



Autonomous trams, electric buses and trolleybuses are produced at the BKM Holding

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What will domestic tourism in Belarus rely on in the coming years?

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Valiantsina Shyts has won all three cross-country skiing races among seated athletes — she is a three-time champion of the games

Strong-minded

The fate of each Paralympic athlete is a separate story, full of drama, emotions and tears, but with an invariably heroic ending and an optimistic conclusion that there is always something worth fighting for. Quite recently, the entire adequate people shuddered at the cynicism and heartlessness of the officials of the International Paralympic Committee, who kicked out Belarusian and Russian disabled athletes of the competition the day before the grand opening of the 2022 Games in Beijing. Paralympic athletes are people with iron will and character, they overcame many barriers and troubles, and therefore they withstood the another blow with dignity: they went home with their heads held high. They just wanted to show excellent results at the alternative tournament called 'We are Together. Sports', which was brilliantly organised by Russia in Khanty-Mansiysk in a short time, with the participation of the host teams, Belarus, Tajikistan, Armenia and Kazakhstan. → 11



National security: top priorities

The President of Belarus held a meeting with the leadership and operational staff of the state security bodies. The main topics are prevented terrorist attacks in our country, the clandestine Abwehr schools of Western intelligence agencies, important agreements with Russia, the prospects for the dollar and the averted missile attack on Belarus.

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised at the meeting, “Thanks to the well-coordinated work of the national security, defence and law enforcement bodies in identifying and localising threats at an early stage, tasks in the areas of intelligence, counterintelligence, protection of the constitutional order and countering terrorism are successfully solved...”

The situation around and inside Belarus is just the tip of the iceberg. You know the depth and the underside of all means and methods of pressure on us. These include coup d'état attempts, organisation of terrorist acts, actions to intimidate the population, aggressive information warfare, and also attempts to destroy the economy. In short, it is a hybrid war. It is precisely such wars that will wage in all parts of our planet, if they decide to do so. The end point of such a hybrid war is military aggression. Fortunately, we have not come to that yet.

‘Man-to-man talk’

Serious man-to-man talk — this is how the President called the meeting. The plans to commit violent extremist acts against representatives of the state media, judges, MPs, law enforcement officers and members of their families uncovered by the KGB also speak eloquently about it. More serious acts of intimidation were also planned. Aleksandr Lukashenko named specific facts,

“In 2021 Belarus’ state security bodies in co-operation with other state agencies prevented 11 attempts to commit terrorist acts organised and financed from the territory of Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, the United States and Germany. Thanks to the efforts of special services, including those officers in attendance here today, the activities of the network of so-called sleeper cells of the Rabochy Rukh project, supervised by the US and Lithuanian special services, have been documented and suppressed.

This extremist unit planned sabotage preparations with the death of people at the facilities of the Orsha and Minsk railway junctions, at Grodno Azot, Gomselmash, Naftan, and BMZ. To adjust the Western sanctions

policy, they collected closed data on mechanisms to counter economic restrictions through a network of informants.”

The President drew attention to the need to create a reliable system of counterintelligence protection of enterprises and institutions and recalled that specific decisions were already made on this issue, or

to attempts to stage cyberattacks against us that have been made. Those are akin to biological weapons and are even more powerful. They don’t need tanks, machine guns, or high-precision missiles. Organising massive cyberattacks against economic objects, subjects of any country will suffice for turning the country upside

controlled from Vilnius, Warsaw, Kiev, but in reality from Washington is, I repeat, different people now (they are doing the right thing: well-thumbed faces need to be replaced). They are being trained under the aegis of security agencies of the USA and Western Europe countries in conditions of increased conspiracy. They

overcome them. The President is confident that soon the currencies of such countries as Russia or China will be more in demand, to the markets of which Belarus supplies a significant part of its products. And therefore, there is no need for citizens to ‘run around the back streets’ in order to exchange rubles for dollars,

“Today the U.S. dollar has already started weakening against other currencies. Nobody needs it any longer, especially given the current sanctions... Very soon we will be hunting for the Russian ruble or the Chinese yuan, because these are the countries we will be mainly trading with.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also noted that they are going to push us into this war in Ukraine, “The yet another launch of a Tochka-U missile to deliver a strike in Belarus’ territory virtually two days ago at night is a testimony to that. We and Russians successfully intercepted and destroyed it over the Pripyat River. The remains lie somewhere by the river. If someone is interested and nearby, feel free to go there and take a look... What is that? Do they really want to bomb Belarus with one missile? It won’t work. This missile will simply not reach us. Why is it being done? In order to stir us up. In order to make us respond. But we are no simpletons. If we respond, we will respond properly. Everyone will feel it then. We hold out for now.”

The Head of State warned that in the future, there will be attempts to intimidate people, induce them to betray, in order to disorganise the work of the largest industrial enterprises, transport, energy, and communications facilities,

“Information aggression will be increasing. Huge resources are spent to discredit the state in the eyes of the population. Discipline should be the toughest. As soon as we, especially the security bodies, let our guard down we will repeat the events of 2020, but this time we will not be able to keep the country intact. Things will sort out and stabilise if we keep cool and know what we want.”



ders were given to the Government and the KGB.

Aleksandr Lukashenko cited the recent plebiscite in Belarus as an example,

“We held the referendum without incidents. Our self-exiled opposition had great ‘hopes’ on this event. The so-called ‘Peramoga’ plan developed by an extremist organisation provided for the organisation of a series of terrorist attacks in the country, which would serve as a pretext for social upheaval. Some people abroad did not hide the fact that it could have been a provocation with the death of people (which would have been a gift for them), clergymen or other ‘sacred sacrifice’. They are not abandoning these ideas today. Fortunately, we keep the situation under control.”

According to the Belarusian leader, all the mechanisms used to disrupt the constitutional campaign did not yield the desired result either: information aggression, cyberattacks on vital infrastructure, rail transport, industrial and energy facilities, and law enforcement agencies.

“I’d like to draw attention

down. It is time for the executors of the plans I have named to admit that they lost their last chance to rehabilitate themselves before their sponsors on the day of the referendum. The voting day was their last chance to bring people to the streets and turn the country upside down. If it doesn’t work — they will not get money. Now they are kept on a shoestring budget and are scouring the planet, from the U.S. to Japan, in search of money. They failed. Now they have launched different campaigns. You know, ‘no war’ is their new motto, and they are campaigning against the war in Ukraine but at the same time putting together battalions of misled Belarusian citizens... Even if the diaspora or somebody else abroad donate this money, it is clear that 99 percent of that will end up in their pockets, as it has happened before. Fortunately, the West has begun to understand this and does not throw the money around,” noted the Head of State.

Who is preparing the ‘new elite’ for Belarus?

The President told who and where is now preparing the fifth column for Belarus, “The fifth column, which is

are being trained in the territory of individual neighbouring countries similarly to Abwehr schools of the Great Patriotic War period. The experience came in handy for them.”

According to the Head of State, plans have been made to insert the so-called new elite that has been trained there into various spheres of the Belarusian society: primarily into the state administration system, into defence, security, and law enforcement agencies, into public organisations and mass media.

“Creeping transformation of the Belarusian state for the benefit of the West, sale of the most precious economic assets, and change of the country’s political course are their goals. A change in the political course is an attempt to redistribute spheres of influence in the region. Obviously, the ultimate goal is Russia, China and their elimination as competitors on the geopolitical map of the world. The events that are taking place around Ukraine are direct proof of this,” said the Belarusian leader.

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that our economy, as before, will be tested by sanctions. However, Belarus can

Belarus stands for peace

In an interview to the Japanese TV channel TBS Aleksandr Lukashenko spoke about the situation in Ukraine, ways to resolve the conflict and the position of Belarus on this issue

The conversation between the Head of State and the Japanese journalist lasted about an hour and a half. A significant part of it was devoted to the events in Ukraine, security issues, personal and professional relations between Aleksandr Lukashenko and the Russian and Ukrainian leaders.

Concerning the position of Belarus

Aleksandr Lukashenko once again recalled that Belarus and Russia have close relations within the framework of the Union State, “We are allies. We have concluded appropriate contracts. We have the closest military-political relations. If there is anyone that supports Russia, it is Belarus. Others either take a neutral position or fight on the side of Ukraine.”

The President stressed that there is not a single Belarusian soldier in Ukraine. Contrariwise, Belarus is doing everything possible to bring about a peaceful resolution, “Despite the hostile stance that the Ukrainian side has taken towards Belarus, encouraged by the West (we turned this page), I called Zelenskyy and offered him to immediately enter into negotiations with Russia. Literally on the third or fourth day of this war. He accepted the offer. We organised three rounds of talks here in Belarus. Now these negotiations continue in the videoconference mode... We would like peace to be over there. If there is no peace over there, there will be no peace in Belarus with the passage of time. It is our position.”

