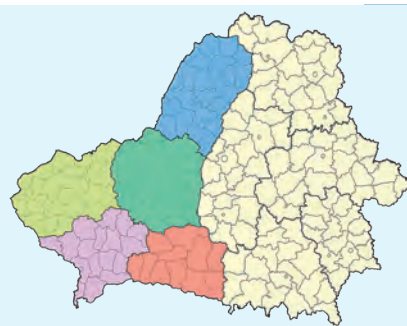




Over 130 enterprises and organisations in Belarus take a comprehensive approach to promote industrial tourism

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The reunification of Byelorussian territories in 1939 is one of the crucial milestones in the formation of our statehood

7

INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

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The capital of our Motherland is a green, cosy, dynamically developing, and amazingly beautiful city that combines historical heritage and the latest architectural solutions. In the photo: Minsk. View of Belarus' National Library

Minsk celebrates its 957th anniversary

The Belarusian capital celebrates its birthday brightly and on a large scale, as always. More than 100 cultural, sports and entertainment events are planned for Minsk's 957th anniversary. The major celebrations, united under the common title *Minsk — City for Life*, will take place during the second weekend of September. They will traditionally begin with a flower laying ceremony at the Minsk Hero City Obelisk. The central part of the city will feature the historical reconstruction festival *Minsk Starazhytny* in the green zone. The international competition *Strongest Firefighter-Rescuer*, *Olympic Day* and the *Modern Minsk* celebration will unfold near the Sports Palace. A new site — *Minsk Gubernsky*, where the atmosphere of the city of the late 19th – early 20th centuries will be recreated — will be opened for the first time in the historical centre of Minsk in the Trinity Suburb. Near the Town Hall, guests are invited to the concert programme *Music Hits of the Presidential Orchestra*. The solemn ceremony of presenting the *Minsk Resident of the Year* awards coupled with a festive concert will gather spectators at Freedom Square. A children's party and an exhibition of retro cars will be organised in Gorky Park. A spectacular fireworks display will provide a bright finale to the 957th birthday of the Belarusian capital.



About the history of Belarus — as truthfully and objectively as possible

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, convened a meeting on September 6th to discuss the architectural solution and the exposition concept of the National History Museum cultural and historical complex

The Head of State underlined while opening the meeting that the agenda featured an issue of fundamental importance for the Belarusian state — the construction of the new Belarusian National History Museum. “There should be that type of a museum that will show young visitors that we have the right to our statehood, that we have achieved it, earned it by hard work, sweat and blood, having lived not even a century but a millennium. The museum should be a vivid display of our history,” the President urged. “No matter what happens around the country, no matter how busy we are with current issues, matters of state building will always be in the centre of our attention,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said. According to the President, Belarus has done a lot in this area over the 30 years of its sovereignty. “We have



PROJECT CONCEPT

The National History Museum will be located in Minsk’s Tsentralny District within the area of Pobeditelei Avenue, Orlovskaya Street and the Svisloch River. The People’s Unity Park will be built on the former Dreamland Park site to become part of the open water-green space of the city. The new building of the National History Museum will have the shape of Belarus’ map. The museum exposition will boast exhibits and information about the history of the Belarusian lands from ancient times to the present. According to Minsk Mayor Vladimir Kukharev, plans are in place to develop a museum and park ensemble on the area of about 31 hectares and call the site the People’s Unity Park. No other construction projects are underway on this area. The area will be landscaped to feature a new park and a museum. “It will be a symbol of our country,” Vladimir Kukharev added.

decided on the approaches to the history of Belarusian statehood and the state policy on history in general. We have stopped being ashamed of some periods of our history. We speak about it honestly, openly, in the way we understand it. This resonates with particular relevance today, especially ahead of People’s Unity Day. The museum is the next step in this endeavour,” the President added.

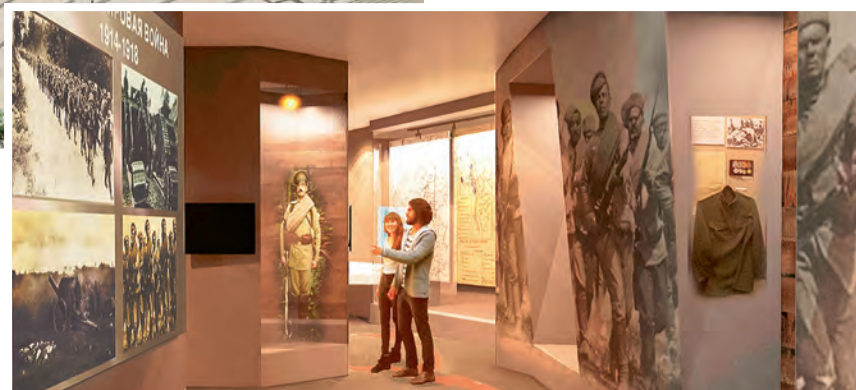
The main goal is to show the Belarusians’ hard thousand-year-long path to statehood.

“Despite all the political whirlwinds that swept over our country, Belarusian people have managed to preserve and develop their special identity, language, culture, their unique talent and peaceful nature. We have gone through a difficult path and achieved high results. This should be an object of pride, especially for our youth,” the Head of State emphasised.

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, there should not be any nationalistic or patriotic overreach in the content of the exposition. “It should reflect an objective view of our history so that both Belarusians and other peoples could agree with its interpretation or, at least, could not reject or deny it. My main requirement is to present historical facts as truthfully as possible,” the President noted.

The Head of State believes the location of the museum to be the right one. The construction of this facility will complete the look of the area that is already called the quarter of Belarusian statehood, which also includes the Palace of Independence, the Supreme Court, and the State Flag Square.

“The museum should become an iconic landmark of the country. It should delight both with its modern architecture and the interior,” Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.



‘THE MUSEUM WILL SHOWCASE THE MOST ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES’

Minister of Culture Anatoly Markevich presented the exposition concept of the future museum at a meeting. He shared some outcomes of the discussion with journalists, “The concept has been supported. There are sketch versions that have received approval, but there is very serious work ahead that will highlight the greatest history of our country.” According to Anatoly Markevich, each hall and each exposition must be filled with profound meaning, “The museum will gather the best, most advanced technologies. Our task is to ensure that the exhibition is interesting to people of all ages. We have seen leading practices in other countries and plan to apply them. We have a lot of meticulous, painstaking work ahead that will reflect our justice, independence, sovereignty, and, of course, a forward-looking vision for the future.”

WITHOUT DISTORTIONS OR FALSIFICATIONS

Vyacheslav Danilovich, Deputy Chairman of the Standing Commission on Education, Culture and Science of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly, noted, “The museum will demonstrate objectively, without distortions or falsifications, the role and significance of our ancestors during each historical period — what they accomplished and what challenges they faced to defend their right to live on this land, as they see fit.” According to the deputy, the National History Museum should become the main museum of the country, showcasing our history and modern times ‘clearly, distinctly, and expressively’. At the same time, the participants of the meeting expressed hope that the museum would become a source of pride for our country and the best in the post-Soviet space. Vyacheslav Danilovich emphasised, “The strength of the national concept of history lies in the fact that we have not excluded any period from our history. Primitive society, the period of the 9th to 13th centuries, the ancient Russian period — the Polotsk and Turov principalities, the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Russia, and Samogitia, the period of the Russian Empire (late 18th to early 20th century), and the Soviet period (1917 to 1991).” According to the deputy, it was during the Soviet era that a powerful socio-political, socio-economic, and spiritual and cultural foundation for modern Belarus was laid. The museum will also feature a hall dedicated to the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War and the history of contemporary Belarus. Historians are planning to reflect the formation of the unity of the Belarusian people after the collapse of the USSR. It is expected that the history of the difficult 1990s will be portrayed, as well as the events that unfolded after the election of the first President of Belarus to the present day. As stressed by Vyacheslav Danilovich, our country has maintained peace for 80 years already since the end of the Great Patriotic War, “We have preserved peace and tranquillity. However, we will also show the attempts to destabilise and divide society — the events that happened in 2020. Future generations must remember that we stood firm thanks to the unity of our people.”

The President said that such a facility should have been built in Belarus long time ago. “Any self-respecting state developed its fundamental buildings and museums long ago for the new generation to feel pride in what the previous generation achieved,” the Head of State pointed out. The President placed a major focus on the architectural solution, “It should reflect the national spirit of the country. The maintenance and upkeep of the building, engineering structures and other issues are of utmost importance as well.” As for the museum exposition, the Head of State believes it is important to maintain a balance between traditional canons and modern information technology. “In short, the museum should become a new world-class centre,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said, adding that it was necessary to study the museum development experience in other countries and adopt the best practices. “We are developing — and we should realise this — an object not for a year or two. In the new museum, our descendants will see a model of attitude to their past,” the President stressed.

