Beijing

By Yulia Demeshko

According to regional and sectoral principles

The first event in the programme was a meeting with a state councillor, President of the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) Shen Yiqin at the House of People's Assemblies in Beijing. Addressing her Chinese counterpart, Natalya Kochanova expressed confidence that further liaison between the Belarusian Women's Union (BWU) and the ACWF will develop fruitfully.

The Chairperson of the Council of the Republic invited Shen Yiqin to Belarus. As the speaker pointed out, it is important for the Belarusian side that the agreements and decisions that were adopted at the level of heads of states are implemented,

“We need to work out a roadmap for our co-operation. I also suggest considering the question of setting up a Council of Women under our (mine and yours) patronage. The Council will monitor the implementation of the previously set tasks. Along with that, we could work more effectively at the global level, addressing the tasks of preserving peace and tranquility in our countries, as well as the issues of the women's agenda of Belarus and China, including the development of the women's movement in the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS.”

In turn, the ACWF President, Shen Yiqin, drew attention to the successes in practical collaboration between Belarus and China, “Belarus is one of China's most important partners in the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). We are ready to faithfully implement all the agreements of our leaders, as well as strengthen humanitarian exchanges, promote co-operation in the field of education, science, culture, and youth policy. This is necessary for reinforcing mutual understanding and friendship between our peoples.”

At a qualitatively new level

Another high-profile event that took place in Beijing was the first meeting of the High-Level Committee on Co-operation between the Legislative Bodies of the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China. Natalya Kochanova stressed that it would become a significant milestone in the history of Belarus–China parliamentarism, “Our parliaments have been co-operating on a bilateral basis and within the framework of international organisations for a long time. There is a well-developed legal framework between our countries, which is updated with new documents every year. An interparliamentary agreement signed between the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus and the National People's Congress of China in 2023, and the creation of the High-Level

Committee brought our interparliamentary interaction to a qualitatively new level.”

Belarus' accession to the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, which may happen as early as July 2024, will give a new powerful impetus to the Belarus–China partnership. The speaker of the Council of the Republic thanked the Chinese side for its support in this matter.

There is potential for growth

In the field of trade and economic co-operation, the dynamics of mutual trade speaks for itself.

“By the end of 2023, the trade turnover between Belarus and China increased by 30 percent and amounted to about \$8 billion,” the Chairperson of the Council of the Republic cited the data. “According to the results of January–March 2024, the trade turnover was slightly less than \$2 billion. There is potential for growth. In the credit and investment sector, 50 projects were implemented with Chinese partners last year. Currently, 20+ loan agreements have been concluded with Chinese financial institutions for a total amount of about \$5 billion. Thus, in terms of the volume of direct investments received in Belarus last year, China entered the top three investor countries,” noted Natalya Kochanova.

The proposals of the Chinese side during the meeting of the Committee were voiced by Zhang Qingwei, Deputy Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Peo-



During the first meeting of the High-Level Committee on Co-operation between the Legislative Bodies of Belarus and China

ple's Congress of China. He pointed out the need to improve the legislative framework, which will contribute to the development of the Belarus–China partnership. “It is necessary to take comprehensive measures to leverage our advantage and give a new impetus to relations,” Zhang Qingwei remarked. “At the moment, 45 pairs of twinning ties have been established between the provinces, regions and cities of our countries. More than 300 events were held within the framework of the *Year of the Regions of Belarus and China*, which took place from 2021 to 2023. Interregional co-operation has become a new point of growth in bilateral relations.”



FRIENDSHIP IN NUMBERS:

• Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the trade turnover between Belarus and China has increased by more than **200 times**.



• In 2023, the historical maximum of trade turnover of almost **\$8.5 billion** was reached, while Belarusian exports to China increased by **20 percent**.

• Currently, over 20 loan agreements have been concluded with Chinese financial institutions for a total amount of about **\$5 billion**.

• In terms of the volume of direct investments received in Belarus



in 2023, China entered the **top three** investor countries.

Stake on innovation

The current and next years are planned to be marked by the *Year of Science, Technology and Innovation of Belarus and China*. In this regard, as Natalya Kochanova emphasised during the meeting with China's Vice President Han Zheng, the Belarusian side is already preparing an appropriate plan for bilateral co-operation,

“This will enable us to bring scientific and technical co-operation between our countries to a completely new level. As a result of the agreements between the Head of the Belarusian State and Secretary of the Party Committee of Peking University Hao Ping, a Forum of Rectors of Belarus and China will be held in Minsk on June 26th, 2024. The President of Belarus personally pays close attention to this event.”

well as to fully implement projects such as the construction of a national football stadium and an international standard swimming pool.”

The warm relations between the leaders of the two countries, as well as similar values and views on the ongoing geopolitical processes contribute to a strong friendship between Belarusians and Chinese. Natalya Kochanova assured,

“Belarus has always been and will remain a reliable friend for China. We are ready to further develop political interaction and practical Belarus–China co-operation in all areas. We also stand in solidarity with China on the fundamental principles of geopolitical security. Peace, consent, sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs are the main pillars on which the policy of our states is based today.”

Links in the chain

Another pivotal meeting took place with the participation of Chairperson of the Council of the Republic Natalya Kochanova and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Zhao Leji, in the course of which the parties discussed strengthening parliamentary contacts. Natalya Kochanova emphasised in this aspect,

“Thanks to the far-sighted and wise policy of the leaders of Belarus and China, our countries have formed an exemplary model of strategic co-operation, including joint parliamentary activity. Our common strategic goal in the international arena is the formation of a fair multipolar world order that does not accept dictates, political or sanctions pressure on sovereign states. Starting from July 2024, China will preside over the SCO. In this regard, Belarus is ready to support possible initiatives put forward by the Chinese side, including the creation of a parliamentary dimension within the organisation. We hope for China's support of Belarus' movement towards full-scale membership in the BRICS.”

The recent talks between the heads of Belarus and Russia at the Palace of Independence in Minsk have showed that security and economic issues are given top priority today. Our further development will be ensured by suppressing any attempts at direct aggression by NATO against Belarus and Russia.

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

Response to threats

A critical element of ensuring Belarus' security within the framework of the Union State is military co-operation with the Russian Federation, which is aimed at implementing joint measures to prevent military threats and repel possible aggression in the common defence space.

Since 2009, Belarus and Russia have been conducting joint military exercises *Zapad*. In addition, there has been arranged participation in competitions *International Army Games*, tactical exercise *Slavic Brotherhood*, and strategic command and staff exercises *Caucasus*. In February 2022, large-scale joint military drills *Allied Resolve* were held. A year earlier, the defence ministries of the two countries signed a five-year strategic partnership programme. The heads of Belarus' and Russia's military departments have agreed to establish three centres for joint military training.

