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Kyiv Post

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Oligarch Toys

Ukraine's wealthiest businessmen flaunt their luxuries to a poor nation that made them incredibly rich



Ukraine's top five oligarchs — from left, Rinat Akhmetov, Victor Pinchuk, Ihor Kolomoisky, Dmytro Firtash and Yuriy Kosiuk — acquired vast wealth following the collapse of the Soviet Union 30 years ago while the nation itself holds the unenviable distinction of being the second poorest in Europe, after neighboring Moldova. The Kyiv Post looks at some of the luxuries they have acquired. See story on page 8



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Ukrzaliznytsia cargo wagons standing at Darnytsia railway station on Aug. 12, 2021. The company's rolling stock is increasingly falling into disrepair due to low revenues.

Oleg Petrasjuk

Ukrzaliznytsia needs bold action to revive fortunes

By Max Hunder

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Ukrzaliznytsia, the state-owned railway, is on the verge of technical default due to years of mismanagement compounded by losses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Debts have exceeded \$1.5 billion, and the company lost \$426 million in 2020. Its only chance to dig itself out is to raise freight tariffs. But to do so, it needs to be in the hands of good management.

Ukrzaliznytsia's neglected tracks and equipment are outdated and in dire need of modernization. Of the nearly 19,800 kilometers of railway tracks, only 9,300 are electrified. Ukraine has to buy diesel fuel from Belarus, made from crude oil produced in Russia.

In response to the crushing economic losses of 2020, the company cut almost 9,000 staff out of more than 250,000 employees, but the financial results for the first half of 2021 were still \$52.3 million in the red. The government had refused to help the company financially.

The situation has gotten so bad that on July 30, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine asked the Cabinet of Ministers to step in to stop financial practices that NSDC Secretary Oleksiy Danilov called "dangerous to national security."

The council demanded that the Cabinet raise tariffs, update the aging rolling stock and "if necessary, take radical decisions in this regard, including on personnel."

On Aug. 11, the Cabinet did so. Ivan Yuryk was dismissed as acting CEO after five months and replaced with Oleksandr Kamyshin, who pre-



Oleksandr Kamyshin, the new CEO of Ukrzaliznytsia

viously served on the boards of two companies owned by Ukraine's richest man, Rinat Akhmetov.

But this led to new concerns. Akhmetov's metal company Metinvest and energy company DTEK are the largest users of the country's railways. Transportation is a big part of Akhmetov's cost structure and he has done all he can to keep freight tariffs as low as possible.

Members of Ukrzaliznytsia's supervisory board insist that they are more committed than ever to raising cargo tariffs, and that Kamyshin's background will be a help rather than a hindrance.

Now, after gaining long-awaited approval from the State Regulatory Service, they might have their chance to increase revenues from iron ore and agricultural produce.

If they fail, Ukrzaliznytsia will be in for a long and difficult winter.

Corruption schemes

The NSDC's request to the Cabinet came two weeks after a National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine investigation revealed a scheme through which Ukrzaliznytsia officials embezzled \$3.84 million (Hr 103 million) through overpriced contracts for the supply of diesel fuel.

In total, between 2019 and 2021, the Security Service of Ukraine exposed embezzlement schemes worth over \$37 million.

Corruption is hard to root out at Ukrzaliznytsia because the company's procurement system is opaque. The nature of railway machinery makes it easy to manipulate tenders because it's difficult for non-specialists to gauge prices.

Volodymyr Omelyan, a member of the European Solidarity party who served as minister of infrastructure from 2016 to 2019, told the Kyiv Post that the company's management is aware of the corruption schemes being run by employees.

"You can't organize a (large-scale) scheme in a way that doesn't

become known to your supervisor," he said.

Omelyan also believes that the President's Office is aware of the largest rackets.

"They calculate everything and take part in it," he said.

Oleksandr Kava, the current deputy minister of finance and former deputy minister of infrastructure, rebutted this allegation.

"There are myriad myths surrounding this cash cow of Ukrainian oligarchs and the state budget... I would be happy to look at irrefutable facts instead of unjustified charges."

Raising tariffs

Ukrzaliznytsia needs to raise tariffs to dig the company out of its financial pit. The cargo transport tariff system is currently a relic of the Soviet Union and the rates are far too low.

If the Ministries of Economy and Transport greenlight Ukrzaliznytsia's proposed new tariffs, transportation

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Ukraine improves its defenses against escalating cyber threats

By Daryna Antoniuk
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The office of Ukraine's cyber police department — the law enforcement agency that protects from cybersecurity threats — looks old and shabby from the outside. The eye is caught by nine luxury cars, including Mercedes and Tesla models, parked in its back lot.

These cars belong to Ukrainian hackers accused of cyberattacks that cost South Korean firms and major U.S. universities, including Stanford and University of Maryland, over \$500 million.

The police detained the criminals on June 16, seizing their computers, cars and about \$185,000 in cash.

Raiding houses of hackers is a routine task for Ukrainian cyber police officers: They come uninvited, search suspects' dwellings and, if lucky, seize stacks of money and equipment that confirm the offense.

Globally, cyberattacks are on the rise. The fastest-growing type of cybercrime — ransomware attacks — caused \$20 billion in damages in 2021, up from \$325 million in 2015. Ukraine reported over 1.7 million cyberattacks on government services since the beginning of 2021; the number of cyberattacks in the country grows by 10% every month.

Ukrainian cyberspace — poorly protected and underregulated — lures criminals that pursue easy money and hackers backed by foreign powers. To fight against internal and external threats, the government has to make cybersecurity its priority. As of today, Oleksandr Grinchak, the head of Ukraine's cyber police, said, Ukraine is doing a great job.

"We are going toe-in-toe with hackers: They invent new ways to hack, we find ways to stop the attack," Grinchak told the Kyiv Post.



Ukrainian and South Korean law enforcement officers raid the home of hackers in Kyiv on June 16, 2021. This hacker gang is accused of cyberattacks that cost South Korean and U.S. firms over \$500 million.

Ukraine hackers

The world's largest hacker cartels, including Fin7, Avalanche, DarkSide and Emotet, are usually based in Russia and Ukraine.

These gangs hire Ukrainian techies because they are skilled and cheaper than hackers in wealthy countries like the U.S. It is also harder to prosecute them because Ukraine doesn't have proper cybersecurity legislation.

Ukrainian hackers are young, aged between 15 and 30; they usually have no criminal records and have an advanced understanding

of information technology and math, according to Grinchak. Their monthly salary starts from \$5,000 — much more than the \$2,000 that tech specialists can earn in Ukraine.

Ukrainian and Russian hackers rarely target their own countries — they prefer to infect computers in Western Europe or the U.S.

To find hackers that work in international gangs, Ukrainian cyber police usually work with foreign law enforcement agencies like the FBI in the U.S., the BKA in Germany, and the NCA in the U.K.

After getting the approval of the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine, foreign intelligence services usually come to Ukraine and work side-by-side with Ukrainian officers. In June, the U.S. and South Korean officers participated in two dozen raids in and around Kyiv, chasing criminals that hacked their universities and firms.

In October-December this year, Ukrainian cyber police took part in four international operations, Grinchak said. Previously, Ukraine participated in one or two operations per year.

Without this cooperation, it is hard to arrest hacker gangs because they are usually transnational: "One

hacker can stay in Ukraine, one in Russia, one in the U.S.," according to Grinchak.

For Ukrainian cyber police, it is better when local hackers work from home. "When they stay in the country, we can punish them in accordance with Ukrainian laws," according to Grinchak. For a severe crime, Ukrainian hackers are usually sentenced to up to six years in prison, he said.

Ukraine does not extradite its hackers; only criminals detained abroad can be jailed by foreign states.

External threats

Hackers usually work on two fronts. Some of them pursue money — they break into bank accounts or demand ransom for stolen data, while others serve political purposes — they target services that are crucial to the society, like public utilities and cellular networks, or leak sensitive information like emails of state officials.

When over 12,500 Ukrainian computers were attacked in 2017 by ransomware called Petya, which allegedly originated from Russia, it was an example of the attack aiming to "destabilize the situation in the country," according to Ukraine's Security Service (SBU).

But when criminals hacked Ukraine's largest tech company SoftServe in September last year, publishing stolen data on messaging service Telegram, they were reportedly chasing profits by asking for a ransom.

