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During *The Candle of Remembrance* requiem rally dedicated to the 78th anniversary of the Khatyn tragedy

Memory is priceless

The memory of those who died during the Great Patriotic War, of those who gave their lives for a peaceful sky above our heads is venerated in our country even eight decades after those tragic events. March 22nd is one of the most important dates for the genetic memory of Belarusians. This is the day when the small village of Khatyn was burned off the map of our country by the Nazis and their traitorous collaborators. It's a real symbol, an embodiment of the interminable pain of Belarusians for their dead countrymen whose lives were destroyed in similar burned villages, ghettos and concentration camps. These days whole families of Belarusians visit numerous memorials to pay tribute to their memory... → **3, 4**



Digits and new opportunities

Draft legal acts aimed at suppressing illegal financial transactions in the field of high technologies discussed at a meeting with the President

By Varvara Morozova,
Yevgeny Kononovich

Global trends are such that digits literally penetrate into every home; this truth must be taken into account. With this in mind, Aleksandr Lukashenko said at the meeting, “We must view digital technologies from the perspective of not only threats, but also opportunities for development.”

Control work

The meeting participants had to work out solutions at the intersection of the digital and financial worlds. Actions, and sometimes even public statements of the digital giants’ heads, are now significantly affecting the traditional industries: automobile-building, transport, logistics, services, space development and others. Aleksandr Lukashenko pointed out another feature of the modern world,

“In some countries, the tools of IT corporations are actively and openly used in political processes. We are familiar with this. Those who let all these processes

get out of control are now reaping the corresponding harvest.”

Digital transformation has penetrated particularly deep into financial relations. The use of tokens and cryptocurrencies are now commonplace as they are accepted as an additional means of payment on a par with traditional money. Belarus was the first, back in 2017, to create legal conditions for the development of these technologies in the country — following a special Presidential decree. That document was immediately called revolutionary. The results of three years work are evident: concrete practice has been established and real experience has been gained. The President is informed that no blatant abuses in this area have been registered.

At the same time, the Head of State noted that certain rules for combating the legalisation of criminal proceeds, financing of terrorism and other manifestations of crime in the digital sphere have been developed around the world. “All these are already present in the world; we are also not

far from the trend. Therefore, the Government, the State Control Committee and the National Bank propose to clarify some provisions of the legislation and establish a necessary level of control over the new sphere of financial transactions,” he said.



A moment for development

Aleksandr Lukashenko agrees that much has already been done. A new and very efficient branch of the economy has emerged in the country and the HTP companies are significantly ahead of traditional industries in most economic indicators. Moreover, the foreign exchange earnings that come to Belarus thanks to their

work have become a significant factor in financial and, accordingly, price stability. However, the President advised they look at this issue more broadly.

In particular, Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled that, during the pandemic last year, the world’s leading countries had

ed to preserve their own economy, support businesses and people. Where did those funds go? They began to be invested in what has the greatest potential for growth and, of course, profitability: the IT industry,” he commented.

The President made an important clarification,

“Most of the printed money is still idle, which means that if we raise these funds, they will serve as a great impetus to our growth.”

The participants of the meeting at the Palace of Independence also discussed the current problems of the country’s digital development. In the near future, a relevant decree will be finalised — to make it possible to focus the available resources on several key areas, while creating a single state regulatory body and maximising the use of China’s experience in building the digital society.

to put additional trillions of Dollars into circulation. “Some tried to profit from this, some used this situation to their benefit... No one hides the fact that trillions of Dollars were print-

On March 18th, President of Belarus signed Decree No. 1 and Ordinance No. 111 to empower the Hi-Tech Park administration to control the activities of HTP residents engaged in financial transactions.



Discussing the Constitution together

The President signed Decree No. 105 on the Constitutional Commission. The document, according to the press service of the Head of State, was adopted to implement the provisions of the resolution of the 6th Belarusian People’s Congress.

The established Constitutional Commission has been instructed to develop proposals for changing the Constitution of Belarus and ensure their public discussion.

By August 1st, 2021, the Constitu-

tional Commission is to submit to the President of Belarus developed proposals for changing the Basic Law of the country for their subsequent submission to a Republican referendum.

The Constitutional Commission

unites 36 people. These are representatives of state bodies, legal science, public associations, various sectors of the economy and the social sphere — honoured and authoritative people with an active civil position.

The Chairman of the Constitutional Court, an Honoured Lawyer of Belarus — Piotr Miklashevich — will lead the Commission’s work.

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Law should work proactively

Amendments to the criminal legislation, fight against extremism and countering the glorification of Nazism are among the issues under the President’s control

By Dmitry Kryat, Polina Konoga

The Head of State held a meeting on improving legislative acts in the field of ensuring national security and protecting public order. Starting the conversation, Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled the results of the previous discussion on this topic,

“The conclusion was unambiguous: a comprehensive overhaul of the legislation is needed, including criminal, labour and other laws. This is prompted by the demand from ordinary citizens to ensure public safety, maintain order and peace in the country... The legislation should not only be able to promptly respond to any

violations, but it should also prevent possible threats.”

The President stressed that, after the previous meeting, the Parliament, the Belarus President Administration, the State Secretariat of the Security Council and other government agencies drafted about a dozen bills within a short period of time. These documents will be scrutinised by the House of Representatives during the spring session, in April.

Strong ‘no’ to Nazism

Those present at the meeting discussed a draft law aimed at countering the glorification of Nazism. Work on the document has been taking place in the country since last year. Be-

larus has approached this independently, but also took into account the experience of Russia.

In his talk to journalists, Prosecutor General Andrei Shved said the bill was very topical, “This is a serious step towards stopping the negative manifestations that we are now seeing (including in the media and on the Internet) aimed at whitewashing the Nazi criminals who committed crimes against the Belarusian people during the Great Patriotic War and staged genocide here.”

The Prosecutor General’s Office actually began working a few months ago to resolve the issue of initiating a criminal case on the fact of the genocide of the Belarusian people during the Great Patriotic War.

Adequate response tools

The Head of State also shared important information he’d received and what conclusions might follow from it,

“According to our intelligence services, they won’t let us live in peace. This means we need to be prepared for any manifestations of destructive activity: from calls for illegal strikes to manipulating people’s minds through Internet technologies.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also pointed to the problem of information attacks via the Internet, “The disclosure of personal data, threats to families and children on the Internet — this should be nipped in the bud. I really mean it.”

The responsibility is en-

visaged not only for threats, but also for fake news.

The legislation will introduce additional liability for authors of false disseminated information. Innovations of the kind have recently been introduced in the legislation of several foreign countries.

One of the topical issues on the agenda was the fight against extremism. In particular, taking into account international experiences, a new version of the law ‘On Countering Extremism’ has been prepared.



Memory is priceless

The President took part in the Republican requiem rally in Khatyn



By Dmitry Umpirovich,
Andrei Zakharov

The memory of those who died during the Great Patriotic War, of those who gave their lives for a peaceful sky above our heads is venerated in our country even eight decades after those tragic events. March 22nd is one of the most important dates for the genetic memory of Belarusians. This is the day when the small village of Khatyn



Vitaly Pivovarchik

was burned off the map of our country by the Nazis and their traitorous collaborators. It's a real symbol, an embodiment of the interminable pain of Belarusians for their dead countrymen whose lives were destroyed in similar burned villages, ghettos and concentration camps. These days whole families of Belarusians visit numerous memorials to pay tribute to their memory...

The Khatyn State Memorial Complex hosted the nationwide requiem rally — *The Candle of Remembrance* — and the Belarusian Prayer for Peace last Sunday. The event was also attended by Aleksandr Lukashenko and his sons. The Head of State walked along the path of memory, laid flowers at the 'Unbowed Man' sculpture and addressed those present, "The tragedy of Khatyn and thousands of villages and towns that suffered the same fate is an unstoppable pain in the heart of Belarusians, all Soviet people. Today we, representatives of different generations, religious communities, philosophical and political views, have come together to honour the memory of the innocent and defend the truth about that war."

The President stressed that this truth is merciless and this memory is hard. "Just think about it: the invaders and their accomplices in the police burned down 9,200 Belarusian villages. More than 5,000 of them were burned together with their residents. We know where it all starts: with the ideas of racial, genetic or any other superiority of some people over others, with the division of people into supreme and secondary. It's really frightening that today these theories have supporters

all over the world. Thank God, the fascist ideology is rejected by Belarusians whose genetic memory has become a real national strength," he stressed.

Aleksandr Lukashenko believes that this memory is full of pain and suffering, it contains a tragic historical experience. It's a fact: WWII was not just a war, it was a consistent extermination of our Slavic peoples. At that memorable night, the President addressed those who are deliberately trying to revive

who found his dead son in the ashes; through the eyes of the hanged helpless old people.

