



Belarus occupies  
one of the  
leading places  
worldwide  
in the export  
of cheese

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In the Osipovichi  
District people  
know how  
to preserve  
the traditions  
of their ancestors

10

INTERNATIONAL

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Agronomists Anna Zhukovskaya, Polina Minova and junior researcher Olga Nikitina in the micropropagation laboratory of the Vitebsk Zonal Institute of Agriculture of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus

# Talent and intelligence

On the last Sunday of January, the country celebrated the Day of Belarusian Science. President Aleksandr Lukashenko congratulated scientists, employees of scientific research institutes and institutions of higher education on their professional holiday, “Today your professional achievements are an important driver of the economic development of our independent country, one of the sources of growth in the well-being of the people. Large domestic research schools have been formed and are successfully operating. With the most active participation of scientists, the national security of the state is ensured.”

The President expressed his conviction that in the future the activities of scientists, based on a solid scientific basis and great love for their native land, will be aimed at the long-term development of Belarus. → 3



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# Message of the President: three questions to the Belarusian people

It is necessary not only to keep the country in the millstones of a new redistribution of the world, but also to build our future. The President stated this during his Address to the Belarusian People and the National Assembly.

During the Address, the Head of State asked the Belarusians,

***“Are you ready to pay for your own defence, for your own state?”***

***Are you ready to pay for this expensive thing called sovereignty and independence?”***

***Are you ready to be proactive and work for yourself?”***

In his speech, the President called on compatriots to think about these points and spoke in detail about the importance of each of them.

Aleksandr Lukashenko is convinced that today even sceptics understand that the established system of the world order is becoming a thing of the past. And we are all witnesses of the reformatting of world politics, economy and culture. The level of aggression is rising critically everywhere, defiant rhetoric has become the norm, while peacekeeping initiatives are shelved.

happening because there is not enough food in the world, there is a fierce struggle for resources and markets.

“The number one question in our society (not at the suggestion of our government or the President) is whether there will be a war or not. Yes, there will be a war. But only in two cases. One of them is if direct act of aggression is committed against Belarus and a war is unleashed. We all, including even those who do not want to, will defend our land and our Fatherland as one,” emphasised the Head of State.

The second reason for the war and the participation of Belarus in it, according to Aleksandr Lukashenko, is a possible attack on an ally — Russia. Then Belarus will join the defence of Russia within the framework of allied agreements.

“I want to respond to the collective West whether there will be troops in the territory of Belarus. For them, this issue is very important. If aggression is committed against our country,



years. And Belarus, being at the crossroads of civilizations, is at the epicentre of these processes,” said Aleksandr Lukashenko.

“Neighbouring countries are talking about the deployment of nuclear delivery vehi-

***Federation. The Americans already have to restrain them at times. But attempts to please the curators are on the verge of destroying their own statehood.***

Under these circumstances, we proceed from the premise that Lithuania should be dealt with harshly, but pragmatically approach, forcing them to fulfil contractual obligations, responding to their actions proportionately.”

The President addressed the Lithuanians, “I just want to say to our friends, Lithuanians: God forbid, you unleash a war together with other Baltic states, this will mean the end of your statehood and your development. Again, this is not a threat. This is a warning. And I address this warning not to the leadership of the Baltic states, but to the peoples.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that Poland has long been trying to achieve its leadership ambitions in Eastern Europe. However, according to him, leadership in Poland is understood not as a responsibility and an opportunity to be a link in the region, but as a confrontation with Russia, including through interference in the internal affairs of its neighbours,

***“Poland acts categorically and unceremoniously. It funded and resourced the radical opposition, spent years creating focal points for the recently failed insurgency.***

It would be understandable with us: like Belarus is ‘their land’. They interfered with Rus-

sia. It is clear: Russia is an enemy; it is impossible to defeat Belarus without defeating Russia. But they even got into Kazakhstan! What do they need there?” asked the President. “In the hope of revenge, it sheltered the fugitives from Belarus, forms an infrastructure to support them. But this is not even the biggest concern. The unprecedented militarisation of the state carried out by Warsaw, the build-up of military resources, the planned doubling of the size of the army — all this is hardly for peaceful purposes.”

Growing tensions in the southern direction are of increasing concern, the President added,

***“Ukraine is becoming the subject of behind-the-scenes bargaining. Ukrainians are being pushed into the flames of conflict, their minds are being broken, and they are purposefully being prepared for aggression. They form a hostile attitude towards the fraternal peoples, including the Belarusians.”***

According to the Head of State, it is necessary to bring the system of ensuring national security, especially in the field of defence, to a qualitatively new level, to increase the provision of military units with weapons and equipment, to train the personnel of the troops in modern methods and ways of repelling threats, to develop territorial defence.

“Our army is compact, manoeuvrable, combat-ready. We will strengthen its power,” said Aleksandr Lukashenko.

He noted that rocket produc-



***The Head of State is convinced, “Major nuclear powers are trying to build new agreements, realising that the planet is unlikely to survive the third world war. However, a compromise has yet to be found. Public opinion is being prepared for the inevitability of war. People are forced to live with such a thought. In fact, the fate of mankind is being decided: either new agreements, or further escalation and a new world war.”***

According to him, this is

hundreds of thousands of Russian troops will be here in order to defend this sacred land with hundreds of thousands of Belarusians,” said the President. At the same time, the Head of State drew attention to the fact that Belarusians do not accept wars and will never initiate them.

“On a global scale, trust in each other has been undermined. Long-standing disputes and contradictions are reanimated. Border incidents, local conflicts, cyber-attacks, vaccine battles — all these are the realities of today, generated literally in recent

cle. Our western neighbours, Poland and Lithuania, are extensively acting in line with Washington’s policy. For them, it’s a survival strategy. The alternative is to forever remain a dull outskirts of Europe. So they choose,” said the President.

***“In trying to profitably sell their political adventures, the Lithuanians are peddling to the detriment of themselves. To please the States, they threw down the gauntlet even to great China, got involved in a confrontation with the Russian***

tion, the creation of unmanned aircraft, small arms and ammunition, modern means of communication and automation, military optics and other products of the Belarusian military industry have already been launched en masse. And Belarus will buy what is missing.

The President drew attention to the fact that the Belarusian initiative to launch the new negotiation process *Helsinki-2*, in the promotion of which a lot of efforts have been invested, has already been picked up by European politicians. However, its authorship in the West is bashfully hushed up, the Head of State emphasised, “It is OK with us. We will give you this initiative for free. The main thing is that it be implemented.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko called what is happening in world politics with the COVID-19 pandemic ‘undisguised national egoism, which appeared already in the first wave of the pandemic’,

**“Coronapsychosis literally tore Europe to shreds. Countries, instead of joining forces, acted spontaneously, chaotically, tried to survive and save themselves.”**

The President is confident that our response to the coronavirus pandemic clearly shows that we can not only overcome difficulties with dignity, but also set a new tone in overcoming global problems “This is a con-



**Deputy of the House of Representatives, Oleg Gaidukevich**

firmation of the sovereignty of Belarus. We have always made decisions ourselves, determined the paths of development. And so we will always do, based on our beliefs and values.”

The President said that he received a lot of signals from Poland, Lithuania, the United States with proposals to build relations, “There is only one answer: let’s do it. But they need to save face. We’ll help you save face. If you want to cooperate with us truly, democratically, without violating our sovereignty and independence, without asking: Are you with Russia or against it? Always with Russia! Because there is no that group of people, that person who can curtail our relations with Russia in Belarus. We will always build mutually beneficial, fraternal, warmest relations with this country... This is our civilisation, we cannot bury it, because the whole world will collapse under the rubble. And the West should take it for granted.”



