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Zinovich Zlata from Bereza and Makarevich Maxim from Grodno after handing over passports

We are the citizens of Belarus!

The updated Basic Law entered into force on March 15th — Constitution Day. The Belarusian patriotic campaign 'We are the Citizens of Belarus' is a traditional set of events run on the eve of the Constitution Day and on the Constitution Day of the country. They, among other things, include solemn ceremonies to hand over passports of the Republic of Belarus to 14-year-old boys and girls across the country. More than 16,000 young Belarusians received their first passport this year. This year, the events of the youth patriotic initiative dedicated to the Constitution Day of the Republic of Belarus have acquired special significance — on February 27th, at the nationwide referendum, Belarusians made a conscious choice in favour of preserving and strengthening the traditions and values of their people, supported a new historical stage in the development of the state. The young generation, which is entering adulthood today, will have to direct its potential to the development of civil society and participation in government in the future.



The security of the country will be ensured

The most important issues of ensuring the country's military security in the future were discussed at a meeting of the President of Belarus with high-ranking officials of the Defence Ministry.

"The situation in the region and its possible developments suggest that in the near and medium term, the threats to our military security will remain high," said Aleksandr Lukashenko.



The President stressed that the security of our country places demands on him and, first of all, the Defence Ministry leadership to ensure a proper level of combat readiness and combat capability of the Belarusian Armed Forces.

"Things will not be quiet. This is what should worry us most of all (I want to draw your attention to this, and, first of all, the Head of our Special Operations Forces). We have always been wary of the presence of mercenaries in the neighbouring states, especially in Ukraine. Our

several sources, our intelligence, discovered such mercenaries who do not cross the border with Belarus. They are afraid, but they are moving parallel to the Belarusian-Ukrainian border in the direction of Chernobyl," warned the Head of State.

The President ordered the military and border guards to prevent violations of the State Border, "We must see them, we must trace them using your capabilities. As we understand, there are almost no Ukrainian border guards along the entire border.

Nobody guards it, except for the Belarusian border guards. Therefore, your task and the task of your intelligence is to monitor what is happening in the adjacent territory, especially what concerns mercenaries. We must not allow these people to violate our State Border. You understand what kind of people they are... We must move in parallel with them. There they walk in small groups, which complicates the situation. You must track them, how they move and control their movement, without violating the State Border with Ukraine. Re-

port on the slightest movements and their intentions."

The President also ordered to provide assistance to Ukrainian refugees,

"We are also facing a tense situation with refugees from Ukraine. People are coming from Ukraine. They are coming here on bicycles, on foot. They are bringing children and elderly people to our territory. These are poor people. They have had nothing to eat for three days or even a week. Their children are hungry."

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted: Belarus has a compact and capable army, the state is taking measures to re-equip the Armed Forces with new types of weapons. The preparation of troops for the fulfilment of missions for their intended purpose is being improved, and exercises are systematically conducted.

"Our army needs to develop taking into account the modern experience of conducting military operations. We already see the specifics of a military operation in Ukraine. We have information about a continued military build-up near the western borders of Belarus," emphasised the President.

According to the Head of State, on the part of Ukraine, we are observing the restoration of protection and cover of certain sections of the border, "We still have to summarise and study the experience of combat activities in general over the entire period of the operation in Ukraine. There is no getting away from it, but we have to take some measures today."

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Relations with China are most important priority

The President of Belarus met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Belarus, Xie Xiaoyun

Welcoming the diplomat, Aleksandr Lukashenko said, "Belarus' relations with the People's Republic of China are the most important priority in our country's foreign policy and economy. We have done a lot in recent years — especially in times when Xi Jinping became and still is President of the People's Republic of China. He is a very great friend of our Belarusian people, and we have established very good relationship with him."

According to the Head of State, during Xi Jinping's presidency, Belarusians have really got to know China and who is the country's friend — including the Chinese people.

China is traditionally among the top three trade partners of Belarus. Last year, the bilateral turnover reached a record \$5,115.2 million (111.8 percent compared to 2020). One hundred twenty-six Belarusian agricultural producers are accredited in China and, since 1992, the volume of Chinese investments has exceeded \$2,6 billion — including about \$1,1 billion of direct investment.

With participation of Chinese companies, more than 50 investment projects were implemented in Belarus in 2021 — including 44 of them in the Great Stone. Actually, the Park accounts for the major inflow of investments. All participants have invested \$753,7 million in the project. Eighty-five residents from 15 countries of the world are registered in the Great Stone, including more than forty with Chinese capital. One joint venture — the Eurasian Railway Gateway — is operational as well. The total amount of the declared investments makes \$1,27 billion.

In order to improve legal regulation and improve the

investment climate of the Park, Presidential Decree No. 215 was adopted on June 11th, 2021. It envisages the expansion of activities, support for start-ups and creation of preferential terms for large investment projects.

More than 1,5 billion Yuan (about \$243 million) of technical and economic assistance have been disbursed covering fourteen projects. The main ones include the support of the Great Stone Industrial Park (428 million Yuan), the construction of social housing (stages 1 and 2 — 622 million Yuan), as well as a student dormitory in Minsk (292 million Yuan) and a therapeutic building of the Minsk Central District Hospital (86 million Yuan). The current portfolio of projects makes 1,8 billion Yuans (about \$287 million).

Three key areas of medium term co-operation in the field of technical and economic assistance have been outlined until 2025: the implementation of such projects as National Football Stadium and International Standard Swimming Pool, the support of the Great Stone Industrial Park development, and the promotion of stability and security (projects of the State Border Committee and the State Customs Committee).

In 2021, 4,5 million doses of a vaccine against coronavirus were delivered to Belarus, including 1,4 million doses and more than 1 million syringes as humanitarian aid, and 3,1 million doses as part of a commercial deal. In January 2022, 3 million doses of the vaccine were delivered (1,5 million doses as humanitarian aid and 1.5 million doses on a commercial basis).

Aleksandr Lukashenko invites China to identify additional ways of co-operation.



Xie Xiaoyun

"I think that in connection with the events that are happening in our region, we should briefly discuss this situation and outline additional ways of interaction with China," noted Aleksandr Lukashenko. "At the same time, I want to emphasise that I do not insist that China bears any responsibility or loses something in connection with the sanctions imposed against Russia and Belarus. In this situation, we need to build and find the model of relations and collaboration that would meet the interests of the two countries. This is the goal of our country's leadership. It has always been like this, but now some things need to be specified and I would like to talk to you today on this topic. I would ask you to convey this to the leadership of China, to the President of the People's Republic of China, so that they are more fully informed about our position and our actions at this difficult time in the Central European region."

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Strength in unity

Belarus and Russia will be able to overcome the pressure of Western sanctions by teaming up with allies. Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko made the statement as he met with President of Russia Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin. The meeting of the Heads of State lasted for almost six hours and proceeded in various formats.

At the beginning of the conversation, Vladimir Putin congratulated Aleksandr Lukashenko on the successful holding of a Nationwide referendum on amendments and additions to the Constitution. He noted the high turnout at the polling stations and the support of the citizens of Belarus.

“The voter turnout was higher than the figure registered during the latest presidential election, by the way, by one and a half percent,” said Aleksandr Lukashenko. The Russian Head of State stressed, “I think that the political process that you have initiated, the dialogue that you are conducting with the people is extremely important in order to make the situation stable and sustainable. It is possible to discuss economic development only in this situation.”

As for the topic of sanctions pressure from the West, Aleksandr Lukashenko is sure that the countries will be able to overcome the existing challenges. The Belarusian leader formulated a specific plan during the meeting with Vladimir Putin.