Come and listen to the Khatyn bell and you will hear the children's cries, mothers' lament and a bitter paternal grief of millions of Belarusians: Belarusians who experienced inhuman suffering, but who were not conquered and defeated. We should always remember this and no matter what disaster befalls us (COVID pandemic or other diseases), we should not be shy to come here on the bright Victory Day to pay tribute to those who died for us. Had they not died, we would not have been here today."

Let these voices from the past remind each generation of how fragile the world is, how valuable human life is and how easy it is to lose it all. As long as this bell rings, Belarus will remember it.



Aleksey Vyazmitinov

the symbols of Nazism. Even if these are just a few, unfortunately, there are such people in contemporary Belarus. He said,

"I appeal to everyone who believes that fascism 'brought civilisation to our land'; who sees killers as heroes; who worships the white-red-white flags under which Belarusian people fell victim to genocide. We have come to grips with this problem, and we will show the whole world what genocide is about and we will prove that those who are trying to teach us how to live have no right to do so. To all of you, misguided and intoxicated, I say: 'Come and see!' Go to Khatyn, Borki, Ola, Dalva, Usakino, Shunevka, Ozarichi, to the memorials of Trostenets, Yama, Krasny Bereg.

Look at these through the eyes of a child who survived under the body of their murdered mother; through the eyes of children thrown into a well to die; through the eyes of a shot pregnant woman who never had a chance to know the happiness of motherhood; through the eyes of a father



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The Head of State stressed, "We will never forget the terrible pages of the history of the Great Patriotic War. We will never forgive the cruelty, inhumanity and atrocities of the enemy on our land. We remember this; and this is our strength. Eternal memory to the killed, tortured and torn to pieces. Let us bow our heads and honour their memory with a moment of silence."

To preserve memory for the sake of peace

People of different generations came to pay the tribute to the memory of Khatyn's residents. Many arrived with their children — despite the



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weather. After the Belarusian Prayer for Peace, the President cordially and sincerely thanked all the participants of the rally for coming, despite the bad weather. He noted that although this village was destroyed, it keeps living in the hearts of people. Aleksandr Lukashenko called upon them to keep bringing their children to such places — for them to understand and value our life,

"You should remember: as long as we come to monuments and shrines of our Belarus, we are human. This means that we will keep living and our country will go on. As soon as we forget these paths, the roads to these sacred places, we will perish as people and as a nation."

to celebrate the Great Victory, about the value of peace, national unity and that the victors' descendants cannot allow the falsification of historical truth. Sadly, some people allow it.

Metropolitan Veniamin of Minsk and Zaslavl, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, addressed those who came on behalf of the leaders of all religious denominations of Belarus who took part in the mourning ceremony, "The outstanding writer, Fiodor Dostoevsky, wrote that the Devil is fighting with God in the human heart. If this struggle comes to the surface, we see the fruits in the form of such tragedies. What should be done to ensure a tragedy of the kind would never happen again? We find answers to this question in the ancient law and the prophets who, obeying the command of God, speak of two parts: primarily, about the love for God — sincere, deep from the bottom of our hearts, and about the holy commandment — love to those who are close to you. Do unto others as you would be done by."

The Apostolic Administrator of the Minsk-Mogilev Archdiocese, Bishop Kazimir Velikoselets, also spoke to journalists about the importance of preserving historical

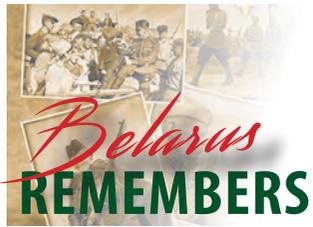


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Belarus will remember these for a long time. The war has truly left a tragic imprint on every family, so those present spoke about their duty to people who were not destined

memory for the sake of peace, "There is the truth that: if we forget the past, then we have no future. We must remember this, remember all that we have experienced, all the wars."

National temples of memory



There are events in our history that even the march of time has failed to send into the shadow of the past. These events should not be forgotten since they are a part of us. Among them are the heroic and tragic events of the Great Patriotic War which the people of Belarus experienced and suffered.

Khatyn became a symbol of the tragedy of the Belarusian nation which lost every third person in the Great Patriotic War. Today, 78 years after that terrible March day of 1943, the tragedy of Khatyn has been restored almost in the smallest detail.

A day before the punitive operation, members of the Uncle Vasya partisan detachment spent the night in the village and, in the morning, headed to the village of Pleshchenitsy. At the same time, a column of German troops was moving towards them — containing the commander of one of the detachments of the 118th battalion of the security police, Hauptmann Hans Welke — a favourite of Hitler, an athlete who was the first German to win gold at the Munich Olympics in 1936. On their way, the Germans met women busy working at logging; when asked about the presence of partisans nearby, they answered in the negative. The invaders didn't suspect anything and moved on. However, after about 300 metres, they were caught in an ambush. In the firefight, the partisans managed to destroy three Nazis, among whom was Welke. The retreating Germans found out where the partisans had taken refuge the day before. Firstly, they shot 26 people at a logging site, and then headed for Khatyn.

Reinforcements from a special SS battalion under the command of Sturmbannführer Oskar Dirlewanger were sent to help the fascists. On March 22nd, 1943, police henchmen of the 118th battalion, led by Vasyura, surrounded the vil-

lage of Khatyn, and gathered everyone they managed to find — including the sick, the elderly and women with babies — into a farm shed and locked them inside. The building was covered with straw, doused with gasoline and set on fire. The dilapidated structure quickly burst into flames. People in a panic began to pile on the door; under the pressure of dozens of villagers it broke. However, those who managed to escape from the fiery hell were shot down with a machine-gun. On that day, 149 villagers were killed, including 75 children...

In the cemetery of the villages of the Khatyn Memorial Complex, mortuary urns of the 186 villages that shared the fate of Khatyn and weren't restored after the war are buried. 433 Belarusian villages have risen from the ruins. Their names are immortalised in metal-cast trees.

The tragedy of Khatyn is not a random episode of the war, but one of thousands of facts that testify to the purposeful policy of genocide of Hitler's Germany and its minions towards the population of Belarus. From June 1941 to July 1944, 9,200 villages were burned on the territory of our Republic, including over 5,000 with their residents — fully or partially. Among them are Khotynichi, Borki, Rositsa, Posudievo, Ola and others.

77 years ago, on March 19th, 1944, the Ozarichi death camp was liberated. Former prisoners came to the memorial on the sad anniversary. Together with their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, they came to the stele to worship the ashes of their relatives and friends, whose lives were taken by the death machine driven by the Nazi invaders in the terrible years of the Great Patriotic War.

Approaching the memorial with flowers in their hands, the former prisoners are distressed. With pain and bitterness, they remember not only their relatives, but also their neighbours and acquaintances from nearby villages who were thrown here to die.

Vladimir Gordienko, Vladimir Bobrik and Mikhail Demidkov are not just friends, but almost brothers. They are all now in their eighties. Having survived terrible trials in early childhood and escaped from under the fascists' barbed wire alive, they have been united for many years by the mission of educating the younger generation.

Decades after the Great Victory, these people who survived by a



The tolling of Khatyn's bells disseminating boundless sorrow — reaching all corners of the country and penetrating every Belarusian's heart

the open sky, without water or bread. Camps of this type were only present on the territory of Belarus. We chewed pine needles and tree bark. People were exhausted to their limit. And when mouldy bread with sawdust was thrown off the plane, the prisoners rushed to them, but not everyone had the strength to grab even a piece."

Vladimir Bobrik has read a lot about fascist atrocities and he learnt from documents that the retreating German army was shielding itself with helpless people who were herded into camps created near the front edge of the defence line. There was a policy of annihilation. People brought to swamps were purposefully infected with typhus. The Wehrmacht intentionally spread a wave of epidemics to use the prisoners as bacteriological weapons. Prisoners were infected with typhus, so that the infection could also penetrate the advancing units of the Red Army and spread among the civilian population. Many soldiers, while rescuing the emaciated prisoners of the Ozarichi camps, fell ill.

Those who survived recall how they noticed the Red Army soldiers behind the wire in the morning. The prisoners became hopeful of escape. On the morning of March 19th, 1944, no Germans were left in the camp.

To save the Soviet people from mortar fire while the enemy were retreating, the Soviet messengers gave the Wehrmacht command an ultimatum

in advance about the immediate withdrawal of German troops from the front line of defence and the abandonment of concentration camps in the neutral zone, and also guaranteed the withdrawal of German troops within a day without a manhunt.