Belarus will fight for own hand

Asked whether Belarus may participate in actions against Ukraine, the Head of State said,

“If only Ukraine continues escalation against Belarus, we will respond. What I mean: at the moment of the conflict on February 23rd-24th they intended to deliver a strike against Belarus’ territory. From four sites. We prevented it. They violate our state border with flying vehicles, a helicopter, and so on. Moreover, they launched two missiles this past week. At least two Tochka-U missiles into Belarus’ territory. Fortunately, we have managed to shoot them down. This is why if they provoke us constantly, we will be forced to respond.”

The key to peace

Aleksandr Lukashenko speaks frankly about the possibilities for settling the conflict in Ukraine.

“I will tell you the key thing for the first time. Russia offers an absolutely acceptable variant of the treaty to Ukraine (Putin to Zelenskyy). I know it for sure. And today it is still possible for Ukraine and Russia to come to terms and for Putin and Zelenskyy to sign this treaty,” the President said.

Ukraine may not like a differ-



ent scenario, the Belarusian leader is convinced,

“If Zelenskyy refuses to do it, then trust me he will have to sign an act of capitulation in a short while. Russia will not lose this war. You are 100 percent convinced of that, too. How does a war end when one side wins? Japan knows it better than I do.”

About nuclear weapons

During an interview, the President stated that there are no plans to deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus,

“I don’t intend to deploy nuclear weapons here, make nuclear weapons here, create and use these nuclear weapons against anyone. Plans of Belarus’ leadership and my plans have never included such things.”

Answering the question whether it will still be necessary to deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus in case the situation worsens, Aleksandr Lukashenko said, “I don’t think such a situation will happen. I don’t think America and the West are so crazy that we have to resolve this problem with nuclear weapons.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also explained the essence of his previous remarks regarding the hypothetical possibility of placing nuclear weapons in Belarus, “In order to prevent Hiroshima and Nagasaki (the USA dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities in 1945) in Belarus, in order for it to never happen, and in order to prevent even threats like that to Belarus, I’ve said: if Americans, France, Britain deploy nuclear weapons in direct proximity to Belarus, let’s say, in Poland, Lithuania, or Ukraine, then I will demand that Putin should give back to us the nuclear weapons we once handed over to Russia.”

About relations with the leaders of Russia and Ukraine

The President of Belarus spoke about his attitude towards the Russian President Vladimir Putin, “We do not just meet as heads of state. We are on friendly terms. I am familiar with many details, both state-wise and personal, as

far as it may be allowed. We have met many times and will continue to meet. Anytime. We do not hesitate to call each other. If there is a need to meet, to talk something over, we do. There are absolutely no problems with this. I know why you have asked this question.

“If you think that President Putin is physically unwell or unfit or whatever, he is, as we often say, healthier than ever. He will catch a cold at the funerals of all of you, as our saying goes. He is an absolutely clear-headed and normal person. The West and you should stop spreading this nonsense. Vladimir Putin is absolutely clear-headed. He is as fit as ever. He performs his duties according to the new Constitution.”

As for the Ukrainian leader, Aleksandr Lukashenko said the following, “I can offer my point of view regarding Volodymyr Zelenskyy. I think that he has little control over the processes in Ukraine. Even before the conflict, he had little sway with these processes, probably because he was unprepared professionally. Nevertheless, he is smart. I hoped that he would gain some experience and, perhaps in his second presidential term, he would be able to take control of the situation in Ukraine. It did not happen. The conflict broke out...

“Today (as I see it though I might be wrong) certain people are running the things, especially on the frontline, directly from Kyiv. It is not Zelenskyy who is in charge of the process. It is not even the advisers who say the military what to do. Furthermore, it is the representatives of the West and the United States who have taken full control of the military action against Russia... Roughly speaking, Zelenskyy has two phones on his desk: one phone, and the other one which is a satellite connection with Biden (U.S. President) and British Prime Minister Johnson. Two phones. He is basically run by these two leaders. He is not his own person. Not just because he can’t run things there.

“It is because he will not be allowed to do things differently.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that what is happening now in Ukraine is beneficial to the United States and its allies, “They would want for Belarus and Russia to get bogged down in this conflict, so that we stop caring about Japan, Syria, China, Africa or Venezuela. Get us bogged down in this conflict. Therefore, they will restrain Zelenskyy in every possible way should he want to do things differently. They will do everything in their power to make things worse for Russia, and Belarus too. This is how I see things. This is my opinion based on the analysis of the situation.”

In a conversation with an interviewer, Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed his disappointment with the change in Japan’s policy towards Belarus. One of the questions was about the bilateral relations, which have recently deteriorated, including due to the decision of the Japanese government to recognise Belarus as an unfriendly country, “This is very disappointing for me. I never thought Japan would become a yes-man for the United States of America, or, as our people say, a minion, an errand boy for the big brother.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised that he has the greatest respect for the Japanese and the Japanese state. He has been to Japan, talked to ordinary people, and saw similar features between the two nations.

“Japanese are just as hardworking, smart, and disciplined as Belarusians. Japan and Belarus have similar economies. Both states have suffered from nuclear disasters: you had Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Fukushima, we — Chernobyl. Belarus co-operated with Japan in mitigating the Chernobyl consequences. We worked with you on this matter more than with anyone else. All of a sudden you start following in the footsteps of the United States, imposing some doubtful sanctions against us,” the President said.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

No limit to the development

Distinctive futuristic body lines, panoramic windshield, ergonomics — autonomous trams, electric buses and trolleybuses organically fit into the transport life of cities not only in Belarus, but also in the CIS countries, as well as far abroad. They are produced at the BKM Holding enterprise, known to us under the more familiar name — Belkommunmash. Having highly qualified personnel, a powerful production base, and its own design centre, the holding would keep pace with the times, or even get ahead of it.



By Oksana Nevmerzhitskaya

Echoes of world problems

Large-scale industries around the world are now having a hard time: they are challenged either by COVID-19 lockdowns or by a difficult geopolitical situation.

“Due to the unpredictable situation in the world, we are not working as efficiently as we could. Our industry has its own specifics: it is not enough to enter the market with an offer, it is necessary to participate in tenders, to perform certain procedures in advance. Sanctions imposed on the bank that serves the company exacerbated the situation: it is impossible to issue guarantees for European contracts. Both the pandemic and economic restrictions have seriously affected our work, despite the fact that we were not directly affected,” admits Oleh Bytsko, General Director of the Holding Management Company ‘Belkommunmash’ JSC.

The difficulty of timely delivery of the necessary components could be solved by import substitution, however, the development of our own components and assemblies is not a fast and easy process.

“Each of our products is unique. Even in Belarus there are no two cities that would buy exactly the same trolleybuses. By configuration, they can differ by 10-15 percent for different positions. Much depends on which countries our cars will go to. Nevertheless, localisation is at least 55 percent. We produce the main equipment — the body, as well as electronic and electrical components, but some of components still must be purchased,” emphasises Oleh Bytsko.

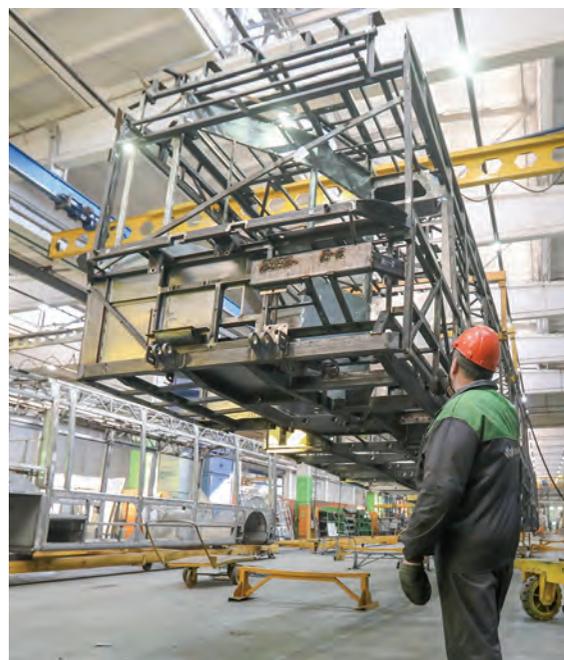
Single-piece prototypes

Nevertheless, the company managed to increase production volumes: compared to 2020, they amounted to 107 percent last year. In addition, investments in production have increased significantly.

General Director of the holding notes, “There were very serious investments in the modernisation of production. We have completed the construction of a new spray booth. The structure of manufactured equipment has changed: it has become more complex and, accordingly, more expensive. So, trolleybuses with autonomous running and an articulated or, in other words, ‘pleated’ body are very popular.”

