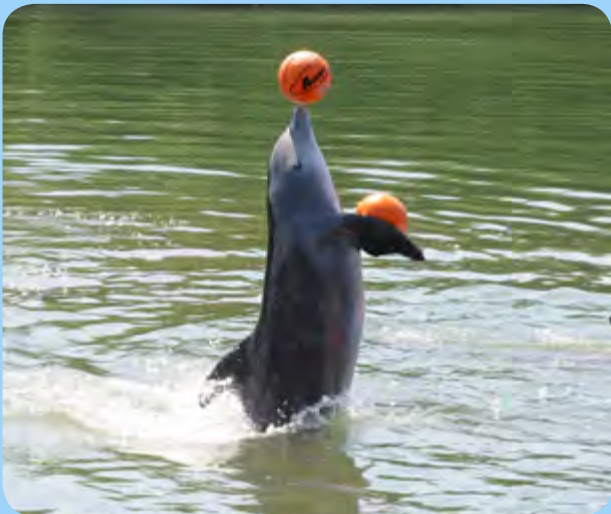




## FitCuba 2022



P. 2

### Cuba

## Heritage and Nature in Camagüey



P. 9

### Cuba-U.S.A

## Prohibited Tourism



P. 4

### Economy

## Cuba Lifts Sanitary Restrictions



P. 5



# Negotiations and Presentations Mark FITCuba-2022

By Wilfredo **ALAYÓN**

VARADERO.- Days of negotiations for hotel managers, Cuban medical services and tourist destinations in the western, central and eastern regions of the island mark the course of the 40th International Tourism Fair, FITCuba-2022.

Product presentations will also be made during the event, after two years without being able to hold the tourism fair due to the worldwide presence of the SARS CoV-2 coronavirus, which causes Covid-19.

The celebration this year of the largest commercial fair in this sector, which is considered the driving force of the Cuban economy, represents a challenge for its organizers.

International experts have reiterated that the current year could see the recovery of the tourist industry in the world. Therefore, local authorities bet that FITCuba-2022 may well translate into a new phase for that economic sphere where the Cuban tourist product can be relaunched.

The opening ceremony will be held at the theater of the renovated Plaza America with its Convention Center in Varadero, Cuba's largest and most important beach resort, also considered to be the second best beach in the world, according to foreign polls.

Plaza América belongs to the local Higher Business Management Organization (OSDE) Cubasol, which also

groups the entities Marlin (marina), Palmares (extra hotel chain), Caracol (store chain), Transtur (transportation company) and Turarte (artistic shows).

Marlin marina precisely, together with Gaviota Group, will make a show and exhibit aquatic equipment at the water mirror located at the entrance to Plaza América, where a fleet of tourist cars and buses operated by Transtur will be on display as well.

But FITCuba is more than that. It is an event that also shows other facets that complement the so called lazy industry, such as the making of hand rolled cigars by world and Guinness



Marlin marina, together with Gaviota Group, will make a show and exhibit aquatic equipment. PHOTO: Marlin marina

record holder Jose Castelar Cairo (Cueto), winner of the Habano Man Award.

The FITCuba-2022 program also includes fashion shows with the product Imagen Cuba, all the line of beach clothing, with brands of national and international prestige and a section to exhibit guayaberas (traditional Cuban garment).

Also attractive, according to experts, will be the exhibition of the computing platform used to digitalize the processes for the commercialization of products and tourist services, as well as the introduction of institutional websites and online platforms. A gulf event to mark the 40th anniversary of FITCuba has been announced too, together with the presentation of the DVD Passion for Identity: testimony of singular figures of the Cuban culture and tours to get familiar with Havana, Pinar del Rio and Cayo Largo del Sur. The culinary meeting known as "Preserving the Traditional Cuban Cuisine" will be held as well.

FITCuba-2022 represents a new phase in Cuban tourism, a sector that has readapted and readjusted with health protocols due to COVID-19 and the complex external situation aggravated by the U.S. economic, financial and commercial blockade against the Caribbean island.

Dedicated to sun and beach destinations, the event summons travel agencies, tour operators, hotel managers, airlines and others to develop tourism on the island and in Varadero. As host, it welcomes the Cuba Completo (Entire Cuba) destination.

## World Cocktail Champions

By Ania **TERRERO**

HAVANA.- The 69th edition of the Bartenders Association (IBA) World Cocktail Championship will be held at the Meliá Internacional Hotel of Varadero next November, in which bartenders from over 60 countries will take part in competitions, pairings and other collateral activities.

Voting for the venue of the organization's general meeting was divided between Russia, Italy and Cuba, but the island finally won by a majority to become the second Latin American country to host the renowned event.

"It is an opportunity to show the Cuban identity, promote tourism and contribute to our bartenders' formation," president of the Cuban Bartender Association (ACC) José Rafa Malén told **The Havana Reporter**.

The event, to be held from November 4 to 9, after an absence of two years because of COVID-19 and will break away from the traditional competitive program to include sensorial, knowledge and speed tests.

Sixty-three competitors will participate in the classic style contest and 32 in flair, in a three-round competition in which participants will be gradually eliminated. Winner of the National Fabio Delgado in Memoriam Championship, Vladimir Márquez, will represent Cuba in the classic competition, while Yasmani Portales, from the Ciego de Ávila province, will represent the island in the flair category.

In the first level, competitors will be divided at random in the appetizer, liqueur, long drink, sparkling wine and non-alcoholic

categories – the latter, to be conducted for the first time. The three first places of each cocktail will go to the following round, Rafa Malén said in a press conference.

