



The strategic exercise by the Armed Forces of Belarus and Russia 'Zapad-2021' will be held from September 10th-16th

5



Minsk's University of Culture Gallery has recently hosted the personal exhibition of Yelena Krasnoshchekova

7

INTERNATIONAL

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During Knight's Fest. Mstislavl-2021 holiday

## Legacy of centuries

Recently, Mstislavl turned into a real medieval capital: after a year of inactivity, the traditional *Knight's Fest* has returned here. The event was organised in the Mogilev Region for the 13th time — attracting guests with real knight fights and jousting, archery competitions, dishes and drinks of the bygone era, handmade themed jewellery and leather goods. → **10**



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# A shield against disease

Production of a Belarusian coronavirus vaccine, the epidemiological situation in the country and the vaccination campaign against COVID-19 were high on the agenda at the President's visit to BelVituNipharm — among other issues

**BelVituNipharm — a high-tech specialised enterprise in the Vitebsk Region — plans to master the production of a Belarusian COVID-19 vaccine. So far, only veterinary drugs are produced here. Experts, however, explain that there are no special differences in the technology of vaccine production, whether for humans or for animals. Aleksandr Lukashenko also sees prospects in this matter — both for domestic medicine and for the whole Vitebsk Region, “The choice of this particular enterprise to produce the Belarusian vaccine is not only a huge responsibility for Vitebsk's residents, but also a great impetus for the development of our whole northern region. Unfortunately, the virus will not go away in the coming years... Hence the conclusion is that there will always be demand for this product, and it will be large. If we don't waste our time, we will quickly build a production facility with an export potential worth hundreds of millions of Dollars.”**



By Dmitry Umpirovich,  
Svetlana Isaenok

## The situation with COVID under control

The President stressed that, although the topic of combating coronavirus infection remains a priority not only in our country but also around the world, there are no global reasons for concern. Aleksandr Lukashenko explained,

*“I want to assure everyone once again: we are dealing with this calamity pretty well. So far so good, without unnecessary information, political squabbles, rallies, curfews that are in place in some states, especially in the so-called mature democracies.”*

In this respect, it seems appropriate to recall neighbouring ‘democratic’ Lithuania, where demonstrators have recently rebelled against forced vaccination and restrictions for people who refused to be vaccinated...

The Head of State also mentioned the economic consequences of the pandemic, “Mankind has never been able to alter the laws of nature and economy. Lockdowns, GDP fall, unemployment, frantic money emissions into national economies, which sent global prices soaring, and other consequences brought absolutely everyone back to their senses.”

He underlined however that there should be no complacency, “I expect the Healthcare Minister to objectively assess the actions of the heads of the regions and the capital in this regard — on the provision of medicines, medical personnel, hospital beds, oxygen, rehabilitation, recovery of serious patients and compliance with the developed measures.”

## Masters of our own health

Vaccination and its necessity were also in focus and Aleksandr Lukashenko insisted: everyone is the master of their own health, though people should understand that they can infect others. Among the strains recorded in Belarus, there is also one of the most severe: Indian. The Head of State emphasised that the Republic anticipated it but was ready; certain measures were worked out. However, no one can predict how many more similar strains will emerge in the future. We know little even about the existing ones. In this regard, the President announced,

*“No forced vaccination. I strongly insist. God forbid that I learn of someone who is forcing others... Know that my response in this case would be immediate and categorical. There should be only voluntary vaccination. If a person wants to be vaccinated, let them do so. If not — it's up to them.”*

However, Aleksandr Lukashenko remarked that there are certain categories of people who still need to be asked — not forced — to get vaccinated. These are employees of trade, pharmacies and social services: briefly speaking, those whose activity envisages direct communication with people. “Ask them, try to persuade them. Our people are wise,” said the President.

## FACTS AND FIGURES

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, Belarus has already spent **\$750-800m of budget funds** alone to fight COVID. Nearly as much was spent by companies and organisations of all forms of ownership.

*“Although our country is not rich, financial assistance was provided at all levels, including bonuses for healthcare professionals, purchase of medicines and vaccines, production of face masks and disinfectants. We offer vaccine shots to Belarusians free of charge. Any foreigner can get a vaccine here at a small price,”* noted the President.

More than one million people have already received two doses of vaccination in our country. Around two million Belarusians have received one shot. “International studies and other statements, various scientific articles in authoritative journals do not yet give me — and you — grounds to assert whether it's a lot or little,” the Head of State noted, adding, “Vaccines are available: Chinese, Russian. The West has offered us a western vaccine through the Republic of Poland. If the Healthcare

Ministry needs it, we can supply it — so that people can choose. Belmedpreparaty supplies at least 90,000 doses of ‘Sputnik V’ every week. I now want to hear from you how the process of vaccination of the population in the regions is progressing and when we will reach the desired level, if there is one.”

## Step by step

At the meeting, concrete steps in the development of a domestic vaccine were discussed and, according to the President, this task is not yet solved — though there is some progress.

“The regulatory and legal framework has been created. I have signed a number of documents to solve this problem. During this difficult time, at the expense of other areas, we found 10m Roubles (and this is only for the first stage!) of innovative money and budget funds in favour of the Healthcare Ministry and the Academy of Sciences,” stressed the President.

The Healthcare Minister, Dmitry Pinevich, later told reporters that according to the plan, the Belarusian coronavirus vaccine will be put into circulation in the first half of 2023. According to him, a comprehensive working group consisting of top-class specialists from different fields — virologists, epidemiologists, specialists in the pharmaceutical industry, designers — participate in its development. “Therefore, as soon as a laboratory-confirmed prototype of the vaccine was obtained, we immediately began to think about how we can scale it so that it turns out to be high-quality, safe and economically profitable. When

conducted both in vitro — that is, in a test tube, and in mice. The specialist clarified: vaccines have already been obtained from several strains of the virus — Indian, British and some others, “We have determined that the serums obtained from a corresponding strain are effective against it. We have not established any cross-activity.”

Based on these studies, scientists have developed a strategy for the Belarusian vaccine. They believe that it is necessary to use the drug that is obtained from the virus strains circulating in our country. “There will be no universal vaccine that will be effective against all strains,” concluded the specialist.

As Mr. Gorbunov concluded, the production of the Belarusian coronavirus vaccine is an important and necessary process. It's also much more profitable to produce our own vaccine than to buy foreign ones,

*“This is also a matter of the country's biosafety.”*

## Not instead, but together

The further plan for BelVituNipharm is to produce a coronavirus vaccine. Experts assert: the fact that drugs for animals and people will be produced within the same enterprise is a world practice — the famous Pfizer company is a good example of this.

“Vaccines for humans and animals are 90 percent the same on production issues. There is no difference,” Sergei Bolshakov, the Director of BelVituNipharm, told journalists.

“At the first stage, two sites will be used. At BelVituNipharm, an active component will be made — taking into consideration the company's experience with vaccine preparations. However, Belmedpreparaty will prepare the vaccine as a drug and bottle it,” added Sergei Belyayev, the Director of Belmedpreparaty RUE. His company already has experience working with vaccine preparations: it is here that ‘Sputnik V’ is being produced at present.

“The peculiarity of the production of our own vaccine is that we will be less dependent on the supply of the substance from foreign countries. We will have Belarusian production of a Belarusian vaccine. This is one of the most important guarantees of the country's provision with vaccine preparations. Here and now — against coronavirus infection, and in the future — from other challenges,” Mr. Belyayev added.

Another instruction from the Head of State was voiced: it is important to develop the production of various vaccines in Belarus — not only against COVID-19.



# Belarus withdraws its consent for US Ambassador to Belarus Julie Fisher



Anatoly Glaz

The Ministry's representative was asked whether there are any details regarding the Belarusian side's announcement that it would make an analysis and take adequate steps in response to another round of restrictions imposed by the United States against Belarus.

"Yes, of course. However, there are certain ethical standards in diplomacy, and we will not make all our steps public. Today we summoned US Chargé d'Affaires, Ruben Harutyunyan, to communicate to him the information about Belarus' measures in response to the unfriendly and even aggressive actions of the United States," Mr. Glaz answered.