Since BKM Holding works mainly to fulfil the already concluded contracts, passenger equipment does not just store in the warehouse. The assembly area operates according to the rule: the closer to the exit, the higher the degree of readiness of the machine. Work begins with the manufacture of a metal frame, which at the initial stage resembles, to be honest, rather the skeleton of a greenhouse in a summer cottage. Then the car takes on a more perfect shape, and some technical features are already laid at this stage. The finished frame is sent for painting, and then returned to the assembly area. Here, its internal and external cladding

Yegor Yermalitskiy



Yegor Yermalitskiy

takes place, filling with electrics and electronic systems. Then glass, doors, seats, mirrors and everything necessary for the operation is installed. By the way, did you know that there are up to 4 kilometres of hidden electrical harnesses under the skin of each passenger car, which actuate systems, control doors, and allow validators and other devices to work.

Belkommunmash produces 250-300 pieces of equipment per year, and most of it is exported.

Oleh Bytsko assures, “We are constantly looking for new sales markets, we take part in tenders for the supply. We have always successfully co-oper-

ated with Ukraine, Tajikistan, Moldova, Russia. In order to diversify the markets, we once carried out certification of equipment in the European Union, and now we supply our electric vehicles to Bulgaria and Bosnia. At least 25 high-capacity trolleybuses with an autonomous run of up to 20 kilometres will arrive in Sarajevo. Such transport is ready for traffic jams or interruptions in power supply, and new routes can be organised without a contact network at all.”

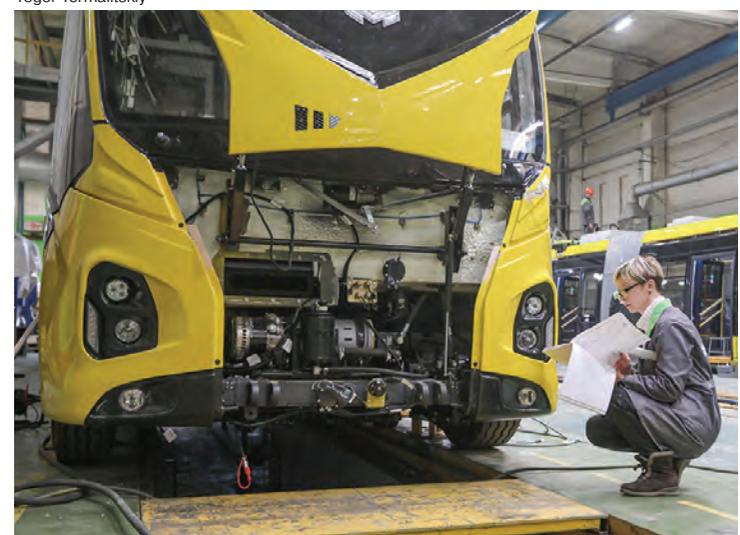
By the way, the company supplies all electric buses complete with electric charging stations of its own production. At the same time, the localisation of the devices that make them up is constantly rising, and now it is about 35 percent.

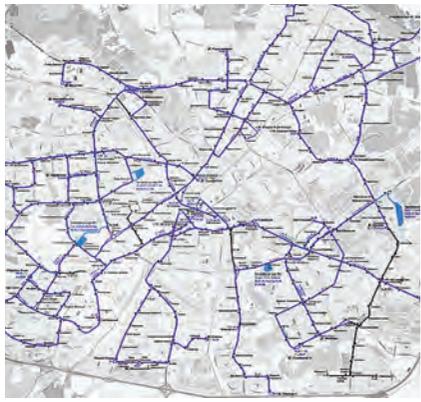
Cars of the future

Everyone knows Belkommunmash as a manufacturer of passenger transport, and it recently surprised everyone by presenting the Vitovt Truck Electro Prime — the first electric truck with a payload capacity of 7,800 kilogrammes and a 44-cubic metre van body (appr. 18 Europallets) — a dream of a retailer who needs to deliver goods to many outlets. What is the reason for this shift in focus? Oleh Bytsko believes that this is not surprising, “Well, technically, electric transport is not new for us. In addition, we constantly monitor global trends. We launched the development of electric buses when the world was still distrustful of this type of electric passenger transport. The topic of battery-powered cars was more difficult for customers. However, with the development of the necessary infrastructure, they are convinced that this is the future. The operation of electric cars is cheaper both in terms of maintenance and energy, but initially these cars are more expensive. A middle ground should be found where the difference in input costs covers the difference in price. The task that we are now facing is to reach a price that will allow potential customers to operate our equipment with maximum economic effect. We created a prototype, on the example of which we tried to show what a modern truck can and should be. Its cost will depend on the volume of production.”

Belarus is implementing a state program for the development of electric transport until 2025, according to which it is planned to increase the share of public transport to 30 percent over the five-year period. For its implementation, the Electrotransport innovation-industrial cluster was created. It included such companies as MAZ, BELAZ, MTZ, the Joint Institute of Mechanical Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences and, of course, Belkommunmash.

Catching up is always more difficult than at least running on par — this is how the policy of BKM Holding is formed. Sometimes it even manages to get ahead time. So it was with electric buses, and so it can be with electric trucks, the production market of which is still almost free, despite the fact that this is the car of the future.





Fortunate innovation

Integral has developed an information system with GPS navigation for public transport

Modern public transport, especially in the capital, starts to get more and more various electronics and automation. For passengers, it is already a common thing that the names of stops are announced not by the driver, but by an automatic informant. Thanks to LED panels with numbers and names of routes, it is easier to navigate in the dark. The process of technical improvement continues. Recently, the Elektronika factory (a branch of the Integral holding) has developed an electronic information system for urban transport with GPS navigation. Its feature allows to independently determine the location of a bus or trolleybus and inform passengers about it both in text and voice. The MT reporter learned the details.

By Yelena Kozlovskaya

Colour, sound and navigation

The Elektronika factory has been engaged in transport displays production for about 20 years. Now one can see models of the new generation on the streets of the capital this year. They have LED matrices with a very small pixel pitch — 6-10 millimetres, which allows one to use different types of fonts, load any characters and use many other effects in the electronic display. Two hundred fifty-six colours and their shades are available.

“We offer the end user, that is, the vehicle fleet or the owner of the bus, to choose the colour scheme themselves. Let’s say that in the regional centre of the Gomel Region people want the route number to be displayed in white letters on a black background, but the employees of the suburban routes of the Grodno Region — in blue,” says Ruslan Bogoslav, Head of the Marketing and Sales Department of Integral JSC.

Electronic displays are provided with software and a navigation system. With their help, stops will be announced automatically according to GPS coordinates: if the stops coincide in reality and according to the map in the device’s memory, an audio message will immediately turn on. Automatic informants are already used in public transport, but they do not always work in conjunction with other electronic elements, so when approaching each stop, the driver still has to turn on the electronic informant manually.

Andrey Boldyrev, Leading Software Engineer of the Design and Technical Department of the Elektronika factory explains, “Approaching the stop, the driver presses a button — the passengers hear the corresponding name. Imagine the situation where the driver somehow

got distracted, for example, to sell a ticket, and forgot to turn on the autoinformant, so the sequence of names went astray. Mistakes were fixed in the new system. Every vehicle has its own GPS receiver today. It is connected to the control panel, in which the actual maps of the city are pre-installed. The coordinates of the area obtained from the receiver are cor-

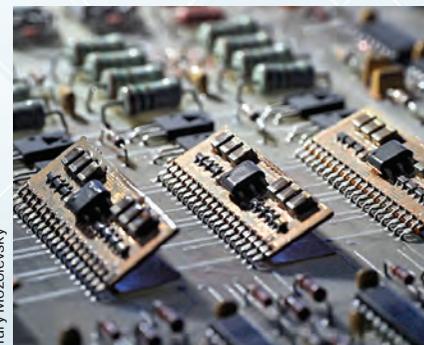
related with the remote control memory, and in case of a match, a sound informant is triggered. Thus, the driver is relieved from additional functions. He or she will be able to focus on issues such as, for example, the safety of passengers, their entrance and exit, and traffic flow.”

Other elements of the system also contribute to security issues. It is possible to display a special sign in the back of the bus that will show whether passengers are still entering or exiting. In addition, the auto-

informer will turn on 10-15 metres before the bus arrives at the bus stop, so people can prepare for the exit in advance. This is a significant advantage in the context of the growing number of cars in cities.