Vladimir Gordienko recalls how, exhausted and hungry, in a semi-conscious state, they left the concentration camp along a narrow path cleared by the Red Army soldiers of the 65th Army of General Pavel Batov. "The liberation from Nazi captivity was our second anniversary there. Thanks to our soldiers, 15,960 children under the age of thirteen, 13,072 women and 4,448 elderly people were brought out of the swamp area, which was fenced with wire and heavily mined. My mother told me how adult fighters — who had seen death during the fighting more than once — couldn't hold back their tears on seeing small children swollen from hunger with frostbitten hands and feet."

The demined path, along which the exhausted and crippled people moved, was later called by the rescued prisoners 'the path of hope'. Every March, they cover every metre of it with flowers — in memory of the thousands of prisoners who remained forever in Ozarichi. They also say, "We will never forget the Red Army soldiers who saved our lives. If someone wants to invade our native Belarus now, we'll be the first to volunteer to defend it!"



Meeting of former prisoners from the Ozarichi camp: Vladimir Gordienko — the head of the district organisation of juvenile prisoners, Mikhail Demidkov and Vladimir Bobrik

miracle are united by a common idea: to preserve the memory of their fallen countrymen and pass on their thoughts to future generations: to love the Motherland and preserve peace on earth.

"Hundreds of people died here every day," Vladimir Bobrik's voice is trembling. "After finding ourselves in the camps of Dert, Ozarichi and Podosinik, united by the common name of Ozarichi, we faced monstrous conditions: under



Memorial complex devoted to prisoners of the Ozarichi death camp

Unique international experience

Oil scientists from Gomel helped improve efficiency of oil production at six fields in India: the BelNIPIneft Institute has completed a major international project



Storage of core samples



During studies of sediment samples from oil wells in India

In focus is Belarusneft's project for India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation. Specialists of the Belarusian Oil Research and Design Institute BelNIPIneft have developed formulations of surfactants to improve oil recovery. "The reservoir porosity and permeability of each of the six fields in different regions of India were studied. Based on the results, Belarusian specialists selected compositions to improve the efficiency of oil production. Effectiveness of surfactant application in the oil-bearing formations was studied — using hydrodynamic models. The forecast of an increase in the oil displacement coefficient for each experimental site, provided that Belarusian technologies are used, was on average 30 percent," the company said. Under laboratory conditions, the environment was recreated as close as possible to the Earth's interior in the studied area. Formational pressure and temperature were modelled.

The project aimed to prepare and develop a chemical formulation of surfactant-polymer waterflooding to improve oil recovery in six fields. "It consisted of several phases which were



During studies of oil samples from India

actually a whole range of laboratory studies in static and dynamic modes, modelling of the waterflooding process — with an assessment and forecast of efficiency," explains Aleksandr Tsybrankov, the Director of the BelNIPIneft Institute.

According to Igor Lyman, who heads the core research laboratory, the objects taken at the deposits — core samples — have unique characteristics. "A very high permeability of layers is registered; it's not common for Belarusian deposits and especially for those located in Russia. Also, we see a high viscosity of oil at one site. One of the significant factors is high temperature which has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the technol-

ogies that were developed and implemented," he adds.

ONGC is the largest Indian state-owned oil and gas corporation and commercial organisation. It produces 77 percent of India's crude oil and 81 percent of its natural gas. The company is among the key players in the Asian oil market, and is also present in international oil and gas regions.

Working under the conditions and restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic had its own peculiarities and difficulties. Due to the closure of the borders, it was impossible to deliver the necessary samples of chemicals, and because of the incidence of disease, it was necessary to limit work in the laboratories of the



Determination of the ultimate core strength

Institute. However, Belarusian specialists managed to complete all the work in 13 months. The project has already been highly praised by the ONGC.

BelNIPIneft calls the implementation of this international project 'a definite challenge'. "As part of the tender, several well-known scientific institutes refused to perform the work due to the complexity of the project and its strict requirements. In turn, this work has enabled us to improve our skills, study international standards and methods, and even develop our own approaches which can be replicated in the future," Mr. Tsybrankov notes.

Belorusneft is convinced that the new international experience

will offer the prospect of further presence and strengthening in the oilfield services market in Asia. "This project was a sort of challenge for us. In addition to the economic component, it gave us significant international experience of such projects, which are premium in this industry. A high recognition of our work by the world-renowned company makes it possible not only to rely on continuing co-operation in the Indian market, but also on expanding liaisons with other companies in the Pacific region of Southeast Asia," stresses Mr. Tsybrankov. Apart from the Indian market, contacts with potential partners from Malaysia and Singapore were also in place.

This is not the first experience of co-operation between Belorusneft and its Indian partners. In 2016-2018, BelNIPIneft's scientists provided comprehensive engineering and consulting services for rehabilitation of the mature Digboi and Chabua Indian fields for another state-owned company of India: Oil India Limited.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Dmitry Mezentsev appointed State Secretary of the Union State



The Chairman of the Supreme State Council of the Union State, the President of the Republic of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, signed Resolution No. 1 'On State Secretary of the Union State' on March 19th. In line with the document, Grigory Rapota is relieved of his post as State Secretary of the Union State and Dmitry Mezentsev is appointed to this position instead.

Until recently, Dmitry Mezentsev was the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Belarus.

Directive No. 1 to officially commend Grigory Rapota for his significant contribution to the development of the Union State has also been adopted.

Grigory Rapota was appointed to the post of State Secretary of the Union State on November 25th, 2011.

State investment programme for 2021 approved

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko has signed a decree to approve the state investment programme for 2021, the press service of the Belarusian leader reports.



Taking into account the investment capacity of the central budget, the programme provides for channelling financial resources into the facilities that will be commissioned in 2021, and facilities which construction is nearing completion.

In 2021, Br664.2m (more than \$255m in equivalent) is to be allocated to finance 102 facilities featured in the programme, including Br399.5m (about \$155m) of state capital investments, and Br105m (over \$40m) from the national development fund.

In accordance with the 2021 programme, there are plans to start financing the construction (renovation) of 28 facilities and to commission a further 48.

Minsk and Bangalore to expand collaboration across several areas

The Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee, Vladimir Kukharev, agreed to expand interaction between Minsk and Bangalore as he met the Indian Ambassador to Belarus, Sangeeta Bahadur. The Indian side is keen to work in such areas as education, tourism, economics and joint ventures,



while the Belarusian side is interested in IT, business and industry.

The parties agreed to expand the opportunity for students from India to receive high-quality education in technical specialties and information technology in Belarus.

India Week may be held in Minsk in September. The programme will include a cultural component and a film festival, as well as a presentation of the economic potential of the Belarusian capital.

Additional responsibility for spreading fake news will appear in the legislation of Belarus

As the Deputy State Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus, Aleksandr Rakhmanov, noted, such innovations have recently been introduced into the legislation of a number of foreign states. He emphasised the urgency of the problem of disseminating false information under the guise of reliable facts.

"Of course, in the national legislation there will be additional responsibility for those people who are engaged in the dissemination of false, inaccurate



information, giving it out as reliable, verified and accurate. This is important for the development of the country, and the military-technical state, the risks and challenges for national security. This is the state of affairs in the field of healthcare and more," he explained.

Intelligence conquering markets

The National Academy of Sciences tells us of the plans for scientific and technical development of the country until 2025

By Veronika Malyshchits

Innovative healthcare, biotechnologies for pharmaceuticals, precision agriculture, electric transport and other areas will become the basis for implementing a future model of socio-economic development — *Intellectual Belarus* — and building an IT country. The main task of the scientific sphere for the next five years is to realise all that has been proposed for implementation in the new cycle of fundamental and applied research. Representatives of scientific organisations have recently met at the National Press Centre for the *Innovation: a Step into the Future. Scientific and Technical Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025* press conference to share their plans for the next five years.

Good groundwork

The Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences, Vladimir Gusakov, opened his speech by summing up the results of 2020, “In recent times, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has intensified its innovative activities. For example, jointly with the Industry Ministry it was among the major customer-executors as part of the 2016-2020 state programme of innovative de-

velopment — realising 11 and 17 projects, respectively. The share of innovations in the total volume of shipped products by the Academy’s organisations was 33.9 percent. In addition, the geography of international relations and foreign economic activity is expanding. In 2020, the NAS supplied its products to the markets of 17 European countries.”

Mr. Gusakov noted that — to meet the goals set at the Belarusian People’s Congress, implement the *Science and Technology 2018-2040* strategy and scientifically support the *Intellectual Belarus* project in the near future — scientists will continue working on space research and digital geoinformation technologies, forming a scientific base for creating artificial intelligence and intelligent big data processing technology based on a single supercomputer platform of cluster architecture. It is also planned to create an experimental base for solar energy, to provide timely reliable information on the achievement of goods in the framework of economic activities of organisations. This will create the necessary conditions to reduce the illegal turnover of industrial products and its impact on the development of the country’s economy.