On October 10th, 2022, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko announced the deployment of a regional group of forces (RGF) based on the Belarusian military personnel due to the aggravation on the western borders of the Union State. The total participation of the Russian armed forces in the RGV amounted to 9,000 soldiers, about 170 tanks, 200 armoured combat vehicles and up to 100 weapons and mortars.

Metropolises are coming

In the current period of formation of a new post-Anglo-Saxon world — a world free from the boundless hegemony of the United States and Great Britain — security is becoming the most significant value for any nation. The development of a person, family, society and the state is impossible without security. It is the absence of wars and military conflicts that makes it possible to advance the economy, culture, art and much more.

After the collapse of the USSR, the political and corporate elites of Western countries felt their superiority over the rest of the world. Since the 1990s, the United States has been building a new model of colonial hegemony. Its essence is very simple and consists in buying raw materials, human resources at low prices and accumulating the main surplus value in their metropolises. The experience of imperial Great Britain and the British East India Company was a vivid example for Washington that inspired it to create a 'global architecture'.



states of one of the key attributes of sovereignty — their own advanced defence forces. This was done solely to prevent the 'uprising' of Berlin, Rome or Paris against Washington and London.

As a result, once the United States commanded that the EU countries impose sanctions against Belarus and Russia to their own detriment and suffer enormous economic losses, Europe meekly fulfilled all the orders. As soon as the US gave the command to finance military operations on the territory of Ukraine, the EU countries immediately obeyed and received huge inflation and holes in their budgets.

Double aims

Talking about a certain security level of the European Union makes no sense. Washington and London openly mock Brussels and push it to war with Russia. Back in September 2022, the Swedish press obtained an allegedly leaked secret report by RAND Corporation revealing the true goals of Americans in Ukraine. The United States has used Kiev from the very beginning to drain resources and undermine the economy of the European Union in order to ease the financial and economic crisis in its own country.

In the document, RAND Corporation experts noted that the aggressive foreign policy pursued at Bankova [location of Presidential Administration Building in Kiev, Ukraine] would force Russia to carry out military intervention in Ukraine, after which the collective West would impose a pre-prepared package of sanctions against Moscow. The EU economy 'will inevitably collapse' as a result of the absence of access to cheap Russian energy resources, whereas the United States will be able to earn dozens of billions of dollars from this, and European youth will be forced to emigrate.

The major objective of the conflict in Ukraine fomented by Anglo-Saxons is to divide Europe, particularly to separate Germany and the Russian Federation, as well as to weaken the EU as a key market for Chinese products, in other words to hit China — the main competitor of US and UK corporations — through the European Union.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that human security is the backbone for the comprehensive development of the economy and society. Ensuring peace involves multi-vector actions. In modern conditions, nuclear weapons act as a deterrent, while information and psychological operations are weapons for internal weakening of society. Our common task, the duty of every citizen is to actively participate in creation of our own security and to prevent our consciousness from being shaken or undermined from within.

Deterrence factors

Multi-vector actions are at the heart of ensuring peace

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"Not only do we constantly discuss matters of security and defence of our states, but we have also created a joint military group to defend the Union State. We keep an eye on everything that is happening on our borders. We see and know this, starting with the construction of various fences and the inflation of hysteria with military exercises that are held near our borders. We pay top-priority attention to security, and many of our meetings are 90 percent or maybe even more dedicated to security and defence. This is except for today's meeting, where we have devoted a lot of time to the economy (even more than to security issues), because the economy is one of the factors underpinning security."

During a conversation with journalists following the official talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, on May 24th, 2024

During the formation of the neocolonial order, ideologists of the United States undertook to destroy post-war international security institutions and level down the status of states as sovereign actors in global relations. The notion 'sovereign state' means that it has the right and authority to conduct independent domestic and foreign policies that it deems necessary and appropriate for its citizens and territory, free from external influence or control, as enshrined in the Vienna Convention.

Institutions of war

For the successful implementation of its goal, Washington created a network of institutions designed to study the systems of sovereignty and security of states. They were instrumental in generating the key foreign policy approaches of the United States and NATO to destroy Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004), Libya and Syria. After the Munich Security Conference in 2007, where a strong call was made for the need to build a new multipolar world, the opening of such institutions by the United States accelerated. In particular, the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) was established in 2007, which in fact co-ordinated all the work of NATO structures on Ukraine's militarisation after 2014 and turning it into a 'battering ram' against Russia.

A wide variety of tools were used to destroy the security systems of sovereign countries — from blunt bribery of senior officials, betrayal of the elites followed by Velvet Revolutions to open armed aggression with large-scale operations and air missile strikes, and the deployment of ground forces.

In other words, any methods are considered good and applicable provided that they enable to enslave nations, make them work for and die in the name of the US and British interests.

In the 1990s, the United States managed to skilfully substitute the original goals of NATO — the fight against the bloc of socialist countries — with a kind of illusory security climate for the European states. The marketing slogan was pretty simple, "If you are a part of NATO, the United States will defend you... The United States has such military and technical potential that it will be able to create a safe dome over Europe."

In reality, this is a classic deception. Washington forbade the EU countries to have their own full-fledged armed forces and headquarters. Thus, the White House has managed to deprive European

Luring power of the sky

Pilot from Mogilev Valentina Bakuleva is inspired by the space flight of Marina Vasilevskaya

Planes at the Mogilev DOSAAF Aero Club named after A.M. Kulagin barely have time to land these days — they are quickly refueled and soar into the sky again. Valentina Bakuleva was looking forward to the opening of the flying season. Finally, it has become possible to get off the ground and sail through the clouds! A programmer by education, she is a pilot at heart. In order to attend training classes at the aero club outside the city, the girl has also learnt to drive a car. The conquest of space, likewise Belarusian Marina Vasilevskaya, has become a new challenge for her.



Andrei Sazonov

By Yelena Kukshinskaya

There is no limit to perfection

“Flying has been my dream, I have always looked at the sky,” Valentina admitted and recalled how she had got to the aero club, “My friends saw an advertisement that the aero club was recruiting young people for the air sports section. I understood that it was my chance. I was just the right age — under 23 years old.”

After a long separation, Valentina ran up to her Yak 52. This sports trainer aircraft is called the pilots’ ‘study desk’. The girl deftly jumped onto the plane’s wing, from there into the cockpit, put on headphones and looked at the dashboard.