“The museum should become a paragon of truth and objectivity. There should be no politicisation, no ‘hurrah’ for Lukashenko or anyone else who allegedly made history while the people are forgotten. Everything should be absolutely objective and on merit”.

The Head of State highlighted the need to give special attention to the most remarkable events in the country’s history, and at the same time not to hide anything. “It should reflect the policy we are pursuing in Belarus today,” the President stated.

Following the instruction of the Head of State, Minsk City Hall together with the Culture Ministry and historians has worked out all these issues. The relevant report was presented at the meeting.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Highest level of co-operation

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, has met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Belarus, Xie Xiaoyong, who is concluding his diplomatic mission in the country. "We paid very serious attention to the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Li Qiang to Belarus. We are satisfied with his visit. We are currently working hard in the Government on the development of relations concerning the issues and problems that were identified during the visit of the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China," stressed the Head of State.

The President expressed his gratitude to the Chinese side for the technical assistance provided.

"Thanks to the People's Republic of China, we are completing the construction of two social facilities that will contribute to and enhance the health of our population, and will become image-building at the same time. This includes a swimming pool and a stadium, the construction of which — I really hope — we will largely finish this year," said the Belarusian leader.

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, Belarus would like to achieve a level of co-operation with Chinese regions similar to what we have with Russian regions.

"A new topic has appeared in our bilateral relations — regional co-operation — and it is developing very well at the initiative of President Xi Jinping. Once, during our meeting, he drew my attention to China's regions,



noting that some Chinese provinces are larger than certain states in the world, both in terms of population and GDP. It is about trillions of dollars. Therefore, we have begun serious collaboration with the regions of the PRC," the Head of State emphasised.

"We will also pay great attention to this opportunity and will develop regional interaction. We would like the level of this co-operation to be approximately the same as the one we have with the regions of the Russian Federation. We already have experience in deepening and expanding such co-operation."

Aleksandr Lukashenko underscored, "I thank you for the tremendous support you provided to us when we joined the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, as well as for the support you render to us in co-operation with the BRICS countries," said the Head of State. "I would like to ask you to convey my warmest wishes to my close friend — Chairman of

the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping. I wish him good health and longevity, especially political longevity. He is a person who is not only known in Belarus but also loved. I am very glad that we have established such kind and warm relations."

The President also noted the diplomat's contribution to the development of bilateral relations. Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised that during his time in Belarus, Xie Xiaoyong had been a model of ambassadorial conduct in the host country. "I could not help but meet with you. First of all, I want to thank you for everything you have done for our country. You have done everything to strengthen our relations with China, even though they were already at a very high level," the Head of State pointed out.

"You have worked closely with us, and we signed a declaration on the all-weather comprehensive strategic partnership between Belarus and the People's Republic of China. This is a very high, probably the highest, level of relations between the states with which the People's Republic of China has relations."

Regarding the foundation of relations, Aleksandr Lukashenko remarked that the trade turnover between Belarus and China amounts to approximately \$8 billion. Thus, China is Belarus' second-largest trading partner after Russia.

Xie Xiaoyong, in turn, conveyed warm greetings to the Belarusian leader from the Chairman of the PRC, Xi Jinping, and also from Chinese Prime Minister Li Qiang. "I have worked in Belarus for over 1,400 days — that is, four years. Throughout this time, I have felt the deep and strong friendly sentiments of the Belarusian people towards me and the Chinese embassy in Belarus. I take pride in having been sent as an ambassador to friendly Belarus, and witnessing and participating in the historical process of developing Chinese-Belarusian relations," noted Xie Xiaoyong.

The ambassador also highlighted the importance of the fact that Chinese-Belarusian relations have reached a new historical height. The diplomat pointed out that over the past four years, Aleksandr Lukashenko and Xi Jinping have met four times, outlined a plan and defined the course for the development of bilateral relations.

HEAD OF STATE HAS HELD A MEETING WITH VIETNAMESE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SECURITY LƯƠNG TAM QUANG

Aleksandr Lukashenko first of all congratulated the guest on Vietnam's Independence Day, which is celebrated in the country on September 2nd. "The Vietnamese have earned this holiday with sweat and blood, they fought for it. Vietnam is a rapidly developing country, not only in Asia but also in the world. It is a well-established country," Aleksandr Lukashenko pointed out. "Vietnam and Belarus have established very warm and friendly relations. Our friendship with the Vietnamese people is based on the heroic pages of the struggle of the Vietnamese people for their independence after the Second World War. Our compatriots worked a lot in Vietnam and helped to restore the national economy both during the war and after it. We still hold the same position."

In the summer of 2024, Vietnamese President Tô Lâm was elected General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Aleksandr Lukashenko conveyed his warmest congratulations to the Vietnamese leader and an invitation to visit Belarus at any time convenient for him.

The Head of State noted that Belarus is committed to developing co-operation with Vietnam. "As for the development of international relations, Belarus and Vietnam have similar views — we stand for a multipolar world. Whether we want it or not, a multipolar world will take place. In this regard, security issues come to the forefront in this swiftly changing, very complex, and ambiguous world. I really hope that your visit to Belarus will contribute to strengthening our relations in the field of security," the Belarusian leader emphasised.

In turn, Lương Tam Quang stressed, "I would like to confirm that the current visit of the delegation of the Vietnamese Minister of Public Security to Belarus will contribute to the deepening of friendly relations not only between the two countries but also between their law enforcement agencies. This visit is very significant. I think it will be a good incentive for the development of relations between the departments of Belarus and Vietnam."

PRESIDENT OF BELARUS ALEKSANDR LUKASHENKO HAS RECEIVED IGOR SERGEYENKO, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, WITH A REPORT

"It is very important now to promote parliamentary work at the international level. After all, people's diplomacy, which should be headed by deputies, is crucial as it produces an effect. You can see this in the work of our senators [the upper house of the Belarusian parliament]. I think the House of Representatives should also act in this direction. How do you think we should organise work in this aspect?" the Head of State outlined one of the topics of the report.

Aleksandr Lukashenko asked questions about the legislative activity of deputies. As Igor Sergeyenko noted, the House of Representatives has been working in an updated composition for five months. According to him, all organisational issues that were raised, including by the Head of State, have been resolved. "All deputies live and work in decent conditions today," reported the Chairman of the House of Representatives.

Describing the current deputy corps, Igor Sergeyenko informed the President that the composition had been largely updated — 20 deputies were elected from the previous convocation to the current one, 90 people were actually new. He also said that 73 men and 37 women work in the deputy corps, 75 people have leadership experience, including leadership of labour collectives, 10 deputies have academic degrees and titles, while 70 deputies represent political parties. According to Igor Sergeyenko, these figures demonstrate that 'reputable people have been elected' to represent in Parliament the interests of the regions from which they were elected.

ALEKSANDR LUKASHENKO HAS PARDONED ANOTHER 30 PERSONS CONVICTED OF PROTEST CRIMES

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko has pardoned 30 people convicted of protest crimes, corresponding Decree No. 343 *On Pardoning Convicts* was signed by the Head of State, sb.by reports with reference to the Belarusian leader's press service

"This decision is a humane gesture towards these people. They have got a chance to return to normal life, to their families and work," the press service stressed. Among those pardoned are seven women and 23 men, most of them are parents of minors and young children.

All persons submitted for pardon were studied by the readmission commission overseeing the fugitives headed by Prosecutor General Andrei Shved. "All these persons have met the mandatory conditions for pardon: they filed a petition for pardon, admitted guilt, sincerely repented and promised to lead a law-abiding lifestyle," the Head of State's press service noted.

The Interior Ministry will ensure control over the law-abiding behaviour of these persons.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



Thriving co-operation in eastern direction



The relations between Belarus and China received a powerful impetus for development in September 2022, when, on the sidelines of the events within the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation in Samarkand, the leaders of Belarus and China adopted a joint declaration on establishing the highest level of relations in history — all-weather and comprehensive strategic partnership. This event marked a historic breakthrough for both states while the interest in deepening interagency and interregional contacts across all areas has increased manifold. The MT journalists learnt during their visit to the Vitebsktoř production branch of Vitebskoblgaz how the political decision by the leaders of the Blue-eyed country [Belarus' nickname] and the Celestial Empire are being implemented in practice.

By Olga Bogacheva

On the Silk Road

This summer was not the most favourable for the peat bogs of Vitebskoblgaz due to heavy rainfall. In July alone, the actual amount of precipitation exceeded the norm by 1.2 times. Nevertheless, despite the whims of the weather, the production is actively functioning, rapidly approaching the seasonal plan for the extraction of raised bog peat. According to Pavel Kravchenko, Director of the Vitebsktoř production branch of the Vitebskoblgaz unitary enterprise, this work will be completed, “We must get it done to ensure the uninterrupted operation of production and fulfil contractual obligations to our foreign partners. It is about our reputation and the immense effort invested in diversifying export supplies and entering new foreign



Pavel Kravchenko

1.4-fold growth — the production branch for peat extraction and processing of the Vitebskoblgaz unitary enterprise is ramping up product supplies to China

markets — first and foremost, the market of the People’s Republic of China.”