He noted that, in recent years, the

The information was announced by the spokesman of Belarus' Foreign Ministry, Anatoly Glaz, in answer to RIA Novosti journalist's question

two countries have done much to mend diplomatic ties. "Therefore, it is a pity that the brazen and openly hostile actions of the United States and some of its individual representatives, that hardly fit the concept of diplomacy and professionalism, have eroded the gains achieved by their predecessors and forced us to withdraw the previously issued consent to appoint Julie Fisher as the US Ambassador to Belarus," Mr. Glaz added.

In his words, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations is very clear and specific about such situations, so there should not be any misunderstanding. "Yet, if necessary, we will offer explanations. Amidst Washington's actions to downscale co-operation in all areas, taking into consideration the economic strangulation of our country, we see no objective reasons for such a significant diplomatic presence of the United States in Belarus. It is simply unclear what they are going

to do here against such a background. In this regard, the US side was asked to reduce the Embassy staff to five people by September 1st. Actually, we will stick to this clear logic if the United States of America continues to scale down bilateral co-operation," Mr. Glaz said.

"Given the loss of trust in the current US administration, Belarus will suspend approval procedures for all new projects, grants and programmes of the US government until this trust is rebuilt. Based on the results of the ongoing study, we reserve the right to take additional countermeasures. I would like to emphasise once again that even, in the current situation, Belarus is ready for dialogue and will revise a number of its retaliatory measures if Washington brings its policy towards Belarus back onto a constructive track. This is truly in the best interests of both Belarusians and Americans," the spokesman said.



Natalya Eismont

## Belarus to answer back

**Aleksandr Lukashenko instructed the Government to develop a set of additional measures against another round of sanctions that western countries have enforced against Belarus**

The Press Secretary of the Belarus President, Natalya Eismont, noted when asked by BelTA about the Belarusian leader's response to new sanctions, in particular, those enforced by the USA, the UK and Canada, "The Head of State has instructed the Government to work out a set of additional measures against another round of sanctions. Belarus will give as good as it gets. We will take reciprocal measures as much as possible."

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# 'We've faced a brazen and daring challenge'

**On August 12th, Belarus' National Co-ordinator for Sustainable Development Goals, the Deputy Chairman of the Council of the Republic — Anatoly Isachenko — sent a letter to the UN General Assembly regarding economic and political pressure on Belarus**

By Maksim Osipov

The Republic of Belarus has been faithfully implementing its 2030 Agenda international obligations. The application reads as follows.

Belarus has put in place a national architecture to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It involves representatives of civil society, government bodies, the parliamentary community and business circles. The joint efforts of society and the state to achieve the SDGs have generated significant progress. In the Human Development Index, our country ranks 53rd in the group of countries with a very high level of human development; in the independent ranking of SDGs achievements, Belarus ranks 24th out of 165 states.

Over its centuries-old history, at the cost of the heroic feat of the previous generations, having lost every third citizen in the Great Patriotic War, Belarus defended its right to independently determine its path of development.

Being one of the founding members of the United Nations, Belarus remains committed to the key principles of international law — non-interference in the internal affairs of states and their equality in the inter-



Anatoly Isachenko

national arena. However, today, due to the targeted campaign launched by the EU and the United States to exert political and economic pressure on the Republic of Belarus, the high results achieved in various fields, including towards the SDGs, are at risk.

We've faced a brazen and daring challenge to our sovereign, democratic and peace-loving state, to each of its citizens. Unilateral restrictive measures in the form of blocking access for Belarusian goods to the European market, an air embargo and escalat-

ing migration crisis on the Belarusian-Lithuanian border are acquiring catastrophic proportions.

Such a thoughtless policy towards our country seriously affects the interests of not only Belarusian citizens.

Hundreds of appeals by Belarusian labour groups have been sent to the European Union with an appeal to stop the illegal pressure. However, numerous requests from workers are being ignored.

*The entire world has witnessed unprecedented external pressure, the politicisation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the unleashing of a global crisis in the heart of Europe. These and other actions contradict a number of international obligations, run counter to the United Nations Charter, and significantly impair the right to a decent standard of living for millions of people.*

Interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state violates the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among states in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 2625

(XXV) of October 24th, 1970. The principle of not interfering in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any state says: 'No state may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another state in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights or to secure from it advantages of any kind. No state shall organise, assist, foment, finance, incite or tolerate subversive, terrorist or armed activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the system of another state, or contribute to it, or interfere in internal struggles in another state'. The Declaration also reads that 'states must co-operate to promote economic growth throughout the world, especially in developing countries'.

**Anatoly Isachenko emphasised,**

**"As the National Co-ordinator for the Sustainable Development Goals in the Republic of Belarus, I appeal to the UN General Assembly and urge them:**

- to condemn gross interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Belarus by foreign states;
- to take measures to prevent the use of unilateral coercive restrictive measures against a sovereign state;
- to stop the planned steps by several UN member states to ignore the key principles of international law and the deterioration of the living standards of millions of people;
- to stand up for the 2030 Agenda, which is currently being consistently ignored by the United States and EU countries, which have undertaken high commitments under it."



# Aimed at innovation

Aleksandr Kulevsky



Vityaz JSC becoming an operator of the electric filling network

Vityaz becomes second operator of the electric filling network and is already working on putting new stations in operation

For over four years, the country has been designing and producing charging stations for electric vehicles and, to date, the model range has been significantly developed from scratch. At present, electric car drivers can enjoy access to slow AC stations — charging their vehicles overnight, or faster electric filling stations where it takes only half an hour to charge. The first super-fast charging complexes with the possibility of customisation with many requirements will soon be installed on the roads.

Gennady Azarov, the General Director of Vityaz JSC — a company that today performs one of the key roles in building the Malanka network, tells us more about the new products expected to be launched in the electric charging infrastructure in the near future.

By Ilya Kryzhevich

— How did the project start?

— It was our initiative to start manufacturing charging stations, in 2016-2017. The business looked promising then, since the number of developments in the field of electric transport had significantly increased in the world. To develop our Vityaz JSC, we were in search of projects and eventually chose electric charging stations. We made this product ourselves and promoted it. Simultaneously, we started working with Belorusneft Production Association which, at that time, was becoming the operator of an electric charging network. This doesn't mean that we made our own product and started selling it to a partner. Vityaz faced serious competition, participating in tenders. Not everything worked out right away. We had to work on the price and technical improvements. As a result, we became understandable and acceptable for the national operator.



Gennady Azarov

In addition to Belarus, the company also supplies its products to Russia, which has its own competitive market. This also allowed us to improve the stations.

At the same time, we are constantly engaged in increasing the level of localisation of our developments. Now, together with one of the Belarusian companies, we are working to localise the production of power units in the country.

One of the important elements is the software that interacts with the electric vehicle and controls the station. It is developed by our specialists.

— How has the model range expanded in four years?

— It all started with the simplest AC stations of 22kW. In addition, we can even offer a mounted station in a lamppost. The most popular today are fast DC stations with a capacity of 50-60kW. We are currently engaged in the develop-

ment of faster DC charging stations of 200kW. A 350kW station is also under development. Ultra-fast charging can be used not only for passenger electric cars, but also for electric buses and other large cars. The pilot project will be implemented next year by Belorusneft together with our company.

In four years, the model range has significantly expanded. At first there was

## ON TREND

In our country, there are about 4,000 electric cars and their number is growing. Accordingly, there is also an increase in the volume of electricity consumption by charging stations: in the first five months of 2021, it amounted to 3.8m kWh — or 23 percent more against the same period last year. Considering the global trends of switching to eco-friendly modes of transport and subject to the adoption of new incentive measures in Belarus, experts optimistically predict that, by 2025, more than 200,000 electric vehicles could travel along the country's roads and consume about 450m kWh. This means that the electric charging network of our country also needs to grow in order to ensure a smooth transition to the comfortable use of a large number of innovative vehicles. Today there are 450 electric filling stations in Belarus and, by the end of the year, the figure is set to reach 600.

one model and now there are about 20 in various modifications.