“Before making our first independent flight, we study theory — from aircraft design to aerodynamics, we take exams. Then we hone our skills on the simulator, fly with an instructor. Afterwards, the piloting technique is personally checked by the head of the aero club. The pilot has to improve piloting skills all their life. This is the beauty of airplane sport for me — you can never reach the limit of the skill,” explained the girl.

Clear prop!

Meanwhile, aircraft technician Yuri Donskoy approached the aircraft. Do you remember the character Makarych from the legendary Soviet movie *Only ‘Old Men’ Are Going to Battle?* In the same way, Valentina said to Yuri Donskoy before takeoff, “Clear

prop!” The aircraft technician also used to fly, having been in aviation for 38 years. His son is a pilot. He proudly noted that their planes were real movie stars and were filmed in *Katyusha, In August of 1944*, and more.

Before each flying season — it is the fifth one for Valentina — it is required to undergo a medical examination.



Denis Shkarenda and Valentina Bakuleva

Health should be perfect. After all, the pilot experiences tremendous amounts of g-forces during takeoff and manoeuvres. “An hour before the flight, you need to eat, but not a lot. To maintain good physical shape, I do figure skating, swim in the pool. I have taken up stretching recently and become interested in horseriding. I have already completed five skydives,” shared the girl.

‘Bird’ flying style

At the All-Russian competitions in air sports in Surgut, within the framework of which



Yuri Donskoy

the pilot. “We train with different instructors which is very useful, because you take note of individual piloting styles. Each pilot has their own flying ‘handwriting’ — smooth, sharp, energetic... Mine is called the ‘bird’ style.”

Valentina’s head teacher is Denis Shkarenda. This instructor pilot was awarded the Order for Personal Courage. In 2022, while making a training flight with a cadet of the Military Academy, he showed professionalism and courage amid the emergency situation related to engine failure, and managed to land the plane without casualties. We met Denis after his flight with another cadet. Valentina admitted that she also dreamt of becoming an instructor in order to instil love for the sky in others.

A new dream

Valentina recalled her first solo flight, “Emotions can be compared to if you have seen fireworks up close! It was August 7th, 2020. I did not tell my mother so as not to worry her, but she somehow felt, so she found my christening certificate and saw that the date of its issue coincided with the date of my first solo flight. She then confessed to me that she immediately calmed down because I was under the protection of the guardian angel.”

According to Valentina, pilots are superstitious people. She has an amulet on her wrist — an airplane on a red thread.

“When a pilot lands an airplane after the first flight, it is customary to spray the plane with water from a bucket as a sign of salute. A pilot should fall from the plane’s

wing into the hands of colleagues, and they throw the pilot three times into the air. It is considered a bad omen to be photographed before departure, and it is customary to wish a soft landing,” the pilot revealed some traditions.

By the way, the girl has quite an earthly profession — she is a project manager in an IT company. In order to attend her training classes at the aero club, which is four times a week, Valentina has obtained a driver’s licence. After mastering the aircraft, learning to drive a car was not rocket science for the girl, “The sky is addictive. It is so beautiful that it is hard to describe in words! When the sun rays break through the fluffy clouds, something unimaginable happens to the heart.”

Valentina Bakuleva remarked that the popularity of air sports had been growing in recent years. More and more young people are eager to master the art of piloting. As for the girl, she is inspired by the example of a Belarusian woman, who has conquered space,

“Like everyone else, I was following Marina Vasilevskaya’s flight into space. I represented my country at competitions and I understand how important it is for a person to glorify their Homeland. Marina Vasilevskaya became the first cosmonaut of sovereign Belarus, she went down in history. For sure, every Belarusian is proud of the fact that we have conquered this peak. This is a fantastic project. Now I have a new dream: I want to fly into space.”



Andrei Sazonov

In March, UNESCO published the United Nations World Water Development Report 2024 on water security issues. "As water stress increases, so do the risks of local or regional conflict. UNESCO's message is clear: if we want to preserve peace, we must act swiftly not only to safeguard water resources but also to enhance regional and global co-operation in this area," declared UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.

By Anton Popov

Worldwide thirst

The concern of international organisations is absolutely clear. According to the updated data, 2.2 billion people around the world have no access to clean drinking water, and 3.5 billion people have no safe sanitation services. Thus, more than half of the world's inhabitants suffer from water supply interruptions. The Middle East, North and Central Africa are traditionally considered problematic regions, but similar difficulties have recently arisen in Central Asia, India, Australia, on the Korean Peninsula and even in a number of European countries and northern regions of the United States. The issue of shortage of water resources is acute in some areas; the irrational use of existing water riches, degradation of water supply and sewerage systems — in others.

As of 2022, about half of the world's population experienced severe water shortages, while one quarter faced 'extremely high levels' of water scarcity, using more than 80 percent of their annual renewable freshwater supply. At the same time, according to experts from the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), 2023 became the hottest year in the entire history of observations, breaking the record of 2016. Scientists stated that in 2023, for the first time in history, the temperature of each day during the year exceeded the pre-industrial reference period by one degree Celsius, and half of the days recorded warmer temperature by 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Global warming causes droughts and depletion of water resources, breaking the plans of politicians and environmentalists.

Equation with many unknowns

One of the main features of the water resources problem is its versatility, which makes it difficult to develop common approaches. There are states that are fully provided with their own fresh water and even have an excess of it. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, the top 5 countries with the largest freshwater reserves include Brazil, Russia, Canada, Indonesia and China. However, there are states that are forced to purchase water from outside in order to meet the needs of the population and industry. According to the World Resources Institute, there are just over a dozen of them. The list also includes four

countries of the former USSR — Turkmenistan, Moldova, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan.

The World Health Organisation estimates that 50 to 100 litres of water per person per day are needed to ensure that most basic needs are met. However, this figure is much lower in Africa and averages 10-20 litres. For comparison: in the USA, they spend 450 litres per person, in Canada — 340, and in Japan — 320. Europeans are more modest than their overseas counterparts in this regard and use from 130 to 180 litres per person. This is, however, mostly due to the fact that the cost of water supply services west of the Belarusian borders is quite high and does not encourage prodigality.

In Belarus, the norm per person is 140 litres of water per day. All residents of the country are provided with high-quality drinking water. According to the United Nations Development Programme, our republic is among the top 20 countries in the world in terms of public access to clean drinking water. In terms of water resources, Belarus ranks fifth in Europe, significantly surpassing Poland and Ukraine in this indicator.

Blood and water

The fight for water is a popular plot of post-apocalyptic fiction.

It is possible that in reality, a whole series of conflicts caused by disputes over access to drinking water sources may arise soon.