By the way, the improved system does not cancel the manual control. The driver himself will be able to announce stops in an emergency situation.

nical tests is to be completed, after which mass production of the systems can begin. In the future, Integral employees will create a city transport management server that can be included in the Smart City system. An information system with navigation for public transport has been developed as part of import substitution. Currently, buses and trolleybuses have



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Achieve success through pricing and quality

Factory tests of new items have already taken place. The equipment was installed on a MAZ bus and tested around the city. The professionals checked the proper work of both the colour display and the automatic announcement of stops. The driver was satisfied — finally he could just drive the bus without being distracted by pressing buttons!

In the next few months, a set of tech-

nical tests is to be completed, after which mass production of the systems can begin. In the future, Integral employees will create a city transport management server that can be included in the Smart City system. An information system with navigation for public transport has been developed as part of import substitution. Currently, buses and trolleybuses have

NEWS IN BRIEF

New resident was registered at Great Stone to develop fintech and e-commerce projects



Bel Samoyed Cloud Sci-Tech Company JSC became the 86th member of the project. It is a Belarusian project initiated by Samoyed Cloud Technology Group Holdings Limited, one of the major providers of cloud solutions in China.

The new resident will develop digital financial technologies and mobile payment systems, while also creating an e-commerce centre in Belarus to provide related services to Belarusian and Chinese companies. The registration ceremony was attended by the Industrial Park leadership, the initiator company of the project, and also representatives of the Embassy of Belarus in China and heads of the China Overseas Development Association.

BELAZ started developing an autonomous open-pit robot shuttle

The robotic mining dump truck began to be designed in the Scientific and Technical Control Centre of the Chief Designer of BELAZ OJSC. All tests have been already passed, the enterprise is ready for



serial production of BELAZ-7558R and BELAZ-7513R robotic dump trucks with a payload capacity of 90 and 130–136 tonnes, respectively. Intelligent equipment tested on these models can also be installed on dump trucks with extra-large payloads. BELAZ designers intend to release a new class vehicle — a robot shuttle, which is not only completely autonomous, but can also move back and forth, avoiding U-turns. The Merry-go-round system can significantly reduce fuel consumption and tire wear, which can give such a robot an additional economic advantage compared to classic mining trucks.

Belarus will join project to create kefir-based COVID-19 vaccine

Russian specialists are currently working on it, who are successfully conducting pre-clinical trials of a new probiotic vaccine in the fight against coronavirus. This vaccine prototype is a viral vector vaccine. Enterococcus, the bacterium that lives in the body of every mammal, acts as a vector. The coronavirus gene is planted into it and the immune system begins to produce antibodies.



Those who want to be vaccinated need to drink two glasses of 200 grammes each, but not at the same time. The first glass is divided into three parts and each part should be taken every other day. Then follows a break for three weeks. The second glass is taken in the same way.

Belarusian specialists are already familiar with these studies. The meeting discussed possible forms of collaboration and a possibility to grant the status of a Union State programme to this project.

Belarus pavilion took second place in World Expo 2020 Dubai pavilion ranking

The professional exhibition magazine Exhibitor has published a ranking of pavilions at the World Expo 2020 Dubai in 14 categories. The magazine included Belarus in the ‘Best Elements and Details’ nomination.

Our country is admitted to the Exhibitor magazine nominations for the second time in the history of participation in EXPOs (earlier in 2010 in Shanghai). This is the first time our Pavilion has been awarded a prize.



Besides, according to the results of the preliminary selection the Belarus Pavilion was included in the TOP-40 (out of 200) Expo 2020 pavilions in the ‘People’s Choice’ category. According to results of public online voting on the web-site of the magazine, our Pavilion reached the TOP-20 pavilions of Expo 2020.

From bad to worse

The authorities of the EU countries are not able to protect Ukrainian refugees from criminal threats. Children bear the biggest brunt.

The number of Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war to different countries of the world has exceeded 3 million. Belarus continues to accept the unfortunate people, providing them with all kinds of assistance and support. In addition to the desire to help, there is an obvious criminal aspect to disadvantaged people in other states. Large criminal structures and individual scoundrels are not averse to taking advantage of the desperate situation of the Ukrainians.

By Maksim Osipov

Heartless 'fishers of souls'

Despite the regular diplomatic spats between Warsaw and Kyiv, the share of Ukrainians in Poland has been steadily growing in recent years. However, with the beginning of the Russian special operation in Ukraine, a truly colossal wave of Ukrainian refugees rushed into Poland. No wonder there appeared those who are not averse to making money on desperate people. Even Euronews, which idealises Poland and constantly demonises Russia, had to admit this week that young, defenceless refugee women, often with small children, are potential victims of perpetrators, "Smugglers are trying to cash in on the migration crisis that erupted after the start of the war in Ukraine. There is a danger of falling into the hands of other criminals. A few days ago, a man was arrested in Poland, who settled a refugee and raped her."

Polish volunteer Joanna Marking, who runs a shelter for refugee mothers in the town of Medyka, is more candid, "In the current situation, there is a small percentage of people involved in human trafficking, paedophiles or other criminals. Therefore, those who find themselves without support, tired and exhausted, are extremely vulnerable."

This was confirmed to Euronews by Hanna, a refugee from Odessa, "We're just lucky. Because bad people tried to take away all money from my friend at the station. At the same time, they looked like those who want to help, but they didn't actually want to help."

Slave traders

It goes without saying that with the beginning of the mass exodus of refugees from Ukraine, the criminals revived not only in Poland. Andrea Bujor, a volunteer with the Romanian NGO World Vision Romania, says, "The risk of such cases is very high. Every year a lot of women become victims of smugglers. It should be noted that children are also at great risk. In times like these, people mobilise, in Romania a lot of people wanted to help, and I'm proud of it, but there is a risk that there may be people who want to take advantage of someone else's tragedy."

The Romanian police are cooperating with the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons to



prevent crime. At the border, women are warned to remain vigilant. In order to combat human smuggling in Poland and Romania, civilian intelligence officers work in crowded places.

The European law enforcement officers warned their Latvian colleagues about the fact that Ukrainian refugees are at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.

According to the TV3 channel, the State Police of Latvia received information that people noticed criminal elements near the refugee reception centres, wishing to make slaves of the Ukrainians.

"Persons from Ukraine are at very high risk of falling into the hands of traffickers. For men, this would be labour exploitation, for women — sexual exploitation," says Armands Lubarts, State Police Human Trade and Pimping Prevention Department Chief.

However, according to TV3, there is little chance of averting the danger threatening the refugees. When individuals offer to accommodate Ukrainian refugees in their homes, no one officially registers, so the police do not have the opportunity to come for an unscheduled check to make sure people are all right. Moreover, Ukrainians often fell into labour slavery in the Baltics even before the start of the special operation in Ukraine. According to the same department, only last year three criminal proceedings were initiated in Latvia in connection with labour exploitation. However, lawyers believe that in fact there are much more such cases.

Euroracism of the 21st century

Another unseemly side of the wave of Ukrainian refugees was their obvious racial segregation along. According to the BBC Russian Service, citizens of Ukraine who have moved to the EU can count on comprehensive assistance from the European Union.

At the same time, citizens of third countries, even those who have lived in Ukraine for 20 years or more, cannot count on almost anything except humiliation and racist attacks. As a result, thousands of Tajiks, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Vietnamese and people from the Middle East and Africa are stuck on the already troubled Ukrainian-Polish border in complete confusion and hopelessness.

Bus drivers who are ready to take refugees even to Belgium explain that they are afraid of getting a criminal article for transporting illegal immigrants, because the status of refugees with non-Ukrainian citizenship in the EU remains unclear. The UN Refugee Agency has repeatedly called on host country authorities to refrain from discriminating against refugees from Ukraine.

Just walk past

However, some 'pranks' are allowed in relation to refugees in Poland — even pure-blooded Ukrainians. Trying to take off at least part of the incredibly growing burden, they are trying to get rid of some Ukrainians, and send them to Lithuania.

Edmundas Jakilaitis, one of the initiators of the Strong Together coordinating centre for volunteers, told the Baltic news agency DELFI that Poland sends three to four buses to Lithuania every day from the centre for refugees created near the Ukrainian border,

"That is, 150-200 people to Lithuania. A bus from Lublin goes to the centre every day, then people transfer to another bus, before that they eat hot food in the centre and go to Lithuania... We find a lot of people who walk across the border on foot, they have small children, they are cold, the children get sick etc. Every day we receive about 600 calls."

Head of the Lithuanian Red Cross Kristina Meide says, "The concern is that we already have growing at 1,000 people a day, and we already see that we will really need more volunteers and humanitarian aid."

Analysts from many countries emphasise that after the phase of an idyllic attitude towards Ukrainian refugees, a phase of disappointment will inevitably come, when irritation, anger and other negative reactions towards refugees will begin to dominate in society.

