



Vitebsk is preparing to host the Slavianski Bazaar Festival



What were the weddings of our ancestors like?



INTERNATIONAL

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Veterans of the Great Patriotic War — Lidia Volkova and Viktor Kostko — while visiting the Mound of Glory memorial complex

## Independence Day

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Rzhev Monument to the Soviet Soldier

# Common Victory and common memory

Presidents of Belarus and Russia jointly took part in the ceremony to unveil the Rzhev Monument to the Soviet Soldier, talked to veterans of the Great Patriotic War and laid flowers at the foot of the monument. After that, the participants of the event observed a minute of silence to honour the memory of the fallen heroes.

During the opening ceremony, Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed, “The unveiling of this monument, the celebrations in the Russian capital, the commemorative meeting in Brest Fortress, the Victory Day parade in Minsk showed once again that these are our common victory, memory and glory which we will continue to preserve carefully. This is the true link connecting the past and generations. This is the invisible thread that unites the hearts of all the nations who took part in that horrible war, first of all, Belarusians and Russians... We will not let anyone downplay the significance of the Great Victory, distort the truth about the events of those times and whitewash Nazism, or else such a tragedy might happen

again. Belarus and Russia, who paid for peace with the lives of millions of their residents, stand united in this goal.”

The President of Belarus noted that hundreds of thousands of heroes were killed near Rzhev, and for each of them it was defending the last inch of their native land. So was Brest Fortress, Neva Bridgehead near Leningrad, Buinichi field near Mogilev or Mamayev Mound in Stalingrad for other soldiers.

“Today we are opening a monument to the soldiers, among whom were representatives of all the peoples of the Soviet Union. We pay them our respects, we venerate their memory. As long as we build monuments, as long as we come to the monuments, we



Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin lay flowers at the foot of the monument

will not go to war, we will avoid such terrible tragedies. As soon as we forget the way to these holy places, a war will certainly follow. This is the main reason why we celebrate these important holidays,” Aleksandr Lukashenko believes.

He also addressed veterans of the Great Patriotic War. The

President of Belarus noted that they gave the whole world an example of unparalleled bravery, patriotism, love of freedom, and fortitude. “We bow down before your immortal deeds, valour, heroism, and loyalty to your Motherland!” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

In turn, Vladimir Putin

stressed that the battle of Rzhev played a crucial role in the victory of the Soviet people over Nazism. During the ceremony, he said, “It is painful to think about the losses suffered by the Red Army here. More than 1.3m people were killed, wounded or went missing: a disastrous and inconceivable figure. The contribution of this protracted and deadly campaign to the victory of the Soviet people over Nazism is huge. The campaign sent a clear message to the enemy: it was impossible to launch another offensive on Moscow, it was equally impossible to break or subdue people who rose up to defend their Motherland.”

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## The science of devotion to one’s own country

### The Head of State discussed the present and future of the Belarusian education system with the pedagogical experts of the country and predicted an increase in salaries

Representatives from different regions of Belarus were invited to meet with the President: the number of participants reached 1,000. As Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised, the education system is the most important strategic industry, not the service sector, “I consider you to be truly opinion-forming people. Who, if not a university teacher, political scientist, deputy forms the opinion of our people today?”

The President touched on the issue of material incentives for teachers, “We have started gradually increasing salaries of academic staff. In the course of the next five-year period, we will make sure to bring them up to 150 percent of the current average salary in the country.”

In response to proposals made by some figures regarding the transfer of university studies



on a paid basis, the President unequivocally stated, “I am surprised that some politicians, who received a university education for free in the past, now speak in favour of only fee-based education. It means that kids from blue-collar worker families, talented and smart, will not be able to afford university education. The way many countries follow

by separating society into the elite and the working class, into those who have the privilege of a university education and those who don’t, doesn’t suit us!”

Another important statement: Aleksandr Lukashenko gave instructions that, by the next university admission campaign, new rules for entering universities should be devel-

oped. The position of the Head of State is unchanged: every child, even from the most remote places, can become a student if they have knowledge and a desire to learn, “The system of entrance exams must comply with this principle. The university needs to properly see the person inside the potential students instead of results of school graduation tests.”

The President personally oversees the provision of housing for students. At present, 89.5 percent of students in the country have places in dormitories. “In some regions, this rate is nearing 100 percent,” he added. The President promised to sort out the problems with students’ halls of residence in the next five-year period. He also recalled that today, the real pride of the country is the Student Village in Minsk, which is a modern complex with almost 10,000 places.

The Head of State also underlined the importance of quality work with youth, “If we neglect our kids, they will be taken up by other ‘mentors’. This will put an end to the history of independent Belarus, as the country’s

future is in the hands of our children. You know what happens with young people who are left alone in the information space. Let me be frank with you: other mentors, foreign ideologists, and sometimes criminals are taking care of them.”

The President also noted that distance education had become a hot topic during the pandemic, “It has become obvious to us that some institutions, where distance learning was superficial, fell behind. Some pretended to teach, others pretended to study. Distance learning cannot substitute a traditional lecture, interaction in a student group, or lessons where people exchange not only knowledge, but also energy, where the youth acquire the most important skills: communication skills, public speaking and persuasively arguing their opinion. Let those people, who want to move the whole system of secondary and higher education online, explain how can one teach a future surgeon perform operations from scratch online...”

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# Independence Day

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Speaking at the official event, Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that Independence Day has become a symbol of freedom of the Belarusian people. "Belarusians have been moving towards their independence for more than a thousand years. In almost all periods, since ancient times, this has been the path of our struggle: fighting against the harsh climate for crops, invaders — for land, against oppressors — for freedom, and to repel invaders — for faith, culture and tradition. However, the Great Patriotic War was a battle for life, for the nation's existence. That was the war for the place of Belarusians in history, to put the young Soviet republic on the world map. The years of occupation clearly and cruelly showed people the true meaning of such concepts as security, freedom, sovereignty and independence," he said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that Belarusians have managed to preserve the harmony of different traditions and languages in society, have learned to accept and appreciate the achievements of different historical eras and respect each other's religious choices. This shows the national and political maturity of our people and that we are ready to finally build our independent country.

"There is a struggle in the world — which is harsh and even cruel: for territories, resources, markets, historical heritage and spheres of influence. For the first time in the history of independence, we are under unprecedented information pressure. The security of people and the sovereignty of the state are at stake," the President noted. "I speak plainly and without any double meaning: in a month's time, we will determine the fate of our country. If we follow the imposed scenarios and those advocated by

foreign 'puppeteers', we will stop being Belarusians: Belarusians who emerged victorious in the most difficult times, Belarusians who have always treated with great respect what was done by their predecessors, Belarusians who have always relied on their ancestral traditions in the cultural, scientific, industrial, political and social life of the country."

This continuity, according to Aleksandr Lukashenko, has made Belarusians a self-sufficient nation, independent in choosing their fate. "Today, more than ever, we must firmly hold our past, present and, most importantly, future in our hands. We must preserve the country's sovereignty and independence," he stressed.

## From generation to generation

On July 3rd, a procession of thousands of Minskites and city guests passed through the capital's Nezavisimosti Avenue to Pobedy Square. People hold flowers and portraits of the victorious heroes in their hands — as a symbol of gratitude and remembrance. Veterans — traveling by car — were met by young people and the Belarusian Head of State. In the crowded column there were the President's sons, veterans, internationalist soldiers, heads of state bodies, representatives of public organisations, labour



Aleksandr Kushner



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teams and clergy, famous artists and athletes, pioneers and cadets. That was a true parade of memory, symbolising the unity of society and the strong link between generations. A line of soldiers from the honour guard company, with a 16-metre flower garland in their hands, processed in front of the column. The flowers were laid at the Eternal Flame on Pobedy Square, after which the participants of the procession laid their own flowers at the monument.