In the semifinal round, competitors will face a testing, knowledge and speed test and will have to prepare three drinks of IBA file. The four best places will go to the final round.

"During the closing gala, all four finalists will have to present a new cocktail of their making, which will have to be based on the Havana Club rum," noted ACC president.

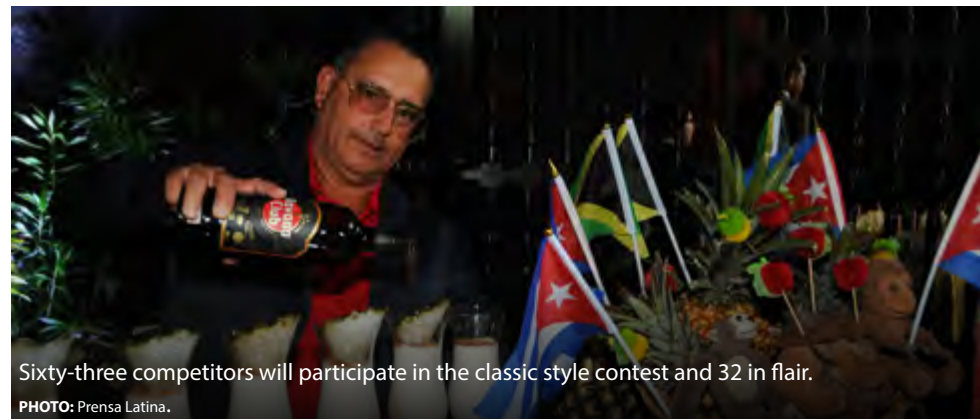
In light of that, the Havana Club and Espumoso Prosecco brands – the main sponsors of this world championship – will guarantee the base drinks for the preparation of all drinks in competition.

Other beverage and Cuban product companies will be summoned to participate in the activities associated with the event as exhibitors.

The collateral program includes a flag parade, the welcome dinner, the launch of the book "Un brindis por mi Habana" (A toast to my Havana), a meeting with the Cuban rum masters from all over the country, a visit to the San José de las Lajas Rum Factory and a rum, chocolate, coffee and cigar pairing.

To try to make a Guinness Record, bartenders will try to prepare the world's biggest Adan and Eve cocktail, a creation of the only Cuban who has become world champion in this field, Sergio Serrano Rivero.

In order to guarantee the comfort of those who travel to Cuba, the Cubatur Agency will offer two tourist packages to both competitors and spectators, with transportation, lodging, meals, guided visits and other services included.



Sixty-three competitors will participate in the classic style contest and 32 in flair. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

**THE Havana Reporter** YOUR SOURCE OF NEWS & MORE

SOCIETY • HEALTH & SCIENCE • POLITICS • CULTURE  
ENTERTAINMENT • PHOTO FEATURE • ECONOMY  
SPORTS • AND MORE

**President:** Luis Enrique González  
**Editorial Vice President:** Lianet Arias  
**Editorial Director:** Mariela Pérez Valenzuela  
**Art Direction:** Anathais Rodríguez  
**Chief Editor:** Ilsa Rodríguez Santana  
**English Editor:** Isabel García

**Translation:** Dayamí Interian/Yanely Interián  
**Graphic Designers:** Fernando Fernández Tito  
**Chief Graphic Editor:** Francisco González  
**Assistant Staff:** Yaimara Portuondo  
**Advertising:** René García  
**Circulation:** Commercial Department  
**Printing:** Prensa Latina

**Publisher:** Agencia Informativa Latinoamericana  
**Prensa Latina, S.A.**  
Calle E, esq. 19 No. 454, Vedado, La Habana-4, Cuba  
Telephone: (53)7838-3496 / 7832-3578  
Fax: (53)7833-3068 E-mail: thr@prensa-latina.cu



# Foreign Measures against the Right to Migrate

By Orlando **ORAMAS**

HAVANA.- Cubans wishing to travel abroad either for temporary reasons or permanently reject measures that limit their right to migrate, especially the U.S. policy on the topic.

**The Havana Reporter** gathered the opinions of the Cuban people after the statement of the island's Foreign Ministry (MINREX) on the migratory measures implemented by Washington against the Cuban citizens, which were described as outrages, in violation of bilateral agreements.

Such statement was made by the Director of the Department of Consular Issues and Cubans Resident Abroad (DACCRES), Ernesto Soberón, who added that "Washington is determined to hinder the process of new visas at the embassy accredited in Havana with the objective of increasing unrest of the Cubans affected."

MINREX stressed that such a behavior contrasts with the traditional, veiled stance, which encourages Cuban emigrants to travel to other territories in order to illegally enter the United States – where you are facilitated entry into that country.

"It is cynical to force Cubans to travel to Guyana to process their migrant visas and, at the same time, to make it a requirement to obtain a transit visa through a third country for those who intend to arrive in Georgetown; while the activity of the U.S. Consulate in Havana remains suspended or very limited," the statement denounces

Tatiana Saldívar, resident in the densely populated neighborhood of Cerro, in the capital city, shares that opinion.

I stayed for almost one month in Guyana with my grandfather, whose ten-year visa was suspended. He is now in limbo too, after our relatives in the United States paid thousands of dollars for our stay in Georgetown, she commented.

Abel Mederos' story is not very different. He hopes to get to the United States through the "green paths," as he calls the irregular transit his fellow citizens make to arrive to the U.S. border.