“We need to rally together in the Collective Security Treaty Organization, in the Eurasian Economic Union. After all, everybody said we should stand together. Well, let’s do it. And trust me, once we also add these markets, we will forget we have sanctions in a month. Therefore, I am making this proposal (and I think you will support me): let’s get the CSTO and the EAEU together in Moscow, sit down at the negotiating table and agree on what we sell to each other. We also need to work out our common economic policy,” said the President of Belarus.

Aleksandr Lukashenko described the pressure of sanctions as a time of opportunities.

“I’ve told you over the phone more than once: the Russian Federation and Belarus always have to deal with sanctions. Today’s sanctions are larger, but we are already accustomed to this piggery of the West, I beg your pardon. Why piggery? Because all of it is illegitimate as they are fond of saying. All of it is illegal, in violation of all the international agreements and treaties,” stressed the Head of State.

Aleksandr Lukashenko is convinced that Belarus and Russia have everything in order to develop their economy in the current conditions,

“We can do without Western partners. We have everything in place to live



and work normally. This is the time of opportunities. If we get our bearings, believe me, in six months — by the end of the year people will forget that this happened. From the point of view of the economy.”

The Russian colleague shares the same opinion with Aleksandr Lukashenko. Vladimir Putin is convinced,

“Attempts to limit and restrain our growth have always been made and are being made now. Certainly on a larger scale at present, it is obvious. However, I am sure that we will overcome these difficulties and will acquire more skill sets, more opportunities to be self-reliant and independent. In the end it will benefit us, as it was in previous years. A massive strike against the economy is being carried out now. But the practice of recent years indicates that we’ve gained new skill sets and regained old ones at a new technological level in the areas affected by Western sanctions. It’s all about work. We’ve certainly become stronger in this regard.”

By the way, trade and economic co-operation between Belarus and Russia is developing in a positive way amid sanctions.

“Last year we have increased the bilateral trade by more than a third — it is more than 34 percent,” noted Vladimir Putin.

An important topic of the talks was the situation in the region and directly in Ukraine. Vladimir Putin briefed the President of Belarus on the situation in the Ukrainian direction.

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed, “More and more people come to understand the real situation and the essence of what is going. We did not attack them. We did not! It was preventive. The Armed Forces of Ukraine began to shoot back when we were at your place two days before. We were in a helicopter (during Aleksandr Lukashenko’s previous visit to the Russian Federation on February 18th after negotiations in the Kremlin, the Heads of State went to a countryside complex where they continued talking in an informal setting). We got regular updates. It was them who started doing it.

I will show you the place from where the attack on Belarus was being prepared. Had there not been a preventive strike on the positions (four positions, I will show them now, I have brought the map) six hours before the operation, they would have attacked the troops of Belarus and Russia, who were at the military drills... I would like to reiterate: they were preparing to attack not only Donbass. They were in position to strike at Belarus... Therefore, it was not us who unleashed this war. Our conscience is clear. It is good that they started it. Biological weapons, the largest nuclear power plants... And all this was ready for blowing up.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew the interlocutor’s attention to an alarming circumstance, the existence of which he publicly announced the day before, “These foreign mercenaries are moving along Belarus’ border towards the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Three things. They want to cut off lines of march of Russian troops, to backstab them as I’ve said. Second, they want to attack positions of the troops staying in our country after the

Belarusian-Russian army exercises. And they still hope we will get involved in this slaughter so that we would leave the Western flank unprotected. They are not that simple. And you and I have yet to figure out what they want to do in Chernobyl.”

The Belarusian leader’s press secretary, Natalya Eismont, spoke about the important results and agreements between the Presidents of Belarus and Russia, “As a matter of priority, the Heads of State discussed in detail the situation in the world and in the region — with a focus on Ukraine. The course of negotiations taking place in Belarus and the positions of the Russian and Ukrainian sides were among the key topics in this context. As part of their discussion, Russian Presidential Aide Vladimir Medinsky was invited to the meeting, and as a result, a unanimous opinion was voiced: if the Ukrainian side wishes, the conflict can be resolved at any time,” the press secretary noted.

The second part of the presidential talks was devoted to topical issues of bilateral relations and building co-operation in connection with a harsh pressure of the West and the United States, and a hybrid war unleashed against Russia and Belarus.

Conceptually, the Heads of State agreed on joint steps for mutual support in connection with the sanctions pressure, including on energy prices.

The issues of co-operation in industry and agriculture were discussed, as well as cargo transportation between the two states.

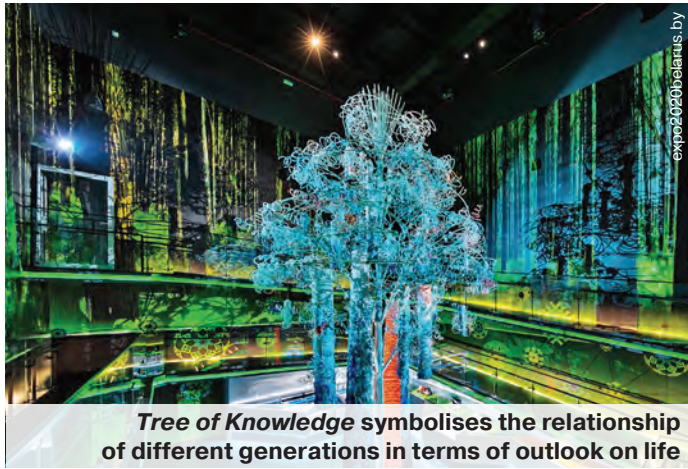
The Presidents paid much attention to development of the military-industrial complex and the Union State defence. In particular, supplies of the newest military equipment by Russia to Belarus in the near future were agreed upon. Belarus, in turn, will increase its supplies of modern agricultural and passenger vehicles, as well as other machine-building products.

The leaders also reached mutually beneficial agreements in the financial sphere.

“I would like to add that, as the President of Belarus stated after the talks, Russia has taken the most serious and unprecedented steps to support the economy of our country,” said Natalya Eismont.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Made in Belarus



Tree of Knowledge symbolises the relationship of different generations in terms of outlook on life

By Vladislav Sychevich

Decent result

— How many people have visited the Belarusian pavilion to date, what attracts them?

— To date, the Belarusian pavilion at the Expo has already been visited by about 700,000 people. This is a fairly large number. However, we can see from the dynamics that the wave of interest in the exhibition is not weakening yet. We expect that we will be able to get close to a million visitors because of its results. It should

One of these in the pavilion is the Tree of Knowledge. This is a product of creativity of the Belarusian artist, which she made from a thread. It took two years to build it. The craftswoman created it with her mother, so the Tree of Knowledge symbolises the relationship of different generations in terms of outlook on life. Furthermore, it symbolises the future. At the foot, there are prototypes of future trains and cars, produced by Belarusian engineers and designers. This 'tree' was included in the top 20 most interesting and attractive exhibits of the exhibition.



During the exhibition, Byelorussian Steel Works signed several contracts for the supply of products worth more than \$100 million within the framework of the Days of the Gomel Region

be noted that this is one of the most effective participation of Belarus in the World Expo exhibitions.

Our pavilion is among the most visited at the exhibition. When communicating with our guests, it turns out that they are primarily attracted by the quite diverse exposition. It is suitable for both business professionals and ordinary people of all ages. Everyone notes: the Belarusian pavilion is not boring. There is all the necessary information about the country for both investors and tourists who want to visit Belarus. Right in the pavilion you can watch a film about our country, get to know Belarusian art better.

Feature of the pavilion, which was noticed by almost all visitors, is that it contains a lot of physical exhibits. It is extremely rare to find the same place at the Expo. Many countries favour multimedia content. We think that it is also important for people to have the opportunity not only to see the exhibit, but also to touch it.

Particularly pleasing is that after five months, there is a great interest in thousands of Belarusian products, which are sold in our store. It means there is a great demand. So far, \$100,000 worth of goods have been sold. This is a good result in terms of boosting our enterprises, which have the opportunity and are interested in entering the UAE market. Foremost, I am sure that many Belarusian goods will appear on the shelves of their stores after the Expo.

