



A builder's fingerprint, a secret tunnel, an iconostasis from Mulyavin and other sights of ancient Kolozha



The location of the Belarusian resistance — Brest forest — keeps its secrets from the past until now



INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 41 (855) ● THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2020 ● WWW.SB.BY



BELTA

Natalia Reutskaya, Head of the Decorative-and-Applied Arts Department at Mozyr's Centre of Creativity for Children and Youth

Centre of attraction

Creative practices are good for everyone — regardless of age, occupation and mindset. They develop the brain, enabling a person to be more efficient and successful. On the eve of November 7th, after a major overhaul, Mozyr's Centre of Creativity for Children and Youth opens — housing over 70 interest clubs: decorative-and-applied, vocal, choreographic and fine arts are the most popular. Children's and youth organisations also operate, such as a volunteer team, a youth parliament, an intellectual club and an association of young journalists. In total, the centre unites more than 2,000 schoolchildren. The centre of attraction for young talent has been among the leaders in this sphere in the Gomel Region for several years already.



Dialogue on the country's development strategy

The importance of dialogue platforms, the people's will and a special form of democracy were among topics touched on by the President speaking during the meeting on the preparation for the 6th Belarusian People's Congress

The Belarusian People's Congress — held once every five years — has always been a new starting point. It is at such forums that the country determines the programme of socio-economic development for the coming five years. This time, the Congress will also focus on important socio-political issues, including the constitutional construction. The President of Belarus highlighted the special significance of this event, saying, "This should be a real dialogue on developing the country's development strategy. Let people talk and discuss openly: we'll make decisions and follow them."

A normative legal act on the preparation of the 6th Belarusian People's Congress and establishment of an organising

committee for its holding was submitted to the President for consideration. Before signing this document, Aleksandr Lukashenko discussed some aspects of the upcoming major political event with the participants of the meeting.

"At the meeting, we will have to honestly and impartially sum up the results of our development over the past five years. It is important to find and identify the reasons why not everything we planned has been achieved," the Head of State said. "Therefore, the key task that we should set for the participants of the meeting is to develop modern, effective, and really efficient acting mechanisms that will help us solve the problems hindering economic growth".



Aleksandr Lukashenko believes that special attention should be paid to the issue of electing delegates to the Congress, "The heads of local authorities need to take a very careful approach to this issue. This actually refers not only to local authorities but all of us. There should be representatives of all segments of our society who want to say something, who want to be heard and who know how to listen. These should be representatives of all social professional groups — such as public organisations, deputies of all levels, and so on. Not only managers, but also ordinary industrial and agricultural workers who understand people's problems."

According to the Head of State, such a step will promote pluralism of opinions. "It's not bad if there are different opinions, it's very good. If we hold a Congress and there are no different opinions, then we can see it as a failure."

The President stressed that the Belarusian People's Congress is a special form of democracy in the country. The forum will determine how the state will develop in the future.

During the meeting, Aleksandr Lukashenko also said that Belarus is beginning to face terrorist threats, drawing attention to the fact that the organisers of protests in Belarus have already passed 7-8 stages according to the 'colour revolution' methodology. "Little is left and radicalisation will become the next stage. It is already in place. Not an information but a terrorist war has been launched against us in certain areas. We must stop this," the President stressed.

Aleksandr Lukashenko added that the authorities in Belarus have always consulted with people when making life-defining decisions for the country.

Based on materials of sb.by

On track to exceed growth

The President received the Prime Minister, Roman Golovchenko, with a report. Aleksandr Lukashenko first of all inquired about the state of affairs in the economy and at the leading enterprises of the country, "Frankly speaking, I would like our economy to perform at least no worse than the economies of the neighbouring countries to upset our opponents, as people say."



By Yevgeny Kononovich

At the same time, the President drew attention to the fact that it is not a matter of the number of tractors and cars produced, for example. The main thing is to sell the product.

In addition, Aleksandr Lukashenko was interested in the socio-economic forecast for 2021, "We will meet again and in a wider circle will discuss our plans for 2021 while we will already have outlined the contours of our five-year plan at the Belarusian People's Congress."

Summing up the results of economic development for the nine months of this year, Roman Golovchenko noted that the situation has not only stabilised, but also entered the track of outrunning growth, "In the third quarter, we have almost caught up with the pace of 2019, although all this is happening in very difficult conditions. Agriculture, construction, information and communications, as well as the financial sector and science make a consistently positive contribution to the country's GDP."

All social obligations of the state were fulfilled in a timely manner and in full. Despite the processes of falling incomes of citizens in connection with the pandemic taking place in many countries, a gradual steady increase in wages is being achieved in Belarus. The measures taken to preserve labour teams and prevent mass layoffs of workers made it possible to maintain a manageable situation on the labour market and prevent an increase in unemployment. The general unemployment rate (according to the ILO methodology) in H1 2020 amounted to 4.1 percent, decreasing by 0.3 percentage points compared to the same period in 2019.

The President met with Metropolitan Veniamin of Minsk and Zaslavl, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, to discuss worldly and spiritual issues, and most importantly — common values. Aleksandr Lukashenko detailed them at the very beginning of the conversation, emphasising, "We very much appreciate the multi-faith world that we have managed to form over a quarter of a century."

Common values

By Varvara Morozova

Representatives of different faiths live in peace and harmony in Belarus — this is the purposeful policy of the Head of State.

Aleksandr Lukashenko reminded people that co-operation between the state and religious institutions (and not only the Orthodox Church) has always been very active in Belarus, for example, a mosque was built with his support. Muslims have never created problems, and they have always supported the authorities.

"We will never allow ourselves what the French President recently began to declare about freedom of speech and religious feelings. How will it benefit you in the country if you start criticising Muslims? Maybe he just needs mediation between him and the Muslims — I can help him here, because I have very good relations with the faith," Aleksandr Lukashenko offered.

Daily bread

The President drew attention to the fact that many parishes have been built in our country, but sometimes there are not enough priests, and this refers not only to the Orthodox churches. Ministers of some denominations come from abroad.

"I have pointed out this issue

to the Pope (both former and current). Listen, how can we now accept clergymen (no offence to them) from Poland when the Polish state — purely Catholic — took such a position towards Belarus? This is not normal," asserted Aleksandr Lukashenko.

He believes that Belarus needs to train its own Catholic clergy more intensively. As for the Belarusian Orthodox Church, the President expressed the following approach, "I know the idea of



returning Orthodox education in Zhirovichi to its place [referring to the Theological Academy]. You know, that's right. Zhirovichi was created in spirit to train clergy."

Aleksandr Lukashenko suggested looking at what else needs to be done for the clergy who will be trained there.

In a spirit of understanding

Aleksandr Lukashenko commented on talks about a possible

visit of the Pope, "The Pope is the head of state and church. Therefore, the invitation, if it comes from Belarus, must be from the Head of State and the Orthodox Church, with which Catholics have a lot of problems. I do not want to find myself between a rock and a hard place, creating any inconvenience," stressed the President.

He noted that Pope Francis showed understanding of the situation in a telephone conversation. "There are speculations that the Pope will visit almost incognito and that there will be crowds of people from all over Europe. Of course, Catholics from all over Europe will come, and this could be 100,000-200,000 people. It is a fact. However, we don't want to create problems when the state invites the Pope and the Orthodox Church, our main faith, and our Patriarch do not agree with it. We have never wanted to sow discord and never will," said Aleksandr Lukashenko.

He is not against the visit of the head of any world religion to Belarus, but this requires a general agreement. "It shouldn't cause an irreparable split. There is no need to conduct any complicated conversations about this and play this card in a political game. This is unacceptable," noted Aleksandr Lukashenko.

A fusion of experience and dedication to duty

High-profile personnel decisions in the power unit and three new Presidential aides

Aleksandr Lukashenko has appointed former State Secretary of the Security Council Valery Vakulchik as President's Aide — inspector for the Brest Region. Former Interior Minister Yuri Karayev took up a corresponding position in the Grodno Region, and his former deputy Aleksandr Barsukov will henceforth work as an Aide to the President — as inspector for Minsk. In addition to the new positions, Yuri Karayev and Aleksandr Barsukov were awarded the rank of Lieutenant General. Moreover, the Head of State appointed Ivan Kubrakov as Minister of Internal Affairs.

The primary task at this stage which the President outlined very clearly is, "Order in the regions is very important. Public safety is a critical issue."