Vladimir Shlapak



Aleksey Vyazmitinov



Aleksey Stolyarov

“In the interests of modernising the domestic machine-building industry, it is planned to present developments of model-training industrial and household robotics, to establish pilot production of electric power supercapacitors. Production of new types of metal composite materials, carbon fibre plastics and fiberglass, and the latest petrochemical products will be mastered. Medicine will receive new information system technologies and drugs based on domestic original technologies to ensure development of personalised medicine, prevention and treatment of diseases,” the official added.

Major plans

The Chairman of the State Committee for Science and Technology, Aleksandr Shumilin, has, in turn, stated, “At least Br3.5bn (\$1.4bn) of sci-tech products are now being calculated for sale based solely on the programmes proposed. At the same time, 18 percent of this is expected to be exported.”

In 2020, the Head of State approved the unified priority areas of scientific, sci-tech innovative activities: digital, information, communication and interdisciplinary technologies, production based on them, as well as biological, pharmaceutical, chemical production technologies, energy, construction, environmental management, and so on.

“The number of state programmes has been reduced from 17 to 14. Today, their formation is underway. There are plans to perform about 740 tasks, of which 34 percent are based on the results of previously completed tasks by state research programmes,” Mr. Shumilin said.

Among the priority areas are ‘Digital Technologies and Robotic Systems’, ‘Quality and Accessibility of Medical Services’, ‘Green Technologies of Resource

Management and Environmental Safety’, ‘Innovative Agro-Industrial and Food Technologies’, ‘Cybersecurity’ and others. For each of them, up to five programmes are to be realised.

According to Mr. Shumilin, the proposed programmes will fully ensure the implementation of priority areas of scientific, sci-tech and innovative activities for the next five years. He added, “Already at the planning stage, it’s envisaged that the number of innovations will double the number outlined for the beginning of the last five-year period — including through the creation of 140 types of machines, over 50 materials and substances of food, 150 technological processes, 38 information technologies, about 70 plant varieties, at least 40 medicines, including for treatment of viral and oncological diseases.”

Aleksandr Nevsky is also invited

Four months left before *Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk* Festival of Arts



BELTA

By Yuliana Leonovich

The Head of the Department of Concert and Festival Projects of the Arts Division of the Culture Ministry of Belarus, Inna Adamovich, revealed to *The MT* reporters some of the secrets of the upcoming action, “We have already announced a competition for directorial concepts for

the gala concert. Ideas reflecting important events in social and cultural life are welcome. At the same time, it’s important to remember that it will be necessary to embody these ideas in the ‘conditions of the Summer Amphitheatre’. We are, of course, in favour of using modern technologies and special effects, alongside other creative ideas...”



The Union State Day and the Youth Day will be held on July 16th. The traditional concert, entitled *The Union State Invites...*, will experiment with the format: this time, artists from choirs will come to Vitebsk on tour.

The 800th anniversary of the legendary Old Russian commander Aleksandr Nevsky will also be celebrated at the festival. The Director of the *Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk*, Gleb Lapitsky, is already anticipating it, “I feel that the festival will turn out to be special. But until recently, we couldn’t even think that we would get out of closed rooms into the open air! Last summer, I had to transport artists across the border by a special train, use exclusively Belarusian equipment in scenography and change the entire programme at least

This year is a jubilee for the largest Belarusian music forum as it will turn 30 years old. The festival will take place from July 15th-18th, and its main theme will be the Year of People’s Unity.

three times, two weeks before the opening... This year, I hope everything will go according to plan, but it is still too early to announce the programme or the list of guests as not all confirmations have been received.”

However, the management has already decided on the forum’s identity. The round date and the invariable symbol of the *Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk* — a cornflower-note — became the main elements of the 2021 identity. The new graphics are based on simple geometric shapes and lines familiar to everyone. Some fans even see Chagall’s themes in it.

The list of guests and solo concerts hasn’t yet been announced, but spectators are already voting for their favourites on the official page of the festival in one of the social networks.

Among Russian performers,

the winner of the *People’s Artist* show, Aleksei Goman, is still in the lead; his solo concert is requested more often than others. Moreover, viewers want to see Dima Bilan, Nyusha, Nikolai Baskov, Philipp Kirkorov and the Omsk Russian Folk Choir on the stage of the Summer Amphitheatre. The *Syabry* band and Yaroslav Sumishevsky are among the wishes of the artists from Belarus.

Fans of the festival aren’t averse to singing along to Oleg Vinnik and Patricia Kaas. Although the popular Ukrainian performer and famous French singer have already performed at the *Slavianski Bazaar*, the audience, it turns out, is ready to listen to them again and again.

The competition for young performers and the *Vitebsk-2021* children’s competition will also delight their fans.

Our ancestors' wardrobe

In Korelichi, the traditional clothes of local peasants were recreated from an old postal stamp

Knowing one's roots, as well as remembering and respecting one's own ancestors: these are the basic commandments of any people on which the national idea is based. Belarusians are no exception. In every corner of our country, there is sure to be at least one person who keeps in their heart and memory a piece of local history and traditions of their land. Unique ancient recipes, unusual holidays, authentic dances, music and many other elements of intangible heritage have gained unprecedented popularity today, in contrast to the relatively recent past, when — due to the lack of interest in the history of the native land — many significant details were lost. Nowadays, they have to be rebuilt, often with great difficulty.

By Yekaterina Charovskaya

Residents of the Korelichi District are gradually returning to their roots. In fact, the famous Mir Castle was restored from the ruins here and received a second life. Old crafts, such as straw weaving, pottery, weaving and linen handicrafts, are being revived. Recently, employees of the department of craft activities at Korelichi's House of Crafts were able to recreate the traditional clothes of local peasants, worn at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries. It took several years for the Korelichi craftswomen to do this. For half a year, they scrupulously studied the features of traditional cut and embroidery, and two years ago they were able to make a festive summer version of men's and women's suits. Having finished this work, they decided to go further and demonstrate what Korelichi citizens wore in the cold season. However, they immediately ran into difficulties, as there was no information about this. Literature gave a lot of detail about similar costumes of the Vitebsk Region and Polesie area but there's practically nothing about the appearance of western Belarusians.

"We started preparing to create a costume by researching," says Yulia Boyarenko, who heads the Department of Craft Activities at Korelichi's House of Crafts. "It turned out that there's nothing to research. It would seem that some time has passed, and not a single sample of a traditional costume is left. Much was plundered during the turbulent times of the first half of the 20th century. So, we started to study literary sources. It didn't do us much good either. Finally, in one of the encyclopaedias we found an image of an old postal stamp, which featured Novogrudok peasants in traditional warm clothes. If we take into account that the

Korelichi District was formed only in 1940, and before that it was a part of Novogrudok Province, we can say that we found exactly what we were looking for. Having studied a huge amount of literature, we came to the conclusion that similar clothes were worn in the Slonim and Lida areas."

It's worth noting that the craftswomen weren't interested in a winter version of clothing, but — as they would say now — a between-season variant. Because in the Korelichi District, and many hundreds of kilometres away from this area, peasants invariably wore a warm sheepskin coat and a fur hat with earflaps in frosty weather. However, the autumn-spring version in different areas had its own characteristics. It turned out that there were no significant differences between women's and men's suits. The workers of the House of Crafts themselves decided to slightly trim and flare the women's coat in order to give it more elegance. In fact, the shape of the silhouette, collar and belts of peasants and peasant women were practically the same. The headdress of men was a straw hat or a peaked cap made of the same material while women threw a thicker kerchief on top of a thin kerchief.

"In the original, warm clothes were sewn from natural hand-made cloth. On the site of today's Raitsy Village Council, there was once a felting mill where they made clothes for the army. This fabric isn't produced now but we tried to find a material that's as similar to it as possible. The buttons were made by hand

from wood, and nobody paid any attention to their special design. More prosperous peasants could afford buttons made of metal or bone. We reproduced the standard version carving them out of wood. Clothes were decorated with hand-woven cord braids, which were intricately sewn on the hem and sleeves of the item. We also made cord braids and decorated our costumes with them. It took about 15 metres of hand-made braid. Now, we're studying the art of volumetric weaving of belts,



Tongue wrapped in ear

There are different ways to study the history of the area. For some, an article on Wikipedia is enough while others think that they should see everything with their own eyes, touch the mossy stones of the ancient church, feel the bumpiness of rural 'brukovka' (cobblestone road) with the soles of their sneakers and taste traditional dishes. Recently, enthusiasts from the Korelichi District began to study the culinary history of these places. They meet with 80-90-year-old grandmothers, who willingly share their memories of the dishes of their childhood.