Aleksandr Lukashenko urged his compatriots not to forget the historical truth about the fight against the Nazi invaders:



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and will always be so. We stand for a dialogue between countries and peoples, for mutually beneficial co-operation exclusively on an equal basis. However, the

modern world is becoming more complex and dangerous and many people now wonder: what will happen tomorrow? The answer is simple. Our future depends only on ourselves. No one from the outside can shake the stability and independence natural for Belarus. Only we can decide the fate of our people on this land. Everything depends on us. The power and strength of the state, the inviolability of its sovereignty are determined by people through their work, unity and devotion to their native land."

## Business can be grateful

The Belarusian capital received a beautiful gift for Independence Day from Sberbank of Russia: a new attraction has joined the map of Minsk — a unique light and music fountain on the Svisloch River. Its opening ceremony was attended by Aleksandr Lukashenko and Herman Gref, the President and Chairman of the Board of Sberbank of Russia.

According to the Head of State, with the opening of this unique fountain, the bank of the Svisloch River will become brighter. It will turn into a centre of attraction for young people, becoming a new site for interesting projects. He wished for as many interesting, dynamic and creative projects as possible to make the city's life even brighter.

In turn, Herman Gref stated that the fountain in Minsk is unique: Sberbank has not built such installations on bodies of water before. "It is the world's only fountain in terms of its scale and location. We've never made a fountain on water: it was complicated from a technological point of view," he stressed. "I would very much like this token of genuine attitude, the love of Russians towards Belarusians to be popular among young people, Minsk residents. I would like it to cheer all of you."

The inauguration ceremony continued with a fountain show accompanied by Vivaldi's music and a concert programme. At the end of the evening, Minsk residents and city guests took part in the nationwide campaign *Let's Sing the Anthem Together*. The day closed with celebratory fireworks.

## Business talk

Before the fountain's opening ceremony, Aleksandr Lukashenko and Herman Gref held a meeting where the President invited Sberbank of Russia to participate in the financing of major projects in Belarus.

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partisans, underground workers and civilians who helped them — millions of people deliberately went to their deaths, not wanting to serve the Nazis.

"I address special words of gratitude to the veterans who are now with us. Thank you for standing up and protecting the Motherland! Your boundless courage, steadfastness and patriotism are a reference point for us, which helped and still helps us to face the challenges of modernity," the President said. "Belarus is a peace-loving state

# Unique objects

**Construction of a national football stadium and an international standard swimming pool has officially started in Minsk. An official ceremony was held at the Dinamo Stadium, attended by the First Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus, Nikolai Snopkov, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China, Cui Qiming, the Minister of Sports and Tourism, Sergei Kovalev, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Economy and the Minsk City Executive Committee. After exchanging greetings, the participants cut a symbolic ribbon, marking the beginning of one of the most significant sports projects in the history of Belarus.**

By Arina Novikova

“The unique facilities that we are starting to build today and the planning decisions which were personally taken by the leaders of our states will not only be indicators of Belarusian-Chinese friendship, but also clear evidence of China’s technological and economic opportunities for Belarus’ neighbours in Western Eurasia,” said Nikolai Snopkov.

According to him, China has allocated about \$240m free of charge for the construction of the facilities.

As the Chinese Ambassador to Belarus — Cui Qiming — noted, Belarus and China are good partners and friends who trust each other. “Comprehensive strategic partnership, mutual trust and mutually beneficial co-operation between China and Belarus are maintained at the highest level. Both countries are true all-weather partners who strongly support each other on issues that affect their main interests and key issues,” the Ambassador said.

The national football stadium will be located next to the Tractor Arena, in



Cui Qiming and Nikolai Snopkov

Vaneev Street. The Belarusian side has already completed the preparation of the construction site. This will be a stadium with a total capacity of 33,000 seats. The pitch will meet the requirements of FIFA, its size will be 105x68 metres. A system of automatic watering and heating will

ensure care for the natural grass surface. Functionally, the stadium includes a canopy, a grandstand, rooms for spectators, athletes, media, commercial premises, underground parking, a room for games and other areas.

The pool will meet the requirements at in-

ternational level and FINA standards and will be able to host official international competitions — including European championships in aquatics, world championships in swimming, diving, synchronised swimming and water-polo.

The sports complex will be divided into zones for competitions, recreation, warm-ups and training. Not only will athletes be trained here, but Minsk residents will also have access.

There will be six sports halls for training athletes in aquatics and modern pentathlon, including trampoline, choreography and fencing halls, as well as facilities for athletes, a recovery centre, administrative offices and other facilities.

The construction is planned to be completed in 2023.

## Attractiveness of the eastern market



**The possibility of setting up Belarusian enterprises in the United Arab Emirates discussed at an export-focused webinar hosted by the Foreign Ministry’s National Marketing Centre**

By Irina Sergeeva

The Director of the National Marketing Centre, Valery Sadokho, explained, “Since 2018, UAE legislation allows setting up commercial entities with 100 percent foreign capital in the country. Such enterprises may specialise in 122 kinds of manufacturing and services and can be established as limited liability companies or privately-owned joint stock companies. The requirements include the availability of a minimal charter capital, the need to use

new technologies, and the employment of the local workforce.”

The official also mentioned factors conducive to the development of Belarusian exports to the UAE. Among them are the constant growth of the UAE economy thanks to diversification, a well-developed transport and logistics infrastructure, a lack of income tax and profit tax, a well-developed banking system and a stable domestic political situation. Mr. Sadokho stressed that the UAE economy is the most open in the Middle East region. The appeal of the

market has resulted in tough competition between European, American and Asian companies in this market.

Experts of the National Marketing Centre, the UAE companies IQ Fulfillment and MCE Advisory — Business, banking & finance experts, representatives of the Consulate General of Belarus in Dubai, and representatives of over 80 Belarusian export companies took part in the webinar.

In 2019, Belarus-UAE trade was close to \$90m, with the UAE’s direct investments in the Belarusian economy made around \$50m.

## As part of regional co-operation



**Five new Belarusian trolleybuses added to the rolling stock used for passenger transportation in Ukrainian Zhitomir**

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Ukraine, Igor Sokol, recently visited Zhitomir — meeting Zhitomir’s Mayor, Sergei Sukhomlin. The two sides discussed ways to step up the level of bilateral co-operation.

The Ambassador of Belarus, the Mayor of Zhitomir, the Director of TOO BMK Ukraine — Nikolai Romanyuk, the Director of the representative office of UKKh BKM JSC — Konstantin Yemelyanov, and the Director of the Zhitomir Tram and Trolleybus Depot — Andrei Nechuveter — took part in the official ceremony held to commission five ‘BKM-321’ trolleybuses. Igor Sokol handed over the keys to the new trolleybuses to their drivers.

The vehicles had been assembled by BKM Ukraine JSC, in Lutsk — based on the assembly kits made by Belarus’ Belkommunmash. The company intends to sell another 44 trolleybuses to the Ukrainian city by the end of the year.

The Belarusian Ambassador also talked to the Chairman of the Zhitomir Regional State Administration, Vitaly Bunechko. They discussed matters of regional co-operation and ways to advance it further.