By Yevgeny Kononovich,
Varvara Morozova

Efficient vertical structure

The new President's aides are military men, as well as experienced managers and true patriots. Although, in contrast to Minsk, the situation in the regions is calmer, there is work to do there too. Especially in Grodno, as was clarified by Aleksandr Lukashenko, "They demand to stop Grodno Azot or to stage a strike. What if an explosion happens...? This is a high-tech hazardous production facility. God forbid it happens — Grodno is located nearby and it will be affected entirely. Moreover, the dominant winds are western. Those winds are blowing, the cloud will cover Grodno, thousands and thousands of people will die. There are about half a million people in Grodno, including visitors. Therefore, public security is the number one priority."

The President added that the competence of Valery Vakulchik and Yuri Karayev will also include the army component, "The air assault brigade in Brest is meant to keep the peace in accordance with the law, and a huge motorised rifle brigade has been deployed in Grodno. This is a pillar for you, for law enforcement and governors there. This is a power block. I am saying this openly and not hiding anything."

Protecting peace and tranquillity

Aleksandr Barsukov previously headed the Main Department of Internal Affairs of the Minsk City Executive Committee, and — as Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs — dealt with public security issues.

"He knows Minsk like the back of his hand," said Aleksandr Lukashenko. "And now his main objective is to ensure full security with the help of the law enforcement in Minsk. Public security is a priority."

In this context, the President considers it necessary to strengthen the work of volunteer street patrols in Belarus, without turning it into a formal



arrangement, "Voluntary people's patrols have just started working but we need to make wider use of this instrument. You know what the situation in Kyrgyzstan was. There was complete chaos, law enforcement forces abandoned the streets.



There was no one to defend the country. Who helped rectify the situation? Volunteer patrols. They rallied policemen, special services and the military."

According to the President, former military personnel and Afghan warriors should be involved in mobile units, "It is necessary for each person to feel that he is protecting his family and his land."

At the same time, the Belarusian leader made it clear that, completely in accordance with his powers, he makes decisions on the protection of citizens, "That's why I'm the Commander-in-Chief, and Karayev doesn't need to make excuses here. He correctly said: what else could the police have done when they [participants in unauthorised rallies] broke down the doors and rushed into people's apartments? We didn't know why they came there. We started with the worst and we protected

families. Some want the police and military to leave Minsk? This will not happen while I'm President. These are my functions and powers: to protect the peace and quiet of our citizens."

There's no need to teach us how to live

When solving internal issues, it's necessary to adequately respond to possible external threats. Hence one instruction from the President to his aides in the regions, "Let's be frank: Polish flags have been put up in Grodno. If they are removed today, it does not mean that something is not brewing in people's heads over there. In general, you have to understand that NATO member states have not calmed down outside our country whatever they may say."

In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled his recent telephone conversation with US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, "Everything they write in Telegram channels is rubbish. He didn't demand an-

anything from me. It was a very warm conversation, a kind one. Still I told him directly that I understand what is going on. I warned him that we will respond in kind if any actions are attempted by Poland, Lithuania, and possibly Ukraine (it is out of the question, as they have something else on their mind), but Poles and Lithuanians, primarily Poles because there is virtually no army in Lithuania. He assured me that it can never happen and will not happen."

Nevertheless, we must be ready to respond quickly and effectively to any threats and challenges from outside. However, instead of teaching Belarus how to live, it would be appropriate for some of our neighbours to deal with their problems. In particular, the President focused on the situation in Poland, "They wanted to organise a revolution here, not even a revolution but a rebellion, and this is what they got themselves. The situation is difficult there and it just will not calm down. The women rose

up — and it is clear why. The peasants rose there — and they know what they have risen for. There, the workers rose — and they know why, as well as civil servants..."

The President drew attention to the fact that the abortion ban was just an excuse, a trigger for protests, "Duda won by rigging the election. He did not have a one percent advantage. It was from there that it all started. They wanted to deflect attention to us, but the Poles are no fools, and the protests began."

Many economic problems were added to this, alongside the main social one — a large gap between the poor and the rich. And this, as Aleksandr Lukashenko is convinced, is the most dangerous thing for any state, "Everything was leading to a revolution there, and I asked them not to interfere and sort things out in their country first. They decided to do otherwise."

Referring to the situation in Lithuania and the results of the parliamentary elections held there recently, the Belarusian leader said, "The opposition won the elections. They interfered with Belarus' affairs and they lost power... And how are things in Ukraine? How is our friend Volodya Zelenskyy doing? He suffered a crushing defeat in the local government elections. That's why you shouldn't throw stones at a neighbour. They should not have interfered with our affairs. You have things to sort out at home. We must always be honest, reliable for neighbours, loyal to our country and sincere."



Humanity faces a new challenge

Professor Fallico: sanctions are a ‘Trojan horse’ and often grounds for illegal competition



Antonio Fallico



By Marta Astreiko

The organisers of the events — the Conoscere Eurasia Association and the Roscongress Foundation — managed to ensure personal health safety measures at the highest level for all offline participants. The results of the 2020 Verona meeting, the concept of the ‘death economy’ and the main lesson that humanity can learn from the trials that have befallen it, *The MT* correspondent discussed these issues with the main organiser and inspirer of the forum, the President of the Conoscere Eurasia Association and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Banca Intesa — Professor Antonio Fallico.

On the eve of the 13th Eurasian Economic Forum, you organised a series of events in Italy dedicated to the 75th anniversary of Victory and the end of one of the most terrible wars in our history. Why did you see it as important to hold them?

I believe I’m an incorrigible optimist. That’s why I hope that the lessons of the past will become science for our children and grandchildren, that the past will teach the present something. It’s primarily necessary to respond to attempts to falsify history.

One of the forum participants said: history is a science, not a tool that can be used to solve political problems. I think the memory of the past is a way to return to the world where there was great unity. During WWII, the United States and two major European powers — the UK and France — on the one hand, and the Soviet Union (including Belarusians who suffered great sacrifices and played a very important role, much owing to the partisan movement) on the other united to defeat not simply the regime and the ideology but also brute economic force that tried to take over. I think we need to use this experience; in the face of a common challenge, we must unite and find ways out of this difficult situation that would suit all sides.

Mr. Fallico, how do you think COVID has changed the world over the past year?

Of course, the current pandemic is an epoch-making

The 13th Eurasian Economic Forum in Verona will certainly take its own special place in history — not only because of its organisers’ courage in holding an international meeting offline under the current very difficult conditions, but also because of a broad discussion of new topics that are important for the whole humanity — genetics and genome research, the transformation of national health systems in the era of COVID-19, and overcoming social inequality — and also thanks to the touching celebrations in Italy dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory and the end of WWII.

event, it changes everything. The consequences are not yet clear. I believe that we are the culprits and accomplices to this disaster: we interfered with nature and almost destroyed biodiversity. So now we no longer have the right to do stupid things, we must ‘wake up’. It is important to change our way of thinking and production, our way of consuming. Culture and education are very important in this regard.

Why not? I know that Belarus is an industrial country with its rich traditions, that Belarusian industry and agriculture are very attentive to nature, they are not as destructive, aggressive and extensive as in other countries.

I would like to add that Belarus has many competitive advantages within Eurasia. One of them is the country’s close ties with Russia, which open up additional opportunities.

people. What lessons can be learned after the first wave?

I can say that our doctors were not ready. We let ourselves be intimidated, we closed our homes, there were difficulties with tests. It seems that we are intoxicated by globalisation and its greatness and have decided that there will be no more epidemics. This is why there were no general practitioners in the basic medical establishments! About 40,000 doctors of

and ineffectiveness of sanctions against countries. As a businessman, what do you think about this?

Actually, I agree that it is necessary to separate these concepts. Sanctions are a product of a world where the stronger is on the right. It reminds me of Aesop’s famous fable about the wolf and the lamb. It turns out that some in the world are wolves, and others lambs. However, this is essentially a denial of normal international, political, and human relations.

Sanctions are often a way to conduct illegal competition in commerce. They are sometimes used as a ‘Trojan horse’ in order to solve domestic political issues of other countries. In any case, sanctions never work. They aggravate relations between states but they create even more problems for people who have nothing to do with it.

In the modern world, it is often assumed that politics in a country is run by people belonging to different parties, but in fact they are run by interest groups that stand behind them. They face off against similar interest groups in other countries.

As a representative of business circles and a person who pays attention to the problems of society, what do you think can be done to resolve economic problems?