He made the statement a few blocks from the Panamanian embassy in Havana, whose accesses are cordoned off by the National Revolutionary Police (PNR) to avoid crowds like those that occurred at the beginning of March when the Panamanian government decided to apply transit visas to Cuban travelers.

"People are saying in the media, particularly from the United States, that Panama will implement new restrictive measures against the Cubans, and that is unfair," says Román Sánchez, who has the intention of traveling to Panama to buy supplies for his business, which he describes as a cellphone "clinic".

"Our relatives want us to be reunited but the paths are harder and harder," said a man who wants to get to Tampa, Florida, where his children live.

The statement issued by the DACCRES director referred to the United States' refusal to process in Cuba the 20,000 annual visas

to be granted in compliance with bilateral agreements. He also mentioned the burden the economic blockade represents, a measure that was tightened and affects the quality of life of the population.

On top of that comes "pressures on the region's governments to request visas to Cubans hoping to benefit from the

permanent encouragement to migrate to the United States," the MINREX texts indicates.

In relation to the opinion of those who refer to the United Nations resolutions on commitments to defend migrants' rights, a university girl who preferred to remain anonymous wondered if the UN is concerned.



Deportees from Mexico arrive in Havana. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

## Studies on Children and Youth

By Lissy **RODRÍGUEZ**

HAVANA.-Six years as a medical student in Cuba awakened the vocation of young Yann Syldick to investigate the topics of early pregnancy, pathological anatomy and addictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in children and adolescents.



The next International Congress is summoned to take place on April 2024. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

These are problems he addressed inspired by professors at the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM), where he did his first two years of studies, a training he later completed at the Miguel Enríquez University Hospital in Havana.

He owes his current vision of social problems to those years of training, as he admitted in an interview with **The Havana Reporter** moments before recalling the phrase the historic leader Fidel Castro said in 1961, that Cuba would necessarily become a country of men of science.

Referring to the topic that currently calls his attention, Yann commented how the COVID-19 pandemic caused technology overuse in children and adolescents, largely resulting into considerable loss of social skills, addictions and behavioral disorders.

That was precisely the research Project he presented at the International Congress on Children, Adolescents and Youth recently held in Cuba with the participation of nearly 1,000 delegates from 13 countries.

"I did not hesitate when I knew about the congress. I was interested in participating and exchanging experiences in that environment, where there are researchers from other centers and countries," stated the young Congolese.

The academic event brought together academics and students that, like him, talked about activism, equity, social justice, education, public policies, demography, gender violence, employment, food sovereignty, among other topics.

These are the most worrying problems at present that are connected with these age groups, said the director of the Center for Studies on Youth (CESJ), Keyla Estévez, who ratified that debates showed researchers' maturity and quality.

This was the most favorable context if we consider that at present, the country is drafting a comprehensive policy on children and youth issues, as explained in one of the 16 panels included in the event.

Doctor of Sociological Sciences María Isabel Domínguez highlighted the establishment of working commissions that in a period of two to three months shall make a proposal taking in mind the country's needs and context.

The 2022 World Population Report was presented during the sessions, which allowed dealing with the issue of unplanned pregnancies, that are present representing half of the pregnancies conceived, to the detriment of societies and women's development.

**The Havana Reporter** also knew about the actions conducted by the Cuban Women's Federation to prevent pregnancy in adolescence, with emphasis on the promotion of sexual education, teachers' preparation, community actions and communication between parents and their children.

The next International Congress of Researchers on Children, Adolescents and Youth issues is summoned to take place on April 2024. Until then, workshops and other related events will be conducted to help the present edition to attain comprehensive results and face new challenges.





Carnival, Norwegian, Royal Caribbean and MSC cruise lines were attacked for conducting "prohibited tourist operations" in Cuba.

PHOTO: Internet.

# Prohibited Tourism

By Alejandra **GARCÍA**

HAVANA.- Four U.S. cruise ship companies wait for a legal decision that threatens to force them to pay thousands of dollars just for traveling to Cuba with U.S. passengers eager to know the island's culture and traditions.

At the end of March, a federal judge of Miami attacked at the Carnival, Norwegian, Royal Caribbean and MSC cruise lines for conducting "prohibited tourist operations" in Cuba, in compliance with laws implemented from 2015 and 2019 by the administration of former president Donald Trump.

According to judge Beth Bloom, the companies will have to compensate the descendants of a U.S. business executive for using a port terminal in Havana confiscated from him after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, on January 1st, 1959.

During the Barack Obama presidency (2008-2017), the United States started a process of rapprochement with Cuba and licensed cruise ships to carry to the island people interested in knowing the Cuban history and its people.

At the time, an important door was opened for exchanges between both countries, even though the term "tourist travels" was not used.

Visitors arriving to Cuba were interested in the historical and cultural heritage, the sea and the climate, and the perfect geographical location, in a country where almost all the hotels are at the beach line.

Prior to the arrival of Donald Trump, on January 2017, diplomatic relations between both nations took several steps forward after half a century of hostilities on the part of the successive U.S. administrations.

According to data provided by the Cuban Ministry of Tourism, the number of tourists who arrived to Cuba increased by over 36 percent from 2013 to 2017. Many

of those who traveled to the island came on board the cruise ship companies that are currently sanctioned.

When Trump took power, he decided to apply a provision of the economic blockade imposed on Cuba which entered into effect over 26 years ago and which no other occupant of the White House had activated before.

