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INTERNATIONAL

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Yegor Yermalitskiy

Aleksandr Gapeenko, junior sergeant of Minsk's rescue and firefighting department No. 30

## It's their job to save people

The country celebrated Fire Service Day on July 25th. For 169 years, Belarusian firefighters have been professionally and consistently putting out fires and other emergencies that are dangerous for people, production and the environment. They are always ready to help in difficult times. They play educational games with children on holidays, right on the city squares. On weekdays, when there are no so many callouts, they come to schools and enterprises to remind children and adults that there is nothing more precious than life. Even if nothing is on fire, they still go to training callouts and work out possible emergency scenarios at complex facilities. They are also engaged in fire and rescue sports to be in good shape. All in order to always have time to arrive, make the right decision and save someone's life. Our rescuers do not stand aside when help is needed abroad. For 15 years now, they have been helping to put out fires and deal with emergencies in other countries. The help of aviators from Belarus was vital in extinguishing forest fires in Turkey, Greece, Russia, Latvia and Georgia.



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# Peace is always much better than war

**We must stop, come to an agreement, end this operation and the war in Ukraine. No need to go any further. Because further is a nuclear abyss. This was stated by the President of Belarus in an interview with Agence France-Presse (AFP). The interviewer was Deputy Bureau Chief and News Editor for the former Soviet Union at AFP, Moscow News Editor Antoine Lambroschini.**

The Head of State made a number of comments about topical items on the international agenda and about the situation in the country. During the interview the Head of State answered questions about when the conflict in Ukraine will end, how the conflict could have been avoided, and what role Belarus plays in Russia's special military operation in Ukraine.

Aleksandr Lukashenko was asked about the difference between a dictatorship and the policy pursued in Belarus. Aleksandr Lukashenko responded that the Constitution gives the President great powers in Belarus. Moreover, all versions of the country's fundamental law were adopted by referendum, and many articles were modelled on the legislative practices of France, Russia, Kazakhstan, "In other words, we did not create anything unique and exceptional, we adopted the experience of other countries... Now everyone is talking about hunger. I agree that we are very close to that point. Many are starving already. You could say, 'Not critical yet'. How is it not? A child dies every 10 seconds in the world. Not a famine yet? It is. It's going to get worse. I am closely monitoring the harvesting campaign and ask a lot from farmers and the whole country. We must crop everything. We need to mobilise. Famine will bring about dictatorship, including in France. Because we need to save people. Not to feed, but to save them from dying."

According to him, such strict requirements from the Head of State can be regarded as a dictatorship, but in this case they are justified by an important goal — to improve people's lives, to prevent critical situations.

The President emphasised,

***"It is true, we have a more centralised system of government. I might even describe it as 'authoritarian'. Yet, it is by no means a dictatorship. In order to dictate terms, you need to have certain leverage and resources. What resources does Belarus have to tell France, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Russia what to do?"***

In his opinion, only the United States can probably dictate terms today, "They have everything for this: power, population, territory and a money printing machine. Even France cannot be a dictatorship, although it is a nuclear power."

Asked for how long he intends to remain the President, Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed it was up to the Belarusian people to decide, "I could have quit a long time ago if a certain situation had existed in the country and abroad. But since 2020 many of those, who took to

the streets, as you say, have come to their senses and understand now what could have happened. They say: 'We didn't act right. What would have happened if he [Aleksandr Lukashenko] had not been around?' That's what people say. Trust me, I know the mood of the people."

The President added,

***"What would have happened if I had abandoned everything and quit in 2020? The country would be totally different right now, and you would interview other people. And the policy would be different. Things would be worse in Belarus than they are in Ukraine now."***

The interviewer asked Aleksandr Lukashenko about the presence of Russian troops in Belarus and whether their presence allows the country to pursue a sovereign and independent policy.

sources. We tried other sources, but they turned out to be very expensive, twice as expensive."

The incident with the Ryanair flight, which became the reason for imposing sanctions against Belarus, was mentioned during the conversation.

***"It is falsification. What right does ICAO have to introduce sanctions? What right does France have? The right belongs to the United Nations Organisation. But the UN has not even recommended it," said the President concerning the recent The International Civil Aviation Organisation's report.***

He pointed out that European countries introduced sanctions to close airspace for Belarus even before any documents or reports were published. Meanwhile, a much more serious incident involving an Indo-



"There are plenty of foreign military personnel in Europe, including in France. You shouldn't even ask me this question. You have dozens of thousands of them," countered Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The Head of State drew attention to the fact that the presence of Russian troops in Belarus is not something extraordinary, "They have always been here as many as we needed. Not a single Russian military specialist has come here without my invitation or permission. This is why all of them are staying here with my consent."

The Head of State remarked that amid the sanctions introduced by the European Union against Russia the dependence of EU countries on Russian energy resources became obvious. In such a situation rebukes saying Belarus is somehow dependent on Russian funding or supplies of energy resources look inappropriate, the President believes, "We've always received natural gas and oil from them. There were no other

nesian aircraft, which was shot down in Ukrainian sky, is still being investigated.

Almost half of the interview was devoted to the situation in Ukraine.

"You created it, this crisis. This artificial crisis was created by you. I can prove it 100 percent with facts: you triggered and continue this war," highlighted Aleksandr Lukashenko.

Answering the French journalist's question about the role of Belarus in the events taking place in Ukraine, Aleksandr Lukashenko said that the role is 'huge'.

***"It is peacekeeping, first and foremost. As soon as this conflict broke out, having a general idea of what was happening and what was going to happen, I kept calling Zelensky all day and asking him: 'Volodya, please sit down at the negotiating table. It is not to your detriment. Talk to each other. Any peace is better than a good war'," the Head of State said.***

Aleksandr Lukashenko

recalled that after that Belarus hosted several rounds of negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. But the West — primarily the United States and Great Britain — did not let Ukraine continue them, the President said.

He reminded that the Minsk agreements were signed in the Belarusian capital city in 2015 after lengthy talks of the Normandy Four — kind of peace treaty, "If Ukrainian authorities had executed this agreement, there would be no war today. And Donbass and Lugansk could possibly be part of Ukraine already. And I am convinced they would be."

In his words, the West artificially inflated tensions around the Russian-Ukrainian conflict all these years. To start a war against Russia from Ukraine's territory was the goal, reminded that before the launch of the

it would have been forced to face a massive blow from NATO, not from Ukraine. Now it is not Ukraine that is fighting. Now you are fighting there, with your mercenaries and your weapons."

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that Belarus is involved in the Russian operation, but its role is to protect the rear, that's it.

The President explained that Russia has not yet used its most powerful weapon in Ukraine, and it is not even about nuclear potential, "I saw this weapon, I am in the know. Therefore, it is not yet the kind of war that could be from Russia."

Aleksandr Lukashenko admitted that he dreamed of creating a pan-Slavic state or a union of countries. This was said in response to the journalist's suggestion that Russian President Vladimir Putin is dreaming of the same thing.

"It was I who had a dream of a Slavic state. Once they promoted this idea of the Russian world. Since the 1990s, I have always drawn attention that there are Slavic states. Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria and others... We should not lose this connection. Indeed, everyone has their own state. But we are Slavs. I've talked about that. Putin did not talk or dream of any pan-Slavic state. You have made this up," the Head of State said.

The President was asked about declared plans to deliver Russian missile systems Iskander to Belarus and refit aircraft with the ability to carry nuclear weapons.

The President remarked, "We have such aircraft. We just need to refit them so that they could carry nuclear weapons. In response to what Americans are doing. They train Germans and other countries. They have prepared aircraft and are training them."

Asked whether he would like Russian nuclear weapons to be deployed in Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko said,

***"It is enough for us that Russia has nuclear weapons. If need be, Russia will defend Belarus like its own territory according to the treaty... God forbid of course we don't want that to happen. Because it will be the end... I am absolutely opposed to nuclear weapons. They must be completely destroyed around the world. And the world will become a safer place then. Today, in addition to nuclear weapons, there are also biological weapons (you see what is happening), cyber weapons. You know, this is even worse than nuclear weapons. Therefore, we [Belarus] do not need nuclear weapons."***

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

# Belarusian manufacturers strengthen their positions

The President of Belarus visited the Stolitsa shopping centre, located at the heart of Minsk

The Head of State got acquainted with the work and development prospects of the shopping centre, visited company stores, looked at trade and public catering facilities, where a wide range of domestic products is presented.