It appears that the cuisine of this Belarusian hinterland is very interesting and distinctive. Take, for example, 'brains in eggs', when veal brains fried with onions are mixed with finely chopped egg and served in eggshells. Or 'tongue in ear', when a tongue is wrapped in a pig's ear, all this is carefully rolled and cooked for three hours. Hearty dishes were washed down with the once very popular drink here — oatmeal jelly. Moreover, on holidays, 'khrenovukha' also appeared on the table — home-distilled vodka, which was infused with horseradish and honey for two weeks.

Axe belt

One of the unusual traditional crafts — belt weaving — is being also revived in the Korelichi District. Once this area was famous throughout the world for its tapestries. Now local craftswomen painstakingly master the art of hand-weaving belts. Olga Krishen, a master-methodologist of the Department of Craft Activities, started with the simplest thing: the creation of decorative cord braids. Some can be woven directly on the fingers without any special devices. Our ancestors used them for various purposes: from household to decorative, e.g. as a bracelet. Later they switched

to weaving on special equipment. The technology of volumetric weaving has already been mastered, allowing the belt to be formed into a tube. It's more practical than a cord braid. Previously, such belts were wrapped around peasant men several times to hang an axe from. The bulky belt does not cut into the body as much under the weight of the instrument. Now Olga is studying the technology of creating flat wide belts that are closer to weaving than knitting in construction. Such belts are decorated with rich ornaments and patterns. And then, who knows? Perhaps it won't be long before the revival of the famous Korelichi tapestries...

traditional for our region, and in the future we are going to supplement it with a braided belt. In general, the entire costume was made only by hand. There were no sewing machines, as well as a variety of colours: only black and grey. As far as footwear is concerned, they wore black or reddish leather boots. But this was a great luxury. Such boots were treated very carefully, they were worn on special occasions and passed on by inheritance. Mostly they wore straw bast shoes," the lady explains.

The simplicity and ordinariness of the design of the costumes depicted



on the postal stamp didn't bother the employees of the Korelichi House of Crafts. From their experience of creating traditional summer costumes, they already realised that the local peasant women were still fashionable and tried to decorate their clothes with bright and complex embroidery as much as possible. Therefore, they probably found ways to dress up boring cloth in a variety of ways. Korelichi craftswomen took the risk of decorating one of them with multi-coloured cord braids. Now, they are going to start studying and making children's traditional summer clothes. Preliminary studies have shown that here, too, they will have to face a lack of information and collect costumes bit by bit from scattered information.



The creation of the costumes was preceded by painstaking research, says Yulia Boyarenko



TRADITIONS

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March 25
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Police clashes with demonstrators during a protest against coronavirus disease (COVID-19) restrictions in The Hague, Netherlands

Tearing the masks off

The ruling party of the Federal Republic of Germany failed due to scams and political demagoguery

By Irina Markova

The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) — Chancellor Angela Merkel's party — has suffered a crushing defeat in elections to the Landtags held in two federal states of Germany. The CDU has shown its worst-ever election result. Voting in Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate marked the start of a series of election campaigns in 2021, which will culminate in the 'super-election' for the Bundestag on September 26th. The current defeat was so crushing that the ruling party is rapidly losing its chances of retaining the post of chancellor.

It's noteworthy that while politicians fooled voters with calls to tighten their belts and stay at home during lockdowns, they themselves shamelessly made money out of the situation.

Serious indignation in Germany was caused by the so-called mask scam, when it turned out that the people's representatives are making good money on the problems of the voters who nominated them. Two deputies of the Bundestag from the CDU / CSU bloc — Nikolas Löbel

and the Deputy Chairman of the faction Georg Nüßlein — were accused of mediating in the procurement of protective masks, receiving six-figure sums in commission. And this is during the period of the COVID pandemic, when many Germans are losing income. One can imagine the feelings of voters locked in their homes learning about this 'feast in a time of famine'.

However, this is not the only reason why they reject the unprincipled politicians. The CDU has always been famous as a party that was primarily concerned about economics. But recently the establishment, according to the Germans, has become carried away by politicisation and interference in the affairs of other countries, forgetting about its own problems.

Not surprisingly, protests continue in Germany, just like other European countries (the Netherlands, the UK, France, etc.), where people take to the streets and governments tighten police measures against protesters. Thus, hundreds of Parisians gathered outside the Senate building when the MPs were discussing the so-called 'Global Security' bill. According to it, the distribution of

photos or videos of police officers in the line of duty to harm law enforcement officers will be declared illegal.

Meanwhile, the British Parliament is preparing a new law that increases the powers of the police and gives additional rights to limit mass protests. *If protesters refuse to follow police directions about how they should conduct their protest, they could be fined up to £2,500. Moreover, they may be subject to a fine even if they have not received a direct order from a police officer, but simply fail to follow restrictions they 'ought' to have known about. If the protests are accompanied by damage to memorials and monuments, then the perpetrators will face up to 10 years in prison, not a fine, reports BBC News.*

All the measures listed in the bill, according to the British Government, don't undermine freedom of expression, but 'balance the rights of protesters with the rights of other people to freely go about their business'.

The citizens of the European Union should seriously think about what kind of Europe they need: an open Europe of equal peoples or a Europe under the guise of political hypocrisy?

Welcome mat for tourists

Greece is laying out the sunbeds and beach umbrellas as it prepares to reopen to tourists in May and resurrect an industry which suffered one of its worst years in decades because of the coronavirus pandemic

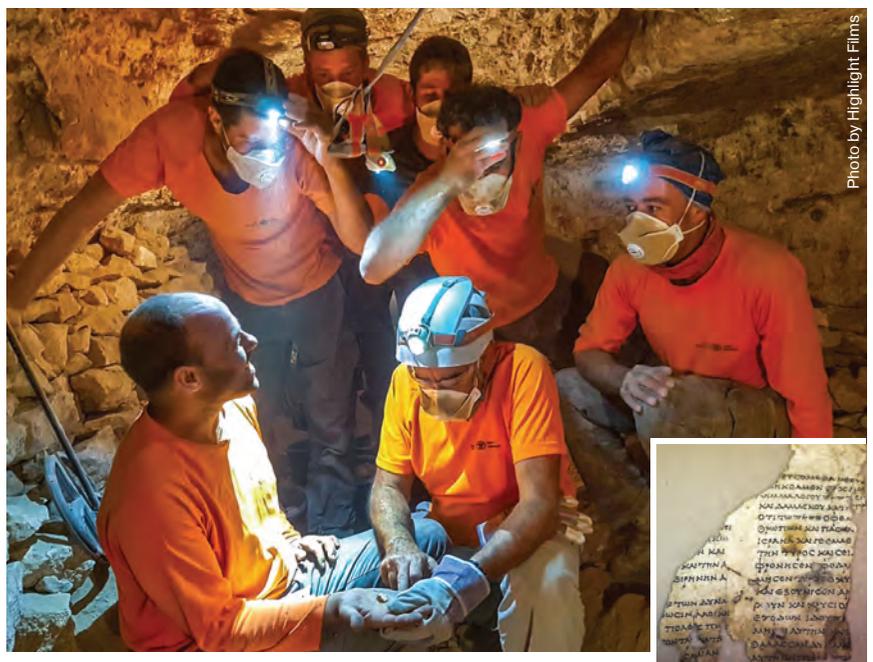
"All you need is Greece," Tourism Minister Harry Theoharis said. The tourism sector accounts for about a fifth of Greece's economy.

While the European Commission gets ready to present a proposal to allow vaccinated people to freely travel across the bloc, countries such as Greece have already started working on their own vaccine passports. A pilot phase of flights bringing visitors from some Eu-

ropean countries, Israel and the United Kingdom will begin in April.

From mid-May, more countries will be added to the list of those who do not need to quarantine upon arrival. Instead, they will need a vaccine certificate, an immune certificate or a negative COVID-19 result.

The Greek Ministry of Tourism has signed a 'green pass' agreement with Israel and is working on similar bilateral agreements with 10 more countries.



Discovery of ancient scroll

A 2,000-year-old Biblical scroll has been unearthed in the Judean desert in Israel, the first discovery of its kind since the Dead Sea scrolls were found more than 70 years ago

The religious text, written in Greek, was found during excavations in a cliffside cave in the Nahal Hever nature reserve, as part of a national operation to combat heritage looting.

The Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) said the 'historic' discovery has made it possible to reconstruct passages from the books of Zechariah and Nahum, from the book of the twelve minor prophets of the Bible.

"For the first time in about 60 years,

archaeological excavations have uncovered pieces of a Biblical scroll," the IAA said in a statement.