Here are few quotes from the 'Children at war' BBC Russian Service news report

- Founded by American veterans, the non-profit organisation Aerial Recovery organises the safe removal of children from orphanages located in the conflict zone. There are many such children — UNICEF estimates the number of children in orphanages and foster homes in the country at 100,000. Other sources say there could be up to 200,000 single children leaving Ukraine. However, veterans say that some children are missing, and admit that they could become victims of human traffickers.

- Concern about the problem of children was expressed by EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson. She said, "We also have some reports of criminals taking orphans from orphanages in Ukraine, crossing the border pretending that they are relatives to the child and then using them for trafficking purposes." "Everybody knows it's going on, but it's difficult to



say the extent because of the chaos here. The authorities are trying to track what's happened to all of the children, but there is no paper trail," said Martin Kvernbekk, an employee of the Salam LADC.

- "They're very easy prey — they're looking for assistance. So if you're an adult with some

food or refuge, they will come with you. They don't know any better," says Kvernbekk. He has heard about children going missing from a number of different sources, and reports of people smugglers wearing reflective vests and pretending to belong to organisations helping the relief effort. "The gangs are very advanced. We are talking about big, well-financed networks that do this for a living. Now it's a war, it's chaos, and they're exploiting the fact there is disorder to be able to snatch more kids and women," Kvernbekk continues.

- According to Chief of Operations Aerial Recovery Jeremy Locke, Lviv authorities expressed concern that 5,000 children on their records were unaccounted for. They appear in the documents, but they cannot find them. "They're either casualties of war, or they've slipped across the border, or have been taken out of the border by smugglers or by people that are doing it the wrong way," says Locke.

A war with no rules

While some experts and political scientists are arguing whether the third world war has already begun, others come to the firm conclusion — the first world information war is under way. We wake up and fall asleep accompanied by explosions of information bombs and bit by bit deduce the truth in the flow of fake news. This is information chaos into which we are plunged by the world's largest media corporations and social networks. However, this did not happen all of sudden today. Not even yesterday. The 21st century clearly shows us how 'harmless' messengers and networks become catalysts for global protests and add more fuel to the fire of revolutions. The Arab Spring, the Maidan coup in Ukraine, the Black Lives Matter activism in America, the Yellow Vests protests in France, the Catalan independence movement, riots in Belarus and Russia — this all has, among other things, become possible thanks to social media...

By Polina Konoga, Maksim Osipov

Spring as a reference point

On December 17th, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi, an illegal fruit vendor from Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, set himself on fire to protest against a slap in the face he had been given by a female civil servant. His death became the catalyst for a series of mass protests, uprisings, revolutions and civil wars in 2011 in more than 20 countries in North Africa and the Middle East. Experts also call the Arab Spring the 'Facebook and Twitter revolutions', since it was social media that played the most active role in supporting the activists.

Wael Ghonim, Google Marketing

recovered from political and economic upheavals. However, apparently, this is how real 'democracy' should look like according to the West and the UN...

A network that kills

Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder and chairman of Meta Platforms Inc. (Facebook and Instagram social networks and WhatsApp Messenger), liked to say that 'Facebook's mission is to connect people'. Maybe, when an unknown Harvard student launched the social media in 2004, he pursued such goals. **But Facebook has long been not just inciting ethnic hatred, but actually pitting people against each other. It is surprising that Zuckerberg himself is**

filed a class action suit against Meta. They accused the company of having done nothing to prevent hate speech against Myanmar's Muslim minority on Facebook.

History repeats itself

On March 11th, 2022, Meta made an unprecedented decision to allow posting information containing calls for violence against Russians and calls for death of the presidents of Russia and Belarus on Facebook and Instagram.

"As a result of the Russian invasion in Ukraine, we are temporarily allowing forms of political expression that would normally violate our rules, that is, aggres-

Management of minds

In his *Theory and Technologies of Social Destruction (on the Example of 'Color Revolutions')* monograph, Igor Sundiev, chief researcher of the All-Russian Research Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, cites an interesting fact: an analysis of many 'color revolutions' shows that the number of offline and online protesters is manyfold different. And this is achieved with the help of special programmes.

For example, in 2010, The US government entered into an agreement with HBGary Federal to develop a computer programme which can create multiple fictitious accounts in social media to



Director for the Middle East and North Africa since 2010 and an activist of the revolution in Egypt, talks about how this works in practice in his 'Revolution 2.0' book. In his account, he opened the 'We are all Khaled Said' page dedicated to the memory of a young man who was allegedly tortured by the local police. Ghonim called for an active position against arbitrary actions of authorities. In a short time, the number of visitors to the account reached a million people, and soon the majority of them became active protesters in the streets of Egyptian cities...

In 2013, the then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated that 'new media played a central role in the fall of authoritarian regimes that ruled the Arab states.' According to him, 'social networks, cell phones and satellite television helped millions of people get their first chance of democracy'.

Today, such statements from a leader of the organisation that stands up for 'peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet' are, to put it mildly, puzzling. In the 12 years that have passed since the Arab Spring, the number of conflicts in the world has increased, the number of refugees has grown exponentially and some of the countries that survived that spring have never

of Jewish blood and seems to have to remember historical events that happened not even a hundred years ago. Although...



As early as in 2018, Younghee Lee, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, admitted: 'Facebook has become a predator.' Then, UN experts did voice the opinion that the network played a big role in the deterioration of the situation in Myanmar in 2016-2017, when several thousand (no exact data is available) representatives of the Rohingya people were killed.

By the way, last December, dozens of Rohingya refugees in the UK and the US

The President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko said:

"A war has been launched against us, and it is even worse than a hot one. In a hot war, it is hard, people die, but everything is clear: you and the enemy. And here — a hybrid war in the media, economy and finance."

(On March 1st 2022, during a meeting with members of the Security Council and leaders of the Council of Ministers.)



sive words such as 'death to the Russian occupiers'. We will continue to prevent calls for violence against Russian civilians," a Meta representative's statement read.

According to an internal memo, temporary changes to the policy of moderating calls to violence against Russian military personnel applied to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine.

On March 14th (by this time, access to Facebook and Instagram in Russia was limited), the company partially 'changed its mind' and declared, "To avoid ambiguity, we are further narrowing our directives to make it clear that we do not allow calls for death of a Head of State on our platforms."

According to Gennady Davydko, Chairman of the 'Belaya Rus' Republican Public Association and Chairman of the Standing Commission on Human Rights, National Relations and Mass Media of the House of Representatives, the first world information war is currently under way, "In Parliament, we plan to change the legislation that increases liability for false information. What is now called fakes is generally a false, just a lie. In our time, words are bullets... Later, it turns out that this or that information is unreliable, but someone has already made a decision or taken a disastrous action based on this information."

manipulate and influence public opinion on controversial issues by promoting propaganda.

A year earlier, the US Air Force commissioned the development of Persona Management Software (a character management programme) which can be used to create and manage fictitious accounts on social networking sites to distort the truth and make it appear that there is generally accepted opinion on controversial issues.

This programme would allow a small number of people to create an 'army of virtuals' (fictitious users) who can distort the truth while making the impression of a 'real online rebellion' at the same time.

So is it possible to win in the information war the strategies of which are becoming more sophisticated and global? A few decades ago, when there were no twitters or facebookes, the Canadian philosopher and media and communications theorist Marshall McLuhan talked about the advantages of traditional societies in the information war. It seems that his algorithm for winning in the information confrontation is still relevant: to be 'aggressively effective in the modern world of information', it is necessary to activate the the national system of priorities in minds of people, to create a vivid image of the national idea and to adapt traditions to new means of communication. Simply put, to develop and intensify one's own ideology and culture, strengthening them many times through advanced high technology.

ACTUAL

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Global food crisis

A Sword of Damocles is now hanging over the global economy — ‘especially the developing world’, according to UN Secretary-General António Guterres

For months now, developing countries have been struggling to recover from the pandemic — with record inflation, rising interest rates and looming debt burdens, while their ability to respond has been ‘erased by exponential increases in the cost of financing’.

Russia and Ukraine represent more than half of the world’s supply of sunflower oil and about 30 percent of the world’s wheat, he added, noting that Ukraine alone provides more than half of the World Food Programme’s (WFP) wheat supply.

“Food, fuel and fertiliser prices are skyrocketing. Supply chains are being disrupted. And the costs and delays of transportation of imported goods — when available — are at record levels.

All of this is hitting the poorest the hardest and planting the seeds for political instability and unrest around the globe.”

Mr. Guterres said 45 African and least developed countries import at least a third of their wheat from Ukraine or Russia, with 18 of those, import at least 50 percent.