The Ambassador invited a delegation from the Zhitomir Region to participate in the 3rd Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine which is due to take place in Grodno in October.

## Mutual interest

**Italy intends to increase the volume of trade with Belarus up to 1bn Euros in 2020 — as announced by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Italy to Belarus, Mario Giorgio Stefano Baldi, as part of the Belarus-Italy: Economic Co-operation Amid Global Challenges online seminar**



The Ambassador said, “We should maintain mutual interest in the economic sphere. The situation is complicated by the coronavirus at present. Italian companies need new markets and opportunities to expand their business. In turn, Belarus has been able to preserve balance, the economic situation is under control. So, we will try to resume our activity in full and will try to reach a trade turnover of 1bn Euros between our countries even in

such a complicated year.”

Italy is interested in co-operation with Belarus in various branches of the economy in which Italian enterprises are the internationally recognised leaders. Among them are power engineering, innovative technologies, pharmaceuticals and civil engineering. “These are some of the examples of the innovative sectors we would like to focus on. Certainly, we shouldn’t forget about

co-operation in furniture production, the fashion industry and food. The Italian entrepreneurs I meet in Minsk ask me to open representative offices of Italian banks in the Belarusian capital,” he said.

The Ambassador added he hopes that borders between Belarus and Italy will soon be reopened.

At the seminar, the Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry — Vladimir Ulakhovich — announced the forthcoming 4th Belarusian-Italian Green Economy Forum, to be held in Minsk on October 13th. He declared that the *International Ecology* online exhibition will be organised earlier: in August.

In 2019, the trade between Belarus and Italy exceeded \$900m; in January-March 2020, over \$180m was registered.

Many Italians successfully run businesses in Belarus and, in recent years, the number of new enterprises with Italian capital has grown significantly. Last year, 21 new companies joined to make a total of 240. Belarusian products are also in high demand on the Italian market. These include metal products, potash fertilisers, synthetic portages, furniture and timber.

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# Modernisation effect

About \$900m was saved in 2011-2019 due to the modernisation of Belarus' energy system — as announced by Energy Minister Viktor Karankevich when visiting Mogilev TPP-1

By Igor Svetlov

“The modernisation of Belarus' energy system in 2011-2019 made it possible to cut the total consumption of natural gas to the volume of about 6bn cubic metres — saving about \$900m. During this time, tariffs for industrial consumers also decreased 1.4 times. Since 2018, the energy system of Belarus has almost completely stopped imports of

electricity, replacing it with production from its own energy sources, with lower costs,” Mr. Karankevich said. “Work on the modernisation of the power system is carried out in accordance with the instructions of the Head of State. Over the past 10 years, 25 power stations have been reconstructed, new facilities are being built and existing ones are being modernised. The largest are Lukoml, Bereza district power plants, and Minsk



At Lukoml district power plant — the largest in Belarus

TPP-5. Special attention was paid to the development of renewable energy sources and increasing the use of local fuels. Much work has been done on the reconstruction of electrical substations, high-voltage and distribution networks countrywide.”

While getting to know the technical processes of Mogilev TPP-1, the Energy Minister acknowledged the positive dynamics in the work of local heating net-

works. “The main tasks set for the Mogilev networks are fully implemented. These include uninterrupted supply of heat energy to consumers, system-based modernisation and reconstructions and increasing the efficiency of generating equipment at those energy sources that are part of the Mogilev heat networks. Measures are being implemented to reduce heat losses. The company has saved 4,300 tonnes of conventional fuel.”

# Ideal cycle

Production of eco-friendly tableware made from bran to be launched in Belarus

By Svetlana Savelyeva

Anastasia Petrova, inventor of the project to create quick-decomposable (compostable) dishes RE-KOLOS, recalls that the search for eco-friendly alternatives began after she learned that, from 2021, some types of disposable plastic dishes will be banned in Belarus, in line with the decree of the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade as of February 19th, 2020. “I began to monitor what has already been invented in the world, and found tableware made of bran; it's already used in several countries. Bran dishes are a safe and useful alternative to disposable plastic and paper dishes. It can be used for dry and liquid food, heated to a high temperature. Under the influence of rain, wind and sun, such dishes decompose within a month. Theoretically, it can even be eaten or fed to livestock,” she commented.

Anastasia Petrova came to the *Social Weekend* contest with the idea of creating such dishes in Belarus and reached the final. A team of like-minded people gathered together: a draftsman, a chemical technologist and a designer. They have a clear plan of action. “To implement the idea, we have budgeted more than \$3,000 for the purchase of dishes and \$4,000 for equipment. Primarily, we want to buy a lot of different dishes from bran and investigate whether



they will enjoy demand. We will offer it to schools, eco-shops, but first and foremost to the organisers of festivals and food-courts. We'll see what size will be most popular. At the same time, we will analyse what output is needed and how many plates will have to be produced daily. When we clarify all the parameters, we'll launch production,” added Ms. Petrova.

The team will collect the used dishes in containers (installed on food-courts and other sites where such dishes will be sold) and send them for composting. Farmers have already been found who would accept used dishes and compost them on their land. “To now, we have seen a linear economy, where plastic is produced from oil, used once and buried for centuries. However, we offer an ideal cycle: we take it from the soil and return it there — fertilising it,” emphasised the inventor.

# Stable prognose

S&P Global Ratings affirms its 'B/B' long- and short-term foreign and local currency issuer credit ratings for the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus (the outlook is stable)

According to the agency, the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus (DBRB) has an integral link with and critical role for the Government of Belarus given that it implements a number of priority state projects.

S&P Global Ratings noted that there is an almost certain likelihood that the Government would provide the bank with timely and extraordinary support sufficient to service its financial obligations, if needed.

The stable outlook for the Development Bank reflects balanced risks and mirrors the outlook for Belarus, announced the DBRB press service.

Based on materials of belta.by



Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus

## NEWS IN BRIEF

Vitebsk hosts Day of the Belarusian Brand for the first time



It was at the Brand Day that the results of the Republican sociological research — *Youth Brand* — 2020 — were officially summed up. The companies whose products are most popular among young people were awarded prizes. The main venue of the forum was the Golden Ring of Vitebsk: Dvina cultural and historical complex which featured many interesting events — such as an exposition of youth innovative projects; a fair of craftsmen, Belarusian organisations and authors of creative developments and the awards ceremony of the regional round of the *WorldSkills Belarus* professional contest.

Niagara Falls illuminated with colours of the Belarusian flag

This is how Canada congratulated Belarus on Independence Day. The photos were posted by the Belarusian Embassy in Canada on its Facebook page.

Similar actions were held worldwide.



For the second year in a row, the tallest building in the world — the Burj Khalifa in Dubai (UAE) — was ‘painted’ in the colours of the Belarusian flag. Armenia also congratulated Belarus on its Independence Day with illuminations: one of the central buildings of Yerevan was lit up in the colours of the flag on July 3rd. The 125m Atakule Tower, which is a symbol of the capital of Turkey, was also similarly decorated in honour of Belarusian Independence Day.

Tickets for Minsk's 2021 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship will soon go on sale

In September, tickets for the 2021 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship — which will be held in Minsk and Riga — will go on sale.

The IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship will be held on May 2st — June 6th, 2021. Our team will play in Group A, also featuring Russia, Sweden and the Czech Republic, Switzerland,



Slovakia, Denmark and the UK. Riga will be the host of Group B: Canada, Finland, USA, Germany, Latvia, Norway, Italy and Kazakhstan. Minsk-Arena will be the venue of the final game on June 6th.