As noted by Konstantin Pochepko, Deputy General Director for Industrial and Agricultural Production at Vitebskoblgaz, the complex geopolitical conditions and the sanctions pressure from Europe, where partners have refused to co-operate with Belarusian producers, have compelled the enterprise to turn its attention to the East,

“As Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised in one of his speeches, the time of Asia has come, and it is crucial not to miss out on this opportunity. The decisions made by the leaders of Belarus and China have undoubtedly facilitated access to this Eastern market.

We began exploring it in 2022.

We obtained accreditation, worked out supply logistics, and participated in several major exhibitions where we found business partners and signed our first contracts. As a result, in 2023, we shipped

1,600 tonnes of peat products to the Celestial Empire worth \$167,000. Alongside this, our specialists have continued their active efforts to expand our presence in the Chinese market. Thus, from January to July 2024, we have already shipped the entire volume of last year — 1,600 tonnes of peat valued at \$229,000. In monetary terms, this represents growth by 1.4 times.”

Experts from Vitebskoblgaz evaluate the potential of the Chinese market highly. In just two and a half years, its share in the total volume of export shipments of peat products has risen to 13 percent. The People’s Republic of China has taken third place in the company’s export rankings following Russia and Türkiye, which account for 40 and 26 percent of shipments abroad, respectively.

“The close attention to China does not diminish our interest in other markets, including the Asian region,” remarked Konstantin Pochepko. “In 2024, we began supplying peat products to Armenia, Georgia, and Uzbekistan. Currently, we are working on delivering a trial batch to Kyrgyzstan.”

Under the sign of quality

The focus on the quality of peat products enables Vitebskoblgaz to remain competitive even under the unstable conditions of the global market, as noted by Pavel Kravchenko. It is impossible to maintain high standards without the implementation of modern technologies in the production process.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

“We are convinced that the ‘Shanghai spirit’ and comprehensive co-operation can become a strong foundation for a new architecture of the world.”

Speech at the meeting of the SCO Heads of State Council in Samarkand, on September 16th, 2022

Therefore, Vitebsktoř is continuously working on the search for and acquisition of new high-efficiency equipment both at the raw material harvesting stage and during the production process. Thus, in December 2023, all work on the installation of a big bale press machine in the agro-town of Krulevshchina was completed. The new equipment has ensured increased productivity from eight to 16 big bales per hour, as well as significantly improved packaging quality. In February 2024, an advanced packaging machine for filling bags with volumes ranging from 2.5 to 55 litres was put into operation.

This has made it possible to considerably expand the range of products manufactured for the domestic market, which accounts for half of the total sales volume. There is a fairly high level of interest among domestic consumers. Therefore, although Vitebsktoř is an export-oriented enterprise, it primarily aims to ramp up its supplies within the country. “Overall, to maintain the competitiveness of the enterprise, a wide range of activities is implemented across all

areas, which yield the desired effect. Due to this, we look to the future with confidence and are sure that all planned production, and financial and economic development indicators for 2024, including the key ones such as labour productivity and wage growth, as well as the profitability of the branch, will be achieved,” the branch manager underscored.



Iva Shvedko

Iva Shvedko

Over 130 enterprises and organisations in Belarus take a comprehensive approach to promote industrial tourism

About 6 million tourists visited Belarus last year. Foreign guests from 150 countries came to our country for new impressions, industrial enterprises being one of the most popular travel destinations. Assembling a tractor with your own hands, immersing yourself in the world of high-precision clock mechanisms, trying yourself as a dump truck driver — these and more opportunities are provided by industrial tourism, which has been gaining momentum in Belarus in recent years. Thus, in 2023, more than 200,000 people visited the country's enterprises, which is one third more than a year earlier. One of them is the Kommunarka confectionery factory. The R correspondent has also walked through the factory workshops and talked with specialists about the development prospects of industrial tourism.



MEANWHILE

The Minsk Tractor Works' press service said that this year Irwin van Gasteren and Jim ze Hennepe became the first tourists from the Netherlands to visit MTZ, taking advantage of visa-free entry, exit and stay in Belarus. A tour of the museum and a ride on a BELARUS tractor made a strong impression on them. Upon arrival home, the tourists intend to recommend Belarus to friends and family as an interesting country for tourists, and Minsk Tractor Works as a must-visit location. The Netherlands became the 31st country in the list of states whose citizens visited MTZ in 2024.

Open entrance days

By Tatyana Semenkova

Everything will be chocolate

You can feel the world of sweets right at the factory doors — the mouth-watering aroma of chocolate has permeated the entire production building. The tour begins with a visit to the tasting room, where tourists can try the latest novelties. Then guests are invited to the conference room to get an insight into the history of the company. A curious fact from the promo video is that the factory, which was established back in 1905, changed its name four times before it acquired a well-known brand in 1929. "The main raw materials for the production of chocolate and chocolate products are cocoa beans, imported to Belarus from Africa," revealed the guide, Yelena Fyodorova. "We produce about 350 types of products. The assortment is updated annually, with about 25 newly developed products. In total, we supply products to 25 countries around the world. Nearly 20 tonnes of cocoa beans are processed per day. Last year, we sold more than 30,000 tonnes of products. In order to ensure such output, continuous production has been established — 24/7, seven days a week. However, the capacity of our factory is no longer enough; therefore, from 2023, a new production site at 57 Gerasimenko Street has been under construction," noted Yelena on the way to the workshop waffle line. "We have about 1,500 employees, the majority of whom are women — 80 percent."

A nice bonus at the end of the tour is delicious gifts prepared especially for the guests.



"I will definitely come here again, with my son. He has a sweet tooth, so he will surely like it here," Marina Prokofieva, a participant in the tour, shared her emotions. "I was impressed by the production itself. I have only positive emotions!"

Another participant, Yelena Kiselyova, came to Belarus from Nizhny Novgorod, Russia. "I decided to spend my vacation in Belarus. Many Russians come here for impressions. Belarusian chocolate is very popular in Russia, so it was my dream to see the production. After all, who in their childhood did not dream of seeing how sweets, chocolate, and cocoa powder are made?" said Yelena, smiling. "I will have something to tell my family and friends when I get home!"

The factory launched industrial tourism in 2015. Today, it is not so easy to get to the enterprise — tours are scheduled for six months in advance. Since the beginning of the year, the factory has welcomed over 15,000 visitors. Overall, ten enterprises of Belgospishcheprom [Belarusian state food industry concern] offer industrial tour programmes.

TO THE POINT

Services for tourists are provided by 12 holdings of the Ministry of Industry, as well as by subsidiaries that are part of the holdings. This direction is actively promoted by enterprises of Belgospishcheprom, Bellegprom [Belarusian light industry concern], as well as by organisations of the Ministry of Architecture and Construction.

FACT

In Belarus, the Neman glass factory became a pioneer in the field of industrial tourism — it opened its doors to tourists in 1980. Industrial tourism has been actively developing since 2010, when industrial giants BELAZ and MTZ opened their workshops for tourists.

16.5 percent increase, while the number of visitors to MAZ grew by almost 1.5 times, reaching 4,500 tourists," reported Andrei Kuznetsov.

"The growing interest from the public in industrial tours is driven by several factors," reflected the Deputy Minister of Industry. "Firstly, the enterprises themselves are actively developing this direction, showcasing modern production processes and enhancing the prestige of industrial professions. They are implementing new services, raising awareness of existing tour products, and improving the quality of tourist services."

Routes of vivid impressions

As noted by Belarus' Deputy Minister of Industry Andrei Kuznetsov, our country is actively engaged in systematic efforts at the state level to develop industrial tourism, "In August 2023, the Ministry of Sports and Tourism established a list of types of tourism, their definitions, and a unified classification system for tourism in Belarus. Industrial tourism is included in this list."

Today, more than 130 enterprises and organisations in the country take a comprehensive approach to promote this direction. They have a solid foundation, established practices, and the motivation to develop industrial tourism further.

Among the enterprises of the Industry Ministry, BELAZ, MTZ, and MAZ have once again emerged as the top three leaders this year, as they did last year.