Anyone can become a victim of cybercriminals, Grinchak said. Cyberattacks usually happen because people are too careless about the security of their devices: They do not use strong passwords, click on strange links or untrusted

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EDITORIALS

Seize the moment

The time for outrage is over with Nord Stream 2. The pipeline is a bad deal all around and exposes not just Ukraine, but also Europe, to the ongoing energy blackmail of the Kremlin. Moreover, it deepens ties between Russia and Germany at a time when Vladimir Putin should be isolated, ostracized and face crushing sanctions.

Promising legal challenges should continue to ensure that Gazprom does not monopolize natural gas supplies and pipelines to Europe. But, in reality, the political fight is not to be won. The time to stop Nord Stream 2 has likely come and gone. A more robust fight should have started in 2015, when the project was launched despite Russia's invasion of Ukraine a year earlier; its shoot-down of Malaysia Airlines, killing all 298 aboard; and all the assassinations, chemical-weapons use, war crimes, and cyberattacks that have occurred since.

But, while it's tempting to keep complaining about this mistake, President Volodymyr Zelensky shouldn't waste his precious time on a last-ditch plea to stop the pipeline when he meets with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Aug. 22 in Kyiv and U.S. President Joe Biden in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 30. Biden and Merkel will simply tune him out. They're not reversing course. Biden's even willing to let the Taliban take over Afghanistan rather than commit U.S. troops to the 20-year lost war. He's not likely to reverse himself to stop this pipeline.

Ukraine should seize the moment and focus on the silver linings. Eventually losing the transit of Russian gas to Europe through Ukraine's pipelines is financially painful, but it is another significant step forward in severing economic ties with the imperialistic enemy. Also, this natural gas pipeline, along with its predecessor Nord Stream 1, will hopefully become obsolete sooner rather than later. The climate change disaster is unfolding at a faster rate. It will force the world to abandon new investments in oil and natural gas and switch to renewable energies as fast as possible, if mankind has any hope of preventing the planet from overheating. Ukraine, despite huge missteps, can still get ahead of the curve on renewable energy with the right public policies in place. Ukraine has abundant land for solar panels and abundant wind for that form of energy. Additionally, if promising new nuclear power technologies emerge, Ukraine could conceivably reduce its consumption of oil, natural gas and coal to a bare minimum.

So what should Ukraine do?

Zelensky should use the 1,000+-word joint U.S.-German statement on July 21, 2021, as a guide to getting the maximum amount of financial, political, security and technical commitments from the two Western allies.

Played the right way, Ukraine could win big. Played the wrong way, Ukraine could end up being ignored by the two powerhouses as a corrupt and complaining nuisance.

The U.S. and Germany have pledged to increase Ukraine's security and stiffen sanctions against further Russian aggression, force the Kremlin to play fair on energy issues — including allowing third-party access to Nord Stream 2 — and help Ukraine make the successful transition to accelerate its energy transformation. This transition includes speeding up integration with the European energy grid, and building greater capacity in renewable energy and the promising hydrogen field.

The pledged \$1 billion "Green Fund" for Ukraine is cheap and inadequate, but maybe the leaders of economies with combined economies of \$25 trillion can be shamed and encouraged to be more generous, not only on the energy front but in bolstering Ukraine's military might.

Germany and the U.S. need to be pressed on the reality that the weak and poorly enforced sanctions against Russia have done nothing to stop its aggression against Ukraine or the West. Much more needs to be done. Moreover, Russia's Gazprom is already using energy as a weapon by cutting natural gas supplies to Europe to drive up prices and send the message it wants Nord Stream 2 operational as soon as possible. This behavior is deserving of more sanctions now.

Ambassadors Daniel Fried, Richard Morningstar and Andras Simony outline the possibilities in a recent op-ed published by the Atlantic Council.

Politically, Ukraine should hope for Green Party victory in Germany's September elections. Its leaders have opposed Nord Stream 2 and supported tougher stances against Russia. A Green Party chancellor may just slow the certification of Nord Stream 2 enough for Ukraine to gain leverage for the best deal possible from the U.S., Germany and Russia.

Smug dictator

Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko, who is not recognized as the legitimate president of the nation because of his rigged Aug. 9, 2020, presidential election, is taunting Ukraine.

On the anniversary of the stolen vote, Lukashenko called on Ukraine to find out "who hanged a Belarusian citizen and how," referring to the death of Vitaliy Shyshov, a dissident and head of Belarus House in Ukraine. Shyshov was found hanged in a Kyiv park on Aug. 2. He was living in Ukraine in exile.

We're tempted to tell the smug and smirking Lukashenko to look in the mirror if wants to see who killed Shyshov.

Ukrainian law enforcement must rise to the challenge of proving whether Shyshov was murdered or died by suicide, and who is responsible for his death, if indeed he was murdered. Thus far, Ukrainian investigators and prosecutors have a dismal track record. Dozens of cases could be cited, but simply mentioning the unsolved murders of journalists Georgiy Gongadze in 2000 and Pavel Sheremet in 2016 will suffice.

Since Lukashenko is so interested in Ukrainian law enforcement finding justice, we have a few of our own demands for the dictator. In 1999 and 2000, four prominent Lukashenko opponents disappeared and are presumed dead. They were: Yury Zakharenko, Viktor Gonchar, Anatoly Krasovsky, and Dmitriy Zavadsky.

Where are they Lukashenko and who killed them? One of your death squads? Let's hope justice prevails in all of these cases.

Why Ukraine's renewed independence matters



Eugene Czolij

Editor's Note: This op-ed was originally published by The Ukrainian Quarterly and is republished with permission.

This year, Ukrainians and our friends throughout the world will commemorate the 30th anniversary of Ukraine's renewed independence and the fulfillment of the visionary words of our legendary prophet Taras Shevchenko who, in 1845, wrote in "The Great Vault" (Velykyi lkh):

*And from beneath Ukraine will rise.
It will dispel the gloom of bondage,
It will light the world of truth,
And prayers will be said in freedom
By children once unfree!*

Thirty years ago, countless, hopeful offerings of prayers were answered, the courageous David against Goliath struggle of Ukrainian freedom fighters was won, and tremendous sacrifices of generations of Ukrainians were rewarded, as Ukrainians received God's greatest gift for a nation when the following words of the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine resonated in the Ukrainian Parliament on August 24, 1991:

The Verkhovna Rada ... solemnly declares the Independence of Ukraine and the creation of an independent Ukrainian state — Ukraine.

The territory of Ukraine is indivisible and inviolable.

From this day forward, only the Constitution and laws of Ukraine are valid on the territory of Ukraine.

This declaration of Ukraine's renewed independence is unquestionably one of the most important and defining geopolitical events of the 20th century.

Indeed, when Ukraine declared — once again, and once and for all — its renewed independence, it propelled everyone into a new geopolitical era, caused the collapse of what former U.S. President Ronald Reagan correctly coined as an "evil empire," and allowed the Ukrainian people to emerge from colonialism and enter the enviable circle of free peoples of the world.

To better understand and fully



Worker installs Trident on the spire of the Verkhovna Rada in Kyiv on Oct. 29, 2015

appreciate the magnitude of this event, it is necessary to comprehend the suffocating yoke of which Ukraine was finally able to rid itself.

Ukraine had suffered three centuries of merciless Russian domination and exploitation, including more than 70 years of indescribable communist terror, which in the 20th century alone included:

- the *Holodomor* that took millions of Ukrainian lives and is now being recognized by the international community for what it actually was — one of the worst genocides in human history;
- the banning of religion, confiscation of church property, and systemic persecution and killing of the hierarchy, clergy, and laity of Ukrainian Churches and faith communities that forced worshippers into catacombs similar to the days of the evil Roman emperor Nero;
- the brutal repression and execution of Ukraine's prominent figures in science, literature, culture, and art, including during a period known as the *Executed Renaissance* (*Rozstriliane Vidrozhennia*);

- the ruthless Russification and destruction of any resistance to the Soviet empire, or the manifestation of any form of Ukrainian independence, resulting in the forced imprisonment of countless millions of Ukrainians in Soviet Gulag torturous death camps;
- the loss of millions of Ukrainian lives at the hands of the Red Army and the Nazis during World War II; and
- the Chernobyl disaster that was an extension of a policy of careless and insatiable plundering of Ukrainian resources by the Kremlin and its subsequent cover up of that nuclear explosion (namely by still holding — five days later — the May 1 parade in Kyiv under the radioactive sky of Ukraine's capital a mere 90 kilometers away from the nuclear disaster, thereby endangering the lives of innocent people, including youth and children).

Only against such a backdrop can one begin to appreciate the enormous significance of the long awaited declaration of Ukraine's renewed independence on Aug. 24, 1991.