**First Secretary of the Central Committee of the BRSM Youth Union, Aleksandr Lukyanovich**

Speaking about co-operation with China, Aleksandr Lukashenko said that the countries are planning to implement several dozen specific projects in the fields of politics, economics, education, science and technology.

**The Head of State noted, “China has become one of the most important trade and investment partners of Belarus. I will name just a**

**few parameters: the annual turnover exceeds \$5.5 billion, 23 investment projects worth billions of dollars have been implemented. By 2025, we plan to export Belarusian goods worth up to \$3 billion to China.”**

According to the President, Belarus also aims to strengthen political and economic ties in relations with other Asian states: India, Pakistan, Vietnam. It is planned to intensify work with Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

“Our products are in demand there. Just do not stop, we need to work on a large volume of these products and, most importantly, quality,” said the Head of State.

The message of the President lasted more than two and a half hours, and for about an hour Aleksandr Lukashenko answered questions from the participants of the event.

**Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by**



The preparation of the 2020 rebellion, taking into account the failures of the past, was carried out much more powerfully. We unequivocally regard the events that have taken place as a multi-stage, coordinated technology. It was implemented simultaneously in several directions. First, ideological expansion. The West promised Belarus a pan-European idyll and tried to impose so-called democratic values on our people through various educational programmes and workshops. However, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, our Government, and I underestimated this, we thought that this did not concern us, that it would pass us by. Second, funding. **It is already known for sure: more than \$6 billion were thrown into the destruction of Belarus.**

They really wanted to do away with us once and for all... Thirdly, infrastructure. A network of sleeper cells was created across the country from so-called non-governmental organisations, individual media outlets, telegram channels and bloggers.

# The foundation of the state

**The role of science in strengthening independence. The most important task for Belarusian scientists. The significance of the mother tongue. These and other issues were discussed by the President at the meeting with the National Academy of Sciences.**

**By Dmitry Kryat, Dmitry Umpirovich, Svetlana Isayonok**

An important part of the event was the presentation of state prizes and diplomas of academicians and corresponding members of the National Academy of Sciences. For the first time such a meeting was held in the Palace of Independence (previously they were held only within the National Academy of Sciences). This is none other than a sign of special respect for scientists. However, the entire sovereign history of Belarus confirms the fact that in our country science receives tremendous support. And this is logical. Aleksandr Lukashenko explained why,

**“Science is the foundation of our state. People who devote their lives to the hardest work of a scientist are the ‘golden fund’ for our nation.”**

**National security factor**

The President outlined the



**Deputy Director for Scientific Work of the Brest Hero Fortress Memorial, Larisa Bibik, was awarded the Honoured Worker of Culture of the Republic of Belarus title**

main challenge that the scientific community is intended to solve today,

**“Science should serve for the benefit of all mankind. But above all, for the people of the country. I am convinced that you, as true**

**patriots and people with a clear civic engagement, understand this very well. And you also understand that your success can directly affect the security factor of the Republic of Belarus.”**

Aleksandr Lukashenko is sure that Belarus needs a strong foundation for vaccine production, but not only for COVID-19 vaccines. The Head of state has no doubt that scientists will cope with such an assignment, “I appre-

ciate your determination. Once again, I became convinced of this when there was a task to produce our COVID-19 vaccine and set up our own production. To be honest, at first, I thought that you would not take it on, that you would be confused. Now I think we will be able to put the vaccine production plant into operation on time. The world has generally gone crazy, gone insane, and this virus is probably not the last, because it is not the first. That is why we need first-class science.”

The President noted that competitors, primarily geopolitical ones, would not be happy with our success, “It’s naturally. Science is also a competitive field.

**Now we see what global changes are taking place in the information and technological field. Knowledge and technology are changing rapidly. Whoever loses in this race — risks losing everything, including the country.”**



# Important period of preparation for the referendum

## Natalya Kochanova summed up the work of the Council of the Republic on the preparation of the draft Constitution



Natalya Kochanova

Natalya Kochanova, Speaker of the Upper House of the Parliament, spoke about the forthcoming referendum and the work on the updated draft Constitution in her speech at the opening of the extraordinary session of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly. After all, the senators themselves played a significant role in adjusting the Basic Law of the country. Here are the details, “The members of the Council of the Republic themselves made about 100 proposals to improve the Basic Law. A number of these proposals are included in the draft amendments and additions to the Constitution, submitted to the republican referendum. In particular, we have proposed a single voting day for the election of deputies at all levels, work in the format of one session per year, a separate ‘youth’ article that encourages young people to be responsible for the future of the country and is evidence of the state’s high confidence in them.”

Natalya Kochanova also spoke about the results of the work of the public reception at the Council of the Republic, where everyone could make proposals regarding changes to the Constitution, “In five days, we received 127 citizens and ten initiative groups, more than 500 proposals were received. This is a serious number, given that more than ten thousand proposals were collected in the republic as a whole within the framework of public discussions. Since the beginning of public discussions, members of the Council of the Republic have taken part in 227 events, including 115 meetings with labour collectives, 52 dialogue platforms and six discussion platforms, 15 public receptions, 34 meetings. As a result of the activities, about 16,000 people were covered.

*As our President rightly noted, in no state in the world has the public been so deeply involved in the process of discussing and improving the provisions of the Constitution. Indeed, this is our Belarusian innovation and a true manifestation of democracy.”*

The constitutional referendum, Natalya Kochanova concluded, is a crucial period for all authorities, “We need to take an active part in the preparation and conduct of such an important political campaign.

*The referendum must be held at a high organisational level, in full compliance with the Constitution and the current electoral legislation.”*



At the seventh extraordinary session of the Upper House of Parliament

## The draft Constitution incorporates the main postulates of the national idea and the Belarusian development model



Vladimir Andreichenko

Last week in Minsk, in accordance with the Decree of the President of January 24th, the seventh extraordinary session of the House of Representatives and the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the seventh convocation began its work. According to the Chairman of the House of Representatives, Vladimir Andreichenko, the preparation of the draft of the updated Constitution was carried out as openly as possible, “In fact, the text of the changes is the proposals of the citizens themselves, expressed at the dialogue platforms, during the Belarusian People’s Congress. We saw sincere interest in the proposed constitutional innovations everywhere.

*People have learned to distinguish real patriots from demagogues; they have understood the true value of those empty promises that would lead the country to disaster.”*

Director of the National Centre for Legislation and Legal Studies Vadim Ipatov told the deputies in more detail about the results of the public discussion of the draft amendments and additions to the Basic Law. According to him, a balanced draft of the Constitution, which has

undergone a unique study, is submitted to the referendum,

*“The very text of the Constitution carries a significant ideological potential, absorbing the main postulates of the national idea and the Belarusian model of development.*

These are democracy, a strong, efficient and responsible welfare state, a diversified economy, traditional values, family support, patriotism, the preservation of historical truth and the memory of the heroic deed of the Belarusian people during the Great Patriotic War.”