"From January to May 2024, the number of industrial tourists at BELAZ increased by nearly a quarter, amounting to around 20,100 individuals. MTZ welcomed about 16,000 tourists, marking a

WORD FROM THE EXPERT

According to Dmitry Golubnichy, analyst at the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Research (BISR), "Industry is the calling card and a source of national pride for Belarus. Public opinion reflects industrial tourism as a promising sector. Sociological research conducted within the framework of the BISR project Pulse of Society indicates that the development of industrial tourism in Belarus will contribute to the 'formation of a brand and loyalty towards manufactured products' (68 percent of respondents), 'will attract motivated youth to the industry' (54 percent), as well as 'will foster patriotic consciousness among citizens' (46 percent). When asked what the primary brand of Belarus is, many respondents emphasised industry (70 percent). Industrial tourism also holds significant importance for the Union State, as it allows demonstrating, through concrete examples, successful integration and co-operation, including the remarkable legacy of the Soviet era."



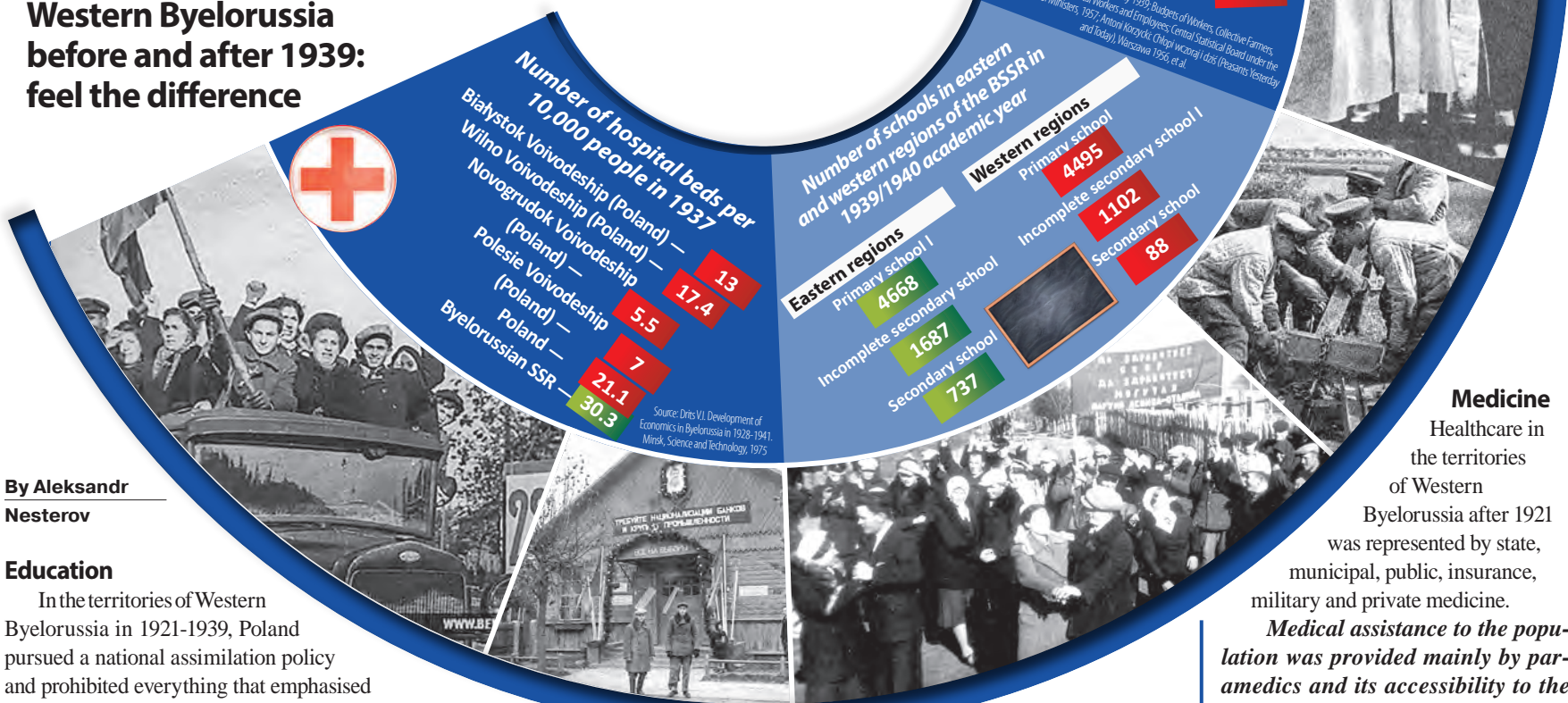
The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"We will remember — we cannot otherwise — and remind everyone that when in alliance with the East Slavic neighbours (Kievan Rus, the Russian Empire, the USSR), the Belarusian lands developed, while in the arms of the West, where we were more than once, we declined and degraded as a nation. We were robbed and destroyed as an ethnic group both in the time of the Rzeczpospolita (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) and during the 20-year period when Poland ruled over our western lands — the lands that even today the Polish elites call their Kresy Wschodnie [Eastern Borderlands]."

From a speech at the patriotic forum *This is OUR History!* on September 17th, 2022

It is good where we are

Western Byelorussia before and after 1939: feel the difference



By Aleksandr Nesterov

Education

In the territories of Western Byelorussia in 1921-1939, Poland pursued a national assimilation policy and prohibited everything that emphasised the national identity of the local population. At the time of the region's annexation to Poland, there were about 400 Byelorussian schools, two teachers' seminaries, and secondary schools in Wilno, Novogrudok, Radoshkovich, Nesvizh, and Kletsk. By 1924, only 37 schools and four gymnasiums remained. Before reunification with the BSSR (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), there were no Byelorussian schools left in Western Byelorussia, and the last gymnasium in Wilno was turned into a branch of the Polish state gymnasium.

With the advent of Soviet power, they began to raise the general level of education and to open Byelorussian schools in Western Byelorussia. Universal compulsory education was fixed: in the city — 7 years, in rural areas — 4 years. Since January 1940, Soviet curricula were introduced in schools in the western regions. New personnel were needed; therefore, pedagogical institutes were opened in the region. By 1941, five teaching institutes had already operated in the western regions of the republic.

Culture

In order to build a Great Poland, the authorities of our western neighbour country aimed to educate the entire multinational population in the spirit of universal 'Polishness'. The national culture of Byelorussians was not taken into account. Thus, the theatre in Grodno, which was opened after renovation, staged mainly plays by Polish authors.

According to statistics, there were 103 theatres in Poland in 1936. Of those, 67 were Polish, 16 were Russian and Ukrainian, and 15 — Jewish. There were no Lithuanian or Byelorussian theatres at all.

After the liberation of Western Byelorussia, theatrical life was noticeably revived. The Polesie Regional Drama Theatre was established in Pinsk in the autumn of 1939. From 1939 until the beginning of the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War, the State Polish Theatre operated in Grodno since a significant part of the local population understood the Polish language better.

In 1939-1941, 100 cinemas, 92 cultural centres, and 220 libraries were opened in Western Byelorussia. Byelorussian-language periodicals appeared in all regional cities and district centres.

Agricultural industry

About 80 percent of Western Byelorussia's residents were employed in agriculture. In 1922, 4,500 landowners (0.9 percent of farms) owned nearly 4.7m hectares of land, which accounted for 58 percent of the land fund that was privately owned. Ninety-nine percent of the villagers accounted for only 42 percent of the land. The peasants suffered not only from lack of land but also from heavy taxes, including land, municipal, road, investment, crisis, emergency, insurance, and other taxes. The rural population of the western Byelorussian lands constantly lived in debt.

In the first Soviet decades, cultivated areas of the BSSR increased and by 1940 amounted to 127 percent compared to the level of 1913. Meanwhile, in the west, they decreased by 0.3 percent between 1930 and 1939.

The mechanisation of labour in agriculture in the eastern regions of the republic made a significant number of human resources available. By 1937, there were 8,100 tractors, over 700 combine harvesters and 2,200 trucks in the agriculture of the BSSR.

By 1939, there were 33 tractors and only nine tractor ploughs in landlords' farms within the borders of Baranovichi Region. According to researchers, there were only 900 tractors in Poland in 1937. For comparison: at the end of 1940, 101 machine and tractor stations were created in the western regions of the BSSR, including 997 tractors.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- According to the Riga peace treaty of March 18th, 1921, more than 110,000 sq.km with a population of over three million people were ceded to Poland. After reunification, the territory of the BSSR increased to 225,700 sq.km, and the population — to over 10m people.
- The territory of Western Byelorussia occupied 24 percent of the total area of Poland, and the population accounted for 13 percent of the total population, while only three percent of the country's industrial products were produced there.
- After the reunification of the Byelorussian territories in 1939, landless peasants of the western regions received 431,000 hectares of land.
- Ethnic Byelorussians among the landowners of Western Byelorussia were only 8.7 percent. Most of them were small landowners, while large Byelorussian landowners, who had in possession over 1,000 hectares, made up only four percent.
- As of September 17th, 1939, there were 66 hospitals with 2,989 beds within the borders of Western Byelorussia, as follows from the internal memo of the People's Commissar of Health of the BSSR, Ivan Novikov, to the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia (Bolsheviks), Panteleimon Ponomarenko, on September 11th, 1940. The provision of beds for the population in the BSSR was 70 percent higher than in pre-war Poland.