Article III of the Helms-Burton Act, the law through which Washington tries to justify the internationalization of the blockade, allows U.S. people to file lawsuits against almost any company having commercial activities or benefiting from properties nationalized after 1959.

In March, judge Bloom affirmed in her sentence that the article only allows the use of nationalized properties – such as the port terminal – in cases of "legal travels," but "that is not the case of these cruise ships," she said.

Washington's hostilities against Cuba are aimed at asphyxiating the economy of the country, but the people of both nations are the most affected.

U.S. citizens seeking to approach the reality of the island are especially affected, after Washington's unsuccessful attempts to isolate Cuba from the rest of the world for decades.

Being able to develop the Cuban tourism sector amidst difficult situations, persecutions and hostilities on the part of the United States has not been easy, highlighted Prime Minister Manuel Marrero Cruz, years ago.

It is not a question of chance or whim, but of political will. This sector is the driving force of our economy and its development allows improving the quality of life of the Cuban people. It will always be a priority, said Marrero, former Tourism Minister from 2004 to 2019.

For his part, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla said that the government of the United States "tries to force us to make political concessions with decisions like those, and with unilateral sanctions and economic sieges. They will fail again."

## Support Continues

By Deisy **FRANCIS**

HAVANA.- A marathon of voices against the economic, commercial and financial blockade the United States has imposed against the Caribbean island for over 60 years and in favor of a Cuba that resists was the message that flooded the social networks recently.

Convened by Europa por Cuba (Europe for Cuba) channel, the media marathon held on April 2 and 3 far exceeded the expectations with regards to the number of participants and the profound content of the messages, its organizers informed.

For 24 hours, traditional and alternative media, solidarity organizations, political forces, trade unions, parliamentarians, intellectuals, Cuban residents abroad, as well as individuals voiced their rejection of the unilateral U.S. siege.

Telesur, HispanTV, Al Mayadeen and Cubavisión Internacional were some of the TV channels attracted by the forum against the blockade.

The media coverage also included Prensa Latina, SANA and Sputnik news agencies, the Venezuelan National Assembly channel ANTV, and radio stations like La Radio del Sur, Radio Patagonia, Radio Rebelde and Radio Habana Cuba.

Moreover, it mobilized nearly 100,000 members of different organizations in the United States such as Greater Hartford Cuba Solidarity Committee, Connecticut Peace and Solidarity Coalition, Latin America Solidarity, Green Party of Connecticut and Veterans for Peace Connecticut.

"When speaking about solidarity with Cuba we must forget about the acronyms or logos of our organizations and have it clear that our goal is to support it," said Manu Pineda, member of the European Parliament,

Similar remarks were made by intellectuals Fernando Buen Abad (Mexico) and Atilio Borón (Argentina), French deputy Francois-Michel Lambert, and Argentinean activists Stella Calloni and Hebe de Bonafini.

The list of participants also included the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Latin American Network of Solidarity with Cuba, the National and International Council on People's Communication, Pastors for Peace (United States), the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador and the Party of the European Left.

"I am very grateful to the love Cuba received from organizations and press media from all the continents that for 24 hours held the media marathon against the blockade," Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel wrote on his Twitter account.

"We send hugs from the island," the president said when ratifying "you can rest assured that the Revolution will continue to fight."

Making the people plunge into despair and suffocation has been the goal of the U.S. blockade against Cuba along all these years.

During his administration (2017-2021), Republican President Donald Trump adopted 243 unilateral measures, a significant number of them in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, he intensified the extraterritorial nature of that hostile policy with the activation in 2019 of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act.

This stand has so far been followed by his Democratic successor Joe Biden during his one plus year's tenure of the White House.



# Cuba Lifts Sanitary Restrictions



The taking of a sample, free of charge, will remain in effect and will be conducted at random.

PHOTOS: Prensa Latina.

By Ivette **FERNÁNDEZ**

HAVANA.- Cuba lifted the health protocols in place when entering the country taking into consideration that almost 90 percent of its population has received all the vaccination scheme against COVID-19, which protects the people from the disease.

Since last April 6, the regulation as a result of which it was compulsory to show a negative COVID-19 test (Antigen Test or PCR-RT) and the vaccination certificate against the virus was eliminated.

However, the Cuban Ministry of Health informed that the taking of a sample, free of charge, to study SARS-CoV-2 among travelers at the country's points of entry will remain in effect and will be conducted at random, depending on the number of flights, the arrival of ships and the epidemiological risk in the countries of origin.

If a test were positive, actions will be conducted following the protocols approved for the handling of this disease, the Ministry added.

The authorities also explained that all measures implemented in each of the points of arrival will remain in effect, where the fulfillment of social distancing and disinfection of hands and surfaces are guaranteed, as well as the obligatory use of masks in the national territory.

Until last April, 9,917,183 Cubans had been vaccinated (89.5%) and 6,339,254 had received a booster doses.

Cuba, a country in which children over the age of two were also included in the vaccination campaign, heads the list of nations with higher number of doses administered per every 100 inhabitants,

according to Our World in Data, the University of Oxford statistics site.

The three national immunogens already approved by the national regulatory authority – Soberana 01, Abdala and Soberana Plus – have the productive capacities needed to meet the domestic demand.

Vice-President of the BioCubaFarma entrepreneurial group, Dr Mayda Mauri, commented that all the COVID-19 vaccine doses needed to both finish the primary immunization and administer the booster doses are guaranteed by the biopharmaceutical industry.