Liquid gold



The global water crisis is gathering pace

According to research by a group of European climatologists published in the *Nature Communications* journal, 91 percent of the world's population will have limited access to clean fresh water by 2050. Environmentalists claim that this will happen due to pollution of aquifers with nitrogen fertilisers and waste from industry and human activity.

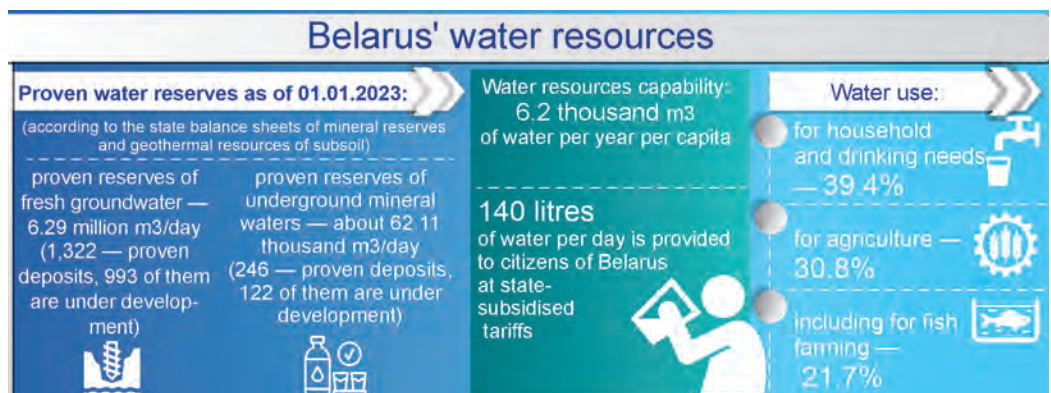
The war over access to water resources is not a new phenom-

non. Scientists believe that water played a certain role in 655 conflicts in the history of mankind. However, the number of water-related conflicts has been steadily increasing lately. According to the estimates of the American Pacific Institute, 466 conflicts and clashes related to the distribution of water resources have occurred in the world since 2010. The most dangerous territories are the basins of the Nile, Brah-

maputra, Ganges, Zambezi, Limpopo, Mekong, Senegal, as well as the area of Lake Chad.

Another point of potential water conflict is the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), built by Ethiopia on the Blue Nile River in the northwest of the country. The construction began back in 2011 in order to solve problems with electricity generation. The Hidase Hydroelectric Power Plant, which is the official name of the facility, caused heated disputes between Addis Ababa, Khartoum and Cairo from the very beginning. The Egyptian leadership is outraged the most as they believe that the dam allows controlling the river flow rate, and fear that Ethiopians could arrange artificial droughts and flooding for their neighbours with its help. For Egypt and Sudan, whose agriculture is mainly based on the use of Nile resources, such a scenario could prove to be fatal.

However, African countries also give an example of effective co-operation in solving the water problem. This refers to the revived work of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. Lake Chad has decreased in size by 90 percent over 60 years, which has caused instability in the region. Recently, the Commission's mandate has been expanded, and now it deals with issues of ensuring the most efficient and rational use of the basin's waters, co-ordinating regional development and preventing disagreements between countries and local communities.



IS THERE A SOLUTION?

Is it possible to do without water wars? In addition to global programmes for the conservation and saving of water resources, and countering global warming, there are local technological solutions in this area. They are primarily related to the purification of contaminated liquids and seawater desalination. Thus, in Israel, over 70 percent of dirty water is treated. Chemists from Cardiff University have created a catalyst for water disinfection based on palladium and gold particles, which allows almost instant water purification from harmful impurities. Researchers from Dalian Maritime University in China have come up with a new desalination device — it can float on top of seawater,

efficiently absorb solar energy and use that heat to evaporate the water. Finally, Korean scientists have unveiled a seawater desalination technology with the use of a nanofibre membrane that takes just minutes to make seawater drinkable.

The water crisis is one of the global challenges humanity is currently facing, and it threatens to affect every corner of our planet. Its further aggravation may lead to a new round of wars and conflicts.

The solution to this issue is only possible with the co-operation of the world community countries. However, the tragic gap between the profitability of the use of terrestrial resources and their depletion prevents from developing effective approaches.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"We are ready to provide modern technologies and equipment for water treatment and water disposal. Clean water is the key to human health. This programme is being successfully implemented in Belarus."

During a meeting with the Governor of Russia's Kursk Region, on June 9th, 2022

Hypocrisy and double standards of US human rights



The human rights situation in the US continued to deteriorate in 2023 and has become increasingly polarised, with the majority of ordinary US people being marginalised compared to the few who hold political, economic and social dominance, according to the *Report on Human Rights Violations in the US in 2023* that has exposed the truth of human rights violations in the US released by China's State Council

In detail, the report said that throughout 2023, the US witnessed at least 654 large-scale shooting incidents, resulting in approximately 43,000 deaths, an average of 117 deaths per day, the report wrote.

Driven by partisan polarisation and interest groups, a growing number of state governments have taken the initiative to push legislation to expand residents' rights to own and bear arms. In 2023, at least 27 states did not require a licence to carry a handgun, the report said, highlighting 'gun violence spills over, while the government's control policies are ineffective'.

The government has abused its power to monitor citizens' privacy, suppressing freedom of speech and expression. The number of faculty members punished or fired for speech and expression on US

college campuses has reached a 20-year high, according to the report.

Deaths from police brutality hit a record high, rendering the police enforcement accountability system virtually non-existent. Police brutality persisted and at least 1,247 deaths were attributed to police violence, an average of roughly three people killed by officers each day.

It also said that growing economic and social inequality makes life extremely difficult for the poor, with the number of homeless people in the US exceeding 650,000, the highest since reporting began in 2007. Drug and substance abuse keeps raging. Suicide rates continue to rise.

Living in the US with a deteriorated human rights situation, ordinary people have to strive to win their rights as the US system decides the human rights in

the country will not get any better if they don't fight for themselves.

In recent weeks, there have been confrontations between law enforcement officials, university administrators and pro-Palestinian demonstrators at numerous college campuses. This has resulted in the arrest of students, dismantling of encampments, and warnings of potential academic repercussions. According to *The New York Times*, more than 2,900 people have been arrested or detained on campuses across the country.

According to the report, the US has long pursued hegemonism, practiced power politics, and created humanitarian crises, and it highlighted that in the wars where the US conducted overseas 'counter-terrorism' operations, the total death toll ranges from at least 4.5 to 4.7 million people.

Colombia bans bullfighting

Colombia's Congress has passed a bill which will ban bullfighting across the Andean country from 2027

The ban is the culmination of a vocal campaign by animal rights activists, who have long argued the practice is cruel.