Medicine
Healthcare in the territories of Western Byelorussia after 1921 was represented by state, municipal, public, insurance, military and private medicine.

Medical assistance to the population was provided mainly by paramedics and its accessibility to the villagers was extremely low. In the Polesie Voivodeship, one site was responsible for 46,000 inhabitants and 1,675 sq.km; in Novogrudok — 47,000 inhabitants and 1,235 sq.km. There was no sanitary service at all and its functions were assigned to district and neighbourhood doctors. There were no anti-tuberculosis, anti-venereal, or children's clinics.

After joining the BSSR, it was required to inculcate the principles of unified public healthcare, expand the network of medical institutions, staff them, and ensure free and accessible medical care. By the beginning of 1941, four children's hospitals, six children's polyclinics, 18 children's consultation centres, 26 maternity clinics, 69 emergency medical stations, 12 anti-tuberculosis and 15 skin and STD clinics had already functioned in the western regions of Byelorussia.

The people of Belarus endured a period of artificial disunity during the last century. Following the signing of a peace treaty in Riga on March 18th, 1921, between Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine on one side and Poland on the other, half of the republic's territory was ceded to its western neighbour. It was only in the autumn of 1939 that historical justice was restored. Pavel Trubchik, Deputy Director for Scientific Work at the Institute of History of Belarus' National Academy of Sciences, has shared insights on the significance of that event.

Consolidation effect

The reunification of Byelorussian territories in 1939 is one of the crucial milestones in the formation of our statehood

By Aleksandr Nesterov

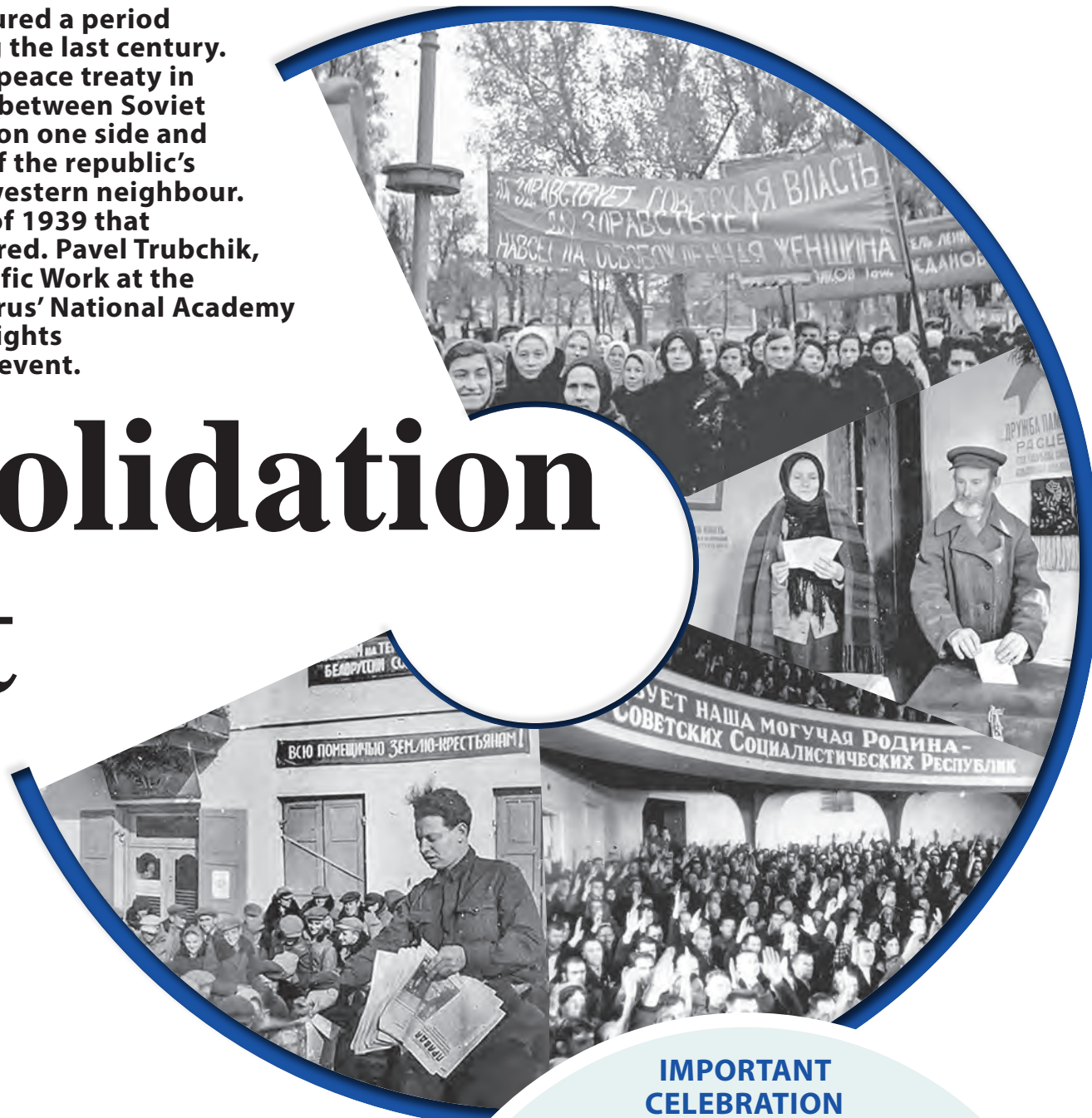
Belarusians were not asked

— The events of September 1939 made the existence of modern Belarus — a sovereign and self-sufficient nation within the borders we recognise today — possible. Undoubtedly, the reunification of Byelorussian lands is one of the crucial milestones in the formation of Belarusian statehood, the key components of which include territory, language, and culture. But what happened back in 1921? Byelorussia, its territory and its people were artificially divided. Half of its land, home to over three million people, the majority of whom were ethnical Byelorussians, was ceded to another state. It is worth noting that representatives of Byelorussia were not invited to Riga in 1921, where the peace treaty was drafted.

Thus, the western territories remained under the jurisdiction of another state for nearly 20 years. The situation for the majority of the population was quite dire. The Polish government implemented a discriminatory economic, social, and national policy. For instance, there were about 400 Byelorussian schools on the territory of Western Byelorussia in 1921, whereas not a single one remained by 1939. Industry barely developed, with the exception of agricultural production. Meanwhile, the Polish authorities pursued a course aimed at extracting resources from Byelorussian lands. The wages of the inhabitants of Western Byelorussia were lower compared to those in the rest of Poland, and access to medical care was virtually non-existent. The social sector saw little to no development. It is no coincidence that the years 1921 to 1939 witnessed significant waves of migration of the population from Western Byelorussia to Western Europe and the USA. These are not mere allegations but irrefutable facts backed by archival materials.

— If we assert today that the reunification of Byelorussia in 1939 was an act of historical justice, does that accurately reflect the reality?

— Without a doubt. When the Red Army entered Western Byelorussia on September 17th, 1939, it encountered virtually no resistance; there were only isolated



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"If the Red Army had not moved its troops to the west, towards Brest and Grodno, at that time, Germans may not have stopped at that western border. They could have come to the gates of Minsk. I dare say today that if in 1939, two years prior to the fascist invasion of the Soviet Union, Germans had been close to Minsk, the Great Victory of 1945 would not have been possible. A mere stride to Moscow — and the Soviet Union would have ceased to exist."

Extract from a speech at the Symbol of Unity forum of patriotic forces, on September 17th, 2021

pockets of opposition from the Polish army. The population warmly welcomed the Soviet troops almost everywhere, and by September 25th, the entire western territory of the republic was liberated and ultimately became part of the BSSR (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic).

Facts without insinuations

— What is the historical significance of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed between the USSR and Germany on August 23rd, 1939, which subsequently made the liberation of Western Byelorussia possible?

— Today, we can confidently state that the Soviet leadership was primarily focused on safeguarding the interests of their country. Previous attempts to establish an anti-Hitler coalition had proven unsuccessful. Neither France nor England, who verbally acknowledged the need to resist Nazi Germany, took any meaningful action. That is why that agreement was signed. The USSR had one goal — to delay the onset of military hostilities. There was no intent to

IMPORTANT CELEBRATION

In 1939, the People's Assembly of Western Byelorussia declared September 17th as the day of liberation for working people of Western Byelorussia from the oppression of the bourgeoisie and landowners. This day was celebrated widely in 1940 across the BSSR in this very context. After the end of the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War, the memorable date was mentioned at a union-wide level for the last time in 1949. Subsequently, the Soviet leadership issued a directive to temper the celebrations to avoid offending the Polish People's Republic, which by that time had become an important political, economic, and military ally of the USSR.

enter into an alliance with Germany.

