

89th anniversary
since the birth
of Vladimir
Korotkevich marked



Pablo Picasso.
Paragraphs
exhibition opens
in the LIBRA
exhibition hall

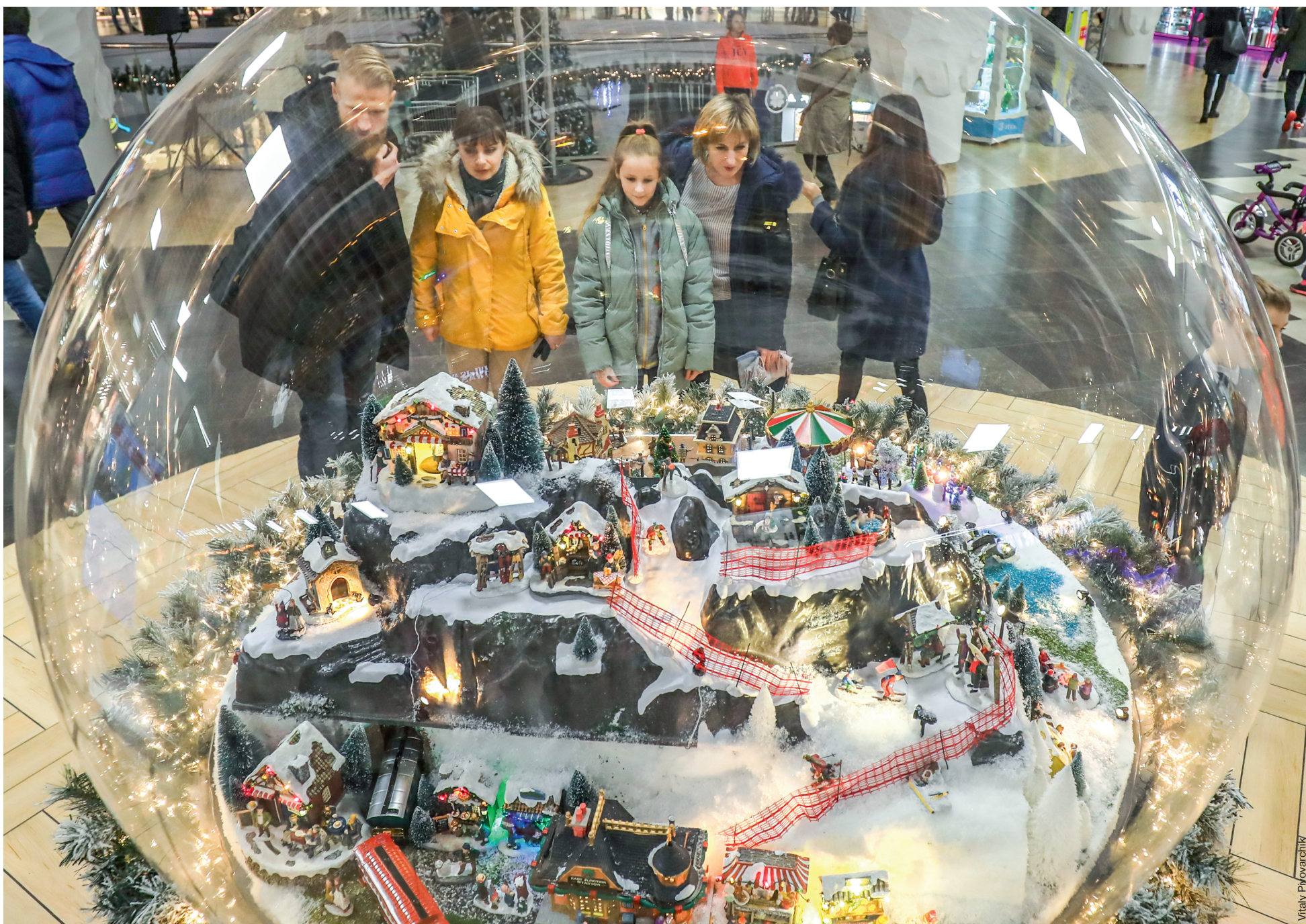


INTERNATIONAL

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Season of miracles begins

Belarus is preparing for the winter holidays. The capital will shine with New Year lights in mid-December: Minsk and city guests will be overawed with the new lights, fir-trees turned into objects of art and other surprises. About 30 New Year trees — including the main 30 metre high green beauty on Oktyabrskaya Square — will decorate Minsk. The *Kalyadny Kirmash* festive Christmas fair is about to begin. Christmas and New Year holidays — in fact, the whole of December — will be rich in eye-catching and memorable events in Minsk.



Economy of mutual trust

Last week, the President welcomed top level guests — the foreign ministers of Sweden and Finland, Ann Linde and Pekka Haavisto — at the Palace of Independence. The parties discussed the internal situation in Belarus and our country's relations with the European Union. This was in fact the first visit of the Swedish Foreign Minister to Belarus, while the Finnish Foreign Minister represented his country as one of those currently presiding over the EU Council.

We have much in common

At the meeting with the ministers, Aleksandr Lukashenko said that Belarus has much in common with these countries of Northern Europe. The states have a long history of trade relations and contacts in various fields.

“Despite the lack of access to the sea, our country is nevertheless an integral part of the Baltic Region. Belarus makes a significant contribution to the well-being of the Baltic States by supplying its cargo and serving transit flows in the northern and southern directions,” the President said.

He invited Swedish and Finnish companies to implement projects in our country in the field of transport and logistics, and also noted the presence of common interests in the fields of renewable energy, environmental protection and energy efficiency. The Head of State also sees significant prospects for co-operation in the forest and woodworking industries. “The use of your technologies and attraction of investments into Belarusian production will be beneficial for all participants. Thanks to convenient transport links, it is possible to supply products manufactured in Belarus to the markets of Europe and Asia,” he said.

As for the bilateral format, Mr. Lukashenko noted that Finland, like Belarus, does not have significant natural resources but has made great progress on its own, through perseverance and hard work. He explained, “Finns are very similar to Belarusians in their mentality. That is why you are well aware of the processes taking place in our country. This is reflected in Finland's support for the sovereignty and independence of Belarus within the framework of the *Eastern Partnership* initiative.”

Taking into account the upcoming launch of the Belarusian nuclear power plant in 2020, Belarus is interested in the experience of the Finnish side in ensuring the safety of the Hanhikivi-1 nuclear power plant currently under construction. “This is especially topical as your station is being built under a similar project by the same Russian contractor,” the President added.

Partnership contributes to economic modernisation

Addressing Ann Linde, the Head of State thanked her for initiating the visit. He noted that the activity of companies from Sweden in the Belarusian direction is much appreciated. For example, IKEA has launched its Forward to Belarus strategy



Pekka Haavisto

to increase purchases of products up to 300m Euros, while co-operation between Scania and BelAZ regarding supplies of engines helps Belarusian equipment enter the EU market. In addition, gas turbines from Sweden will ensure the stability of the Belarusian power system after the commissioning of the nuclear power plant and the H&M brand has begun creating a trade network in Belarus.

“Our partnership contributes to modernisation of the economy and the consolidation of new markets. Businesses are working in the right direction. Let's support this movement,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said, also suggesting all think jointly about what can be done to make the visit give impetus to the development of relations between Belarus and the whole of Northern Europe.

Building bridges

The President noted that it's important that the guests' visit was taking place right after the parliamentary elections in the country. “Belarus is extremely interested in building mutually respectful, good-neighbourly relations not only with the European Union but also with your states — Sweden and Fin-



Ann Linde

land. I've talked about it many times over the years. For us, you are a model of economic management. We are very similar to your countries. We have a similar economy and, most importantly, hardworking strong people,” he said. “We succeed in many aspects. You demonstrate more progress and we show less but I hope you'll tell us in which direction to move — primarily as regards the economy.”

The Head of State said that Belarus is interested in the EU's best practice in many areas but it's first necessary to complete the process of forming the legal framework and sign the prepared agreements. “Since we have already worked out the relevant agreements and come to the understanding that we need to sign them and move in this direction, then we should not delay,” he added.

Mr. Lukashenko stressed that it is in the common interest for the region to become an oasis of peace, tranquillity and prosperity, “This is the key. If we have this, then we'll be rich and our people will live normally. This is what we seek, while formulating our peace initiatives and promoting ideas aimed at

reducing tensions and strengthening good neighbourliness. Obviously, such approaches are important to you as well. No wonder the so-called detente in the 1970s was named Helsinki.”

'Belarus is a close country for us'

After the meeting with the President, the foreign ministers of Sweden and Finland shared their impressions with journalists. In particular, Pekka Haavisto noted, “We discussed not only our bilateral relations but also the relations between the EU and Belarus in general. We discussed the visa facilitation agreement that we are to sign and other issues on which we may not always agree.”

The sides also touched upon the role that Belarus plays in the peace process in Ukraine. It is noteworthy that the meeting was held in the same room of the Palace of Independence where, a few years ago, the leaders of the Normandy Four met. “In general, we would like to enhance co-operation with Belarus. We are already actively liaising in such areas as forestry, environmental protection and contacts between our peoples. We hope for further improvement in these relations,” Pekka Haavisto added.