To help Ukraine fully regain and defend its territorial integrity, Western leaders should take effective actions to ensure that:

- (1) NATO grants Ukraine the NATO Membership Action Plan;
- (2) the Kremlin's Nord Stream 2 project is canceled; and
- (3) Russia is banned from SWIFT if it does not de-occupy Ukraine within a fixed period of time as defined by the West.

Such decisive actions will help Ukraine ensure that all Ukrainians (including those who reside in the temporarily occupied territories in Crimea and the Donetsk and Luhansk regions) can fully celebrate future anniversaries of Ukraine's renewed independence.

Such actions will also ensure that we all live in a more prosperous and safer world, where all people and nations have a significantly better chance of enjoying the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the UN Charter.

Slava Ukraini! Heroiam slava!
Eugene Czolij is president of Ukraine-2050 nongovernmental organization, honorary consul of Ukraine in Montreal and served as president of the Ukrainian World Congress (2008-2018). 🇺🇦

See these features online at Kyivpost.com

Ukraine's Friend & Foe Of The Week



Friend

Maria Golubeva, Latvia's interior minister

Golubeva declared a state of emergency at the Latvia-Belarus border on Aug. 10 to stop a wave of illegal migrants fleeing Iraq, Iran, and Syria from entering Europe via Belarus. Ukraine supported Latvia and sent barbed wire to strengthen its border. The Baltic nation is one of Ukraine's best allies.



Foe

Georgiy Muradov, Russia's permanent representative in Crimea

Muradov said that Ukraine's inaugural Crimean Platform summit on Aug. 23 is designed to "organize anti-Russian and anti-Crimean provocations" on the peninsula illegally occupied by Russia since 2014.

Feel strongly about an issue? Agree or disagree with editorial positions in this newspaper?

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Will Amos Hochstein mitigate the damage of Nord Stream 2?

By Natalia Datskevych
datskevych@kyivpost.com

When U.S. President Joe Biden appointed Amos Hochstein as a high-level energy security adviser on Aug. 9, some experts were shocked.

The 48-year-old diplomat has been a vocal critic of Russia's \$11 billion Nord Stream 2 pipeline to Germany. After pressure from Germany, Biden's administration recently decided to waive sanctions on the project and let the 1,230-kilometer pipeline under the Baltic Sea be completed, to Ukraine's detriment.

Hochstein has just been put in charge of reducing risks posed by the project, which the Biden administration called Russia's "geopolitical weapon."

Responses to the appointment were all across the board. Some analysts believe Hochstein can make the best of a bad situation while others believe he was only hired for show, to legitimize Biden's controversial decision.

Timothy Ash, an emerging markets strategist at BlueBay Asset Management, sees Hochstein's appointment as "window dressing," Biden's attempt to appease critics of his decision to appease Berlin and the Kremlin.

"It looks like that horse has bolted. It is not serious," Ash told the Kyiv Post.

"He (Biden) has shown that Emerging Europe is a low priority and he is willing to sell out their interests for a quiet life with (Vladimir) Putin, while the U.S. gets on with Covid, China and Climate."

For him, Biden's move was a surprise, but he cannot understand why Hochstein, who believes the project is an "existential crisis facing



Amos Hochstein

Ukraine," is "willing to play along." Hochstein, who stepped down from the supervisory board of the Ukrainian state oil and gas giant Naftogaz in 2020 claiming "increasing sabotage from corrupt forces" in the country, did not respond to a request for comment.

Svitlana Zalishchuk, a former lawmaker and current adviser to Naftogaz CEO Yuriy Vitrenko, said it's too early to draw conclusions about Hochstein's new role.

"Through this appointment, the American administration is trying to send a signal to Ukraine, Germany, Europe, Russia, and not least to its own Congress, that the full stop has not been put in this process yet," said Zalishchuk.

As soon as the pipeline under the Baltic Sea is ready, Russia's state-owned gas company Gazprom will be able to double the gas supply directly to Germany, Europe's biggest gas consumer.

It will kill the need to use Ukraine's

gas transport system, costing the nation at least \$1.5 billion a year in transit fees.

Still, Berlin promised to appoint a special envoy to ensure that the gas transit agreement with Ukraine is extended until 2034, Politico reported on July 22.

Some experts are sanguine about what Hochstein can do for Ukraine.

"The message is clear — the US is ready to discuss real steps to counter Russia together," said Lana Zerkal, former deputy foreign minister of Ukraine.

In an op-ed co-authored by ex-ambassadors Daniel Fried, Richard L. Morningstar and Andras Simonyi for the Atlantic Council, the authors called Biden administration's a "welcome development." They wrote: "He the right person to oversee the implementation of the joint statement's best provisions."

Andriy Favorov, former head of the Naftogaz gas division, said the appointment is a victory.

"Amos is a great ally of Ukraine, he knows the country very well, and

he is a very close person to Biden's administration," said Favorov. "He is trusted in the White House, in Berlin, and in Ukraine."

Among all four candidates for the energy envoy position, Hochstein was the best one for Ukraine's interests, Favorov believes.

"Tough negotiations are ahead, but it is difficult to imagine a more qualified person than Amos for this," he said. "He is now the main energy diplomat in Europe. It's a big role that only a person with big ambitions can handle."



Volodymyr Petrov

It's just a drill

Soldiers with Ukraine's 112th Territorial Defense Brigade engage simulated enemy troops during urban warfare drills in Kyiv on Aug. 9, 2021. The weekend warriors were exercising their skills in countering terrorist forces trying to seize the city's key government buildings.

LEGALIZATION OF GAMBLING IN UKRAINE

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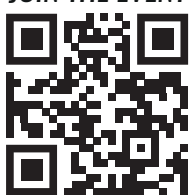
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Belarus dictator Lukashenko keeps country in his firm grip

By Oleksiy Sorokin
sorokin@kyivpost.com

A year after Belarusian strongman Alexander Lukashenko claimed he was supported by over 80% of the country's voters, thousands of political refugees are in exile and the country is isolated from the democratic world.

On Aug. 9, the first anniversary of Belarus's fraudulent election, U.S. President Joseph Biden imposed a new round of sanctions on 17 companies that supported Lukashenko's regime and 27 individuals involved in the violent suppression of the post-election countrywide protests.

The sanctioned companies include Belaruskali, which produces 20% of the world's potash fertilizers, and the Belarus Olympic Committee, responsible for an attempt to abduct athlete Kristina Timovksaya, who escaped and was granted a humanitarian visa by Poland.



Opposition activists gather on the streets of Minsk on Oct. 25, 2020. A peak number of 200,000 of Belarusians were on the streets of Minsk demanding free elections in 2020.



Belarus opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya

"Rather than respect the clear will of the Belarusian people, the Lukashenko regime perpetrated election fraud, followed by a brutal campaign of repression to stifle dissent," Biden said in a statement.

The U.K. and Canada joined in the sanctions. Switzerland imposed them two days later.

Yet foreign powers have a limited influence on Belarus.

Lukashenko's regime, propped up by Russia, successfully crushed its opposition and continues to wage terror against those daring to question the dictator's authority.

"I don't believe that the Belarus regime can fall because of the pressure from Ukraine, the U.S. and the European Union," said political analyst Artyom Shraibman, who was forced out of the country by the regime.

"Nothing will change until Moscow decides that it's time to stop supporting Lukashenko."

Crushing dissent

Hours after Lukashenko declared victory in the 2020 presidential elections, hundreds of thousands of Belarusians took the streets in protest.

The Aug. 9 elections were deemed

fraudulent by Ukraine, the EU and the U.S. while Belarus opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya called on her supporters to "protect their vote."

A peak number of 200,000 of Belarusians were on the streets demanding free elections, record-breaking numbers

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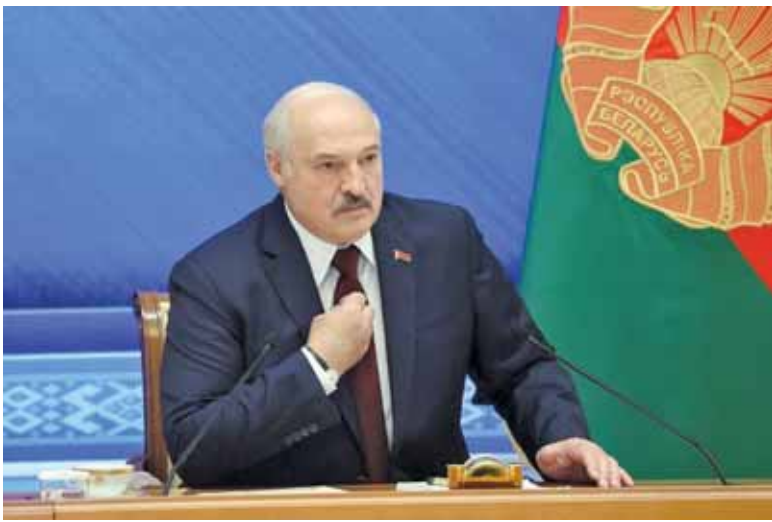


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Fastiv Lyceum #2



AFP



Belarus' President Alexander Lukashenko speaks during a press conference in Minsk on August 9, 2021.