It should be noted that our task is not only to produce stations and install them. We remotely monitor and work on emerging situations at already operating stations. We analyse errors during operation, make the necessary changes

to the design and software.

— How is the domestic market developing today? How strongly do you feel the competition in your field is?

— At the very beginning, we competed with foreign companies in tenders. Then the stations began to be produced domestically as well. However, there is still no similar large-scale production anywhere in Belarus. On our part, state resources

— What share does the production of charging stations occupy in the portfolio of your company? Will this area become a higher priority in the future?

— Electric filling stations occupy a share of about 4 percent in revenue among all areas of our enterprise, we have achieved this in just three years. It's also worth noting that the development of electric charging is taking place against the background of a significant increase in the production and sales of televisions and medical equipment.

The production and sales of equipment for electric charging infrastructure in Vityaz should significantly increase in the next five years. Electric transport has the potential for development. We also have the opportunity to increase several times the production volumes of new models of stations needed by the market.

In addition, we don't exclude the possibility of co-operation with potential competitors — leading Russian and global companies, if there's a need for additional competencies. At the same time, production will be localised in Belarus.

— There is already a technical request for electric cars to charge faster. What is your business strategy? Are you planning to increase the charging speed?

— Acceleration of charging to sky-high indicators may not be the basis for the development of charging networks. Many analysts agree that charging electric cars with stations with a capacity of 60-120kW will remain a priority for a long time. 22kW AC stations will remain in demand. They are convenient and don't overload the network, they wear out the batteries less. At the same time, we're also developing super-fast complexes, increasing capacity. We'll focus on the market.



For a long time, charging electric cars with stations with a capacity of 60-120kW will remain a priority

Aleksandr Kulevsky



The company is now engaged in the development of faster DC charging stations of 200kW

were also invested in the development, which demonstrates the seriousness of our approach. We are responsible for the expediency and efficiency of using these resources. Now our products occupy about a third of the share of all charging stations in the Malanka network and we won't stop there.

cars with stations with a capacity of 60-120kW will remain a priority for a long time. 22kW AC stations will remain in demand. They are convenient and don't overload the network, they wear out the batteries less. At the same time, we're also developing super-fast complexes, increasing capacity. We'll focus on the market.

## BY THE WAY

Vityaz JSC has launched a new line to produce large screen TV sets and is preparing a project with Russian Sberbank

The modernisation has made it possible to increase production of large screen TVs about 1.5 times and this result will be achieved not only by expanding the equipment used but also by optimising the internal production logistics, notes General Director Gennady Azarov.

In recent years, Vityaz has steadily increased the volumes of its TV production to meet the needs of the primarily Russian market. Taking into account the current market situation, the company is focusing on the development of a model range of receivers with large screens (43-65 inches) and

their share in the structure of the output of this innovative product already exceeds 50 percent. They plan to master the production of TV sets with a diagonal of 75-80 inches by the end of 2021.

Vityaz will also continue increasing the volumes of its production of TV receivers with SmartTV support,

including on the multimedia platform of the Russian Yandex. In addition, the company is working on launching smart TVs on the Salyut TV platform with wide functionality in 2021. This is the result of co-operation with Russian Sberbank, whose systems include the Salyut virtual assistant service.



# Brothers in arms

‘Zapad-2021’ exercise will be held from September 10th-16th, involving 12,800 people and about 500 units of military equipment on the territory of our country

**There is very little time left before the strategic exercise by the Armed Forces of Belarus and Russia ‘Zapad-2021’, that will be held from September 10th-16th on the territory of four points of our country and nine of the Russian Federation. In Belarus, the 230th Obuz-Lesnovsky combined arms training ground, the 174th Domanovsky air force and air defence training ground, the 210th Ruzhansky aviation training ground and the Brestsky training ground will be used. 12,800 people will take part in the exercise on the territory of our country, including**

**about 2,500 Russian and up to 50 Kazakh servicemen from the CSTO Collective Rapid Response Forces. Moreover, 350 units of armoured vehicles will be involved, including 140 tanks, as well as about 110 units of artillery and multiple launch rocket systems, more than 30 aircraft and helicopters. During the briefing, the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, First Deputy Defence Minister of Belarus, Major General Viktor Gulevich, told journalists about the progress of the preparation of the large-scale exercise.**

By Ilya Krasovskiy

The first echelons with Russian servicemen arrived in our country at the end of July. At the moment, there are 850 servicemen of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, as well as 10 tanks and 30 units of other armoured vehicles, on the site of the Brestsky training ground.

“We have settled down in the field camp of the battalion tactical group,” Lieutenant Colonel Sergei Kobrov, Deputy Regiment Commander of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, told us. “Fighting comrades warmly greeted us in Belarus: with bread and salt. Now there is active preparation for the upcoming exercise, which very soon will demonstrate a high level of co-ordination and skill of the combat units of the two countries. We are always ready to lend a shoulder to our brother-Belarusians in case of external aggression.”

The ‘Zapad-2021’ exercise will make it possible to improve the procedure for the joint use of defensive infrastructure in practice and to check the readiness and the ability of the regional military force to carry out missions as

intended. According to the concept of the forthcoming exercise, one of the possible options for the development of the military-political situation was developed, envisaging aggravation of international contradictions to a level capable of leading to aggression against the Union State.

During the exercise, the military of the two countries will work out a number of training tasks, such as responding to the growing threat from the activities of conditional illegal armed groups, as well as separatist and international terrorist organisations, particularly, the creation of a group of troops in a short time, control of the actions of aviation and air defence troops in the course of repelling strikes by air attack from a simulated enemy, landing of tactical airborne assault forces, alongside testing of new methods of conducting defensive actions.

The exercise is aimed at increasing the training of troops from the regional group — designed to ensure security in the East European region. ‘Zapad-2021’ will be held in two stages. The first one will take three days. During this time, the united command will work out the issues of managing

subordinate formations and military units. The second stage will last four days, during which the military of the two countries will complete the defeat of the conditional enemy.

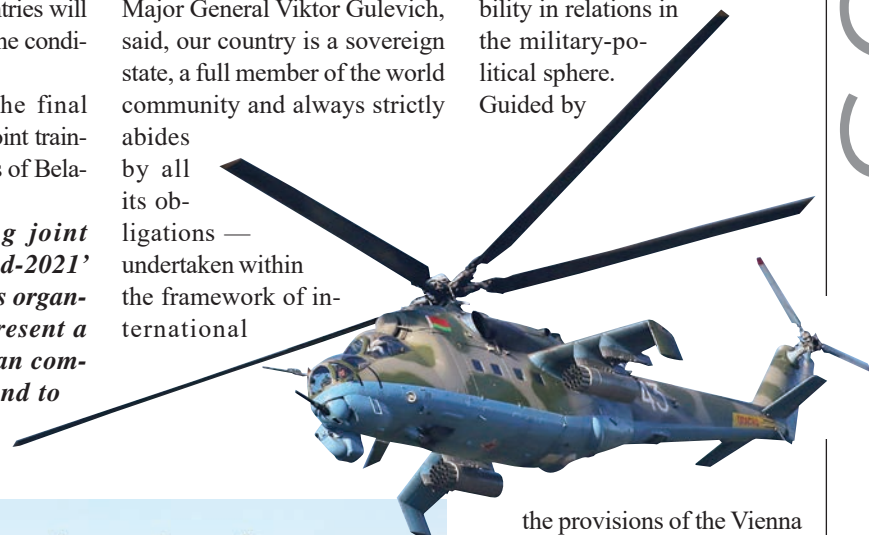
‘Zapad-2021’ is the final stage in the system of joint training of the Armed Forces of Belarus and Russia this year.

***The forthcoming joint army exercise ‘Zapad-2021’ is purely defensive; its organisation does not represent a threat to the European community as a whole and to neighbouring countries in particular.***

As the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, First Deputy Defence Minister, Major General Viktor Gulevich, said, our country is a sovereign state, a full member of the world community and always strictly abides by all its obligations — undertaken within the framework of international

and regional treaties in the interests of increasing confidence and strengthening positive stability in relations in the military-political sphere.