The excavation, in the West Bank part of the Judean Desert which has been occupied by Israel since 1967, required drones and mountain equipment such as ropes for abseiling.

In addition to the pieces of parchment, other rare finds were made.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Revival of Belarusian Versailles

A unique palace and park ensemble in the village of Zhilichi, Mogilev Region — known as the Belarusian Versailles — is being restored to life

Majestic palaces and castles, churches and objects of intangible spiritual culture are not mere pilgrimage destinations for tourists, but also a powerful tool for patriotic education. After all, in realising the greatness of what our ancestors created, we will inevitably feel respect for them, become more interested in history and do our best not to lose our heritage.

By Oksana Nevmerzhitskaya

A bit of history

The estate, built by the wealthy family of Bulgaks, is located near the preserved high ramparts and bastions of the 17th century fortress. It's designed in the style of late Classicism, with strict lines, clarity and simplicity of silhouette. The palace was conceived not so much as a place to live in but as a means of demonstrating the high status and wealth of its owners. The Bulgak family was well-known from the 14th century, but it was not as noble and influential as the Sapegas and Radziwills. However, the Bulgaks turned out to be enterprising businessmen and strong economic managers: they owned more than 60,000 hectares of land and were engaged in agricultural processing. The family ran a sugar beet factory, a brandy kitchen, a mill, a sawmill and distilleries all over the country.

Initially, the land belonged to the brothers Ignaty and Vincent Bulgaks; they were retired military men. The brothers had no children, and after their deaths, the property went to their nephew, Ignaty Bulgak, who began constructing a family estate in 1823.

The main U-shaped building of the palace was built according to the design by the famous architect, Karol Podchashinsky. It had living rooms and a main hall. During Ignaty's lifetime, the main building was constructed and work on the side buildings began, though the palace was fully ready only after his death: the construction process was completed by his heirs.

Heyday of the palace

The estate was being built over almost a century: from 1823 to 1910. It reached its greatest prosperity in the times of Edgar, the youngest son of Ignaty, who inherited Zhilichi. Among other things, he had nurseries where peaches, apricots and even pineapples were grown. One of the first meteorological stations in Belarus was sited there by him — for the needs of agriculture.

"There are about a hundred rooms in the palace, and we can



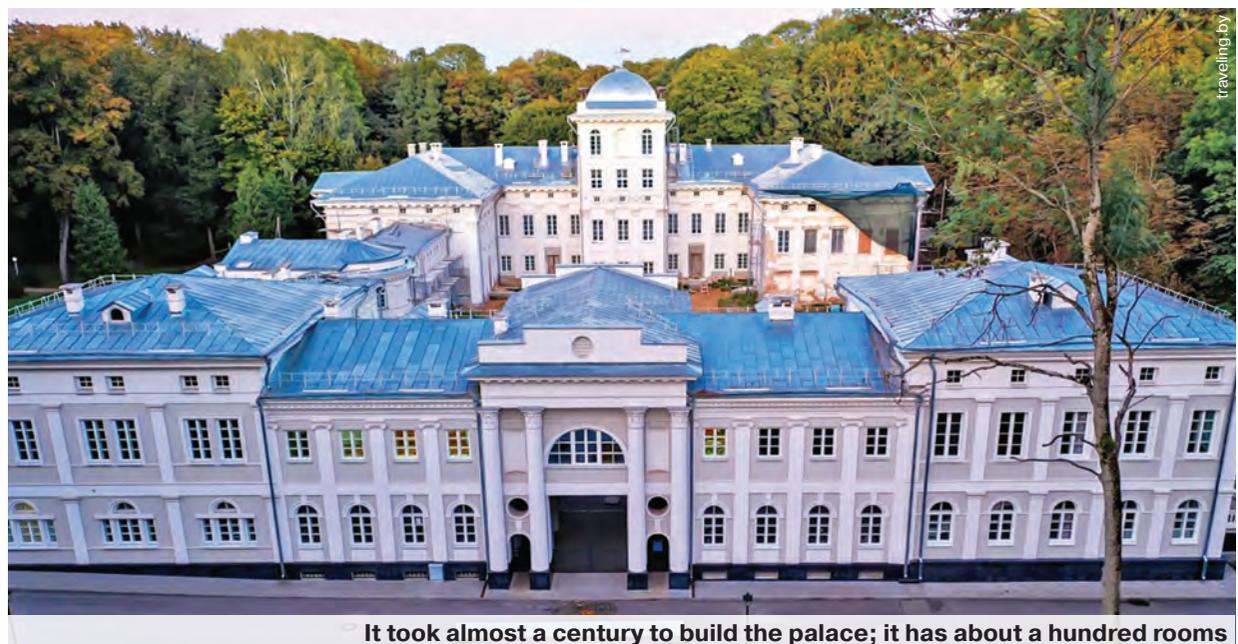
This is what a fragment of the interior decoration might look like



The craftsman left his mark on the side of this staircase

only guess at the purpose of many of them," says Vladislav Kulakevich, the Director of the Zhilichi Historical Complex-Museum cultural institution. "There were banquet and ball rooms, many salons, gallery rooms, a house chapel and a greenhouse. Probably, many of the rooms — if we can call them this — were designed to show guests impressive collections of works of art and paintings. Eighteen Slutsk sashes, a collection of raiments (a detail of the festive vestments of a Catholic priest), paintings by famous masters, medieval weapons, a library of 6,000 old printed and handwritten books were kept there."

In some ways, the Bulgaks' palace was lucky: it wasn't seriously damaged during the two world wars and was always inhabited. Reconstruction and restoration of the estate has been conducted since 2009 — with greater or less intensity. A powerful impetus to the work was given by the President's instruction to put in order several historical and architectural sites, including the palace in Zhilichi.



It took almost a century to build the palace; it has about a hundred rooms



Some elements of the decoration were lost, but restorers managed to return them to the palace



The decoration of the chapel is almost restored

How greatness is returning

Our tour starts from the main entrance. On coming inside, I'm amazed by our ancestors' 'invention': right at the entrance, they arranged a fireplace that created a heat curtain — as in most modern premises. Each of the three lobbies had a fireplace. We move carefully, so as not to touch the scaffolds or interfere with the people working here. An oak staircase leads to the second floor, to the main halls; its stairs are currently being restored.

One of the rooms which is always ready, after the restoration, is the Bulgaks' house chapel. "There's nothing surprising about a home chapel," says Mr. Kulakevich. "In those days, many wealthy families had one. For the Bulgaks, this chapel became a matter not only of prestige: they professed the Catholic faith, and mainly Orthodox Christians lived around them. The mouldings on the ceiling, the cherubs on the walls, the altar, the cascading chandelier with gilding and imitation candles have already been restored on the basis of photos; it remains only to put the benches back and decorate."

Historical puzzles

The largest and most beautiful halls of the palace are, without doubt, the ballroom and

banqueting rooms. Both once had coffered ceilings: this is a special type of decoration, in which the natural recesses between the beams were left and beautifully decorated with stucco and gilding. Unfortunately, the decorations made of wood are not well preserved. In the banqueting hall, work is in full swing: specialists are restoring the ceiling and the stucco, clearing the columns that were once covered with imitation marble. Reconstruction of a 4m tall fireplace is next in line. After that, workers will start finishing the walls. In the grand halls, they were sometimes covered with wallpaper — woven or paper, or sometimes with imitation of marble and Venetian plaster.

We climb a narrow spiral staircase to the observation tower. Its floor-to-ceiling French windows look out on all four sides, offering excellent views. From above, the remains of the carriage house, found to the right of the main entrance, are clearly visible. This building was operational until 2006 but was then destroyed by a fire. It would be great to restore it too, since it played an important role in the Bulgaks' life. Carriages and horses were kept there. In a tower above, a coachman was always on duty. In addition, one of the carriages was kept ready,

so that the owner could go on urgent business at any time.

Another object which needs restoration is the lake in the park. It's an integral element of the palace and park architectural ensemble. The lake dried up as a result of reclamation measures, but there may still be ways to return water to it.

Birth of the museum

Restoring beautiful interiors is not the ultimate goal: a project is now being prepared to envisage all aspects of operating the building as a museum, while adjusting the principles of filling it with exhibits.

"Most tourists might be satisfied with the rich interiors but some need more," explains Mr. Kulakevich. "Look at this photo of the banqueting hall in 1910. It features beautiful carved chairs, a very elegant fireplace screen, consoles with candelabra and magnificent mirrors. All these need to be restored. But how? There are several solutions. The first is to make everything fresh. However, the problem is that new pieces look different. It's also possible to buy antique furniture items but exact copies are unlikely to be found, we can buy only analogues. The third option is to put a glass panel with the image instead of, say, a console. This is the most scientific option; it's not the best for tourists as they want to see the antiques. There are many difficulties, and it's the museum's project that will help to overcome them."