With support of Kremlin, dictator shows no fear of being deposed

page 6 →

for a country of 9.5 million people.

Yet the protesters couldn't stand up to Lukashenko's use of force.

Tikhanovskaya, who ran in the elections on behalf of her imprisoned husband Sergei, was forced out of the country. Many protesters were jailed and tortured.

Starting in May, prominent opposition activists received long prison sentences.

According to human rights group Vesna, as of Aug. 9, there are 1,450 ongoing political trials and 610 people have been jailed for political activism. A total of 35,000 people were detained since the protests began, while hundreds of people were beaten in detention.

Independent news outlets were shut down by authorities.

At least 35 journalists were imprisoned for their work, including Belsat journalists Yekaterina Andreyeva and Daria Chultsova, who were sentenced to two years in jail on charges of "violating public order" by stream-

ing a police crackdown on protesters in Minsk.

"All media have been crushed, everything is blocked," Dmitry Halko, an exiled Belarusian journalist based in Ukraine, told the Kyiv Post in late May.

"It will be safe to say that Lukashenko was able to crush dissent," said Shraibman, who now lives in Kyiv.

Drifting east

Despite all the atrocities, Lukashenko remains in power, with little fear of being deposed.

Lukashenko's regime is politically and financially supported by President Vladimir Putin's Russia, while western sanctions remain limited.

Since August 2020, Lukashenko met with Putin in Russia five times. Putin loaned \$1.5 billion to Belarus to keep the country's economy afloat.

Russia also is selling Belarus oil and gas below market rates, allowing the country to profit from its two refineries that refine about 20

TOP 10 KYIV POST exclusives online this week

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5. Taras Revunets: 30 years on, 'Chicken Kyiv' still haunts Ukraine
6. Parliament extends adaptive quarantine until Oct. 1
7. Ukraine wins bronze in women's high jump at Tokyo Olympics
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million tons of oil per year. Most petroleum products are later sold to Ukraine.

According to the International Monetary Fund, up to 27% of Belarusian GDP is propped up by the Russian government's investments. The average yearly Russian financial support of Lukashenko's regime accounts to \$9 billion.

Russia has been vocal in its support of Lukashenko, conducting joint military drills and offering Russian riot police to assist with patrolling the streets.

"We will continue to provide full assistance to Belarus amid the ongo-

ing political pressure," Putin said on July 1. "Belarus isn't simply our neighbor, it's our closest ally."

"The two pillars that allow Lukashenko to maintain his power is the support of law enforcers and Moscow backing," Shraibman told the Kyiv Post.

With Lukashenko's regime backed by Putin, Western pressure remains feeble.

The U.S., the EU and Ukraine imposed individual sanctions on most Belarusian top officials and have sanctioned Belarus key state-owned companies – Belaruskali, Naftan oil refinery, Belarus Oil Company and

Belavia airlines.

However, Belarus is successfully dodging sanctions by removing customs data regarding oil products and potash exports, hiding the statistics of the Naftan refinery's production and creating new companies to take over from the sanctioned ones.

"Lukashenko obviously sees himself as the winner, yet looking at how anxiously he reacts to any kind of dissent and sanctions, he doesn't think that the crisis is over," said Shraibman.

"There's a notion that if he loosens repressions, the situation can roll back to active protests." 🇺🇦

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Planes, palaces & other posh possessions of the oligarchs

Editor's Note: This is a two-part series about the luxury goods, vehicles and properties owned by Ukraine's top oligarchs. This article will look at Rinat Akhmetov, Ihor Kolomoisky, Victor Pinchuk, Yuriy Kosiuk and Dmytro Firtash.

By Anna Myroniuk
myroniuk@kyivpost.com

Ukraine's wealthiest may find their pockets lighter if the president's de-oligarchization law is passed in September.

It would ban political donations from oligarchs and force them to log all communication with public officials. Oligarchs would be banned from buying state property, a practice that has propelled them to the top.

This may force them to shed some ballast.

Multi-millionaire Yuriy Kosiuk has already had to sell two of his yachts due to financial problems caused by the falling value of his flagship agricultural company, Myronivsky Hliboproduct (MHP). His companies, which enjoyed \$90 million in subsidies in 2017–2018, only got \$2.9 million in 2019–2020.

Kosiuk is not the only one who faces a tightening cash flow as the state tries to distance itself from oligarchs.

Ukraine's richest man, Rinat Akhmetov, is squarely in the sights of a bill that would force iron ore producers to pay an extra Hr 3 billion (\$111 million) to the budget each year. The tycoon owns half of

Valerie, a 85-meter luxurious superyacht allegedly belonging to Rinat Akhmetov.



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the iron mines in the country and the legislation – passed in the first reading – is unofficially called the “anti-Akhmetov bill.”

So, what do these oligarchs own? The Kyiv Post put together a list of the swankiest jets, decadent yachts and pompous properties of the

wealthiest men in Europe's poorest country.

Rinat Akhmetov (\$7.6 billion)

Rinat Akhmetov is the richest person in Ukraine with an estimated net worth of \$7.6 billion.

He reportedly owns 85-meter superyacht Valerie, which made headlines in July when celebrities Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck rented the vessel to sail along French Riviera.

Akhmetov's press secretary denied that the yacht belongs to the oligarch. But the Kyiv Post managed to establish a link between Akhmetov and Kaalbye Shipping Ukraine, the vessel's official owner.

Akhmetov is also looking to get rid of it. In 2019, he put it on sale via Dynamiq Brokerage, a Monaco-based service for superyachts sales and charters, which valued Valerie at 110 million euros.

The yacht has six decks and can accommodate up to 17 guests and 27 crew members.

It has a gym with a panoramic view, a spa with a hammam, and a private sundeck with a six-meter pool. The foredeck has enough room for a helicopter to land.

Akhmetov also has an impressive jet fleet.

System Capital Management (SCM), his financial and industrial holding company, has an Airbus A319–133(CJ) with registration number P4-RLA, which might refer to the oligarch's name, Rinat Leonidovych Akhmetov. Such a jet costs around \$80 million.

Akhmetov also has a Falcon 7X made by the French aircraft manufacturer Dassault and registered under the number P4-SCM. These start at \$60 million.

Akhmetov lives in a massive palace surrounded by pine forest in Plyuty village, 35 kilometers south of Kyiv. But he has other, way fancier real estate.

In 2020, he paid \$235 million for the historic 18,000-square-foot,

14-bedroom Villa Les Cedres in southern France, once owned by King Leopold II of Belgium.

The palace went on sale in 2017, with an initial price tag of \$411 million. At the time it was “the most expensive house on Earth,” according to Bloomberg.

Akhmetov seems to like things that are “the most expensive.”

In 2011, he bought a \$190 million flat in London's One Hyde Park, which Forbes called “world's most expensive apartment.”

The Kyiv Post has recently revealed that Akhmetov's son Damir, who manages some of his father's companies, bought a villa on Lake Geneva in Switzerland for \$65 million in December.

Victor Pinchuk (\$2.5 billion)

Victor Pinchuk is the second wealthiest person in Ukraine after Akhmetov. Like many oligarchs, he also owns real estate in London, acquiring two historical buildings there in 2017.

One is a multimillion-dollar office block overlooking Hyde Park at 27–31 Knightsbridge in London's district of Belgravia. It was worth more than \$104 million as of the end of 2015.

The other one is called the “Grand Buildings” and is located on Trafalgar Square. This luxurious building once housed London's Grand Hotel. Now it houses a number of restaurants and boutiques. As of 2010, Dubai-based investment firm Istithmar was selling it for \$240 million.

In 2008, Pinchuk's wife Olena bought an \$111 million five-sto-



Grand Buildings, formerly the Grand Hotel, a landmark historical building on Trafalgar Square in central London, is owned by oligarch Victor Pinchuk.

Diego Deliso

One of Europe's poorest nations made oligarchs very wealthy

page 8 →

ry house in another wealthy area in southwest London, in Upper Phillimore Gardens.

This Victorian villa was immediately rebuilt to meet the needs of the new owners. Now it has an underground swimming pool, gym, sauna, and cinema. The house also has at least 10 bedrooms and a secure "panic room," according to the Daily Mail.