“We must do everything possible to avert a hurricane of hunger and a meltdown of the global food system. In addition, we are seeing clear evidence of this war draining resources and attention from other trouble-spots in desperate need.”

In Sudan, people gathered on the streets in protests against deteriorating living conditions and rising prices for bread, which has already risen in price

by 40 percent on average.

In other African countries, particularly in Tunisia, there was a twofold increase in the consumption of flour, semolina and sugar due to the approaching Ramadan. It is noted that 50 percent of the bread in the country is made from Ukrainian wheat.

Mr. Guterres called on countries to find creative ways to finance increased humanitarian and development recovery needs worldwide, to give generously and immediately release pledged funds.

“In a word, developing countries are getting pummelled. They face a cascade of crises — beyond the Ukraine war, we cannot forget COVID and the impacts of climate change — in particular, drought.”

Beijing’s objective position

Beijing has taken ‘an objective and fair position’, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Zhao Lijian said at a briefing

“The United States is trying to slander China and put pressure on us, which is extremely irresponsible and will in no way help resolve the issue. We are against it, and we simply cannot accept the US position,” he pointed out in response to a Western reporter’s question as to what Beijing would do in terms of interaction with Russia given the risk of falling under US sanctions over Ukraine.

Beijing has taken ‘an objective and fair position’ and ‘will be guided by its own independent judgements’.

Zhao Lijian noted that China respected the concerns of each of the parties involved in the complicated situation in Ukraine. “We support all efforts that can help overcome the crisis,” the Chinese diplomat underlined.

“Some people on the US side keep spreading false information and smearing and pressuring China. Such practices are extremely irresponsible and do not help to solve the problem. China firmly opposes this and will never accept it. What the US should do is to seriously reflect on its role in the Ukraine crisis and the part it has played, effectively assume its due responsibilities, and take practical actions to ease the situation and solve the problem, instead of continuing to add fuel to the fire and shifting problems,” said Zhao Lijian.



Spring festival of colours

The Hindu Festival Holi, also known as the festival of colours, marks the beginning of the spring season in the Indian subcontinent

With winter finally coming to an end, millions of people in India — and other parts of the world home to Hindus — are gearing up for one of the most joyous celebrations of the year.

Holi, also known as the festival of colours, is a religious occasion celebrated with much pomp. It is considered the second biggest Hindu festival after Diwali, and the celebrations last for two days — Choti Holi or Holika Dahan and Dhulandi or Rangwali Holi. It marks the celebration of the victory of good over evil. The festival falls in the Hindu calendar month of Phalgun, which usually falls between February and March. On this day, people play with colours, water, flowers and

more, children and adults smear Gulaal on each other, and people seek the blessings of their elders. People visit their friends and relatives and also relish Holi delicacies like gujiya (a deep-fried sweet with dried fruit), dahi bhalla (a yogurt dish topped garnished with savory chutney), lassi (a chilled, refreshing yogurt drink) and more after playing Holi.

Despite being a Hindu festival, Holi now transcends the boundaries of religion and is celebrated by people across the Indian subcontinent. People young and old come together to douse loved ones and strangers alike in hues of red, yellow, pink, purple and more for a day of laughter and fun.

Three signs of the decline of the Dollar

US Dollar may lose its place as the main currency of the world, says economist Henrik Müller, listing three factors that raise doubts about the future of the US currency

The specialist explained in a column for the German edition *Spiegel* that inflation of the US Dollar could greatly shake the world’s confidence in the value of this currency. He drew attention to the fact that price increases in United States of America amounted to 8 percent. In addition, anti-Russian restrictions may also negatively affect the Dollar.

“The most formidable weapon in the arsenal of anti-Russian sanctions is the freezing of Moscow’s foreign exchange reserves in other central banks. Such a

step has not yet been taken on a comprehensive scale. If, as a result of such treatment of money by sovereign Russia, there will be fears that Washington may at any moment confiscate the foreign exchange assets of other countries, such a breach of confidence will seriously harm the Dollar,” Mr. Müller notes.

According to the expert, the situation in Ukraine is rapidly changing the balance of power in the financial market, which can also have a significant impact on the foreign exchange market and, accordingly, on the US Dollar.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

The last of the Itinerants



Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya

The best landscape painter of his era, famous artist Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya has forever inscribed his name in the history of Belarusian art

Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya loved and poetised nature until the end of his life. Even when he was over 80, he continued to paint it almost every day. People, animals or birds appeared in his paintings very rarely. The artist himself explained it by the fact that his task, first of all, was to show the plain and at the same time familiar beauty of the surrounding world. Byalynitsky-Birulya left behind a huge creative heritage which can currently be seen in the new exhibition building of the National Art Museum. By the way, the largest collection of works by the master is stored here: more than 460 sketches and finished paintings from the main holding, as well as about 160 works from the auxiliary scientific one. For the 150th anniversary of the delicate lyrical painter and the last of the Russian Itinerants, the museum has prepared a large anniversary exhibition which will last until April 10th.

The life of Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya was long (85 years!) and dramatic. He had just gained fame as a talented painter and built his famous residence called Chayka (a manor by the lake of Udomlya in the Tver Region with which a large part of the master's personal and creative life is connected), but then the Russian Revolution happened. Byalynitsky-Birulya had to establish himself in the new artistic hierarchy. He lived off ideologically neutral painting — landscapes, and workshops for peasant children he opened at his beloved Chayka.

Other little-known facts of the biography of the Belarusian 'praiser of Russian nature', as critics of that time called Byalynitsky-Birulya, are presented in our review for the master's anniversary.

By Yuliana Leonovich

1. Byalynitsky-Birulya was a student of Illarion Pryanishnikov and Sergei Korovin

Despite his interest in drawing, Vitold's parents sent him to the Kiev Vladimir Cadet Corps. However, even studying military affairs, the boy did not abandon his childhood hobby. Then Vitold's brother who lived in Moscow showed his sibling's works to the then-famous artist Illarion Pryanishnikov. The latter was greatly impressed and recommended the young man to take exams to enter the famous Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, where Pryanishnikov taught. In 1889, 17-year-old Vitold became a student. The brightest stars of artistic Moscow were his teachers — not only Illarion Pryanishnikov, but also Nikolai Nevrev, Sergei Korovin and Vasily Polenov.

2. Pavel Tretyakov bought a work by Byalynitsky-Birulya straight from a student exhibition

The well-known philanthropist and art collector Pavel Tretyakov tried not to miss annual student exhibitions open to all comers. He selected the most interesting, in his opinion, works for his collection, which was tantamount to wide recognition.

After Tretyakov bought his painting *On the Outskirts of Pyatigorsk*, Byalynitsky-Birulya ran to the gallery to make sure it was not a joke.

The artist recalled, "Pavel Mikhailovich's apartment and office were in the same building. I saw him standing behind the desk. When Pavel Mikhailovich found out about the purpose of my visit, he replied with a smile that I could go upstairs and check whether my painting hung well. Hardly believing my luck, I ran up the stairs and found my work hanging among great artists' paintings..."

3. Byalynitsky-Birulya drew daily sketches before breakfast at the Chayka

Vitold Kaetanovich was a highly disciplined artist. His

rules prescribed daily work on sketches. The artist got up early and always managed to sketch a landscape or a bouquet of flowers before breakfast. Knowing this, one day, smart village boys decided to earn money. Before dawn, they picked peonies from a flower bed in front of Byalynitsky-Birulya's house, and in the morning, they offered him to buy the bouquet. The master knew well that peonies grew only at his manor; he scolded the boys, but he bought the flowers anyway.

4. Byalynitsky-Birulya saved his manor from expropriation by writing to A. Lunacharsky, People's Commissar of Education of the RSFSR



In 1947, Aleksandr Gerasimov painted a famous group portrait of four oldest Soviet painters. People's Artists Ivan Pavlov, Vasily Baksheyev, Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya and Vasily Meshkov are depicted at the dining table.

In 1918, the Chayka faced a threat: the manor was subject to expropriation. However, the artist was not going to give up. His creation, he believed, should not turn into a 'red club'. And Byalynitsky-Birulya found a way out: the manor would continue to serve art, but as an art school. Having discussed this idea with friends, Vitold Kaetanovich wrote a letter to Anatoly Lunacharsky where he proposed to organise a school for peasant children at his manor. On September 21st, 1918, *News of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Working and Military Deputies* published Decree of the Council of People's Commissars No. 205, which stated that 'the dacha of V.K. Byalynitsky-Birulya, artist, shall not be subject to requisition or confiscation'.