Vadim Ipatov dwelled on some of the provisions of the Basic Law that caused the most lively discussions in society. In particular, there were proposals from citizens not to limit the tenure of the President to two terms, “It is clear that such a position is caused by the patriotic im-

pulse of citizens and is due to the positive experience of the development of the presidential republic in Belarus since 1994. However, this proposal [on the limitation of terms] is an initiative of the Head of State, who has repeatedly stressed that the Constitution is a document of future generations. The powers of the incumbent President reflect the uniqueness of the personality of Aleksandr Lukashenko as the architect of modern Belarusian statehood. Further development of the political system and national statehood will require additional balances in the power system. This will naturally lead to a redistribution of powers between its branches, as well as to the introduction of additional restrictive mechanisms, which include, among other things, the maximum number of presidential terms.”



Before the meeting of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus of the seventh convocation

# Belarusians continue active discussion of amendments and additions to the Basic Law of the country

Yury Mozolevsky



Changes and additions to the Constitution are being discussed at the dialogue platforms countrywide

During the meeting with the leadership of the Shklov District, representatives of organisations, deputies and public associations, Chairman of the Mogilev Region Executive Committee Anatoly Isachenko noted the high interest of people in constitutional reform,

*“A socio-survey conducted in early January of this year [on the study of topical issues of socio-economic and socio-political situations in the Mogilev Region] shows that the majority of survey participants — 81.6 per cent — consider it necessary to amend the Basic Law, 84.5 per cent of the respondents decided to take part in the referendum.”*

“The current Constitution has fulfilled its purpose — the strong state power has created conditions for the development of the economy, this system has withstood external and internal challenges, but a lot has changed in a quarter of a century,” said Anatoly Isachenko. “As the standard of living rises, people always want more. Therefore, in order to carry out social policy, we need a strong economy that cannot work without a stable state. The basis of this stability is the Constitution.”

## OPINIONS

**Maria Korchik, 3rd year student of the Faculty of Biotechnology of the Vitebsk State Academy of Veterinary Medicine:** Amendments and additions to the Constitution were widely discussed at round tables and dialogue platforms. Lectures were held for first-year students, where they told what the Basic Law of the country is, as well as the history of its adoption. **The youth is well aware that it is us — today’s students, tomorrow’s specialists — who will have to live according to the Constitution that the Belarusian people will adopt at the referendum.** It is safe to say that each of our students will go to the referendum with the awareness of responsibility for the future of the country and their future. I will also vote for the new Constitution, because I care about our common tomorrow.

**Vyacheslav Lyusik, entrepreneur, Gomel:**

*There are people who argue: the referendum does not decide anything, it makes no sense to go to the vote. In my opinion, it was precisely because of this approach that we almost lost the country, when many preferred to sit on the sidelines and observe the destructive processes that took place in 2020. But if it was possible to refer to the political inexperience and gullibility of citizens then, now those who discredit the process of adopting a new version of the Constitution are conscious saboteurs. The majority should not be passive. I believe that the amendments proposed in the Constitution will be able to consolidate the society. At the same time, the limitation of the number of presidential terms and the new status of the Belarusian People’s Congress will help Belarusians avoid mistakes in building the future of our state. The constitution needs to be changed. The Basic Law, which was adopted in the 1990s, was based on the realities of that period of the country’s history. Times have changed — and now a new course is needed. Belarusians have learned a lot over the past two years. The document, for which we will vote, has collected proposals from various segments of the population. I myself will certainly come to vote on February 27th. For me, voting is a civic duty and a confirmation of my solidarity with the vision of the future of Belarus, which will be spelled out in the updated Constitution.*

Based on materials of sb.by

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**For the first time, a transaction in Chinese yuans was made at BUCE**



The seller was a Chinese wood-working company operating in the Belarusian market; the buyer was a major European trader, which supplies sawn products to the EU, Asia and Africa. Edged softwood sawn timber was sold for ¥1.8 million, or \$287,000.

When making settlements in yuans, the currency risks of the participants in the transaction are reduced, and the time for receipt of funds to the seller’s account is significantly reduced.

“The possibility to indicate the cost of goods and pay for exchange transactions in yuans appeared at the end of last year. Previously, transactions involving residents of the PRC were concluded mainly in dollars or euros. The innovation was positively received by Chinese bidders, primarily companies operating in the timber products section,” emphasised the press service of the exchange.

**Vitebsk resident won the Queen of the Students of the Union State — 2021 competition**

The fourth-year student of the Vitebsk State Technological University (VSTU) Victoria Vorobyeva was awarded with the title and the crown.



Victoria is 20 years old. At the university, she masters commodity science and expertise of non-food products, devotes her free time to dancing and modelling. She studies at the V.I.P variety dance studio and the Vitebchanka folk student choreographic ensemble, and manages the student fashion house as well: she teaches fashion shows, participates in the preparation of the Queen of VSTU and Mister VSTU competitions.

In the competition of grace and talent The Queen of the Students of Belarus — 2021 Victoria Vorobyeva was awarded the title of the 1st Vice Queen. She is sure that true beauty begins with self-love.

**Belarusian polar explorers congratulated the country on the 100th anniversary of academic science**

On behalf of the participants of the 14th Belarusian Antarctic Expedition, the head of the expedition Aleksei Gaidashov sent congratulations to all scientists, researchers and scientific workers of the country.

Polar explorers celebrate the anniversary year of national academic science in Antarctica with new scientific and techni-



cal achievements. The national research programme and international projects are being successfully implemented, modern instrumentation complexes and measuring systems created by Belarusian scientists are being introduced, new means of transport and communication are put into operation, a set of engineering and technical works is being carried out to prepare the first stage of the Belarusian Antarctic station for the transition to year-round operation.

**Belarusian oncologists develop breakthrough CAR-T therapy for the treatment of lymphomas**

CAR-T therapy involves the use of genetically modified blood cells of the patient himself. Cells of the human immune system T-lymphocytes are responsible for cellular immunity. That is, they find microorganisms, bacteria or viruses and destroy them. When the genome is modified, T-lymphocytes are reprogrammed to recognise malignant cells. To do this, an antigen is isolated from the patient’s tumour so that the T-cell can instantly recognise it. Further, the resulting CAR-T cells are multiplied to several billion under artificial conditions and injected back into the body. It turns out a very good ef-



fect, not comparable with the action of anticancer drugs. This expensive new technology is already used against leukaemia. Belarusian scientists are trying to apply it to the treatment of lymphomas.

# Belarus and Japan: projects for the future



Ruslan Yesin

By Marta Astreiko

Belarus and Japan celebrated the 30th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in January. However, the history of the Belarusian-Japanese co-operation has much deeper roots: our compatriots Iosif and Yelizaveta Goshkevich arrived in the distant and unknown Land of the Rising Sun with a diplomatic and humanitarian mission almost 200 years ago. Moreover, that is what can be considered a real starting point for the beginning of the friendship between Belarusians and Japanese. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Japan Ruslan Yesin discussed in an interview with *SB. Belarus Segodnya*. Trends the way our countries are co-operating today, being separated by almost eight thousand kilometres, but still having common ground:

— The history of bilateral achievements, like the history of friendship, also extends far beyond the thirty-year mark. We had many significant events, which became the basis for the development of many areas of co-operation.

Back in the 1970s, a delegation from the city of Sendai came to Minsk with a friendship visit, and it was an important impulse for contacts back then. By the way, next year Minsk and Sendai will celebrate the half-century anniversary of twinning.

In the mid-1980s, our compatriot, a well-known member of the partisan movement, an outstanding statesman and diplomat Pyotr Abrassimov headed the Soviet embassy in Japan. A significant event for the development of Belarusian-Japanese friendship was the holding of the first Days of Belarusian Culture in Japan during his diplomatic mission.