I do not separate my activities in the field of finance and in the public sphere. I believe that an economy that does not support and does not take into account the social sphere is a death economy. Of course, it is important to earn money, including in order to create additional wealth, but it must be distributed fairly. We have now reached a stratospheric level of social inequality, and conditions are being created for a social explosion in many parts of the world. This is bad for the economy and financial institutions, but it is also bad for wealth holders.

Therefore, for a businessman to work in the public sector is not a concession but a duty. If we, businessmen, fail to take into account that we are part of society and have a certain social conscience, then we are condemning ourselves.



Verona

There are no geopolitical barriers to the coronavirus pandemic; this process is running across all territories around the world. However, I’m convinced that we must and can control the situation.

Of course, the pandemic is a priority area and we need to extinguish this ‘fire’ in co-operation with science. However, we can’t defeat the pandemic first and then start saving the economy. Therefore, the absolute priority, in my opinion, is to restore the economy taking into account the importance that nature plays, and all that is associated with it.

It is also important that COVID-19 treatments become available to everyone as soon as possible. A single country can’t do all this. Everyone should participate: it’s a principle of multipolarity. Private interest should not prevail in the fight against the pandemic. I mean, for example, the registration and promotion of various vaccines which are subordinated to the interests of various pharmaceutical groups, and not to humanity.

Belarus did not close its economy, realising that it is a matter of survival of the country and people. Do you think the Belarusian experience can be useful to others?



At Verona forum 2020

What economic mistakes were made in Europe during the pandemic?

As an Italian citizen, as a European, I can make one comment: the endless injection of money into the non-manufacturing sector did not help much. Of course, where there is extreme poverty, it is necessary to help, but it is important to keep in mind that if you do not give people jobs, there will be no creation of wealth and welfare, no added value, and no economic development.

Even if you pour money on people, the problem in its essence will not be solved. We can’t succeed without structural change.

Italy was one of the first countries to face the pandemic. COVID affected many

basic specialties are still being sought. This is an obvious example of the fact that the basic structures in Italian healthcare were destroyed, while excellent results were achieved in other specialisations, including cardiology and orthopaedics.

This makes us think. Of course, now, during the second wave, we are more prepared than before, but the basic structures are still not quite effective, and the least protected segments of the population suffer from this.

Therefore, we need to build a medical system that works for everyone. When the medical system is ineffective, its cost becomes very high.

At the Verona forum, speakers focused on the need to separate politics from the economy, about the futility

To see and be seen

Expositions of Belarusian manufacturers will soon be presented at a major international exhibition — organised by Belinterexpo unitary enterprise of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry which has held over 250 exhibitions and expositions in 60 countries to date

The *Made in Belarus* exhibition will be presented in Egypt at the international *Cairo ICT* telecommunications and information technology exhibition on November 22nd-25th.

Cairo ICT is a key technology event that brings together suppliers and system integrators in the field of information and communication technologies for such areas as engineering, banking and financial services, education, energy, telecommunications, construction, defence and security.

“As part of the exhibition, Belarusian participants will enjoy an opportunity to present high-tech products and services. In addition, jointly with the Embassy of Belarus in Egypt, a programme of events is being prepared, which includes visits and negotiations with representatives of IT parks, ministries and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, production and trade organisations of the country,” said Belinterexpo.

Expositions by Belarusian manufacturers of food and beverages — *Belarus. The Taste of Nature* — will be presented at major food exhibitions in Turkey and the UAE: *CNR Food Istanbul* and *Gulfood* in Dubai.

The *CNR Food Istanbul* fair will be held in Istanbul on November 25th-28th. Last year, it was attended by more than 650 companies from 17 countries, including



Photos from Belinterexpo archive

the Czech Republic, India, Jordan, Iran, Poland, Serbia, Malaysia and Belarus.

“The interest in the exhibition is explained by the fact that Turkey is now not just a large consumer market with more than 83m people and approximately 52m tourists, according to 2019 data, but also a trade gateway to the Middle East and North Africa. Over the past 15 years, Turkey has imported food products worth \$12-15bn annually. International experts in the field of agriculture predict a further increase in Turkish food imports in the next five years, due to an increase in the country’s population, food shortages and the deterioration of agricultural production within the state,” Belinterexpo noted. The

company added that, according to the Belarusian Embassy in Turkey, the increasing cost of food production in the country has forced the Turkish Government to make compromises in imports of agricultural products, reducing import duties.

“Recently, the Middle East countries have also become an important export destination. The arid climate makes the Gulf states major importers of food. In a number of countries, the demand for food increases by 30 percent annually. Governments of the Middle East countries participate in the selection and procurement of products, including through specialised exhibitions,” the exhibition company stressed.

The world’s largest annual food exhi-



bition — *Gulfood* — will be held in Dubai on February 21st-25th. It annually gathers more than 5,000 participants and about 100,000 professional visitors from over 190 countries. The exhibition of Belarusian producers at *Gulfood* has already become traditional: the event will be held for the sixth year in a row. It will also feature business events such as seminars, conferences and negotiations that will provide participants with an additional opportunity to establish business contacts.

Today, the UAE is the world’s third re-export market — following Hong Kong and Singapore. The UAE is a key hub for the re-export of food products in the Persian Gulf region. It is through them that more than 90 percent of food products are imported into the region, which also includes Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia. Meat and milk are at the top of the list of the main imported products to the region. Belarus plans to supply dairy products, beef and poultry.

Based on materials of belta.by

New machinery tested in action

By Olga Korneeva

This year, the vehicle was shown to the general public at the *Belagro* exhibition and tested on harvesting corn of complete waxy maturity. “The FS 450 harvester copes superbly with its functions: efficient forage harvesting with a high quality of grinding in the most difficult conditions,” the company notes.

The vehicle is equipped with a 450HP Volvo Penta engine and a 750-litre fuel tank. The transport speed can reach 30 km/h and makes it possible to cut the time spent by its operator on driving.

The FS 450 has a spacious, modern cabin with excellent visibility. It is equipped with everything necessary for comfortable operation of the harvest-

er, also having a powerful electric lighting system for working at night.

Another advantage of the new vehicle is the ability to choose a pre-grinding device of a roller or disk type.

“The new model has some options which will help improve the efficiency of forage harvesting: auto driving, remote monitoring, video surveillance, four-wheel drive, automated centralised lubrication system, fire extinguishing system and determination of the parameters of the prepared feed,” the company adds.

Gomselmash harvesters work in the fields of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Argentina, Brazil, China, the Republic of Korea, and the Baltic States. The company has a wide distribution network, joint ventures and assembly plants.

A major agricultural machinery manufacturer — Gomselmash — has successfully tested its new FS 450 forage harvester



gomselmash.by

NEWS IN BRIEF

First mobile interactive exhibition — *Partisans of Belarus* — opened in Molodechno



In the year of the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War, the exhibition presents unique archival documents, award lists, combat characteristics, descriptions of battles and partisan fights. The *partizany.by* Internet project was created jointly by the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House and the National Archive. As part of it, the documents available in the archive are actively being digitised, while the database is updated daily. Over 100,000 names of partisans and underground workers are already added to the site. In addition, the portal has created individual electronic cards that contain basic information about a partisan. Attached are scanned copies of archival documents.

Representatives of 41 countries to take part in Eurovision Song Contest 2021

The 65th International *Eurovision Song Contest 2020* was scheduled to take place from May 12th-16th at the Ahoy Hall in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. However, it was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. Instead, on May 16th, an online show was held fea-



turing the participants of the cancelled *Eurovision Song Contest 2020*.

The 2021 event — organised by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and Dutch companies NPO, NOS and AVROTROS — is scheduled to take place at Ahoy, on May 18th, 20th and 22nd. The ‘Open Up’ slogan chosen for the cancelled *Eurovision 2020* will remain for next year’s song contest.

Training pilots in Belarus is scheduled to start in 2021

The Aviation Department of the Belarusian Transport and Communications Ministry is now working to make pilot specialisations available. The first students are expected to be enrolled in 2021. Requirements for entrance exams have been worked out as well as for physical and psychological evaluations and medical certification of the entrants. Design documents for building a training centre in the Belarusian State Aviation Academy are also being prepared.



The Belarusian State Aviation Academy will offer theoretical training while the Minsk aeroclub of the DOSAAF (the Voluntary Society for Assisting the Army, the Air Force, and the Navy) will teach pilots how to fly.