The National Art Museum has the largest collection of works by Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya

5. Byalynitsky-Birulya was an experienced hunter and wrote hunting stories

The authority of an experienced hunter attracted not only artists to visit the Chayka. Even well-known party and state leaders Mikhail Frunze and Yan Rudzutak came there on bear hunts. According to recollections, Byalynitsky-Birulya was an excellent organiser of drive hunting. But most of all he liked to retire with a gun in fields and copses. There were serious hunts as well. A Yakovlevo villager recalled a case when lumberjacks asked the painter for help after they had inadvertently caused a bear come out of the den in winter, since the waken animal did not let them work in the forest. Vitold solved the problem. There is a legend that he shot 47 bears.

Also, the artist wrote hunting stories. The most famous one is about hunting on the lake of Belokhovskoye, a hermit from the island of Litvin and stumps that float up when waves are strong.

6. In the summer of 1947, after many years spent in the Tver Region, Byalynitsky-Birulya returned to his homeland, Belarus

The result of this travel (albeit not too long) was a series of works united by the idea of the post-war revival of Belarus. The artist was deeply touched by places of childhood.

"Now, when I have seen my native places, damaged so severely from the invasion of the enemy, again, I want to transfer the won-

derful image of the reviving country to canvas with even greater passion," Byalynitsky-Birulya wrote.

7. Byalynitsky-Birulya bequeathed to bury himself next to his daughter, but the USSR Academy of Arts opposed his will

In 1948, a tragedy struck in the artist's life: his daughter Luba drowned in the lake opposite the Chayka. Her death deeply shocked and knocked down the then 76-year-old landscape painter. In the autumn of the same year, he suffered a stroke and became partially paralysed. In 1957, Byalynitsky-Birulya died at his beloved residence. He bequeathed to bury himself next to his daughter in the Troitsa village by the lake of Udomlya, but the Academy of Arts decided otherwise. The body of the People's Artist of the BSSR and the RSFSR was transported to Moscow and buried with honours at the Novodevichy Cemetery. Hunters fired their guns to accompany Byalynitsky-Birulya's last journey.

In 2018, Belarusian museum workers brought nurslings of lilac from Krynki (Byalynitsky-Birulya's home village near Belynichy) to the Chayka, where they were planted in the manor park.

The zest of cornflower country

New routes, online tours, mobile applications, and pilot projects: what will domestic tourism in Belarus rely on in the coming years?

The soul of tourists yearns for new experiences, but travel abroad remains a problem. Therefore, Belarusians more and more prefer the beauties and sights of their own country in the last two years. Now, in order to maintain and strengthen this interest, the main focus is on the development of domestic tourism. These are features and novelties that are going to attract travellers.

By Oksana Nevmerzhtskaya

The place of hospitality

To form and develop a modern competitive tourism complex, increase the contribution of tourism to the national economy, the country is implementing the Hospitable Belarus State Program for 2021-2025.

“We face several global challenges. One of them is certification of guides and guide-interpreters. Over the past year, 32 guides were certified in Minsk, 8 in the Minsk Region, 15 in the Brest Region, 28 in the Grodno Region, 8 in the Gomel Region, 38 in the Vitebsk Region, and 13 in the Mogilev Region. Each Region should make an effort to have guides who can conduct tours in different languages. Sooner or later, the lockdowns will end, people will come to us, so we must be ready to present them the entire tourism potential of the country. By the way, in the past year alone, we have added 15 new tourist routes,” noted Irina Voronovich, director of the Tourism Department of the Ministry of Sports and Tourism

It is very important to work on information support of events taking place in the tourism sector. High technologies have been adopted: sites are being filled with content, online tours are being conducted, facilities are being supplied with QR codes, so scanning allows one to get more information about them.

The development of inclusive tourism is a top priority so that everyone can freely travel around the country. On the website of the National Tourism Agency, there is information concerning objects which are ready to have physically challenged guests, how to get there, in which hotel one can comfortably relax.

Regarding the development of tourism infrastructure, the director of the Department said, “For this five-year period, we have planned the introduction of 73 new facilities. There is serious work to be done, but the tasks are clear to us, we are working on them.”

With an eye toward the zest

Each Region of the country is implementing a pilot project in the field of domestic tourism. At the same time, they all have captivating zest associated with

cultural and natural features.

Brest Region decided to rely on the unique nature and originality of the Region. The pilot ‘Tourist Region of Pripyat Polesie’ project includes Pinsk, Stolin, Luninets, Drogichin, and Ivanovo Districts. Particular attention is paid to the most fascinating and less developed territories. A network of hiking, water, and bicycle routes will be created along Pripyat Polesie to meet the recreational needs of various

Districts of the Vitebsk Region, and an interesting feature is connected with this. In each District, tourists will be able to get a piece of a puzzle-magnet, and as a result, they will get a ‘Vasilkovy Krai’ A4-size picture. For those who like to capture themselves in beautiful places, more than 100 selfie spots have been prepared. However, there are enough beauties in the Vitebsk Region: there is the largest stone of the country, the deepest lake, the highest



Aleksey Vyazmitinov



Aleksey Vyazmitinov



Aleksey Stolyarov



categories of visitors. The White Heron agro-tourist cluster is being created in the Pinsk Region. A website and a mobile application for travellers are being developed. The interactive ‘Brest Region: Warming with Beauty tourist’ project offers free online presentations of sights and exciting places, as well as master classes in cooking traditional cuisine. The broadcast is available worldwide, ten online broadcasts have already taken place, which has aroused great interest. The project of the Vitebsk Region under the romantic name ‘Vasilkovy Krai’ (the cornflower country) is designed for the most part for individual tours. A mobile application is being developed so that travellers can create a convenient route themselves. The project involves 12

swing, the only floating island, and a unique underwater road. To attract tourists, the Vitebsk Region also uses a rich festival potential. ‘Zvany Safii’, ‘White Amphora’, ‘Ringing dulcimer and accordion’, ‘Dnieper Voices’, ‘Cherry Festival in Glubokoe’, ‘Braslav Lightning’, ‘Zhurauli zhuraviny’ and, of course, the famous ‘Slavianski Bazaar’ in Vitebsk takes place on this land.

The Pristolichie tourist cluster, designed to become an export-oriented competitive tourist facility, is being created on the territory of the Novodvorsky and Lugovoslobodsky village councils of the Minsk Region. Its economic model includes objects of various forms of ownership. The list of services provided has already been determined, a logo and an Internet resource have

been developed. Also banners have been prepared, and an initiative group has been formed from the owners of farmsteads. The result is obvious: the facility has already been visited by numerous tourists.

In the Mogilev Region, it was decided to use the recreational potential of the Chigirinsky reservoir. On the territory of the Bykhov and Kirov Districts adjacent to it, Chigirinka eco-tourist recreational cluster is being created. The material base for it is already available: 21 farmsteads and 23 recreation centres. To raise funds for its further development, they intend to create a stable economic zone with a special regime for investors. Events such as the ‘Big Bard-Fishing’ international music festival will not be forgotten either.

In the Year of Historical Memory, new projects are being developed for the patriotic education of young people. Having passed the ‘Partisan paths’, the youth will find themselves in a reconstructed partisan camp, which will have the opportunity to plunge into the atmosphere of difficult forest life, sing military songs around the fire, and taste soldiers’ porridge.

The pilot ‘Patriotic Impulse’ project of the Gomel Region, which includes a variety of military-patriotic excursion routes, is also aimed at educating young people as the creator of the future of our country and its defender. Thus, on the ‘Forever in our memories’ route it will be possible to visit the Ola memorial complex, as well as the monument to the children — victims of the Great Patriotic War, created on the site of one of the largest transit and storage camps. About two thousand children from 8 to 14 years old were kept there, many of whom were taken to Germany, and some were distributed to hospitals as donors for wounded German soldiers and officers.

There is no need to talk about the sights of the Grodno Region once again. This is the Augustow Canal, orthodox and catholic churches of stunning beauty, as well as mysterious old castles. In order to further popularise them, the Grodno Region decided to create a system of tourist information centres.

As for Minsk, the capital proposes to form a system of 11 bright and recognisable tourist areas with multilingual functionality of navigation services, augmented reality, online tourist assistance, QR codes at cultural and educational sites, and information services with audio guides. Thanks to this, Minsk expects to break into the international tourism market.

Sports heroes

Belarusian Paralympic athletes showed excellent results at the 'We are Together. Sports' games

By Sergei Kanashits

The road home is always pleasant. It is doubly pleasant when medals tinkle with soft music in the suitcase, and the soul is warm from a sense of accomplishment. It was with such a mood that the Belarusian Paralympic team flew from Khanty-Mansiysk after winning 16 awards (5 gold, 2 silver, 9 bronze) at the 'We are Together. Sports' games.