In early 1991, a delegation of the BSSR was in Japan to establish co-operation on mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. In addition, under the programme of the Japanese government Grass-Roots Human Security Projects, our country is still receiving material and technical assistance for the affected regions. The visit of the President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko to the Winter Olympics in Nagano in 1998 was a truly epochal event.

In 2021, the office of the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Belarus was opened in the city of Hakodate, Hokkaido. This is indeed one of our most important achievements.

The symbolic bridges connecting our country and Japan are the capsules containing soil from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, laid in July 2021 in the All Saints Memorial Church in Minsk, as well as the Belarusian potash mineral, transferred to the Okinawa Pre-

## What Belarusian products do the Japanese particularly like, and can our countries develop co-operation in space exploration?

fectoral Peace Memorial Museum in November last year.

Unfortunately, the frequency of communications has been significantly decreasing amid the pandemic. In any case, no forced breaks will stop the peoples of the two countries from further promotion of dialogue.

— How did trade co-operation develop between Belarus and Japan in 2021?

— I believe that the main achievements with Japan have been made precisely in the economic direction. The Japanese market is top-grade and demanding, but nevertheless our products are competitive there.

Just look how the dynamics of deliveries of Belarusian exporters' products have changed since the opening of the Belarusian diplomatic mission in Tokyo.

While in 1995 our exports amounted to 937.6 thousand dollars, by the end of 2021 we expect an amount of more than 16 million dollars.

the development of specific projects to promote wooden houses, leather and textile products, food, and jewellery. We plan to continue negotiations between scientific organisations in the field of space exploration, bio- and nanotechnologies.

— Despite the pandemic, the Belarusians and the Japanese continued to maintain business contacts and make ambitious plans. Did the Belarusian-Japanese Business Club, established in 2020, have a big hand in this?

— The Belarusian-Japanese Business Club provides serious assistance in the development of bilateral relations. This is particularly evident at the regional level. Thus, in 2021, in co-operation with the National Centre for Marketing and Price Study, a visit of a Japanese business mission to Belarus was organised.

Japanese businessmen learned about the activities of the National Marketing Centre and the capabilities of the export by

anese Business Club is more of a communication centre allowing to quickly distribute the proposals of Belarusian exporters in Japan. Members of the club have already submitted a number of proposals on new formats of work to Belarusian partners, and I hope that in the near future we will see the launch of interesting joint projects.

— During your diplomatic tenure in Japan, the number of shops offering products from Belarus to the Japanese increased rapidly. What Belarusian goods are particularly in demand among the inhabitants of the Land of the Rising Sun?

— Over the past five years, the embassy has paid special attention to increasing the presence of our goods on the shelves of Japanese stores.

There are dairy products, linen fabrics and manufactures, as well as other goods. The Japanese are especially fond of our butter and cheeses for their natural flavour, the highest quality and a competitive price compared to other similar products. I believe that it is time for our exporters to think about opening a brand shop in Tokyo.

In my opinion, the most effective and time-tested way to achieve this is to co-operate with Japanese businesspersons in developing trading companies. Taking into account demand and existing trends, the opening of a kind of 'warehouse-showroom' for products of the Belarusian light, food, alcohol and woodworking industries may be indeed timely.

— Environmental problems significantly affect both the state of the planet and humankind. In recent years, the Belarusian leadership has taken many important steps in this area. Can ecological projects become one of the key sectors of co-operation with Japan?

— Indeed, our country pays considerable attention to the issues of environmental protection and nature management. I recently met with the Governor of Ibaraki Prefecture Kazuhiko Ōigawa, who highly appreciates the results of the work of Belarusians in overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and expresses interest in co-operation with our country in this direction.

Our Japanese partners are interested in the Belarusian experience in the development of ecological tourism in specially protected natural areas, the area of which exceeds 1.8 million hectares and continues to grow. The Embassy actively uses the format of meetings with residents of various Japanese prefectures and cities, as well as media representatives in order to inform about the tourism potential of our country and existing plans to create ecotourism clusters in Belarus.

In Japan, the industry for the processing and disposal of solid domestic and industrial waste, water purification, rearing of fry and the use of other high-tech solutions is developed at a top-level, which, of course, is of high interest to our specialists and scientific researchers. In general, I consider the ecological direction to be very promising, and we will make efforts to expand bilateral co-operation in this area.



In tough times of 2021, we managed to hold about 30 presentations, as well as organise the Belarus-Hokkaido forum in a hybrid format, which became the first major regional event after a long quarantine period.

In 2022, we will focus on further work to develop the legal framework governing bilateral economic relations.

In co-operation with Japan, we plan to pay additional attention to

portal, took part in an expanded meeting of Belarusian exporting enterprises interested in promoting their products to the Japanese market. The businesspersons visited a number of enterprises that are part of the Bellegprom (Belarusian Light Industry Concern) and Belgospisheprom (Belarusian Food Industry Concern), held a meeting at the National Investment Agency.

At this stage, the Belarusian-Jap-



# Cheese billion

Belarus occupies one of the leading places in the world in the export of cheese and annually expands the geography of supplies

**In 2021, our country earned \$1 billion from cheese exports. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Belarus accounts for about 6 percent of world cheese exports, a third of production in the EAEU. Moreover, Belarus occupies the 4th place in the world cheese export ranking after the European Union, the USA and New Zealand. Why not push those competitors too? The prospects are large-scale, the opportunities for growth are enormous.**

By Diana Bernikovich

## Got through to Antigua and Barbuda

How much do you know about the above Caribbean islands? Their residents, by the way, highly appreciated the quality of Belarusian cheeses. And it is true. Last year, our enterprises have already organised trial deliveries there.

*In particular, the geography of our export deliveries is steadily growing: in 2016, there were 19 countries on the list, in 2018 — 24, last year — 26. At the same time, almost the entire volume of cheese — 99.8 percent — is exported to the CIS countries. Russia's share in exports exceeded 93 percent.*

Products with a total value of almost \$912 million were delivered to the markets of the neighbouring country, which is about 110 percent compared to January-November 2020.

Sceptics will say: what about the promised diversification of sales markets? In the structure of Russian cheese imports, Belarusian ones still occupy the first place. Sooner or later the situation may change in favour of local producers. Therefore, it is risky to completely depend on one direction, even if it is the most profitable. Considering the market situation, our enterprises have been studying other promising proposals for several years.

Why do the numbers remain high? This is because export volumes are growing in all directions. One of the significant events of 2021: Belarusian Cheese Day was held in Tokyo. By the way, Japan is the world leader in the import of dairy products.

*The Ministry of Agriculture and Food noted that last year supplies to Kazakhstan increased by 18.5 percent, to Ukraine — by 36.6 percent, Uzbekistan — by 67.5 percent, to Moldova and Azerbaijan — by 44.2 and 44.1 percent, respectively, to Kyrgyzstan — by 2.9 times.*

In turn, Belarusian producers delivered almost 225 tonnes of cheese to the countries

of Asia and Oceania worth about \$985,000, which is 2.8 times higher than the same period last year. Mongolia and Georgia had the main share in the volumes of deliveries. In addition, the delicious products were presented on the shelves in Jordan, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, China and Malaysia. The first deliveries of cheeses were organised to Afghanistan.

Almost 87 tonnes of cheese worth more than \$450,000 were exported to the countries of America and the Caribbean, which also exceeds the level of 2021 by more than 2 times. We increased the supply of cheeses to the United States of America to \$430,000 (2.5 times higher than the same period in 2020).

