



Simulator at Rostov nuclear power station — visited by Belarusian specialists — to guide Belarusian station's large scale simulator

Level of security ensured with no possible indulgence

St. Petersburg scientists conduct more vital assessments into Belarus' future nuclear power station

By Yakov Vladimirov

About a decade ago, the construction of Belarus' own nuclear power station seemed unlikely; at that time, security was the major obstacle. Today, security remains vital but all major decisions on the site have been made (close to the Belarusian district centre of Ostrovets). Not long ago, Belarusians asked the St. Petersburg Scientific-Research and Design Institute Atomenergoprom to reconstruct the conditions which resulted in the Japanese Fukushima disaster, thinking of an 'AES-2006' Belarusian project. The scientific answer was that no

similar situation can occur in Belarus. "The station is to be built with maximum security in mind; everything has been analysed in detail," stresses the Chief Engineer of Belarus' Nuclear Power Plant Construction Directorate, Anatoly Bondar. "The plant will be able to withstand an earthquake of magnitude eight. After construction, Belarus is ready to undergo tests to show the readiness of equipment and personnel to deal with possible emergencies."

Around a hundred security systems are to be in place, accounting for almost 70 percent of all costs. The Belarusian station will have

more safety elements than any already built or being constructed (under the same design) in China, Kaliningrad and the Leningrad and Voronezh regions of Russia. The Fukushima tragedy has not hindered Belarusian-Russian co-operation over the plant's construction.

Design documentation is now being prepared, to be conducted in three stages. The first envisages raising investment funds and has been completed, with Belarus' Energy Ministry approving the document. In addition, a report on the possible influence of the future site on the environment has been adopt-

ed, with the IAEA actually approving the Ostrovets site. An architectural design, with specifications and estimates, is now being put together, overseen by specialists from the Belarusian Emergency Ministry's Department for Nuclear and Radiation Security.

Construction is already in full swing, with basic infrastructure almost complete. A residential site for the plant's workers is also being built. In September, digging of foundations will begin, using prefabricated subassembly technology. A special technical base is now being prepared.

The remaining issue is the

signing of a contract to build the Belarusian nuclear power station and supply its infrastructure. No exact sum has been announced but specialists believe it could cost \$6-7bn. Atomstroyexport JSC (part of Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation) is to act as the general contractor. "Belarus hopes to sign documents soon," explains Belarus' Energy Minister, Alexander Ozerets. "Talks are ongoing, with a credit agreement under focus."

Rosatom's Head, Sergey Kirienko, has visited the Ostrovets site, praising the preparatory works. Direct construction lies ahead.

Soldiers keep their head in battle conditions

Military units from Brest and Vitebsk spend week testing forces

By Konstantin Yevmenov

The air force was sent aloft, also practicing sudden strike repulses, while tanks and infantry fighting vehicles practiced hitting firing range targets. This year, the unexpected element was that the entire staff — from private to general — reacted to a battle alarm. The sudden character of the campaign allowed maximum objective assessment of combat readiness — vital if servicemen are to remain always alert. The quick reaction forces, who are to be the first to

defend the country in case of an emergency situation, were at the forefront of the test.

Altogether, around a thousand military and several hundred fighting machines took part in this year's practice. Firing ranges in the Brest and Vitebsk regions saw real hostilities with unmanned aircraft used for detecting enemy raiding parties for the first time. Fighting vehicle columns were accompanied by the air force.

According to the plan, air defence forces supported the rocket battalion from Domanovo firing range in



Column convoy successfully passes water obstacle by pontoon ferry

the Brest Region. The soldiers were to hit seven targets: two weather balloons, a dummy combat helicopter and four high-speed rockets. The latter were in the sky for no longer than ten seconds, so reaching them required skill and professionalism from anti-aircraft gunners. Vitebsk's military also played their part, as the State Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus, Leonid Maltsev, and CSTO Secretary General Nikolai Bordyuzha watched the action.

Usually, almost a thousand soldiers are brought to Losvido firing range but, this year, the location changed to an unknown site in the Lepel District. Mr. Bordyuzha praised the precise and well-coordinated 'flying infantry'. Meanwhile, our paratroopers were visited by American colleagues, who practiced alongside them and learnt about the military history of the famous brigade.

Another two military subdivisions in Slonim were also raised by the alarm, using 70

vehicles and 60 tanks to force a pontoon bridge crossing and to arrive at Obuz-Lesnovsky firing range. There, they were met by gun targets. It took only a few seconds for the experienced T-72 tank crews to deploy their laser-sights and hit targets.

According to the Defence Ministry's press service, the event is yet to be thoroughly assessed but the high level of military professionalism shown by Belarusian servicemen seems undisputable.

Unique monuments outlive Chernobyl

By Anastasia Serova

Album-guide on districts reviving from Chernobyl nuclear disaster released for first time

The *Stamps of Unforgotten Land* album-guide marks the 25th anniversary of the tragedy at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, containing over 150 photos of cultural-historical treasures from the Chernobyl zone's 21 districts. Among them are photos of St. Nicholas' Church in the Luninets District (built without a single nail) and the Barkolabovskaya icon of the Blessed Virgin Odigitria (known as a masterpiece of the 17th century Belarusian school of icon painting and kept in Bykhov). Additionally, the book features scenes from the ancient custom of 'Arrow Burying'.

Journalists, designers and local historians spent about six months preparing the album, aiming to show the unique historical-cultural and natural values of the affected territories, their traditions and those who preserve them. The work lacks stereotypes regarding the Chernobyl zone, rather aiming to show its dynamic revival. The book may be translated into foreign languages, enjoying increased circulation and gaining an e-version.

Worthy examples to follow

Belarus' Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry and Latvia's Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development sign 2011-2015 co-operative programme in field of environmental protection

The document was signed during a visit by a Belarusian delegation headed by Belarus' Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Minister, Vladimir Tsalko, to Latvia. It envisages co-operation between our two states' ecologists in protecting the natural environment. The programme is to develop protected territories, protect biodiversity, monitor the environment, improve the ecology of water sites and promote an exchange of experience in the field of legislation governing nature protection.

The Belarusian delegation was shown Latvia's nature protection technologies and current projects which are environmentally friendly.