The present reduction in the number of critical and serious cases related to the virus, as well as the low number of deaths and the better response seen in patients with pneumonia is the result of the high levels of immunity the vaccines provide, said doctor of Medical Sciences and specialist of the Pedro Kourí Institute of Tropical Medicine, Daniel González.

The above criterion was endorsed by BioCubaFarma when saying that, up to march 31st the present year, the country's death rate per one million inhabitants was three times lower than that recorded in Europe and the Americas.

Cuba's results in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic are very positive, with tangible evidence in the handling of its most recent variant, Omicron, stated representative of the Pan-American and World Health organizations (PAHO/WHO) in Cuba, Dr José Moya.

The scenario Cuba has achieved is the result of vaccination, he affirmed.



Ninety percent of Cuban population has received all the vaccination scheme against COVID-19.



# Sandunga launched worldwide

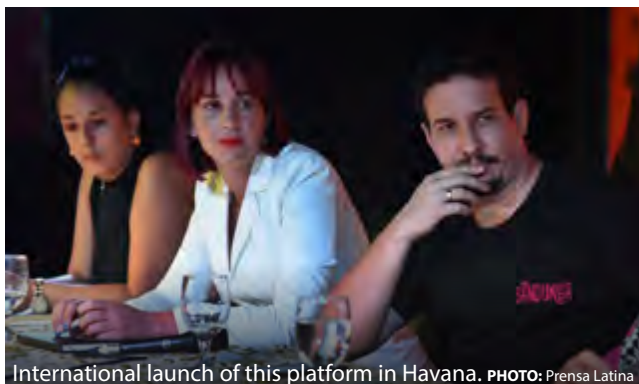
By Danay **GALLETTI**

HAVANA.- In some regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, the term 'Sandunga' refers to indigenous voices linked to music that means charm, grace and style but is also a synonym of party and fun.

In Cuba, the term is used to refer to an original, digital platform created about a year ago by state and private companies to promote the variety of rhythms present in the Cuban culture. This platform started promoting works of renowned authors such as Kelvis Ochoa, CimaFunk, Telmary, Mayito Rivera, Ivette Cepeda, David Álvarez y Juego de Manos, and the Iris Duet.

The international launch of this platform took place last April 1st, and for that, their promoters took into consideration the incorporation of benefits and the premiere of an interface, in a constant renovation that led to the creation of a streaming and download tool as an online solution to e-commerce.

The proposal includes products linked to the Cuban music that are also distributed through a shop with physical materials, delivery service, an on-line course sale system and the broadcasting of selected syllabuses.



International launch of this platform in Havana. PHOTO: Prensa Latina

One of the peculiarities of Sandunga is the commercialization of e-books and musical scores, benefits for the international market. However, products bought through this modality will be sent abroad by means of exports or via DHL or Correos de Cuba (Cuba Mail).

According to senior Marketing and Communication Specialist at the SoyCubano Export Agency, Yanae Naredo, the platform's new features comprise the inclusion of sections and the creation of a modality on recommendations.

The last mentioned feature means that each user will enjoy a unique experience while surfing the platform, as "based

on their preferences and the most visited sites, the apps will give priority to those topics, videos, articles, courses or artists they prefer."

In the future, Sandunga will function like a social media, where each representative of an artistic expression will have his/her own profile, will manage his/her own content and will be able to add images and choose the topics to include in his/her profile.

The digital media will likewise include a section called Canales (Channels), dedicated to exploring the websites of institutions or persons "who would like to do the musical curation of songs included in the platform to create their own reproduction lists," Naredo explained.

Developed by the Lombao Estudios group and attached to the Artistic and Literary Promotion Company, Artex S.A., the platform counts on the direct collaboration of all institutions linked to the promotion, launch, representation and commercialization of national rhythms.

Its name is a tribute to the theme Sandunguera, composed by bassist Juan Formell and popularized by his band, Van Van. The proposal is the result of the collaboration between the Cuban Ministry of Culture and the United Nations Organization for Industrial Development (ONUDI).

## San Remo Music Awards Cuba 2022

By Danay **GALLETTI**

HAVANA.- Representatives from Mexico, Spain, the United States and Italy stood out at the San Remo Music Awards Cuba 2022 musical, culinary and fashion event, held in several cultural and tourist institutions of Havana.

The list of foreign guests included singer and songwriter Ricardo Cocciante; fashion designer Nino Lettieri, and composer Gatto Panceri, author of the theme Vivo per Lei (I live for her), as well as artists Sonia Mazza, Rossella Zitiello and Sara Scognamiglio, all from Italy.

Held from April 5 – 10, the event's organizers included the Music Editing and Recording Company (EGREM), the Cuban Ministry of Culture and the Music Institute.

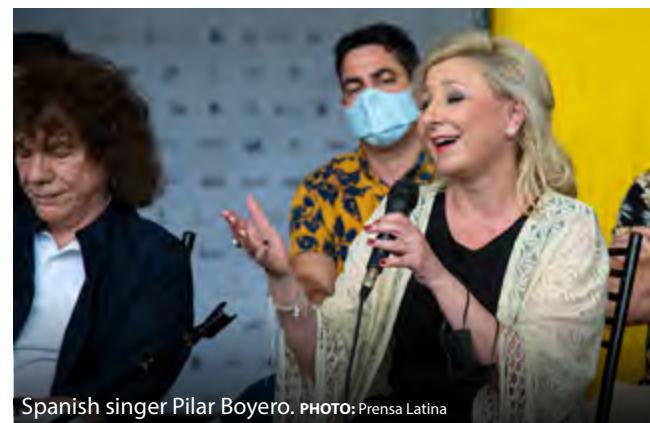
Among those who took part in the event, Spanish singer Pilar Boyero and Mexican Samuel Casteli – winner of the La Academia (The Academy) talent show – were included.