## Simple arithmetic

Many foreign analysts are amazed at the rapidly developing dairy market in Belarus. We are among the leaders in the post-Soviet space. However, it is a mistake to look for the dependence on the population, the number of cheeses consumed per capita. This indicator is not high yet.

The dairy industry is largely export-oriented: while saturating the needs of our own market, we are increasing supplies abroad. And there is an important point to remember. Firstly, the development of production depends on a well-coordinated, well-thought-out strategy for the development of not only the processing industry, but also dairy cattle breeding. The enterprises invest in the modernisation of farms and complexes, the purchase of high-yielding livestock just as much in volume as in the technical re-equipment of production facilities, realising that the result largely depends on the quality and quantity of incoming raw materials.

Here is another important example that the producers pay attention to: the focused specialization of many enterprises, as well as the long traditions of cheese making, contribute to the improvement of product quality.

## Blue to white mould

Dairy processing enterprises are constantly working on the development of new types of rennet cheeses. The output of soft cheeses increased by 2.6 times over five years. The leader in this segment is the Turov Dairy Industrial Complex, which produces cheese using Italian technologies. The enterprise mastered the production of a number of import-substituting types of products: soft cheeses Mozzarella, Mascarpone, Ricotta, Cream Cheese, Cremolle — about 60 types in total.

Recently, the Molodechno Dairy Plant announced in the media the release of innovative products in 2023: the company plans to master the production of Camembert-type cheese with white mould (the cheese is most popular in France). The first batch is going to be released in the first quarter of 2023, subsequently increasing production to 3 tonnes of cheese per day.

*Expansion of the assortment list is not only the prestige of the enterprise, but also an opportunity to strengthen its financial stability. After all, this means that they are able to organise high-quality production.*

“92 percent of all Belarusian cheeses are hard and semi-hard types, 8 percent are soft, pickled and processed cheeses,” comments Lyudmila Bogdanova, Head of the Laboratory of Butter and Cheese Making Technologies at the Institute of the Meat and Dairy

Industry of the Republican Unitary Enterprise Scientific and Practical Centre of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus for Food. “The list has expanded significantly in recent years. Moreover, almost all types are represented in retail chains — hard, semi-

hard, soft, brine-ripened, moulded from a layer and in bulk, cheeses with a low and high temperature of the second heating, including those using propionic acid bacteria, cheeses with blue mould such as Roquefort, or Raclette ripened using brevibacteria, there is a very large assortment of cheeses with cheddaring and thermomechanical processing of the Sulguni type.

### FACT

Over 400 types of hard and semi-hard cheeses are produced in Belarus. For 11 MONTHS of last year, enterprises produced 259,000 TONNES of fat cheeses, of which 223,000 TONNES were hard and semi-hard.

In 2021, Belarusian cheeses were supplied to 26 COUNTRIES of the world.

### NUMBERS

For 11 months of 2021, enterprises exported 230.5 THOUSAND TONNES of cheese worth \$976 MILLION. The growth rate compared to the same period in 2020 amounted to 110.4 PERCENT in physical terms and 111.7 PERCENT in value terms, respectively.





# Protests draw thousands of people

Thousands of people gathered in European capitals to protest vaccine passports and other requirements governments have imposed in hopes of ending the coronavirus pandemic

Police in Brussels fired water cannon and clouds of tear gas at 50,000 protesters demonstrating against COVID-19 vaccinations and restrictions. Some of the protesters came from France, Germany and other countries, shouting 'Liberty!' as they marched through the headquarters city of the European Union. Videos showed some black-clad protesters attacking a building used by the EU's diplomatic service, hurling projectiles at its entrance and smashing windows.

In Brussels, white-helmeted riot police repeatedly charged after protesters who ignored requests for dissolution. Police water cannon trucks fired powerful jets and tear gas filled the air in the Belgian capital.

Anti-vaccination demonstrators also marched in Barcelona, following protests in other European capitals against vaccine passports and other requirements

that national governments have imposed as daily coronavirus infections and hospitalisations surge because of the Omicron strain.

Several thousand anti-vaccination mandate protesters marched in Washington along the National Mall. In the United States, the Supreme Court recently rejected a vaccination mandate President Joe Biden tried to impose on 84 million workers employed at large businesses but let stand a narrower mandatory vaccination order affecting 17 million hospital health care workers.

Protesters also took to the streets of Paris to demonstrate against the new COVID pass, that will curtail the activities of the unvaccinated, restricting their ability to travel and go to entertainment sites, including bars, movie theatres and sports events.

Demonstrators in Helsinki protested the vaccina-

tion passes that can be required to enter restaurants and other venues. The protesters in Finland's capital also demonstrated against the Finnish government's move giving local and regional authorities the ability to enact wide-ranging measures to combat the Omicron variant.

In Sweden, where vaccine certificates are required to attend indoor events with more than 50 people, some 3,000 demonstrators marched through central Stockholm and assembled in a main square for a protest organized by the Frihetsrorelsen — or Freedom Movement.

In Germany, more and more anti-vaxxers are joining an increasing number of demonstrations in cities across the country. Mandatory vaccination scheduled for introduction in March is mobilising opponents of the jab as well as those in favour of the move.

## Migrants storm English Channel

Despite harsh winter weather, many migrants continue to make dangerous attempts to cross the English Channel to enter the United Kingdom from France

Over the past year, 52,000 attempts were recorded, almost half of which were successful. This is 5 times more than in the previous year 2020. Some migrants have paid with their lives, as happened last November, when 27 people died after their boat sank, triggering a diplomatic spat between the UK and France.

Since the beginning of the year, the first death at sea has already been registered: a 20-year-old refugee from Sudan drowned. Roads are another route that migrants take to enter the UK. But this path is also extremely dangerous.

Meanwhile, migrants accommodated at the Foreigners' Registration Centre (FRC) in Lithuanian Kybartai live in conditions that amount to inhuman or degrading treatment prohibited under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Seimas Ombudsman Erika Leonaitė has said in a report published recently.

Ms. Leonaitė also noted that 'the nature and degree of the actual restrictions applied to foreigners accommodated in Kybartai FRC are equivalent to detention'.



## Paris Fashion Week 2022

Even in an evermore metaverse-obsessed world, physical fashion weeks remain bellwethers of our wardrobe trends

Over the past two years, these summits have seesawed, largely due to COVID-19 and its variants, back and forth between digital, in-person, and 'phygital' presentations. Despite the upheaval, the fact remains that there's no more powerful a showcase of what's to come stylistically than these events — and they're not always just about the clothes: fashion weeks start conversations about identity and self-presentation, and how those evolving attitudes fit into, or reflect, popular culture.

There's really nothing like Paris

Fashion Week. Drawing crowds of both the biggest celebrities and influencers, as well as massive swells of well-dressed civilians, it is undoubtedly one of the biggest cultural touchstones of the year. Virtually every major brand showed their FW2022 collections during PFW. Louis Vuitton debuted their final Virgil Abloh collection, Rick Owens confirmed his stature as a member of the undead with a vampire-esque cape and Dior brought the house down with a Naomi Campbell-led charge of Parisian classics.







# War and peace

World military spending is growing, militarisation is intensifying in Europe, foreign military forces are becoming more active near the Belarusian borders

By Dmitry Umpirovich, Polina Konoga

## Fighting spirit

Aleksei Avdonin, an analyst with the Belarusian Institute of Strategic Research (BISR), notes the constant growth of military spending and the formation of an offensive infrastructure and a grouping of NATO forces in relation to the Union State,

*“By the level of growth in defence spending and the purchase of weapons and military equipment by countries, one can judge the degree of ‘pumping’ the regions with the ‘spirit of militarism’ and creating conditions for subsequent bloodshed. Recent events in the European part of the Eurasian continent reflect the constant growth of tension and the mutual demonstration of military force.”*

The key indicator of the militarisation of the regions of the world is the level of defence spending, which determines the possibilities for the purchase of weapons and military equipment.