Guided by



the provisions of the Vienna Document 2011, Belarus at the end of 2020 officially notified the OSCE countries of the upcoming joint strategic exercise ‘Zapad-2021’.

Upon completion of the exercise, by September 30th, the personnel, weapons, military and special equipment of our army will return to their permanent deployment points, and the military units and subdivisions of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation will leave the territory of Belarus.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Journalists from Sky News, CNN, The New York Times, RBC visited the border of Belarus with the European Union



The State Border Committee of Belarus held a briefing for representatives of foreign media on the situation on the border of Belarus with the European Union.

The journalists were provided with video materials demonstrating the facts of illegal actions of the Lithuanian border guards against foreigners, including those that had not previously been made public by the State Border Committee. Moreover, an opportunity was provided to personally communicate with an Iraqi citizen who received medical assistance in a hospital after the Lithuanian side took him to the border line and forced him to violate the border of Belarus. The reporters visited the border directly, where they were able to see the technical means of protection and get answers to all their questions.

### UNHCR is concerned about Latvia's actions at the border in relation to migrants

The Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the Nordic and Baltic Countries, Elisabeth Haslund, expressed concern about Latvia's actions at the border,



when violence is used against migrants and people are forcibly turned back.

“We call on all parties concerned to respect basic humanitarian principles, adhere to international and European law and refrain from violence,” stressed Ms. Haslund.

Latvia, having made the controversial decision not to let illegal migrants into the country — in fact, to send them back to Belarus, as well as not giving them the opportunity to apply for refugee status — runs the risk of contradicting the European Convention on Human Rights. This was previously pointed out by lawyers and politicians.

### Places in Belarusian sanatoriums are almost booked before the October arrivals

In general, the development of tourism in Belarus — both domestic and outbound — is affected by the pandemic. They are trying to use this period to work on the quality of tourist services and improve infrastructure. So, for example, the introduction of the sub-programme, entitled *Development of Sites of the Tourism Industry* was an innovation in the *Hospitable Belarus* state pro-

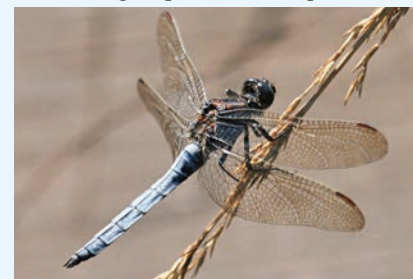


gramme for 2021-2025, and it is planned to build more than 73 sites in five years.

Among the trends, there is an increase in the number of organisations involved in domestic tourism. The depth of sales is also ensured. This year, especially in summer, the places for tourists are full. So, in sanatoriums, the bookings already reach October. Foreign citizens also come for treatment: more than 3,000 people are now staying in Belarusian sanatoriums.

### New for Belarus species of dragonflies discovered in Olmanskies swamps

Until this summer, there were 67 species of these flying insects in the official list of dragonflies in our country. Ornithologist Denis Kitel recently photographed the 68th species — a small blue dragonfly — during an expedition to the Olmanskies Bolota [Marshes] Reserve of Republican significance in the Brest Region. It is important that not just a single flying individual was seen, but a group of dragonflies with a female. It is likely that these dragonflies breed in Belarus. Thus, one of the largest wetlands in the country has once again proved its uniqueness.



The small blue dragonfly is a multi-winged dragonfly from the family of real dragonflies. Its length reaches 36-45mm and it lives in Southern and Central Europe, Mediterranean, Central Asia, Middle East, and North Africa.





# A shelter discovered

Belarusian State University scientists work on radio-absorbing materials for civil aviation and small satellites

**Scientists task to develop new materials for space and aviation equipment. For example, BSU has created innovative coatings based on carbon felt to shield various objects against high-frequency electromagnetic radiation. They can also be used for covering the internal niche for weather radar in civil aircraft, to protect pilots and passengers against radio waves and in scientific laboratories.**

By Inna Gorbatenko

### Absorption effect

The Union State has been implementing the *Technology-SG* scientific and technical programme since 2016. Belarusian and Russian scientists plan to develop innovative technologies for use in the space industry. One of the tasks set for scientists is to create new materials with radio-absorbing properties and this is what the laboratory of nano-electro-magnetism and the laboratory of physics and technology at the BSU's Research Institute of Nuclear Problems are currently working on, under the leadership of the laboratory head, Dmitry Bychenok.

"We make radio-absorbing materials based on unfired carbon felt which is produced at SvetlogorskKhimvolokno. The company produces felt that is homogeneous in its main properties: density, thermal and electrical conductivity. That is, its physical properties are as similar as possible in different areas. For the tasks related to the absorption of electromagnetic radiation, we needed to obtain samples with inhomogeneous electrical conductivity. For this purpose, the technology of heat treatment of felt was developed. It makes it possible to

change physical properties of felt in a controlled way. We've managed to develop a material which porosity and inhomogeneity of resistance make it possible to effectively absorb electromagnetic waves. The latter are everywhere — being emitted by phones, Wi-Fi, GPS, navigation systems of cars with the function of unmanned driving such as Tesla, in cameras for both photos and video recording on road," the scientist explains.

Why is this necessary? Firstly, high-power electromagnetic radiation is harmful to humans. It affects the central and peripheral nervous system and results in a decrease in attention, memory impairment, increased fatigue, drowsiness... Secondly, sometimes the absence of any electromagnetic radiation is necessary for the accuracy of research, for example, in laboratories.

"You have probably seen walls in recording studios covered with a special sound-absorbing material in the form of pyramids," Mr. Bychenok gives an example. "This is done in order to record a clear sound coming from each instrument and to suppress the re-reflected and distorted sound waves from the walls."

Thanks to a set of such important

properties as high elasticity, chemical resistance to acids, alkalis and solvents, innovative materials can be used for electromagnetic protection when various surfaces are covered with them. The aviation industry consumes the most carbon fibre: this lightweight and surprisingly durable material is used both in the manufacture of load-bearing elements and for interior

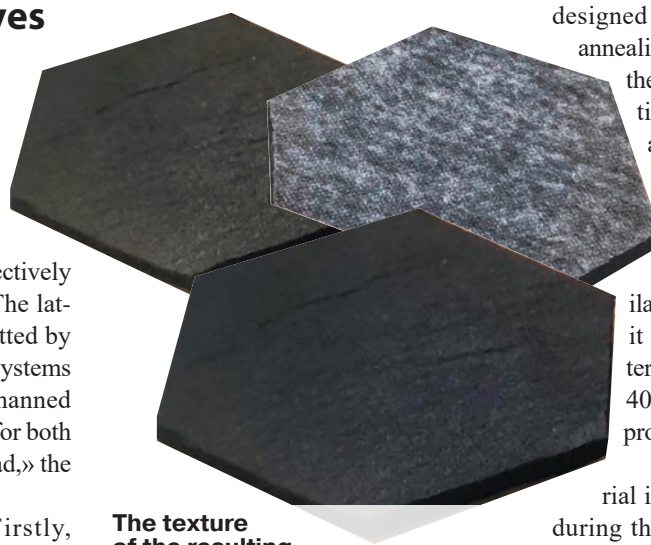
reflectivity of the surface, and provides a smooth transition from air to glass. At the same time, glass is transparent to electromagnetic waves, while carbon felt, on the contrary, absorbs them.

While we are talking, junior researchers Yegor Vasilevich and Aleksei Sukhotsky are preparing a gradient furnace for work. Custom and homemade, it is designed specifically for non-uniform annealing of carbon felt. It is here that the material acquires the properties so valuable for the aviation and space industry. Annealing takes place in a vacuum, at a temperature of 700 degrees.

The texture of the resulting material is somewhat similar to felt boots but, importantly, it is not flammable. In scientific terms, its thermal stability reaches 400–450 degrees — a necessary property for aviation equipment!

The potential of carbon material is extensive! If a defect occurs during the synthesis process for some reason, then such a sample can be used not for absorption but for effective reflection of electromagnetic radiation. It copes with the task well. We put my phone in a special case made of this material and try to get through. The voice on the phone says: 'The subscriber is turned off or is out of the network coverage area'. The cover works on the principle of a Faraday cage and is a layer of conductor through which electromagnetic waves do not pass but are completely reflected, as if from a mirror.