The blasphemous decision of the International Sports Syndicate, which, having lost the shred of conscience and elementary human decency, did not allow representatives of Belarus and Russia to participate the day before the official opening of the 2022 Paralympics, caused anger and indignation among all mentally healthy and adequate people. A sneak attack was inflicted on disabled athletes, who not only have nothing to do with politics a priori, but have already suffered a lot from life.

Nonetheless, representatives of parasports are not used to holding and accumulating anger in themselves — they are well aware of what life is. Therefore, actions are more important than words or any complaints. In a short time, their own, alternative 'We are Together. Sports' games were organised in Khanty-Mansiysk.

Here everyone was able to come off, show their best qualities and win medals, the price of which is no lower than the one that they tried to steal from our Paralympic athletes in the most arrogant and cynical way.

The real hero of the past starts was Valiantsina Shyts, who won all three ski races among seated athletes — she is a three-time champion of the games!

Valiantsina was born in a large family in the Boroviki village, Svetlogorsk District. The birth trauma did not allow the girl to learn what it means to take a step with her own legs, but her character allowed her to confidently stand on her feet in a figurative sense of the word. At a certain moment, the parents made a difficult decision for themselves to send the girl to a specialised boarding school, but it was this twist of fate that became the key for Valiantsina. It was there that

her talent, her speed, strength and will were acknowledged. Her path to this success wasn't easy. She participated in the 2014 Paralympics in Sochi, performed on the slopes of Pyeongchang 2018, but it was 2022 that was supposed to be her hour of triumph. It was just like it's supposed to be. Despite all the obstacles and heartless decisions of the sport politicians. Valiantsina Shyts commented her performance at the 'We are Together. Sports' games, "Here we managed to cheer up a little

this result, three wins, is a big surprise for me. Maybe I just underestimated myself. You know, I had difficult moments in my career when I wanted to quit everything. Today I just want to thank my family and my coach for his patience because there was a lot to go over for him."

The philosophy of Valiantsina Shyts is not to lose heart. There is no doubt that all other Paralympic athletes go through life with the same motto.

SB, Sviatlana said, "My vision is about minus 14. Even with glasses or contact lenses it is not corrected, I wear them to have an idea of what is in front of me: a closet or a door. However, I basically do not want to take a guide with me or walk with a stick. It is not difficult to live with such vision. It is difficult to believe that if you are physically challenged, then everyone around owes you something. After all, many people just sit and whine about how unhappy they are. They cannot make a cup of tea for



Valiantsina Shyts (centre)

Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko has sent greetings to the Belarusian Paralympians on great performance,

"In Khanty-Mansiysk you won a bunch of medals, demonstrating high sportsmanship, iron will and unbending character. Once again you proved that there is no limit to what a person can do. All our people support you in your fight for the right to do what you love and to defend the honour of Belarus in international sport arenas without the interference of politics. We are proud of your endurance and patriotism," the message of greetings runs. Aleksandr Lukashenko wished the Belarusian Paralympians and coaches strong health, wellbeing and new great victories.



Sviatlana Sakhnenka

after the situation with the Paralympic Games in Beijing. The support of the stands is just super, it's very nice when they shout to you: 'Come on! You can do it!'. It gives strength and energy, as if I got a second wind. I am satisfied with my performance at all the races, but there is always something to work on. I did not expect that I could perform so well here, I expected to hit at least a top three or two. Therefore,



Darya Fedzkovich

In Khanty-Mansiysk, Sviatlana Sakhnenka twice climbed the top of the podium. Four years ago, she had three victories in South Korea, so Sviatlana today is one of the most titled Belarusian Paralympic athletes. Serious vision problems followed all her life, forcing her to literally look for her life path by touch. As you know, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. In an interview with

themselves, they constantly complain about the state authority. I'm used to the fact that there is no one to feel sorry for me. If you want to do something, go ahead and do it!"

Belarusian Paralympic athletes Lidziya and Dzmitry Loban, Yury Holub, Raman Svirydenka and Darya Fedzkovich also became winners in Khanty-Mansiysk. Good job, you are true heroes!

ARENA

● BATE beat Slavia in the Belarusian Premier League



The footballers of the BATE Borisov club beat Slavia Mozyr away with a score of 3:0 in the last match of the opening of the Belarusian Premier League.

There is still almost the whole season

ahead — everything can change. But so far the most pleasant impression of all the Belarusian teams, perhaps, is made by BATE. The club defeated Shakhtyor Soligorsk in the Belarusian Super Cup game (1:0), defeated Torpedo-BelAZ Zhodino in the quarterfinals of the Russian Cup (1:1, 1:0). And now, BATE started the season with a confident victory.

The second match day of the national football championship will be held in early April.

● Belarusian hockey player Ilya Usov signed for the Tampa Bay Lightning

Belarusian centre Ilya Usov has signed a three-year rookie contract with the NHL's Tampa Bay



Lightning, according to the Bolts press service. Usov spent this season in Dynamo Minsk, in 40 games of the KHL regular season he scored 26 (9 + 17) points. The last time Ilya played overseas in the 2019/20 season as part of the Prince Albert Raiders — Western Hockey League club.

Tampa Bay Lightning is the defending champion of the Stanley Cup. At the moment, the team is in fourth place in the Eastern Conference of the NHL with 84 points.



Yegor Yermilitskiy

Photo of the week

The carriage of businessman Pavel Borisevich on the streets of Slutsk

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

On March 26th, Earth Hour movement is organised. It is a global annual international action of caring for nature, a public call for decisive measures to preserve the planet's climate and take care of its limited resources. It is organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature. On this day, at the appointed time, people around the world turn off the lights and other electrical appliances for one hour.

On March 27th, 1990, Sherlock Holmes Museum was opened in London. It is the world's first memorial flat of a literary character. According to the works of Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes and his friend Dr. Watson lived in an apartment at 221b Baker Street from 1881 to 1904. At the time these works were written, no such address existed in London. Nonetheless, Sherlock Holmes became a very real person for many readers around the world. However, a monument to the famous detective was opened in the same place in 1999 on Baker Street in London.

On March 27th, 1927, Mstislav Rostropovich was born (1927-2007), a Russian musician, cellist, conductor, People's Artist of the USSR (1966), one of the greatest contemporary artists.

Honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music in London, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, etc. His repertoire includes classical masterpieces, as well as works by composers of the 20th century. He performed in an ensemble with the largest musicians in the world. He has conducted the famous symphony orchestras of the world.

On March 27th, 1987, the Belarusian Public Association of Veterans was created. It has its own organisational structures in all cities of Belarus. Main activities: protection of the rights and freedoms of veterans, active participation in the public and political life of the country; participation in the development of state regulations and programs for the social protection of veterans; active participation in the patriotic education of youth.

On March 27th, 1992, the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (consultative and legislative body) of the CIS Member States was established in the city of Alma-Ata (Republic of Kazakhstan), in accordance

with the Agreement signed by the heads of the parliaments of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

March 27th is Day of workers in the sphere of consumer services for the population and housing and communal services in the Republic of Belarus. These services are the main component of the urban way of life. These people improve and decorate the city, create comfort and cosiness for its inhabitants, and are responsible for cleanliness and order.

March 27th is World Theatre Day. It was established in Vienna at the 9th World Congress of the International Theatre Institute under UNESCO in 1961. It takes place under a single motto: 'Theatre as a means of mutual understanding and strengthening of peace between peoples.' Traditionally, the two most popular genres are played in the theatre — comedy and tragedy, the symbols of which are theatrical masks, the mention of the first theatrical production dates back to 2500 BC.

On March 28th, 1942, Lev Tolbuzin was born, a Belarusian designer, medallist. He works in arts and crafts. Among his famous works are:

Symmetry, *Ivan Melezh*, *Yazep Drazdovich*, *Maksim Bogdanovich* medals; *Lamps* series; decorative and small plastic arts, etc. He was among the authors of the design of the Ploshcha Yakuba Kolasa metro station in Minsk.

On March 28th, 1912, Marina Raskova was born (1912-1943), the first woman in the Soviet Union to achieve the diploma of professional air navigator, major, participant of the famous non-stop flights, Hero of the Soviet Union. During the Great Patriotic War, she commanded an air group for the formation of women's aviation regiments; in the shortest possible time, she prepared the first female aviation bomber regiment in history, later awarded the Orders of the Red Banner and Suvorov for military merit. She died in the line of duty at the controls of an aircraft.

On March 29th, 1873, Leo Tolstoy began work on the *Anna Karenina* novel. By that time, the writer had long nurtured the idea of writing a novel about a 'sinner' ostracised from society. Tolstoy finished this work in April 1877. In the same year, it began to be published in the Russky Vestnik magazine. Only a part of the work was published monthly — all reading Russia was fired up, waiting for the continuation.