Warm investment environment

— In general, if we talk about the investment component of the exhibition, how successful is this event for our country from this point of view?

— Our pavilion presents the main areas for investment, as well as start-ups. Investors are quite actively interested, for example, in such projects as a bioprinter and medical products. The key element of our

Consul General of Belarus in Dubai on the first results of our country's participation in the World Expo 2020

The world's largest exhibition Expo 2020 continues in Dubai. 192 countries present their achievements at the large-scale international forum. Belarus is among them. The National Day, which took place at the end of November, was the key event for our country. At the same time, the Belarus Investment Forum took place. Both events aroused great interest among foreign visitors and investors. The results were immediate and measurable. Contacts gradually develop into profitable contracts. In particular, Byelorussian Steel Works signed several contracts for the supply of products worth more than \$100 million during the exhibition within the framework of the days of the Gomel Region. Evgeny Lazarev, Consul General of Belarus in Dubai, summed up the first results of our country's participation in this most prestigious world forum in an interview with *MT*.

exposition is the layout of the Northern Waterfront project, which is being implemented in Belarus by the largest developer in the UAE, Mohamed Alabbar. He is the founder of the EMAAR — the largest real estate development company in the UAE. This project is estimated at about \$5 billion, and

of projects in Belarus. We are convinced that all this will significantly strengthen trade and economic relations between the two countries.

— And what do you personally remember most of all among the events that took place as part of the Expo business programme?

heavy engineering or even petrochemical products. Therefore, it seems to us that the programme of participation of Belarusian regions and enterprises, concerns and ministries was drawn up correctly and made it possible to cover the entire spectrum of our exporters in a completely substantive way. The most important task facing our participants is being fulfilled. Each enterprise leaves either with a specific contract or makes contacts with potential importers. In this regard, we have provided a flexible and diverse platform for our exporters.

Important shift

— Within the framework of the Belarusian 'Pivot to Asia' strategy, the holding of the world forum in the UAE is a great success.

— Indeed, everything is going very well, and this exhibition is held for the first time in this region. Usually, these forums were always held in Western countries. As noted by many experts, the exhibition in Dubai is able to cover not only the UAE itself, but also other countries of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. Today we see that



Expo 2020 Dubai is a tremendous exhibition, which, in addition, is of great interest all over the world

FACT

Expo 2020 Dubai will have visitors until March 31st, 2022. The Belarusian pavilion is located in the 'Opportunity District' themed area.



this is a signal that flagship projects with Arab investments are being implemented in Belarus.

Naturally, the Belarus Investment Forum held in November paid off. Now the National Agency of Investments and Privatisation is working out various projects with investors. I also know that, in addition to the participants of the investment forum, new businessmen have joined the implementation

— I want to say that the business programme is so diverse that it is quite difficult to single out anything separately. Nevertheless, it was very interesting for me to watch the presentations of our regions. I want to emphasise that they were quite strong. Exhibitors understand that they have a good opportunity to enter the rich and huge UAE market. Each region presented its zests and strengths: food products,

people from many Arab countries come to the Expo. It is very important for us that in this way we can reach out to such major partners as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar. While most countries are closed due to coronavirus restrictions, this region has every opportunity to freely organise the presentation of its products and investment opportunities. Moreover, most importantly, to start mutually beneficial cooperation.

Refugees get assistance

Our country welcomes those fleeing the fighting zone in Ukraine

We have always advocated and continue to advocate for the peaceful settlement of all conflicts. The proof is that Belarus has for the past eight years been and remains now the venue for Russian-Ukrainian negotiations.

By Anna Kurak

A number of meetings of delegations from Russia and Ukraine that took place in the Gomel and Brest Regions are behind. The participants failed to agree on the key points of the long-term perspective — neither of the parties is ready to make concessions yet.

Meanwhile, the situation in Kyiv, Mariupol, Sumy and Kharkiv, where fighting is unfolding, risks turning into a humanitarian catastrophe. Since February 24th, the Ukrainian authorities have not established the proper evacuation of the civilian population. Moreover, the Ukrainian party still fails to fully implement the agreements on the regime of silence and the creation of humanitarian corridors. The only working route is Sumy — Poltava. In fact, millions of ordinary people remain hostages inside cities with no food, communications, electricity or heating.

According to the State Border Committee of Belarus, from February 24th more than 700 Ukrainians crossed into Belarus. Despite the fact that the Ukrainian border crossings do not actually work, our specialists register all comers.

Among the refugees, there are many old people, children and pregnant women. Most are residents of the border regions, but there are also those who managed to escape from the fighting zones — Gostomel and Bucha near Kiev, Mariupol and Sumy. People reach the border on foot, by bicycles and by cars. Some go to relatives, but most of the people are placed in sanatoriums, recreation centres and hotels. Their food supply is provided by public organisations and local authorities. Archbishop Stefan of Gomel and Zhlobin has taken care of one of the pregnant women — the expectant mother is the archbishop's compatriot.

“Belarusians are a peace-loving and sympathetic people. We are always ready to help citizens of any country in a difficult situation. An example is the recent

cases on the Belarusian-Ukrainian border with the Jews who had not been let pass to the place of pilgrimage by the Ukrainian authorities, or refugees from the Middle East heading to the EU countries — we did not ignore anyone, all those in need got assistance, including in accommodation, food and medical care,” Feliks Yashkov, member of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus, Head of the Gomel Customs Service, reminds.



BELTA

The life and solution of urgent problems of refugees from Ukraine have been taken under personal control by Assistant to the President and Inspector for the Gomel Region Nikolai Rogashchuk

According to him, Ukrainians can count on real support from Belarus: they will be provided with everything necessary, helped in resolving legal issues and offered job opportunities. Applications for the allocation of accommodation for those who decide to live in our country and work in rural areas will be considered.

“At the border, the necessary conditions for unrestricted entry into our territory of those fleeing the fighting zones

ON THE SUBJECT

A Ukrainian woman who experienced a terrible tragedy and miraculously survived is now in the Mazyr city hospital.

On March 5th, the woman was with her family at the dacha near Kyiv, when looters broke into the house. Her husband was killed, and she was wounded — the bullet went right through. The daughter was able to get to the Russian military who immediately came to the rescue. The victim was evacuated to a field medical station at the camp, from where transportation to a Belarusian hospital was organised.

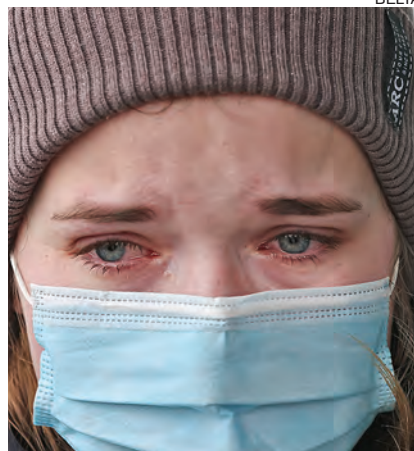
cles in the shortest possible time,” Feliks Yashkov emphasises.

However, there still are obvious obstacles in the work of humanitarian corridors created as agreed between the Russian and the Ukrainian parties.

“The most serious problem is the obstruction to the use of humanitarian corridors for civilians by nationalist groups. In fact, the nationalists are hiding behind the civilian population, seriously endangering their lives and health and frustrating agreements on creating conditions for their safe exit from fighting zones. It causes great concern. Belarus is making every effort so that the conflicting parties have the opportunity to agree, and, most importantly, to fulfil the agreements reached,” the senator says.