In general, in Europe, according to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, intensive deliveries of weapons and military equipment were observed to Poland, the Baltic countries, Scandinavia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine.

Aleksei Avdonin notes that over the past three to five years, military exercises have been intensively conducted in the territory of Poland and the Baltic countries with full or partial deployment of NATO forces and assets in the eastern direction. The nature of the exercise indicates that the United States and NATO are practicing the issues of conducting a full-scale offensive operation using tanks, artillery, and anti-tank brigade groups.

## The situation with the neighbours is escalating

Indicative figures were announced by Pavel Muraveiko, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Chief of the Central Operations Office:



**President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko:**

***There are from 8 to 10 thousand military personnel of the United States of America on a rotational basis in the territory of Poland and the Baltic countries. What are Americans doing here? Why do you reproach us, Russia, that we are carrying out some kind of manoeuvres, training exercises and so on, if you have come to distant lands here? What will you do here? Certain ‘hotheads’ are already openly calling for war. We hear these statements.***

*(January 17th, 2022, when listening to a report on the concept of a joint operational exercise of the Armed Forces of Belarus and Russia).*

- More than 12,000 US troops are deployed in Europe under NATO’s two operations Atlantic Resolve and Enhanced Forward Presence alone.
- The mission to protect the airspace of the Baltic states is carried out by about 300 different military personnel from NATO countries, as well as 6-8 F-16 or F-35 aircraft.
- Within the framework of this activity alone, more than 20,000 military personnel are deployed on the territory of Poland. Of these, 15,000 are representatives of the ground forces.
- In the Baltic States, there are more than 12 thousand military personnel: representatives of the army, police, border guards.
- Today, there are more than 32 camps where these military personnel are deployed in the immediate vicinity of our border and perform various tasks.

## Living under a rock

*At the end of September last year, Polish Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak said that the country’s authorities intend to deploy 250*

*tanks purchased from the United States on the eastern border (near Belarus). We are talking about the M1A2 Abrams SEPv3 tanks.*

“We order the most modern tanks. Top-of-the-line tanks, battle-tested, built to take on Russia’s most advanced T-14 Armata tanks. These tanks will be on the first line of defence, if, of course, there is a need for such protection,” the Polish media quoted the Head of the Ministry of Defence.

By the way, in August 2020, Poland and the United States completed negotiations on expanded cooperation in the defence sector. One of the new measures was the deployment of a thousand additional American soldiers in Poland — 4.5 thousand US troops were already stationed there.

In addition, Poland wants to completely upgrade the air defence of the ground forces and strengthen the air defence with the latest short-range systems. To achieve their goal, by 2035, the Poles plan to buy 23 batteries of the latest air defence systems. The cost of the programme is estimated at \$7.5-15 billion.

## Not for safety

The deliveries of equipment and weapons to Ukraine are increasing. The UK recently delivered a batch of light anti-tank weapons here.

Earlier, the United States also promised to supply Ukraine with a new batch of military aid in the coming weeks to strengthen the country’s defence capability. According to a State Department official, Washington has delivered more security systems

to Kiev in 2021 than at any time since 2014, “I can assure you that these shipments are ongoing and more are planned in the coming weeks. As soon as Russia invades Ukraine, we will provide Ukrainians with additional defence materials.”

The Ukrainian authorities also announced that they intend to create a new type of troops by 2026 — coastal missile troops, which will include three divisions of the new Neptune complex. By the second quarter of 2022, the first division will be fully formed, which will soon be on combat duty.

## Cover

At the end of December last year, it became known that the US authorities approved the sale of Javelin anti-tank missile systems to the Lithuanians in the amount of \$125 million. Vilnius acquired 30 launchers, as well as 341 missiles. At the same time, Lithuania’s initial request was about three times less. According to Washington, ‘the sale of weapons to the Lithuanians will not lead to a change in the balance of power in the region’.

By the way, Lithuania’s military budget last year was 2.01-2.09 percent of GDP, or more than \$1.2 billion. The BISR analyst Aleksei Avdonin notes,

*“To justify the need for a constant increase in defence spending, Poland and the Baltic countries are using the hysteria around ‘possible Russian aggression’, including to cover up their own plans to pull weapons and NATO forces to the borders of the Russian Federation.”*

## List of countries by military spending for 2020 (according to SIPRI Fact Sheet)

	Spending, billion \$	Share of the country’s GDP (%)	World share of spending (%)
USA	778.0	3.7	39.0
China	252.0	1.7	13.0
India	72.9	2.9	3.7
Russia	61.7	4.3	3.1
Great Britain	59.2	2.2	3.0
Saudi Arabia	57.5	8.4	2.9
Germany	52.8	1.4	2.7
France	52.7	2.1	2.7
Japan	49.1	1.0	2.5
Republic of Korea	45.7	2.8	2.3



# Knot of common fate

In the Osipovichi District people know how to preserve the traditions of their ancestors



**Ancient burial mounds, the legend of Rogneda, the miraculous spring in Proshcha, the history of the noble family Daragan, whose representatives laid a railway line in Osipovichi in 1872 at their own expense. Despite its young age — Osipovichi was given the status of a city in 1935 — it has something to charm tourists. But the main attraction here is the people. Remembering their roots, loving their land, they write a new history of their small homeland.**

By Olga Kislyak

## Don't lose their track

As the theatre begins with a hanger, so Osipovichi begins from the railway station. With the advent of the railway, a new era began in the history of the region. It is not surprising that steam locomotives are everywhere here: on the coat of arms of the city, bright murals of buildings, and in the history room of the Osipovichi railway junction. More than 2 thousand residents of the district work for the railway. One of the oldest workers is Vladimir Simanovich, he has worked for 46 years.

“I am a local, since my childhood I have been falling asleep and waking up to the sound of wheels, I loved to travel by train. Parents worked all their lives on the railroad. So I didn't see myself in any other industry,” tells Vladimir about himself. “I came here as an odd labourer, after serving in the army and receiving an education, I became an assistant driver, and a year and a half later I became a driver. For ten years I drove freight and passenger trains. Even without an assistant: there was such an ex-

periment in the 1980s. I travelled not only in Belarus. In the 1990s, I drove tourists — from England, Africa — around Ukraine on P36. Such passenger locomotives are now a rarity. And in our P36 there were sleeping cars, a club car, a restaurant car, a sauna car...”

In 1992, Simanovich was offered to become an instructor driver for locomotive crews. The position entails many responsibilities: not only experience is needed here, but also pedagogical abilities. Over the years, he taught about a hundred young specialists to competently drive trains.

Pavel Dombrovsky, Deputy Head for Ideological Work, Personnel and Social Issues of the Osipovichi Locomotive Depot, speaks highly of Simanovich,

*“They say about such people: they will ride even on one wheel. It means that he is a first-class specialist. If a breakdown occurs in an open field, everything will be sorted out, the malfunction will be eliminated. I myself used to be his student, gaining experience. Vladimir Simanovich worked on all types of rolling stock: steam locomotives, die-*



*sel locomotives, diesel trains, freight and passenger trains, electric locomotives, electric trains. For many years of conscientious work, a significant personal contribution to the development of the country's railway transport, he was awarded the Outstanding Specialist of the Belarusian railway badge, as well as the badge for accident-free mileage on a locomotive of 1,000,000 kilometres.”*

“It was 16 years and 1 million kilo-

metres ago,” smiles Simanovich, who has ‘run’ on the railroad for about the same amount since then.