Belarusian car listed in Guinness Book of Records

A huge 4,600HP BelAZ Belarusian dump truck — weighing 810 tonnes — is now listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the largest car in the world. In addition, several other impressive vehicles joined the list. Among them is the most uneconomical: a Bentley Meteor. This experimental model with an 850HP aircraft engine consumes 117 litres of fuel per 100 km of travel. The longest car is a Cadillac Eldorado, converted into a 30m limousine with 50 seats. The fastest production car is a 1,287HP Shelby Supercars Ultimate Aero TT, able to travel at a speed of up to 411 km/h.





By Sergey Golesnik

Although the pandemic has not yet completely receded, the festival will take place from July 16th to 20th. The programme is slightly reduced but the main events will remain unchanged: the international pop song contest and the international children's music competition. The Day of the Union State will become one of the brightest events of the music forum.

The Summer Amphitheatre will host seven major events of the festival. The grand opening on July 16th will feature Filipp Kirkorov, Yelena Vaenga, the *Syabry* and *Pesnyary* ensembles, Tima Belorusskikh, Nikolai Gnatyuk and others. On the same day, the festival flag will be raised and an engraved plaque for the winner of the special award of the Presi-

dent of Belarus 'Through Art to Peace and Mutual Understanding' will be unveiled.

The Day of the Union State — scheduled for July 17th — will feature a concert by the *Phonograph-Simfo-Jazz* orchestra conducted by Sergey Zhilin. According to the Director of *Slavianski Bazaar*, Gleb Lapitsky, music lovers will enjoy an interesting programme of live cinema music. "Belarusian and Russian singers, theatre and film actors will perform the best film songs of different years, which unite our peoples and we have grown up with which for more than a generation," he says.

Participants of 18 countries will sing at the *Vitebsk-2020* International Pop Song Contest. It will start on July 18th and, on the first day, its participants — judged by the jury led by a People's Artiste of Russia, Oleg Gazmanov — will perform a world

# It was promised — and has returned

## Vitebsk is preparing to host the *Slavianski Bazaar* Festival

hit, accompanied by the *Todes* show ballet. German singer and composer Thomas Anders will perform in the second part of the concert at the Summer Amphitheatre.

On the second day, the contestants will perform a Slavic hit, accompanied by the Presidential Orchestra of Belarus. This will happen during the closing ceremony of the festival, where the award ceremony will take place. Famous Russian singer Lolita will be among the hosts of the closing ceremony.

**The 'Slavianski Bazaar' programme is available at [www.fest-sbv.by](http://www.fest-sbv.by) and [www.gck.by](http://www.gck.by)**

The *Vitebsk-2020* International Children's Music Competition will be held on July 18th-19th, at a new unique venue that was specially built near the Vitebsk concert hall. Representatives of 21 countries will compete for victory and the jury will be led by an Honoured Artiste of Belarus, Aleksandr Solodukha.

The Summer Amphitheatre will also

host the *Golden Hit* and *Chanson TV* — *All Stars* projects, in addition to the previously announced collective rock concert. Initially, it was planned that it would become a kind of prologue for the festival. Now, says Gleb Lapitsky, it has been decided that their performance on the night of July 19th-20th will be the final chord of the *Slavianski Bazaar*, "To minimise the epidemic risks, this year's festival programme will be held in large open areas. For example, groups that previously performed in the chamber atmosphere of theatres will join the street art fest *On Seven Winds*. They will join artists, performers, musicians, dancers and poets to create an unforgettable atmosphere on the streets of the city, on Pushkin Square. This time, puppet shows will be performed in the Philharmonic courtyard. Youth Day will be held in the usual Pobedy Square but there will also be new locations: i.e. the Mazurino Country Park. The latter will host a large festival of car audio and a family holiday *Colour Fest*."

Importantly, tickets to the events held at the Summer Amphitheatre and Vitebsk concert hall will replace the entry visa to Belarus for the period from July 6th-25th for foreign guests of the *Slavianski Bazaar*.



**Paradise and Pain in Song Land: Belarus Through Artists' Eyes of the 1920-1930s** — featuring graphic works from the National Historical Museum's collection united by the theme of Belarusian ethnography — presented in Minsk

## Opportunity to experience the epoch

By Olga Korneeva

The album describes ethnic types of Belarusians, rural and urban landscapes, monuments of architecture, traditional folk art and crafts. These graphic pieces from the 1920-1930s are of great value as they are simultaneously works of both art and science. Most Belarusian artists of that time supported the local history movement, participating in numerous ethnographic, folklore and archaeological expeditions and making sketches as part of their work.

The album contains works by Soviet masters Arkady Astapovich, Anatoly Tychina, Nikolai Dutchits, Meer Akselrod, Oscar Mariks, Mendel Gorshman, as well as artists of Western Belarus: Piotr Sergievich, Leonid Radevich, and others. The publication includes works by Yazep Drozdovich from his *Polesie: Pinsk Area* and *Glubokoe* albums, as well as Vitebsk graphical painters — such as Solomon Yudovin, Stepan Andrukovich and Lev Leitman.

700 copies of the book were released by the Petrus Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House, in Belarusian and Russian.

## Fugue for organ

**In the village of Medvedichi (Lyakhovich District, Brest Region), the century-old organ of the local St. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church sounded once again — after reconstruction. It took 10 months to repair the unique instrument and, during the work, specialists found the archive of a local organist.**

By Irina Sergeeva

The St. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church in the village of Medvedichi received its organ in 1912, on the initiative of local priest, Yan Eismont. He understood that such an acquisition would strengthen the high status of the church. The Vilno company of Piotr Voitekhovich received an order to make an organ and the craftsmen made it with two keyboards and a 17-register pedal. The organ has 924 pipes, the size of which ranges from a few centimetres to five metres in height. It occupies two floors of the church.

"Our organ could play but was off-key. It was repaired by the author of the *Organs of Belarus* encyclopaedia — Aleksandr Burdelev," said the staff of the Lyakhovich District Executive Committee. "In June, we planned to hold an international organ festival in Medvedichi and present the restored instrument. Musicians from Russia, Poland and Germany were to come but the pandemic interrupted the plans and the festival was cancelled."

The scientific head of the Medvedichi organ restoration — Aleksandr Burdelev — said, "The organ was built for this church and, as a result, we now enjoy a perfect combination of a large (by Belarusian standards) ro-



St. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church in Medvedichi



The century-old organ belongs to the church in Medvedichi

manic instrument and the good acoustics of the church. The sound literally envelops a listener from all sides."

"In different times, organs were built differently. Voitekhovich had his own unique style — very precisely and qualitatively choosing the sound of the registers. This is common to all his instruments," Mr. Burdelev notes. "There are also two language registers in this organ. In Belarus, they were rarely created in small localities as it was expensive and difficult to operate and maintain. They took a lot of effort to restore; we had to work hard with them."

Interestingly, the Medvedichi organ has not only metal pipes. The largest of them are made of wood. Previously, the air in the mechanism was supplied manually: it was necessary to turn a special wheel. The instrument is now equipped with an electric motor.

During the renovation, an organist's old archive was discovered at the church; the find included several notebooks from the 1940-50s. Interestingly, the works of a local musician were also found there.

On the day of the organ's presentation, music from various epochs was performed under the arches of the church by famous Belarusian musicians.