In turn, Ann Linde said that a good conversation was in place with the Belarusian President. “Belarus is a close country for us, and our relations have greatly improved recently,” she stated.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

New impulse for interaction



Kaliningrad Sea Port

For Belarus, the Kaliningrad Region is not only an important and promising trade and economic partner: it is geographically and historically close to the Russian Federation. The President announced at a meeting with the Governor of the Kaliningrad Region, Anton Alikhanov, noting that, in Soviet times — when there was a single country, many negotiations were held at the highest level to annex the Kaliningrad Region to Belarus. In fact, Belarus was responsible for the Kaliningrad Region on many issues.

Need to move further

A delegation from Russia's westernmost region visited Minsk two years ago. According to the President, his previous meeting with Anton Alikhanov gave new impetus to co-operation.

Aleksandr Lukashenko believes that Belarus and the

Kaliningrad Region have plenty of potential growth points. As an example, he mentioned the launch of an oil extraction plant in Smorgon by Russia's Sodruzhestvo company and participation of the Osipovichi Automobile Units Plant in the localisation programme at Ka-

liningrad's Avtotor Holding.

“We look forward to closer co-operation between Belarusian and Russian machine builders. We have plenty of experience in this area,” the President stressed. He added that Minsk buses successfully operate in Kaliningrad. According to the Head of State, it is possible to expand the fleet of passenger vehicles to Belkommunmash electric vehicles. He also suggested to go further: to organise joint assembly of this equipment in the Kaliningrad Region.

One of the traditional areas where we successfully co-operate is construction. The most significant result of our joint work is the construction of a stadium in Kaliningrad for the 2018 FIFA World Cup. The President noted, “Citizens and guests all appreciated the professionalism of our Belarusian specialists and the quality of modern building materials. Some major infrastructure projects are being implemented in the region now — such as the construction of a seaport, a pot-

ash plant, a museum complex and a Primorye circuit. We are ready to participate in these construction projects if you need us to — including through the supply of freight, road, utility and construction vehicles.”

We have something to offer

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, agriculture is developing dynamically in the western region of Russia and Belarus can offer its experience. “Belarus has experience and technologies in animal husbandry, cultivation of grain and vegetable crops, construction of dairy and grain drying complexes — which we are ready to offer to your farmers. There are also reserves to increase the supply of high-quality Belarusian food to the region,” he said.

The President noted that his first visit to Kaliningrad took place in October 1999 and became a starting point, “Much has been done in these two decades. Last year, in terms of bilateral trade, we approached a record level of \$360m. It's time to set more ambitious goals — pri-



Anton Alikhanov

marily, in the industrial sphere, through production co-operation. Most importantly, Belarus and the Kaliningrad Region are both striving for this.”

Anton Alikhanov agreed with the President, “Our co-operation has a solid foundation. We are actively working and have co-operation agreements with the Grodno, Brest, Minsk and Gomel regions; there are very close contacts there. We've managed to almost double our trade turnover, and we set this ambitious goal after our first meeting. The task of further increasing trade is still there. Industrial co-operation and a localisation programme in Russian are already in place thanks to the Belarusian plants.”

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



Security is a collective matter

The summit of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, held in Bishkek, was not only an important element in the establishment and consolidation of peace but also a landmark geopolitical event. The President of Belarus took part in the CSTO Council session. In his speech, Aleksandr Lukashenko focused on peace initiatives and global threats that have recently come to the fore.

By Yevgeny Kononovich

Taking into account the lessons of history

The military-political situation in the CSTO area of responsibility and along the perimeter of the organisation's borders is not easy. This is caused by the growing global confrontation between the world's leading power and such a situation leads to the degradation of the entire system of international law. The President of Belarus paid special attention to this point, calling the termination of the treaty on intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles unjustified and dangerous. That is why Belarus made a proposal to adopt a multilateral political declaration of responsible countries on the non-deployment of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles in Europe. Clearly, no global problem can be solved without restoring trust between the countries. Mr. Lukashenko said in this respect, "Taking into account the bitter lessons of the history of Belarus, we also call for the resumption of a broad dialogue on international security issues, similar to the Helsinki process, and to direct it to overcoming the existing contradictions in relations between the countries in the common space in the Euro-Atlantic Region and Eurasia."

that more NATO manpower and armoured vehicles are being drawn to our borders cannot but cause concern. Never before have troops been moved so ostentatiously to our borders. Of course, this cannot be ignored. At the same time, we need to act calmly and with restraint, without sabre-rattling. "We do not need a new arms race," the Belarusian President stressed.

Belt of good-neighbourliness

Threats in cyberspace have recently been added to the challenges in the military and economic spheres. Modern wars and conflicts are increasingly conducted in social networks. This requires new approaches to co-operation in the field of information security. Hence the initiative of Belarus to form a 'digital belt of good-neighbourliness' aimed at defusing tensions in the information sphere, establishing common rules of responsible behaviour of the parties in the virtual space.

Mr. Lukashenko also called for strengthening the international authority of the CSTO, expanding its co-operation with other organisations, saying, "The situation around the CSTO area of responsibility and on the planet as a whole is changing significantly. I am convinced that our organisation must respond adequately and in a timely manner to new challenges and threats, analyse the situation in detail and comprehensively, and develop appropriate proposals and initiatives."

Working perfectly

Summing up the results of Kyrgyzstan's chairmanship in the CSTO, President Sooronbay Jeenbekov said that, this year, major exercises have been held: 'Unbreakable Brotherhood' in Tajikistan and 'Interaction' in Russia. Now Kyrgyzstan is passing on the baton of chairmanship to

intensify the activities of the CSTO to combat drug trafficking," Mr. Putin said. "The new anti-drug strategy will contain further concrete measures to curb the production and trade of drugs and strengthen the border regime." The proposal is consistent with the decisive actions that are being taken in Belarus on behalf of President Lukashenko. On combining efforts, its effectiveness will greatly increase.

Results and assessment

Following the summit in Bishkek, the CSTO leaders adopted a number of important documents in the field of security. "The heads of state comprehensively discussed the military-political situation in the world. On the basis of the analysis, the presidents made a corresponding statement," the Acting CSTO Secretary General, Valery Semerikov, said later. "They talked about the need for practical development of partner and observer institutions recently established in the CSTO. This will be intensified, and there are already candidates who can receive corresponding status."

To strengthen the military component of the CSTO, the regulations on the procedure for the preparation and conduct of joint exercises were approved. A collective action plan of the CSTO member states on the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy until 2021 was also signed. A list of additional measures aimed at reducing tensions in the Tajik-Afghan border has been adopted. Experts noted that the main threats to the security of the CSTO countries come from the northern provinces of Afghanistan, where there is an intensification of terrorist gangs, and from returning fighters from Syria and Iraq. These areas of Afghanistan could become a new springboard for the Islamic State terroristic group. We must be prepared for these realities.

Amendments were also made to the regulations on the operation of the permanent action of the CSTO member states to combat crimes in the field of information technology ('PROXY' operation). Among the issues discussed was the CSTO budget for 2020 which makes about 420m Russian Roubles. An action plan to celebrate the 75th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War was also approved.

Mr. Semerikov touched upon the appointment of the CSTO Secretary General, "The heads of state congratulated Stanislav Zas, a representative of Belarus, on his appointment as Secretary General of the organisation starting from January 1st, 2020. The decision of the Collective Security Council clearly regulates the appointment of secretaries-general on a rotational basis in alphabetical order. It was Armenia up to now but Belarus takes on the role from January 1st."

Personnel reinforcement

In February 2020, the chairmanship of the Eurasian Economic Union will pass to Belarus. At the same time, our country will receive the right to appoint its chair of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission for the next four years. The representative of Belarus, Stanislav Zas, has also been appointed Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation since January 1st, 2020. In addition, next year, the Republic will chair the Supreme State Council of the Union State and co-chair in the CIS. These circumstances were occasioned a number of meetings, held by the Head of State in the Palace of Independence.

The prospects for the chairmanship of Belarus and the country's representatives in the integration associations within the post-Soviet space were the main topic of the meeting between the President and the Chairman of the Council of the Republic, Mikhail Myasnikov.

The President emphasised that the proposal for the candidacy of Mikhail Myasnikov for the post of Chairman of the EEC Board was carefully analysed and prepared, "We thought carefully about the right candidate. And we had many people to choose from," Mr. Lukashenko remarked. "But I think only you can do the job. Because all the candidates I've had to review are weaker, have less experience, and are less diplomatic. You have all the proper skills."

Aleksandr Lukashenko also said that before finally voicing his decision, he informed the leaders of the EAEU countries about it, "I had to seriously consult with and prepare my colleagues. You have to understand that our candidate will have



Mikhail Myasnikov



Aleksandr Turchin

to do the job for four years. The candidacy is supposed to be nominated by the President before our economic council, on which the heads of state

will sit. I would like them to accept the candidacy without reservation. There is no reason for any objections... Everyone has a favourable view. I think from all angles, including the personal one, it will be good for you to work there and benefit not only Belarus but our entire economic community."

The President also decided to appoint Economy Minister Dmitry Krutoy to the post of First Deputy Prime Minister, and Aleksandr Turchin — who has held this post until then — to the position of Governor of the Minsk Region.



Dmitry Krutoy

Based on materials of belta.by

IN ADDITION

At the summit in Bishkek, the CSTO presidents congratulated Stanislav Zas on his appointment as Secretary General of the organisation. The Acting CSTO Secretary General, Valery Semerikov, commented, "The heads of state congratulated Stanislav Zas, a representative of Belarus, on his appointment as Secretary General of the organisation starting from January 1st, 2020. The decision of the Collective Security Council clearly regulates the appointment of secretaries-general on a rotational basis in alphabetical order. It was Armenia up to now but Belarus takes on the role from January 1st."