Today he is 63 years old and does not plan to be ‘side-tracked’. Even when Vladimir retires, the Simanovich labour dynasty will not end: his son Aleksandr has been working here as a driver for 18 years. Daughter Tatiana graduated from the Belarusian State University of Transport and, like a mother, became an economist.



## Observing folk traditions

For 35 years now, not a single holiday in the Osipovichi District has been complete without the Vyazanka folk group. The team, created at the Vyazye Village Centre of Culture, has 13 par-

ticipants aged 30 to 62 years. The band is famous for performing ritual songs. Its leader Nikolai Zabavsky can talk about Vyazanka for hours,

*“In our repertoire there are carol, wedding, Maslenitsa songs,*

*songs for St. George's Day, all those that our great-grandmothers sang to celebrate the end of the harvest, the beginning of the harvest. In order to collect them, to preserve the legacy of our ancestors, we once travelled the entire district in search of bearers of traditions, asked the old-timers how to conduct rituals correctly, how these tunes sounded in the old days, looked for information in museums.”*

The band is a laureate of regional, republican, international festivals. The geography of touring activities of the rural team is impressive. Before the pandemic, they performed in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Moldova. In 2019, Vyazanka was invited to Moscow by Gediminas Taranda. The famous choreographer staged a per-

formance on the theme of Kupala, in which he involved powerful singers from the Osipovichi District.

The Vyazanka members play on the drum, accordion, button accordion, cymbals, pipe. They also use an old wooden oiler as musical instruments, because it ‘makes sounds like a dull drum’, and a 100-year-old ironing board as a ratchet.

“Our specialty is ritual songs,” says the oldest member of the group, 62-year-old Zhanna Solovyan. “For example, we conduct an authentic wedding ceremony called Three Towels. When fellow countrymen get married, they invite us, and we show what each towel symbolises, accompanying the action with songs.”

By the way, the accompanist of the ensemble, the wife of Nikolai Zabavsky, Irina, embroidered towels and costumes. They also have their labour dynasty.

## Soulful patterns

Irina Zabavskaya became interested in embroidery about eight years ago. She decided to make authentic costumes for Vyazanka with her own hands. Having trained for a start on making towels, she instructed her husband to bring her 40 meters of linen fabric from Minsk. And then she sat down to work. As an example, she took the costume of one of the local women born in 1926. She used it as an example of the Belarusian ornament. It took several months to make the ‘kashulya’ (shirt) for her husband. Now he is performing in it. By the way, Irina Zabavskaya's work won the Grand Prix at the national costume festival of the Kupala fest *Alexandria Gathers Friends*.

*Irina Zabavskaya sewed the costumes for the rest of the team together with her singing friends*

*Renata Paramonova, Irina Malinovskaya and Galina Gulyayeva. The work is painstaking, requires patience, perseverance. There are much more patterns on the women's outfit than on the men's, it takes a year, or even more to ‘paint’ linen with floss threads, then manually sew a shirt, apron and skirt.*

But Irina likes both the process itself and the result. She is working for the revival and popularisation of traditional embroidery, she also studies the features of the local, Osipovichi traditional costume:

“It turned out that we have our own, authentic ornament. Many crosses that mean the feminine beginning, fertility. Now I immortalise them in a towel.”

And Irina Zabavskaya also has a whole collection of homespun belts made on a reed. The craftswoman will-



ingly shares the secrets of her craft with her fellow countrymen: the Pasazhnitsa club of lovers of traditional needlework, which she leads, invites both adults and children.

Irina Zabavskaya also makes beautiful charm dolls, which are instant-

ly sold out at our fairs, as well as in Ukraine, Poland.

This winter, Irina Zabavskaya took her dolls, authentic Belarusian costumes to the republican exhibition of folk art called *Kalyadnyya Uzory*, where she was awarded the title of the People's Master.

# Belarus — country of sports



Minsk-Arena

The words 'Belarusians' and 'sport' had almost become synonymous. The country's parks are always full of sports enthusiasts, while modern swimming pools and ice arenas are being built even in small district centres. Therefore, it is not surprising that Belarusian professional athletes regularly get to world podiums to accept well-deserved awards.

By Sofia Arsenyeva

## To paddle to Brest

The nature of the region encourages to go rowing: there are more than twenty thousand rivers in our 'Blue-eyed' country. Kayaks and canoes scurrying back and forth across the water surface are a familiar sight in urban areas. Back in the 20th century, athletes from Brest, Gomel and Minsk traditionally won gold medals for the Soviet team in these sports. The winning tradition did not end there: Belarusian rowers have never returned from the Olympics without awards over the past two decades. There are training bases in all regions, but one of the most beautiful is located in Brest. A modern rowing canal with a multifunctional sports and entertainment complex is

is a reason for it: she won two Olympic gold medals and the title of six-time world champion.

## To experience horsepower

The elite village of Ratomka is known not only for extremely expensive cottages and star residents but also for its hoofed inhabitants. There is the Republican Centre for Olympic Training of Equestrian Sports and Horse Breeding. Watching noble animals and their brave riders in the moments of dressage, overcoming obstacles and triathlon is a special pleasure.

However, you can always come to Ratomka and take a tour, look into the stables and arenas. You can even

Russian team beat the Swedes on this ice and took the well-deserved gold at the Ice Hockey World Championships. The matchup was tough and exciting, and the championship was recognised as the most attendant tournament — over 640 thousand fans from eighty countries. Today you can come here to see the home games of Dinamo-Minsk Hockey Club and Tsmoki-Minsk Basketball Club.

However, Minsk-Arena is not only a sports venue. In 2010 and 2018, the *Junior Eurovision Song Contest* was held at the complex, and even the sports drama *Legend No. 17* was filmed there.

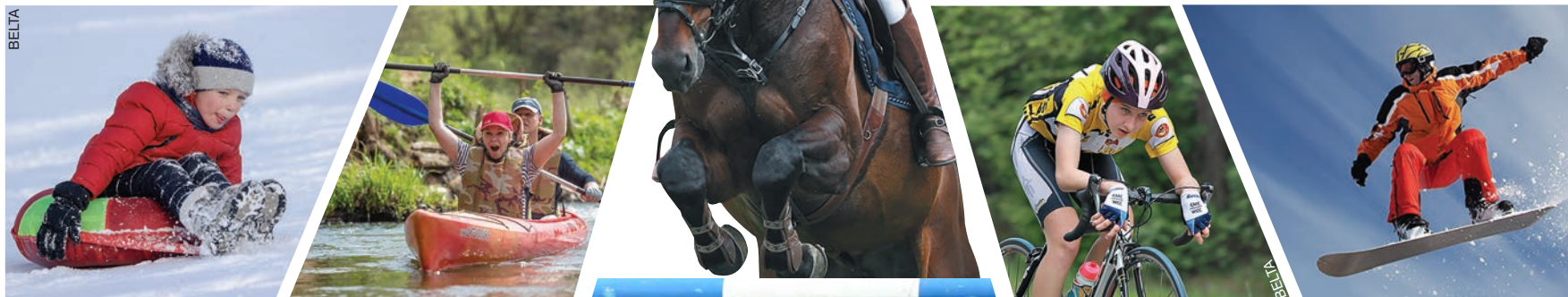
## To follow in the steps of the legends

Nature has not endowed Belarus with snow-covered

Raubichi Centre is notable in that both professionals and amateurs can equally enjoy the facilities of the complex. In winter, you can go skiing, skating and snow tubing down steep hills until dark. In summer, guests can rent bicycles, tennis courts, volleyball and basketball courts and much more.

