

## DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**March 14th** is World Sleep Day. Sleep is a special state of organism, no less complex than daytime wakefulness.

On average, every person spends a third of their life sleeping. Sleep helps the brain get rid of everything unnecessary, 'cleaning' neural connections of unnecessary proteins. Sufficient sleep, a balanced diet, and proper organisation of the daily routine are necessary conditions for maintaining physical and mental health for many years.

**March 15th, 1930** saw the birth of Zhores Alferov (1930-2019) — a Soviet, Belarusian and Russian physicist, Nobel Prize laureate in Physics. He was an academician, a foreign member of Belarus' National Academy of Sciences and many academies around the world. His main areas of scientific activity were semiconductor physics and semiconductor electronics. He authored 600+ scientific papers, 3 monographs, and 50 inventions. Alferov established the Foundation for Support of Education and Science, into which he invested a third of his Nobel Prize money. The foundation's goal is to support fundamental research in physics, which is vital for economic development. He was an honorary citizen of Minsk and Vitebsk.



**On March 15th, 2010**, the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Organ and Tissue Transplantation was opened on the basis of the 9th City Clinical Hospital, and an organ transplantation service was created. In Belarusian medicine, organ and tissue transplantation is one of the most dynamically developing areas. Over 15 years, Belarus has managed to enter the top 20 most developed countries in this regard. In terms of the number of transplants per one million population, Belarus ranks first in the CIS, surpassing the numbers in Russia by 3 times and in Kazakhstan by 10 times.

**March 15th** is International Day of Action for Seals. Harp seal pups have been hunted for many decades, primarily for their beautiful fur. The international community continues to fight against the hunting of harp seal pups. Yet, even today, such mass and inhumane slaughter of seal pups is not prohibited in Canada and Norway.



**March 16th** is National Crayon Day. Coloured pencils became widespread only at the beginning of the 20th

century, although the pencil's history dates back to the era of the Ancient World. Unlike a regular pencil, where graphite is used as the core, the crayon's core is wax- or oil-based and contains pigments. The mass production and availability of coloured pencils have turned them into an indispensable attribute of creativity for children and teenagers.



**March 18th, 1965** marked the first spacewalk in human history. Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov was the first person in history to perform a spacewalk from the *Voskhod-2* spacecraft piloted by Pavel Belyayev. This mission was an important milestone in the Soviet space programme. The whole country was watching the man's exit into open space.

**March 18th** is Internal Troops Day in the Republic of Belarus. The Internal Troops of Belarus' Ministry of Internal Affairs is a powerful law enforcement structure, ensuring the maintenance of law and order in the republic. The official task of the Belarusian internal troops is 'to protect the life, health, the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens, society and the state, the constitutional order, security and sovereignty of the Republic of Belarus from criminal and other unlawful encroachments'.



**On March 19th, 1474**, Venice became the first place in the world to adopt a law on the protection of copyright for

inventions. This was the world's first copyright law, which already recognised the moral right of creators and granted them the exclusive right to use their invention for a limited period of time. It was during this period that Leonardo da Vinci lived and worked in Venice, and the world owes him the prototypes of modern tanks, diving suits, helicopters and parachutes. However, the great artist and inventor, unfortunately, was unable to take advantage of the new law.

**March 20th** is International Earth Day. This is a global movement of civic initiatives to protect the planet as a common global Home, uniting many different events and campaigns, both environmental and peace-building. It is not so much a celebration as an opportunity to reflect once again on the problems of the fragile and vulnerable environment, as well as the problems of the relationship between humans and the surrounding world. The date is timed to coincide with the day of vernal equinox, when the biological rhythm of the planet changes, nature awakens and renews itself.