The Stolitsa shopping centre offers a broad array of products from national manufacturers: clothing and footwear, souvenirs, home textiles, dishes, accessories, food products, furniture and many more.

The Head of State positively assessed what he saw. The President instructed to make the same object on the site of the Minsk Magnet unfinished construction project at the intersection of Independence Avenue and Kalinovskogo Street. The construction works there began back in 2009. The project has never been completed. The President instructed to begin the work on the site of the un-



BELTA

**“Now is the time to take over the market and not let anyone enter it,” emphasised Aleksandr Lukashenko.**

The President also dropped by the newly opened Pervyi merch store at the Stolitsa shopping centre. He was told that the merchandise sells well not only in brick-and-mortar retail outlets, but also at various holidays and festivals. Merch is often taken as souvenirs and gifts by foreign visitors from various countries. By the way, one of the new products has the autograph of Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The Head of State also visited other stores. Everywhere there was an extremely business-like conversation about working conditions, prospects for expanding the range and network of outlets, possible difficulties and ways to overcome them. Aleksandr Lukashenko personally appreciated the taste of the products.

The Stolitsa shopping centre has been operating since 2006 and is currently undergoing renovation and rebranding. Minsk City Hall, the owner of the centre, positions the centre as a retail space of branded stores of leading Belarusian manufacturers. The main goal of the rebranding effort is to popularise domestic brands and create comfortable conditions for customers and for manufacturers by gathering them in one place so that one can evaluate their benefits.

Co-operation has been established with the leading arts universities of the country. Their students are given the opportunity to showcase their art: works of art, choreographic numbers and programmes.



ished construction project in the near future, and not to delay this process.

**“We should prioritise Belarusian products and manufacturers,” noted Aleksandr Lukashenko.**

During a visit to a store of a well-known Belarusian confectionery brand the Head of State was informed that the departure of a number of foreign suppliers vacated some niches in

this market segment. In these circumstances, Aleksandr Lukashenko sets the task to strengthen positions not only in the current moment, but also for further extension.

There is a great demand for Belarusian confectionery abroad, including in China. Therefore, another task is to scale up production, launch new production lines if necessary.

The President also visited factory shops of domestic light industry manufacturers. He was told about the assortment and new products. For example, the demand for linen products has been steadily growing in recent years. As in the case of the confectionery industry, there was talk about the supply of raw materials and efforts to increase the presence of Belarusian brands in the domestic market.

## Preserve natural blessings for future generations

**In Belarus, work will be intensified to protect flora and fauna. Relevant tasks were set by Aleksandr Lukashenko, while hearing the report of the head of the State Inspectorate for Protection of Flora and Fauna under the President of the Republic of Belarus Yuri Tertel.**

Aleksandr Lukashenko asked Yuri Tertel what should be done to make the work of the State Inspectorate more efficient and what are the shortcomings in its activities today. Several years ago, when Yuri Tertel was appointed head of the State Inspectorate, the President pointed out to the need to ensure discipline in the agency and even to the facts of corruption.

**“A military man was put in charge to restore order. Has order been put in place? We have to improve the protection of fauna and flora. A green island of nature in the centre of Europe should be preserved for the future. There is no pathetics here. We live in greenery (I mean our nature), and we would like our children to live in the same world,” emphasised Aleksandr Lukashenko.**

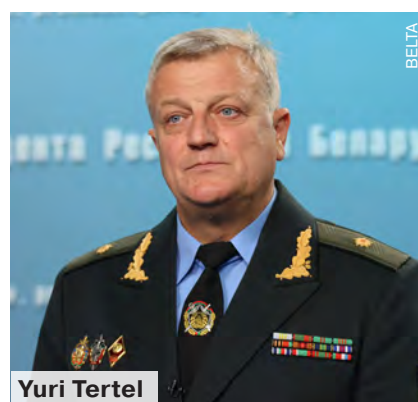
Aleksandr Lukashenko paid special attention to the reproduction of forests, “We had a very big problem: if they cut it down, it will overgrow by itself. Have you taken this issue under control?”

The President noted that there are no

plans to increase the number of the State Inspectorate. While efficiency must be increased through new forms and methods of work.

Aleksandr Lukashenko also added: the employees of the State Inspectorate for Protection of Flora and Fauna should also be ready, if necessary, to take up arms to protect their country. Aleksandr Lukashenko reminded, “The inspectorate is a relatively military formation. When I sent a military man there, I thought that this component would be strengthened. During a meeting with the emergencies minister, I instructed him to set up a military unit with strong, reliable men in case of hard times. After all, thousands of rescuers serve there. I emphasise once again: these are well-trained, smart guys. We have agreed (and this issue has already been resolved) that we will have several thousand trained fighters there just in case. You need to have the whole inspectorate ready to take up arms. This factor must be also kept in mind.”

According to the President, if necessary, the inspectorate will be further



Yuri Tertel

equipped, and it is also worth developing appropriate training plans for its staff,

**“It is not because there is some kind of emergency, but we are all men, and we must be prepared for it. We need to have trained people. We need to learn the lesson from the experience of Ukraine, where they grabbed unprepared people (the country had been ruined there even before this operation began) and sent them to the front. They were not ready to carry weapons, let alone to fight. Therefore, we need to prepare our society to defend the Fatherland.”**

Aleksandr Lukashenko also drew attention to the egregious facts of animal abuse and demanded to respond to such things. The Head of State noted that young people often allow such actions against animals, “Recently, we have seen cases of animal cruelty (there have always been plenty of brazen young people, and there are some now too). Especially among young people.”

The President instructed to immediately make proposals if any additional decisions should be made in this regard, although this area is not exactly a scope of reference of the State Inspectorate. There is no need to even look for the perpetrators of such actions, as they upload videos to social networks.

According to Yuri Tertel, the State Inspectorate is now working to implement the instructions given several years ago when he was appointed to this post. First of all, close attention was paid to the instructions concerning the personnel, and order in the agency.

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

# 5-axis development



The Belarusian machine tool building has a second wind. This industry is, perhaps, a key one in industrial sovereignty together with microelectronics and instrumentation. Unfortunately, it experienced difficult times for last two decades. Foreign corporations worked hard in the development of the post-Soviet market and ousted domestic producers from it. Many specialised enterprises have just degraded. Fortunately, Belarus managed to preserve them. It cannot be said that today they have no problems, but they are able to become the backbone for the revival of the machine tool building. We discussed this issue with the director of StankoGomel Anatoly Savenok.

## Belarus has preserved skill sets in machine tool building



On the scale of the union of Belarus and Russia, machine tool builders need to fill the market and take positions from which they cannot be knocked out so easily and categorically (as it was in the 2000s) by foreign manufacturers



StankoGomel has preserved the ability to produce a full cycle of machine tools

By Vladimir Volchkov

### Habits tend to change

At first, Belarus could produce almost a full range of machine tools. It should be noted that enterprises worked well even in the difficult 1990s. Domestic equipment, perhaps, was inferior to imported in elegance and design, but it had the necessary functionality and was much cheaper than foreign counterparts. The turning point occurred in the 2000s, when foreign corporations and commercial structures took up the post-Soviet market in earnest. Then it seemed that the leading German and Japanese corporations would bring modern technologies to the country. In fact, we served as a target market for them. And for two decades, importers have been systematically ousting Belarusian manufacturers. In fairness, it should be noted that there were objective reasons for this. Foreign suppliers could offer better financial terms through cheap loans at home. In addition, they trumped the market with comprehensive services: they trained staff, maintained their equipment, and provided consulting with engineering.

“Certain habits and stereotypes have developed in the market. Our and Russian industrialists are accustomed to working with German, Japanese equipment, and psychologically they still hardly perceive domestic equipment, even if it meets all technical specifications. Of course, the heads of enterprises understand that there will be no more Western machine tools, or rather they will have to be supplied according to complex schemes. There are significant risks in their maintenance and the supply of spare parts, but they are still struggling to rebuild their internal doubts,” explains director of StankoGomel Anatoly Savenok.