There's no need for a new arms race

These initiatives are particularly relevant today, against the background of the destruction of arms control mechanisms. Mr. Lukashenko stated, "We are recording a gradual build-up of military capabilities, expansion of military infrastructure in the European region. In fact, we are talking about an open and, importantly, groundless militarisation of the western borders of the CSTO zone of responsibility."

Of course, it is premature to talk about a direct military threat. However, the fact

Russia. Mr. Jeenbekov said that Russia's chairmanship in the CSTO will be held in the year of the 75th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War which would be very symbolic. "We must not forget our common history and must stand together against attempts to rewrite it," he noted. President Vladimir Putin assured his colleagues that Russia would ensure continuity in the organisation's activities. In particular, Moscow will initiate the development of the CSTO anti-drug strategy for 2021-2025. "We consider it a priority to in-

Victory loves determined personalities



The national kayaking and canoeing team have recently been honoured at the Palace of Independence. The President presented medals 'For Labour Merit' to coaches and athletes.

Aleksandr Lukashenko called the national team the most stable and successful team of the decade, also saying that this sport is truly Belarusian. "Its traditions are inextricably linked with the centuries-old culture and life of Belarus — the land of thousands of rivers and lakes," he said.

The President noted that it has become a tradition to meet at the Palace of Independence to express gratitude to those who glorify Belarus and impress the world. Among these people are the kayaking and canoeing team.

Mr. Lukashenko noted that the fans are used to the victories of Belarusian rowers at major international competitions. "Belarusians return with medals from every tournament, including the Olympics. In June, during the 2nd European Games, I observed that with great pleasure. I closely followed the hot August battles at the World Championship in Szeged, Hungary, where you proved that Belarusians have no equal in the world today. Having won 14 medals, including six gold, you won the team standings and left behind other world leaders in rowing: Germany, Hungary, China, Russia, New Zealand and others. Nothing more is needed for the Olympics [in Tokyo].

I personally do not expect any more from you: simply repeat the previous results," he said.

The Head of State warmly thanked the athletes for the unforgettable emotions that they gave to all sports fans. However, there were not only words of gratitude. The elite of Belarusian sport — athletes, coaches, teachers, medical workers — were awarded medals, titles and thanks!

The crew of the kayak-double — Marina Litvinchuk and Olga Khudenko — are already used to medals since they've earned all manner of them. However, Mr. Lukashenko's 'For Labour Merit' was the first in their collection. "In Hungary, our golden duo twice rose to the highest step of the podium. I want to thank the team as a whole since, in this sport, even second and third place or simply good performances by girls, young men and children create the basis for victories by such great athletes," the President noted, recalling



that the rowing and canoeing team have won five medals at the world championships in Olympic disciplines. "All these achievements are evidence that a strong national rowing school has been established in Belarus. Our young talents win not only at junior events but also successfully reach the highest level," the President said. He then added with regret that, for Belarus, such results are rather an exception than a rule.

Aleksandr Lukashenko thanked the athletes and coaches for their hard work, determination to win and the highest results but reminded them that soon the national team will have to pass the main test: in July, the Olympics will start in Tokyo. "You understand as well as me that, in Japan, you will face the

most severe, uncompromising struggle in difficult climatic conditions. You'll have titled rivals who are also aiming for success and are preparing for the Olympics very well. I am convinced that you will be able to overcome everything and be ahead of your rivals for at least a second [no more is needed]," the President added.

The Head of State also presented the Order of the National Olympic Committee of Belarus to Vladimir Shantarovich for his outstanding sports achievements, exceptional merits in the development of the Olympic movement, mass sports and sports of the highest achievements. The honorary title — 'Honoured Master of Sports' — was received by an athlete-instructor of the nation-

al team, Artem Kozyr, from the President.

Mr. Lukashenko's gratitude was also addressed to eight athletes for their extreme professionalism, achievement of excellent sports results at international competitions in kayaks and canoes. 15 representatives of the coaching staff were also rewarded for their many years of fruitful work in the field of physical education and sports, outstanding achievements in the preparation of high-class athletes, professional skills and significant personal contribution to providing highly qualified medical and pharmacological services to the athletes of the national team.

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FOCUS

According to the law and justice

Results of the fight against the drug threat as a whole rather than just the number of detected crimes will be grounds for evaluating the efficiency of countering drug addiction in the country. Belarus continues improving measures to solve this major problem. Valery Mitskevich, the Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, tells us more of the new approaches.



Valery Mitskevich

The Presidential meeting in late October was devoted to countering the spread of drugs and preventing drug addiction; the talks were serious and extensive. General trends and issues were discussed as well as the advantages and disadvantages of current law enforcement practice. As a result, the Head of State gave instructions to develop a range of measures to improve the effectiveness of countering the drug threat and preventing drug addiction.

Firstly, it was decided to organise a more objective assessment of the work of law enforcement agencies. Until now, the criteria for their anti-drug activities have been the number of registered crimes, the number of detainees and convictions... However, not only quantitative indicators should be in focus

from now on but the reduction of the drug threat as a whole. Certain criteria matter — such as prevention of involvement of minors in drug crime, the volume of drugs seized, number of distribution channels uncovered and drug laboratories, and reduction of the number of deaths from overdoses. Law enforcement agencies should be guided by these more objective criteria while assessing their work.

Secondly, proceeding from the principle of justice, the President gave instructions to carefully consider the nature of those convicted of drug crimes. Perhaps there are people among them who have already realised the gravity of what they have done and sincerely repented. If they are firmly on the path of correction, if the punishment they have already suffered is enough,

then parole may be possible — of course only if they commit to not break the law again and to get a job or go to school. The President also instructed to consider the possibility of pardons for those people who clearly accidentally committed a crime. These cases will be considered individually. In addition, the mandatory conditions of the pardon will be the guarantee of close relatives and the serving of at least a half of the sentence. The identity of the convicted person, their behaviour and all the circumstances of the case will be studied... Pardon is primarily a chance for those who really stumbled into crime. If they do not take this chance and commit the crime again, then a new punishment will be definitely even tougher.

Based on materials of sb.by



Strategic move

Interior Ministry and Information Ministry sign information strategy on drug use prevention and counteraction to drug trafficking in Belarus for 2020-2025

The document was signed by the heads of departments: Yuri Karayev and Aleksandr Karlyukevich. The strategy aims to promote an objective understanding by the population of all aspects of such phenomena as drugs and drug addiction, strengthening preventive and educational measures, especially among young people. A key aspect is the formation of a pool of

specialists who promote the principles of the strategy in co-operation with the target groups that create and disseminate information.

The document, prepared by the two agencies, is intended to be another effective tool to reduce the supply and demand for drugs.

Based on materials of belta.by

Last week, the 60th resident was officially registered at the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park: Swiss Hess Great Stone JSC — an affiliate of Carrosserie HESS AG — will produce electric passenger transport in our country

Contact in place now!

By Ilya Kryzhevich

The ceremony was held in a new production facility where the Swiss resident will soon install its equipment. The event was attended by the First Deputy Prime Minister — Aleksandr Turchin, the management of the Park's Administration and the Industrial Park Development Company, as well as representatives of the Swiss company. Participants symbolically cut the red ribbon, then the Head of the Industrial Park Administration — Aleksandr Yaroshenko — handed the certificate of the registration to the Head of Carrosserie HESS AG's Department of Buses and Trolleybuses, Daniel Widmer.

"This is our third resident from Switzerland," Mr. Yaroshenko said with pride. "It is very important for us to see such landmark projects that produce



Aleksey Matyush

high-tech products and have unique technology for the production of electric vehicles. For us, it is no less interesting that the new resident will produce environmentally friendly electric vehicles. This is also important from the point of view of the future 'electric' economy which our country has adopted, taking

into account the commissioning of the nuclear power plant." Another important aspect is that the new company plans to fully export its produce.

In turn, Mr. Widmer believes that it will be convenient to conduct business in our country because we have many highly qualified employees capable of perform-

ing complex projects. "In addition, we have some experience: we already buy some products in Belarus and use them in our production. In the future, we see an opportunity to expand co-operation with local companies. Also, an important factor was that we work with Stadler Rail AG and produce some components for it. We will continue to work with our partner. Initially, we will manufacture parts for electric vehicles and supply them to the main production in Switzerland. In future, we will release the transport completely and export it to the countries of Western Europe," he noted.

The new resident plans to produce up to 45-50 bodies for passenger transport by 2021 and to assemble about 40 fully finished electric buses in the future. According to the top manager of the Swiss company, the demand for such transport is now increasing everywhere.