Restoration works should complete by next December. No doubt, the restored palace will take its rightful place among the most famous and beautiful sights of the country.



Yekaterina the Great

By Sofia Arsenyeva

Arranging a masquerade ball in Polotsk

“The hills stretch ahead, with many lakes among them, which is very beautiful; the population here is very diverse, with Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Uniates, Jews, Russians, Poles, those of Finno-Ugric origin, Germans and Courlandians living together; in a word, you won’t see two peasants dressed and speaking alike in one dialect, thus the mixture of tribes and dialects resembles a Babylonian pandemonium,” said Yekaterina II, describing her first impressions of the Polotsk vicerealty in 1780 to her son, the Grand Duke, Pavel Petrovich.

However, the most interesting part lay ahead: three days of luxurious receptions, meetings with subjects and rich entertainment. Dinner tables were set for hundreds of people, and every time there was a drink to good health, a cannon was fired. The ancient city on the Dvina River ‘was burning’ from morning to night since ‘everything was lit with colourful lights: the market, streets, temples, houses... In front of the church there were four huge pyramids, on one of them there was an inscription in colourful lights reading ‘Victoriis clara, Beneficiis illustrior’ (translated from Latin as ‘glorious for victories and even more famous for good deeds’). A masquerade ball was staged at the governor-general’s house, which lasted until three in the morning. Yekaterina decided to leave the Polotsk lands symbolically: ‘Her Imperial Majesty deigned to change from carriage to boat and, across the Dvina River, was met on the other side, as if on the border of Mogilev royalty...’

Entering the city in a royal manner

Several addresses in Mogilev are associated with the high-profile name of the Russian ruler. In summer 1780, she met with the Austrian Emperor Joseph here.

It is known that Yekaterina the Great entered the city through a majestic arch erected in her honour. Alas, it has survived to the present day in a slightly altered form, without an opening and with a bas-relief of Lenin.

The baroque church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary has survived, its beauty captivated the Empress. The vaults of the church are decorated with unique authentic frescoes of the second half of the 18th century on Biblical subjects, made by local artists under the direction of Pavel Pitrovsky. By the decree of Yekaterina II, the Mogilev Catholic Church became a cathedral. This status is currently assigned to it.

Staying with a St. Petersburg pleasure-seeker

Yekaterina II was generous with gifts to her favourites. Grigory Potemkin was given Krichev in Belarusian territory. He didn’t own it for long, but built a luxurious palace, which has survived there to this day.

Semen Zorich, after a conflict with the Empress, settled in Shklov. The Petersburg pleasure-seeker didn’t waste time in the province: in the two or three years of his ‘exile’, he erected merchants’ rows, a town hall, a church and a palace in the



Luxurious meals and lavish balls are a thing of the past, but you can still immerse yourself in the atmosphere of the time on the banks of the Dvina River

Belarusian routes taken by Yekaterina the Great

The Empress made voyages through the blue-eyed country twice: in 1780 and 1787. The memory of these travels is still kept by many cities and towns in the Republic. There are dozens of Yekaterina’s routes.



The coat of arms of the city of Mstislavl, approved by Yekaterina II in 1781

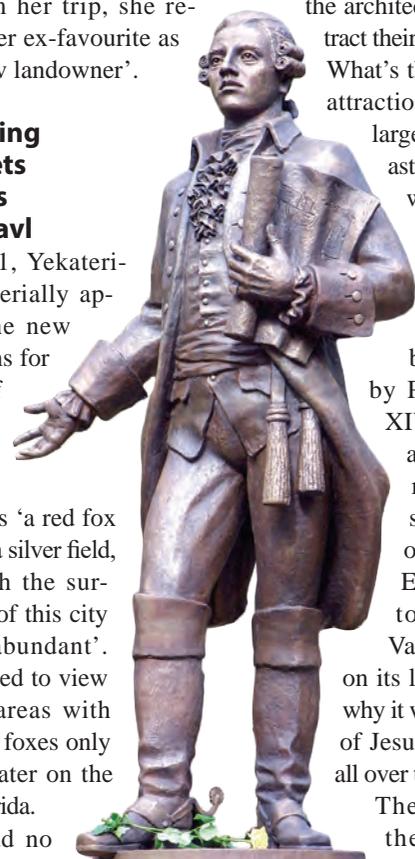
small town. Through this initiative, an opera and ballet theatre along with several orchestras appeared, which were well known throughout the empire. However, the main brainchild of Zorich was the Shklov Cadet Corps. These pupils were educated and disciplined so that they could compete with the capital’s cadets. It’s no wonder that after such success, Yekaterina decided to visit Zorich. Later, recording the impres-

sions from her trip, she referred to her ex-favourite as ‘my Shklov landowner’.

Discovering the secrets of Jesuits in Mstislavl

In 1781, Yekaterina II ‘imperially approved’ the new coat of arms for the city of Mstislavl, where in the lower part there is ‘a red fox running in a silver field, with which the surroundings of this city are very abundant’. She managed to view the local areas with these same foxes only six years later on the way to Taurida.

She had no former favourites here, and



The monument to Semen Zorich in Shklov

the architecture didn’t attract their kind of luxury. What’s the secret to its attraction? One of the largest Jesuit monasteries in Europe was located in Mstislavl. By that time, this Catholic order had been abolished by Pope Clement XIV for political and economic reasons. The self-titled crown of the Russian Empire refused to publish the Vatican’s decree on its lands, which is why it won the support of Jesuit monks from all over the world.

The church and the remains of the monastery courtyard can still be seen today in the main square of Mstislavl. However, they do require serious reconstruction.

Dining in Propoisk

“If it were spring, I would have planted a young tree here as a souvenir. But in this frost, I’ll just carve the date of my stay on this linden tree,” said Yekaterina the Great while visiting Propoisk (now Slavgorod). The Empress stayed here while visiting Prince Aleksandr Golitsyn. In anticipation of Her Highnesses visit, he built on the bank of the River Sozh, opposite the mouth of the River Pronya, a castle surrounded by a palisade where, on January 20th, 1787, he ‘treated the Empress to a dinner banquet’.



The Baroque Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Stanislaus in Mogilev captivated the Empress with its beauty

Olympics in focus

Viktor Lukashenko has held his first official meeting as Belarus' NOC President with the Head of the Russian Olympic Committee, Stanislav Pozdnyakov, and Russia's Sports Minister, Oleg Matitsyn

The key theme was the preparation of athletes for the Games in Tokyo. They will take place in several months and issues of sportsmen's adaptation to the conditions of the competitions are in the spotlight now. The parties also discussed vaccination of athletes and other members of delegations, following the health safety recommendations of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee and the IOC.

By Maria Kashkan

In addition, infrastructure and other opportunities for joint training events, and prospects for the use of Russian sports bases by Belarusian national teams were discussed. The topic of education and experience exchange events with participation of representatives from the national Olympic committees of Belarus, Russia and other countries was also on the agenda.

Stanislav Pozdnyakov noted

that the dialogue was constructive and useful. "Our neighbours and colleagues who have held the wonderful 2nd European Games recently, continue preparing for the Olympic Games in Tokyo — being guided, like all participants of the Olympic movement, by the interests of athletes and creation of the most comfortable conditions for their performance. Our positions coincide on this matter. That was why we devoted much time to a detailed discussion of the possibilities of our national Olympic committees — also

focusing on training our athletes for the summer and winter Games. We would also like to invite our Belarusian colleagues to participate in educational, youth, and other projects that promote Olympism," he stressed.

Stanislav Pozdnyakov added that the visit was very important in terms of further steps to develop and strengthen co-operation which has historically been very close.

"The National Olympic Committee of Belarus and the Russian Olympic Committee



Stanislav Pozdnyakov and Viktor Lukashenko

have always maintained close friendly relations and have similar positions on many matters regarding the development of sport and the Olympic movement. The upcoming Olympic Games in Tokyo and the 2022 Olympic Games in Beijing will undoubtedly be extremely important for our countries. We appreciate the proposals of Russia, in particular, its Sports Ministry, regarding the organisation of joint training camps in Siberia and the Far East. I would like to point out that our sports facilities

are always ready to welcome athletes from Russia. They already commonly use Belarusian Olympic training centres, such as Staiki, Raubichi, the Freestyle Centre and other sports facilities as they prepare for important international events," said Viktor Lukashenko.

He thanked the Russian Olympic Committee for its co-operation and support and expressed confidence that the ties between the two leading sports organisations will be further strengthened in the near future.