In the same year, Pinchuk reportedly bought four villas on the Italian island Sardinia for \$82 million. Among them is Luci del Mare that has 15 rooms and a swimming pool; Samanna which has 21 rooms and a garden; and two smaller ones, La Torre and La Deseada. The latter one lies on the sea coast.

He also has some real estate on the French coast.

Pinchuk has spent more than \$117 million for the 1,500 square meter Sorrentina villa on the waterfront in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat in Cote D'azur, according to the Challenge media outlet.

The oligarch uses Bombardier Global Express and Gulfstream planes with registration numbers of OE-IDO and OE-LEO respectively.

Igor Kolomoisky (\$1.8 billion)

Igor Kolomoisky shares Damir Akhmetov's admiration for Lake Geneva. However, Kolomoisky's lakeside villa — registered under the name of his sister Larisa Chertok — is much smaller.

The 1,200 square meter, two-floor residence was custom-built

from 2010–2018, according to the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP). It has a pool and a spa. Chertok reportedly bought this house for \$32 million.

She also owns a house on the French side of Lake of Geneva and a ski chalet worth 16 million euros (\$19 million), OCCRP reported. Chertok does not have any businesses that would bring her enough income to independently afford such purchases.

In 2019, Kolomoisky returned to Ukraine from self-imposed political exile in Geneva and settled back into his hometown of Dnipro. He owns a 10-hectare plot of land and a house there, according to Strana.ua.

Slidstvo.Info also reported that Kolomoisky owns two villas in Israel. He also has numerous other properties around the world.

The oligarch also has a collection of luxury boats, including his 90-meter superyacht Lauren L. Its interior was designed by the Greek construction bureau Alpha Marine with Germany's Cassens-Werft styling the exterior.

Lauren L. can accommodate 26 guests across 20 suites and 40 crew members. It's equipped with a health center with massage and aromatherapy rooms and a fully-equipped beauty and hair salon. Its estimated value is \$76 million.

However, the jewel in Kolomoisky's vehicular crown is the the 65-meter yacht Trident. Designed by Dutch company Royal Van Lent Shipyard, it cost the oligarch \$102 million. It can accommodate 14 guests.

Kolomoisky owns two Hawker 800XP jets with registration num-



This London building on 206 Brompton Road was purchased by oligarch Dmytro Firtash on Feb. 27, 2014 from the U.K. Ministry of Defense.

bers UR-WRR and UR-PRT, and a Hawker 850XP (UR-WRS) costing around \$2.5 million each, according to luxury vehicle information site SuperYachtFan.

All three are listed in the Ukraine registry of aircraft as property of Windrose Airlines, which allegedly belongs to Kolomoisky.

Yuriy Kosiuk (\$700 million)

In late 2020, Kosiuk put his superyacht Ace and support yacht Garcon up for sale for \$137 million and \$28 million, respectively. The cheaper one reportedly sold in January.

The superyacht was launched in 2012, custom-built by German yard Lurssen and conceived by London firm Winch Design. Kosiuk requested that the Ace reflect the interior style of The Ritz hotel in London.

Each guest cabin offers a different theme: art deco, French Provencal and contemporary nautical. It can accommodate 10 guests and 30 crew members. It has a cinema, gym, beauty salon, nightclub and a Russian tea room. A lower deck spa inspired by Roman villas includes a hammam, spa pool, sauna, ice pool and lounge, next to a fold-down terrace.

Kosiuk also has numerous aircraft. According to SuperYachtFan, he owns a 20-seat capacity Airbus A318-112(CJ) Elite worth \$70

million. The plane has not flown since December 2018, according to Planefinder.net. It is not listed in Ukraine's registry of private aircraft.

However, the registration number of the Airbus, OE-ICE, is similar to UR-ICE, the number of a \$3.2 million Bell-429 helicopter owned by MHP. Kosiuk also has a Bell-430, which costs at least \$4 million and is probably the most expensive private helicopter in Ukraine. Kosiuk also had a Eurocopter EC145, which crashed in Kyiv. These aircraft start at about \$2.3 million.

The oligarch lives in a giant mansion made to look like the Versailles palace in France. Kosiuk's version stands near Feofania, a park in the historical neighborhood of Kyiv. He has one more house in Gostomel, one of Kyiv's satellite villages.

Dmytro Firtash (\$420 million)

Ukrainian oligarch Dmytro Firtash has permanently lived in Austria since early 2014, hiding from U.S. extradition for alleged racketeering and bribery, charges that he denies.

Firtash is under house arrest but many would dream to stay in a house as opulent.

It is located in a posh neighborhood called Hietzing. Built in 1908, this art nouveau building has a pool, wine cellar, home theater, spa and English lawn, according to Profil

media outlet. Its estimated value is around \$29 million.

While Firtash cannot leave Austria, his plane can. Recently he lent his Embraer Legacy 600 to Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz to fly home to Vienna from Tel Aviv according to news site Zack Zack. The plane costs between \$12 million and \$15 million.

Firtash is infamous for political spending. The Guardian reported that he donated to the U.K.'s Conservative Party through a shady firm.

In London, Firtash demonstrated some of his extravagant taste in real estate. In 2014, he bought a metro station in central London from the U.K. Ministry of Defense.

Brompton Road station in South Kensington is a historical heritage site. It was formerly home to a command center directing combat against the Luftwaffe during World War II, My London reported.

Firtash paid \$73 million for the station to redevelop it into flats. This never panned out due to the U.S. bribery charges that hit him a month after the purchase.

Right next to the station there is a five-story house Firtash bought in 2012 for \$83 million. It has a swimming pool, a gym, a conference room and at least four bedrooms. Across the street is an apartment belonging to his wife that cost \$1.1 million, according to the Schemes investigative reporting project. ❖

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Oligarch-friendly tariffs condemn Ukrzaliznytsia to financial losses

page 2 →

of iron ore will go up by 30% and of agricultural products by 15%.

According to the company's figures, this will lead to a \$378 million (Hr 10.1 billion) revenue increase in 2022, of which \$120 million (Hr 3.2 billion) will come from Metinvest, and \$37 million (Hr 1 billion) from DTEK.

Another way to shore up Ukrzaliznytsia's finances is to waive the company's obligation to pay land tax to regional governments, which currently costs it around \$150 million every year.

Railroads in most European countries are exempt from land tax, but Ukrzaliznytsia has been unable to convince the government to push this change through, as politicians are concerned about losing electoral support if they defund regional administrations.

Sevki Acuner, the chairman of Ukrzaliznytsia's supervisory board, told the Kyiv Post that the situation is unsustainable.

"Ukrzaliznytsia is presently paying exorbitant land taxes and some of the regions, on the other hand, are not even paying us what they owe for passenger services."



Ukrzaliznytsia cargo cars standing in Odesa Sea Port on July 28, 2018.

New CEO

Oleksandr Kamyshin is Ukrzaliznytsia's sixth CEO in two years.

Acuner said that the board recommended Kamyshin's appointment because of his thorough knowledge of cargo transport, which makes up

most of the company's revenue.

From June 2012 to December 2019, Kamyshin sat on the supervisory boards of Lemtrans, SCM's

railway business, and Portinvest, another SCM subsidiary focused on seaports.

Acuner insisted that there was enough distance between Kamyshin and SCM owner Akhmetov.

"Conflicts of interest arise only out of one's present and future actions, not from the past," he said, adding that the supervisory board was ready to take action if any problems occur.

Even Omelyan, who is otherwise critical of the current government, said that Kamyshin should be judged by his actions and the quality of the team he appoints.

Kamyshin has been appointed on a temporary basis until 31 December 2021. His primary focus will be to solve burning issues around debt repayment and push through the long-awaited cargo tariff increase.

However, if he stays past that date, he will be expected to restart Ukrzaliznytsia's stagnant progress towards its unbundling into separate companies.

Acuner said that this needs to happen, as passenger travel ought to be subsidized with state funds, rather than profits from cargo transit.

"It's not fair for enterprises to support what is essentially a state obligation," he said. ❦

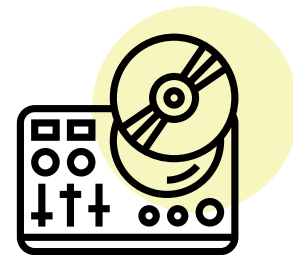
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The 25 Ukrainians who won 19 Olympic medals at Tokyo Games

By Asami Terajima
terajima@kyivpost.com

For the majority of Ukrainians who brought back medals from Tokyo, this was their first shot at Olympic glory.