As for the possible increase in the number of refugees from Ukraine and the penetration of terrorists and other criminals into the country, Feliks Yashkov comments it as follows,

“The probability of penetration into the country of various destructive elements exists not only in aggravation of situations. Of course, the relevant state bodies and services of Belarus have developed and successfully apply effective preventive methods. Therefore, our citizens do not have to worry about such things. The country's leadership, as well as the people of Belarus advocate for peaceful settlement of conflicts. We are always ready to help, and we are very sorry for all disagreements between the fraternal peoples due to the cruel and aggressive policy pursued by Western countries.”



have been created. For example, the Gomel Customs Service has taken all measures to organise customs operations associated with imported goods and vehi-

NEWS IN BRIEF

The 8th China Guangzhou Annual Investment Conference was held in Minsk

China is traditionally one of Belarus' most important partners in trade, economy, and investments. Belarus is intent on advancing co-operation with China in the sphere of trade and investments. Director General of the Minsk branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BelCCI) Sergei Nabeshko mentioned it during the conference. “We have a rich history of co-operation. Back in 1993 we signed an agreement with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT). The agreement served as the basis for advancing bilateral relations between the chambers of commerce, for sharing business and commerce information, for organising expos and fairs, business missions, and so on,” the official stressed.

Over 40 such events involving Chinese partners and representatives of the Chinese private sector and the Belarusian one were held in 2021. Over 300 companies, which are members of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, prioritise co-operation with China in their profile.



Belarus increased export of goods and services to \$4 billion in January

In January 2022, Belarus' export of merchandise and services rose by 31.5 percent compared to the same period in 2021 to \$4,029 billion. This is evidenced by information published on the website of the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus (NBRB).



Surplus of foreign trade in goods and services equalled \$695,9 million (the surplus was also positive in January 2021 — \$409,7 million)

Belarus' merchandise trade expanded by 32.5 percent to reach \$6,187 billion. Merchandise export went up by 36.1 percent to \$3,251 billion, with merchandise import up by 28.8 percent to \$2,936 billion.

The foreign trade in services grew by 12 percent to \$1,174 billion. Export of services increased by 15.2 percent to \$777,6 million, import — by 6.1 percent standing at \$397,1 million.

In January 2022 Belarus' foreign trade totalled \$7,362 billion, which is 28.7 percent more than in January 2021. Import amounted to \$3,333 billion (up by 25.6 percent).

Surplus of foreign trade in goods and services equalled \$695,9 million (the surplus was also positive in January 2021 — \$409,7 million)

A new edition of the book about the military tragedy in the Peski memorial was presented in Polotsk

The tract Peski in Polotsk is the resting place of tens of thousands of people: prisoners of war, soldiers of the Red Army, partisans, patriots and civilians captured by the invaders.

The Tract Peski — the territory of death book by Sergej Kopyl was dedicated to this tragic place. The writing was published in the second edition and received new information.

In addition to describing the memorial complex of the victims of fascism located here, it contains the memories of prisoners of war from camps located near Polotsk. New data from the National Archives of Belarus, as well as the archives of Russia and Germany, have been added to the book.

It should be noted that work on the book will continue. An aerial photograph of the outskirts of Polotsk, found in the archives of Germany, suggests new mass burial sites just opposite the memorial complex — on the other side of Palata River.



Comfortable restoration

We looked in on the workshops of the new restoration building of the National Art Museum

Until March 3rd, the newly opened exhibition building of the National Art Museum was closed for re-exposition. Some of the works that were shown to visitors during the first presentation of new projects came in the halls straight from the restoration workshops. To be more precise, from the museum's restoration building at 25 Kirov Street, the opening of which Belarusian restorers have been dreaming of for years. Let us remember that experts moved there to 'restore' and return cultural heritage monuments to the national context in December.

By Yuliana Leonovich

More metres

Arkady Shpunt, the Head of the Department of Scientific and Restoration Workshops, does not hide the yearlong problems in the restoration industry. Firstly — lack of space, and secondly — lack of modern equipment. Both of these issues, albeit not immediately, but still managed to be a proof of museum attention and control by the state. Restorers occupied adapted premises, but there were no conditions corresponding to the specifics of the work for a long time.

Now Arkady Shpunt and his colleagues have 14 brand-new workshops at their disposal.

— Each specialist has his own workplace. In addition, this is an unimaginable luxury even for serious restoration establishments. Although, of course, we did not get an ideal space to just immediately enter and make something there. So for now, we're just settling in here.

With the new premises, the area for restoration work has increased from 810 to 1398 sq. m. The workshops were divided as follows: four — for specialists in the restoration of oil painting, the same number — for restorers from the ancient Belarusian and decorative and applied arts departments. There are separate workshops for the restoration of items made of fabric, metal, wood, porcelain and ceramics. Rooms for varnishing and restoration of large-format paintings are intended for general use. Before restoration, the work must be photographed — for this purpose there is a laboratory on the second floor. Experts are guided on the photos taken there during their work.

The task is to reveal, preserve and convey the author's intention as accurately as possible, without adding anything strange or of one's own.

We are going on a tour of the new building with the artist-restorer Olga Mikhailova, a specialist in the field of tempera painting. Her workshop is located on the third floor — we'll start with it.

Breathe tidally

The restoration workshop is more like a doctor's office according to the set of tools. Works of past centuries are restored with surgical precision by the staff of the department. The principal precept of work is the same as that of professional healers: do no harm.



Olga Mikhailova



Arkady Shpunt

Olga shows the icon of the Mother of God 'Helper in Childbirth'. In the 1990s, its illegal removal abroad was prevented by Belarusian customs officers, and later the icon appeared in museum funds.

"It entered our department in an insufficient condition. It was necessary to prepare the icon for the exhibition, so the first thing we did was to strengthen the paint layer and primer, and made an X-ray and an infrared study. There were no changes in the pattern of the painting, so the painting was further uncovered," Olga comments during the tour.

Two extraction systems assist her in working with solvents. Workshops are also equipped with humidity and temperature sensors.

— Relatively speaking, everything is provided. An important point: earlier, work with solvents had to be transferred to the second half of the day in order to breathe fewer chemicals. Now, thanks to powerful extraction systems, there are no more problems with this, the process of opening the painting can be safely performed at any time.

You will be surprised: the refrigerator and the sink area are also new. Olga confirms it with a nod: that is right. To get water, prepare a solution or wash tools, now one do not have to leave the workshop. By the way, there is no need to carry heavy paintings or large-scale canvases in hand: in every room, there are tables on wheels — the same ones are used in operating rooms.

With the opening of the restoration building, the museum library with a separate book depository and a reading room also occupied the new premises. In two rooms with a total area

of 164 sq. m, there are 40,000 units of books and periodicals.

— If there is a need to move the work, for example, to the office of physical and chemical research, then I calmly carry it on this table. Consider this: there are no barriers and thresholds in the corridors, there are ramps everywhere for ease of transportation.

A museum depository is one floor above. There are not only those works that are waiting for restoration, but also ready for exhibiting. However, the allocation of additional space is not all that needs to be done to preserve the Belarusian restoration as an important area of the national museology, Arkady Shpunt believes, "Also, firstly, it is necessary to ensure an assessment of the professional level of restoration specialists and the development of a competent system for assigning them the appropriate categories. Such a system is successfully operating in all neighbouring countries. Secondly, it is important to work out and approve a strategy for the development of museum restoration in our country. Its goal should be 100 percent coverage of objects of the museum fund of the republic with restoration services. Thirdly, it is necessary to continue strengthening the physical and technological infrastructure of the workshops of the Art Museum, which employ the best and most trained specialists in the country. There is still a lack of expensive but necessary equipment: high-precision microscopes, laser scalpels, vacuum tables..."

All this will ultimately make it possible to preserve essential evidence of the life and work of our people for future generations.