Bullfighting was introduced in Colombia by the Spanish during colonial times and became very popular, drawing thousands of spectators to large bullrings in cities such as Bogotá, Medellín and Manizales.

The bill still needs to be signed by President Gustavo Petro, but as he has backed the ban, this is considered to be a formality.

The Colombian leader welcomed its approval by Congress, writing on X that 'those who enjoy the death of animals will end up enjoying the death of human beings, just as those who burn books, end up burning human beings'.

In order to mitigate its impact, the bill will allow for a three-year transition period in which those whose businesses are tied to bullfighting will be offered help finding alternative incomes.

Colombia is the latest country in Latin America to prohibit bullfighting.

In Europe, bullfights are still held in France and Spain, although some cities have outlawed it.



Icebergs drift past Iceberg Alley

Each spring along the eastern coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, it's prime time for spotting icebergs

This area is known for iceberg chasing, a phenomenon where tourists try in to see the beasts up close whenever they pop up along Iceberg Alley, the stretch of the water next to the eastern coast of the province, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Around 90 percent of icebergs are all old parts of Greenland's glaciers while the rest come from Canada's Arctic. They break off the larger ice sheets when temperatures rise in the summer, although the behemoths normally only last a few months.

It's a yearly phenomenon, and the glacial masses can be seen from around the coast on clear days. They can range in

colours too, being both snow-white and aquamarine, according to the province's official website.

The icebergs can also be enormous — the largest one ever recorded was found in 2021, at 135km in length and 25km in width and it moved towards South Georgia.

However, it's thought that these visiting icebergs are becoming more common now because of the climate crisis and the overall threat to the Earth's ice caps.

A 2019 study from the US Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found Greenland's glaciers are melting four times faster than previously estimated.

North Korea vs South Korea

Tensions between the two Koreas have reached a new level: Seoul has just officially accused Pyongyang of sending balloons containing excrement to the south of the Korean Peninsula

North Korea has dropped at least 260 balloons carrying rubbish in the South, prompting authorities to warn its residents to stay indoors.

The balloons have been found in eight of nine provinces in South Korea and are now being analysed. The balloons reportedly arrived after North Korea's Deputy Defence Minister Kim Kang-il warned that Pyongyang would retaliate in response to anti-North Korean leaflets flown across the border in the opposite direction. For years, South Korean activists and North Korean defectors have sent balloons carrying leaflets with messages

critical of North Korean authorities.

North and South Korea have both used balloons in their propaganda campaigns since the Korean War in the 1950s.

Photographs shared on social media show bags attached via string to white translucent balloons carrying toilet paper, dark soil, and batteries, among other contents. South Korea's *Yonhap* news agency reported that 'some of the fallen balloons carried what appears to be faeces judging from its dark colour and odour'.

South Korea's military condemned the act as a 'clear violation of international law'.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Why does the United Nations so reverently monitor that the rights of murderers are not violated?

In 2015, Belarusian law enforcement agencies detained members of the 'black realtors' gang. The criminals gained the confidence of lonely people and alcohol abusers, solved their financial problems, offered relocation to a smaller living space and, having sold their flats, killed the owners. The investigation reliably established that during the period from 2009 to 2015, at least six people died at the hands of murderers. Some of the victims were buried alive. What is the interest of the UN Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) in this case?

By Alena Krasovskaya

Long-forgotten ones

The investigation into the case lasted almost two years in Belarus, followed by eight months of court sessions and a logical result — in July 2017, the Mogilev Regional Court sentenced Bereznoi and Gershankov to death, while Gershankova received 24 years in prison and Kolesnikov — 22 years.

The criminals unsuccessfully appealed their verdicts in all possible instances. Gershankov and Bereznoi even appealed to the UN — not by themselves obviously, but through the so-called 'human rights defenders' — those who consider it an honour and the purpose of life to portray any type of scum as a victim of the 'Belarusian dictatorship'. Yet, despite the fuss created by human rights activists around the sentence imposed on Bereznoi and Gershankov, it was carried out in 2018.

Almost 6 years have passed since then. The unmarked graves where the murderers were buried are long lost in oblivion, as well as the mere memory of them. However, the names of the sadists have surfaced at the UN in 2024. By the way, after the execution of the sentence in 2018, 'human rights defenders' appealed to the UNHRC with a complaint on behalf of Gershankov's and Bereznoi's mothers. They complained that the rights of the criminals had been violated. The Committee has considered those complaints only this year.

No compassion for victims

The complaint on behalf of Gershankov's and Bereznoi's mothers listed the violations that 'human rights defenders' saw in the 'black realtors' case — the right to a fair trial, the presumption of innocence, the right not to be subjected to torture and ill-treatment, the right to life. After reading this complaint, one could get an impression that the bonfires of the Inquisition are still burning in Belarus, and guilt is determined by the method 'drowned, so not guilty'.

Strangely enough, the UNHRC did not agree with the torture and ill-treatment complaint, although they usually tend to believe even the wildest fantasies. Apparently, the 'human rights defenders' got carried away in their fabrication. Gershankov and Bereznoi were not tortured and testified of their own free will, without physical influence or coercion — that is what the UN decided. Thus, they are guilty and there can be no complaints.

UN level cynicism



The UN Human Rights Committee should have stopped at that point in order to think about the type of crime Gershankov and Bereznoi had committed. The officials could have tried to imagine, at least for a second, what a person feels when they are thrown into a pit and buried alive, tied hand and foot. In some cases, the 'black realtors' drugged the victim with alcohol to a vegetative state, and then strangled the person in a helpless condition with a wire, cord, rope — whatever came to hand... The murderers had done all of this routinely, without any compassion for the victim, the main goal being to put another ten or fifteen thousand dollars in their pockets.

Juggling dates and figures

The injustice of the verdict and violation of the presumption of innocence were vividly described in the document manufactured by 'human rights defenders'.

They started with the detention. Gershankov and Bereznoi were arrested on March 26th, 2015, and a warrant for their detention was issued on April 3rd. 'What a horror!' exclaim 'human rights defenders' in tune with the UNHRC. So what is the 'horror' about?

Before being charged, a detainee may be held in custody for 72 hours by decision of the body that carried out the detention. In special cases, such as when a detainee is suspected of committing an extremely serious crime — let us remind that this case refers to at least six murders — the period of detention without charge can be extended up to 10 days. Then charges are brought and the prosecutor's office determines the measure of restraint. In the case of Gershankov and Bereznoi, detention was unequivocal.