Many veterans in their sport lost earlier in the competition or didn't make it past the qualifying stage, leaving less hope about this year's Olympic results.

But the medalists, many of them in their early 20s, proved skeptics wrong and brought back more medals than expected.

Even with the smallest-ever Olympic team in its 30-year history, Ukraine made it to the top 20 countries by number of medals. The team of 155 athletes won more medals than in the previous Games in Rio. The 25 winners brought home 19 medals, compared to 11 just five years ago.

Even so, Ukraine finished with an all-time low ranking of 44th because the official team ranking prioritizes the number of gold medals. And this year, Ukraine just claimed just one top prize. The U.S. won with 39 gold medals, followed by China with 38 and Japan with 27.

Regardless, Ukraine's one gold, six silver and 12 bronze medals in Tokyo inspired national pride.

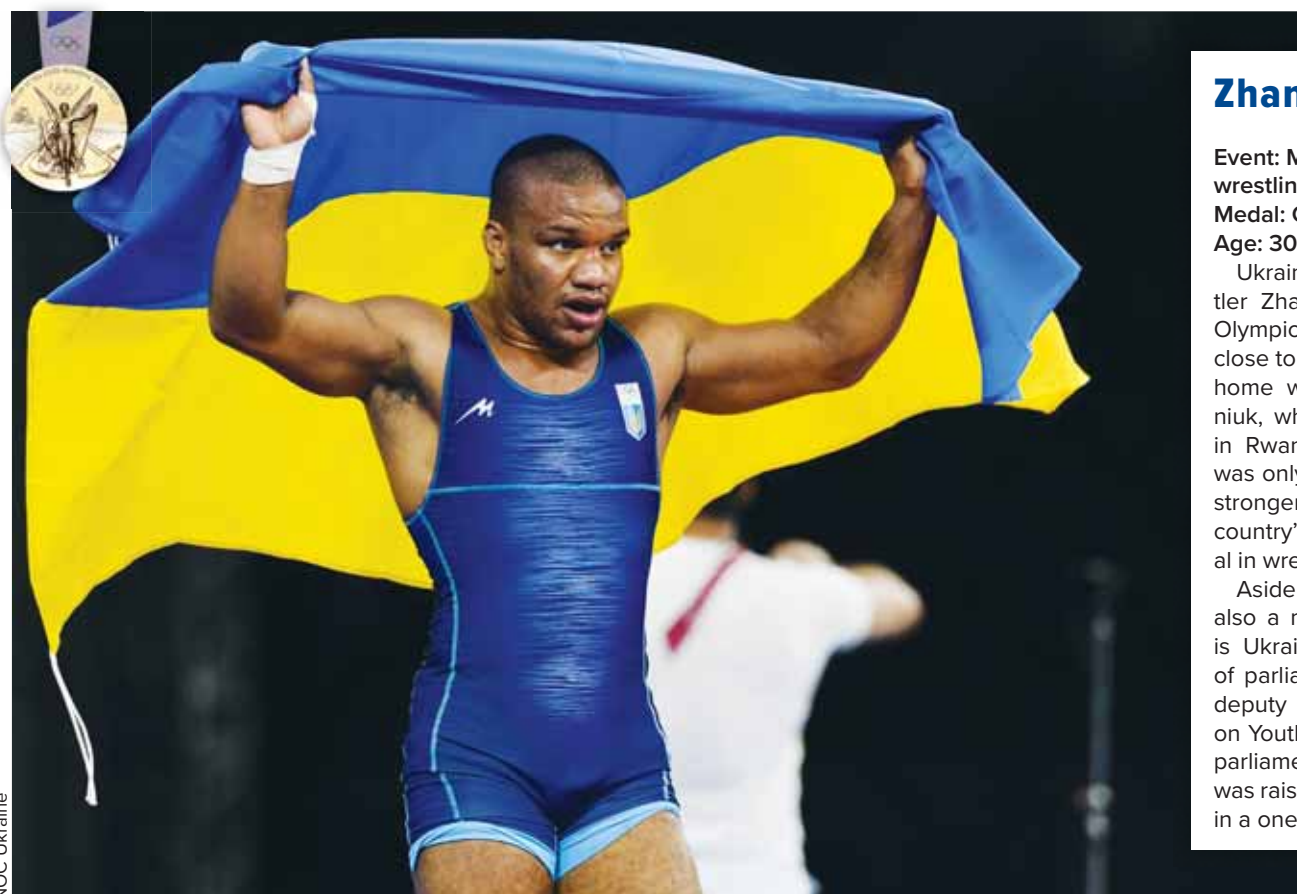
As the Games came to an end and Tokyo passed the baton to Paris, a vibrant closing ceremony with a final flurry of fireworks, traditional taiko drum rolls and dance moves lowered the curtain on the Pandemic Olympics on Aug. 8.

With the host city in its fourth COVID-19-related state of emergency, most athletes had already gone home because they were obliged to return to their country of origin within 48 hours after their final event. Around a dozen Ukrainian athletes attended the ceremony, with wrestler Elbrus Tedeyev holding the blue-yellow flag high.

The medalists were welcomed home by family, friends and fans at the airport upon their arrival, even though there were no traditional festivities.

The government also congratulated the team and said cash prizes totaling \$1.84 million will be handed out to all 25 athletes who earned a medal.

According to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, gold medalists will receive a bonus of \$125,000, while silver medalists will get \$80,000 and bronze medalists \$55,000.



Zhan Beleniuk

Event: Men's Greco-Roman 87kg wrestling
 Medal: Gold
 Age: 30

Ukrainian Greco Roman wrestler Zhan Beleniuk left the last Olympics in Rio bitter, coming so close to a gold medal but coming home with silver instead. Beleniuk, whose father died fighting in Rwanda's civil war when he was only 11 years old, came back stronger this year and won the country's first Olympic gold medal in wrestling in 25 years.

Aside from sports, politics is also a major part of his life. He is Ukraine's first black member of parliament and serves as the deputy head of the Committee on Youth and Sports in Ukraine's parliament. The future wrestler was raised by his Ukrainian family in a one-room flat in Kyiv.

Mykhailo Romanchuk

Event: Men's 1500m and 800m freestyle
 Medal: Silver (for 1500m) and Bronze (for 800m)
 Age: 25

Mykhailo Romanchuk broke the Olympic record in the semi-final of the 800-meter race but was disappointed because he couldn't repeat the result in the final and bring back a gold medal. Nevertheless, the Rivne-born athlete brought Ukraine's first Olympic medal in swimming in 17 years. Romanchuk, who is also a world cup record holder in the 1,500 meter freestyle race, flew to Tokyo with the same coach that had taught him how to swim when he was six. Almost 20 years later, the two went home carrying two Olympic medals.

These prizes are very high by global standards. U.S. athletes only get \$37,500, \$22,500 and \$15,000, for gold, silver and bronze medals, respectively. The host country of Japan will be giving out awards of \$45,000, \$18,000 and \$9,000. Yet all these countries are still less generous than Singapore, which gives out prizes of \$737,000, \$369,000 and \$184,000, respectively.

In addition, three Olympians from Lviv will receive new apartments from the city. 🏠



NOC Ukraine

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Anzhelika Terliuga

Event: Women's kumite 55kg karate
 Medal: Silver
 Age: 29

Anzhelika Terliuga dreamt of the day when her name would be engraved in the history of karate. Her long-sought dream came true in this year's Olympics. Together with Stanislav Horuna, who also earned an Olympic medal in karate, the two became the first-ever Ukrainian karatekas to be called on the podium. Terliuga also works as a fitness director in a sports club at home.