## To find out where Alla Pugacheva had sold out concerts

Within ten minutes walk of the railway station, there is the main sports arena of the country — the Dinamo Stadium. When looking at a modern brilliant miracle, it seems downright unbelievable that it was built in the post-war years. Since then, however, its exterior has changed drastically several times.



indeed impressive in its scope. There are swimming pools, gyms, ski-roller tracks, a hotel, a sauna and a cafe. It is not surprising that not only Belarusian athletes, but also Russians like to train in Brest. By the way, amateur athletes are always welcome here.

A curious detail is that it was at the training camp in Brest in 1997 that Ekaterina Khadatovich, who is also now known by the surname Karsten, met her future husband. In the rowing world, her nickname is Catherine the Great. There

saddle dashing horses in the field or sedately ride in a carriage. By the way, Ratomka is the only centre among the CIS countries where centralised training of young men and juniors in equestrian sports is organised. Belarusian kids are incredibly lucky.

## To prove that you're not a coward

The beauty and pride of the Belarusian capital is Minsk-Arena. Architects Valery Kutsko, Vladimir Budaev, Anatoly Shabalin were awarded the State Prize for this project. Two years later, the

mountain slopes, but it's not an obstacle. Four-time Olympic champion and hero of Belarus Darya Domracheva is the proof of that! Famous Belarusian biathletes, skiers, freestylers regularly bring home a whole bunch of prestigious competitions awards. Raubichi Republican Centre for Olympic Training in Winter Sports is their alma mater. The place with amazing energy and powerful infrastructure had been widely recognised and appreciated by the world biathlon stars who came here for the family sports festival *Race of Legends*.

Few people know that during the Olympics-80, this Minsk stadium hosted seven football matches, including the first quarterfinal. That is why this stadium has every right to bear the proud title of Olympic.

However, the record attendance at Dinamo was scored not for sports matches, but musical events. For example, from August 16th to 20th, 1989, Alla Pugacheva gave eight solo concerts at Dinamo, which gathered four hundred thousand spectators in total.

## ARENA

### Belarusian track and field athlete Iryna Zhuk wins Perche Elite Tour tournament in France

An athlete from Grodno started the competition in the pole vault with a height of 4 m 43 cm, then reached 4 m 52 cm, and a successful attempt at a height of 4 m 60 cm brought her victory. After that, Iryna Zhuk tried to overcome the bar at a height of 4 m 70 cm, but failed. The second place was taken



by the Cuban athlete Yarlesley Silva (4 m 52 cm), and the Chinese athlete Xu Huiqin (4 m 43 cm) was third.

Iryna Zhuk will start the next start of this series of tournaments on February 5th in Tourcoing, France.

### Australian Open winners announced

In the final match of the tournament, the Spaniard Rafael Nadal beat the Russian Daniil Medvedev — 2:6, 6:7 (5:7), 6:4, 6:4, 7:5. The game lasted 5 hours and 25 minutes. After losing two games, Rafael Nadal (5 ATP) managed to pull himself together and won three sets in a row.

Daniil Medvedev (2) lost for the second time in a row in the final of the Australian



Rafael Nadal

Australian tennis player Ashleigh Barty (1 WTA) outplayed American tennis player Danielle Collins (30) in straight sets to win the Australian Open for the first time.

After the Australian Open,

Open: a year ago he lost to Serb Novak Djokovic (1).

In the women's singles final,

Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka remained in second position in the updated ranking of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA).

The best Belarusian tennis player to date reached the 1/8 finals on the courts of Melbourne Park, where she lost to Estonian Kaia Kanepi. Now Aryna Sabalenka has 5,698 points.



Ashleigh Barty

## Photo of the week



In winter, a herd of bison can be observed in the fields of the Minsk Region

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**On February 3rd, 1927**, in Western Belarus, the Polish authorities shot a demonstration of workers in the town of Kossovo, who spoke out in defence of the representatives of the Belarusian Peasant-Working Community, who were threatened with a trial.

**On February 3rd, 1966**, the Soviet Luna-9 station made the world's first soft landing on the Moon. After landing, the Luna-9 station worked for 75 hours and performed seven communication sessions. Luna-9 transmitted to Earth a television panorama of the area. These images, taken from a height of about 1 m, showed details up to 1 mm in size.



**On February 4th, 1977**, the Council of Ministers of the USSR decided to build a subway in Minsk. On May 3rd, 1977, the construction of the subway began. On June 29th, 1984, on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Minsk from the Nazi invaders during the Great Patriotic War, the regular movement of Minsk subway trains began.



**February 4th** is World Cancer Day. It is held by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) with the support of the World Health Organisation. The purpose of this Day is to draw public attention to this global problem, to remind people how dangerous and widespread cancer is, and to significantly reduce cancer deaths.

**February 4th-11th, 1945**, the Crimean or Yalta conference took place. It was the second official meeting (after Tehran) of the heads of the anti-Hitler coalition — the USSR, the USA and Great Britain — during the Second World War. Here, plans for the final defeat of Germany and the end of World War II were agreed upon, the basic principles of a common policy regarding the post-war order of the world were outlined, and a number of other issues were discussed.



**On February 6th, 1952**, after the death of King George VI, 25-year-old Elizabeth II was declared Queen of Great Britain. At that time, she became the Head of the Commonwealth and the reigning queen of seven countries: Great

Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan and Ceylon. She is currently the longest-reigning and oldest monarch in British history, as well as the longest-reigning and oldest head of state in the world.

**February 7th, 1812** is the birthday of Charles Dickens (1812-1870), who was an English realist writer, stenographer, reporter, novelist and essayist. A classic of world literature, one of the greatest prose writers of the 19th century, became the most popular English-language writer during his lifetime. Author of such books as *Oliver Twist*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Bleak House*, etc.



farms and state farms are named after him. During the Great Patriotic War in Belarus, 7 partisan brigades and dozens of detachments bore his name.

**On February 9th, 1852**, the opera *Idyll (Sielanka)* based on the libretto by Wincenty Dunin-Marcinkiewicz was staged for the first time in Minsk. These original operatic and dramatic parts were written in 1842-1844. The music for the text was written by friends of Dunin-Martsinkevich — composer Stanisław Moniuszko and violinist K. Krzyżanowski. The premiere took place on the stage of the Minsk City Theatre.



**February 9th, 1887** is the birthday of Vasily Ivanovich Chapayev (1887-1919), the legendary commander of the Civil War. Since 1918, he commanded a detachment, a brigade and the 25th Infantry Division, which played a significant role in the defeat of Kolchak's troops in the summer of 1919. He died in battle. The image of Chapayev is captured in the novel *Chapayev* by Dmitry Furmanov and the film of the same name. In Belarus, streets, collective



**February 10th, 1636** is the birthday of the iron. Its first documentary mention was found in the book of expenses of the Russian royal court. The mentioned and described iron costing 5 altyns belonged to the simplest heating type. It weighed about 10 kilograms and was monolithic. In general, devices for ironing clothes were invented a very long time ago. Back in the 4th century BC, in Ancient Greece, they used methods to pleat clothes from linen using a hot metal rod that resembled a rolling pin.