BSU scientists have already conducted laboratory studies that confirmed the effectiveness of the developed innovation and showed the possibility of its use in the aviation industry.



The texture of the resulting material is somewhat similar to felt boots

or decoration. Up to 30 tonnes of carbon fibre can be used for an aircraft. In addition, radio-absorbing coatings based on carbon felt can be used to cover the inner niche of weather radar in civil aircraft, to protect pilots and passengers against radio waves, as well as in scientific laboratories.

### Great potential

To better understand the options of the material, Mr. Bychenok explains that we could observe a similar principle of operation of reflective coatings in anti-reflective glasses. It also reduces the



The aviation industry consumes the most carbon fibre: this lightweight and surprisingly durable material is used both in the manufacture of load-bearing elements and for interior decoration



# Between Amman and Minsk

By Yuliana Leonovich

**Oksana Chemezo was among the initiators of the creation of a cultural and educational association of Belarusians in Jordan and is now dreaming of opening a Belarusian culture centre**

Many years ago, they left their home but never stopped loving Belarus. A careful attitude to memory and an endless strong spiritual connection with the Motherland unite all Belarusians around the world today — all those who are not indifferent to the fate of their country, its traditions, history and national identity. All this time, our compatriots living abroad, representatives of large public organisations and cultural communities follow the news from their native Belarus and do not stop their activities to promote Belarusian culture. The head of the association of Belarusians in Jordan, Oksana Chemezo, is among those who help our compatriots to keep their ties with their homeland, though they may live 3,500km away from it.

Oksana moved to Jordan for love: she married a former professional rugby player, Feras. Eight years have passed and Amman — the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan — has become her second home. At the same time, Oksana does not feel completely disconnected from life in Belarus. She admits, “Probably, it’s in the field of my activity. For the last three years, I have been working with state-owned enterprises in the machine-building industry. I’ll be honest: the pace of development and adaptation of our equipment to foreign markets is impressive! We are also working on and establishing co-operation in other areas between Jordan and Belarus.”

Jordanians know a surprisingly large



**Oksana Chemezo (far right) celebrates Kupala Night in the company of her Belarusian friends**

amount about our country. As Oksana notes, this could be easily explained, “Quite a lot of Jordanians have studied and continue studying in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Belarus. Maybe not as many of them as we would like, but I’m sure it’s just a matter of time.”

Several years ago, Oksana Chemezo, together with another Belarusian, Nadezhda Al-Olimat, decided to establish a cultural and educational association of Belarusians in Jordan, though their desire to unite compatriots was born much earlier.

“There is a large Russian-speaking diaspora in Jordan. Its organisations hold various cultural and educational events, including for locals. At some point, it became clear to me that the time had come for national self-determination. The starting point was a consular reception in 2018; it was held at that time by the Second Secretary of the Embassy of Belarus in Syria, Aleksei Zubko. He also provided compre-

hensive support and assistance in the formation of our association,” the lady says.

The association now unites about 30 adults and 20 children — not many, but Oksana is convinced this is the beginning of a major journey. The ladies invite every Belarusian personally, that’s why their organisation is so friendly. Oksana comments, “We organise events for the general public together with the Embassy of Belarus in Syria (Lebanon and Jordan — concurrently), and for members of the association. Last October, for example, we prepared a regional children’s drawing contest — *Much Comes from a Horn* — based on Belarusian fairy tales. For the second year in a row, we are organising a literary project — *Time Never Could Erase the Memory* — and read poems about the war in Belarusian. Belarusians from other countries take part in our online activities, relations which we are keen to maintain and establish.”

Last year, the association members organised the *Kupala Festivities* in Jordan for the first time — with jumps over the fire and wreaths. In addition, in early March, the Belarusians of Jordan celebrated Maslenitsa; the holiday was then ‘welcomed’ not only with traditional pancakes but also other treats of national cuisine.

Oksana follows the news from Minsk every day and believes the recent reports about the closure of the sky for planes of the national airline are not the most encouraging. However, the lady is trying to find the pros, “Perhaps it’s time for Belavia to pay attention to our region, since other airspace is closed. In my opinion, it would be possible to work out flights (at least for the summer period) covering Syria and Jordan since we have never had direct flights and it has become much more difficult recently for us to fly to Belarus because of the termination of flights from Ukraine. I remember the time when I didn’t visit my homeland for three years. I missed everything: people, forests, our holidays.”

Since the beginning of July, Oksana and Nadezhda have been staying in Belarus, but have not yet realised they are (finally!) at home. “Firstly, it is very hot and unusual for me; believe me, there is not such strong humidity in Jordan. Secondly, these days I don’t have a moment of peace: I hold meetings on the affairs of the association. For example, I am negotiating to bring an exhibition of the Belarusian costume — *Skarbnitsy* — to Jordan for the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and Jordan. We are also negotiating for assistance in establishing ties between the cultural subjects of the two countries,” says the lady.

Photo courtesy of the character

## The colour of the native sky

**Artist Yelena Krasnoshchekova has lived in Moscow for 20 years but has never broken ties with Belarus. She participates in the Belarusian community’s events and visits her small homeland every year to exhibit her kind, light paintings and present them to her fellow countrymen. Minsk’s University of Culture Gallery has recently hosted Yelena’s personal exhibition: *From the Native Threshold* — the landmark 40th in her career.**

By Yuliana Leonovich

— Yelena, you constantly turn to the theme of the small homeland and family in your paintings. What does Slutsk mean to you?

— I come here every year for several months — to my mother, to the big house where I have an opportunity to work and paint. Sometimes, during the summer, I draw 30-40 works, devoting 12-14 hours a day to painting, more as the summer days are long. I get up at 5am and start working. Meanwhile, in winter, I organise exhibitions in Moscow and abroad. Actually, even my still lifes are based on the scenes from my mother’s garden. I often draw our house: it’s painted in ultramarine and surrounded by diverse colourful flowers. I travel a lot around Belarus and naturally these landscapes are also reflected in my works. I love Belarus, it nourishes me, my roots are here. I really like Mir Castle, the wonderful Zhirivichi Monastery, and every time I discover something new on the road.

— Judging by your canvases, do you prefer realism and impressionism?

— Not only that, I also like abstraction — the cosmic cycle, for example. I’m simply interested in trying different styles and techniques. I am constantly studying; right now, for example, I am seriously engaged in watercolours.

— As far as I know, you have presented some of your works to the Slutsk Art Gallery...



**Native House by Yelena Krasnoshchekova**

‘I’ve entitled my exhibition *From the Native Threshold* because everyone should have their own harbour where the heart aspires, where they return, where they can get a

spiritual boost. For me, such a place is my homeland, Slutsk, the house where I was born, this wonderful ultramarine colour that is present in all my works: the colour of the Belarusian sky and our cornflowers.’



**Yelena Krasnoshchekova**

— It’s natural for me to make a present to my small homeland and countrymen. The gallery is named after Vladimir Sadin, an Honoured Artist of Belarus and my teacher. I had three exhibitions there, which I dedicated to my mother, my teacher and the 900th anniversary of Slutsk. Thanks to my exhibitions, people learn that there is such a city, they see how beautiful the Slutsk land is. I tell them about my native country and depict it in paintings — as a result, tourists come to Belarus.

— 2020 is the Year of National Unity in our country. What does this mean for you?

— We, Belarusians, are probably the most peaceful people on the planet. We know what war is, what losses are and, last year, I was struck by the events taking place; it seemed hardly possible to me. I’m generally a pacifist; I advocate peace and friendship... I always paint using consecrated water and I start any work with a prayer. Actually, every picture is a prayer — for the loved ones, for the homeland... I can’t accept modern European trends: I travel around the world a lot and I don’t understand why there’s such a craving to portray blood and misery. It shocks me. Belarusians are traditional, family people. Art educates new generations, and what will grow out of a child if there are negative paintings in the house? Since I’m also engaged in book illustration, I’m interested in the modern book and observe with horror how children’s fairy tales are being rewritten in the West: everything is being turned inside out and bad parents are to blame for everything... However, parents are our most important people!