Treating everyone with enthusiasm

Belarusian exposition on show at UzProdExpo 2019 international exhibition in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

By Natalia Yemelyanova

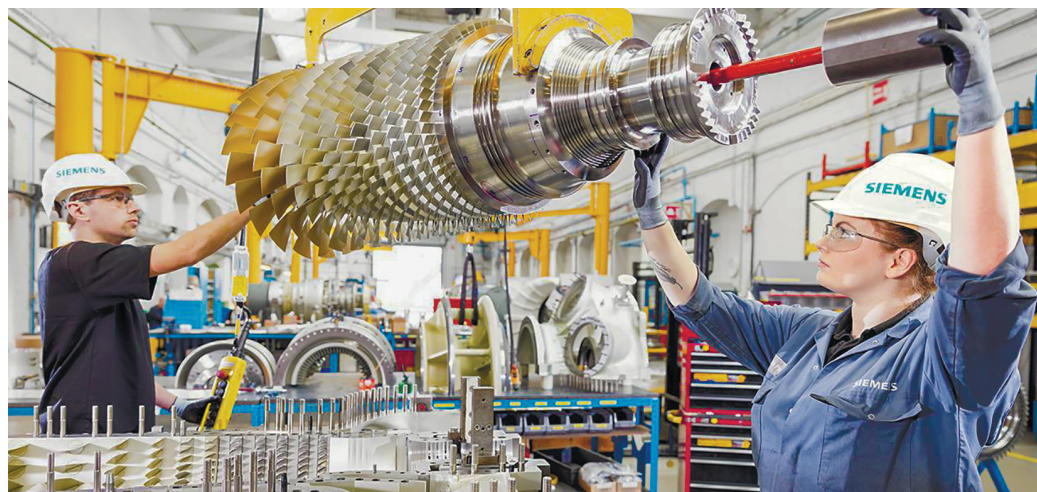
The joint Belarusian stand featured the Pinsk Meat Packing Plant, Spartak Confectionary, Zdravushka Milk, and Domochai bakery and confectionery company. On display were meat and dairy products, confectionery and bakery goods, snacks, dietary and therapeutic items.

The Belarusian stand hosted B2B meetings and our participants had an opportunity to establish business contacts with distributors, retailers as well as end-use consumers with a view to promoting Belarus' exports to Uzbekistan.



UzProdExpo

This year, *UzProdExpo* has welcomed 150 companies from 21 countries — gathering together over 6,000 business visitors.



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Arrival of equipment from Sweden

By Irina Sergeeva

Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery to supply energy storage equipment to Vitebskenergo Republican Unitary Enterprise to build energy storage capacities at Lukoml State District Power Plant and Novopolotsk Cogeneration Plant

The contract to supply equipment was signed in the

city of Finspang (Sweden) following an open tender in Belarus won by Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery. Taking part in the event were top executives of Vitebskenergo, the Lukoml State District Power Plant, Novopolotsk Cogeneration Plant and embassy officials.

Vitebskenergo will build energy storage capacities to integrate the Belarusian nuclear power plant into the national power

grid. "Specialists at the enterprise have put a lot of effort into selecting a reliable supplier of equipment for these facilities. Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery is one of the largest suppliers of equipment for the Belarusian energy industry and associated businesses. It has already provided maintenance services and helped upgrade the Belarusian energy system," Vitebskenergo staff commented.

NEWS IN BRIEF

On December 2nd-3rd, the President of Belarus paid an official visit to Serbia

In Belgrade, Aleksandr Lukashenko held talks with the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic. At the meeting, held in both closed and expanded format, the heads of state discussed the development of political dialogue and economic interaction between the two countries. The programme of Mr. Lukashenko's visit also planned for him to meet with the President of the National Assembly of Serbia, Maja Gojkovic, and deputies of the country's highest legislative and constitutional body. A Belarusian-Serbian Business Forum was held in Belgrade simultaneously and about \$100m of commercial contracts and agreements were signed as part of it.



New logo of Eurovision 2020 presented

The organisers of the *Eurovision 2020* Song Contest presented the logo of the future show on the website of the European Broadcasting Union. The logo of the 65th anniversary contest is in the form of an intermittent circle, which is made up of the flags of the participating countries and combines the symbols of the show, which have previously been used in the signs of *Eurovision* held in the Netherlands. In the coming year, the competition will be held in Rotterdam on May 12th-16th under the 'Open Up' slogan. Participants from 41 countries, including Belarus, will compete for the main award. The total TV audience of the show annually exceeds 600m people.



Winter 'clothes' for calves created in Technopark of Vitebsk State Technological University

Elvada has developed a blanket for newborn calves to protect newborn animals from the cold. The blanket helps to support the immune system, keep the calf warm in the first days of life at a temperature of minus 30 degrees and avoid stress from the cold. This is achieved through the use of a special material made of durable and wear-resistant water-repellent fabric in combination with innovative insulation. The use of the product reduces the incidence of death of calves by 20 percent and increases the profitability. The blanket is 1.5 times cheaper than its foreign analogues.



Brest to soon pass the baton of the CIS Cultural Capital to Kazakhstan's Shymkent

Brest is ending its honorary status of CIS Cultural Capital. Over the year, the city has hosted about a hundred musical, educational and theatrical programmes with participation of creative teams from all over the CIS. Many events were held for the first time and among the most prominent of them were the Festivals of Boys' Choirs — *Berestiysky Assemblies*, the *Dancing Rainbow* Festival of Choreography, the International Contest of Children's Ex-libris, the International Parade of Orchestras — *March of the Millennium*, the Children's Festival of Theatres and Books — *Book Cupboard*, and a conference of CIS librarians.



ECONOMY

Your role is very important



Katerina Charovskaya

By Katerina Charovskaya

The statistics regarding women in senior positions in our country today looks as follows: there are 40 percent of women in the Lower House of Parliament while local councils of deputies boast more than 48 percent. Women account for more than 67 percent among state officials at all levels and ministries, including 56 percent in positions of heads and deputies. However, there are only 4 heads of regional executive

committees, and so far only one woman is the deputy chair of the Regional Executive Committee in the Grodno Region.

At the opening of the forum the Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Irina Kostevich, emphasised that appointment to a leading position in Belarus does not depend on the applicant's gender. The main criteria are personal competencies, professional qualities and healthy ambition.

"Belarus holds high positions in many ratings in terms of gender equality," she

An International Forum of Women Leaders took place in Grodno, discussing the prospects for more active participation of women in the socio-political life of the country at all levels

noted. "According to the 2018 Human Development Report, in terms of the gender equality index, our country was ranked 31st out of 160 states. Such a result is explained by gender parity in education, the constantly improving health status of women and the high level of their participation in the labour market. Belarus is also a leader in the index of opportunities for girls, where we're in 24th place out of 144 countries."

Nevertheless, the Minister admitted, it is not yet easy to compete on an equal footing for a modern woman. The major reasons are double employment at work and in the family, as well as social stereotypes. In Belarus, women, compared with men, spend twice as much time doing housework and taking care of children and relatives.

The Chair of the Lida District Council of Deputies, Inessa Belush, is confident that the presence of women in leadership positions is important not so much for their personal fulfilment, but for society as a whole, "Women sometimes have different views compared to

men: this is unambiguous. Therefore, participation of women in making crucial decisions is extremely important. And it's easy for a woman to make a career in our country if those around her contribute. I am grateful to my own parents, children and husband for this."

The UN Resident Co-ordinator in Belarus, Joanna Kazana-Wisniowiecki, believes that participation of women in our country in areas of the economy that boast high salaries should be increased: industry and the high-tech sector, "In the meantime, women's efforts are concentrated in the field of social protection, health or education."

The current forum, held by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection jointly with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, is the third in a row. It was first held at regional level. The reason is simple: the questions raised by its participants must be addressed locally, although they are global in nature. The forum participants made recommendations for improving the leadership potential of women.

Source of consolation and joy



Aleksandr Kushner

By Marina Kuzmich

The Holy Dormition Zhirovichi Monastery was established after the appearance of the miraculous icon of the Mother of God and has always been open to worshippers and pilgrims who cherish the Zhirovichi image of the Queen of Heaven. The miraculous icon, whose appearance dates back to the late 15th century, is still kept in the main temple of the monastery.

These shrines are considered the national cultural heritage of Belarus, spiritual symbols of the nation. The miraculous icon is revered by the Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches and is one of the hundred most important Orthodox images of the world.

"For five centuries, the icon has been a consolation for those in sorrow and suffering," says brother of the Holy Dormition Zhirovichi Monastery and lecturer at the Minsk Theological Seminary — hieromonk Yevstafy (Khalimankov). "It still does — as evidenced by numerous pilgrims from near and far."

In the jubilee year, the shrine will remain in the monastery as it's impossible to transport it: the icon is too fragile. During a fire in the early 16th century, it was damaged. The hieromonk

Celebrations on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the Holy Dormition Zhirovichi Monastery and the 500th anniversary of the miraculous Zhirovichi icon of the Mother of God will be held on May 19th-20th, 2020, with participation of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia

explains, "If you look close, you can see the cracks. To preserve the shrine, in 1996, the monastery made a copy of the miraculous icon. Restoring the original is not so easy. The jasper of which the icon is composed is too fragile for processing."

"During the jubilee year for the Belarusian Exarchate — 2020 — the main celebrations will be held on the site of the monastery," an aide to the Archbishop of Novogrudok and Slonim, priest Aleksandr Snezhko, says. "On May 19th-20th, a festive service will be held with the participation of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. Scientific-practical conferences and exhibitions dedicated to the shrines of Belarus will be held in the regional centres, Minsk and other cities of the country. Moreover, the events will not be of purely ecclesiastical character."

According to Mr. Snezhko, the Zhirovichi monastery is carefully preparing to receive guests. The reconstruction of one of the oldest buildings of the complex — the first brethren building — is underway. A new set of bells is being cast with the support of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Belarus. At the entrance to the monastery it is planned to erect a monument to St. Serafim Zhirovichsky.

