

Makei goes West, MILEX, and Chernobyl for tourists – State press digest

Alexander Lukashenka meets the President of Moldova, discusses Russia and Ukraine. Foreign Minister Makei flies to Geneva and later meets USAID representatives. Putin's press-secretary Pescov rebuffs Lukashenka's statements on the anti-Belarusian sanctions. Minsk prepares for the international military exhibition MILEX.

Belarus wants to expand its cooperation with the World Bank in projects worth \$300m. Lukashenka disapproves the agrarian management, suggests that large industrial giants should take up more collective farms. Belarus intends to repair its parts of the "Druzhba" pipeline.

Lukashenka expects the High Tech park to bring the latest information technologies to the court halls. Minsk prepares for the Second European Games. The Belarusian authorities to open up the Chernobyl Exclusion zone for tourists.

Politics

The President of Moldova visits Belarus, reports [BELTA](#). On 10 April 2019, Alexander Lukashenka met Igor Dodon, the President of Moldova, in Minsk. The presidents discussed the bilateral relationship, the Ukrainian events, and the relations of both states with Russia. According to Lukashenka, Belarusian-Moldovan relations remain almost flawless. Dodon, on the other hand, praised the Belarusian import to Moldova and expressed the intention to improve the mutual trade relations.

Foreign Minister Makei meets USAID representative, reports

[BELTA](#). On 11 April 2019, Uladzimir Makei met with a U.S. delegation led by Brock Bierman, Assistant Administrator for USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia. The parties discussed the bilateral relations and the potential enhancement of cooperation, particularly, in the areas of promotion of small and medium-sized entrepreneurship, tourism and culture.

In addition, previously **Minister Makei visited Geneva** to take part in the 68th session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), reported the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#). Belarus's foreign minister emphasized the unique role of UNECE as Europe's top discussion platform on economic and social development matters.

Putin's press secretary Peskov disagrees with Lukashenka's statements on "the sanctions against Belarus", reports ["Soyuznoe Veche"](#). According to Dmitry Peskov, the temporary closure of the Russian market for several categories of the Belarus-made milk goods has never presumed anti-Belarusian sanctions. Peskov assured that Russia had always followed the political and economic agreements of the Union State and intended to do so in future.



Source: sb.by

Minsk prepares for the top military exhibition MILEX 2019, reports [Belarus Segodnya](#). The Ninth international arms and military hardware expo MILEX 2019 will feature about 100 samples of weapons. Approximately 35 companies from Azerbaijan, Germany, China, and Russia have already confirmed their participation in the exhibition. The exhibition's opening ceremony will take place at the historical complex Stalin's Line on 15 May.

Economics

Belarus wants to engage in \$300m projects sponsored by the World Bank, reports the [Ministry of the Economy](#). In early April 2019, the Belarusian delegation led by the Minister of Economy Dzmitry Krutoy met with the World Bank's Vice President for Europe and Central Asia Cyril Muller. The parties discussed the potential new projects in education, energy effectiveness, and infrastructure. Currently, Belarus's investment portfolio reaches eight investment projects worth \$790m.

Lukashenka angry with agricultural management reports [Belarus Segodnya](#). On 9 April 2019, the President of Belarus went for a working trip to Lahoisk district. Alexander Lukashenka expressed particular dissatisfaction with the underperformance of the collective farms and state agricultural enterprises. The Belarusian leader encouraged the industry giants to take up more collective farms under their control:

I think some industry giants, like MTZ and Belorusneft, should take on more collective farms. They have people, some resources, technology and different approaches. They will be able to bring these companies into shape faster.

Belarus wants to repair its parts of the "Druzhba" pipeline, reports ["Soyuznoe Veche"](#). According to the Vice Premier

Minister Ihar Petryshenka, Belarus intends to repair all the pipelines passing through its territory. Due to the complicated nature of the maintenance works, several pipeline's areas will close at times. By 2019, "Druzhba", the world's longest oil pipeline, flowing from the Yamal peninsula to Germany, will reach 55 years old.