Belarus always responded to such claims that 'pre-trial detention was carried out in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code of Belarus'. This is an absolutely exhaustive answer to the far-fetched accusations that Bereznoi and Gershankov were brought to court 580 days after their arrest. In fact, they were delivered as soon as the court sessions began. However, the UNHRC used all this juggling with dates and figures as the basis for recognising the verdict... unfair.

There was more to come. It turns out that the accused were kept in metal cages and handcuffs during the trial proceedings. Moreover, the violation was found in the fact that after the judgement had been delivered, the criminals were taken to the appeal hearing dressed in jail uniforms

with the 'EMP' [Exceptional Measure of Punishment] inscription on their back, and were escorted to the courtroom in a humiliating and uncomfortable position reserved for persons sentenced to death (with their heads bent towards their knees).

Can you imagine cruel murderers who have nothing left to lose, sitting without handcuffs in the courtroom literally on the neighbouring bench with witnesses and victims? What about the consequences of such 'observance of rights'?

As for the jail uniform with the 'EMP' inscription and an uncomfortable position during the escort — these attributes appear from the moment the accused is sentenced to death, even before the verdict has come into force. This is also provided for by Belarusian legislation. After all, the most violent criminals who pose a real danger to other citizens, including to employees of the convoy service, are sentenced to capital punishment in Belarus.

Furthermore, the journalists who attended the court sessions appeared to be not up to the mark, in the opinion of the Committee, since they spread information about the process and called Gershankov and Bereznoi guilty of the murders, which led to 'biased public opinion against them and to problems finding lawyers willing to take on their criminal cases'. The court was allegedly influenced by the media, as well, that is why it handed down such a harsh sentence to the accused...

In reality, it was the so-called independent media that wrote more about the criminal guilt of Gershankov and Bereznoi. Info-scamblers competed with each other to see who would come up with more atrocities. Yet, who is going to look into it? The UN Human Rights Committee is definitely not.

'Killed' murderers

Of course, 'human rights defenders' did not skip out on a chance to mention the much-speculated violation of the right to life. Immediately after the punishable by death sentence had been pronounced, 'human rights defenders' appealed to the UNHRC and the latter issued a letter called 'a request for urgent provisional measures'. This means that until the UNHRC has considered the verdict and all the complaints of the accused and given the go-ahead to proceed, it is by no means possible to execute the sentence.

In the case of Bereznoi and Gershankov, six years have passed since the sentencing. Thus, having considered the complaints, the UNHRC recognised the verdict



as violating the criminals' right to life. That is some twisted quirky logic. According to the results of many years of correspondence with the UN, it was probably planned to release the 'great guys' from prison with apologies and appropriate compensation. This is exactly what justice looks like in the understanding of the UNHRC.

The words about compensation are far from being a joke. The Committee decided that Belarus should pay the authors of the appeal, that is the mothers of the murderers, 'proper monetary compensation for the death of their sons, as well as, if applicable, reimbursement of court costs incurred'. Isn't that too noble towards the evil spirits that rightfully ended their existence by a court verdict?

Not only does the UN Human Rights Committee cynically represent Gershankov and Bereznoi as victims, but it also believes that Belarus should pay for their death and apologise to their families. Do the UNHRC officials mean that Belarus should apologise for depriving the murderers of an opportunity to kill more people? Or for the fact that it is the Law that is in force in Belarus, and not the parody arranged by committees that protect anything but human rights? That is not going to happen. Whatever the UN would think about it.

Architectural pearls of Belarus

Over the past few years, the list of architectural pearls in Belarus has become wider — luxurious palaces, castles and manors have opened their doors to tourists after large-scale restorations



The Ruzhany Palace's entrance gate of honour is a mini palace in itself



A knight's festival is held in Golshany every year

By Sofia Arsenyeva

Sweeping through the ages

The history of the Old Castle in Grodno dates back more than a thousand years. This place was for a long time the residence of the first persons of several states — first the ancient Russian princes, then the princes of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, followed by the kings of Poland. The complex of buildings on the high bank of the Neman River has been repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt. The current version, therefore, has absorbed the breath of different epochs and architectural styles. Literally across the street from the Old Castle, there is... the New Castle! However, it is already almost three hundred years old.

It is possible to make a tour of both castles by buying a ticket to the historical and archaeological museum. More than eight thousand unique exhibits are displayed in 30 halls. Moreover, many rarities have been discovered quite recently — in the course of the latest reconstruction, archaeologists worked tirelessly. Among the valuable finds are household items and medieval clothes, as well as jewellery, money and chess pieces.

Catching a sunbeam

The Puslovsky Palace in Kossovo was once conceived and built by pretty

eccentric people. The owner of the palace — a famous industrialist Count Vandalin Puslovsky — wanted everything to be symbolic. That is why anyone can draw an analogy between the 12 crenelated towers and 12 months, while the four main towers hint at the four seasons.

The architects designed the palace so that each of the 132 rooms is completely filled with sunlight for two days a year. In the 19th century, the Puslovskys celebrated a kind of Room Day on this occasion, richly decorating it and spending most of their time in it. Each hall had its own purpose — white halls hosted balls, black halls were used for playing cards, and in pink halls people worked and listened to music. There were also blue, silver, gold, glass, mirror and many other rooms. According to the legend, if you stand on the windowsill on the second floor of the east side and clap your hands, you can hear the vaults 'singing'. One of the walls was entirely musical — it started to sound at the touch. The secret lies in the dozens of small clay pots embedded in it.

Meeting the Black Monk

All castles have ghosts. It is only in Golshany that they have long become a tourist brand. The legend is nothing out of the ordinary. Princess Hannah-Gordislava Golshanskaya fell in love with a poor man. The misalliance was not



Each hall of the Kossovo Palace had its own purpose



The Bulgakov Palace's interiors are decorated with sophisticated bas-reliefs, frescoes, stucco mouldings



It is easy to feel like a medieval townsman inside the Old Castle

allowed, and the couple began to meet in secret. The guy showed up on dates dressed in monastic vestments so as not to be caught. However, this did not save him, as the girl's father ordered her lover to be walled up in a thick wall. Since then, the ghost of the Black Monk has been wandering around the castle. Nearby, a White Lady can be seen in the Franciscan Monastery — the ghost of the wife of one of the builders buried alive during construction.

The restoration and conservation of the castle has been going on for several years, but tourists can already visit the North Tower of the Golshany Castle. You will have to climb from the outside, so the unusual staircase design will allow you to assess the impressive scale of the ancient possessions.