# Floods after fires

**Heavy rains have triggered severe floods and mudslides in northern Turkey, killing at least 77 persons and leaving others missing or injured, officials said**

Helicopters scrambled to rescue people stranded on rooftops while cars were swept away in raging torrents last week. The floods hit the Black Sea coastal provinces of Bartın, Kastamonu, Sinop and Samsun.

“From a meteorological point of view, we are perhaps facing a disaster that we have not seen in 50 or 100 years,” the Agriculture and Forestry Minister, Bekir Pakdemirli, said of the flooding and heavy rains.

Turkey has been grappling with drought and a rapid succession of natural disasters that world scientists believe are becoming more frequent and vio-

lent because of climate change.

The downpours along Turkey’s northern coast came as firefighters had almost managed to control wildfires in the south that have killed at least eight people since late July. Thousands had been forced to evacuate as the country battled more than 200 blazes.

The worst-hit flood area appeared to be in Kastamonu, where the town of Bozkurt was inundated, and dozens of cars were swept away by raging waters. The Kastamonu governor’s office denied reports that the flooding was caused by a burst dam and there were no immedi-

ate reports of any casualties.

The Interior Minister, Süleyman Soylu, who travelled to Kastamonu, said waters have surged ‘three or four meters high’ in some of the flood-hit areas and that many people were waiting to be rescued from rooftops.

“Evacuations and search-and-rescue efforts are continuing,” he said. “The gendarmerie, the army are trying to deploy all of their helicopters to the region.”

In Bartın, the flash floods demolished several houses and at least two bridges and caused the partial collapse of a road leading to the neighbouring Province of Karabük.

# Travelling wild elephant herd

**More than 150,000 people have been evacuated from the path of a herd of migrating elephants, Chinese officials said**

Authorities in south-western Yunnan Province feared conflict between residents and the 14 Asian elephants which have been on the move for months.

More than 25,000 police officers using vehicles and drones have monitored the herd. The protected animals left a nature reserve in Yunnan about 17 months ago.

Since then, they have made international

to the Mengyangzi Nature Reserve initially failed but eventually the herd turned around and began to head home.

Wan Yong, who heads the team monitoring the elephants, told a news conference that the herd had crossed the Yuanjiang River and was continuing to head south. Electric fences, bait and artificial roads have been used to ensure the animals followed the correct path.



headlines with an extraordinary 500km trek that has seen them wander through fields, towns and cities, eating millions of US Dollars worth of crops and damaging buildings.

As the herd approached settlements, people were temporarily relocated to prevent conflict as local residents tried to protect their crops and homes. By June, the animals had reached the outskirts of the provincial capital of Kunming.

Efforts to head them off and send them back

Experts say it is unclear exactly why the elephants left their usual habitat to embark on the journey. Some have suggested an inexperienced leader may have led the herd astray, while others believe the elephants could have been searching for a new habitat.

The Asian elephant is an endangered species. China has only about 300 wild elephants, mainly living — like the wandering herd — in the south of Yunnan Province.

# Politics gets in the way

**Russia’s ‘Sputnik V’ coronavirus vaccine is one of the most effective in the world and is ranked in the same category with the best western jabs but politics prevent it from being used more widely, Australian epidemiologists and virologists told *The Sydney Morning Herald***

“It is an excellent vaccine with over 92 percent efficiency in preventing COVID-19, which puts it on a par with western drugs developed using new mRNA technology,” says Michael Toole, an epidemiologist at Burnet Institute. He underlined that the fast creation of the shot should not cast doubts on its efficacy because the scientists that developed ‘Sputnik V’ already had the basis in the form of MERS and SARS vaccines which they worked on previously.

The epidemiologist stressed that as of now ‘none of the more than 60 countries using this vaccine reported problems with blood clotting either during clinical trials or during the use of the drug in Argentina, Italy and San Marino (which has been almost entirely vaccinated with ‘Sputnik V’). “I’m not sure why the WHO is taking so long,” notes Mr. Toole. “They’ve already approved China’s Sinovac and that’s not as effective and has its own transparency issues.”

Gary Grohmann, virologist who consults the WHO, also praised the Russian jab. Grohmann ‘has no doubt ‘Sputnik V’ is a very good vaccine, based on both its trial and real-world data so far’.

According to the scientists, ‘politics are playing a role in resistance to the Russian vaccine’. “That’s part of the inequality of the global vaccine rollout,” says Deakin University epidemiologist Catherine Bennett. “We all have an obligation to understand these vaccines or you can have this kind of closed shop.” According to her, shots similar to the Russian vaccine can save a population but politics make it difficult to make right decisions.



# Bonjour, Paris!



While the Paris 2024 Olympic Games may still be a few years away, it’s never too early to get excited about the Games of the 33rd Olympiad!

With that in mind, here are the top five things to know about the Paris 2024 Olympic Games:

## The centenary of the Paris 1924 Olympic Games

In 2024, Paris will become just the second city to host the Olympic Summer Games three times after London (which staged the 1908, 1948 and 2012 Olympic Games). The City of Lights first hosted the Olympic Games in 1900, four years after the multi-sport event was resurrected in Athens after being banned by Roman Emperor Theodosius I some 1,500 years earlier.

## The Olympic debut of breaking

The 2024 Summer Olympic programme is scheduled to feature 32 sports encompassing 306 events; among these sports is breaking, which will make its Olympic debut. Breaking is a competitive form of breakdancing that includes footwork and athletic moves like back or head spins.

## Olympic surfing in Tahiti

Tahiti — the largest island in French Polynesia — will host the surfing competition at Paris 2024. Tahiti was chosen as the venue, and when the competition does begin in 2024 — 15,700 kilometres from Paris — it will break the record for the farthest Olympic medal event to be held outside of the host city.

## Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic emblem

When the emblem for Paris 2024 was unveiled in 2019, it marked an iconic moment in the history of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. For the first time ever, the same emblem would be used for both competitions.

## A marathon for all

In another first for the Olympic Games, a mass participation marathon open to amateur athletes will take place on the same day as the elite event. The ‘public’ marathon wouldn’t start at the same time as the elite competition, but athletes will run on the same course and in the same conditions as the Olympic event.

**Materials prepared with aid of information agencies**



# Afghan syndrome



## What is happening in Afghanistan resembles a humanitarian catastrophe

Afghanistan is once again the focus of world attention, as it was in 1979 and 1989. This time because the Taliban took over Afghanistan. In April, US President Joe Biden announced his decision to end the American military campaign which was the longest overseas cam-

paign in the US history. The Taliban, having taken control of almost the entire territory of the country, entered Kabul. Bagram airbase was captured, and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani left the country. An urgent evacuation of diplomatic missions has begun in the capital.

### The scale of the disaster

The radical Taliban movement have hoisted their flag over the Presidential palace in Kabul. The rebels announced the beginning of negotiations aimed at the formation of an Islamic government, which — they say — will involve not only members of the movement, but also other Afghans.

‘An inclusive Afghan government is what the people of Afghanistan demand and desire. There was a popular uprising’, Euronews quotes the spokesman for the Taliban political office, Suhail Shaheen. However, the people themselves have rushed out of the country in overcrowded (up to 800 people on board) American transport aircraft and even hiding in the

bays for the landing gear: shocking videos of people falling from a great height have become another confirmation of the tragedy of what is happening, as well as the fact that the US military opened fire when a crowd of people entered the runway of Kabul airport. Reuters reports that the shooting killed at least 5 people while the total number of victims across the country exceeded a thousand in these crazy days.

### Taliban hit the US

Several hundred people came to the White House in Washington on Sunday to urge US officials to take action against the Taliban and stop the violence in Afghanistan. According to TASS, many of the rally

participants came with banners reading ‘Don’t leave Afghanistan’, ‘Stop the Taliban’, ‘The new Taliban arsenal was paid for from your taxes’.

It’s not hard to guess that what happened in Afghanistan will trigger a new grandiose wave of migration. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has already called on Afghanistan’s neighbours not to close their borders to Afghans seeking escape from the fighting — but to enable them to seek security, regardless of their current legal status.