The high-quality timbre opportunities of the century-old organ combined with the excellent acoustics there make it one of the best in the country for solo and ensemble performances of 19th-20th century romantic music, as well as conceptual interpretations of the musical layers of other styles.

# Native patterns

On the eve of Independence Day, on July 2nd, Belarus celebrated the national ornament with the Day of Embroidered Costume, which has become a symbol of patriotism and love for the country. Many enjoy it for its style and uniqueness because each pattern embroidered on it has its own meaning.

By Victoria Derzhanovich

One of the participants of the event, a craftswoman and embroiderer from the Oktyabrsky District House of Crafts, Natalia Molokovich, shares the peculiarities of the Belarusian symbols, “Belarusian ornament is a traditional set of symbols and colours that our ancestors have used for many centuries. This is a kind of cultural code of our people, which served as a talisman. The colour white symbolises purity while red is the colour of the sun and blood is a symbol of life. Black represents the earth. The decoration is placed only on certain parts of the clothing: for women it is collar and cuffs, for men, the shirt front, collar, cuffs and hem, because they wear it untucked. It was believed that the decoration is needed where there are holes through which evil can penetrate. Each pattern carries a particular meaning, revealing a certain idea.”

One of the key patterns in Belarusian ornament is the sign of the sun. It looks like a rhombus with embellishments. The craftswoman says, “This symbol is widely known in Belarusian weaving. Once it was possible to see it in every peasant house since it was considered to be miraculous. It was embroidered when people wanted to express the idea of flourishing nature and life, as well as when a woman had no children. The sun is usually depicted as a circle with a dot in the middle. However, you can’t make a circle in textiles, so it turned into a rhombus.”

The sign of the earth represents a crossed-out diamond with dots while the symbol of a child was traditionally depicted as an eight-pointed star. People said: ‘When a child is born a star appears in the sky. If a person is good, then the star shines brightly’.

The symbol of mother enjoyed particular popularity among Belarusians: our ancestors glorified a mother by decorating her clothes with the symbol.



Symbolises eternity



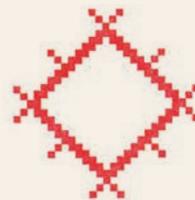
Symbol of a child. Talisman



Symbol of spring and youth



Symbol of a strong family



Symbol of the sun



Union of the sun and the earth. Symbol of harvest



Symbol of wealth



Symbol of mother

## It was interesting!

The *Day of Embroidered Costume* festival was held at the Sports Palace, opening with a catwalk fashion show, entitled *Style. Inspiration. Beauty*, with young girls presenting costumes with embroidered elements from designers and manufacturers.

During the creative relay race *Belarus — a Source of Inspiration*, folk groups and pop singers performed. Moreover, a flashmob ‘raZAm in Embroidered Shirts’ and the Internet challenge #yavvyshyanke were also held.

At the *Belarusian Kirmash* fair, guests of the festival were able to learn how to make colourful Belarusian souvenirs on their own. Craftsmen generously shared their professional secrets with the guests of the event. A large food court — ‘Belaruskaya Karchma’ (Belarusian Tavern) — was set up, offering draniki, machachka and other dishes of Belarusian national cuisine on the menu. Meanwhile, in the ‘ABC of Belarusian Ornament’ salon everyone received a ribbon with a national ornament. The youngest guests were expected at the playground while the final note of the event was the ‘Vyshivanka.by’ folk disco.

# Registration free

**Amendments to the law on the legal status of foreign citizens and stateless persons came into force on July 1st. In line with the renewed regulation, those coming to the country and intending to stay for up to ten days no longer have to be registered with the police or the Foreign Ministry.**

According to the Citizenship and Migration Department of the Interior Ministry, the amendments are designed to bolster the country’s tourism and investment appeal. “From July 1st onwards, foreigners who arrive in Belarus for up to ten days are exempt from the obligation to register with the internal affairs bodies or the In-

terior Ministry. Simply put, if a foreigner has arrived in our country and settled at a private address for a period not exceeding 10 days, they are not subject to registration as a temporary resident. At present, foreigners can stay in Belarus without registration for up to five days at most. The requirement does not apply to Russians

and citizens of some other neighbouring countries Belarus has signed relevant intergovernmental agreements with,” the Interior Ministry announced.

Hotels, sanatoriums, resorts and farmsteads will no longer have to take care of the registration of foreign visitors. These hospitality industry outlets will have to directly inform police via a dedicated website or other means. “Persons who have stayed at an hotel, sanatorium or farmstead are not subject to registration, regardless of the purpose of their stay: tourism, business or private trip,” the Interior Ministry added.

The list of reasons to grant temporary residence permits to visitors, who come to Belarus for education, has been

expanded. The measure is expected to allow Belarusian universities to attract more foreign students, increase exports of education services and address some issues with refresher courses before admission to university.

Highly qualified foreign specialists will be able to get temporary residence permits for a period of up to two years. The time such foreigners are required to temporarily stay in Belarus in order to get permanent residence permits has been reduced from seven to three years. The temporary residence period required to get permanent residence permits has been reduced from seven to five years.

Based on materials of belta.by



Dr. Anthony S. Fauci

REUTERS

## Positive results of COVID-19 vaccines

**An institute of biological products in Beijing affiliated with the China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) announced that it had achieved positive results for a COVID-19 vaccine candidate it developed**

Three of the four inactivated COVID-19 vaccines developed in China evoked positive immune responses in Phase I and II clinical trials, indicating that China has made great progress in the research and development of this type of vaccine, experts said.

The Beijing institute, which is under the Sinopharm China National Biotech Group (CNBG), said in a statement that all 1,120 volunteers in the first and second phase clinical trials successfully produced high-titer antibodies against COVID-19 after accepting two doses of the vaccine. The vaccine has proven to be effective and safe, reads the statement.

The clinical trials started on April 27th in Shangqiu county, Central China's Henan Province and were designed as randomised, double-blind and placebo-controlled studies, according to the statement.



Another institute under CNBG in Wuhan, Central China's Hubei Province, on June 16th announced the results of Phase I and II clinical trials of a vaccine candidate it developed. This provided further vital data for CNBG's research of inactivated COVID-19 vaccines.

## Jump in new coronavirus cases

**US could reach 100,000 coronavirus cases a day while Leicester became first British city to have draconian lockdown measures reimposed**

With daily Covid-19 numbers growing across US, states shift gears on what is allowed. The Government's top infectious disease expert said that the rate of new coronavirus infections could more than double to 100,000 a day if current outbreaks were not contained, warning that the virus' march across the South and the West 'puts the entire country at risk'.

Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, offered the grim prediction, telling senators that no region of the country is safe from the virus' resurgence. The number of new cases in the United States has shot up by 80 percent in the past two weeks, with new hot spots flaring far from the Sun Belt epicentres.

"I can't make an accurate prediction, but it is going to be very disturbing, I will guarantee you that," Dr. Fauci said, "because when you have an outbreak in one part of the country, even though in other parts of the country they are doing well, they are vulnerable."

"We're going in the wrong direction," Dr. Fauci said. "Clearly we are not in total control right now."

He also warned of the risks presented by clubs and bars, saying data showed they were likely contributing to the new outbreaks. "Congregating in a bar inside is bad news," he said. "We've really gotta stop that right now."

At the hearing, Dr. Fauci said there was 'no guarantee' there would be an effective vaccine for Covid-19, but that

he was 'cautiously optimistic' that one would be developed based on information from early trials.