Nevertheless, numerous delegations from Russian consumer companies came one by one to StankoGomel in the spring. Specialists carried out ‘reconnaissance in



Leading engineer of StankoGomel Boris Buzanov

force’: they studied, asked the price and looked closely. Now, according to Anatoly Savenok, the second wave is underway — this time with the discussion of specific contracts. There will definitely be demand for Gomel machine tools. Today, a certain niche has formed in the market, but it will not be empty for a long time. On the scale of the union of Belarus and Russia, machine tool builders need to fill the market and take positions from which they cannot be knocked out so easily and categorically (as it was in the 2000s) by foreign manufacturers.

### Rich tradition

Historically, StankoGomel has always specialised in milling machines. Although production volumes have somewhat decreased, the company managed to maintain and develop the design department. It has developed and introduced into production a modern line of milling machines, horizontal and vertical 3-axis machining centres and a 5-axis machining centre. True, to launch the last product, it is necessary to purchase several units of production equipment. The director of the enterprise believes that appropriate funding is needed (commer-

cial loans are too expensive to be able to develop dynamically with their help today) for the rapid revival of the domestic machine tool building, and, most importantly, it is crucial to fill the place vacated by importers. Resources are also needed to increase production volumes to meet growing demand.

“We have the ability to produce a full cycle of machine tools. However, this production model is quite expensive, and there is a need for co-operation,” explains Anatoly Savenok.

StankoGomel is actively looking for partners. We require certain volumes of orders and their stability to encourage contractors and get a favourable price from them. And for this it is necessary to increase sales of machine tools. Their manufacturers stake hopes on programmes within the framework of the Union State or national projects to achieve technological independence. Today, the replacement of foreign software is actively taking place. But the transition to a domestic machine park, at least in strategic sectors (military-industrial complex, power, aircraft con-

struction, transport infrastructure, and so on), is an important component of industrial independence.

***Belarus and Russia have every opportunity to strengthen their technological sovereignty. A lot needs to be done, but there is already a basis for this.***

Nevertheless, fundamental decisions are needed at the state level in order to quickly boost the machine tool building.

### Both repair and engineering

It is essential to develop not only production, but also services. Today StankoGomel develops the direction of engineering. Far from all enterprises, the engineering staff has a wide range of skill sets in the field of machine tool operation. Therefore, specialists from Gomel can offer not only maintenance and repair of equipment, but also the selection of tools and operating modes for the production of a particular type of product. The development of local skill sets is one of the critical factors in promoting domestic equipment on the market. The overhaul of equipment is another area that StankoGomel is actively developing today. A modern machining centre requires very expensive equipment. In some cases, there is no need to purchase a new machine — one can restore the old one, carry out its deep modernisation, for example, equip it with an electric drive and CNC.

Fortunately, skill sets in the field of machine tool building are still preserved in Belarus. However, they need to be developed, primarily through the training of engineering, design, and technological personnel. The own school has been preserved at our enterprises, and it is extremely important to ensure its continuity. Technological independence is primarily created not by microcircuits or equipment, but by qualified personnel.



# Domestic vaccine comes first

The Centre for Virology of the Academy of Sciences will develop domestic vaccines

**The Belarusian product against COVID-19 is ready, now a site for pilot production is being built. But it's not just about fighting the pandemic, epidemiologists say. The main thing is to learn how to create platforms for the release of vaccines. With such a foundation, Belarus will be able to withstand any challenges, and do it without outside help.**

By Yelena Basikirskaya

Last year, the Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus Vladimir Gusakov initiated the creation of a centre for organising fundamental research in virology. It is being built at the Institute of Biophysics and Cell Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. Director of the Institute Andrei Goncharov told what specialists plan to do, “The main attention is being given to diagnostic methods and the creation of test systems in our country. This is the very first centre at the Academy of Sciences, where we will purposefully engage the whole institution in medical virology, primarily the development of various vaccines. The state allocates large funds for the construction of the Centre for Virology. The premises are already done, communications are laid out, it remains to install the ventilation system. The centre is being erected by specialists directly trained for this, because the work here is significantly different from ordinary objects. Laboratory rooms are isolated from the environment as much as possible, constant air pressure will be maintained there to prevent microbes. Complete wastewater treatment is provided.”

“All microorganisms will be neutralised, and they will not be able to cause any disease.



We purchase the highest quality equipment that will allow us to get good results and provide reliable protection: glove boxes for safe work with microorganisms, CO<sub>2</sub> incubators, microscopes, ultracentrifuges, cryostorages for organic living materials and much more,” specifies Andrei Goncharov.

After the creation of the platform, vaccines against new infections will be obtained as soon as possible, the Director of the Institute is sure, “We will develop preventive drugs from the vaccination calendar and gradually replace imports. This is an important aspect of national biosecurity, which is essential in today’s turbulent world.”

The Centre for Virology is considering producing vaccines against infections endemic to Asia, Africa and South Ameri-



ca. For example, against malaria, yellow fever — as an export option. Here they will deal with the elimination of the threats of influenza, the carriers of which are animals, birds, including migratory ones. We should always be at the ready for new viruses, says the scientist, “With the onset of global warming, another dangerous factor has emerged. This

*“There can be no medicine without biology. COVID-19 scared us, and we had to fast-track vaccine production.”*  
Aleksandr Lukashenko said as he heard out a report on the integration of biology and medicine, June 16th, 2022



Vitaly Pivovarchik

es were circulated among bats only in Africa, now they are also found in certain European countries. This cannot but be a source of some alarm.”

Therefore, the monitoring of the animal world for dangerous infections, co-operation with the veterinary service, the Scientific and Practical Centre for Biore-sources, as well as interaction with other departments of the National Academy of Sciences will be within eyesight of the newly-created Centre for Virology. Andrei Goncharov set another important task for the centre — to develop and produce technical tools for virus identification.

The main thing for the country is to be ready to protect itself from infections.

However, they can arise not only in a natural way: bio-terrorism cannot be dismissed out of hand — today many people in the world know how to grow a pathogen in the era of the development of biotechnology. In addition, there is a possibility of virus leakage from laboratories. Therefore, when creating a domestic centre, security issues will be given maximum attention.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin had a telephone conversation



Bilateral co-operation was in the focus of the conversation between the presidents of Belarus and Russia on July 22nd. They discussed a number of important issues in economy, including specific import substitution projects.

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin also discussed the international agenda. Separately, the Russian President informed his Belarusian counterpart about the talks in Tehran.

Belarusian Head of State, in turn, thanked his colleague for supporting the Belarusian national air carrier.

In addition, the presidents of Belarus and Russia agreed on the appointment of a new ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to the Russian Federation. The Belarusian side has already received the agreman. Ambassador Vladimir Semashko is replaced by Deputy Head of the President Administration Dmitry Krutoy, who at one time was directly involved in the development of the Union State programmes to advance the integration.

The heads of state discussed the schedule of upcoming contacts.

### Belarus terminates participation in the Aarhus Convention

Belarus decided to discontinue the country’s membership in the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) as of June 25th, 1998. This is provided



for by Decree No. 247 ‘On the withdrawal of the Republic of Belarus from the international treaty’ signed by the Head of State Aleksandr Lukashenko.

Despite the progress achieved in fulfilling the international commitments in the relevant area, in October 2021 Belarus faced a biased and discriminatory attitude and pressure from the governing bodies of the convention, as well as facts of pressure on a sovereign state.

Under these circumstances, Belarus cannot continue being a full-fledged party to this convention. Article 21 of this international document provides that any party has the right to withdraw from the convention.

### Export of Belarusian goods to China increased by 1.5 times over five months and amounted to more than \$0.5 billion

China remains one of the most important strategic partners of Belarus. Over 100 Belarusian enterprises are now accredited and are intent on working on the Chinese market today. Export of Belarusian goods to China has increased by practically 1.5 times and is moving fast towards the annual target of 100 percent increase.