Ticket to *Listapad* Film Festival already on sale in Minsk

The 27th Minsk *Listapad* International Film Festival will be held on November 6th-13th, under the ‘Magic of the Image’ banner. The Tsentralny cinema will be the main venue for the main feature film competition and the *Youth on the March* competition. There will also be night screenings from the out-of-contest feature film programme. The Falcon Club Boutique Cinema complex will host screenings from the competitive and out-of-contest feature film programmes, while the Pioneer cinema will show competitive films for children and young people — *Listapadzik* — as well as competitive screenings of feature films and out-of-contest films. The opening and closing ceremonies will be held at the Moskva cinema.



Clearly visible beauty



Anton Stepanishchey

New observation site on Mayak Mount

By Anna Naumova

A new attraction is to be found on the Mayak Mount — known as one of the best sightseeing spots in the Braslav District. Symbolically, the observation tower resembles a lighthouse — surrounded by blue lakes instead of the sea. In good weather, there are views of the surroundings for many kilometres.

Those at the Braslav Lakes National Park have long dreamed about this project. The unusual tower was discussed for the first time four years ago but work on it only started in 2019.

“The height is a dizzying 15 metres,” smiles the Deputy Director of the National Park, Mikhail Molotok. “However, owing to reliable steel railings, it is quite safe to enjoy the views.

A five-storey-high observation site opens in Braslav District

The site is located in a recreation area near the Strusto and Snudy lakes. We have been improving this place for several years: new and old tourist camp sites have been revamped, a rental office has opened and electric lines have been laid. The new observation site is actually a final touch.”

The object is a serious bid to get into the top tourist attractions in the region. At any time of the year, there are enough people who want to go up here to appreciate the view. It’s no wonder: the height of the mountain is 174 metres above sea level, and 44.7 metres

above the neighbouring lakes.

Next to the new site there is an old one; its height is much less impressive: around 3 metres. This site — well known to Braslav residents and guests of the district — will not be destroyed but likely to be used for a new purpose.

“Writing about Mayak and climbing to it are different things,” Vladimir Petkevich, a leading specialist of the National Park’s Tourism Department, encourages us to go. He takes us 10km away from the district centre to reach the mount. Mayak is captivating at first glance, although it is cool to stand here: it is quite windy on the mountain.

“This year, many Belarusians have discovered the Braslav District for themselves, also being attracted by domestic tourism,” Mr. Petkevich notes. “After visiting our land, they admitted it’s great here, even without the notorious ‘all inclusive’ services. The unique nature and homely atmosphere are the significant advantages.”

Mount Mayak is attractive all year round: nowhere else it is possible to discover the natural scenery common to this place

Sounds of the past

Polotsk whistles bid to be included in the State List of Historical and Cultural Values

Polotsk has long been famous for its talented people, beautiful buildings, and lasting traditions. One of the special features of the city over the Dvina also includes 13th-19th century artistic ceramics. Many of these clay artefacts have been found at different times in the central part of the city, in Zapolotie and Zadvinie, on the site of the former Jesuit Collegium. Now valuable exhibits are stored in the Museum of Architecture History of St. Sophia Cathedral.

By Olga Plyukhaeva

Whistles are at the heart of the collection; they were used as toys or as musical instruments. Among the most interesting finds were pipe whistles, whistle-horses, and others. An artefact discovered in 2018 on the site of the Upper Castle is of special interest: the ‘Nightingale’ whistle has the form of a small pot measuring 6.3 x 6.0 x 4.5cm, with a whistle on its body. If you pour water into the pot, the whistle sounds with the overflow, as if a bird is singing.

Whistles were made in various pottery centres but Polotsk toys have peculiar features: zoomorphic lines, engobe painting (engobe is a coating of liquid clay applied to the surface of the product before it is fired). Polotsk whistles were made from local soft clay which, after firing, becomes red-brown. The figures were made from practically one piece, they are frontal and, despite their small size, they seem extremely monumental. Having lain for hundreds of years in the soil, the toys can still surprise with their clear, echoing sound. Depending on the size of their hollow part, the sound can be high-pitched or lower.

Yekaterina Zelenskaya, a ceramic master of the Polotsk District Centre of Crafts and National Cultures, is now seen as the major keeper of the tradition of Polotsk

whistle making. She is a 3rd degree winner of the international *Clay Sings* competition of masters of ceramics and pottery held as part of the *Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk International Festival of Arts*. The crafts-woman is not only engaged in making whistles based on the discovered artefacts or stylised items of traditional forms, but



Photos courtesy of Polotsk District Centre of Crafts and National Cultures



also teaches others how to do it. Since 2016, the Sculpture and Ceramics club has operated at the Polotsk District Centre of Crafts and National Cultures; since 2019, the Kuvshinka [Waterlily] children’s studio of decorative and applied arts has worked here. The tradition lives on and there is a chance that the unique Polotsk whistle will soon receive the status of an intangible cultural object of Belarus.



Ilya Shvedko

Mystery of the ancient city

The archaeologists found ancient graves, as well as fragments of glass bracelets, a ring and other 12-13th century artefacts while working on the site of Polotsk’s Upper Castle. Since last November, large scale construction has been underway here: the former hospital campus will house the Polotsk Cadet School. Our correspondent met the archaeologists to learn more.

By Ilya Krasovsky

Laborious work

Igor Magalinsky, an Associate Professor of the Department of Social and Humanitarian Disciplines at Polotsk’s State University, explains that any work on the site of the historical centre is run under the mandatory supervision of archaeologists, “During excavation work at the construction site, a team of archaeologists discovered 9 graves of Polotsk residents of different ages: adults and children. Evidently, those were noble people who were respected in the city — as confirmed by glass bracelets found in several graves. A copper alloy ring is an important chronological marker as it very accurately dates the time of burial to the 12th century. Decorations of this kind are rarely found in burials from those times. The placement of graves — behind the church — also looks unusual.”

The Christian burial site did not exist for long: there are no burial places and all graves have a single positioning: west-facing with a focus on the south. It’s probably a church cemetery. Next to it, a hundred metres away, archaeologists previously discovered the foundation of a temple of the same age as the graves. It was built in the late 12th century from plinth, a thin

baked brick. It was then that Polotsk was booming in stone construction.

Experts view

Only after the remains pass an anthropological examination, they can be described in detail, since all are very fragmented. The possibilities of modern anthropological expertise are quite wide: the remains will make it possible to determine the gender, age and cause of death of these people.

“A cultural layer has been miraculously preserved at a depth of about 1.5 metres; it’s been seriously damaged during numerous construction works above this level,” continues Mr. Magalinsky. “The graves are literally cut through by communications. The archaeologists found the burials when taking out strong concrete foundations. In Soviet times, a garage was located above the burial site.”

In the meantime, the work on the area of the Upper Castle continues. According to Mr. Magalinsky, there are evidently more graves here: they are concentrated under the northern wall. The objects discovered from different epochs are already of great scientific value. Thanks to them, another historical page of Belarus’ oldest city will be completed.

Not all secrets are yet revealed

A builder's fingerprint, a secret tunnel, an iconostasis from Mulyavin and other sights of ancient Kolozha



St. Boris and Gleb Kolozha Church

By Sergey Gavritsky

The 12th century St. Boris and Gleb Kolozha Church in Grodno is one of the oldest functioning churches in Belarus. Unique architecture and construction technologies, for example, clay mouth-shaped urns set in the walls, make it possible to talk about a special Grodno school of architecture. The church boasts a rich history, and, despite the fact that it has been well studied, it continues to reveal its secrets.

There is still no consensus on who built this most beautiful stone church on the high bank of the Neman River. Let's leave the controversy to scientists and historians while getting to know one of the builders better. Indeed, several years ago, fingerprints were found on the base plate (this is the name of the layer from which the walls of the temple are built). It is clear that they could have been left only at the time of building. Forensic experts got involved in the case and the print was studied in the laboratory using modern techniques. Although with a degree of caution, it was nevertheless concluded that the builder was a man, about 30 years old, the print strong and purposeful.

Now the church contains a 3D model of the print, enabling visitors to touch history. However, the trail itself continues on the outer wall of the temple.

If you look closely, you can find other 'messages' from the builders of the church. For instance, on one of the base plates the image of a fish is seen while a key is depicted on the other and a star on a third.

"These are most likely the hallmarks of the craftsmen who erected the temple or produced bricks for the construction," says the Father Superior of Kolozha Church, Archpriest Aleksandr Bolonnikov. At that time, this was a kind of guarantee, a quality mark. More than 800 years later, we can say that what they did then was good for centuries.