Moreover, at that

time, Germany had agreements with numerous other states regarding co-operation, economic assistance, and so on. And what of it? For our republic, the pact had a positive impact, as it facilitated the reunification of Western Byelorussia with the BSSR.

In the public domain

— One of the objectives of the National Unity Day celebration is to preserve historical truth and convey it to new generations of Belarusians. What work is the Institute of Belarus' National Academy of Sciences undertaking in this regard?

— Our institute devotes significant attention to the topic of Belarusian statehood formation. In addition to arranging and participating in various events dedicated to the interwar period of the first half of the last century, we engage in research and preparation of thematic publications, as well as collections of documents. In particular, between 2018 and 2020, we published a five-volume series titled History of Belarusian Statehood, the third volume of which examines and characterises the stages, forms, directions, and peculiarities

of the development of Belarusian national statehood within the context

of global geopolitical transformations from 1917 to 1939. We also released a collection of scholarly works titled The Riga Peace of 1921 and Belarus (in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the treaty). Society now shows heightened interest in the circumstances surrounding the signing of the Riga peace treaty and the overall period of Western Byelorussia's inclusion within the Polish state. These publications are available in the public domain, in libraries. We are currently collaborating with colleagues from various universities to prepare a multi-volume edition titled History of Belarus. This is going to be a fundamental comprehensive work that, taking into account new approaches and new sources, will address key topics crucial for a thorough understanding of the processes of land settlement in Belarus from prehistoric times (the pre-state period), the formation and development of the Belarusian people and their statehood from the 9th to the 21st centuries, as well as innovative questions, which have previously been overlooked or unpublished for various reasons. The events of 1939 will also receive extensive coverage.



Volkswagen employees meet in Wolfsburg to hear about company fortunes and possible plant closures, Germany, September 4, 2024

Volkswagen considers closing factories in Germany

Volkswagen is weighing whether to close factories in Germany for the first time in its 87-year history as it moves to deepen cost cuts amid rising competition from China's electric vehicle makers

In a recent statement, the German automaker, one of the world's biggest car companies, said that it could not rule out plant closures in its home country. Other measures to 'future-proof' the company include trying to terminate an employment protection agreement with labour unions, which has been in place since 1994.

"The European automotive industry is in a very demanding and serious situation," said Volkswagen Group CEO Oliver Blume. "The economic environment became even tougher, and new competitors are entering the European market. Germany in particular as a manufactur-

ing location is falling further behind in terms of competitiveness."

Volkswagen, which embarked on a €10bn (\$11.1bn) cost-cutting effort late last year, is losing market share in China, its single biggest market. In H1 2024, deliveries to customers in that country slipped 7 percent on the same period in 2023. Group operating profit tumbled 11.4 percent to €10.1bn (\$11.2bn).

The lackluster performance in China comes as the company loses out to local EV brands, notably BYD, which also pose an increasing threat to its business in Europe.

"Our main area of action is cost cut-

ting," Blume told analysts on an earnings call last month, citing planned reductions to factory, supply chain and labour expenses. "We have done all the organisational steps needed. And now it is about costs, costs and costs," he added.

Volkswagen's cost-cutting plans will face heavy resistance from labour representatives, which hold almost half the seats on the company's supervisory board, the body that appoints executive managers.

IG Metall, one of Germany's most powerful unions, blamed mismanagement for the firm's shortcomings and vowed to fight to protect jobs.

No link between mobile phone use and brain cancer

Researchers from the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) published the results of a systematic review into the potential health effects of radio wave exposure from mobile phones

The review, commissioned by the World Health Organisation (WHO), analysed the results of over 5,000 studies conducted between 1994 and 2022, and found that brain tumour rates have remained steady despite a widespread increase in mobile phone usage in the same period.

"When the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified radio wave exposure as a possible carcinogen to humans in 2013, it was largely based on limited evidence from human observational studies," ARPANSA's Ken Karipidis, who led the review, said in a media release.

"This systematic review of human observational studies is based on a much larger dataset compared to that examined by the IARC, that also includes more recent and more comprehensive studies, so we can be more confident that exposure to radio waves from wireless technology is not a human health hazard," he added.

The research also concluded that there is no link between prolonged mobile phone use or the amount of mobile phone use and cancer.



New EU travel rules for tourists

The new rules require travellers to complete an online application, provide personal details, answer security questions and pay a €7 fee

Starting in 2025, travellers, including British tourists post-Brexit, will face new rules when visiting Europe, leading to more bureaucratic procedures.

The European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) is a new system that non-EU travellers will have to navigate. ETIAS requires travellers to complete an online application, provide personal details, answer security questions and pay a €7 fee. Under the new ETIAS rules, travellers from non-EU countries will have to apply before visiting the Schengen Area, which includes most EU countries as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Most travellers from outside the EU

will need to comply with ETIAS, but there are some exceptions. The fee will be waived for children under 18 and adults over 70, although they will still need to apply for authorisation.

Independent travel expert Rob Staines explained the impact of this change for British tourists, "We were asked to be deemed a third country when we left the European Union and this is extra red tape and extra layers of complexity when it comes to travel."

He added, "It is one of those situations that we just do have to keep an eye on, but actually, yes, it's going to make travel harder. It's going to make travel slightly more expensive for us as well."

Robot waiters in Kenya create buzz

AI-powered robot servers at an eatery in Nairobi are drawing crowds and praise for innovation

This is the Robot Cafe, believed to be the first of its kind in Nairobi and East Africa, where three robots glide among human waiters serving food to mesmerised customers.

The three pre-programmed robots — which are named Claire, R24 and Nadia — were acquired for entertainment. Cafe owner Mohammed Abbas says he experienced robot service in Asian and European countries and decided to invest in them.

"It was very expensive to import the robots," he says, but adds that the investment has borne fruit, because the restaurant is 'often busy with curious customers'

who come to experience robot service.

The robots aren't programmed to have a full conversation with customers, but they can say 'Your order is ready, Welcome' and then people have to press an exit button after picking up their food from the tray.

They are commanded by waiters through an application on an iPad.

Human waiters are still important in the operations of the cafe, because they take orders from customers who don't use the online ordering option. The waiters then place the food on the robot tray when it's ready and deliver drinks in person.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Difficult breathing

Harmful emissions are the scourge of Western cities

For many years, Western 'experts' have been trying to assure a broad audience that Europe is nothing short of an earthly paradise — a beautiful blooming garden, according to Josep Borrell — while the rest of the world is a dirty and wild jungle where people live poorly and dream of finding refuge under the wing of 'true' civilisation. The incessant mention of air quality has been one of the small yet significant fragments of this distorted worldview. Supposedly, in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, this indicator is exceedingly poor, whereas enlightened Europe shows genuine concern for its inhabitants by relocating polluting industries to safer locations and implementing complex filtration systems on factories. But is that really true?



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"Belarus calls upon all those who must bear the burden of historical responsibility: firstly, to make a proportional contribution to addressing climate security issues after centuries of thoughtless disregard for nature; secondly, to enhance support for developing countries and economies in transition; and thirdly, to stop expressing mere concerns and start taking action to preserve life on Earth."

At the UN Climate Summit in Dubai, on December 1st, 2023

By Anton Popov

'Blooming garden' turns into hell

There is a mere kernel of truth in this concept since the Global South and East indeed have a lot of locations where air quality leaves much to be desired. However, local authorities and populations bear little blame for this — it is predominantly businesses, often linked to Western corporations, that pollute the air, operating on the principle of 'the lower costs for wages and environmental standards, the higher profits'. Typically, the bigwigs of those environmentally hazardous enterprises escape responsibility, or any punishment they receive is merely symbolic. A stark reminder of this is the chemical disaster in Bhopal, India's Madhya Pradesh, in 1984, when methyl isocyanate escaped and killed around five thousand people on the first day, leading to at least another fifteen thousand deaths in the years that followed. The total number of affected individuals is estimated to be between 150,000 and 600,000. The US-owned Union Carbide Pesticide Plant managed to quell the outrage and evade litigation with just \$470 million — an average of \$2,100 for each deceased, while the injured, many of whom were left disabled, received a laughably small amount of \$500 to \$800.

But let us return to the 'blooming garden', for it harbours no fewer dangerous surprises.

