

# Date which remains in our memory and when the world continues to ponder

CIS Council of Heads of State Address, dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station

26th April, 2011, marks the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl tragedy — the largest technogenic and social catastrophe of the 20th century. It has been proclaimed International Day Commemorating Victims of Radiation Accidents and Catastrophes in CIS states. The consequences of the Chernobyl tragedy remain topical today and will do for future generations. Such catastrophes turn affected territories into crisis zones for many decades.

We remember the courage and self-sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of liquidators

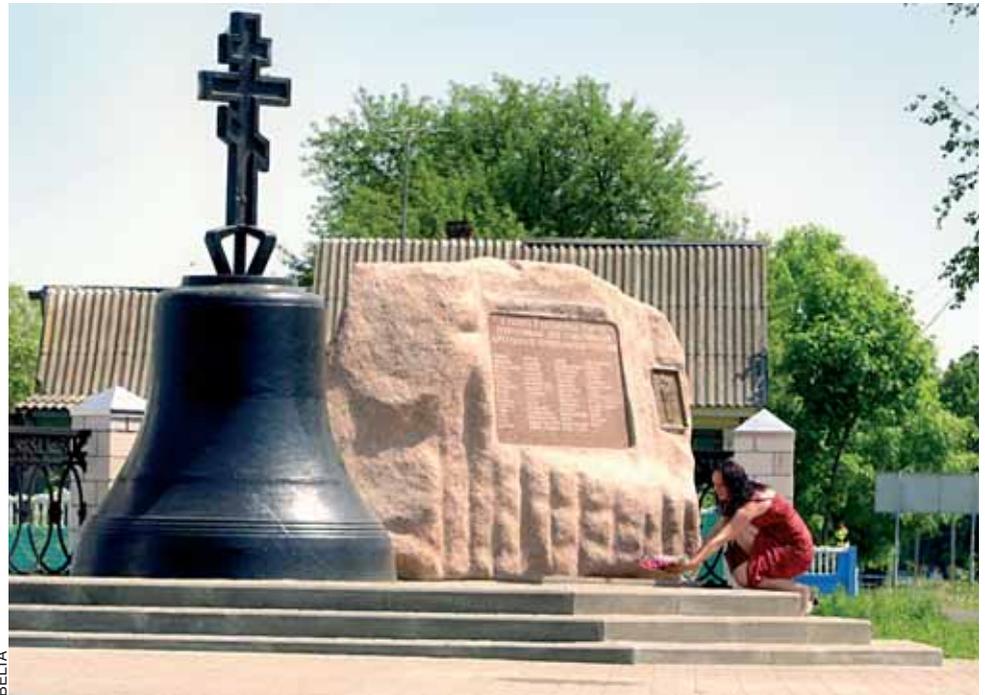
who dealt with the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, from all over the USSR. Risking their lives and health, they fulfilled their duty and prevented the further spread of dangerous radioactive emissions.

Despite adopted measures, the consequences of Chernobyl continue to negatively influence life in affected countries. Several million people remain under special medical care and major protective measures are still required in certain areas. Without them, it would be impossible to ensure the safety of those who reside

within contaminated territories.

Radiation and socio-economic rehabilitation of contaminated territories, as well as the development of the social and economic potential of the affected areas, are among the most vital tasks in the wake of the catastrophe at the Chernobyl nuclear power station. Solutions require new approaches, grounded in science, and considerable resources, in addition to financial, scientific and technical assistance from the international community.

Definite steps have already been taken in this direction.



Monument to Vetka District villages in the Gomel Region, who 'died' from Chernobyl

The UN General Assembly has named this third decade after Chernobyl (2006-2016) as the Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions. It aims to ensure that the suffering population returns to normal life: a corresponding UN plan of action is being implemented.

Pleasingly, the UN General Assembly has welcomed the decision of the CIS Council of Heads of State to proclaim April 26th as International Day

Commemorating Victims of Radiation Accidents and Catastrophes in CIS states. It has proposed that UN member countries hold events to honour the memory of those who have fallen victim to radiation accidents and disasters.

This day honours the memory of those who died as a result of the Chernobyl catastrophe. Accordingly, we announce our determination to create the necessary conditions to ensure social protection for those who

have helped deal with the accident at the nuclear power station.

We believe that co-operation and experience sharing, between state and public organisations, will enable us to overcome the consequences of this catastrophe. We call on the world community to continue liaising in this area while finding new paths of interaction, shifting to co-ordinated activity, which complements the major efforts of states to restore the suffering regions.