In addition, after the reconstruction, a window into the past was literally opened in the church. Once there were many columns, but some have since been destroyed. The base of one of them has now been covered with special glass, and through the archaeological window in the floor, you can see it.

The temple continues to survive despite its many trials. One of the most serious happened in the mid-19th century, when a landslide caused the wall of the church to collapse into the river. It was restored in wood instead of stone. A century later, the wooden wall required major repair, which was completed in late 2018.

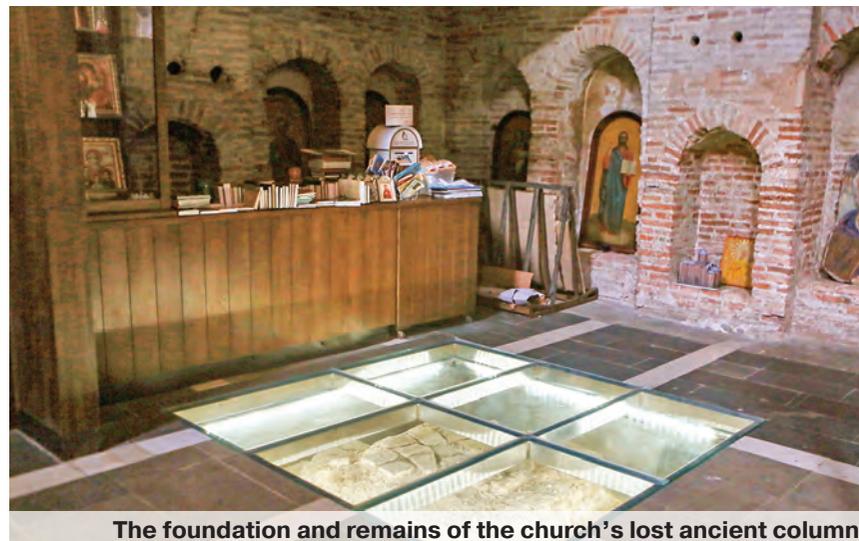
According to the Father Superior, the return of the historical copy of the unique Kolozha Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos to the renovated church confirms that everything was done in a timely manner and correctly. The miraculous icon, created, according to some sources,

in the 16th century, was for centuries the main shrine of the Grodno Region. It was in the church until its collapse in 1853. Many healings and miracles are associated with the icon: for example, the deliverance of Grodno from destruction by the Kaiser's troops in 1914. After a prayer by the residents for salvation from ruin and destruction, the enemy, who were practically at the gates of the city, retreated. In 1915, the icon was evacuated, and since then it has been lost.

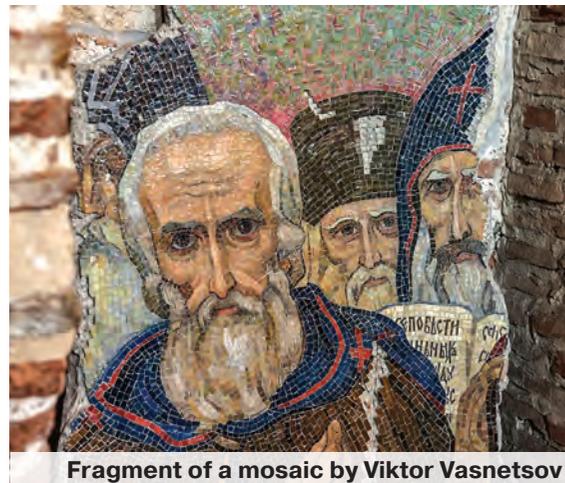


A secret passage in the church

BELTA



The foundation and remains of the church's lost ancient column



Fragment of a mosaic by Viktor Vasnetsov

However, in late 2018 — when large-scale renovations were being completed in the temple — the exact and only known historical copy of the icon was discovered at one of the antique auctions in Germany. The church fortunately managed to get it.

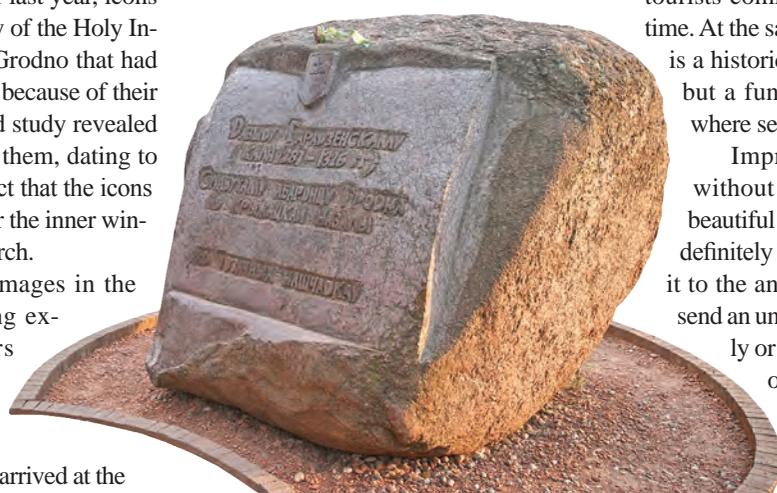
According to Aleksandr Bolonnikov, the return was preceded by another significant event. At the end of last year, icons were found in the sacristy of the Holy Intercession Cathedral in Grodno that had not been previously used because of their unusual shape. A detailed study revealed an inscription on one of them, dating to 1897. It testifies to the fact that the icons were painted specially for the inner windows of the Kolozha church.

The list of unique images in the church is far from being exhausted. Several years ago, a copy of the icon of St. Righteous Anna — the mother of the Most Holy Theotokos — arrived at the church. The image of the saint was painted

on Mount Athos especially for Grodno church. People pray to the icon for the gift of children and there are many cases of miracles.

Few people know that the history of the temple is connected with the name of Vladimir Mulyavin. The famous 'pesnyar' [singer] donated money to make an iconostasis for the church. A prayer in the Kolozha church helped him get rid of his addiction to tobacco.

The Kolozha church is significant in the history of Grodno and Belarus in general both as a unique architectural monument and a witness to important events. For example, it was from here, as the legends and historical chronicles say, that the army of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania — under the leadership of Vytautas — was sent to the Battle of Grunwald. In honour of this event, a memorial



A memorial sign to commander David Gorodensky

sign was erected near the temple.

According to legend, the prince, castellan of Grodno Davyd Gorodensky is buried near the walls of the temple. He became an iconic figure in the history of Grodno and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in general at the beginning of the 16th century. Prince Davyd became famous primarily as a military leader and courageous defender of the city. It is believed that he did not suffer a single defeat in the battles with the crusaders.

There is also the work of the outstanding Russian painter, Viktor Vasnetsov, in Kolozha: a fragment of a mosaic depicting St. Sergius of Radonezh — which previously adorned one of the temples in Warsaw — found its home in Grodno.

There is still no answer to the question of why a secret tunnel was created in the temple during its construction. Few know about it and you can only enter it at the altar. A narrow staircase (not every adult will get through) leads inside the wall to the second floor. The same was found in another wall, which a landslide brought down into the Neman River.

Clay jugs — similar to those found in the walls of the church — are embedded in this staircase. These vessels, called resonators, are another feature of the church. They are believed to create unique acoustics.

"Large hollow jugs in the walls could have been used to facilitate the construction. I have no doubt that the church has revealed far from all its secrets," notes the Father Superior.

Today the Kolozha church is a visiting card of the city, and probably one of the most visited sites. The flow of guests does not stop. Almost every day, buses and cars line up at the site in Kolozhsky Park, with tourists coming in groups and one at a time. At the same time, although Kolozha is a historical site, it is not a museum, but a functioning place of worship where services are held.

Impressions from Grodno — without a doubt, one of the most beautiful cities in the country — will definitely be incomplete without a visit to the ancient church. You can also send an unusual souvenir to your family or even yourself. All postcards or letters sent through the mailbox inside the temple are stamped with a unique postmark created specifically for Kolozha.



Symbolic edition of the Cannes Film Festival

Red carpet, evening dresses and photographers: the symbolic edition of Cannes 2020 — the most prestigious film festival in the world — opened with the ambition to breathe new life into an asphyxiated sector by the health crisis

“Our presence here is a responsibility, it is pleasure because it is the culture and it is also a friendly and affectionate demonstration”, noted Pierre Lescure, President of the festival.