From Belovezhskaya Pushcha to the Karakum Desert

The traditional autumn Ashgabat International Book Fair has completed its work. As usual, a delegation of Belarus' Information Ministry took part in it. Vladimir Andrievich, the Head of Publishing and Printing Department at the Information Ministry, tells us about the exhibition, Belarusian-Turkmen book publishing and literary relations.

By Kirill Ladutko

Is there any interest in Belarusian books in remote Turkmenistan?

As contacts with visitors of the exhibition proved, Turkmenistan is not actually so remote... Many people came to the 'Books of the Republic of Belarus' stand, saying that their children study at Gorki, Minsk or have already graduated from the Gomel University... Interestingly, many local residents remember that our country was the guest of honour at the Ashgabat 'Golden Book' Fair in 2009. I was told about this by poet and prose writer Agageldy Allanazarov, children's poet Kasym Nurbadov, prose writer Atajan Tagan, employees of Turkmen magazines and newspapers 'Dunya Edebiyaty' (World Literature), 'Garagum' (Karakum), 'Edebiyat Ve Sungat' (Literature and Art).

Which of our books attracted Turkmen readers most of all?

Visitors were interested in country literature, local history books and publications devoted to the Great Patriotic War. At the exhibition, I learned that the artist who worked more than a hundred years ago in Belovezhskaya Pushcha was Turkmen painter Nazar Yomudsky. Meanwhile, in the 19th century, our countryman-orientalist Aleksandr Khodzko — a native of Myadel — recorded



the folk verses in the Caspian area of the Karakum Region. True, our peoples are united by many names, personalities and events. Turkmen writers, having communicated with our colleagues Ales Badak and Aleksey Cherota, offered some interesting creative projects devoted to the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory. These will be fiction boos by Turkmen and Belarusian authors in Belarusian and Russian languages. I think these editions will also recall such Turkmen writers and cultural figures who liberated our region from the Nazi invaders as Annakuli Mametkuliyeve, Chara Ashirov, Ashir Nazarov, Seyitniyaz Atayev, Izat Klychev... Belarus has experience of co-operation with Turkmen in the field of literary translation. With this in view, we brought a special Turkmen edition of our 'Litaratura i

Mastatstva' (Literature and Art) newspaper to the fair. It featured an extensive large poetic collection of works of classic and contemporary writers translated into Belarusian. Among the authors were Makhtumkuli, Mollanepes, Kemine, Seyydy, Ata Atajanov, Agagelda Allanazarova, Ismail Taganov.

Do Turkmen translators show interest in Belarusian literature?

We were presented with a whole stack of magazines and newspapers with recent translations of poems and stories of Yakub Kolas, Yanka Kupala, Vladimir Korotkevich, Mikola Metlitsky, Ales Badak, Lyudmila Rublevskaya, Yulia Aleichenko and many other writers of Belarus. A strong bridge has already been built in the Belarusian-Turkmen literary and cultural friendship.

Korotkevich landed in Rogachev

November 26th marked the 89th anniversary since the birth of Vladimir Korotkevich — one of the most prominent figures of Belarusian literature in the 20th century. The writer is known to be born in Orsha, but Rogachev occupied a special place in his life and creative biography. Here the house has been preserved in which Korotkevich created his best works. Soon it will turn into a museum, while landmark places that feature on the pages of his historical prose are proposed to be included in the tourist route.

By Olga Valchenko

'Nowhere could I write so well as here'

The writer's uncle lived all his life in Rogachev. For his nephew, who often came to visit him, a separate room was allocated in the house. Rogachev neighbourhoods became for Korotkevich something akin to Boldino for Pushkin. The classical writer admitted that nowhere could he write so well as here.

Residents of the district centre are proud of their relationship with the great writer. Vladimir's face today smiles from the end of one of the buildings in the city centre while the central district library and street bear his name. Moreover, the local museum boasts several books with his signature, and commemorative signs are placed in landmark places.

Next year, to mark the anniversary since the birth of Vladimir Korotkevich, they plan to organise a large-scale festival in the district and establish a memorial to Korotkevich's character — Gervasiy Vylikhava — who played a chess game with the Death itself in the *Boat of Despair*, written in Rogachev.

House with windows onto the garden

The most important issue to be settled before next year's festival is the opening of the Korotkevich museum. They want to



Bibliographer Natalia Pyraeva holds books in her hands with the signature of the writer

arrange it in the very house of the writer's uncle, in which the author worked for so long.

Korotkevich's relatives live there now — his cousin with his wife and a son. Options are now being worked on for providing them with other housing in order to transfer the house into communal ownership and organise some interesting exhibits there.

Many things from here 'have migrated' to museums, but there is still preserved the writer's favourite couch, personal belongings, and even wallpaper from those times. The relatives are not against the exchange. The house is large, and two disabled people and a pensioner are no longer able to maintain it. It obviously needs repair, and glass is broken in the famous windows looking onto the garden, about which Korotkevich often wrote.

The house promises to be a landmark point on the tourist route. A memorial plaque is found here and, several years ago, the street started to bear the name of the writer.

Subjects for the master

We continue our literary journey and our next stop is Zamkovaya Hill. Here, where the Dnieper and Drut rivers merge, according to the literary fantasy of the author, the possessions of Gervasiy Vylikhava were found.

Near the old city cemetery, a cross was erected to nobleman Tomash Grinevich. In 1863, he was the head of the rebel de-



The house where Korotkevich lived



View of the River Dnieper, where Vladimir Korotkevich wrote his *Ears under Your Sickle*



A sketch of the monument to one of Vladimir Korotkevich's characters

tachment in Rogachev county. At this place he was shot. Grinevich was the prototype for the character from the novel *Impossible to Forget* and the story *Ferry on the Rapid River*.

Korotkevich considered Grinevich to be his ancestor, which, however, is now doubted by researchers. A memorial plaque to him was erected here. A local farmer provided a stone, museum workers helped with the metal, and one of the entrepreneurs made a memorial plaque.

The tourist route won't be limited to Rogachev only. To immerse oneself in the world of Korotkevich completely, it is necessary to visit the village of Ozerishche — his favourite place. Here, the writer spent days fishing and was inspired by local beauties. It was here that the famous beginning *Ears under Your Sickle* appeared: 'The pear was blossoming its last year. All its branches, from big ones to

the last twigs, were covered with vigorous white-and-pink flowers'. This same pear was growing right here, on a cliff. But the coast is washed annually by the Dnieper: a few years ago, a wagon could easily pass between the final house and the shore, now there is a narrow path only. The tree has grown together with the shore...

And finally, we stop at the edge of a gloomy forest near Ozerishche. The former swamp along the roadside is covered with impassable thickets, while grey trunks of trees are covered in fog. This landscape, according to locals, was the starting point for the creation of *The Savage Hunt of King Stakh*. Serious research on this topic has not been conducted, but it seems almost as if a group of silent and cruel riders will really jump out of the mysterious Ozerishche swamp.



Street art with a portrait of Vladimir Korotkevich on Internatsionalnaya Street in Rogachev

Ivan Yan'yanovich

Closer to the roots

The genealogical tree, which is more than 600 years old, was compiled by Minsk resident, Nikolay Murashko. He has collected information about his ancestors over several years.

By Irina Sergeeva

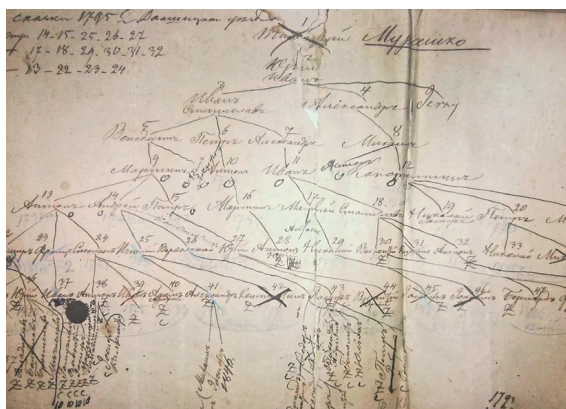
"I've managed to find many documents relating to our family from different periods. Some of them are 300-400 years old," says Nikolay Murashko.

Today, the 70-year-old man shares information with his grandchildren not only about his parents, but also about their ancestors from the time of the Battle of Grunwald. The genealogical tree is composed of up to 17 families, up to the ancestor of the land-holding clan Murashko: Symon.



The historical study took more than eight years. The result was a whole book that contains biographies of the ancestors of 7 generations, personal letters, documents, photographs and, of course, the author's stories about his searches.

"Our ancestors at certain periods of time had to prove their aristocratic origins," said Mr. Murashko. "They drew trees and registered them in the appropriate judicial authorities. Now I'm working on the next book, which will



The genealogical tree of the Murashko family, found in the archives and dated 1795. Behind each document is a story.

cover the period from 1246, that is from King Mindaugas."



cover the period from 1246, that is from King Mindaugas."

Filling in the gaps in one's own tree of life and understanding who is closer to the roots is no simple matter. At the first stages of the search, one needs to interview the oldest relatives, to go to the places where

their ancestors are buried, and after that one can contact the National Archives. About fifty people are seen working on the history of their families every day in the reading room.