Boyero, who is also a professor and anchorwoman in Spain, described herself as an endless lover of the Cuban music and people. She made reference to the mixture of races and the rhythms resulting from the Caribbean roots and idiosyncrasy, and recalled her collaboration with singer Omara Portuondo and the Buena Fe band.

During her presentation as part of the opening program, held at the Hotel Nacional, the artist was accompanied by Cuban pianist Alejandro Falcón. In her opinion, Cuba is her home, a place where she can always find beauty, happiness and honesty. Other figures also attended the event, like fashion designer Dayán Naziri and president of the Agency for Cultural and Economic Exchange with Cuba, Michele Curto, who highlighted the importance of this gathering as a space for the development of young singers.

The San Remo Music Awards included a varied program of concerts, an international business fair, a fashion show, a gastronomic event and a four-night show at Havana's Teatro

Nacional, where 16 Cuban youngsters tried their best to be the winner of a singing contest held in front of an international jury. Havana also welcomed other exponents of the artistic world from Spain, Mexico and the United States, in addition to the performances of local figures such as Mayito Rivera, Adrián Berazaín, Niurka Reyes, Elito Revé, Pedrito Calvo, Tony Ávila and Toques del Río.



Spanish singer Pilar Boyero. PHOTO: Prensa Latina



You can now get up to date news headlines from the PRENSA LATINA NEWS AGENCY by sending an SMS with the letters PL to 8100.

Once confirmed, you will receive 4 x 250 spaced message updates per day.

A 30 day subscription costs only 25 CUP, deducted from your balance and which should be renewed before your expiry date.

If you encounter any problems with the service, you can call our Helpline on 72047397

For further details see <http://www.entumovil.cu>, [www.prensa-latina.cu](http://www.prensa-latina.cu) or call the Desoft Customer Care Line at 7 832 3501

**For 4 News Headlines per day for just \$25.00 CUP / month, Send an SMS with the letters PL to 8100**





# A Renewed Plaza America

By Braulio **MANUEL**

MATANZAS.- After full renovation, Plaza America and its Convention Center at the famous Varadero Beach resort will relaunch the Cuban tourism product in the modality of event for this year 2022.

Zulema Afá, event organizer for the facility, told **The Havana Reporter** that different events have been scheduled for this year, including the BioCubaAgro Congress, the Congress on Diabetes and More Severe Complications, another on construction and the much awaited International Tourism Fair (FIT 2022) in May.

She also mentioned the Varadero Gourmet Festival, the Convention on Animal Production and Agricultural Development, the International Meeting on Quality and Cubamotricidad Congress.

The expert provided details about two other events that will be held in 2022, such as the 2nd National Workshop on Essential Oils and a business meeting of plastic manufacturers. In the meantime, she announced that the animal health meeting

known as SISA and the mining meeting "Minimetal" will be held next year.

"The participants will find rooms prepared and set up with new technologies, in accordance with the demands of the

moment. Three halls and other areas were enlarged to provide more facilities to customers, above all, to comply with the biosafety measures adopted to fight COVID-19," she sustained.

Plaza América is located in Cuba's most important sun and beach destination in the western province of Matanzas. It's a two-

story building with a commercial area on the first floor and meeting rooms on the second. The plaza, said Afá, now offers more services including a car rental bureau of Marlin Marina and a handicraft fair involving several entities that promote cultural products.

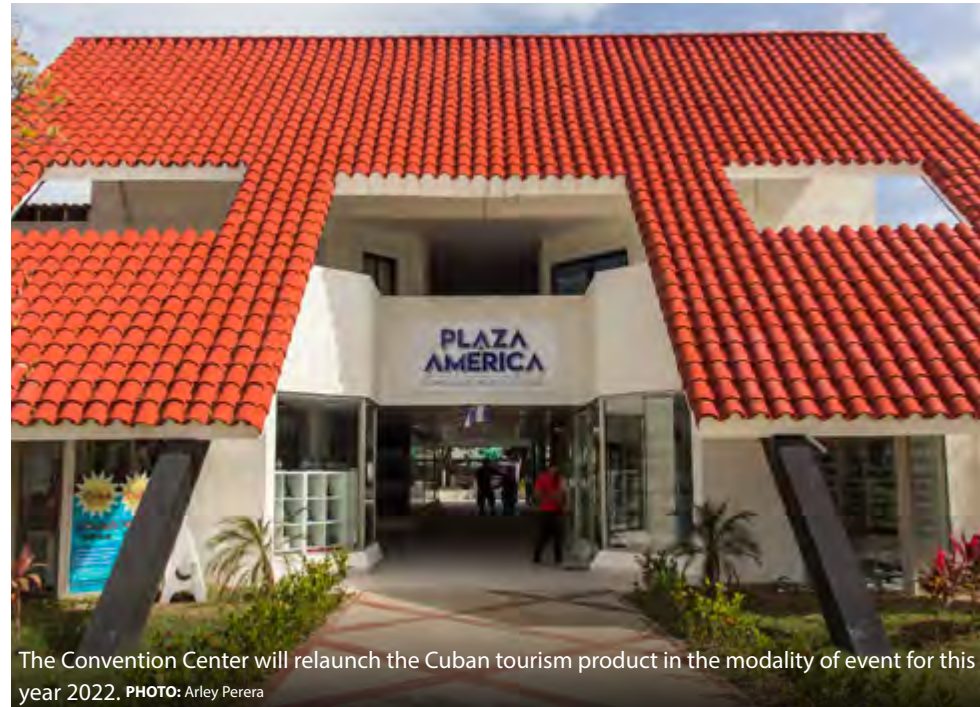
"The small flag square was redesigned with its water mirror at the entrance close to the parking area, while the access to the beach now has two footbridges built to protect the dune, explained Zulema.