Dozens of spectators followed one another, respecting physical distancing, for a rise ‘almost normal’ steps from the Palais des Festivals, which hosted the event as usual. But with wearing a mask and the obligation not to stay too long in

order to avoid any grouping.

The festival kicked off with the screening of the film *Un Triomphe (The Big Hit!)*, comedy-drama by Emmanuel Courcol with Kad Merad and Marina Hands, in the presence of the film crew.

In total, four films, including two French, were screened. Among the two foreign films: *Asa Ga Kuru (True Mothers)* by the Japanese Naomi Kawase, and a Georgian debut film by Dea Ku-

lumbegashvili, *Dasatskisi (Beginning)*, crowned in San Sebastian (Spain).

The event ended with *Les Deux Alfred (The French Tech)* by Bruno Podalydès, in the presence of the director and the main actress, Sandrine Kiberlain.

Meanwhile, Egyptian director Sameh Alaa’s film *I’m Afraid to Forget Your Face* has won the Palme d’Or in the Cannes Film Festival’s Short Film Competition.

World’s longest immersed tunnel

After more than a decade of planning, work has begun on the world’s longest immersed tunnel. Descending up to 40m beneath the Baltic Sea, Fehmarnbelt Tunnel will link Denmark and Germany, slashing journey times when it opens in 2029.

The tunnel, which will be 18km long, is one of Europe’s largest infrastructure projects, with a construction budget of over 7bn Euros. By way of comparison, the 50km Channel Tunnel linking England and France, completed in 1993, cost the equivalent of 12bn Euros in today’s money.

It will be built across the Fehmarn Belt, a strait between the German island of Fehmarn and the Danish island of Lolland, and is designed as an alternative to the current ferry service from Rødby and Puttgarden, which carries millions of passengers every year. Where the crossing now takes 45



minutes by ferry, it will take just seven minutes by train and 10 minutes by car.

The tunnel, whose official name is Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link, will also be the longest combined road and rail tunnel anywhere in the world. It will comprise two double-lane motorways — separated by a service passageway — and two electrified rail tracks.

Changing hundreds of royal clocks

As the clocks go back this autumn, the horological conservator at Windsor Castle was busy changing more than 400 clocks from the Royal Collection Trust



Fjodor van den Broek is the current horological conservator of the 900-year-old royal castle. The changing of the clocks this autumn was Fjodor’s first since taking on the role.

He spent about 16 hours changing all 400 clocks on the Windsor estate, including about 250 in the castle itself, along with seven tower clocks.

“It’s just myself, and I have one colleague at Buckingham

Palace who changes all the clocks there,” Fjodor said.

For some clocks there is an extra time difference to take into account.

When he’s not changing the time, Fjodor’s job includes spending one full day a week winding up the mechanical clocks to keep their pendulums swinging.



Protests in Italy turn violent

Protests took place across Italy over new restrictions to curb the country’s second wave of COVID

Clashes were reported in the northern cities such as Turin, where petrol bombs were thrown at officers. In Milan, tear gas was used to disperse protesters, and thousands of people gathered in the centre of Naples. The demonstrations began soon after the national government’s order to close restaurants, bars, gyms and cinemas came into effect.

Many regions have also imposed nighttime curfews — including Lombardy and Piedmont. The violence was blamed on extremist agitators and police said 28 people had been arrested in Milan alone.

Protests took place in about a dozen other cities, including Rome, Genoa, Palermo and Trieste. Taxi drivers occupied a central square in Turin while restaurant owners beat pots and pans in the centre of Cremona. In Naples, a big crowd gathered in the central Piazza del Plebiscito, many calling on the regional governor to resign.

While an initial national lockdown earlier this year was complied with little resistance, the announcement of renewed measures has been met with immediate pushback.



Monika Unger

She wanted to rise up but ended in prison...

Head of 'parallel government' sent to jail in Austria

This is news that is likely to interest the representatives of our so-called 'Co-ordination Council', unless, of course, it has already interested and forced them to think. The news came from Austria, where the woman who founded and headed the 'parallel government' of the country (Monika Unger) was recently imprisoned for 12 years while her deputy was given ten years. She has not received any support from other European democracies.

Briefly, the organisation was founded in 2015 and unites up to 2,600 members (they also included anti-state supporters — from anarchists to neo-Nazis), Staatenbund considered itself a fully-fledged state with passports and license plates, prohibiting its members from paying taxes to the Austrian authorities. Members of the underground group (how can the Staatenbund be called otherwise?) were collecting money hoping to arrange a military coup in the country. In January 2017, they even petitioned the Defence Department with a written request to arrest some 100 politicians, starting with the federal president, and form an interim military government. They also openly considered options for foreign intervention. To this end, Unger once again wrote a letter to Vladimir Putin.

Frau Unger herself is a member of the nationalist Austrian Freedom Party — one of the parties of the ruling coalition in Parliament. She sees herself as a 'victim of the system of oppression' and is well-known for criticising the Austrian system for injustice. She said that modern Austria is an un-free society of capital that suppresses personality.

Everyone understands what such a 'political history' can lead to, except for our 'zmagary' who are shrouded in a veil of revolutionary romance. The impostor was rightly found guilty of incitement to mutiny and treason. According to Austrian media, the jury in Graz compared the two leaders of that same 'government' with the putschists. Since the army, which Unger was trying to win over to her side, has weapons, the prosecutor regarded this as a real coup attempt. The remaining twelve defendants were found guilty of subversion and fraud. All defence lawyers considered this accusation laughable and asked for the defendants to be acquitted.

"This is an unorganised, unsystematic group, and therefore it does not constitute a competition for the republic. Their behaviour was complete nonsense, but certainly not dangerous."

However, their appeals were all in vain. After the new trial, Monika Unger was still found guilty, thus giving food for thought for the rest of the party.

"The experience of democratic countries shows that there are many attempts to create quasi-state, parallel structures," commented Vadim Gigin, the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Belarusian State University. "There is even a special term — 'parapolitics'. There are similar examples not just in the European Union. In some states of the United States, for example, there are political organisations that claim — among other things — state power. Attempts to create separate states that issue their passports and issue stamps are not isolated either. It must be said that states react to such structures in different ways. At first, as a rule, they simply try not to notice them and treat them as fakes, but if these manifestations are systematic and constant, then the reaction will be quite harsh almost everywhere, both in the European Union and in the USA. Especially if it turns into some kind of radical and extremist form. It should be understood that many in the democratic world are dissatisfied with the current political system. If we look at the polls in Spain, for example, how many supporters of the monarchy and how many of the republic are there?"

Virus and protest

Coronavirus and protests: the situation in Poland is getting worse

Mass protests and women's marches. A nationwide strike and the creation of a 'Co-ordination Council'. Clashes with law enforcement agencies and road blocking. Calls for resignation and offensive posters. Meetings under undesirables' windows... This article is about what is happening now in Poland where demonstrators have been protesting the Constitutional Court's ruling on tightening abortion laws for many days.

In Poland, the situation is hotting up with every new day. The 'political temperature' records are being broken by the efforts of protesters. The degree of heat is rising and large demonstrations pour onto the streets of Warsaw, Katowice, Krakow, Poznan, Wroclaw, Szczecin and Trigorod. Campaigns also took place in smaller cities. Those attending were making a lot of noise, defending their rights. It was not only opponents of stricter abortion laws who were showing themselves: farmers were reminding people of themselves again — having blocked the key Warsaw intersections and paralysed transport links. Employees of the exhibition industry also plunged into the protest cauldron, demanding industry assistance from the Government which would enable them to survive the consequences of the coronavirus.

These were definitely not peaceful meetings. We can only imagine how much the entirely blameless car drivers and passengers of the capital's buses and trams cursed in traffic jams. Farmers fired flares and set off firecrackers. Similar tactics were used by the protesters in Bialystok. In Wroclaw, a group of 40 similarly 'unknown' persons — mostly well-built men — attacked the female anti-abortion protesters during their march. Two victims were taken away by ambulance. Two female journalists were also attacked.

Acts of disobedience and aggression are fraught with consequences, and the country's law enforcement agencies have once again clearly proved this. Pepper gas and stun grenades were used to prevent collisions and beatings against the 'incredible' Polish women who came to the forefront of the fight against the actions of the authorities. The military gendarmerie was sent to help the police and immediately set to work zealously.

"Situations that we deal with on the streets — aggression, vandalism, attacks — should not take place. We will strongly oppose them. They violate public order and the law," Poland's Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, stated categorically. However, just two months ago, he called the protests in Belarus 'a thirst for complete freedom and democracy, a thirst to be part of free peoples'. It turns out that this situation in one's own home, even if Poland considers itself an example of democracy, is truly unpleasant.