The UK's first full local lockdown has been announced in Leicester, with stricter measures imposed in the city. Non-essential shops have shut, and schools closed for most pupils because of a rise in coronavirus cases.

The Health Secretary said measures would be enforced by police 'in some cases'. Matt Hancock said the city had '10 percent of all positive cases in the country over the week'. Mr. Hancock said 'targeted action' at factories, workplaces and schools over the past several days had not worked, meaning stronger measures were needed.

## The world's largest rooftop garden

**The largest rooftop garden in the world has just opened in Paris**

It is the latest in line to prove that large quantities of healthy food can be grown on a rooftop farm, rather than bought in the supermarket.

The environmental cost of shipping groceries around the world is enormous, generating what are known as food miles. As a result, more and more people are keen on buying local produce. According to an expert on urban agriculture, regional food production has the potential to change the future of food.

The 14,000sq.m space — equivalent

to about two soccer pitches — was loaded with around 30 different species of plant. These are grown in columns without soil and fed with nutrient-rich solutions and rainwater. This aeroponic method uses little water and means a large number of plants can be grown in a small area.

Visitors will be able to purchase produce as well as sample it in the rooftop restaurant. The farm will also host educational tours and various events.

"If everyone really wants this to happen, we can provide, at a regional level, a 100 percent of coverage of food for everyone," says Dr. Rob Roggema, Professor of Spatial Transformations at Hanze University of Applied Sciences.



i.guim.co.uk



## Is the future of travel underwater?

**Underwater tourism is opening the ocean up to travellers, offering them the chance to see the marine world that covers 70 percent of our planet**

Underwater tourism is hardly a new concept. Jacques Cousteau invented general-use scuba gear in 1942, and the Professional Association of Diving Instructors has issued 27 million diver certifications globally since 1967. According to *Scubanomics*, there are around 6 million active scuba divers in the world, plus countless snorkelling enthusiasts, who explore the edges of our oceans, diving sunken wrecks, swimming with whales and turtles and even going underwater caving. In addition, coastal resorts have long offered trips in glass-bottomed boats.

More recently, however, a shift in thinking has brought scuba-like adventure to people who are not skilled divers or swimmers or don't have the time or means to earn diving certification. Experiences such as 'Seawalker on Green Island in the Great Barrier Reef' allow people to submerge while wearing a large glass helmet. Dressed in a protective suit, 'divers' are gently lowered to the ocean floor, where they quite literally walk upright on the sand, connected by tubes that allow them to breathe normally while underwater.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

At the beginning of the war, a village boy from the Chashniki District — Vasily Shitkov — was only 16. In August 1944, he was killed in battle while fighting to liberate Latvia.

# ‘When reading his award document, my eyes were full of tears...’



The city of Bauska, August 1944

*Many years of searching for information about the military fate of young partisan Vasily Shitkov ended in success for his relative, thanks to the partizany.by website*

By Oleg Usachev

That was July 3rd, 1941, when the Soviet command was calling on people to deploy partisan and sabotage activities behind enemy lines. The first detachments were mostly formed spontaneously — uniting Red Army officers and soldiers who were encircled, as well as local residents. After a short time, the partisan movement became organised and proved to be so strong that the fascist command was forced to transfer regular formations from the front to fight against these ‘forest avengers’.

Vasily Shitkov, from Chashniki District’s Gory, began to help the partisans from the first days of the war. Two years later, on June 8th, 1943, he took the partisan oath and became a soldier of the Aleksei brigade — named after its commander, Aleksei Danukalov. The latter was a legendary partisan and soldiers called him ‘a beloved father’ — ready to follow him into fire and water. The fascists were so afraid of him that they offered a huge award to anyone who killed him: 100,000 Reichsmarks. Aleksei was one of the youngest partisan commanders in the Polotsk-Lepel zone but, on April 27th, 1944, he was killed — at the age of 28. He was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

His award recommendation is posted on the partizany.by website. It reads: ‘The brigade, under the command of comrade Danukalov destroyed 22 German garrisons, 14 district councils, derailed 46 German military echelons, destroyed 314 vehicles with manpower and cargo in battles and ambushes, 24 motorcycles, 5 armoured vehicles, 9 tanks, 2 aircraft, 2 radio stations, 2 railway and 69 highway bridges, also killing up to 10,000 German soldiers and officers and almost 700 police traitors to the Motherland’.

In May 1944, the brigade was renamed after their commander.

## No knowledge of the award

Vasily Shitkov was proud of his commander and tried every way to confirm the right to be ranked among the avengers. He was no worse than his elders — going on reconnaissance alone and with a group, participating in raids, ambushes, and derailling trains... The command appreciated his contribution: on August 2nd, 1944, Vasily was recommended to receive the ‘Patriotic War Partisan’ medal of the 2nd degree but sadly never received it. Moreover, he didn’t even hear about it...

After his native Belarus was liberated, he joined the

Red Army and, on August 19th, 1944, Vasily Shitkov, an ordinary soldier of the 935th rifle regiment of the 306th rifle division, was killed in the battle for the liberation of the city of Bauska (Latvia). His remains were later reburied in a mass grave for 2,044 Soviet soldiers, at Bauska’s military cemetery.

Vasily Shitkov’s grandnephew Mikhail says that his family has been collecting information about the soldier for a long time. “For many years, we’ve been surfing the Internet to find anything. Unfortunately, not much has been achieved. Our joy was unbelievable when we discovered Vasily’s awarding docu-

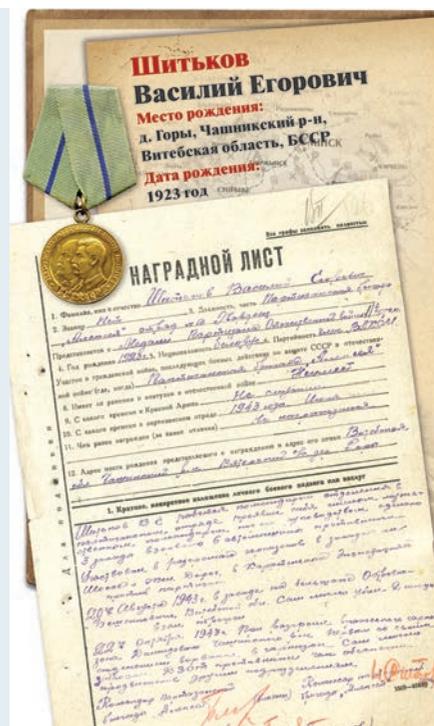
ments at partizany.by which reads: ‘Under the leadership of detachment commander V. Shitkov, 3 ambushes were organised and 6 cars were blown up. On August 20th, 1943, in an ambush on the Ostrovno-Beshenkovich (Vitebsk Region) road, he personally killed 2 Germans and took the spoils. On October 22nd, 1943, during the defeat of the enemy garrison in the Chashniki District, he was the first to break into the garrison with his squad and personally threw grenades at the enemy’s bunker — which ensured the headway for other units’.

Mikhail is grateful to partizany.by which does a superb job of helping to preserve and enhance the memory of real heroes. “I am 45 and I serve in the Department of Internal Affairs of the Orsha District Executive Committee. I’ve seen a lot, but — when reading the awarding document — my eyes were full of tears,” he says. Vasily’s mother Yelena Fedorovna never heard about her son’s death as she died shortly before he was killed. His father had died in 1942.