If independent searches are not possible, qualified specialists will do it for you, although you will have to pay for the service. Even so, no one will guarantee that you can find your ancestors back to the seventh generation. According to the archives, composing a genealogical tree with a length of a few hundred years is easier if there was an aristocrat in the family. Mr. Murashko says that he was lucky. The story turned out to be rich and there were many well-preserved documents. Today, the relatives of this man live literally all around the world — from America to Australia. A connection has been established with many, and warm relations are maintained.

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INSIDE



Priceless treasures stolen from German museum heist

German investigators are still scrambling for leads in the theft of 'priceless' 18th century state treasures from a museum in Dresden

The dramatic heist took place at dawn, after a fire broke out at an electrical distribution point nearby, deactivating the museum's alarm and plunging the area into darkness.

Thieves in the German city of Dresden have broken into one of Europe's largest collections of art treasures, making off with three sets of 18th century jewellery of 'immeasurable worth' in what German media has described as the

biggest such theft since WWII.

A day after burglars made off with priceless jewels from a German museum, pressure is growing on police to find the culprits. One big reason: the diamond-encrusted dagger, pearl necklace, and dozens of other glittering artefacts were uninsured.

The German State of Saxony, the owner of the Green Vault Museum in the eastern city of Dresden, carried no in-

surance on the jewels, standard practice because the premiums typically exceed potential damages in the long-term, the state Finance Ministry said.

Art experts warn that a hoard of royal jewellery taken during a daring heist at one of Germany's most famous museums could disappear forever with the pieces being broken up and their gemstones removed for sale. Dozens of items stolen from an 18th century collection

at Dresden's Green Vault are so identifiable that it would be very difficult for the thieves to sell them on the open market, said Julian Radcliffe, the Chairman of the world's largest private database of lost and stolen art — The Art Loss Register.

"If they broke them down, they would be able to sell individual diamonds for a price," he said. But even the loose stones may prove a challenge for the thieves to pawn off.



First drug that can slow Alzheimer's dementia

Aducanumab appears to 'reduce clinical decline' of patients in early stages

A potentially 'ground-breaking' drug which appears to slow Alzheimer's disease could soon change the lives of thousands of dementia sufferers. The treatment offers new hope to patients in the early stages of the most common form of dementia.

Biogen says its drug, aducanumab, would be the first treatment to 'reduce the clinical decline' of patients in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease if approved.

The company is now seeking regulatory approval for the drug in the US after new analysis of trial data revealed some patients experienced benefits in memory, orientation, language and everyday living skills such as shopping and doing laundry.

Reacting to the company's announcement, Hilary Evans, Chief Executive of Alzheimer's Research UK, said, "People affected by Alzheimer's have waited a long time for a life-changing new treatment and this exciting announcement offers new hope that one could be in sight."

Prof. Bart De Strooper, the Director of the UK Dementia Research Institute at University College London, said, "It's fantastic to hear of these new positive results emerging from the aducanumab trials."



SMARTCITY EXPO WORLD CONGRESS

Stockholm is 2019's winner at Smart City Expo World Congress

The Global Smart City awards are presented every year to the most outstanding initiatives and projects in the urban innovation and transformation industry

The city of Stockholm has been chosen as the Smart City of 2019 at Global SmartCity awards, hosted as part of the Smart City Expo World Congress.

Inclusive, sustainable and thriving initiatives were considered key for the jury's decision to name the Swedish capital as Smart City of 2019. Stockholm was said to have a strategy to create a smart and connected city, via innovation, openness and connectivity, which provides the highest quality of life

for residents and the best environment for business.

The jury, comprised of representatives from the Barcelona City Council, the UITP International Association of Public Transport, UN-Habitat, the World Bank and Smart City Expo World Congress, has considered that, at city level, Stockholm is said to have been making efforts for years, developed together with residents, focused on smart and integrated solutions in a number of areas such as low energy districts, integrated infrastructure and sustainable urban mobility.

In the 'Innovative Idea' category, the winner is the Modular, Versatile, Self-Supporting,

High Efficiency E-mobility Lorry Platform for Urban Services developed by FCC Environment in Barcelona (Spain).

IoT-Based Yingtan: the World's First 5G-Powered Digital Twin City by the Government of Yingtan (China) won the 'Digital Transformation' project. Yingtan is piloting IoT and envisions an 'IoT-based, Smart Yingtan'.

The Government of Buenos Aires (Argentina) received the 'Inclusive and Sharing Cities' award for its *Tackling Informality: Social and Urban Integration in Barrio 31* initiative that analyses what policy should be put forward to tackle informal settlements.

The 'Governance and Finance' award has gone to the Los Angeles Data Science Federation launched by the City of Los Angeles — Information Technology Agency. The Data Science Federation is a collaborative research partnership between the City of Los Angeles and 18 Los Angeles area colleges and universities.

The 'Mobility' award went to the System of Urban Cable Cars of La Paz and El Alto by the State Cable Transportation Company Mi Teleférico in La Paz (Bolivia). This metropolitan integration network was said to be the first main public transport network of a city made up of cable cars.

Electric scooters face bans and restrictions around the world

E-scooters suddenly appeared everywhere, but now they're riding into serious trouble

Brussels. San Diego. Bogotá. Walk around any major tourist destination these days, and you'll see them. Electric scooters, gliding silently around city centre streets, zipping through traffic signals, or abandoned — lying on the street, propped up against trees or, in some cases, dumped in rivers.

Scooter-sharing systems similar to city bike schemes have sprung up in more than 100 cities worldwide as their popularity has grown. But this tiny-wheeled transport revolution could be about to end as quickly as it began.

While they've attracted admirers for their convenience and fun, they've also incurred the wrath of those annoyed at having to leap out of people riding across sidewalks or step over scooters lying in their path. There are also mounting safety concerns and questions about environmental claims made about using them.



Last month, Singapore announced a trial prohibition of e-scooters on sidewalks that could become an all-out ban next year. It took the decision, says Lam Pin Min, Senior Minister of State for Transport, following the death of a cyclist who collided with an e-scooter. Local news reports said one Singapore hospital had reported six deaths of scooter riders in 2019.

Meanwhile, in France, a sidewalk scooter ban was enforced in September, three months after a rider was hit by a truck and killed.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Putting in a good word for Pablo Picasso

Pablo Picasso. Paragraphs exhibition has opened in the LIBRA exhibition hall: the compact exposition manages to familiarise viewers with the artist without leaving them bored. It relies on the body of Picasso's graphic drawings from private collections, as well as ceramics, since the great avant-garde artist began his experiments with faience and biscuit porcelain at an older age, but managed to leave a significant legacy, a fraction of which is stored in Belarus.

By Irina Ovsepyan

“The exhibition features 61 original works from private collections in Germany, Belgium and France, reflecting almost all the main stages of Pablo Picasso's career,” said project curator Denis Barsukov. “The majority of the lithographs made from famous paintings, for example, were made during the artist's lifetime. Moreover, twenty works of Picasso ceramics from the collection of the National Art Museum of Belarus are also on display. In addition, we have included twenty-five photographs depicting different moments of Picasso's life, and about twenty sculptures and ceramic items by famous Belarusian authors — Pavel Voinitsky, Mikhail Inkov, Dmitry Oganov, Aleksandr Sokolov and Yelena Chepeleva.”

The philistine has a twofold attitude towards mass-market objects of art, whether these are plates with images of the famous pigeon or graphic works. Everything is clear with paintings: there is *A Girl on a Ball* — a canvas about a 1m x 1.5m in size or giant *Guernica* which is 3.5m x 8m. They call it in the Belarusian language: ‘taking the item into one's own hands and immediately feeling something of weight’. And it's immediately clear why it's worth the money. However, a print on ordinary paper is seen as something less significant, or even given the offensive label ‘fake’. This, of course, is a mistake, as the value of a work of art is not determined by how large it is; the work of an artist is not the work of a house painter.

“After all, the lithographs were printed by other people, and not by Picasso himself!” so might a knowledgeable person try to catch out the curators. Yes, Marc Chagall, for example, was seriously interested in printmaking and often personally made prints of his

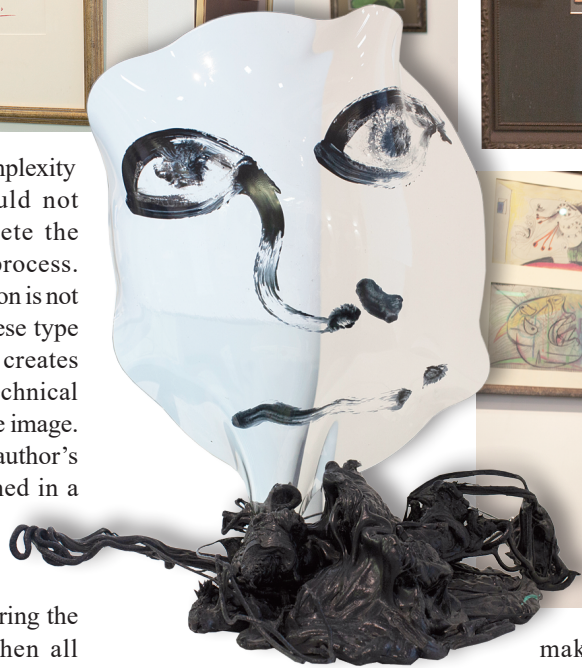
work, but due to the complexity of production he could not independently complete the entire technological process. The ‘author's hand’ notion is not literal in the case of these type of graphics: the artist creates a work and entrusts technical specialists to transfer the image. The result is the same author's work as a canvas framed in a rich frame; the original is the original.