Thanks to the high level of co-operation incremental growth and the advancement of joint trade and economic initiatives are observed. For the sake of re-



directing commodity flows from markets of unfriendly countries to the Chinese market industry-specific import applications have been worked out as well as offers for updating export applications to the People’s Republic of China for this year. Belarusian manufacturers work directly with Chinese chambers of commerce, associations, and enterprises on possible deliveries of technological equipment from Greater China.



# Knowledge is power



By Polina Konoga

Last week, the country began the 2022 admission campaign. It is planned that about 53,500 applicants will become undergraduate students at 49 universities, about 39,500 more people will study in institutions of secondary specialised education and about 26,700 young people — in institutions of professional training education. In general, the adult literacy rate in Belarus has always been one of the highest in the world, now it reaches 99.9 percent, and the enrolment rate in preschool or primary education is higher than in Europe and North America. The world is at risk of facing a major crisis in education: almost 200 million children in different countries have not attended school in recent years. However, it will obviously not be possible to solve this problem by 2030...

## Hard mark to hit

Ensuring quality education for all is the fourth goal in the list of 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. And, as it turned out, one of the most difficult to achieve. World education was in crisis even before the pandem-

ic, the consequences of COVID-19 restrictions made the situation catastrophic.

According to a new UNESCO report, only one in six countries will be able to achieve the fourth Sustainable Development Goal and ensure universal access to quality education without additional action by 2030.

*Analysts estimate that 84 million children and young people will still be out of school by the end of the decade.*

Today, UNESCO Member States expect the proportion of students who have acquired basic reading skills at the end of primary school to increase from 51 percent in 2015 to 67 percent in 2030. However, it is not out of the woods yet: according to various estimates, 300 million children and youth will not master the basic numeracy and literacy skills they need to succeed in life. Experts point out that, despite the promise of universal secondary education, only one in six countries aims to achieve this target by 2030, only four out of ten young people in sub-Saharan Africa will complete secondary education.

## Belarusian path

The compilers of 'A Roadmap for SDG Implementation in the Republic of Belarus' emphasise that, unlike many neighbouring countries, Belarus, having gained independence in 1991, did not undertake a large-scale and disruptive restructuring of its education system. As a result of this stable continuity, the country has made significant progress in achieving high enrolment rates at all levels of education.

Net enrolment rates put us on par with most high-income countries in the world. The authors of the document also emphasise that the high rates of higher education make it possible to classify the youth of Belarus as the most educated in the world.

*The country's adult literacy rate has consistently been one of the highest in the world and currently stands at 99.9 percent. In terms of enrolment of children in primary and secondary education, Belarus is included in the group of countries with the highest level of development.*

## EDUCATION IN BELARUS

(at the beginning of the 2021/22 academic year, according to Belstat)

- ▶ Institutions of preschool education — **3,760**.  
The total number of children — **405,500 people**.
- ▶ Institutions of general secondary education — **2,967**.  
The number of students — **1.1 million people**.
- ▶ Institutions of professional training education — **172**.  
The number of students — **59,900 people**.
- ▶ Institutions of secondary specialised education — **221**.  
The number of students — **107,500 people**.
- ▶ Institutions of preschool education are attended by **88.5 percent** of preschool children. Preparation for school in Belarus covers all 5-year-olds.
- ▶ The number of teachers in institutions of general secondary education is **106,700 people**.
- ▶ There are on average ten students per teacher, five in rural schools, and 12 in urban schools.
- ▶ In 50 institutions of higher education, there were **243,000** undergraduate students, of which **18,500** were foreign citizens (**7.6 percent** of the total number of students).
- ▶ There were **12,300** postgraduate students at the second-cycle higher education level.
- ▶ There are **273** students and undergraduates of higher education institutions per 10,000 people of the population of Belarus.



## WHAT ABOUT THE WORLD?

(From the UNESCO 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report and the UNICEF State of the Global Education Crisis report, December 2021)

Even before the pandemic, the global education system was in a global crisis: 56 percent of primary and 61 percent of senior school children (617 million children and adolescents in total) could not read and count. The UNESCO outlined the inability of many children to attend school as the main reason for this state of affairs.

Other indicators of access to education are even more dismal: 16 percent (61 million) of children are not enrolled in lower secondary education, and 36 percent (138 million) in upper secondary education. One in five children between the ages of six and 17 does not attend school, and one in three young children does not receive preschool education.

Before the pandemic, 750 million adults worldwide remained illiterate. Almost half of them are residents of Central and South Asia, more than a quarter are the population of sub-Saharan Africa. Two-thirds of illiterate adults are women.

More than 1.6 billion children and adolescents have been completely or partially stopped from school due to coronavirus lockdowns. Since the beginning of the school year in September 2020, only 16 percent of students worldwide have attended school — 35 percent in September 2021. In total, schools were closed for 18 weeks in 2020-2021 — half of the school year.

## FIGURES AND FACTS



Belarus ranks 32nd in the education index in the Human Development Index and has the best result among the CIS countries.

Belarus ranks **17th among 163 countries of the world** according to the 'Access to Basic Knowledge' indicator in the Social Progress Index for 2020. The leading positions among the CIS member states in terms of coverage of children aged from one to six years old attending preschool education institutions have been strengthened. In 2021, it amounted to **88.5 percent**.

Almost **1.3 billion rubles** were provided for financing the education sector in the 2021 budget, and more than **1.4 billion rubles** in the 2022 budget.

# My heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth

Saint Kirill protects his native Turov even as the centuries went by

10 years ago, the Cathedral of Saints Kirill and Lavrentiy of Turov appeared in the heart of Turov. Even the layout of the shrine is simply awe-inspiring. Imagine how people are overwhelmed with feelings when they cross its threshold and find out how many miracles are associated with the name of the wisest bishop, under whose heavenly protection the spiritual Turov flourishes to this day.

By Natalia Ostapchuk

## Faithful people

This small woodland town is called the second Jerusalem. According to legend, Equal-to-the-Apostles Olga converted the Turovites to Orthodoxy 30 years before her grandson Prince Vladimir officially christianised Kievan Rus. Turov became a powerful spiritual centre by the 12th century, during the lifetime of Kirill. In terms of area, the city was commensurate with the current Brest, however, 76 Orthodox churches and four monasteries were located on its territory. Pretty impressive, isn't it?

The ancestors of Saint Kirill came to the Turov lands together with the Byzantine princess Barbara, the third wife of Prince Sviatopolk Izyaslavich. The parents of the future bishop were high confessors, often visited Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv. Kirill studied a huge number of prayers, and the Kyiv Bishop Theodosius of the Caves was his spiritual patron. Later, a student from Turov will dedicate one of the written prayers to him.

Senior researcher at the Turov Local Studies Museum Oleg Verenich says, "Lack of land, drought, famine, a huge number of poor people — looking at all this, Kirill decided to live in humility, pray for his native land and for small children. He spent eight years in the Borisoglebsky Monastery in seclusion and wrote more than 30 works, for which he was known as the righteous Chrysostom. Already after his resignation from the chair of the Bishop of Turov in 1182, he wrote the Great Week — a mighty prayer for all



Archbishop Stefan of Gomel and Zhlobin

days of the week, which today is read in all churches and parishes not only in Belarus, but also in neighbouring countries."

## It was a sign!

Archbishop Stefan of Gomel and Zhlobin, who stood at the origins of the modern cathedral in Turov, believes that there are only few such enlightened saints in the Orthodox world like Kirill in terms of their knowledge and faith, "This case is unique and virtually unbelievable — people themselves elected a monk as a

bishop. This suggests that the future Saint Kirill was an example of the holiness of life in the eyes of fellow countrymen. He loved his city, his flock, he loved the Borisoglebsky Monastery where he lived. And for the modern Christian, he remains the image of the enlightener, the image of the good shepherd, about whom Christ speaks in the Gospel."

Saint Kirill of Turov is venerated every year on May 11th. His figure returned from oblivion and shone in the spiritual sky of Belarus thanks to the efforts of the late Metropolitan Filaret, believes Archbishop Stefan, "When I was in charge of the Turov cathedral, Metropolitan Filaret said in one of his conversations that if I built a stone church in Turov, it would be a gift for him. I turned to history and found information that Saint Mitrofan Krasnopol'skiy, being the Bishop of Minsk and Turov, raised funds for the construction of the cathedral at the beginning of the 20th century. But... the First World War began, and the funds went to the treatment of wounded soldiers."