“My grandfather lost his parents at the age of 13 and the villagers fostered him after the war,” Mikhail recalls, adding, “The time was one of hunger, devastation was all around but people shared everything with him. In my opinion, here is where the spiritual strength of our nation is rooted. We are invincible!”

## Facts about the partisan brigade named after A.F. Danukalov, from partizany.by website

It was established in April 1942 and, on July 1st, 1944, joined the Red Army as part of 12 detachments, with a total of 1,817 partisans. The brigade operated in the Kasplyany District of the Smolensk Region, the Liozno, Surazh, Vitebsk, Orsha, Bogushevsk, Beshenkovich, Chashniki and Ushachi districts of the Vitebsk Region, and the Plissa District of the Vileika Region.



# Sacred code of happiness

What were the weddings of our ancestors like?

**For centuries, weddings were accompanied by traditional rites. Our ancestors believed that, following tradition, it's possible to find prosperity and even prolong our earthly life. Modern brides and grooms don't attach the same importance to the rituals inherited from our great-grandmothers. Who knows, maybe in the time-tested and well-thought-out folk scenarios of one of the most significant events in life, the keys to family happiness are hidden?**

By Marina Kuzmich

When looking through old photos, one immediately notices that weddings in each region had their own differences. The magnificence of the event depended not only on status, but also on a number of other circumstances. More information can be found in the multivolume edition of the Institute of Arts, Ethnography and Folklore of the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR — *Belarusian Folk Creativity*, and *The Belarusian Encyclopaedic Manual* edited by V. Titov. Our ancestors used to marry early: at 17-20 years. They tried to choose a bride so that she had good health, was from a prosperous family, did not have a bad reputation and had a good dowry. Similar demands were made in relation to the groom.

If the bride moved to live in her husband's house after the wedding, then it was called ordinary. But if the groom went to live in the house with his bride's parents, he was called a 'prymak', and the wedding was known accordingly. Such a celebration was accompanied by various jokes and humorous songs addressed to the groom.

There were also weddings that were called 'orphan' events. Their distinguishing feature was that the role of the parents of one of them was played by godparents or other relatives. At the same time, songs at such a wedding would be subdued, like those performed by mourners at the funeral. Before the wedding, or on the second day, the young woman went to the cemetery and addressed her dead parents with a song.

Sad chants were also performed at weddings if the marriage was entered into by a widowed bride or groom.

## Blessings to start, the matchmaker!

The wedding process took place in several stages. The first was called 'vygledziny', 'davedki', 'svatanne', 'zapoiny' (can be translated from the Belarusian language as 'matchmaking'). Then the matchmakers would come to see the bride on a weekday, without warning, to see how she managed the household. In some areas, there was the tradition of a 'lezhan' (from the Belarusian word 'lyazhats', meaning 'to lie idly') was sent to the girl's house. He simply had to lie by the stove and watch what the young woman was doing around the house.

In some places in Polesie, until recently, the custom remained when a match would be arranged in the dead of night. They travelled in a roundabout way, even when the bride's house was located close by. They went out on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, or on the eve of a holiday.



Wedding attire of the peasants from the village of Volchin, in the Grodno Province. Early 20th century



Vorniany, Ostrovets District. Belarusian wedding. 1930s



Orsha. Jewish wedding. Early 20th century



Belarusian wedding in Lida county. 1916



Naroch (Kobylnik). Belarusian wedding. 1916



Brest. Russian wedding. 1930

The parents of young people also exchanged gifts. Then, as expected, a joint 'pachastunak' (treat) followed, which consolidated the alliance. In addition, a joint meal from the earliest times was considered a unifying, connecting action and even equated to kinship by blood.

'Zaruchyny' ended with special songs corresponding to this stage of the wedding scenario. From that time,

the wedding was officially announced, the bride and groom began to be called 'malady' and 'maladaya', 'knyaz' and 'knyaginya' or 'zaruchony' and 'zaruchonaya', meaning the betrothed.

## God himself kneads karavai

One of the main characters at the wedding was the matchmaker. He was also called 'staly' (mature). The honourable role was given to a married man. It was, as a rule, a worthy and respected person, a happy family man and a good host.

An important attribute of a wedding is karavai (a round loaf). Special women were invited to make it, who were called 'karavainitsy'. These should have been good housewives with a happy life. They put on 'white shirts' and had 'white as snow and thin as cobwebs, namitki (kerchiefs)' on their heads.

The future life of a young couple depended on how the loaf was baked. Therefore, they prepared it with songs and dances, which could last until midnight, 'since each of the women making the karavai, and sometimes there were more than ten, considers it her duty to dance as much as possible that evening'.

## Yesterday she was a girl but now a young woman

It is noteworthy that until the mid-19th century, when concluding a marriage, they were guided by 'customary law'. The marriage was concluded without seals and signatures, but with witnesses. This became in the future a prototype of the legal basis of marriage. Such an alliance could not be broken, because it was witnessed by people and relatives. Thus, ethical norms, duties and rights of

the future family were legalised. All ritual actions were accompanied by songs.

Our great-grandmothers decorated their wedding dresses with lace, on which a pattern in the form of tears was traced. This symbolised the departure from the parental home. Embroidered patterns predicted wealth for a young couple.

**Photos from Vladimir Likhodedov's personal collection**



# Racket sports asking for an event

## Aleksandra Sasnovich won the national championship and is preparing for Wimbledon

**Aleksandra Sasnovich is the champion of Belarus. The event is not usual: the last time one of the strongest tennis players in the world played on home courts was a very long time ago. And in a situation when the official season in the world begins at best within a month, any title is of genuine interest. However, on the way to victory, Aleksandra had a chance to meet on court with almost everyone who is today called the closest reserve of the national team. In the final, Sasnovich confidently beat Jana Kolodynska (6:3, 6:2), and then shared her impressions of the first tournament of the season.**

By Dmitry Komashko

*The championship turned out to be interesting. In the final I had to work hard, despite the fact that my rival is only 17 years old. Jana reached the final by beating serious rivals. But I know her well, as we often trained together. We've even played, so the coach and I were able to choose the right strategy.*

**It's not often that the championship of Belarus turns out to be so representative, but you didn't give up a single set...**

*Of those who could play here, only Arina Sobolenko and Vera Lapko were absent. At the same time, all my rivals resisted very seriously. I'm pleased with my game and I'm glad that I managed to win.*

**You've even played in the mixed category. Was it an interesting experience?**

*I really liked it: very emotional! For a long time I've wanted to play a mixed match with Ivan Lutarevich. We communicate well,*

*we are friends, and I'm glad that we managed to get to the finals. I told him to score points in the doubles, so that we could enter together for international competitions, for the Grand Slam tournaments.*

**Nevertheless, you did lose to Lidia Morozova and Andrei Vasilevsky in the final. Although the match itself turned out to be very interesting: when else could such a confrontation be seen!**

*Perhaps it will be possible to meet, for example, at Wimbledon. The match was very good. We played the first set well, but in the end the focus went a little: the fatigue affected us. Lida and Andrei are serious rivals: if you lose concentration a little, they will immediately take advantage.*

**In general, who among the participants of the Belarusian championship has a chance to break into major tournaments in the near future?**

*Yulia Gotovko. She is very talented. I played with her in the semi-finals and caught myself*