Aleksandr Lukashenko explained in detail what exactly caused the Polish street protests when making personnel decisions. Firstly, tougher abortion laws acted as a trigger. Secondly, it was the falsification of the elections by Polish President Duda. Thirdly, the accumulated economic problems and, fourthly, the gap between the poor and the rich mattered. As the Head of State concluded, the revolution there has been maturing for a long time, "They wanted to organise a revolution in our country — not even a revolution but a rebellion — but they've got it themselves."

On top of all this, experts draw another interesting parallel: protests in the world are like coronavirus. No



REUTERS

one is immune from either. Moreover, the signs are the same. A loss of 'sense of smell' is one of them.

"Everyone thinks this disease is going to take over someone other than me. The situation with protests and riots is exactly the same," believes a national security expert, Aleksandr Tishchenko. "It doesn't matter now what the trigger mechanism is, or against who they occur. Protests, like the coronavirus, mow down everyone indiscriminately — looking for new victims, even among those who follow, in his opinion, 'a healthy lifestyle'. This concerns not only Poland. The whole of Europe is covered with protests: 'yellow vests', anti-COVID, anti-abortion demonstrations... The reason is not the key. The 'soil' on which this can grow is important. It's unhealthy. Poland, while kicking us, hoped that all this would not affect it. They laughed at our stability which was supposedly shaken by the wave of protests, but now their own is starting to get a virus. Nobody knows how the 'disease' will end."

...In addition, the number of COVID-19 cases in Poland has for the first time exceeded 20,000 per day.

Cut-throats in France

France has not yet recovered from the monstrous brutality of the murder near Paris when an Islamist radical stabbed a teacher who showed students cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, as once again people are attacked

This time it's happened in Nice. The victims of an attack near the Notre Dame Basilica last week, which has already been classified as a terrorist attack, were three people — including a Christian priest. One of the dead women was almost decapitated. The perpetrator was shouting 'Allahu Akbar'. As reported, he is 25 and his name is Brahim. During the arrest, the man was wounded and taken to hospital.

A similar case occurred in Avignon, France where an unknown person with a gun attacked the police officers who opened fire in response. The man died from his injuries.

Another armed potential terrorist — who brandished a knife at a tram stop — was arrested in the French city of Lyon. He was promptly



REUTERS

taken into custody, and an investigation is underway. Whether this episode is connected with the terrorist attack in Nice is still unknown. Nevertheless, France has taken the current counter-terrorism plan to the highest level.

Speaking at the National Assembly, Prime Minister Jean Castex called the incident in Nice a vile and barbaric act that plunged the entire country into mourning. He assured people that the response of the authorities will be quick and decisive.

In line with the acting French laws, the introduction of a level of urgent measures in connection with a terrorist attack means the mobilisation of larger police and army forces to ensure security, and the allocation of funds to expand their activities.

Partisan Belarus



Reconstruction of a military campaign to rescue peaceful villagers

By Maria Grishina

Taking an invisible path

Time in Khovanshchina seemed to stand still. To find the village of the partisans, it's necessary to follow winding paths. Although trails are now laid for us, city dwellers 'spoil' with asphalt.

During the Great Patriotic War, only one road led to the settlement. Invisible. It was laid with stones in the swamp, so that the muddy water hid them. Thanks to this, even Sherlock Holmes wouldn't have found the path to the village! It was not visible from the air, and an enemy nearby would only see an untouched forest. Even not all the locals knew about the 'bolthole', only selected guides.

There was much to hide from the enemy. In the middle of the forest, the partisans built a whole town with a headquarters, a regional party committee building, a forest school, a medical unit, a family camp and the editorial office of the *Zarya* newspaper.

Seeing history with one's own eyes

Especially for the guests, real actors put on a mini-performance about how the partisans defended their homeland. This is much more realistic than in the theatre. In the middle of the forest, among the houses that act as a kind of decoration, the story is played out about how the Germans came to the Belarusian village to find the elusive avengers.

Suddenly, the quiet, peaceful forest is broken by the sound of shots, but so sharp that it pierces the heart. The shots are almost real, and the sounds are real. The partisans come to the village and save their compatriots.

After what they saw, the audience is overwhelmed with emotion. Such a performance, of course, cannot be compared with theatre, because, like it or not, a person finds himself practically a participant in the drama in the forest and feels all the pain, horror and joy of Victory that reigned here decades ago.

Studying at a forest school

Children of the Belarusian partisans also had a school, albeit in the open air. But even here they used a trick: so that the enemy did not see the school from the air, the crowns of the trees were tied together, forming a kind of tent. The kids learned to write, read and count.

Otherwise, it was almost an ordinary school with desks, a blackboard and a teacher. The partisans were even given tasks: from each sortie, they should bring back pencils, pens, paper and ink. Although the soldiers performed the task faithfully, there was still a shortage of school supplies.

The schoolchildren had their own materials made of wood, cans and wire-while the ink was obtained from enemy garrisons. Instead of notebooks, they used German leaflets, writing between the lines and in the margins. When there was nothing to write on, children used a special sand tablet. If there was not enough ink, they pounded blueberries or grapes to make 'edible' ink.

BELTA



A summer partisan school in the village of Khovanshchina



When there was nothing to write on, children used special sand tablets



Partisan children

BELTA



During the partisans' rest in the camp

Khovanshchina... The first thought that arises at this word is fear, horror, war. The location of the Belarusian resistance — Brest forest — keeps its secrets from the past until now while the descendants of the heroes help to preserve it.

Finding Father Frost

Despite the harsh years, there was even a place for a fairy tale in the partisan detachment — they had their own Father Frost! He appeared thanks to the Russian girl, Marusya. Before the war, she'd married a local man from Eastern Belarus. But in the first war years, her spouse was killed, and Marusya found herself in a partisan detachment.

Since she was a pioneer leader before the war, the commander didn't hesitate to appoint her as the leader of the partisan pioneer group. The New Year was approaching, and Marusya decided not to deprive the children of the holiday — especially at such a terrible time. She persuaded one of the partisans to change into Father Frost. He was dressed appropriately: a jacket, a grey beard made of cotton waste, a hat with earflaps with a red stripe. In his hands he had a staff with a red star at the end.

The wizard presented the Belarusian children with real Tula gingerbread! There was a tradition of making gingerbread cookies made in Marusya's family, so she, like no one else, knew the recipe for the delicacy. The main ingredients — rye flour and honey — were found in the village.

Reading 'little Zarya'

The partisans called it affectionately 'our little Zarya' because the newspaper was only 1/8 of the newspaper *Pravda* in size. At the top of the title page was written: 'Read and then pass on to another', and no partisan had ever used it for scrap as they knew the price of each issue. The newspaper was published right in the partisan forest, on a real printing press. Average circulation was 300-400 copies.

One day a partisan courier came to the village with 50 copies of the newspaper to distribute among local residents. It was at this moment that the Germans showed up, who equated the printed word with military weapons. The young partisan girl ran into the nearest house and asked the owner to hide her and the newspapers. He was not at a loss, even though death was threatened for this; he hid the girl by the stove with his children, and the newspapers... in a felt boot! The Germans ransacked the entire house but found nothing. Finding the children by the stove, the German soldier angrily kicked at a felt boot lying next to him. However, the newspapers were hidden in the second boot. So, it saved the whole village from being burned. Moreover, the saying 'if you want to hide something, hide it in a conspicuous place' was confirmed even by the partisans.

Skating to win

IceStar International Figure Skating Tournament hosted by Minsk

The IceStar competitions — which are already a tradition being held for a decade — have ended on the ice of the Olympic Arena. The event brings together leading Belarusian and foreign figure skaters and this year was no exception: sportsmen from ten countries competed for the IceStar awards.

By **Tatiana Litvinova**

Even before its start, the tournament promised to be representative and interesting. Sadly, not all managed to come to Minsk. The French were unable to leave their country and, accordingly, one of the favourites in men's singles, Kevin Aymoz, didn't come to Belarus. Russian Yelizaveta Tuktamysheva and Azerbaijani Yekaterina Ryabova couldn't attend at the last moment...

However, the tournament was impressive. In the seniors' competition, the first winners were named among sports pairs in ice dancing. The Belarusian duo of Viktoria Semenyuk and Ilya Yukhimuk were unrivalled; interestingly, the event was the first international competition for the pair as part of the Belarusian national team.