Looking for treasure

The Ruzhany Palace used to be the largest one in the Belarusian lands. Now it is called the greatest ruins of modern Europe. Time did not spare the Sapiega family estate. Nevertheless, there are still crowds of people who want to look at the former splendour. All the more so as, thanks to the restoration work, the entrance gate of honour has been restored — and it is already a mini palace in itself. Moreover, the restoration has been done quite skilfully to meticulously repeat every detail as it was in the past, with a sculpture of St. Anna and the coat

of arms of the princely Sapiega family installed above the gate.

The main feature of the Ruzhany Palace is the treasure, which, according to the locals, was buried a lot. The rumours are not groundless — during the wars, the treasury of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was sheltered here. In addition, gold was indeed discovered in the gate of honour in the 1990s.

Admiring the 'Versailles'

In 1814, Ignatius Bulgak, the district leader of nobility and a knight of the Order of St. Anna, second class, returned from a foreign campaign of the Russian army to his homeland. A year later, he bought an estate in remote woodlands and conceived a grandiose construction project. "Versailles, no less!" the nobleman's plan was — and he fulfilled it. The huge palace in Zhilichi, Kirovsk District, evokes memories of gallant knights and beautiful ladies waltzing on the lacquered parquet floor.

The Bulgakov estate has reached our days in excellent condition. Sophisticated bas-reliefs, frescoes, stucco mouldings decorate the interiors now as they did under the first owner. Attentive tourists traditionally try to solve the mystery of the 'all-seeing eye' on one of the gables of the side extensions. Is that the Masonic trail? Missed it! There was a home Roman Catholic church in this part of the building.



The Botanical Garden of Belarus' National Academy of Sciences was engaged in landscaping in the style of noble luxury

Entire team on the front foot

Belarus' and Russia's national football teams promise to put on a clinic

On June 7th, the Dinamo Minsk Stadium will host a match, which stands out from others and has every reason to be marked as special and extraordinary. The Russian national football team with the strongest line-up is going to visit the Belarusian national team.

By Sergei Kanashits

Presumably, there is no need to remind anyone once again about the current state of affairs in global sports. Russia's membership in FIFA and UEFA has been suspended 'until further notice', which means that Russian clubs and national teams do not have the right to compete under the auspices of these organisations and, therefore, have found themselves in a difficult situation of almost complete isolation. Belarus has been allowed to compete in international matches, yet with severe restrictions. Thus, our national team and club sides have been banned from playing matches at home by UEFA and are required to play home matches at neutral venues, with no spectators allowed to attend matches in which the teams from Belarus feature as host. Due to this, Belarusian football players have not played on the home field with the support of their fans for as many as three years, the last time being in June 2021, when Belarus hosted guests from Azerbaijan for a friendly match at the Dinamo Stadium. Since then, the national squad has had a lot of matches but it has not always been possible to watch them, even via TV broadcasts. Therefore, the Friday evening on June 7th is so eagerly anticipated. The start of the game is scheduled for 8pm to make sure everyone interested can get to the stadium on time. Moreover, both teams are going to play with their strongest squads.

The 2023-24 Russian Premier League has finished recently, and experts have unanimously called it the most powerful, interesting and unpredictable throughout all sovereign years. The intrigue persisted until the last round, and it was not clear who would make up the top three medallists and who would leave the top division. As a result, the medals were distributed as follows: Zenit Saint Petersburg won gold, Krasnodar secured silver, Dynamo Moscow got bronze, while Lokomotiv, Spartak and CSKA remained at the foot of the podium. Almost all matches were played at a high pace, and the skill level of the players and the entire championship proved to be very high — certainly not worse than the one at many vaunted European championships. It is worth noting that despite the bans and restrictions, the Russian national team continues to maintain a good form

by holding friendly matches, and looks very good. Thus, last autumn, Valery Karpin's charges defeated Cameroon, drew with Kenya, and made mincemeat of their opponents from Cuba — 8:0. They also made a lot of noise in March, having defeated quite unexpectedly a powerful Serbian team with a score of 4:0. That means that the Russians are coming to Minsk as undisputed leaders. However, it is believed that the Belarusian football players together with their Spanish coach Carlos Alós Ferrer know how to beat the trump cards of the favourites.

Of the main stars of Russian football, only Aleksandr Golovin, recognised as the best player of Monaco in the completed season, will not show up in Minsk. The midfielder has missed the final section of the French championship and keeps recovering from injury. Everyone else in Valery Karpin's



Vladislav Morozov, who joined Portugal's Arouca in winter, was among the most noticeable players on the field in last year's matches with Israel. On June 11th, the national teams of Belarus and Israel will play again, this time — in Hungary.

squad is on duty. The Russian national team's composition is quite impressive and, if it were not for the sanctions, the players would probably be preparing for the final stage of the European Championship, which is around the corner. This fact makes it all the more interesting for the Belarusian team to match its strength with the powerful opponent. Matvey Safonov, who has recently finalised his transfer from Krasnodar to French Paris Saint-Germain FC (PSG) for €20 million, or Andrey Lunev, who is choosing at the moment where to continue his career — in Azerbaijan's Qarabağ, where he previously played, or Dynamo Moscow, can play in the goal of the Russian national team. The main stars in midfield are the newly-minted Europa League winner as part of the Italian Atalanta, Aleksey Miranchuk, and Arsen Zakharyan from La Liga club Real Sociedad, Spain. They are joined by other solid players who surely know how to

play football — Daler Kuzyaev, Anton Miranchuk, Ivan Oblyakov need no introductions. The same refers to centre-forwards Fedor Chalov and Konstantin Tyukavin, who will undoubtedly arrange a real terror for our defenders on the field. In general, it is going to be very interesting.

The Belarusian national team features significantly fewer stars in contrast to the Russia's 'landing force' that mainly consists of guys from FC Ural Yekaterinburg, who will have to fight in order to retain their position in the Elite League, and guys from FC Khimki, who have just won a ticket to the Premier League, the top tier of professional football in Russia. In this regard, resisting the Russian 'shock battalion' will be anything but simple. All the more exciting it will be to see what Belarusian football players and their legionnaire coach are capable of in action. There will definitely be someone to admire at the Dinamo Minsk Stadium.



Anton Miranchuk, who has recently become the Europa League winner, and his partners in the Russian national team in March stood head and shoulders above the participant of the upcoming Euro 2024, the Serbia national football team — 4:0

There is only one moment — grab it!