Ancient Belarusian fortresses



A small but spirited country is used to fight back. In memory of this, many unique fortifications of various eras have remained on our land

wikimedia.org



By Sofia Arsenyeva

See the enemy from afar in Kamenets

‘...And then God put a good thought in the heart of Prince Vladimir. He thought about whether to build a city somewhere outside Berestye.’ So says the *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle* concerning the events of the end of the 13th century. No sooner said than done. On the banks of the Lesnaya River, the city of Kamenets emerged. And in its very heart, the famous city planner Oleksa raised ‘a pillar of stones seventeen sazhen high, a wonder to all who look at it.’ The tower with the height of a modern ten-story building looked especially amazing in the Middle Ages. However, even today, in the country-like part of a small regional centre, this tower is an architectural miracle!

Curious tourists can look inside and climb to the very top: they will understand what those who fought off the crusaders, Poles, and Lithuanians saw six hundred years ago. The stone fortress withstood all attacks. In the 19th century, people sought to dismantle it into bricks, but over the centuries, the bond has hardened so much that the entire tower has turned into one big block.

Outsmart Napoleon in Bobruisk

The ‘elder sister’ of the Brest Fortress was the most impregnable in the Russian Empire and was considered one of the best in Europe in terms of military equipment. The fortifications occupied 120 hectares, and the defence works housed about 350 guns of various calibres. All around are ramparts and ditches filled with water from the Berezina and Babruyka rivers. The amount of ammunition was intended for a year, food — for six months. In addition, a real botanical



garden was laid out in the fortress and the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral was built. For what purpose? The fortress was fully prepared for Napoleon Bonaparte. “No fortress in Russia has ever been as useful as Bobruisk in 1812,” General Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky, the author of the first official history of the Patriotic War, wrote about the citadel.

The fortress met the French and enabled Bagration’s army to retreat to Smolensk, where Barclay de Tolly was already standing. After that, the garrison held back the siege of the enemy for another four months!

In 1820-1823, the organisers of the Union of Salvation served here. Their bloody Bobruisk plan to capture Alexander I failed. But already in 1825, the fortress turned into casemates for the Decembrists after the uprising on Senate Square.

Remember the heroes in Brest

According to Hitler’s plan, the fortress and the city on-the-Bug were to be taken by noon on June 22nd, 1941. It didn’t work out. The world-famous phrase ‘I am dying, but I do not give up! Farewell, Motherland’ is dated as early as July 20th. The walls could not stand it, the brick crumbled and melted, but the defenders beat the enemy. Day and night, without water, food, and supplies, practically barehanded.

The memorial complex *Brest Hero Fortress* is a symbol of the courage and steadfastness of the Soviet people.

Above the necropolis on the square of ceremonials, a thirty-metre sculptural image of the Unsubdued Warrior froze. Every year on June 22nd, tens of thousands of people come here to remember the feat of their ancestors. Today there are several museums around the soldier in the former casemates.

The new expositions, opened at the expense of the Union State, amaze with their scale and technology. So, in the Eastern Fort, you can see with your own

recognise it as a temple, and this is no coincidence. Thick walls, intricate turrets, gothic features, and Byzantine details — it is more like either a fortress or a castle. The spirit of the times also reflects the interior. Under the mighty vaults, you can see unique drawings of the 16th century in Greek, Latin, and Church Slavonic.

The temple is known for helping pious girls to get married happily. Brides come from all over Belarus to pray to the icon of the Mother of God, called *Most Holy Mother of God*. The miraculous image was painted in the Vato-pedi Monastery in the 17th century by monks from Mount Athos.

In Polotsk

It was the 16th century. The Russian sovereign Ivan IV Vasilyevich, commonly known as Ivan the Terrible, goes to war against Livonia and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The city of Polotsk was between these realms. The pious tsar prays earnestly and discovers in his treasury the altar cross of Euphrosyne of Polotsk. He promised: I will take the city and return the ancient shrine to where it came from. And so it happened, the tsar kept his word. Moreover, Ivan the Terrible decides to build an archery castle on the Polota River. He spared no effort, no money, no sand: for two years, under the leadership of the boyar Shuisky and the governors Zaitsev and Shchokin, the Polotsk residents put up a ten-metre-high rampart. The wooden castle on it did not last long. But the embankment is still clearly visible. Now the Spartak Stadium is located there.



eyes what the last days were like in the fortress of the legendary Major Pyotr Gavrilov. It was his story that formed the basis of the Brest Fortress film.

Ask for protection in Syntkavichy

The ancient Church of St. Michael of red brick stands in the open in the Grodno Region. According to legend, the temple was founded by Grand Duke Vytautas in gratitude for the fact that in the local forests he escaped from the pursuit of the cruel brother Jagiełło.

Those passing by do not immediately





US inflation hits new high

US consumer price gains accelerated in February to a fresh 40-year high on rising gasoline, food and housing costs

The consumer price index jumped 7.9 percent from a year earlier following a 7.5 percent annual gain in January, Labour Department data showed. The widely followed inflation gauge rose 0.8 percent in February from a month earlier, reflecting higher gasoline, food and shelter costs.

The figures show an inflation cloud over the economy that's proved more persistent and expansive. While February was once forecast as the peak for US inflation, now readings are set to increase to above 8 percent, according to some economists. That's because the Ukraine conflict and Biden's ban on Russia energy imports tightened oil supplies and sent prices of US retail gasoline and other commodities

to some of the highest on record.

The price burst presents a challenge for US President Biden, especially given that November's midterm elections are fast approaching. Democrats will need to battle to retain control of Congress at a time when voters are feeling the squeeze of higher expenses.

President Biden once again blamed Russian President Vladimir Putin for soaring gas prices and pushed back against claims from Republicans that his energy policies are harming the economy.

"Democrats didn't cause this problem, Vladimir Putin did and we are working to fix it," Biden said in the closing address at the House Democrats' annual

retreat, where lawmakers sought to hone their messaging and legislative agenda ahead of this fall's midterm elections.

Biden and top Democrats have taken to blaming Russia's conflict with Ukraine for rising prices. Prices, however, had been rising for months even ahead of the Ukraine situation.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) scoffed at Biden's effort to pin the blame on Russia. "These are not Putin gas prices. They are President Biden gas prices," he wrote on Twitter.

Biden, though, warned Americans that the ban would cost American families, who are experiencing the highest gas prices since the 2008 financial crisis.

US hijacks European allies

Global Times: Washington's selfish tactic erodes EU autonomy

The US' move to urge European allies on energy sanctions against Russia has a very 'selfish' motive inside, as not only does the US look to weaken Europe's self-independence strategy by binding Europe's economic ties with the US, but also the country is using Russia-targeted sanctions as an excuse to ruthlessly extend its crackdown on third-party countries, including China, economists said.

Chinese officials reiterated their stance in opposing unilateral sanctions, while experts said the chances are very small that China's energy supplies will have any severe disruptions as a result of the world energy crisis, although China will also feel the sting of global crude and natural gas price jump.

As the US moves to launch a campaign of 'moral kidnapping' against China, with continued moves that aim for some coercion, China has clarified its stance that the Russia-Ukraine conflict cannot be resolved through sanctions and will require dialogue and negotiations.

China 'firmly opposes' unilateral sanctions without basis of international laws, as frequent sanctions will not bring about peace or safety, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian stressed.



Limit of capabilities

The European Union has reached the limit of its capabilities to impose financial sanctions on Russia, the bloc's foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell said in light of the wave of western sanctions on Russia over its special military operation in Ukraine

"With regard to financial sanctions, of course, you can always go further, but we have already reached the limits of what we can do. We did everything we could," noted Mr. Borrell.

The EU foreign policy chief underlined that the bloc must 'avoid going to war with Russia because otherwise it would be the third world war'.

Regarding a possible ban on Russian gas and oil — a measure taken earlier by the United States — Borrell said that it would be much more difficult for the EU to do than for Washington.