“I believe that we will see a significant flow of migrants around the world,” said the British Defence Minister, Ben Wallace, adding that Turkey, Pakistan and India have

already noted an influx of Afghan refugees.

The Head of the German Christian Democratic Union, candidate for Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Armin Laschet, called the results of the operation in Afghanistan NATO’s biggest failure since its foundation.

### Greg Barton, Professor at Deakin University (Australia):

*Life in the Republic will be an exact copy of the caliphate proclaimed by terrorists from ISIS. Lives for women in Afghanistan, in particular, will take a terrible reversal from life in the past two decades. An entire generation of young women will see their lives change quite radically and rather quickly with regard to things like education, study and general civil liberties.*

## Hard cleaning-up in the Lithuanian way

In Lithuania, those who have not been vaccinated have been banned since September 13th from using public transport, visiting hospitals and even some shops, not to mention cafes, restaurants, gyms and beauty salons. Those who have been vaccinated by this date or have had a coronavirus will have a so-called ‘passport of opportunities’. In the Sejm, such innovations are called stimulation of the vaccination campaign, while protesters call this a violation of civil rights.

### Tear gas and batons

Last week, those dissatisfied with the actions of the authorities gathered in Vilnius near the Sejm. They encircled the Parliament building. They didn’t have to wait long for an answer, as soon the first arrests began. Police subdivisions, paddy wagons and even heavy military equipment such as armoured vehicles with machine guns began to gather. To get the deputies out of the building, the police began to push the protesters away from the building, but stones and water bottles were thrown at the law enforcement officers. In response they received tear gas and batons. The law enforcers began an investigation into the organisation of the riots, but the authorities did not abandon the restrictions: they were approved at the government meeting.

What is happening in the country, whose political leadership is trying for any reason to teach and condemn Bela-

**Protests in Vilnius have been suppressed. Democracy is understood here only in the exported version of events. The authorities do not hesitate to use force against their citizens and refugees.**



### Laurynas Ragelskis, journalist and blogger:

*When they pressed the ‘white-red-white rot with Molotov cocktails’ in Belarus with gas, it was a struggle for democracy. In Lithuania, this is the suppression of anti-state actors. Lithuanian rubber batons are good and democratic, but Belarusian ones are not.*

### Giedrius Grabauskas, Chairman of the Socialist People’s Front of Lithuania:

*On August 10th-11th, bloody events began in Lithuania. The regime sent special forces against civilians. Spine-chilling scenes: bloody women, beatings, mass arrests. In July and August, special forces have already beaten and gassed Lithuanian citizens in Rudnikai and other parts of the country. Tough measures have also been taken against refugees. Severe political repression and pressure on freedom of speech are underway.*

rus regarding the observance of human rights and the use of force against participants in the riots, justified by law? How is it, gentlemen? People came to you with well-grounded claims, and you immediately meet them with batons and gas...

The Head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Lithuania, Agne Bilotaite, immediately announced that those guilty could face up to six years in prison. Why is this? Where are the courts, what about justice and the presumption of innocence? However, Agne ‘burns’ not just with fire, but with napalm, “The riots near the Sejm in Vilnius in the context of the situation with illegal migrants at the Rudnikai training ground, not far from the border with Belarus, is an anti-state activity that has nothing to do with the expression of a civil position.”

Such a bold statement by the Minister surprised even the official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Maria Zakharova, who noted, “How interesting: Lithuanian citizens are protesting, but their protests have nothing to do with the expression of civil position. It turns out that the Head of the Lithuanian Internal Ministry deprives her citizens of the very opportunity to express their civil position? Considering that the Lithuanian leadership constantly taught the neighbouring countries about democracy, I would like to continue the lesson: what forms of expression of civic position, in the opinion of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Lithuania, are correct?”

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



# Legacy of centuries

Andrey Sazanov



Beautiful ladies and brave knights, horsemen's tournaments and the Scottish infantry performance organised in Mstislavl as part of the Middle Ages recreated romance

Recently, Mstislavl turned into a real medieval capital: after a year of inactivity, the traditional *Knights' Fest* has returned here. The event was organised in the Mogilev Region for the 13th time — attracting guests with real knight fights and jousting, archery competitions, dishes and drinks of the bygone era, handmade themed jewellery and leather goods.

By Anastasia Guzovskaya

"This year's festival was eagerly awaited in our city, so we all prepared for it," Natalia Biskup, the Head of the Department of Ideological Work, Culture and Youth Affairs of the Mstislavl District Executive Committee, explains. "We cleaned the streets and the Castle Hill, beautifying front gardens and planting flowers. The city missed this holiday. The Knight's Festival is a brand of Mstislavl area. Every year many guests from all over Belarus came to us, there were participants and spectators from Russia and Ukraine. This time, many clubs from abroad were unable to participate because of coronavirus but many guests came from the neighbouring regions of the Russian Federation, Moscow and St. Petersburg."

The geography of the festival participants is wide: Mogilev and the Mogilev Region, Minsk, Soligorsk, Zhodino, Vitebsk, Gomel, Rechitsa and other cities. As for artisans and folk craftsmen, they came from almost all parts of the country.

The Castle Hill rightfully became the epicentre of the holiday, hosting thematic sites of archers, re-enactors' clubs and a medieval tavern. To get here, guests passed through the city of master craftsmen where artisans and folk craftsmen presented their products: handmade jewellery, leather and wood products, household items, souvenirs, good luck charms, soft toys and much more. It was also possible to taste diverse hot dishes and drinks.

One of the most spectacular moments of the event was the performance of the Zolotaya Shpora (Golden Spur) equestrian historical club from Minsk: six horsemen in the armour of winged hussars from the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania demonstrated not only amazing costumes and armour decorated with ostrich feathers, but also excellent horsemanship, competed in accuracy and even staged a battle for the heart of Princess Mstislavskaya.

The oldest horseman of the Minsk club, Aleksandr Ustinovich, is 72. He tells us that he first got on a horse at the age of 50. "I need adrenaline, that's why I've been riding for more than 20 years and I'm not going to stop doing it. The horse I performed on today is from our club; its name is Titan. This is its first event of this scale, and, as you can see, the horse has successfully coped with everything. Now Titan is our military horse," the man smiles.

Another participant of the equestrian historical club

is Yelena Andreeva. This is not the first time the girl has come to the festival. "The costume that I'm wearing was completely made by myself. It took me several years to complete.

First, it's necessary to study various sources, then buy fabric which must be of natural materials. This is not cheap," says the lady. "How did I get into the club? Since childhood, I was passionate about history; it's my favourite school subject. A little later, I learned about knights, their club and an opportunity to get involved in historical recon-



participants tried to be careful and not cause serious injuries to an improvised opponent. Presenters closely monitored the fight and did not allow anyone to break the rules.

Archers competed in strength and agility and even had their own tournament at the festival. Among the participants were the family of Aleksandra and Aleksandr Kryazhev from Minsk, who came to the festival together with their daughter Marina and a dog. They all had stylish costumes and all the necessary equipment for archers, while their dog had a themed collar. The family make weapons for training and performances themselves. Their daughter Marina was the smallest archer of the festival. She is 7 but can already give a head start to any adult. "We make our own outfits and weapons. Our family are artists by education and profession. We have participated in this festival many times and always try to come up with some new feature, to introduce an element



Andrey Sazanov



struction. This is how it all started."

Knight fights (3x3 and 5x5) were bright and exciting, while mass battles were organised separately — featuring wall to wall fist fights, a capture of the tower and a battle on the bridge. The guests, holding their breath, were looking at what was happening on the site. That was not a mere reconstruction of jousting tournaments from the Middle Ages. Each warrior wore armour and a helmet, holding swords, axes or spears in their hands. The fights were full-contact and, from the side, looked like a real fight to the death. Actually, all par-

of novelty into each competition," explains Aleksandra.

In the evening, musical bands performed on the Castle Hill and guests to the festival could see an onslaught of the castle and a bright fire show.