According to recent studies, 98 percent of Europe's population reside in cities where the annual average concentration of dust and fine particles exceeds the maximum permissible limits set by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The only exceptions are four countries: Iceland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

Currently, the contenders for the title of the most polluted air in Europe are the Po Valley in Italy, alongside major cities like Paris, Athens, and Barcelona. An eloquent fact: just ten days before the scandal-ridden Paris 2024 Olympics, an air quality monitoring organisation in the Île-de-France region announced that critical levels of nitrogen dioxide pollution had been exceeded at 95 percent of the 112 sports facilities in the area. One might argue that in any large modern city, the air quality situation is unlikely to be particularly rosy. Yet even in locations with seemingly pristine environments, the air state is far from ideal. Thus, observations conducted by scientists from Toulouse at the end of the last decade debunked the myth that the cleanest air in Europe can be found in the Alps. A group of researchers, during the winter of 2017-2018, analysed the data collected at the Bernadouze meteorological station at an altitude of approximately 1,500 metres, and discovered that the microplastic content was around 365 particles per day, per square metre. As the Toulouse specialists conclude, the optimal altitude for walks in the Alps is three thousand metres and higher above sea level.

Dirty United States

Across the Atlantic, the situation with air pollution is escalating even faster than in Europe. Data from the U.S. National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reveals that the country has set a new unfortunate record for atmospheric contamination by micro-particles and greenhouse gases such as CO₂, methane, and nitrous oxide over the past year. Reports indicate that levels of carbon dioxide have been steadily rising for the last 11 years, at the fastest rate seen in 65 years.

According to the American Lung Association, the dirtiest cities in the United States, in terms of air quality, are primarily located in California. This state is also home to five locations with the highest levels of acute pollution.

Some particularly zealous 'green' activists seem to forget that modern civilisation cannot progress without the use of its main pollutant — fossil fuels and their derivatives — since alternative energy sources have failed so far to replace oil, gas, and coal. In other words, calls for radical air purification are akin to demands for a regression of civilisation.

Nuclear energy could provide a real alternative, as demonstrated by Belarus. However, the pseudo-green lobby in the West, often comprised of self-proclaimed experts or outright deceivers, wields such influence that nuclear power plants continue to be shut down.

Major threat to humanity

The term 'air pollution' has long become a cliché. Meanwhile, this phenomenon is extremely serious and requires heightened attention. According to WHO data, approximately 6.7 million premature deaths worldwide each year are attributed to the 'combined effects of ambient (outdoor) and household (indoor) air pollution'.

Research from Nanyang Technological University in Singapore indicates that between 1980 and 2020, roughly 135 million people died due to air pollution. The European Environment Agency reported that in 2021 alone, PM_{2.5} particles — those measuring 2.5 microns — in the air were responsible for the deaths of 253,000 people in Europe.

Air pollution causes a range of health problems, affecting individuals regardless of gender or age. The issue of air quality is one of the fundamental challenges facing civilisation at this stage of development.

It can only be addressed through international co-operation; however, the West prefers to spend enormous resources on militarisation and inciting conflicts in various parts of the world — that also contribute significantly to air pollution — rather than work collaboratively with the rest of the world. After all, it is far more convenient to speak of a blooming garden and wild jungles while ignoring how the air in one's own cities gradually becomes poison.



OASIS OF CLEANLINESS

In terms of air quality, Belarus is an exceptionally comfortable place to live. As reported by Yelena Melnik, Head of Environmental Information Service at Belhydromet (Republican Centre for Hydrometeorology, Control of Radioactive Contamination and Environmental Monitoring), during a press conference following the first half of 2024, 'the air quality in Belarusian populated areas is primarily characterised as very good, good, and moderate'. There are few factors that could worsen this situation, and they are mostly objective. Thus, a slight decline in air quality was observed in late March to early April due to Sahara dust reaching Belarus.



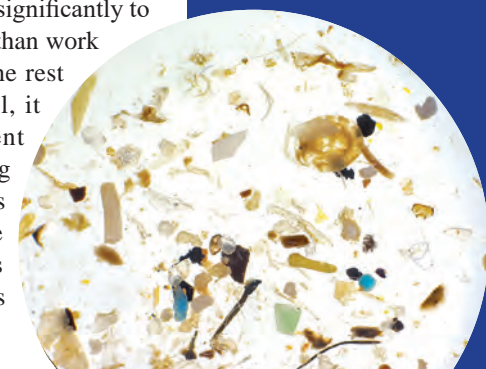
NUMBER

More than 137 million Americans live in areas with unhealthy levels of air pollution.



FACT

Particulate air pollution remains the world's greatest external risk to human health.



Grain growers deservedly enjoy special honour and respect. In autumn, when the harvesting campaign comes to an end, large-scale heartwarming festivities are traditionally held in honour of grain growers in every region across Belarus.

By Sofia Arsenyeva

See the agricultural show

There is no such thing as easy bread. However, the harder you work, the more enjoyable it is to relax afterwards. Wouldn't you agree? Lavish celebrations at the end of the agricultural season continue the ancient Slavic tradition, which has been preserved through the efforts not of individual enthusiasts or private structures but of the whole country.

The vibrant atmosphere of Dazhynki is very similar to the fair depicted in the famous film *Cossacks of the Kuban* [a Soviet musical comedy of 1949 glorifying the life of the farmers in Kuban Region] with brisk trade, lively concerts and contests, honouring agricultural enterprises and leaders. The celebration starts with a large procession through the main streets — a bright carnival stretching for kilometres, featuring beautiful girls in national costumes, parades of agricultural machinery, pyramids of delicious fruits and vegetables of the new harvest. The show attracts thousands of viewers.



Time to enjoy Dazhynki celebrations



Taste the fragrant loaf

The main star at Dazhynki is the last sheaf of grain harvested from the field. Bread grains have long been considered a symbol of wealth and fertility. Special attention is also paid to the gorgeous fragrant loaf baked from the flour of the new harvest. The size of the loaf serves as a testament to the season's success; in recent years, this pastry has been multi-tiered weighing tens, and in some cases even hundreds, of kilogrammes. Its golden crust is often adorned with elaborate fancy decorations, such as edible birds and flowers, fruits and iconic landmarks.



Win a goat or a piglet

A favourite pastime at Dazhynki is participating in a win-win lottery. The prize pool includes not only clay cups and souvenirs made of flax but also substantial items like a live pig, a calf or a goat. These will definitely come in handy on the farm!

Fairs are also about trade. The handicraft business in Belarus is on the rise today, with young people actively mastering skills in weaving and embroidery, engaging in blacksmithing and straw weaving, creating furniture and carving wooden dishes. Visitors can attend masterclasses conducted by professionals who will teach the basics and inspire independent creativity.



Master folk dances

Lyavonikha, Kryzhachok, Polka, Bazaar, Karapet, Vesyalukha... We advise you to learn these dances if you plan to attend Dazhynki. There is nothing more joyful than dancing to your heart's content to the orchestra of rural musicians. You will hear the groovy sounds of the accordion, violin, dulcimer, tambourine, and pipe performed live.

By the way, the above dances are meant to be danced in pairs. National culture beautifully showcases the traditional values of the Belarusian people. The gestures of hugging, twirling, and supporting each other reflect our ancestors' skills at romantic courtship.

The programme will also feature a big concert on the main stage, where amateur groups will perform non-stop in turn with professional ensembles. Special emphasis is placed on the folk repertoire as it resonates with the soul and reflects eternal values.

Appreciate the field art

In the twenty-first century, Belarusians seem to have invented a new form of creative expression, making ingenious sculptures and even extraordinary castles in the fields using straw bales. Inventive farmers transform animal feed into impressive creations, including bears and bison, tractors and steam locomotives, funny and whimsical figures of men, and recognisable buildings.

An informal championship has been established among the farms — a farm whose works are more popular with people as photo objects is a winner. Although with the onset of cold weather, all art objects are removed from fields to be fed to cattle, this artistic trend continues to gain popularity and acquires a greater scale across the country with each season.



Pavel Bogush

Andrei Sazonov

Pavel Bogush

BELTA

BELTA

Strong in spirit

Belarusian Paralympians have returned home from Paris

We can safely call people like them people with unlimited possibilities. Belarusian athletes put up a scintillating performance and came back home from the Paralympics with their heads held high. The Belarusian team has won seven medals!

By Sergei Kanashits

Cheers of admiration ‘Well done!’, ‘Great job!’, ‘Nailed it!’ and ‘You have glorified the country!’ were heard from all sides to greet our brave athletes during the solemn meeting of the delegation at the airport. The words were drowned in a sea of smiles, flowers, greetings and happy laughter, and were perfectly complemented by the glitter of medals proudly looking at everyone from the chest of the athletes who came back home. The composition of our delegation was incredibly small this time — only eight athletes managed to win the right to perform in France under conditions of severe discrimination. However, never had our team been so close-knit and friendly, and gracefully upheld the honour of the country. The last sonorous chord of the Belarusian national team at the Paris 2024 Paralympics was Dzmitry Salei’s silver in the 100-metre butterfly S12 on the final day of the competition.

CONGRATULATIONS

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko has congratulated Dzmitry Salei, a member of the national Paralympic sports team, on winning silver at the Paris 2024 Paralympics. “I am sincerely glad that thanks to your perseverance, character and high athletic skills, you have risen to the podium once again. Well done!” the congratulatory message reads. Aleksandr Lukashenko wished Dzmitry Salei good health, well-being and new achievements.