And then Archbishop Stefan received a sign. One day the archbishop drew attention to an icon in the monastery house while visiting the Yurovichi Monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God: there are two saints on it, a carved robe smeared with floor paint. Stefan took the image, and a year and a half later the restorer said that it was the image of Saints Kirill and the subsequent Bishop Lavrentiy of Turov. "I was so convinced that they came to help that I said that we were building a cathedral in honour of two saints," Archbishop Stefan says.



The Cathedral of Saints Kirill and Lavrentiy of Turov



Metropolitan Filaret consecrated the Cathedral of Saints Kirill and Lavrentiy of Turov in 2013.

## All roads lead to the temple

"I know every brick in the temple. Today, all roads lead to the temple — it welcomes visitors from the east, north, west and south sides. However, initially, its construction in the very centre of the city did not fit into the plans of the secular authorities. Only by a miracle of God and the protection of Bishop Stephen and Metropolitan Filaret did everything succeed. They met with the President and asked to allocate the



city centre for construction," says sacrist Vasily Pytel, Archpriest of the Cathedral of Saints Kirill and Lavrentiy of Turov, who participated in the construction.

A year ago Aleksandr Lukashenko donated the cross to the Cathedral of Saints Kirill and Lavrentiy of Turov.

Vasily Pytel explains while demonstrating the relic, "This is a reliquary. It contains the tree of the life-giving Cross of the Lord from Jerusalem, a particle of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, a particle of the relics of the Saint Barbara and a particle of the relics of the Andrew the Apostle. Unfortunately, photographs, sketches of what the patronal cross of Saint Kirill of Turov was like, have not been preserved. The Cross of Saint Euphrosyne of Polotsk was taken as a basis in the manufacture."

## Believe in a miracle

In Turov, miracles were not only seen, but also recorded. Local guide Valery Kotlyarchuk leads another group of

tourists to the Borisoglebskoye Cemetery, which is known for its unique stone crosses — raising and emerging from the ground, and advises visitors, "If your relatives are not with you, attach your pectoral cross to the stone cross. At home, touch your loved ones with your cross."

The guide personally witnessed how a woman in a wheelchair, who came from Ukraine with her daughter, left the cemetery (this is the territory of the Borisoglebsky Monastery where Kirill lived) on her thin legs after worshipping a stone cross. Valery also told about the case when two blind girls recovered their sight here, "The guide who brought the sisters said that she knew their diagnosis and nothing would help them. Two months later she returned and said: 'Valera, there is a God! I will bring the girls on May 11th on the day of memory of Saint Kirill, and we will record a miracle. And there are many such miracles. At first, I wrote them down in a notebook, and then I stopped — let God have all this listed.'"

According to legend, there were no illegitimate children in Turov during the bishopric of Kirill. And to this day today they pray to the saint as a family intercessor. The greatest legacy that we inherited from him is piety, says Valery Kotlyarchuk, "If only we lived piously towards each other — foremost in the family, because the family is a small church, we would basically live better. Turov's intercessor was concerned about honest, decent relations. He says in every prayer: man, worry about your sins, and not about the sins of your neighbour."

Local residents believe that the confessor still protects his native city. In the 20th century, Saint Kirill of Turov was undeservedly forgotten, and the city almost paid for it. A little more — and it would have turned into a godforsaken village. But when on May 11th they began to honour the bishop every year, when they rebuilt the temple in honour of Saints Kirill and his fellow creature, life returned to the city. Tourists, pilgrims flocked here in a string, a dairy factory was opened, a cannery is working. Life goes on, both spiritual and earthly.

BELTA

SPIRITUALITY

The Minsk Times  
Thursday  
July 28  
2022

7



# Europe turns back to 'dirty' coal

Major EU countries are now turning to the 'dirtiest' fossil fuel to ensure they have enough power to keep the air conditioning running, and, in a few months, the heat on

For decades, they've relied on gas imports from Russia, but now, with the conflict in Ukraine putting a squeeze on those supplies, there are fears of energy insecurity in the months to come. Long-closed mines and power plants are being relaunched. Hungary has already declared a state of emergency, limiting gas exports. Moreover, tankers do not reach poor countries, being deployed to Europe. Coal has also risen sharply in price: \$400 per tonne is an absolute record, RIA Novosti reports.

It seems that Germany has decided on the timing of the rejection of Rus-

sian raw materials. According to Reuters, the EU's leading economy will completely stop buying coal from August, and from December 31st it will also refuse oil.

The EU faced a choice: European solidarity or its own national interests. Hungary was the first to decide by introducing a state of emergency in the energy sector. Gergely Gulyás, the Minister heading the Prime Minister's Office, explained that the export of energy carriers is now prohibited in most cases, and the task has been set to purchase additional natural gas on the

market in order to replenish reserves. However, the ban on energy exports is contrary to EU rules approved in 2017.

A scenario in which everyone pulls the blanket over themselves in conditions of a severe shortage of fuel was predicted back last autumn.

Moreover, emerging markets — from India to Brazil — cannot compete with Europeans for LNG on prices and are therefore forced to cut imports.

Experts say that producers have stopped fulfilling long-term contracts: it is easier to pay a penalty, but to sell gas three times more expensive to Europe.

# More guns in US than people

United States is the only country in the world where civilian guns outnumber people, according to the Swiss base Small Arms Survey (SAS), and is also the country where at least one mass shooting takes place every year

US has more civilian guns than people, but they threaten mostly black people, said Vice President Kamala Harris.

"The number of weapons produced in this country has tripled in the last twenty years. Today we have more weapons in the country than people," she said.

Ms. Harris emphasised that blacks are the vast majority of victims of armed attacks.

"Black people make up 13 percent of the US population, but 62 percent are the victims of armed homicides," she added.

According to the Gun Violence Archive portal, which collects statistics on incidents involving firearms, since the beginning of the year, more than 11,000 people have died in such incidents in the United States, and about 21,000 have been injured.

According to 2021-gun ownership statistics, there are 120.5 guns per 100 people in the US.



A police officer gives water to a British soldier wearing a traditional bearskin hat, on guard duty outside Buckingham Palace, during hot weather in London. The British government has issued its first-ever 'red' warning for extreme heat.

# Heat apocalypse

Europe is being gripped by a devastating heat wave, triggering wildfires and forcing tens of thousands of people from their homes — whiling killing over a thousand more

Over 1,100 people died in Spain and Portugal alone due to heat-related causes over the last two weeks, according to Axios.

Temperatures soared well past the 104 degrees Fahrenheit mark (that's 40 degrees Celsius), with the UK hitting an all-time record of 104.3 degrees Fahrenheit. Parts of the country are now under a 'red warning' for extreme heat, for the first time in history. While those kinds of temperatures may be common in other places of the world, Europe is ill prepared. The London Underground, for instance, had to suspend some services due to the lack of air conditioning. In short, the effects of climate change are on full display — and could be a grim sign of things to come, in the absence of drastic climate action.

"We're climate change refugees," one resident who lives in southwestern

France said.

Southern Europe lit up in 'monster' wildfires, with authorities warning of 'very extreme' fire danger in areas across Spain, southern France, Italy, and even the UK, according to the BBC. Officials called the area 'a real powder keg', due to winds fanning flames. Portugal hit temperatures of 116 degrees Fahrenheit last week, a July record.

"In some south-western areas it will be a heat apocalypse," meteorologist François Gourand warned.

It's a sad reality — but it's far from surprising, given global average temperatures have risen by 1.1 degrees Celsius since pre-industrial levels, largely due to human activity. And that's making heat waves like this one substantially more likely to occur in any given year, according to experts.

# Seven 'deadly sins' of NATO

NATO has intensified after the start of Russia's special operation in Ukraine, but the alliance still has 'seven deadly sins', writes Chinese *People's Daily* columnist

The publication calls the first sin of the bloc 'the ghost of racism'. "Europe has a double mentality of 'historical acquaintance' and 'civilised superiority' over Russia," the author of the article believes. NATO considered Russia 'the loser of the Cold War' and over the past two decades it has repeatedly broken its promise 'not to expand an inch to the east'.