*thinking that the ball seemed to stick to her racket and all the time flies into the court from the most incredible positions. After the match, I even asked her: how she manages to hit it like this. She replied that it comes naturally. Anyway, her prospects are very interesting: she just needs to develop her abilities and to work hard. Anya Kubareva showed her skills off perfectly. She moves around the court well and is stable. These are valuable qualities! Evelina Laskevich will soon announce herself. They are working with her very thoroughly, the trainer for physical fitness has been preparing her since childhood. There is also an interesting young girl, Alena Faley, while Kristina Dmitruk is generally my favourite! So the competition is good.*

**For many players, stopping the season created serious problems. Many even said that they simply couldn't stand the financial difficulties and it could end their careers. Has this situation affected you?**



Aleksandra Sasnovich

### THE MT REFERENCE

The winner of the Belarusian tennis championship in the men's singles was Russian Aslan Karatsev. In the final, he was stronger than Belarusian Ivan Lutarevich, beating him — 6:1, 6:3. In the match for third place, Yulia Gotovko was stronger than Tatiana Sosnovskaya, winning — 6:3, 6:2, while Yaroslav Shilo defeated Aleksandr Zgirovsky — 5:7, 6:4, 7:6 (7:5). In the men's doubles, Aleksandr Zgirovsky and Ivan Lutarevich celebrated victory — 6:2, 6:4 — being stronger than Timofey Basalygo and Vladimir Filipovich. Kristina Dmitruk and Alena Faley, who defeated Yulia Gotovko and Anna Kubareva — 6:3, 6:1 — became champions in the women's doubles. In the decisive mixed match, Lidia Morozova and Andrei Vasilevsky won over Aleksandra Sasnovich and Ivan Lutarevich — 1:6, 6:1, 10:6.

*Well obviously, at the moment, I don't earn, only spend. Moreover, I spend a lot. But I think about the future and hope that I can earn and compensate for these costs. I put the period without competitions to good use. I practiced a lot, significantly tightened up my tennis and calmed down. I had just enough time to think about everything, relax and prepare well. I have recovered and I'm ready to play. I'm seriously determined to return and not in the top hundred, but at least in the top 30. I'm sure that I'm now playing at the level of the 20-30 strongest tennis*

*players in the world.*

**The final of the Federation Cup, in which the national team of Belarus will take part, was postponed to next year. Is this a good thing?**

*It's normal at the moment. I think April will come so fast that you won't have time to blink. However, the season could be very busy with the Federation Cup, tournaments and the Olympics. But I don't think about that yet. I'm getting ready for August, I'm going to get to the tournament in Palermo and the USA and I want to perform my best possible tennis.*



In the decisive match of the women's singles, Aleksandra Sasnovich confidently beat Jana Kolodynska in two games — 6:3, 6:2

# New season is approaching

By Arina Novikova

Eight clubs will take part in the forthcoming 29th men's championship of Belarus in the first division: HC Meshkov Brest, SKA Minsk, Vityaz and BGUFK-SKA, Masheka Mogilev, Gomel, Kronon Grodno and the RGUOR-2002 team (out of competition). They will play a four-match tournament, the first of which is scheduled for August 29th-30th.

A tournament for the women's teams will follow the same system, featuring Gomel, BNTU-BelAZ, Gorodnichanka, Brest Victoria-Berestye, Vitebchanka, Bobruisk Berezina, RTSOR-BGUFK and RGUOR-2004 team. The start of the

women's championship is scheduled for September 5th.

Also at the meeting of the BHF's Executive Committee, well-known specialist Oleg Shareiko was approved as the head coach of the U-20 Belarusian team.

It is planned that five clubs will represent Belarus in the European Cup tournaments in the new season. Brest's Meshkov HC will play in the men's Champions League, Belarus' vice-champion — Minsk SKA — will play in the European League, while Masheka will play in the EGF Cup. BNTU-BelAZ handball players will take part in the European League, while Victoria-Berestye will try their hand at the EGF Cup.

The new handball season in Belarus starts in late summer — preceded by the Final Four of the 2020 Cup draw which was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. The final stage of the Belarusian Cup among men's teams is scheduled to be held on August 22nd-23rd in Pinsk, while the women's squads will play for the trophy on August 29th-30th in Zhlobin. Such decisions were made at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Belarusian Handball Federation.



A match against Porto Portugal: an archive photo



## Photo of the week

Anton Stepanishchev

The Day of Embroidered Costume was celebrated in Belarus. The photo features Irina Irshonok — a holder of the award of the President’s Fund for the Support of the Talented Youth, a student of Novopolotsk’s Music School.

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**On July 9th, 1955**, the first passengers drove along the Children’s Railroad in Minsk (the Small Belarusian

Railroad named after Konstantin Zaslunov). At the time the railroad opened, there were two stations: Park Kultury and Sosnovy Bor. Park Kultury had the most beautiful railway station and became the main one, where young rail workers studied, holding official events and accepting guests. A little later, another station was built: Pionerskaya. In 1971, the Children’s Railroad began to bear the name of the legendary partisan brigade commander, railway worker Konstantin Zaslunov. At the same time, Park Kultury station was renamed Zaslunov station.

**On July 10th, 1980**, the Literary Museum of Petrus Brovka was founded in Minsk. It’s located in the former apartment of the People’s Poet of Belarus, Petrus Brovka, where he lived and worked in 1951–1980. The building is an architectural



monument of the 19th — early 20th century. The museum preserves artefacts of spiritual and material culture which refer to the life and creativity of the poet. The archives of the museum consist of 10 collections: manuscript materials, documentaries, printed editions, works of fine art, postcards, historical and household items, photographs and reproductions, negatives, audio documents and film documents.

**On July 10th, 2000**, a memorial for the victims of the Holocaust was opened in Minsk at a place where approximately 5,000 people were shot, in March 1942. A touching bronze sculpture depicts Jews descending into a pit, among which the figures of a violinist and a pregnant woman stand out. The author of the project is architect Leonid Levin.



**July 11th** is World Population Day. It’s celebrated by the decision of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), adopted in 1989. The holiday is marked to raise awareness of population issues, including their relationship to the environment and development.

**July 12th** is the Day of Tax Authorities in the Republic of Belarus. The professional holiday is celebrated annually on the second Sunday of July. The tax authorities of Belarus have come a long way in their formation. Their names and structure changed, reforms were carried out, but the main task always remained unchanged: to ensure full and timely receipt of taxes and payments into the budget. Behind these budget revenues is the financial well-being of the state as a whole and of each citizen individually.



**On July 15th, 1410**, the Battle of Grunwald took place near the settlements of Grunwald and Tannenberg — the decisive battle of the Great War of 1409–1411 between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland on the one hand and the Teutonic Order on the other. This battle decided the outcome of the war. The troops of the Teutonic Order were



defeated by the combined armies of the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. From the Belarusian lands the banners of Polotsk, Vitebsk, Mstislavl, Grodno, Brest, Pinsk, Novogrudok, Lida, Volkovysk, Drogichin, Orsha, Turov and Slutsk participated, as did the Russians of Smolensk. The victory of the allies near Grunwald stopped the expansion of the crusaders into Slavic lands.

**On July 15th, 2005**, Architectural, Residential and Cultural Complex of the Radziwills in Nesvizh and the Struve Geodetic Arc points joined the UNESCO World Heritage List. This decision was made at the 29th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, held in Durban (South Africa).



**July 15th** is World Youth Skills Day, declared by the UN General Assembly. It is celebrated with the aim of raising awareness of the importance of investing in the development of youth skills and improving socio-economic conditions for young people to solve the problems of unemployment and underemployment.