There was no sensation in men's singles skating, with Russian Mikhail Kolyada winning: he broke into the lead after the short programme and the gap between him and the others was more than 20 points. In the free programme, Kolyada was also named the best. In turn, silver went to a Belarusian figure skater, Konstantin Milyukov, who openly admitted that he was pleased with his performance since not everything had worked out well in training before the tournament.

"I was worried during the short programme and made a mistake. However, in the free programme I felt confident. Of course, we would like to see more participants and greater competition. It was originally planned that Moris Kvitelashvili, Kevin Aymoz — participants of the European championships — would come. Nevertheless, it was interesting to compete with such skaters as Mikhail Kolyada," Konstantin said later, adding that it's not yet clear how the season will develop. Due to the pandemic, changes are made to the calendar every now and then, so most likely the nearest event for him will be the Belarusian

Championship scheduled for December.

Honoured Coach of the USSR and Russia, Aleksei Mishin, also spoke about how important the tournament held in Minsk was for figure skaters. "Minsk is a happy city for us: one of our skaters became a European champion here. I'm grateful to the Belarusian Skating Union and its Chair, Yulia Komleva, for organising a tournament necessary for athletes at such a difficult time. For sportsmen, the key task now is not to compete against rivals but to train their programme and find weaknesses in them," he said.

Speaking about Minsk, which is successful for Russian figure skaters, Mr. Mishin probably meant primarily the successful performances of Sofia Samodurova in our arenas. Last year, the Russian singles figure skater won the European Championship here and later

was second — losing to her teammate Anastasia Gulyakova and being ahead of Belarusian Viktoria Safonova. However, after the free programme, everything changed. On the second day of the competition, the Belarusian became the best; Safonova was ahead of the Russians in terms of points — leaving Gulyakova in second place and Samodurova in third.

"I'm happy with my performance,"

good level of readiness. The season is in its beginning and I could hardly imagine to see so good skating. Our fruitful work over the long and difficult months has yielded fruit. Viktoria Safonova was worried but performed great in the free programme to defeat Aleksei Mishin's strong athletes who have not yet reached their maximum. As for the men's singles competition, Konstantin Milyukov



Belarusian figure skater Konstantin Milyukov takes second place

won IceStar. In the absence of Yelizaveta Tuktamysheva, many still viewed Sofia as one of the main contenders for victory. After the short programme, she



Viktoria Safonova snatches victory in free programme at home tournament

said Viktoria Safonova. "There were minor mistakes but all was fine in the second start. I'll now start training for the Grand Prix in Moscow. My mood is combative and the performance at IceStar definitely gives me confidence. I am glad that we have competitions where a sportsman can skate in front of the public, find some shortcomings and eliminate them," she said.

Summing up the results of the tournament, a coach of the Republican Centre for Olympic Training in Ice Sports and a coach of our national team — Aleksandr Morozov — noted, "Any sensations at IceStar were pleasant. We saw that all the leaders of our national team have now a

pleased me much. He had a bad last season. He was changing coaches but has found the optimal training model and showed good skating. I am very happy for Bogdana Lukashevich and Aleksandr Stepanov, with whom Oleg Vasiliev and Nikolai Kamenchuk work, and for our sports pair in ice dancing Viktoria Semenyuk and Ilya Yukhimuk. The latter are an international level pair and we pin much hope on them. Of course, we are happy that the figure skaters demonstrate a high level of performance. It's only the beginning of the season but each of them enjoys a reserve: what they showed during the competition is not their strongest abilities yet."

On speedy ice

In the 500m women's event, Anna Nifontova was unrivalled — finishing in 38.84 seconds. Ignat Golovatyuk took the lead in a similar discipline for men: 35.28 seconds. Marina Zuyeva topped the 3,000m women's distance, with a final result of 4 minutes, 12.75 seconds.

In the 5,000m men's race, Yegor Domratsky won in 6 minutes, 42.58 seconds, while, in the women's team sprint, the Belarus-1 team members celebrated a victory: 1 minute, 33.95 seconds.

On the second day of the tournament, four sets of prizes were played for. In the women's race (1,000m), Yekaterina Sloyeva won in 1 minute and 19.31 seconds. Ignat Golovatyuk was the best over



During the competition

The Belarusian Speed Skating Championships in different distances, hosted by Minsk-Arena oval speed skating stadium, became one of the key events for sportsmen during the coronavirus pandemic — gathering about 70 participants from countrywide

the same distance for men: 1 minute, 10.13 seconds.

In the women's team race, the Belarus-1 team took the lead, posting a final 3 minutes, 13.06 seconds. In the similar men's programme, the Belarus-1 team won with 3 minutes, 58.09 seconds.

On the final day of the championship, the 1,500m women's event was a success for Marina Zuyeva; she finished in 2 minutes, 01.90 seconds. The skater also excelled in the mass event race. The 1,500 m men's was won by Ignat Golovatyuk: 1 minute, 49.85 seconds. In the mass event, Yevgeny Bolgov finished first.

Based on materials of belta.by

Photo of the week



Yury Mozalevsky

Kaleidoscope of colours: *Dozhinki* Festival in Cherven

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



November 5th is Day of Military Intelligence in the Republic of Belarus. Military intelligence officers are called the 'eyes and ears' of the Armed Forces. It was the scouts who made

a significant contribution to Victory in the Great Patriotic War. Military intelligence has been and remains the most important link in the national security system, allowing for the prevention of risks and threats at an early stage. Now the most modern technologies are used to collect information — from unmanned aircraft to spacecraft.

On November 6th, 1940, a radio plant was founded in Minsk (since 1957, the Instrument-Making Plant). Nowadays, Amkodor-Belvar JSC is a leading enterprise for the production of radio measuring equipment, medical devices, batteries and household appliances.



November 6th is International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict, launched by the UN General Assembly on November 5th, 2001, to draw attention to

the environmental impact of war and the importance of abandoning exploitation and needlessly damaging ecosystems in pursuit of military objectives.



November 7th is October Revolution Day in the Republic of Belarus. The 1917 revolution was one of the most significant events of the 20th century, which radically influenced the course of world history. Although more than 100 years have passed, the ideas of social justice are relevant in our time.

On November 7th, many stations of the Minsk metro were opened. The tradition of opening stations on the Minsk subway on November 7th began in 1997 from the extension of the 2nd line, when the stations Proletarskaya and Avtozavodskaya were put into operation. The next section of the same subway line, the opening of which was timed to coincide with a significant date in 2005, was a section that consisted of three stations: Sportivnaya, Kuntsevshchina and Kamennaya Gorka. On



November 7th, 2007, the relay race was intercepted by two new stations of the 1st line: Borisovsky Trakt and Uruchie, and on the same day in 2012 — three more stations were added: Grushevka, Mikhalovo, and Petrovshchina. The opening of the new 3rd metro line is scheduled for November 5th or 7th this year.

On November 8th, 1050, Svyatopolk Izyaslavich was born — Prince of Polotsk and Turov, the Grand Duke of Kiev. He was son of Grand Duke Izyaslav Yaroslavich, grandson of Yaroslav the Wise. In 1069, he assumed the reign of Polotsk, and, in 1093, he took the grand-princely throne in Kiev, which he held until death. He was one of the initiators of the Lyubech Congress of Princes in 1097, which decided that he — as a prince of Turov — received large territories on both sides of the River Pripjat with Turov, Pinsk, Berestie and Pogoryn, as well as the Kiev Principality and Novgorod land. According to the legend, his second wife — the Greek woman, Varvara — founded a convent in Turov. He died in 1113.



November 9th is International Day Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism, celebrated at the initiative of the UN, UNESCO, the

Council of Europe and international European organisations.

On the night of November 9th-10th, 1938, mass Jewish pogroms organised by the leadership of the Nazi party began simultaneously in Germany and Austria (Kristallnacht or the Night of Broken Glass).

On November 10th, 1930, the first sound cinema Chyrvonaya Zorka was opened in Minsk, which had 700 seats. On its opening day, it hosted the premiere of the first Belarusian experimental sound film *Coup* (directed by Yuri Tarich), produced by Belgoskino. Chyrvonaya Zorka became the fourth sound cinema in the USSR.



November 10th is World Youth Day. On this day in 1945, the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) was founded. WFDY fights for peace, youth rights, independence of peoples and the international rallying of progressive youth; against colonialism, neo-colonialism, fascism and racism.