The second 'sin' of the North Atlantic Alliance lies in the ideology of the strategic 'tool' of the United States, which manifests itself in relation to other countries, including China, which has been made a 'systemic challenge' from a 'systemic competitor'.

The third 'sin' lies in international law. NATO has caused serious damage to relations between Finland and the Russian Federation and by its expansion wants to violate the obligations fixed by the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947, according to which

neither side can create an alliance or enter into an alliance against the other side.

The fourth 'sin' is the practice of 'one-sidedness in the name of multilateralism'. NATO constantly says that it acts in accordance with the UN Charter, but in fact behaves like an accomplice helping the United States to pull off its dirty deeds.

The fifth 'sin' is the formed confrontation between Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, which becomes worse when the alliance tries to divide countries into groups.

The sixth 'sin' is the 'living fossil of the Cold War'. During the last summit, NATO called Russia 'the most important and immediate threat', and China — 'a systemic challenge'.

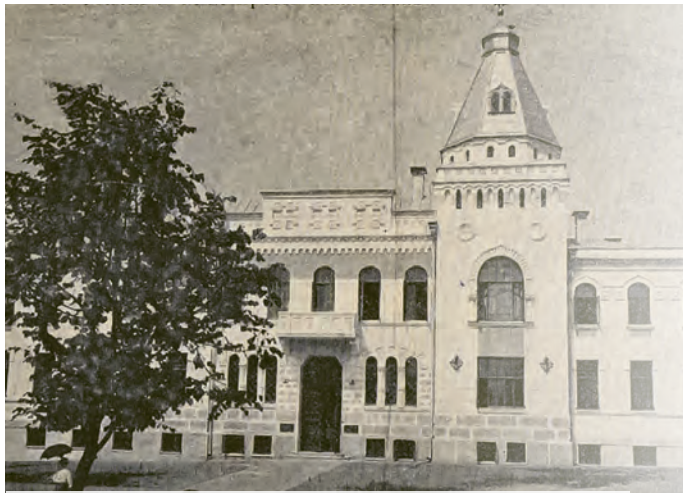
The seventh 'sin' is global expansion. The columnist emphasises that NATO is acting contrary to the peaceful development of China and the will of the peoples of most countries of the alliance.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



# Brilliant architect of the provincial city



Mogilev. Peasants' Land Bank. Early 20th century.

The architectural attractiveness of Mogilev has always been a subject of controversy among tourists and guests of the regional centre — some were completely satisfied with the quantitative and qualitative state of historical buildings, others found it boring and not particularly worth the time spent opening selfie sticks. However, those who are difficult to please are always easier in a dispute — they, as a rule, do not tire themselves with either preliminary preparation for the trip or the search for weighty arguments. Therefore, let's talk about a person, thanks to whom there is always something to see in Mogilev and its environs. Moreover, at least three city buildings erected by him are in the top 10 most popular among both tourists and local residents.

By Sergei Nikolaev, Vladimir Likhodedov

## Architectural landmarks

In 1886, a young and still completely unknown 26-year-old Petr Georgievich Kamburov, graduate of the St. Petersburg State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering, came to Mogilev at the invitation of the city authorities. He almost immediately received a contract for the design of the Mogilev Drama Theatre, which the provincial authorities had been dreaming about for a long time.

The foundation for the future architectural gem was laid in the very centre of Mogilev at the intersection of Dneprovsky Prospekt (now Pervomaiskaya Street) and Dvoryanskaya Street (Komsomolskaya Street) even before Kamburov's arrival. Thus, Petr Georgievich had to be engaged in the process, as they say, just-in-time. Competent and progressive Kamburov decided to implement a very ambitious project, choosing a pseudo-Russian style, which was just starting to come into fashion. In 1888, the theatre with an auditorium for 500 seats was opened with all the pomp appropriate to the moment and transferred to the city. As the legends say, neither the author of the idea nor his colleagues, the interior designer Chernyshev and the designer of the curtain and decorations Trenin, were invited to the box for honorary guests. However, from 1915 to 1917, Emperor Nicholas II of Russia constantly invited distinguished guests to the Mogilev Theatre. Vera Komissarzhevskaya starred on the stage, Feodor Chaliapin sang and Sergei Rachmaninoff played music here. The women's diocesan school on Saltanovskaya Street (now Vorovskogo Street) was the next creation of Petr Kamburov. He finished it already in the position of the Mogilev provincial architect. Initially, the building in the neo-classical style was intended for the education of girls of the clergy, but later it housed the Red Commanders School in 1918, and after the end of the war, the Pedagogical School and the boarding school. In 1990, it was transferred to the regional lyceum at the Mogilev State Pedagogical Institute named after A. A. Kuleshov.

In 1895, Petr Georgievich accepted the post of Mogilev city architect and focused on managing other projects. But in 1904, he began work on the building of the State Bank, which was built in the neo-Renaissance style on Bolshaya Sadovaya Street (Leninskaya Street). Initially, the complex included two stone buildings and outbuildings, which, unfortunately, have not been preserved. In Soviet times, the regional departments of the State Bank of the USSR, Zhilsotsbank of the USSR, Agroprombank of the USSR resided there replacing each other one after another. Now the Main Department of the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus for the Mogilev Region is located in this building.

Of all the projects of Petr Kamburov, the most interesting fate was destined for a two-story Art Nouveau building. It was built in 1914 on Officerskaya Street (now Mironova Street) for two financial institu-

tions at once — the Peasants' Land Bank and the Nobles' Land Bank.

At the time of construction and in subsequent years, it was considered the most beautiful and stylish in Mogilev. It had everything that in those days was considered the latest technology and domestic comfort, including even air conditioners. In addition, bank premises were equipped with the most reliable safe rooms for storing valuables.

In 1917, after the Bolsheviks captured the Stavka of the Supreme Commander, the Krasnaya Stavka newspaper moved

From 1991 to the present day, the building houses the Mogilev Regional Arts Museum named after P.V. Maslenikov, which presents the richest collection of Belarusian art of the 17th-19th centuries, modern masters of painting, works of the national school of icon painting, an exhibition of paintings by Pavel Maslenikov himself.

Unfortunately, another house of stunning beauty built by Petr Kamburov in 1915 for the Red Cross Society and located on Malaya Sadovaya Street (Pionerskaya Street) was destroyed during the Great Patriotic War, leaving no hope of restoration.

the villages and small towns of the current Mogilev, Vitebsk, Gomel and Smolensk Regions. However, especially among them stood out St. Nicholas Church in Chausy, built on the personal instructions and with funds allocated by Nicholas II of Russia (who was touched by a letter from parishioners addressed to the Emperor), as well as a bell tower in the Moscow suburb of Mogilev. The Church of the Nativity of the Virgin in the village of Plutovka (now Red Partizan) in the Dobrush Region (1889) is an excellent example of wooden church

Mogilev Drama Theatre. Early 20th century.



Mogilev. State Bank. Early 20th century.

Mogilev. A bell tower in the Moscow suburb. Early 20th century.



to the house on Officerskaya Street for a short time, and then the financial department of the provincial executive committee and the Mogilev State Historical Museum replaced it. In 1929, the basement floor (the same one with armoured rooms) was occupied by the archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia. Hundreds of national treasure artefacts were brought into its walls from Minsk, Polotsk, Vitebsk or other places located near the Soviet-Polish border. Among them was a cross made by Lazar Bohsha by order of Euphrosyne of Polotsk. There it, like all other unique artefacts, was seen for the last time. During the war, their trace was completely lost.



Mogilev. Red Cross Society building. Early 20th century.

Chausy. Church. On a postcard with a letter from the architect Kamburov. Early 20th century.