The expert commented that the meeting hall and Room G on the second floor have video and audio systems as well as interpretation equipment.

The center's structural systems were remodeled, the flooring changed and the gastronomic services at restaurants, cafeterias and bars, among others, were enhanced.

"We have improved all tourist services and worked under the accessible and sustainable tourism slogan and together with the Varadero Ciudad Digital (Digital City) Project," she said.

"I am happy but not fully satisfied. It's been hard work but we must aspire to do it better. We must continue betting on this product. Those of us who are in love with this kind of product are willing to make much more in order to succeed," the organizer stressed.



The Convention Center will relaunch the Cuban tourism product in the modality of event for this year 2022. PHOTO: Arley Perera

## We are more than a travel magazine...



**Cubaplus is available  
in 134 point of sales  
located in hotels in  
Havana and Varadero,  
at International Airports  
and Holguin's Telecorreos  
as well as in the bookstores  
of Casa de las Americas.**

[www.cubaplusmagazine.com](http://www.cubaplusmagazine.com)

To subscribe please contact :

Gerencia editorial Prensa Latina

Email: [gerenciaeditorial@cl.prensa-latina.cu](mailto:gerenciaeditorial@cl.prensa-latina.cu)

Telf. 7833 2279







San Pedro de la Roca del Morro Fortress. PHOTO: Prensa Latina

# Magnetism of mountains and sea

By Martha **CABRALES**

SANTIAGO DE CUBA.- In a recent post on her Facebook account, a journalist from this eastern Cuban province praised the excursion offered by Palmares extra hotel company, which allowed her to enjoy the lush landscape of the Gran Piedra mountain range.

This is perhaps one of the signs that shows that tourism is beginning to recover in this eastern province, after a little over two years coping with the negative impact of COVID-19. Along this time, many doors were closed and others were transformed to offer medical assistance to patients; even with the help of their staff.

Although the aforementioned example is part of the increased tourist offers for national vacationers, the truth is that the reopening to foreign tourists can also be appreciated at hotels and other resorts in the territory.

Among the new examples that point to a favorable environment amid the safety measures adopted due to significant numbers of SARS-Cov-2 cases are the reopening of El Morro Restaurant and of Prado de las Esculturas Park –outdoor gallery. The restaurant, located at the entrance of San Pedro de la Roca del Morro Fortress, was fully renovated. The guests not only enjoy the proximity to the Caribbean Sea or the marvelous landscape that disappears in the distance, but also some of the best dishes of the Cuban cuisine.

The park, considered an open-air art gallery with 20 huge sculptures on display in an area covering 40 hectares, recovered its splendor thanks to the work of a team of specialists with the Caguayo Foundation, after decades suffering the impact caused by natural events and exposure to the elements.

With this fresh start, which features the piece Punto de memoria (Point of Memory) by U.S. artist Melvin Edwards –the newest placed there– Prado de las Esculturas will be one of the most captivating sea-mountain destinations near the city during the upcoming summer season.

The arrival of the German cruise ship World Voyager at the Guillermón Moncada Port last December must be a good sign for more ships to continue to arrive. However, the U.S. government's hostility is an ever greater obstacle to achieving that goal.

The numerous improvements the hotel and extra hotel infrastructure underwent during the forced standstill entailed by the pandemic, with the objective of ensuring hygienic and safe tourism, will contribute to meet the expectations of visitors and even have them want to repeat the experience.

The Tumba Francesa La Caridad de Oriente (Afro-Cuban genre of dance, song and drumming project), declared Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, and the Archaeological Landscape of the First French Coffee Plantations in the south-east of Cuba, look forward to welcoming visitors. So does the status as creative city of music recently granted by UNESCO to Santiago de Cuba.

## Pinar del Río, where the Sun Sets

By Claudia **GONZÁLEZ**

HAVANA.- Mysterious fogs over the limestone formations, earthly and underwater landscapes, an eclectic environment, the site of a meteorite – the second seen in the province – are some of the features that characterize Pinar del Río, where the sun sets in Cuba.

The westernmost of the provinces of the island finds in nature its main charms, treasuring one of the most famous sights in the country and whose image the world recognizes: the Viñales Valley.

Tourism-specialized publications highlight the beauty of this site – Cuba's first geopark – and acknowledge the preservation of the environment and people's harmonic relationship in the cultivation of fruits and tobacco, the country's hallmark.

A visit to this location, which in 1999 was declared a UNESCO Heritage Site could include a horse or bicycle riding, a car tour or even a walk, especially for those who prefer to make a stop and admire the valley. For adventure lovers, this national park offers hiking and canopy tours, in addition to other options provided in the rocky formations, such as visits to Cueva del Indio (Indian Cave) or the Pre-history Mural, one of the world's biggest outdoors frescos.

Visitors can also enjoy dozens of archeological sites, Cuba's two largest cave systems, an extensive biodiversity and endemic species, such as the cork palm tree, considered a living fossil.