## Place found to build the Workshop of the Future

By Veronica Degtyareva

Unusual building to be erected in Minsk's Gazeta Pravda Street in a few years' time



A stone in foundations laid

The building will resemble a restaurant or an expensive hotel, being the first 'energy-passive' public Workshop of the Future, covering 2,200 square metres. The project, run by Minsk and Dortmund educational centres, envisages the construction of a consultative centre, conference halls and an exhibition of renewable energy. It will be open to all, allowing the public to see the advantages of eco-friendly houses, which require little energy for heating and are made from ecologically friendly construction materials (domestically produced and imported) while using solar panels to provide electricity. The new building will be the most eco-friendly in the country.

The first foundation stone at the Minsk International Educational Centre has been laid by representa-

tives of Chernobyl organisations from 12 countries, as part of the international *Twenty Five Years After Chernobyl* conference. The unusual design will demonstrate the advantages of energy saving technologies and, according to the Rector of the International Sakharov Environmental University, Semen Kundas, ties in well with the theme of energy efficiency and renewable energy, in the wake of the nuclear accident at Chernobyl.

"25 years ago, the Chernobyl disaster raised a question for all humankind: how can we live with alternative energy sources," notes Anatoly Lavnichuk, who heads the Energy Department at Minsk City Executive Committee. "After recent events in Japan, this issue is even more topical. We'll be able to look at life with different eyes via the Workshop of the Future; it will remind us that we must not only extract but preserve our wealth. Minsk consumes much energy, with only 3 percent generated from alternative sources. The Workshop of the Future is an important step in promoting these technologies — through our lifestyle and our enterprises."

3.5m Euros is needed for the new building, so external support is vital for the worthy project. "Over the past 15 years, Belarus has reduced its energy consumption almost 2.5-fold," stresses the Director of the Energy Efficiency Department at Belgosstandart (Belarus' State Committee for Standardisation), Leonid Shenets. "We'd like everyone to be able to come to this building to personally see how new energy saving technologies operate."

## These self-sacrificing people called liquidators

Twenty five years ago, Chernobyl reactor's deadly radiation was placed under control by courageous few

A quarter of a century ago, they saved the world, being the first to face a technogenic catastrophe such as had never before been witnessed. They fulfilled their duty with honour. All Belarus knows of and remembers their deed — now part of our history, alongside the deeds of WWII veterans.

On the eve of the mournful date, Belarusian parliamentarians met those surviving liquidators of the Chernobyl catastrophe to again remember those who showed their bravery in April 1986. The House of Representatives' conference hall gathered liquidators, former and present heads of the most affected districts, chemists, fire-fighters and biologists. These people know each other well as, 25 years ago, they worked hand in hand to control the radiation, 24 hours a day.

"Your altruism, bravery and professionalism saved dozens of thousands of lives. The state and society highly appreciate the work of those who fought to return the affected territories to normality and who managed to stop the fire, preventing the spread of radioactivity further. They monitored the radiological situation, conducted protective measures, evacuated



Parliamentarians meet accident liquidators

people and ensured public order," noted the Chairman of the National Assembly's House of Representatives, Vladimir Andreichenko.

Twenty five years have passed, enabling the affected areas to revive at last; their restoration has been overseen by the 5th State Chernobyl Programme, running until 2015. As Mr. Andreichenko said, the total financing for the coming five years is set at about Br7 trillion.

During the National Assembly's meeting, flowers and diplomas of honour were given, demonstrating our national respect for all those involved in the difficult situation. "Our guard took up duty on April 25th. The next morning, I was just 150 metres from the 4th reactor. We began extinguishing the fire in five minutes," recollects Ivan Shavrey. He served as a fire-fighter at the Chernobyl nuclear power station on that awful

day. "We spent 90 minutes on the roof, before starting to faint. We were initially sent to Pripyat hospital and, later, spent six months in Moscow. Many of those who worked alongside me died a painful death, their skin turning black from the extensive radiation."

Not long ago, Chernobyl was recalled in connection with the Japanese catastrophe. In the first, human factors were to blame. In the second case, a natural disaster was the catalyst for the power plant overheating. Nuclear power is again causing concerns but the Chairman of the Council of the Republic, Anatoly Rubinov, stresses, "Chernobyl should not become a black mark on the path of modern energy development in Belarus. The twenty five year old tragedy must not influence our decision to build our own nuclear power station. It must be constructed, otherwise we'll suffer an obstacle to progress."