## Sacral architecture

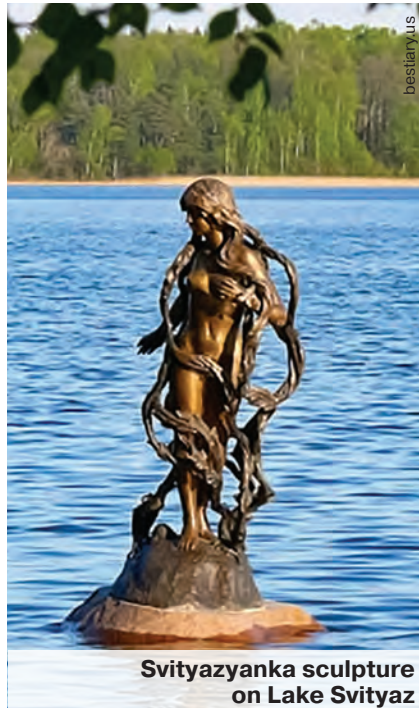
With all the achievements in the secular field, Petr Kamburov still devoted most of his heart and remarkable talents in the construction of churches, especially since he was a Mogilev diocesan architect for a long time and had a hand in more than forty places of worship in addition to the posts of the provincial and city head of the architectural department.

Churches built according to his designs — wooden and stone — adorned

architecture in the neo-Russian style. St. Nicholas Church in the village of Blagovichy was built already at the beginning of the 20th century from clay on the site of the temple of 1797. It impresses with its quiet beauty, brevity, elegance of lines and gives the most complete picture of the capabilities and talent of the outstanding architect of his time — Petr Kamburov.

Photos from the personal collection of Vladimir Likhodedov

**The Republic of Belarus was nicknamed 'a blue-eyed country' for a plaser of picturesque lakes and purest springs flowing among forests and fields. However, the country is also famous for its fast-flowing rivers: there are more than 20,000 of them here!**



**Svityazyanka sculpture on Lake Svityaz**

By Sofia Arsenyeva

**Lake Naroch**

Russians have Lake Baikal, Belarusians have Lake Naroch. The largest lake in the country is impressive in scale: the second shore cannot be seen from the first. Almost eighty square kilometres of water surface give a complete immersion in the atmosphere of comfort and relaxation. Along the coastline there are sanatoriums, camp sites and children's camps. With walking alleys and pump rooms with mineral water. There are also dozens of farmsteads, tourist sites and campsites. In a word, a real resort! Lake Naroch impresses with its transparency and purity: in sunny weather, one can see everything at a depth of five to seven metres. Advice from the local residents: it is better to swim on equipped beaches away from reeds and bird nests (birds can be carriers of various infections). If you want to relax away from the crowds, go to the National Landscape Reserve 'Blue Lakes'. It is smaller, but also included in the Narochansky National Park. There is a secret location — a small forest water source Rudakovo four kilometres north-west of Myadel. The water here is healing and contains impurities of silver.

**Braslav**

The small town of Braslav lurks near the northwestern border of Belarus. In winter, it is anything but ordinary, but in summer the whole country comes here for a beach holiday on numerous lakes. They appeared as a result of the melting of the glacier 15,000 years ago. Small and large, shallow and deep, surprisingly regular in shape and with numerous islets. Houses, estates, hostels are already booked in March-April. Dilatory tourists should better take a tent with them.



Yacht club on the Minsk Sea

*Recreation near water in 'a blue-eyed country'*



Viva Braslav open-air is held annually on the shores of Lake Driviaty



Lake Naroch

By the way, Viva Braslav, one of the most incendiary open-airs, takes place annually on the shores of Lake Driviaty. Sandy beaches turn into a huge dance floor with a tent city.

**Blue Spring**

There is the largest spring in Eastern Europe in the vicinity of Slavgorod District, Mogilev Region. People call it Blue

Spring, or Blue Well. How so? Regardless of the weather, the water temperature here is constant — 8 degrees Celsius.

In the 8th-10th centuries, there was a pagan temple of the Radimichs, and after the adoption of Christianity, the locals built a chapel near the spring. It was for a purpose. Scientists from the Institute of Geochemistry and Geophysics of the NAS of Belarus proved that the water from this spring is the cleanest in the entire country. In addition, it has medicinal properties. People always go to the spring to quench their thirst and take a dip. Locals say that if the source is forded three times, the body is filled with life-giving energy, and diseases recede.

**Minsk Sea**

Just ten kilometres northwest of Minsk — and here it is, the sea. It appeared more recently — in 1956 after the construction of a dam on the Svisloch River. Let not salty and modest in size, but you can be sure that you will get the first-class rest. As many as ten beaches have been equipped with modern infrastructure and coffee shops.

Want to go sailing? There is a yacht club on the Minsk Sea. Rent a motor boat and sail into the sunset away from the coast? You're welcome. Dreamed of flying on a kite over the vast expanse of water? Indeed, they arrange it here too. Oh, what incendiary parties await you on the Island of Love! Ibiza is no match for this place.

**Lake Svityaz**

This is one of the most mysterious lakes in Belarus. According to legend, a city of extraordinary beauty once stood in its place, which went underwater during a siege by enemies. Amazingly, scientists say that the lake really appeared as a result of the failure of Quaternary deposits into underground voids. The poet Adam Mickiewicz devoted a whole cycle of heartfelt ballads to Lake Svityaz — they definitely worth reading before the trip.

Lake flora and fauna are covered with secrets. The shores are framed by an emerald necklace of a kilometre-wide forest. And in the water itself, a bunch of relict plants blooms: Dortmann's cardinalflower, nodding waternymph, lake quillwort and shoreweed. A mollusc lives in the lake — planorbis stelmachticus, which is known only in the fresh waters of France, Belgium and Germany.

Note: Svityaz is located within the boundaries of the landscape reserve, therefore it is prohibited to spend the night with tents on the shore. Tourists farmsteads and accommodation in the private sector of the nearest villages are at visitors' disposal.



Mayak Hill with an observation tower in Braslav Lakes National Park



Blue Spring

# Set the example

Anastasia Prokopenko is preparing to compete for awards in the final of the Pavel Lednev Cup, which will be held from August 2nd to August 3rd in Moscow

— Anyway, I'm happy with how it turned out. Although this year the coaches suggested that I reduce the competitive load and change the approach to training, I gained a fairly good form. But there are some nuances and certain imperfections, so there is something to work on further.

— **Have you thought about ending your career after the Tokyo Olympics?**

— No. If, perhaps, family circumstances had developed differently and we, for example, were expecting a third child, I would think about it. But destiny had other plans for me. So I'm in business. I still want to spur the girls from our team so that they become even stronger. Yes, and they, as far as I can see, want it too. Those who ran rather slowly began to pay more attention to their training — someone is losing weight, someone is focusing on general physical training, special exercises and training in the gym. They realise that they need more than just running for the development of speed. I try to help and explain.

— **Was the decision to continue your career influenced by the fact that there was much less time left before the Olympics in Paris than the standard four years between the Games?**

— Maybe yes. After all, it turned out like this: a year of rest, a year and a half of qualifying and the Olympic Games. This really motivated me to continue.

— **Amid this fact, was the exclusion of our team from international competitions painful for you personally?**

— Not in the least. The Pavel Lednev Cup was organised very quickly, in which three world champions are competing right now: Russian Gulnaz Gubaydullina won the championship in 2017, me in 2018 and 2021, Olga Silkina in 2019. In recent years, we have not given a single World Championship to our rivals! Indeed, Olympic medal-

lists compete at international tournaments, but I believe that at the World Championships the competition is higher than at the Olympic Games, because we go through those stages in which 96 people compete! Only the strongest advance to the finals. So at the Pavel Lednev Cup, it's worth it to rival the girls who always motivate you and make you get better. We become even stronger, charged and united.

— **The Prokopenko — Silkina — Prosentsova trio still remains almost unchallenged**



Anastasia Prokopenko with her husband Mikhail Prokopenko

**to other athletes in our country. What can you say about your closest pursuers?**

— We have many worthy girls. For example, Masha Gnedchik was on the highest step of the podium in the team event along with me and Irina Prosentsova. Yekaterina Sukora began to work very seriously on her training. There are other considerable athletes. So far they have only one kind, but if we manage to improve everything slowly, we will have a very strong team, one of the best in Europe.