Mariya Gnedtchik has stormed into the world elite of modern pentathlon

"My dream is to win an Olympic gold, no less. Obviously, I want to win at the World Cup and European Championships, but the major goal is to win the Olympics. So if I do get to Paris, I will try to make my dream come true there. And then, repeat it at the Los Angeles 2028 Summer Olympics. Why not?" When Mariya Gnedtchik shared her plans almost a year ago, one might think that the girl had a bit too much optimism. It was autumn, and Belarusian pentathletes were still banned from participating in international competitions by the UIPM. In other words, the mere possibility of qualifying for the Olympics was very dubious. However, Mariya believed that everything would work out. Thus, as soon as she got a chance to compete for a coveted ticket to the Paris 2024 Olympics, she jumped at it.

By Tatiana Pastushenko

Mariya Gnedtchik's debut at the World Cup has taken place this season, at the stage in Cairo, Egypt. The first start was not particularly successful — the Belarusian pentathlete took 17th place. However, already at the next stage of the tournament in Ankara, Türkiye, Mariya rounded out the top five. At UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup in Budapest, the Minsk resident pentathlete delivered a brilliant and inspiring performance. At first, she confidently overcame qualification and did well in fencing in the final, although not very well in swimming and showjumping. Despite the fact that before the final event — laser run — Mariya was almost half a minute behind her rivals, she managed to

erase the deficit and crossed the finish line with an advantage of eight seconds over the nearest competitor. Back then, Gnedtchik took a massive stride towards qualification for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, having secured a place in the top 5 of the Olympic Qualification Ranking. Moreover, she has recently topped the ranking list by winning a silver award in the World Cup final.

The 18 best athletes competed for the victory in the decisive stage. Mariya Gnedtchik showed the ninth result in fencing, after which she earned the maximum number of points in showjumping, and had the 17th time in swimming. Before the final discipline of the competition, the Belarusian was in the middle of the protocol, more than 30 seconds behind the leader. Mariya coped

with her best event with flying colours and took second place, having lost only to the experienced Lithuanian pentathlete, Gintarė Venčkauskaitė. The World Cup is over, yet pentathletes will have an equally important and responsible start on June 9th–16th — the 2024 World Modern Pentathlon Championships, which will be held in Zhengzhou, China, and which will also become a qualification stage for the Olympic Games in Paris.

Mariya Gnedtchik has recently turned 20 years old. She is a bright and extraordinary athlete that stands out among others not only with her crimson hair and a wide open smile, but also with her incredible charisma. Every day of the athlete is scheduled down to the minute. She does not hide the fact that in many ways she



Mariya Gnedtchik

follows the example of Anastasiya Prokopenko, the Summer Olympic Games 2008 bronze medallist, five-time winner and multiple medallist of the World Championships. Anastasiya is one of those athletes, thanks to whose successful performances throughout many years, the Belarusian national team is considered one of the strongest in the world. Mariya Gnedtchik is undoubtedly the one who can continue the glorious winning traditions of our team.



Anton Stepanishchey

Photo of the week

Within the framework of the Belarus' Media Community Forum, a solemn ceremony of awarding winners and laureates of the 20th Golden Letter national competition was held on May 28th in Mogilev. The Belarus Segodnya Publishing House has secured four statuettes and six laureate diplomas. Its project *SB. Nedelya [Week]* has won the major award — the Grand Prix in the nomination *The Best Creative Project of the Year among the Republican Print Media, News Agencies, Online Publications*.

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



June 6th, 1599 is the date of birth of Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez (1599–1660) — a Spanish painter, the greatest representative of the Spanish Golden Age, the leading artist in the court of King Philip IV of Spain. He is best known for his portraits of the Spanish royal family, members of the court and other famous figures. His influence on art was significant — artists such as Edouard Manet and Pablo Picasso cited him as a source of inspiration.

June 6th, 1799 marks the birthday of Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837) — the great Russian poet, novelist, and playwright. He is the author of immortal works in verse and prose, such as *Eugene Onegin* and *Dubrovsky* novels, the famous poems *Ruslan and Ludmila*, *The Prisoner of the Caucasus*, and many others, as well as fairy tales for children. He is one of the most authoritative literary figures of the first third of the 19th century.



June 6th is Russian Language Day. It was declared by the UN in 2010, and is celebrated as part of the programme to support and develop multilingualism and

cultural diversity. One of the goals of this programme is to maintain the equality of all six official languages of the United Nations: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.



June 6th, 1984 is considered the date of birth of Tetris, when the first computer version of this game appeared. Its author is Soviet programmer Aleksei Pajitnov. The game began to spread rapidly across the country and soon around the world, gaining more and more fans. Thus, in 1988, Tetris became the best-selling computer game in England and the USA. Nowadays, a large number of Tetris versions are available.

On June 7th, 1632, the Taj Mahal mausoleum was laid in the town of Agra, the then capital of the Indian Mughal Empire, in honour of Mumtaz Mahal — the beloved wife of Emperor Shah Jahan who died during childbirth. Later, Shah Jahan was buried there, too. It took more than 20 years and the efforts of 20,000 best architects from India, Persia, Türkiye, Samarkand, Venice to complete the construction. The Taj Mahal is completely built of white marble and is rightfully considered a masterpiece of world architecture.



part of the sustainable development process. Up to 40 percent of the world's oceans are now considered heavily affected by human activities, including pollution, depleted fisheries and loss of coastal habitats.

On June 8th, 1909, the first Russian-made production car, Russo-Balt, was released. The car designed by engineers Yakovlev and Freze drove out of the gates of the Riga-based Russian-Baltic Wagon Factory. It was an elegant two-seater grey vehicle with a 24-horsepower 4-cylinder engine. Russo-Balts gained a reputation of reliable and hardy cars, as well as recognition from official circles. The cars were successfully showcased at five exhibitions, including the international automobile salons of 1910 and 1913 in St. Petersburg, and were awarded five gold medals.



June 10th is known as World Ice Cream Day. About 3,000 years ago, refreshing dishes from a mixture

of ice, snow and pieces of fruit were made in China. The recipe using frozen milk appeared in Europe only in the 14th century, apparently in Italy. Today, there are a huge number of types of ice cream — a product that still remains one of the most affordable and in-demand desserts in the world.

June 11th is World Motorcyclist Day. In 1992, enthusiasts in several countries left their cars in garages and went to work on motorcycles and scooters. Initially, the day was called Ride to Work Day. In favour of bikers is the fact that motorcycles reduce the risk of traffic jams, do not require a lot of parking space and consume little fuel, which has a positive effect on the environment.



On June 12th, 1934, the Dinamo Minsk Stadium was officially opened. The legendary Dinamo Stadium is one of the most impressive buildings in Minsk. In June 2018, it reopened after a large-scale reconstruction and already in October was assigned UEFA category 4, which is the highest category in accordance with the UEFA Stadium Infrastructure Regulations. The Dinamo Stadium in Minsk is a world-class multifunctional arena.