"For the United States, it's not too

difficult because they consume almost no Russian oil," he explained. "Saying 'I won't do what I'm not already doing' doesn't have much merit."

Joe Biden, in a bid to paralyse the Russian economy, went on and banned imports of Russian oil to the United States. The move was later backed by the United Kingdom and Canada, which also banned Russian oil, liquefied natural gas, and coal.

Speaking about the sanctions already imposed on Moscow by the EU, Borrell described them as 'very tough'.

Calls for death



Meta Platforms will allow Facebook and Instagram users in some countries to call for violence against Russians and Russian soldiers in the context of the Ukraine conflict, according to internal emails seen by Reuters, in a temporary change to its hate speech policy

The social media company is also temporarily allowing some posts that call for death to Russian President Vladimir Putin or Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko, according to internal emails to its content moderators.

In a tweet, Meta spokesperson said the company would temporarily allow forms of 'political expression' that would normally violate their terms of service, including 'violent speech'. He gave the example of 'death to the Russian invaders' as a phrase that could be accepted now. "We still won't allow credible calls for violence against Russian civilians," he said.

The calls for the leaders' deaths will be allowed unless they contain other targets or have two indicators of credibility, such as the location or method, one email said, in a recent change to the company's rules on violence and incitement.

The temporary policy changes on calls for violence to Russian soldiers apply to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania,

Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, and Ukraine, according to one email.

Russia's embassy in the United States demanded that Washington stop the 'extremist activities' of Facebook owner Meta Platforms (FB.O), which has temporarily lifted a ban on calls for violence against the Russian military and leadership.

"Meta's aggressive and criminal policy leading to incitement of hatred and hostility towards Russians is outrageous," the Russian embassy said in a statement. "The company's actions are yet another evidence of the information war without rules declared on our country."

The embassy said it wanted the US authorities to 'stop the extremist activities of Meta and take measures to bring the perpetrators to justice'.

Many major social media platforms have announced new content restrictions around the conflict, including blocking Russian state media RT and Sputnik in the European Union, and have demonstrated carve-outs in some of their policies.



Factories of death are covering their tracks

What military laboratories in Ukraine were hiding

Recently, an official representative of the Russian Ministry of Defence made a statement that had the effect of a bombshell. A biological one. Major General Konashenkov told reporters that during the special operation in Ukraine, the Russian Armed Forces uncovered the facts of a US-funded military biological programme under implementation. According to Konashenkov, the employees of Ukrainian biological laboratories informed them about the emergency destruction of especially dangerous pathogens, such as plague, anthrax, tularaemia, cholera and other deadly diseases on February 24th.

By Roman Rud

The scandal chronicle

This information was supplemented by Igor Kirillov, Chief of the Radiation, Chemical and Biological Defence Forces of the Russian Armed Forces. He said that a network of more than 30 biological laboratories was formed in Ukraine, the Defence Threat Reduction Agency within the US Department of Defence being the customer of its operation. After the start of the special operation, all laboratories received a task from the Ministry of Health of Ukraine to completely destroy all biological agents present in these semi-secret institutions.

Traces of what kind of research did Americans in Ukraine hurry to hide?

Right away, China became interested in this question whose government called on the US to immediately disclose information about the military biological laboratories in Ukraine and the viruses worked on there. This was stated at a regular briefing by Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian. He emphasised,

“US military biological programmes in Ukraine may be just the tip of the iceberg. Under the pretext of co-operation to reduce biological risks in the field of safety and protection of global health, the US controls 336 laboratories in 30 countries.”

The American party also carried out a lot of military biological research at the Fort Detrick laboratory. What is the true intention of the US? What exactly did it do?

“We call on the US to provide comprehensive information about its military biological programmes both in America and

“We are working with Ukrainians on how to prevent these research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces.”

In fact, Nuland admitted the presence of the laboratories and the desire to cover their tracks...

What the laboratory network hides

Companies affiliated with the military department, primarily Black & Veatch, took part in the implementation of dangerous projects. The work was carried out in three main directions. First of all, it was the monitoring of the biological situation, according to the Pentagon, in the expected areas for the deployment of military contingents of the NATO bloc countries. The second direction was the collection and export to the US of strains of dangerous microorganisms. The third direction was research of potential agents of biological weapons specific to the region that have natural foci and are capable of being transmitted to humans.

For example, in 2020-2021, the German Ministry of Defence conducted a study of the causative agents of Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever, leptospirosis, meningitis and hantaviruses in Ukraine as part of the Ukrainian-German initiative to ensure biological security at the external borders of the EU. Under the pretext of testing drugs for the treatment and prevention of coronavirus infections, from Ukraine to the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research of the US Army, several thousand serum samples of patients primarily belonging to the Slavic ethnic group were transported.

Increased contagiousness was created in a Georgian biological laboratory subordinate to the Pentagon. Its spread caused significant economic damage to a number of countries, including Ukraine and Poland, and excluded them from a list of pork exporters. The Directorate of the Chief of the Radiation, Chemical and Biological Protection Troops of the Russian Armed Forces constantly analyses the biological

The article focuses on the key aspects of biological research carried out in the laboratories which often has a dual purpose, despite the declared exclusively ‘civil use’.




So, central reference laboratories are open in 12 Ukrainian cities (Odesa, Dnepropetrovsk (2 objects), Lviv (3 objects), Luhansk, Shelkostantsiya village (near Merefa), Vinnitsa, Kyiv, Sim-



situation in Ukraine. According to it, now, the biological programmes are being urgently wound down. The documents analysed confirm that the Ministry of Health of Ukraine has set the task to completely destroy all biological agents in the laboratories starting with February 24th.

Meanwhile, an analysis of the instruction to laboratory officials indicates that the procedure for destroying collections is aimed at their irreversible destruction. Apparently, everything necessary to continue the implementation of the military biological programme has already been removed from Ukraine. An analysis of certificates of destruction shows work with the causative agents of plague, anthrax and brucellosis in the Lviv biological laboratory and of diphtheria, salmonellosis and dysentery in the laboratories in Kharkov and Poltava.

Here are some actual figures: only in Lviv, there were destroyed

-  **232 containers with the causative agents of leptospirosis,**
-  **30 containers with the causative agents of tularaemia,**
-  **10 containers with the causative agents of brucellosis and 5 containers with the causative agents of plague.**
- In total, more than 320 containers were destroyed.**

Background

Belarusian readers are familiar with the history of American biological laboratories in the post-Soviet space from the ‘The Threat of New Pandemics’ in-depth article published by the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House last August. Its authors are reputable statesmen, the then Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Subbotin and Deputy State Secretary of the Security Council Vladimir Archakov.

feropol, Kherson, Ternopil, Uzhgorod and Kharkiv) under the actual management of the American companies such as Black & Veatch and Metabiota. Along with this, the International HIV/AIDS and TB Institute under the leadership of E. Perlman, American military expert on viruses, operates in Ukraine.

With the start of the implementation of these projects, outbreaks of measles, hepatitis, tuberculosis, rabies and other infectious diseases among the population of the country have become more frequent. In 2017 alone, tens of thousands of Ukrainians suffered from infections. The massive nature and mortality are explained by the spread rate of viruses with high virulence. As part of the study of the impact of viruses and bacteria on the gene pool of animals and plants in Ukraine, research on the adaptation to local conditions of causative agents of infections atypical for this territory is being carried out.

As a result, at poultry farms and livestock complexes, epidemics of bird flu and African swine fever with economic consequences amounting to tens of millions of US dollars periodically break out.

A year prior to this publication, Ukrainian deputy Renat Kuzmin appeared on television who explicitly warned that the Pentagon had been developing biological weapons in Ukraine for many years. He also said that US native Ulana Suprun, then acting Minister of Health of Ukraine, had been the supervisor of American biological laboratories all that time.