Yuri Moisevich

By Dmitry Vasiliev

The track-and-field winter season is over, culminating in the European Athletics Indoor Championships, which was recently held in Polish Toruń, bringing Belarus two medals. The result is good, but the Olympics lie ahead, so all the current results are being considered with an eye to the coming summer. The head coach of the national team, Yuri Moisevich, is convinced there are reasons for optimism:

— At the European Championships, Belarus was represented by 22 athletes, with half of them making their debut at such a major competition! At the same time, Germany, for example, was below us in the medal standings! This allows us to speak with optimism about the future. When, before Maksim Nedosekov, did we have medals in top competitions for high jump? Only Gennady Moroz claimed bronze in 2003. After Tatiana Shevchik, who set her records in the early 1990s, women didn't have great success in this type of programme either. Now our jumpers are competitive both in Europe and the world, with Irina Zhuk winning Belarus' first award in women's pole vaulting in Toruń!

— Our team in Toruń has three fourth places. Are these lost medals?

— When we passed certification and substantiated the composition of the national team at the Sports and Tourism Ministry, we were told: 'Look: the main thing is the Olympics'. It's great if there are medals on the way to Tokyo, but don't pressure the

athletes. Each result at the European Championships must be considered separately.

— Why did hurdler Elvira German fail in Toruń? The best result of the season — 7.91 in the preliminary race — 7.99 in the semi-final — and 8.05 in the final.

— Of course, she didn't show her best result. But let's remember the previous seasons: Elvira always had to go through 5-6 events before the main one. This is necessary in the sprint, and even more so in the hurdles. The athletes couldn't manage even the shortened calendar of this winter; they simply didn't have time to get visas, there are still problems with this. Meanwhile, her main competitor, Nadine Visser, went wherever she needed. There were further issues with warm-up and placement. Every sport has its own little tricks at home, and athletics is no exception. In Toruń, the organisers deliberately



Champion's emotions of Maksim Nedosekov

arranged the draw so that all the strongest athletes would be in the same race. The fact is that, according to the regulations, two best athletes from each semi-final go to the final and two more according to the result. Elvira had a very strong race, in which she also had a false start. So everyone was careful. If they'd run not 60m, but 100m, German could

have won, but the distance wasn't enough for her. In addition, she got caught on the barrier.



Irina Zhuk

— It's good that she didn't catch it the way Ruslana Rashkovan did, who was taken off the track by doctors...

— The case of Rashkovan is very indicative. Before the start, the organisers drove 40 people into the warm-up zone: a corridor for three lanes of 45-50m. And there everyone was warming up, running, setting up barriers,

moving them, removing them. Ruslana ran and suddenly with her swinging leg she literally stood on the third barrier and fell with it. It's a good thing she didn't break her legs. How did it happen? It turned out that one of the coaches of other teams had moved our barrier while the athlete was running at her own pace. Almost immediately right

after that, Rashkovan went to the start. It's clear that she already had an attack of nerves, and this

situation affected her muscles. She started to run, crashed into the third barrier and shattered her periosteum. This is sport...

— Was it a surprise for you that the performance by Nedosekov, who, after not the most impressive season, rewrote the national record and became the European champion?

— Many were sceptical about the athlete and his results this winter. However, I believed that he could jump high. Fans often jump to conclusions without knowing all the issues. And I knew for sure that Maksim was ready to go to the European Championships and fight for victory there. Yes, Nedosekov injured his foot and then underwent a tonsil surgery. This all affected his preparation. Then the manager suggested he try to perform in spikes from another company. He tried, but the shoes didn't suit Maksim. He takes height due to a good run, technicality and propulsion. When Maksim performed at the 2nd European Games and as part of the Match Europe v USA, he set a personal record; it was noticeable that he had a large margin. Even at the Belarusian Championship in Mogilev, he made one of the

attempts at 2.23m with a huge margin, so I expected good jumps from him.

— There was a lot of pressure on him...

— Modern sport is constant tension and stress, which everyone experiences and reacts in different ways. It's been calculated that during its life the human body can endure only about 50 stressful situations without consequences. As a result, there are situations when tennis player Novak Djokovic suddenly goes into the study of religious movements and searches for the meaning of life. We ourselves can often drive athletes into stress, declaring that at this tournament you must win a medal, at the next one you must win gold, and then at the Olympics. From now on, they will be surely expecting a medal from Nedosekov, who'll be criticised if he takes not 2.38m or 2.40m, but 'only' 2.37m. However, by the age of 23, this young boy has already climbed where many don't get in their entire career! At this age, the body simply finds it difficult to cope with such stress, and it's important to take this into account when discussing the results or any actions of Maksim.

— In discussions about our athletics chances at the Olympics, figures of four and even five medals slipped through. Is this real?

— Desires may not always coincide with reality. The world championships and even more so the Olympics are tournaments where all the best results, ambitions and desires are concentrated. I would say this: we have chances. If we have 10-12 finalists at the Olympics — which is quite realistic — then in the end we can get from 2 to 4 medals. Although these are all very relative indicators...



Photo of the week

Young people are now the main driver for rural development. An agronomist and seed grower of Matveevtsy agricultural company, Yulia Sheveleva.

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

March 25th is International Day of Sport on Television. It has been celebrated by a decision of the International Olympic Committee and the International Federation of Sport Televisions since 2002 on the initiative of the famous Georgian director, Aleksandr Zhgenti. On March 25th, 1896, US Bud Greenspan captured on film the competitions of the first modern Olympic Games.



On March 27th, 1851, Aleksei Sapunov was born — a Belarusian historian, ethnographer, archaeographer. In 1873-1896, he taught Latin and Greek at the Vitebsk gymnasium. Since 1896, he was an archivist of the Vitebsk Central Archive of Ancient Acts. He also initiated the opening of the Vitebsk branch of the Moscow Archaeological Institute. He studied history, literature, ethnography, archaeography and folklore of Belarus. Sapunov revealed and made polygraphic descriptions of ancient manuscript monuments, Borisov stones, archives of the Vitebsk and Mogilev regions, alongside the city of Minsk. He died in 1924.

On March 27th, 1916, Ivan Shavrov was born (village Shabuni, Vitebsk District) — a Soviet military leader, army general,

professor. During the Great Patriotic War, from 1941, he served on different fronts: as chief of staff of a tank battalion, a brigade, an operational department of the command headquarters of the commander of armoured and mechanised front troops, tank army corps. He took part in the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk, the liberation of the Crimea, as well as battles in the Baltic States. In 1957-1960, he served as Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the group of Soviet forces in Germany; in 1963-1967, he was Deputy and Commander of military districts. Since 1973, he headed the Academy of the General Staff and, since 1978 — in the apparatus of the Commander-in-Chief of the Unified Armed Forces of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation member states. He died in 1992.



March 27th is World Theatre Day, celebrated annually since 1962 and established in Vienna at the 9th World Congress of the International Theatre Institute at UNESCO in 1961. Traditionally, it is held under the single motto: 'Theatre as a Means of Mutual Understanding and Strengthening Peace Between Peoples'. The mention of the first theatrical production dates back to



2500 BC. International Theatre Day is not just an international professional holiday of stage masters and all theatre workers, it's a holiday for millions of spectators.

On March 27th, 2001, the decision of the Minsk City Council of Deputies approved the coat of arms and the flag of Minsk. The coat of arms of the capital is a shield in a form peculiar for the Baroque epoch — of a deep blue colour, which depicts the Ascending Mother of God surrounded by two angels and two cherubs. The flag of Minsk is a rectangular piece of blue fabric with a ratio of 2:3. Elements of the coat of arms are located in the centre of the obverse of the flag.



On March 28th, 1996, the National Paralympic Committee of the Republic of Belarus was founded. It's an integral part of the International Paralympic Committee, acting as a public association and having the exclusive authority to represent the national teams of Belarus at the Paralympic Games, as well as at regional, continental and world sports competitions — held under the auspices of the International Paralympic Committee.



March 28th is the Day of Workers of Consumer Services of the Population and Housing and Communal Services in the Republic of Belarus. Housing and communal services from the time of the emergence of the first cities to the present day are the main component of the urban way of life. It is they who improve and decorate the city, create comfort and cosiness for its residents, are responsible for cleanliness and order without discounts for the vagaries of nature, seasons, holidays and weekdays.



On March 29th, 1941, the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR founded the Belarusian State Archives of Film and Photographic Documents in Minsk (since 1987, in the town of Dzerzhinsk, Minsk Region). This is the state repository of audio-visual archives: a research institution that deals with their acquisition, accounting, preservation and organisation for use. It stores audio-visual documentary artefacts from the end of the 19th century to the present day. Among the film documents are feature films, cartoons, documentaries, popular science, educational films made in Belarus.