“Most of the works on show were made during the lithography boom, when all famous artists, from Picasso to Salvador Dali, resorted to this method of distributing their pieces,” explains the curator of the hall, Oleg Ryzhkov. “These are auction works, they are all numbered, every auction house knows in whose hands — private owner or museum — each copy is kept. You need to treat them like works of art. From my point of view, making a lithograph is much more difficult than making an original painting.”

The exhibition was compact but filled with pieces: including vivid emotional images from the *Les Bleus de Barcelone* series, *War and Peace* series are startling, sketches for the anti-fascist *Guernica*, a graphic portrait of Jacqueline Roque (the artist's wife) that one could stand next to for an hour, admiring its amazing beauty. *The Paragraphs* are built on the principle of a literary

collection. The addition in the form of works of Belarusian authors looks organic, allowing viewers to build continuity from classics to modern and at the same time drawing attention to domestic art: not necessarily to explore deeply, but at least to take a closer look. Picasso ceramics from the archives of the National Art Museum also deserve attention as they are rarely taken out of the storerooms for display, incidentally, just twenty jugs and plates, in which the great Pablo had a hand, are estimated by insurers at \$300,000.

You could, of course, complain about why the curators do not bring *The Women of Algiers* and *The Girls of Avignon* to Belarus, but the idea of the gigantic insurance sums and conditions that need to be arranged for such trips



Daria Titova

make it obvious: there are things that it's very difficult and expensive to organise even for national museums. The tour schedule of famous paintings is planned for years to come — exactly like tours by world stars. There are also works that never leave their home port, you can admire them only on the spot: buy a ticket to Madrid, Paris or New York to see these beautiful works of art in person! Unless, of course, time and circumstances don't allow it, then these light,



mobile and less expensive graphic works provide a good opportunity to get acquainted with the work of the masters without leaving one's own country or overpaying for tickets.

ACCENT
Pablo Picasso. Paragraphs exhibition reflects the main stages of the master's creativity: the early period, the ‘blue period’, analytical and synthetic cubism. Sketches for the most famous painting by the artist — *Guernica* — and the series of late works *Toros Y Toreros*, *War and Peace* are also presented.

New page in the star atlas



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More than two years have passed since the third cosmonaut with Belarusian roots, Oleg Novitsky, returned from the International Space Station for the second time. Rehabilitation and summing up the results of the experiments took no less time than the flight itself. Overall, during his career, our astronaut has spent 340 days, 10 hours and 4 minutes in orbit. But can such statistics stop a man in love with the sky? Last year, on his Instagram, the astronaut announced: ‘A meeting of the state medical commission has taken place and the verdict is I’m suitable for the next space flight! I just need just to wait for appointment to the crew and — onward’. The appointment eventually appeared and in October preparations began. The astronaut has told *The MT* reporter more.

By Alina Kasel

From Zvezdny to Houston and back

We contacted Oleg Novitsky by phone. He has recently returned home to Zvezdny Gorodok (Star City) from Houston, USA, where he underwent five weeks of ‘extra-ship’ preparation for activities and work in the American area.

“Why was the extra-ship training needed? Because the programme of the expedition can change and the astronauts must be ready to perform various tasks, including for our American partners. Tasks may also relate to spacewalks. We’ve already completed several during this trip, they will continue, and their number will increase,” explains the astronaut. “Incidentally, while I was there I tried on an American spacesuit for extra-ship activity for the first time. It has standard sizes, so it wasn’t specially sewn for me. However, NASA experts meticulously select the gloves to perfectly suit every individual. This is important because the main work is done by hand.”

The Russian and American spacesuits are completely different in design. In the Russian spacesuit a cosmonaut can independently prepare for a spacewalk: he can enter the suit himself and close it himself. In the American, one can’t do it without the help of colleagues, as it consists of several parts. Which is more convenient? It’s difficult for Oleg Novitsky to compare, because he has not yet worked in outer space.

“I had two flights and not a single spacewalk so far. Of course, I was ready for this, but in the previous flights such tasks were not set. This time I hope to go into outer space,” the astronaut tells us. “I really want to!”

In the meantime, the cosmonauts of Roscosmos need to be certified to work in these spacesuits under certain conditions and to learn how to perform the necessary tasks. In addition, it’s necessary to prepare for work in the American segment. During the first two flights, Oleg Novitsky was only a user of American systems; now cosmonauts of Roscosmos are being trained as fully-fledged competent specialists.

“Yes, it’s necessary to constantly study in our field, but I like it. Our American colleagues have done well. They have put into operation many new systems that we will use on board. The progress is significant! For example, the life support system has changed. It was improved and they tried to exclude the interference of the crew in it as much as possible. The systems have become automated for astronauts; with everything necessary being done from Earth. Yes, the systems have become more complex, but, nevertheless, if they work normally, the crew, in principle, will be freed from participation in this system. At this time, you can do other tasks,” says Mr. Novitsky. “For five weeks we have been studying all these in the American segment, but there is still a lot of work ahead. The next business trip to the USA is scheduled for January 10th.”

But this is only the first completed training stage. A few days break, and then the next step — preparation in Zvezdny.

Crew commander

Each crew member is selected very carefully. Cosmonauts should not only be healthy and professionally grounded; they also need to be psychologically fit. The left seat from the crew commander and flight engineer Oleg Novitsky will be taken by flight engineer Piotr Dubrov.

“He hasn’t made a flight to the ISS yet, so I support him and help during the preparation as much as I can. I answer all his questions openly and simply so that he understands what awaits him, what the tasks are and how we will need to carry them out. I hope my answers help him,” Mr. Novitsky laughs. “He is a worthy, responsible young man, so everything is going perfectly.”

Meanwhile, this is preliminary infor-

mation, and much depends on the launch of the American ships. Interestingly, the crew of the next two expeditions — ISS-64 and ISS-65 — will include only Russians, who will fly to the International Space Station on the Soyuz spacecraft. This information recently appeared on the website of the Yuri Gagarin State Scientific Research-and-Testing Cosmonaut Training Centre. Over the past nineteen years this is happening for the first time! At present, the expedition ISS-64 consists of Anatoly Ivanishin, Ivan Vagner and Nikolay Chub. Their backup cosmonauts will be Sergey Ryzhikov, Sergey Kud-Sverchkov and Sergey Korsakov. They will also become the main crew of the ISS-65, and their backup pilots are Oleg Novitsky, Piotr Dubrov and Mukhtar Aimakhanov.

“I imagine our flight will be in the second half of 2021. In spring 2021, we will duplicate Sergey Ryzhikov’s crew,” says the astronaut.

In the meantime, training in the Russian segment is planned for this week and beyond. In fact, training at Zvezdny is similar to a standard working day for members of the cosmonaut corps: it starts at 9am and finishes at 6pm. Two classes before the lunch and two after it: work on the Soyuz spaceship and in the Russian segment, training in conducting experiments, studying new equipment, including cameras, classes in English and other subjects necessary for working both in the spacecraft and at the station.

“Soon they will repair and launch a hydro-laboratory with technological equipment, systems and apparatus, where the complete zero gravity is simulated and we will get ready to perform tasks such as preparing for extra-ship activities, testing technical maintenance, repairing modules and other operations. We will also be engaged in the ‘Vykhod-2’ simulator which includes preparing our ‘Orlan’ spacesuit for extra-ship activities, working in it, moving in the work area, and so on,” says

Mr. Novitsky, giving only a few examples of how much the crew has to study and prepare for the flight. “There is a regular training procedure, regardless of the number of flights each astronaut needs to go through.”

‘A great new chapter will be written!’

Of course, physical education on this list is a large and important part. There are general planned classes, as well as self-training. Oleg Novitsky admits that when any free time appears, he spends it in the gym, “I restrict my appetite. Fried potatoes are my weakness, but everything spicy, fried, sour, salty can seriously affect the body and tests. I have no problem with this. The idea that a long business trip is ahead is exciting. But when the active phase of preparation begins, I, as usual, will get involved and will look forward to the start more and more. Therefore, slowly but surely, we are moving towards 2021!”

Oleg Novitsky greeted the New Year holidays in 2013 and 2017 in orbit. Perhaps there he will also meet the new year of 2022.

The astronaut shares his views, “Recently, we moved to our house in Zvezdny, and I’m very pleased about it! I don’t really enjoy apartments as I’ve got used to being in my own house in Cherven since childhood. So, probably, we will greet the new year in my home with family and friends. I hope there will be a ‘window’ in my preparation schedule. I really miss Belarus, my relatives and friends. If it works out, I’ll drop into the Academy of Sciences. Perhaps Belarusian scientists are preparing to present their experiments that they would like to conduct at the ISS. If this happens, I will be glad to participate in them.”

At the end I clarify whether journalist Yulia Novitskaya — the wife of the astronaut — has started preparing to write her third diary. The space theme is now very popular! Recently, cosmonaut Oleg Artemiev, who also has a lot to do with Belarus, wrote a book entitled *Space and the ISS: How Everything Really Works*. Oleg Novitsky laughs, “Yes, Yulia is already watching me. She is making some notes and sometimes comments on trips and even statements I make: Oh, what a great chapter it will be!”