In addition, Kuzmin stressed that there was a high probability that those biological laboratories could become a source of the spread of coronavirus throughout Europe.



abroad, as well as to accept international verification,” the diplomat concluded.

The US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland reacted to the story of emergency destruction of biological materials quite nervously. She stated that the US is concerned about the possibility of Russia gaining control over the American biological laboratories in Ukraine. However, she did not give a reason for such concern. According to her, these institutions are engaged in biological research only. What she didn't specify the exact kind of research. However, she summed up,

At the same time, the operation of the biological laboratories that began in 2014 and the programme of the so-called ‘reform’ of the Ukrainian healthcare system implemented by the US led to an uncontrollable increase in the incidence of especially dangerous and economically significant infections. An increase in the number of cases of rubella, diphtheria and tuberculosis in Ukraine has been recorded. The incidence of measles has increased more than 100 times. The World Health Organisation has declared Ukraine a country at high risk of a polio outbreak.

General Kirillov also said that in 2007, a strain of African swine fever with in-



To find an elephant

Moderately funny, graceful, equally interesting for both children and adults — the new programme of the Belarusian State Circus, simply called *Such a Big Elephant*, became, perhaps, one of the most successful in the last couple of seasons. Everything is just the way we like it on the arena: a lot of funny well-groomed animals and their smiling trainers, under the dome there are gymnasts, airy to the last degree, as well as a surprisingly successful clown duet. Well, and the elephant Marik, who got lost and who is being searched for throughout the whole performance — and, of course, they find it exactly by the last act.

By Irina Ovsepyan

“We have long dreamed of inviting an elephant artist to the circus. Another thing is that it was constantly postponed, and recently it has become even more difficult due to the pandemic and the many difficulties with crossing borders. However, I believe we are lucky: we agreed, it became clear that we have an elephant, and now we need to create some action with it. We did not want to make something similar to a New Year’s fairy tale, where there are many different characters — it turned out more like a divertissement. But nevertheless, this is the story of an elephant that disappeared and is now being sought, that is, there is some kind of intrigue,” admits the Artistic Director of the Belarusian State Circus Vytautas Grigaliunas.

From the very first performance, guests from Moscow set the tone for the whole show — acrobats on jumping stilts under the direction of Viktor Roshchin. Jumping stilts, colloquially called grasshoppers, look like hooves, and it seems that four playful fauns are having fun in the arena.

Clowns Yevgeny Maikhrovsky and Stefan Petrov performed at the arena throughout the evening — a talented and really hilarious tandem, which is a rarity in our times.

It is not easy to find a truly funny clown. Fortunately for us, we were lucky that the Pushkin Brothers duet is in the programme. Classical, a thousand times familiar reprises acquire a new charm in their performance. And although many of the moves are generally predictable and familiar from childhood, it is impossible not to laugh.

The elephant, which the presenter is looking for during the entire performance, recently visited Gomel, and now he has moved to the Belarusian State Circus. Miley Monnie, a trainer from Germany, has famously controlled an eared giant in three or four languages at once in the arena since childhood, “I represent the fifth generation of the circus dynasty. Of course, I had a choice: stay in the circus or do something else, but I chose the circus. I worked with elephants with my husband, trainer Christian Gaertner, for 11 years. And I’ve been doing it by myself for five months now.”

The trainer’s children Tivan and Kristel also perform, they even have their own act in this programme, created by their mother: little artists take trained geese to the arena. Miley Monnie also brought gorgeous Friesian horses to Minsk.

“This woman manages a huge household, from elephant to goose, can you imagine? Everything is under her control!” admired Vytautas Grigaliunas.

Artists of the Belarusian State Circus look great: Belarus has something to be proud of. The art of training is developing in a right direction: Sergey Prichinich, whose plump bears are so loved by the audience, taught the fluffy wards to ride hoverboards, and Andrey Teplygin introduces capuchin monkeys to the art of music.

Aerial gymnastics, which the Belarusian circus school focuses on, traditionally pleases the visitors. A sophisticated number was presented by a young aerialist Anastasia Donchenko, who takes off under the dome of the circus on a treble clef. In her rather young years — she is only 22 — Anastasia is a laureate of

serious international circus festivals, and she rises to a ten-metre height without any safety equipment.

Oleg Lobanov, equilibrist on the tightrope, replaced tightrope walker Vasily Peshkov in the Belarusian State Circus. However, the tightrope in the sense of a thick reliable cable is less about a circus, but perhaps more about an old ship’s rigging. The steel cable along which the artist moves, carrying his partner Beata Slabko either on his shoulders or on a stand held by his teeth, is only 12 millimetres thick. However, the distance is rather big, but Oleg is able to overcome it even blindfolded. Who said that the circus could not be serious?



Aleksey Matyush



Aleksey Matyush



***Such a Big Elephant* programme will last until April 29th: there is enough time to see an elephant and its sparkling accompaniment**

Absolute meanness

By Sergei Kanashits

One can only imagine how our and Russian Paralympic athletes felt when, literally a day before the opening ceremony of the Games in Beijing, they were told that they did not get to be here. Although the day before everyone was smiling, shaking hands, there was no escalation, no conflicts, no tension in the Paralympic village. There was a familiar and pleasant atmosphere of friendship and international consolidation between people of the same blood. They all had the same difficult fate, and therefore perfectly understood each other and recognised that the world is often insidious, cruel and extremely unfair. Nikolai Shudeyko, Secretary General of the Paralympic Committee of Belarus, spoke in detail at a special press conference about what and how happened in Beijing and how the ban of Belarus and Russia was decided. This situation could well become the basis for a textbook of meanness — such prevarication and falsehood could be expected from the most notorious scoundrels, but by no means from representatives of the international Paralympic community. In fact, top men, which, alas, could not and did not want to adhere to laws and justice, utterly and completely gave in to their Western masters — they all turned out to be puppets in dexterous and work-weary hands. Nikolai Nikolayevich recalled that the first decision of the International Committee was that the delegations of Russia and Belarus were allowed to participate in the neutral status. It was also meanness, but not a wicked blow. However, this decision was unacceptable for the hilarious bureaucracy, so they pulled the strings: the puppets are so obedient and weak that we ingenuously believe that they can speak. The things were instantly turned around, in spite of all procedures, democratic norms, enshrined rights and laws: Belarusians and Russians were forced to leave the Games. Nikolai Shudeyko says that none of the other athletes, as it was officially announced, was going to boycott the competitions, and even more so, there was and could not be any threat to the competition. All this, like we used to, is a pure lie and provocation. As the famous Bulgakov character would say: ‘Congrats, citizen, you done lied!’

Chairman of the Paralympic Committee of Belarus Oleg Shepel was so outraged, “I have many friends and relatives in Ukraine, I am worried about them and I call them every day to know is everything okay. Nonetheless, this entire situation should not concern sports, especially Paralympic ones, but it became a real disaster. How do physically challenged athletes tie into the current situation? What are they guilty of? Sport has become so involved in politics that there is now much

The sports world has gone crazy: now they are trying to trample down the Belarusian Paralympic athletes

The decision not to allow Belarusian and Russian athletes to participate in the Paralympics in Beijing means nothing but absurd allegations. It's not just injured party who think so. Most other physically challenged athletes also see this decision as a cynical and impudent attempt to kick us out of the sports festival. Almost everyone. From Canada and France, Italy and Germany. The sports international sympathetically and embarrassedly lowered their eyes, clapping athletes from Russia and Belarus on the shoulder after the verdict announced by the International Paralympic Committee, from which even the battle-scarred scoundrels and villains felt ashamed.