Society

Lukashenka wants to introduce information technologies in Belarusian courts, reports [BELTA](#). On 5 April 2019, Alexander Lukashenka ordered the government to improve the operation of the general jurisdiction courts by introducing the most advanced information technologies. According to the President of Belarus, the Belarusian judges need to stop using hardcopy protocols of court proceedings: "All the sessions of the Supreme Court should proceed without paper. You can use paper only if someone needs to take hardcopy notes in rare cases."

Moreover, Lukashenka expressed the intention to digitalize the Belarusian courts all over the country by the specified deadline with the help from the HighTech Park and the Operations and Analysis Center.

Belarusian educators worried about plagiarism reports ["Navuka"](#) newspaper. According to Aliaksandr Huchok, the chair of Belarus's Higher Attestation Commission, the Belarusian segment of the Internet contains 46 websites offering paid thesis writing. Though advertising such services break the Belarusian law, the Ministry of Education unable to trace all the lawbreakers.



Source: sb.by

The Belarusian language holds a positive therapeutic effect, reports [Belarus Segodnya](#). According to Ala Ryzevich, a popular radio DJ from “Stalitsa” radio station, the Belarusian language helps to balance the daily stress and restore good psychological condition. Ms Ryzevich particularly advises using Belarusian words in conflict resolution.

Culture

Minsk hosts the Spring Queen 2019 beauty pageant, reports [BELTA](#). On 8 April, the Minsk City staged the nationwide contest of beauty and talent Spring Queen 2019. Students from ten universities competed for the right to represent Minsk at the nationwide final show “Miss Belarus 2019”. Yelizaveta Abramkina, the student of Belarusian State Economic University, won the crown.

Belarus prepares for the Second European Games, reports [“Soyuznoe Veche”](#). From 21 to 30 June 2019, Belarus’s capital will host more than 4000 sportsmen from 50 countries. The fox Lesik, the official symbol of the Games, became the first participant to register in the accreditation centre at the beginning of April.

Belarus to open the Exclusion zone near Chernobyl reports

[Belarus Segodnya](#). Tourists will get access to the abandoned villages; however, the tourist routes will retain safe radiation levels. The costs of such excursions should vary between \$150-200.

The State Press Digest is based on the review of state-controlled publications in Belarus. Freedom of the press in Belarus remains restricted and state media convey primarily the point of view of the Belarusian authorities. This review attempts to give the English-speaking audience a better understanding of how Belarusian state media shape public opinion in the country.

Putin's Aide: Don't Throw Flames on Russia-Belarus Oil Talks



The Russia-Belarus oil disputes continues as Belarus authorities struggle to retain a larger share of the duty-free oil imports. However, Russia seems to be determined to keep a larger share of the pie despite the reputation damage, which the dispute has already caused. The duty-free oil shop is likely to remain open only for Belarusian domestic customers, but no longer for those re-selling Russian oil to the West.

Yesterday, Vladimir Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov urged not to throw flames on Russia-Belarus oil talks. But he explained on [the pages of the Washington Post](#) that Russia is determined to cut the luctative oil refining business of the Belarus regime:

The so-called “dispute” between Russia and Belarus is in reality an ongoing negotiation between supplier and customer. For years, Russia subsidized Belarus by providing deep discounts for oil. This discounted oil was used not only for Belarus’s domestic needs, but considerable amounts of it were refined in Belarus and exported to European markets at the real market price.

Although Belarus and Russia continue to declare that the dispute will not affect deliveries to Europe, there are serious reasons to worry. According to Reuters, Russia has already told oil firms to re-route some flows scheduled for Belarussian refineries to the Polish port of Gdansk as Moscow and Minsk struggle to agree a new supply deal.

If the oil flows via Belarus stop, Poland and Germany, the largest European economy, are likely to be seriously affected. The stakes are high, because according to the International Energy Agency:

Poland received 385,000 barrels a day, or 93 percent of its oil imports last year, through Druzhba’s northern branch, while Germany got from 300,000 to 400,000 barrels a day, or as much as 20 percent of its imports, via the link.

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