Earlier, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko congratulated Ihar Boki, a member of the national Paralympic sports team, on setting a world record and winning five gold medals, as well as Yahor Shchalkanau, a member of the national Paralympic sports team, on securing a gold medal at the Paris 2024 Paralympics.

Let us remind that earlier, magnificent Ihar Boki became the five-time champion and the main hero of the Paris competitions, who brought the score of his Paralympic titles to a truly incredible number — 21 gold medals — five each in London 2012, Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024, and six in Rio 2016! Yahor Shchalkanau, the youngest member of the Belarusian Paralympic team, also brought a gold medal from Paris, contributing to the overall success.



Ihar Boki with his wife and daughter

The Motherland welcomed the triumphant return of its heroes with open arms, and dozens of meeters and greeters who arrived at the airport, despite the rather late time on Sunday, rewarded athletes and their coaches with well-deserved ovations. Congratulatory notes from the President of Belarus and the head of the National Olympic Committee were read out and handed over to the triumphant. The solemn meeting would not be complete without the traditional bread and salt welcome, followed by a folk choir with songs and dances that added to even more festive and vibrant atmosphere, and recharged the batteries of the victorious athletes tired after a long trip.

It goes without saying that Ihar Boki was in the limelight. The first thing he did was hug his wife and take his baby daughter in his arms while shining brighter than all his gold medals.

“I will try to continue to develop, work hard and win medals,” the multichampion reassured everyone. “Despite the fact that we competed in Paris in a neutral status and without a flag, we keenly felt the support of our fans throughout all the Games. Everyone knew who we were and from which country, they knew that we represented Belarus. This added strength as we fought not only for ourselves. Now we will have a bit of rest and go back to fight for new victories!”

Aryna Sabalenka has won 27 of the 28 major matches played on hard courts over the past two years, losing only to Cori Gauff in the 2023 US Open final. By winning the decisive match of the 2024 US Open on September 7th, the Minsk-born tennis player closed the gestalt. Good job!

The President of Belarus has congratulated Aryna Sabalenka on her brilliant victory on the courts of New York, “Dear Aryna! I congratulate you on your brilliant victory at the US Open. In intense matches against the world ranking leaders, you showed all your best athletic qualities. Wherever the competitions take place, I am sure that you feel the energy and fervent support of your fans in Belarus.” Aleksandr Lukashenko wished the athlete good health and new victories.

Hard court queen

Aryna Sabalenka has successfully carried out error correction work



By Sergei Gordienko

Taking into account the January victory at the Australian Open, Sabalenka won her second Grand Slam title this season. The final in New York against Jessica Pegula from the USA turned out to be very difficult for Aryna, but she managed to draw a lesson from her bitter defeat in 2023, did not flinch at the end of both sets and deserved the victory — 7:5, 7:5.

In last year’s final against Coco Gauff, the Belarusian clinched the first set but then yielded under the pressure of the stands. This time, in New York, Aryna was constantly stressing: That lesson has been learnt, it will not happen again.

The final against Pegula checked Sabalenka for rupture in the second set. The Belarusian took a 3-0 lead and had a break point, but tenacious Pegula first managed to hold her serve, and then won five games in a row. Five! With the score 5:3 in favour of the American tennis player, the stands were passionately cheering for their home favourite and many already believed in the possibility of a third set. However, Sabalenka returned to her former self and won the end of the set, match and major in style. “I’m speechless right now. I can’t put two words together. I’m very happy. I remember all the tough losses here at the US Open. They say you’re gonna see the reason later. I see the reason right now,” Aryna both cried and laughed during the on-court interview. “I’ve been through a lot on and off the court. I just figured out for myself how to control my emotions and stay balanced. I had to go through tough lessons to hold this beautiful trophy. I think I’m the happiest person in the world right now.”

The days, weeks, and months that fit between Sabalenka’s two triumphs included the breakup

and the tragedy with Konstantin Koltsov, a shoulder injury and a frustrating defeat to the rising tennis star, Mirra Andreeva, in the Roland Garros quarterfinals, skipping Wimbledon and the Olympics, Formula 1 and the newfound formula of love with Brazilian Greek Georgios Frangulis, the painful search for the previous form and return to Cincinnati. Since then, she has played 12 matches and won all of them.

Sabalenka has become only the fifth tennis player in the Open Era to win both hard court majors in one season following Monica Seles (1991 and 1992), Steffi Graf (1988 and 1989), Angelique Kerber (2016) and Martina Hingis (1997). In total, the Belarusian athlete has 16 WTA titles.

The reaction of the tennis world underlines the fairness of the Belarusian’s success. “Amazing win for Aryna. Congratulations. Best player in the world this season!” Victoria Azarenka, who has played in the US Open finals three times but never won, posted a congratulatory message on her social network page. These are the words from great Martina Navratilova, “Congratulations to Aryna on her third Grand Slam victory and her first at the US Open. Today it is deserved!” Sabalenka’s main rival on the tennis tour, five-time Grand Slam champion, Poland’s Iga Świątek, extended her congratulations to the Belarusian, “Congratulations, Aryna. A wonderful tournament.” Now, even taking into account the victory at the US Open, Sabalenka is more than two thousand points behind Iga — and therefore there is no struggle between them for the title of the first racket of the world — but in the race to the WTA Championships at the end of the calendar year, the gap between the Belarusian and the Polish is only 409 points. Why doesn’t Sabalenka compete for the champion title in 2024?



Photo of the week

Yelizaveta Kobetskaya

The trainees of the honoured amateur dance ensemble *Chabarok* — brothers Matfei, Yelisei and Pavel Kuzmenkov — are passionate about folk dancing

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



September 12th is International Crochet Day. This knitting technique is believed to have an ancient history. However,

documents suggest that it only appeared and spread in the early 19th century. Available in terms of learning, crochet has gained wide popularity due to the possibility of creating beautiful, unique and diverse items.

On September 12th, the Republic of Belarus celebrates the Day of Preliminary Investigation Bodies' Employees. The investigative agencies stand guard over the rule of law and play a crucial role in strengthening statehood and justice.



On September 13th, 1929, Alexander Fleming publicly revealed his discovery of penicillin for the first time. While conducting

a routine experiment to study the human body's fight against infectious diseases, he quite accidentally found out that ordinary mold synthesises a substance that destroys infectious agents, and discovered a molecule that he called penicillin. Penicillin has become indispensable medicine and has saved the lives of many people around the world.



September 14th is World First Aid Day. In today's society, emergency medical care remains one of the most critical factors in saving people's lives around the world.

The ability of each of us to provide first aid to a victim before the arrival of rescue services can play a vital role in saving a person's life.

September 15th is Library Day in the Republic of Belarus. The first collections of books in the country appeared in the 11th century. Currently, there are about 3,000 public libraries in Belarus. The main book depository of the country is the National Library, founded in 1922. Its new building in the shape of a huge glass diamond has become a landmark in Minsk. Today, over nine million books and three million periodicals are available to readers in the National Library of Belarus.



September 16th is the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer. Ozone constitutes a very small part of our atmosphere. Yet, this thin shield of gas protects the Earth from the harmful effects

of solar radiation, thereby contributing to the preservation of life on the planet. Environmental societies are constantly calling for reducing the use of ozone-depleting substances.

On September 16th, the Italian city of Verona celebrates a holiday — the birthday of Juliet, the famous Shakespearean heroine of the tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*.



In order to determine her exact birth date, historians carefully juxtaposed all events of the tragedy and established that Juliet was born on September 16th, 1284. Letters from love-struck individuals still arrive in Verona, seeking Juliet's advice or guidance in difficult romantic situations.



September 16th, 1380 marks the victory of the Russian troops at the Battle of Kulikovo — a confrontation between Russian

regiments led by Dmitry Ivanovich, Grand Prince of Moscow and Vladimir, and a Tatar force under the command of Mamai — which became a turning point in the struggle of the Russian people against the yoke of the Golden Horde.

September 17th is National Unity Day in the Republic of Belarus. It was established by the decree of the President of Belarus on June 7th, 2021. On September 17th, 1939, by order of the Soviet leadership, the Red Army crossed the Soviet-Polish border to take under its protection the lives and property of the population of Western Byelorussia. The army was welcomed as a liberator from social and national oppression. The unity of Belarus was restored.



On September 17th, 1934, RCA Victor released the first 33 1/3 rpm gramophone record featuring

Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*, performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski. It was also the first recording of a symphonic work to fit onto a single record.

September 19th marks the birthday of the smiley face — a friendly electronic symbol. In 1982, Professor Scott E. Fahlman from Carnegie Mellon University first proposed using a colon, a hyphen and a closing parenthesis to represent a smiling face in computer text.