Photo from Oleg Novitsky’s archives

New role for Yekaterina the Great

In summer, our famous two-time Olympic champion ended her sporting career of more than 30 years. However, she has not left rowing completely: in 2020, Yekaterina Karsten will start working with the reserve of the national team of Belarus. One of the most titled athletes in the country is currently in Germany but has recently attended the Olympic meeting where she was awarded an honorary badge of the National Olympic Committee 'For Merits in Development of the Olympic Movement in the Republic of Belarus' by NOC President Aleksandr Lukashenko.

By Tatiana Pastushenko

It's always nice to receive awards. I appreciate that my achievements are not forgotten even though I'm not an athlete any more.

The decision to retire was not easy for you. You were preparing to compete at the World Championship and battle for Olympic qualification but those plans were ruined by an injury. How have you settled into a new life without constant training and medal goals?

It's become calmer. However, I'm now excited that, in January, I'll start a new job — with the reserve athletes at the Republican Olympic Training Centre. Of course, I know some of the guys who've shown good results this year and have been on everyone's lips but I'll have to get to know many of them.

Is it possible to speak about their potential now?

Everyone needs an individual programme. However, as my experience shows, it's easier to keep a reserve now than previously. In the Soviet Union, many young athletes won competitions in their age category, though there was no

youth level then: we immediately went into adult sports. Not everyone succeeded: even two-time world champions failed to perform well after joining the adult team. At present, we have a youth category and many competitions held as part of it. This means that strong athletes can be trained even if we don't immediately transfer rowers into the adult sports. I believe we'll be a success.

This year, our rowers have achieved success not only at junior level. Anastasia Yanina and Yelena Furman, for example, are now European champions in the lightweight duo. We are pinning our hopes on them at the Olympics in Tokyo.

Were you surprised by this result?

It didn't come as a surprise to me. I knew that this is a strong crew and the girls should win the European Championship. Sadly, they failed to realise their potential at the World Championship — finishing sixth. I'm not sure why this happened. They are physically very strong athletes but possibly didn't cope well with the emotion of the world forum. I hope they will work on



Yekaterina Karsten finished her career but did not retire from rowing: she is ready to pass on a wealth of experience to young athletes

their mistakes, concentrate and perform well at the Olympics. I believe they are able to win a medal in Tokyo.

After the end of your career, you wanted to move from Germany to Belarus. Haven't your plans changed?

On January 3rd, I'll start working in a new position. I'm now going to Germany to see my family. In late December, I will return home.

Do your daughter and husband plan to move with you?

No. My daughter is closely connected with Germany with her business but my husband did plan to come with me. He thought about the move seriously and it was a surprise to me to hear 'Let's go' from him. Sadly, he's fallen seriously ill and now has to remain in Germany. We'll have to communicate via the Internet. Over the last two years, I have spent a great deal of time in Belarus — coming here for 5-6 months. So this way of keeping in touch has become habitual for us. Of course, I want to be close to my family but my work is my work. I'm now at home again. I have new goals and objectives and I'm very happy about that.

Ready to conquer leading positions



MAZ-SPORTauto Team present trucks ahead of Dakar 2020 scheduled for 5th-17th January, in Saudi Arabia

According to Sergey Vyazovich, the head and pilot of the team, Dakar was one of the most technically challenging rallies for the participants in 2019. "This year, we've decided to field the hooded MAZ truck which proved its worth at various rallies last year. We were leading most of the 'Silk Way' rally but didn't manage to make it into the top three. We want to take revenge!" he said. "Since then, we have refined the configuration of the vehicle. It would take too long to recount all changes that we've made but the vehicle is now better managed, its weight is more evenly distributed and it's comfortable to be in it."

Moreover, MAZ-SPORTauto has upgraded the technical fleet. "For example, at Dakar 2020, we will have a new camper van with more comfortable rest facilities. Aleksey Vishnevsky's

hooded MAZ. Pilot Aleksandr Vasilevsky will team up with Dmitry Vikhrenko and Vitaly Murylev. In addition, Aleksey Vishnevsky will compete with Maksim Novikov and Andrey Neverovich.

The major world rally — Dakar 2020 — will start in Jeddah on January 5th and conclude in Qiddiyah, near the Saudi capital of Riyadh, on January 17th. With an overall distance over 7,800km, the competitors will battle over 5,000km of special stages. Participating crews will discover sand, dunes and dangerous rocky areas. The official entry list for the Dakar rally includes 351 vehicles: 170 bikes and quads, 134 cars and SSVs and 47 trucks.

In 2019, two MAZ-SPORTauto crews finished in the top ten in Peru. Mr. Vyazovich was sixth and Mr. Vasilevsky finished eighth. Mr. Vishnevsky's crew was placed 11th. Eduard Nikolaev's crew (KAMAZ, Russia) won the event then.

truck is also equipped with automatic transmission. We're not standing still. We make improvements after every rally and we're ready to take the leading positions," added Mr. Vyazovich.

Three Belarusian crews will take part. Team leader Sergey Vyazovich and co-pilots Pavel Garanin and Anton Zaporoshchenko will compete in the

Medal achievements

Belarusian trampolinists won three medals at the World Championships in Tokyo

Vladislav Goncharov, Oleg Ryabtsev, Ivan Litvinovich and Aleksey Dudorov were winners in the team competitions. The Belarusian team earned 180.390 points to finish ahead of competitors from China (placed second) by 0.03 points. Russians were third, with 178.540 points.

In synchronised jumping, Vladislav Goncharov and Oleg Ryabtsev took second place, behind Japan's Tasaki Katsufumi and Munetomo Ginga.

Another silver was taken by 18-year-old Ivan Litvinovich. In the final of the individual competition, he missed out on gold only



Oleg Ryabtsev and Vladislav Goncharov

The last time Belarusian athletes achieved such a success in this programme at a world event was 25 years ago.

Aleksandr Lukashenko congratulated the athletes on winning gold, "It was a striking performance that allowed us to get ahead of strong rivals and confirmed the high quality of the Belarusian trampoline school."

to the Olympic bronze medallist and multiple world champion, Chinese athlete Gao Lei. Apart from the medal, he also won an Olympic place for Belarus.

Formally, qualifications in trampoline for the Olympics have not yet been handed out. Athletes will have to pass two more Cup stages, after which the results will be summarised and points scored.



Photo of the week

Minsk hosts *Serious Relationships* dance marathon to choose the longest dancing couple

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM

12 Karl Marks Street
Until 12th January. *East-West*

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street
Until 15th December. *Yazep Drozdovich's Universe*
Until 10th January. *Russian Impressionism*
Until 19th January. *Oman: Pearl of the East. Handicraft Legacy*

MUSEUM OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY

8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 31st December. *Returning Time*

YANKA KUPALA LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Yanka Kupala Street
Until 5th December. *I'm Free in My Spirit*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY

13 M. Bogdanovich Street
Until 12th January. *There Is Charm in Old and Forgotten...*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street
Until 8th December. *Solaris. Donatas Banionis*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

3 Nekrasov Street
Until 8th December. *Information*
Until 8th December. Personal photo projects of Yelenka Donbrova
Until 8th December. *Run with Scissors*
Until 15th December. *Object: Ceramics II*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 8th December. *Stars Captured by Camera of Oleg Lukashovich and Aleksandr Alekseev*
Until 8th December. *Graphics of the Year*
Until 19th January. *Lady's Articles*

LEONID SHCHEMELEV ART GALLERY

10 Revolutsionnaya
Until 15th December. *Condensation of Thoughts*

LIBRA

37 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 26th January. *Pablo Picasso. Paragraphs*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street
Until 8th December. *Solaris. Donatas Banionis*

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE OF BELARUS

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square
05.12. *Whether Day Reigns...*
08 and 10.12. *Creation of the World*
11.12. *Gala-concert of laureates of Minsk's International Christmas Contest of Vocalists*
12.11. *Prince Igor*

MAXIM GORKY THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
05.12. *Lady for a Day*
07.12. *Bridal Shower*
10.12. *Twelve Night*
12.12. *Husband Leaving Wife*

BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE

44 Kropotkin Street
05.12. *Mad Woman*
06.12. *Wisdom Measurer*
07.12. *Gender Tricks*
08.12. *Serezha*

BELARUSIAN ARMY THEATRE

3 Krasnoarmeiskaya Street
05.12. *Absolute Happiness*
06, 07 and 08.12. *Inspector*
12.12. *Romeo and Juliet*

MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
05.12. *Comedy*
06.12. *Unfinished Novel*
08.12. *Husband Like Many*

YANKA KUPALA THEATRE

7 Engels Street
05.12. *Elza's Land / Jeweller's Jubilee*
07.12. *Hangdogs*
08.12. *Artistic night of People's Artists of Belarus, Zoya Belokhvosik*
10.12. *People on Marshes / Love as Militarism*
11.12. *Paulinka / School of Taxpayers*
12.12. *Harvest / Evening*

CHAMBER DRAMA THEATRE

5 Frunze Street
05.12. *Veronika Decides to Die*
07.12. *Corporate*
11.12. *Night at a Hotel*
12.12. *Clinic*

MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
05.12. *Hello, I'm Charlie's Aunt!..*
07.12. *Tristan and Isolde*
08.12. *Ball in Savoy*
10.12. *Foreigner's Letter*
11.12. *Titanic*
12.12. *Jane Eyre*

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
05.12. *The Fool*
06.12. *Dear Pamela*
07.12. *Caught by Love*
08.12. *Double Double*
10.12. *Love of Three*
11.12. *Rich Brides*
12.12. *Tectonics of Feelings*