Olena Starikova

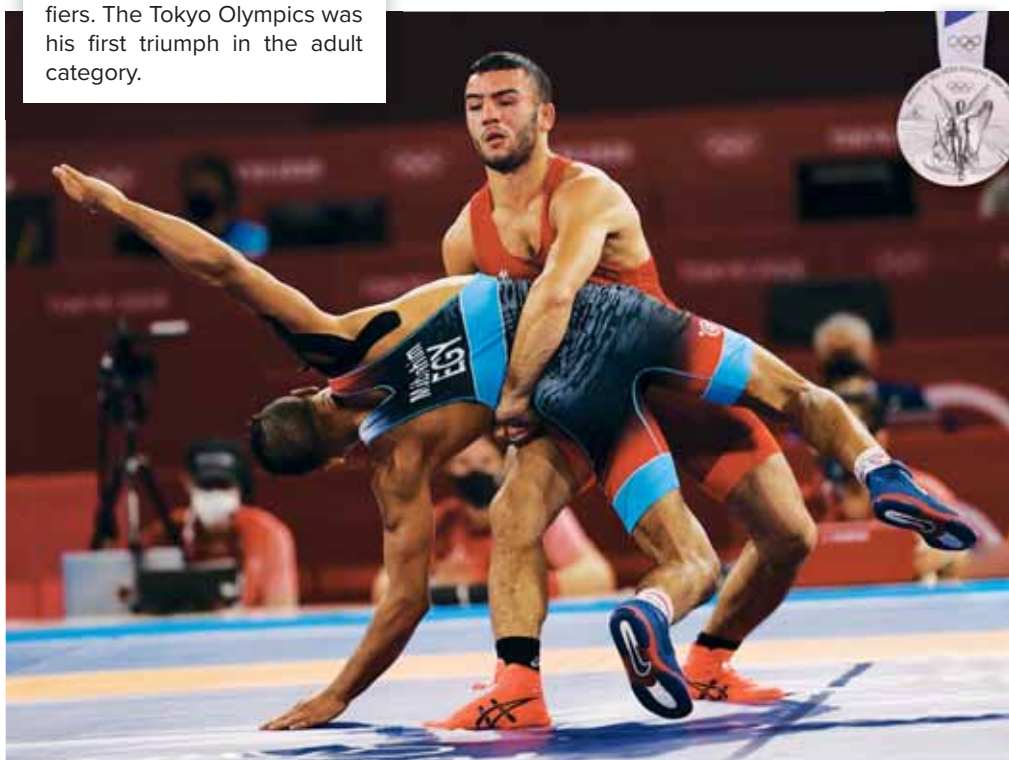
Event: Women's sprint-track cycling
 Medal: Silver
 Age: 25

Ukrainian Olena Starikova has left a mark in Ukraine's cycling history in her first Olympic appearance. She had brought home the first Olympic medal in cycling in the last 17 years. Born in Kharkiv but now a Lviv resident, Starikova began cycling at the age of 13 when she got a bicycle and fell in love with the sport. Her mother soon enrolled her in a cycling club because she was worried that her daughter would end up in the wrong places and that's how it all started.

Parviz Nasibov

Event: Men's Greco-Roman 67kg wrestling
 Medal: Silver
 Age: 22

Parviz Nasibov is a Ukrainian Greco-Roman wrestler from Azerbaijan. Before coming to Tokyo, the youngster stunned Rio Olympic bronze medalist Rasul Chunayev, also from Azerbaijan, in the World Qualifiers. The Tokyo Olympics was his first triumph in the adult category.



Oleksandr Khyzhniak

Event: Men's middleweight boxing
 Medal: Silver
 Age: 26

Oleksandr Khyzhniak left the boxing ring staggered, not knowing why the referee chose to abruptly stop the fight. Under boxing rules, referees can stop the fight when they have reasons to believe that a contestant is in imminent danger.

The Poltava-born boxer had a clear advantage with quick and big punches but lost to Brazilian Hebert Sousa in the Olympic finals because of the referee's call. He doesn't agree with the referee's decision but understanding that nothing can be done now, he waits for the next Games in Paris "to make his medal gold." Khyzhniak's father is an ex-boxer and pulled the future Olympian into the sport when he was five.

Anastasiia Chetverikova & Liudmyla Luzan

Event: Women's canoe double 500m and (Liudmyla Luzan) single 200m
 Medal: Silver (for double 500m) and Bronze (for single 200m)
 Age: 23 & 24

The two canoeists sealed a silver medal a few days after Liudmyla Luzan saw great success in her individual race. Luzan also earned bronze in the women's canoe single 200 meter dash. Originally from Ivano-Frankivsk, Luzan had been training artistic gymnastics for 10 years before she became a canoe sprinter. She said that deep down, she knew that gymnastics wasn't the sport she wanted to be in. Luzan's partner, Anastasiia Chetverikova, has a different story. The Kherson-born athlete's brother encouraged her to try the sport when she was 12 and she said it was impossible not to fall in love with it.



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Elina Svitolina

Event: Women's singles tennis
Medal: Bronze
Age: 26

July was an eventful month for Odesa-born Elina Svitolina — from tying the knot with French tennis player Gael Monfils to making history as the first-ever tennis player to win a medal for Ukraine. The World No. 6 had put her honeymoon on hold to focus on the Olympics. Though devastated after losing in the semi-finals, Svitolina defeated Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina winning bronze. In the previous Games in Rio, the Ukrainian knocked 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams out of the competition but then fell in the quarter-finals. Svitolina reached her career-high ranking of World No. 3 in September 2017 and again in September 2019.

Daria Bilodid

Event: Women's 48kg judo
Medal: Bronze
Age: 20

Judoka Daria Bilodid already had many fans in Japan prior to the Olympics. At the age of 17, she broke the record for becoming the youngest ever judo world champion and has been a hot topic ever since.

Now a two-time world judo champion, Bilodid also does photo shoots for many well-known brands on the side. She serves as an ambassador of a \$7 million Japanese cosmetic company Aesthetic TBC.

Bilodid's bronze made her the first Ukrainian woman to win a medal at an Olympic judo event.

AFP



Alla Cherkasova

Event: Women's freestyle 68kg wrestling
Medal: Bronze
Age: 32

This year was Lviv-born wrestler Alla Cherkasova's final shot at the Olympics regardless of the result. She's already announced that she won't be going to the next one in Paris. Having promised to her seven-year-old son that she would return with an Olympic medal, Cherkasova was extremely pleased with the result.

NOC Ukraine



Iryna Koliadenko

Event: Women's freestyle 62 kg wrestling
Medal: Bronze
Age: 22

From claiming gold in the European Championships to winning a medal in her first-ever Olympics, 2021 was a breakthrough year for freestyle wrestler Iryna Koliadenko from Kyiv Oblast. She began wrestling at the age of 11 and had her first big win in the 2019 World Championships where she won silver.

NOC Ukraine



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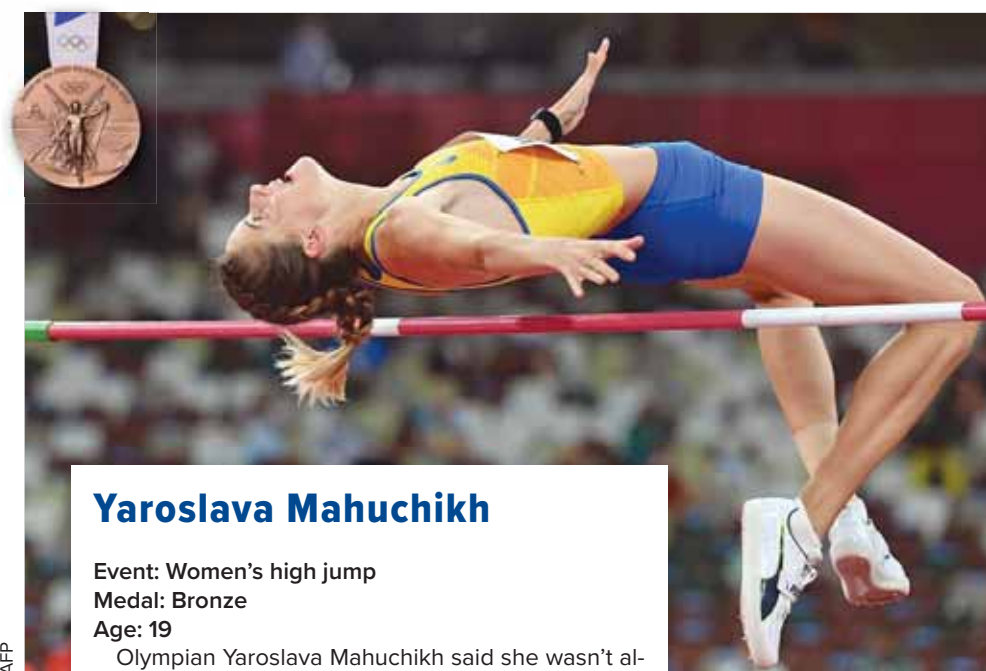
Stanislav Horuna

Event: Men's kumite 75kg
Medal: Bronze
Age: 32

Growing up, Lviv-born Stanislav Horuna never thought of internationally famous karatekas as idols. For him, they were simply people with great achievements that motivated him to work harder so that he could one day outcompete them. Having won many top-level international competitions staged across Europe and the world, the 32-year-old is now one of the most followed and admired karatekas in the world. He remembers how his friend took him to a karate training session and he immediately knew that this was the only sport he'd want to pursue.