Andrew Parsons

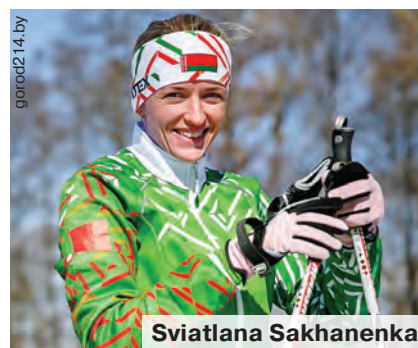
It was just a slap in the face made by such world sports leaders as the President of the International Paralympic Committee, Andrew Parsons. Physically challenged athletes, who had been preparing for these competition for four years, did not spend much time with their relatives and friends, and devoted a lot of their effort.

less sport than politics. Yes, time will pass, we will survive, we will calm down, we will find common ground and consensus, but what happened at the 2022 Paralympics defies any logic and has no justification. Neither in human terms, nor in terms of violating all norms and rights.

Physically challenged athletes, who had been preparing for these competition for four years, did not spend much time with their relatives and friends, and devoted a lot of their effort. It was just a slap in the face, a wicked blow.

Three-time champion of the Paralympic Games in cross-country skiing and biathlon Sviatlana Sakhnenka shared her pain with the mass media. She said that there were no problems in communicating with the Paralympic delegation of Ukraine — everyone greeted each other and smiled. However, later our southern neighbours seemed to have been replaced, and this

happened clearly on orders from the top officials: the Ukrainians were forbidden to communicate with our delegation. It was not without provocations from the especially crazy people: they insulted our athletes, especially in social networks, “There



Sviatlana Sakhnenka

is a feeling of misunderstanding and resentment. We were attacked by those who, on the contrary, were supposed to protect us. The International Paralympic Committee gave up its representatives even without

a fight. But we have to be strong, and we won't break.”

Returning from the cancelled Games ahead of schedule, our Paralympic athletes sang Belarusian songs at the Beijing airport.

Those who naively believe that these guys and girls can be broken are wide-eyed and foolish. Life tried to break them — and could not. They have a character and a big heart. All decisions made and sneak attacks will remain on the conscience of those who made them. According to the law of global justice, these deeds will come back to bite them later.

However, the Belarusian Sports Paralympic delegation takes part in the We Are Together games, which are held from March 16th to 21st in Khanty-Mansiysk. So every Belarusian Paralympic athlete will still get a chance to win the medal. Its significance is unlikely to be lower than the one that was vilely stolen from our athletes.

ARENA

- **Belarusian biathletes participate in the Russian Biathlon Union Cup in Ufa**



Anton Smolski of Belarus won the Men's Sprint.

Iryna Leshchanka of Belarus finished third in the Women's Sprint.

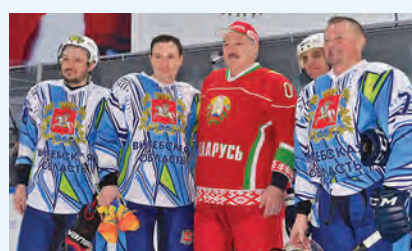
In the pursuit race at the Russian Biathlon Union Cup Belarusian biathletes occupied the entire podium. The winner of the sprint Anton Smolski became

the owner of the gold medal. Dzmitry Lazouski was second in the sprint. Another representative of Belarus, Mikita Labastau, hit the top three winners.

- **The Belarus President's team defeated the team of the Vitebsk Region at the Amateur Ice Hockey Tournament**

Belarus President's team achieved the sixth victory in the matches of the 15th National Amateur Ice Hockey Tournament for the Prize of the President's Sports Club.

On the ice of the Minsk Olympic Arena, the Belarus President's team defeated the guests from the Vitebsk Re-



gion with a score of 10:3 (4:0, 5:1, 1:2).

In six games of the first stage, the ice team of the Head of State scored 12 points and took first place. In the semi-finals, the leaders will meet with hockey players from the Gomel Region. The teams from Brest and Minsk Regions made up the second semi-final pair.

- **Belarusian archers will perform at domestic Russian tournaments**

Russian Championship, Cup and Individual Championship in archery will be held in Alushta from April 18th to May 1st. “Now we are reworking the unified calendar of competitions and are negotiating with the Belarusian Federation on joint events. We have already talked with the head coach of the Belarusian athletes, and received a positive response,” said Vladimir Yesheev, President of the Russian Archery Federation.



Aleksey Stolyarov



Photo of the week

Celebration of the Great Maslenitsa at the Belarusian State Museum of Folk Architecture and Rural Lifestyle in the Ozertso village

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



On March 17th, 1597, Sigismund III Vasa granted Vitebsk the Magdeburg rights and coat of arms — an image of the head of Jesus Christ on a blue background, under which there is a red sword.

March 18th is the Day of Internal Troops in the Republic of Belarus, a professional holiday of the country's Public Order guardians, established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus in 2001. The Internal Troops of the Republic of Belarus is a powerful security apparatus that ensures the maintenance of law and order in the republic.



March 18th is World Sleep Day. Sleep is a special form of existence of the body, no less complex than daytime wakefulness. During a properly flowing sleep, the body restores the forces spent on daytime activities.

On March 18th, 1965, the first spacewalk in history was performed. Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov was overboard the two-seat spacecraft Voskhod 2 for about 12 minutes. This mission was an important milestone in the Soviet lunar program. The entire country followed the spacewalk.



On March 19th, 1697, the Great Embassy — the first diplomatic mission of Peter I went to Western Europe from Russia.

François Le Fort, Fyodor Golovin and Prokofy Voznitsyn were the grand ambassadors. However, Peter I was also a member of the delegation incognito under the name of Peter Mikhailov, constable of the Preobrazhensky Regiment. This embassy, which lasted almost a year and a half, was the first visit of the Russian tsar to Europe.

March 20th is Signals Intelligence Service Day in the Republic of Belarus. This holiday is dedicated to the unique intelligence collection method. Humanity has not yet come up with a more effective and at the same time safe means of reconnaissance. Domestic electronic intelligence, created on the basis of units and subunits of radio and electronic intelligence of the Belarusian Military District, is the legitimate heir to the glorious military traditions of Soviet military intelligence.



March 20th is International Day of Happiness. Since 2013, the United Nations has been celebrating International Day of Happiness to recognise the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world. In 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals to end

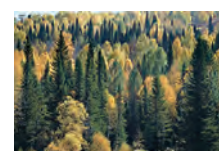


poverty, reduce inequalities and protect our planet — the three factors to achieving well-being and happiness.

March 20th is Vernal Equinox Day — one of the most unique natural phenomena. On this day, the Earth, rotating around its imaginary axis passing through the poles, while simultaneously moving around the Sun. Our planet is in such a position relative to the star that the sun's rays, carrying thermal energy, fall vertically on the equator. The sun moves from the Southern to the Northern Hemisphere, and these days in all countries the day-time is almost equal to the night.



March 21st is World Poetry Day. It was proclaimed by the decision of the 30th session of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris in November 1999. Celebrating World Poetry Day, UNESCO also draws our attention to the amazing ability of the poetic word to awaken creative skills of a person. One of the main goals of World Poetry Day is to encourage linguistic diversity and support endangered languages through poetry.



March 21st is International Day of Forests. This holiday is an occasion to inform the society about the importance of forest

conservation and its significance. The total area of forests on the planet is about a third of the land area. The problem of preserving the forest and its heritage is one of the most important environmental tasks for all countries of the world today.

March 21st is World Puppetry Day. At the suggestion of the International Puppetry Association (Union Internationale de la Marionnette, UNIMA), since 2003 it has been widely celebrated not only by professionals themselves, but also by fans of this art in many countries of the world.



March 23rd is World Meteorological Day — a professional holiday for weather forecasters of all countries. In 1950, the convention of the

World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), a specialised agency of the United Nations, came into force. It is celebrated since 1961. In the Republic of Belarus, it is known as the Day of workers of the hydrometeorological service.