— **The Pavel Lednev Cup is held in the traditional format — with show jumping in the programme. This events is**

**to some extent could be considered a lottery: horses are determined by draft, there is very little time to prepare for a duet with them. How do you feel about the plans of the International Modern Pentathlon Union to replace show jumping with an obstacle course?**



Yury Mozolevsky



Yury Mozolevsky

**MEDAL AFTER YEARS**

2018 was a special year for the pentathlon. Anastasia Prokopenko, together with Irina Prosentsova, won gold in the relay at the World Championships, which took place in Mexico City. Then she added to it another award of the highest standard in the only Olympic discipline of modern pentathlon — individual competitions. In addition, she received another medal at the end of the tournament — the bronze of the Olympic Games in Beijing. Ten years before, our athlete took fourth place at the 2008 Olympics. Years later, the doping tests of the participants of the competition were rechecked, and the anabolic steroid Oral Turinabol was found in the sample of the Ukrainian Victoria Tereshchuk, who took third place. The athlete was disqualified. Accordingly, bronze went to go to Anastasia Prokopenko. Although it became known that the results of the Games would be revised back in 2016, it took a long time to resolve all issues with the redistribution of medals. The Olympic bronze ceremony was unexpected for Anastasia Prokopenko. As the athlete herself later said, the organisers of the tournament in Mexico City asked the participants not to leave after the awarding of the World Cup winners — they promised to arrange a surprise. Anastasia was taken to the centre of the hall and presented with a well-deserved Olympic award. "When I saw the medal, I cried, I could not hold my tears back. These are completely different emotions when you know that it is yours, that you will keep it at your home, and you know how much effort was expended to win this medal," Anastasia shared her feelings during the interview.

— I don't want modern pentathlon to be changed. Also, I suppose, our sport will remain in its usual form in the CIS countries. Perhaps some other joint start of Russia and Belarus will be organised, in which the pentathlon will remain traditional. After all, if you remove show

jumping from the programme, our sport will fall apart. Where, after all, to put all the horses? Release them into the forest? Before making such a serious change in the programme, one need to consider a lot of factors. But I think that we should not change the pentathlon, introduced by Pierre de Coubertin.

— **An obstacle course has already been presented at test competitions in Ankara. How do you like the proposed discipline?**

— I think it's some kind of the promotion of American sports. An obstacle course and similar disciplines are very developed in the United States, they even hold various championships. If you look, the girls participating in these competitions look almost like bodybuilders! If an obstacle course is introduced into the programme of our sport, it will no longer be a pentathlon. I really hope that all countries that do not want to give up riding will come to us for competitions.

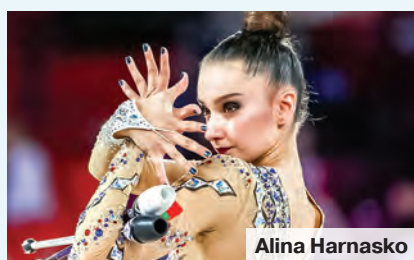
— **There is very little time left before the final of the Pavel Lednev Cup...**

— I plan to perform in Moscow. I will prepare, and only time will tell how everything will turn out.

## ARENA

### • Belarusian gymnasts won gold awards at Crystal Rose International Tournament

The International Rhythmic Gymnastics Tournament was held in Minsk from July 22nd to July 24th. The Belarusian gymnast Alina Harnasko won three out of four events in the all-around final: hoop, ball and clubs, and only in the ribbon exercise the Belarusian showed the second result. In the end, Alina scored 145.550 points, ahead of the Russians Lala Kramarenko and Arina Averina. The Belarusian quartet won silver in the team tournament, and the gold went to the Russian national team.



Alina Harnasko

Belarusian gymnasts Alina Harnasko and Anastasiia Salos won two gold medals in individual event finals. Salos was the best in hoop exercises. Furthermore, she gained silver medal for exercises with a ribbon and a ball. Harnasko handled the ball better than the rivals. In addition, Alina won silver in clubs and bronze in hoop.

### • Three world records broken at the World Championships in Athletics

Swedish Armand Duplantis, Nigerian Tobi Amusan and American Sydney McLaughlin set new world records at the World Athletics Championships, which finished in the United States.

Duplantis reached a height of 6.21 metres and won gold at the 2022 World Athletics Championships final in the pole vault. The previous outdoor record, also held by a Swede, was 6.16 metres. The indoor world record is also held by Duplantis at 6.20 metres.

Tobi Amusan from Nigeria is the new



Armand Duplantis

world champion in the 100 metres hurdles. In the semi-finals, the Nigerian finished it in 12.12 seconds, beating the previous world record by Kendra Harrison of the United States by 8 hundredths of a second. In addition, the best result in the history of the women's 400 metres hurdles (50.68 seconds) was set by Sydney McLaughlin.



Anton Stepanishchev

## Photo of the week

**Blacksmith Siarhei Kudzikau, craftsman of the Mstislavl House of Crafts at the Vitebsk International Festival of Blacksmithing ZNICH**

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

**On July 29th, 1957,** Nellie Kim was born, a Belarusian athlete (artistic gymnastics), Honoured Master of Sports of the USSR. In 1992-1995 — coach of Belarus women's national artistic gymnastics team. Champion of the 21st and 22nd Olympic Games (1976, 1980). Absolute world champion. Absolute champion of the Spartakiad of the Peoples of the USSR.



Chalgrin at the behest of Napoleon Bonaparte to commemorate the victories of his 'Grande Armée'. Inside the monument there is a museum of the same name, on the roof there is an observation deck.



**July 30th** is International Friendship Day. The UN General Assembly has designated July 30-th as the International Friendship Day, on the basis that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and provide an opportunity to build bridges between societies that honour cultural diversity.



of the economy and is developing today more dynamically and rapidly than ever before. On this day, more than 600,000 employees of this industry will celebrate their professional holiday.

**On August 1st, 1939,** the grand opening of the VDNH (Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy) took place in Moscow, an exhibition complex in the Ostankinsky District of Moscow, which is one of the 50 largest exhibition centres in the world. At present, the total area of VDNH is almost 700 hectares.



**On July 29th, 1817,** Ivan Aivazovsky was born (1817-1900), a Russian marine painter, honorary member of the Imperial Academy of Arts. Author of about 6,000 paintings, drawings, watercolours, incl. *The Ninth Wave*, *Storm in the North Sea*, *Among the Waves*, etc. He also painted battle compositions, subject paintings and portraits. He founded an art gallery in Feodosia. The National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus keeps his *Peter the Great at Krasnaya Gorka*, *Storm*, *Moonlit Landscape* and other paintings.



**July 29th** is International Tiger Day. It was established at the Global Tiger Summit in Russia (2010), on the initiative of thirty states. The tiger is under international protection. A total ban on tiger hunting has been in place since 1947. In the wild, no more than 5,000 individuals have survived. This animal is threatened with extinction.



**On July 29th, 1963,** the first flight of the Tupolev Tu-134 jet aircraft, one of the most successful projects in the field of passenger aircraft construction, took place. Designed for short and medium haul airlines, this aircraft was developed in the early 1960s by the Design Bureau under the guidance of the legendary Andrei Tupolev. It gained a place in the history of civil aviation as the most massive and popular Soviet airliner.



**On July 31st, 1802,** Ignacy Domeyko was born, a geologist, mineralogist and explorer of Chile. He organised the study of the geology and mineralogy of the Andes, the Atacama Desert. He founded a meteorological service, created an ethnographic museum, a mining school, opened copper and silver mines, organised gold mining, introduced the metric system of mass and measures, wrote textbooks on mineralogy and meteorology. He died in 1889. The Chilean government declared Domeyko a national hero.



**July 31st** is Trade Workers Day in the Republic of Belarus. Trade has been and remains one of the most important sectors



**August 2nd** is Paratroopers and Special Operations Forces of the Republic of Belarus Day. It has been leading its history since Soviet times. Today, the Special Operations Forces are considered by the country's leadership as one of the most reliable links in the national security system of the Republic of Belarus.



**August 3rd** is Watermelon Day. Perfectly quenching thirst and being completely low-calorie, watermelon, of course, deserves its own holiday.