NOC Ukraine

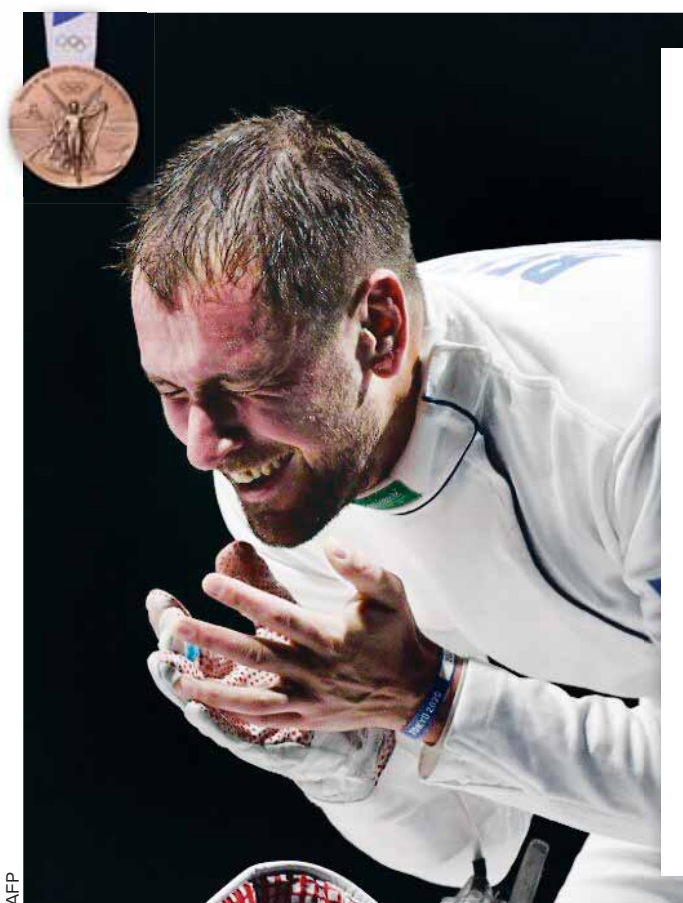


Yaroslava Mahuchikh

Event: Women's high jump
Medal: Bronze
Age: 19

Olympian Yaroslava Mahuchikh said she wasn't always so great at her chosen sport. She began high jumping when she was 13, a late start for a professional sport, and her gift for the high jump wasn't immediately apparent. But the jumper from Dnipro improved very quickly. After two years of practice, Mahuchikh had a major career breakthrough when she won a gold medal at the junior world championships.

AFP



Ihor Reizlin

Event: Men's individual épée fencing
Medal: Bronze
Age: 36

The Tokyo Games were Ihor Reizlin's first Olympics in his long athletic career. Regardless, he made a historic win by becoming the only Ukrainian swordsman to ever return with an Olympic medal. He said that age has only helped him to perform better because it was a lot more difficult to control his emotions while competing when he was younger. As a result, his career in fencing picked up pace in recent years, with Reizlin winning numerous international competitions at the highest level.

AFP



NOC Ukraine

Olena Kostevych & Oleh Omelchuk

Event: Mixed 10m air pistol shooting
Medal: Bronze
Age: 36 & 38

Shooters Olena Kostevych & Oleh Omelchuk are veterans in their sport. Kostevych has already won numerous Olympic medals before — one gold and two bronze. Born in Russia but having later moved to Ukrainian Chernihiv where she went to a shooting range for the first time, she met her current coach who turned her into an Olympic champion. Omelchuk from Rivne wasn't decorated with an Olympic medal prior to Tokyo but has won many prestigious international competitions like his shooting partner. Both have been competing in their sport for more than 20 years.

Vladyslava Aleksiiiva, Maryna Aleksiiiva, Marta Fiedina, Kateryna Reznik, Anastasiya Savchuk, Alina Shynkarenko, Kseniya Sydorenko and Yelyzaveta Yakhno

Event: Women's artistic swimming team and (Marta Fiedina & Anastasiya Savchuk) artistic swimming duet
Medal: Bronze (for both events)
Age: 19-25

The Ukrainian artistic swimming team made its first Olympic appearance in Rio in 2016 but missed the bronze medal by less than one point. This year, athletes Anastasiya Savchuk and Kseniya Sydorenko made their comeback with six new swimmers and took third place in the Tokyo competition. Savchuk, 25, also competed in a artistic swimming duet (formerly known as synchronized swimming) with 19-year-old Marta Fiedina and won another bronze medal for Ukraine.



NOC Ukraine

Oleksandr Grinchak: ‘No state is 100% protected from cyberattacks today’

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emails and use unlicensed software without antiviruses.

It is a perfect environment for cybercriminals, especially those who use ransomware, the most popular type of malware today. It encrypts all files on the computer and demands a ransom in cryptocurrency to bring them back.

Given that cryptocurrency is anonymous and Ukraine recognizes it neither as property nor money, it is hard to investigate ransomware attacks in the country.

Ukraine has the highest number of malware encounters in Eastern Europe, according to Microsoft Ukraine. In the last 30 days, Microsoft detected over 1.3 million infected devices in Ukraine, compared to 682,000 in Poland, 460,000 in Romania and 320,000 in Belarus.

Most often, Ukraine is attacked by Russia. “We have always been a playground for Russian hackers,” Grinchak said: They test how Ukraine responds to cyber threats or just showcase their power.

These attacks are bad for the country’s image, economy and national security, according to Grinchak. “But

they made us more experienced,” he said.

Cybersecurity in Ukraine

Ukrainian experts complain that Ukraine is poorly protected against cybersecurity threats: its laws on data protection are outdated, while the cybersecurity industry lacks proper financing and the support of private businesses. In 2020, the country ranked 78th globally and 39th in Europe by the Global Cybersecurity Index.

The Ukrainian government didn’t care much about cybersecurity before Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, unfolding its war on two battlefields – Eastern Ukrainian and informational.

To deter Russia’s cyber threats, Ukraine founded a department of cyber police in 2015 and got the support of the so-called hacktivists that countered Russian aggression.

In 2016, they established the Ukrainian cyber alliance that hacked websites spreading Russian propaganda and even leaked emails linked to Vladislav Surkov, the political advisor of Vladimir Putin, which revealed Russia’s plans to conquer and divide Ukraine.

Now the Ukrainian cyber alliance



Ukrainian Oleksandr Grinchak has headed the Ukrainian cyber police department since 2019. Grinchak said that this year his department is doing better than ever: it received over \$1.8 million from the state and took part in four international operations since the beginning of the year.

opposes most of the government’s projects: It constantly criticizes state-funded mobile app Diia and laws that regulate Ukraine’s virtual space.

Grinchak said that he wants to cooperate with the cyber alliance, but so far their relationship is weak. Ukrainian law enforcement also asked for help from “ethical

hackers,” tech specialists that hack computers for money to test how well-protected they are.

“But businesses lure these hackers away by offering two to three times the salary,” Grinchak said. To change that, Ukraine has founded a unit of special agents, who receive almost as much money as the head of the cyberpolice, he told the Kyiv Post.

Despite all the efforts, the Ukrainian cybersecurity market is still very small and lacks cooperation with private firms, according to Denis Gursky, a Ukrainian tech expert.

In Ukraine, cybersecurity is controlled by seven government agencies that include cyber police, SBU, the Ministry of Defense and the National Bank. Ukrainian citizens do not trust local cybersecurity companies and work with foreign businesses instead, according to Gursky.

“It is very hard for a private company to enter this market,” he said.

Both private businesses and the cyber police want to change Ukraine’s image as a poorly protected country.

Grinchak said that his department is now doing better than ever: this year cyber police received more money than ever – \$1.8 million from the state, while his officers become more skilled by confronting thousands of cyberattacks and working with partners from other countries.

He said that there are still many problems that Ukraine has to resolve to protect itself from hackers, but other countries are in the same boat.

“No state is 100% protected from cyberattacks today,” Grinchak said.

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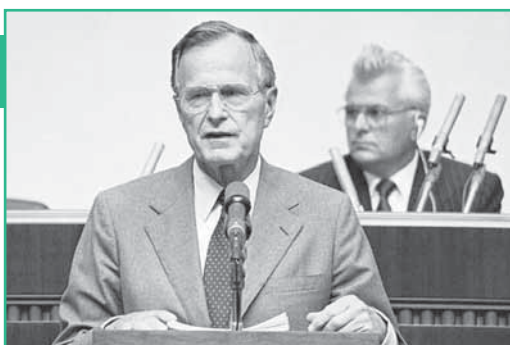
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