# The mood to win

## Twenty Belarusian athletes to compete at Paralympic Games in Tokyo

Recently, there has been a lull in the sports arenas in Tokyo, as the Olympic Games are over and athletes from all over the world have gone home. But it will not last long: very soon the Japanese capital will be hosting the Paralympic Games. Our team was solemnly escorted to the main event of the four-year at Minsk — Hero City Memorial.



Sergey Mitsevich



Coach Nadezhda Kuzmina and Paralympian Aleksei Talai accompanied by his brother Artur

they demonstrate what they are capable of, there will be medals, and inner satisfaction, alongside the desire to continue to play sports and be an example for other people.”

Ivan Tikhon also noted that despite all the restrictions associated with the coronavirus, our Olympians did not experience any problems in Tokyo. He is sure that the Paralympians have nothing to worry about: the Japanese are hospitable, trying to create the most comfortable conditions for the participants of the competitions. The main difficulty will be different: athletes will need to

cope with anxiety and inner fears that can prevent them from showing results. Our other athletes also spoke about the fact that each of our team members wants to perform with dignity and win medals.

“All of us have a fighting spirit,” said Aleksei Talai. “This especially refers to me. I am a man beaten by life. I know it won’t be easy for us. Somewhere, perhaps, there will be provocations, so we must be ready for anything. Our team is very experienced, and I am still a beginner in this field of activity; it is only my fourth year in sports. But, having the experi-

ence of surviving in extreme life situations, I am sure that we will cope with all the difficulties and bring home medals.

*Our guys are ready. I saw how they worked and trained. We are fully armed, ready to fight and will return with victory!”*

There are many applicants for winning medals in our team. According to Nikolai Shudeiko, these are Igor Boky and our other swimmers, fencer Andrei Pranevich, who will also try to

repeat the success in Rio de Janeiro. There are also chances in athletics, judo, and, of course, in rowing, where Lyudmila Volchek probably did not say the last word. By the way, she will become the team’s flag bearer at the opening ceremony. Like the Olympic Games, the main event of the Paralympians’ four-year period will take place virtually without spectators. The competition will begin on August 24th and will feature 539 medal chances.



Sergey Mitsevich

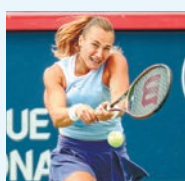
## ARENA

### ● Minsk Dinamo hockey players win the Saley Cup for the fourth time in the club’s history



The hockey players of Minsk’s Dinamo beat Yunost in the decisive match of the Saley Cup-2021 with a score 4:2 (0:0, 1:0, 3:2)

— to become the holders of the honorary trophy for the fourth time in their history and for the second time in a row. The match between strong rivals turned out to be very tough, full of skirmishes and power techniques. Before the final whistle, both teams had good chances to tip the scales in their favour, but the Minsk ‘bisons’ managed their chances better.



### ● Arina Sobolenko lost in the semi-final of the tennis tournament in Montreal

Belarusian tennis player Arina Sobolenko failed to make it to the final of the WTA-1000 tournament in Montreal, Canada with a prize fund of \$2.5m.

On August 14th, the third ranked player in the world lost in a semi-final to Czech Karolina Pliskova (ranked 6th globally) — 3:6, 4:6. Their meeting lasted 1 hour and 23 minutes. In the first round, Arina Sobolenko beat American Sloane Stephens (62nd) — 7:6 (7:4), 4:6, 6:4, where she proved stronger than Canadian Rebecca Marino (220th) — 6:1, 6:3. In a quarter-final, the Belarusian defeated another Belarusian,

Victoria Azarenko (15th) — 6:2, 6:4.

In doubles, Arina Sobolenko and Belgian Elise Mertens defeated the Canadian duo of Leylah Annie Fernandez and Rebecca Marino — 7:6 (7:4), 6:2 — and then, in the match to reach the semi-final, lost to the Brazilian-Canadian duo of Luisa Stefani and Gabriela Dabrowski — 2:6, 2:6.

### ● Chelsea footballers capture UEFA Super Cup for the second time in history

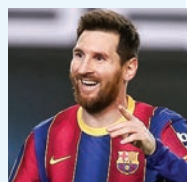


In Northern Ireland’s Belfast, the Champions League winners prevailed over the winner of the Europa League, Spanish Villarreal, in a penalty shootout — 6:5. In the middle of the first half, Hakim Ziyech put Chelsea ahead and, in the 73rd

minute, Gerard Moreno restored parity — 1:1. In extra time, this result didn’t change, and the Chelsea players shot the better penalties. For the first time since beating the Spanish Real Madrid in Monaco with a result of 1:0 in 1998, the club from the English capital won the Super Cup.

### ● Lionel Messi officially joins PSG

Argentine forward Lionel Messi has officially moved to the French Paris Saint-Germain football club. It was announced that one of the best football players in the world will earn 41m Euros a year after taxes in the new team. Thus, the Argentine will become the highest-paid player in the history of the French Premier League.





## Photo of the week



Ivan Yartanovich

The cosmic beauty: the Perseid meteor shower — the most beautiful summer starfall over the Gomel Region

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**On August 19th, 1916**, Tikhon Kalinin was born — a participant in the liberation of Belarus from the Nazi invaders during the Great Patriotic War, Hero of the Soviet Union. During World War II, he commanded an armoured train and an anti-tank artillery battalion. He also took part in the liberation of the Caucasus and Crimea. He was killed in battle during the liberation of Pinsk.

**August 19th** is World Humanitarian Day, celebrated in accordance with the resolution of the UN General Assembly of December 11th, 2008, to pay tribute to the workers of humanitarian organisations of the UN and those who died while helping others.

**On August 20th, 1906**, the first car accident happened in Minsk. Cars appeared in the city at the beginning of the 20th century. A certain Ivan Fedorov turned to the city council in 1906 with a request to allow him to transport passengers by car. The taxi driver's debut ended sadly. Driving along Podgornaya Street, he started the car at full speed. The brake rod snapped and the car crashed into a telegraph pole. The passengers were thrown onto the pavement. According to the



local press, one passenger was so injured that there was no hope of recovery. This was the first car accident in Minsk. Apparently, the fear of the townspeople was so strong that the taxi drivers did not declare themselves until 1912.

**On August 21st, 1911**, Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece *Mona Lisa* (*La Gioconda*) was stolen from the Louvre (France). After three years of searching, the painting was found in Florence and returned to the museum.



**On August 21st, 1911**, by the decision of the bog commission of the Minsk Provincial Council, the Minsk district council bog research station was opened: the first scientific institution for the study of bogs in Russia and Belarus. In 1930, on the site of the station and the department of drainage and culture of swamps of the Belarusian State Institute of Agriculture and Forestry, the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Swamp Economy was created.



**August 21st** is International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly on December 19th, 2017, with the aim of paying tribute to the victims and those suffering from terrorism, supporting them and promoting the protection and full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**August 21st** is International Homeless Animals' Day, celebrated at the suggestion of the International Society for Animal Rights (USA). This date is considered not a holiday, but a reason to address the problem of homeless animals, to tell as many people as possible about their tragic fate.



**On August 22nd, 1861**, Ignat Buinitsky was born — a Belarusian actor, director and theatrical figure, as well as the founder of the Belarusian national professional theatre. He organised and headed the First Belarusian troupe named after Ignat Buinitsky (1907-1913). He initiated the organisation of the First Society of Belarusian Drama and Comedy (1917). Moreover, he paid great attention to local theatre lovers, contributing

to the rise of the amateur theatrical movement in Belarus. He also directed most of the performances of the first Belarusian troupe. He headed the theatre and toured with it around Belarus and abroad. He studied songs and dances, collecting samples of folk clothes and ornaments.

**On August 22nd, 1891**, an association of sisters of mercy of the Red Cross Society was founded in Vitebsk: one of the first in Belarus.



**August 23rd** is Day of State Statistics Workers in the Republic of Belarus. Statistics permeates all aspects of modern life and is a vital tool for the economic and social development of any state, serving as the basis for many government decisions in the field of business and social activities.



**On August 24th, 1956**, the world's first civilian ship with a nuclear installation — the nuclear-powered icebreaker 'Lenin' — was established at the Admiralty Plant in Leningrad. In 1989, it was mothballed.