Another scenario of the Pinar del Río province that is known for its beautiful landscape is the Guanahacabibes biosphere reserve, an area bathed in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

The peninsula, with the stories of pirates who arrived to its coasts to hide uncertain treasures and where the vegetation and the animal species coexist with few permanent residents in an area of about 1,060 km<sup>2</sup>, seems like an oasis with its over 20 beaches.

Guanahacabibes is the seat of Cuba's largest lakeside area, and the iguana, the island's largest lizard – whose male species can measure up to two meters in length – is part of its legend.



The westernmost of the provinces of Cuba finds in nature its main charms. PHOTO: Prensa Latina

One of the attractions that specialized websites highlight the possibility of witnessing the birth of sea turtles from a couple of meters of distance, as part of a monitoring project for the preservation of those reptiles that has world repercussion. Emblematic places of the area include the Roncali Lighthouse, the only edification made in the colonial period in the country's far west, and the María la Gorda International Diving Center, which offers about 60 diving points in calm waters and with great visibility.

In addition to its natural charms, Pinar del Río is known for the Guasch Palace, in the central part of the city. This building combines gothic style, Doric capital, Ionic frieze, Egyptian columns, Arab pointed arches and Hindu portico, in which sea horses, gargoyle-like heads and winged monsters appear.

Another outstanding building is the Tranquilino Sandalio de Noda Natural History Museum, built in 1914 by designer and constructor Francisco Guasch Ferrer – who finished the work with the assistance of only two builders – as a present to his wife. If these were not enough attractions, on February 1, 2019, a meteorite fell on the province, leaving the local people the memory of a fireball flying through the sky and a strong explosion as a result of which fragments of different sizes were scattered in almost all the Pinar del Río municipalities.





# Heritage and Nature in Camagüey



Sculptures in the Plaza del Carmen in Camagüey. PHOTOS: Prensa Latina.

By Fidel Alejandro **MANZANARES**

**CAMAGÜEY.-** The Villa del Puerto del Príncipe, Camagüey, founded on February 1514, was one of the first towns established in Cuba, with sacred places that make it one of the main tourist destinations on the island.

Its regional patrimony goes far beyond its cultural values to also combine with natural attractions that include protected areas.

One of the city's sacred places is the trilogy formed by the convergence of Maceo, Ignacio Agramonte and Independencia Streets, which experts call the Golden Triangle.



Santa Lucía grows as one of the main tourist destinations in the country.

This is perhaps the liveliest and busiest area -even from the commercial point of view- in the Historic District, one of Cuba's largest and declared World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2008.

In addition to the large number of resorts, the area stands out for its architectonic and cultural values in general.

The experts with the Office of the City's Historian develop priority programs in places of this kind, being the Arte Plaza project one of the leading ones, as it is a representative cultural space, a source of spiritual and economic wealth.

Aware of this zone's potential, Cuba's Ministry of Tourism is increasing its hotel infrastructure under the E brand of the Cubanacán Hotel Group, such as Hotel Santa María, which is close to Soledad Church. Well known for emblematic places such as Carmen and San Juan de Dios Squares, and surrounded by sanctuaries that have earned it the name of City of Churches, the capital of Camagüey is beloved for its craftwork, clay roof tiles and street network.

Camagüey hosts international folkloric dance events such as the Olorum Dance Festival, and is the birthplace of illustrious Cuban personalities such as National Poet Nicolás Guillén (1902-1989) and scientist Carlos J. Finaly, (1833-1915), who discovered the agent that transmits yellow fever. It is also known as the cradle of Cuban literature, because it was there where Silvestre de Balboa wrote Espejo de Paciencia in 1608, which is considered Cuba's first literary work.

Because it has a large area that includes 16,000 square kilometers, 22 percent of Cuba's beaches are located in Camagüey. One of them is Santa Lucía, which each year grows as one of the main tourist destinations in the country.

Other remarkable places along the coastline are La Boca and Residencial, where the hotel infrastructure grows as well. At the end of 2021, the Iberostar Hotel Group inaugurated Coral Level at Iberostar Selection Esmeralda, a seafront five-star hotel in Cayo Cruz (key).

Travel Trade Caribbean website recognized that one of the biggest Cuban tourist projects is being developed in the coastal zone of Camagüey, on one of the most pristine and paradisiacal islets of Jardines del Rey keys.

## Trinidad, a Seductive City

By Mayda **PARDILLO**

**SANCTI SPIRITUS.-** Cuba's Trinidad, a central-southern city, captivates visitors with its colonial architecture, cobblestone streets and old houses with fascinating elements inside.

Founded in January 1514, it was the third of the first seven towns established by Spanish conquistadors.

Known as the City Museum of the Caribbean, last December Trinidad marked the 33rd anniversary of its historic district being declared World Heritage Site by the UN Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), together with the Valle de los Ingenios (Valley of the Sugarcane Mills).

The city is reviving again, little by little, after being quiet for a while due to the COVID-19 pandemic, without the usual hustle and bustle of national and foreign tourists.

According to experts, its urban historic district is one of the most extraordinary in Cuba and Latin America.

Surrounded by mountains and the sea, the village not only has the UNESCO designation as World Heritage Site, but is also listed among the World's Creative Cities of Craft and Folk Art.

Visiting this city is like travelling back in time and at the same time having the opportunity to enjoy the blue water of its beaches, appreciate the most delicate craftwork in the form of embroideries and fabric, as well as artistic earthenware.

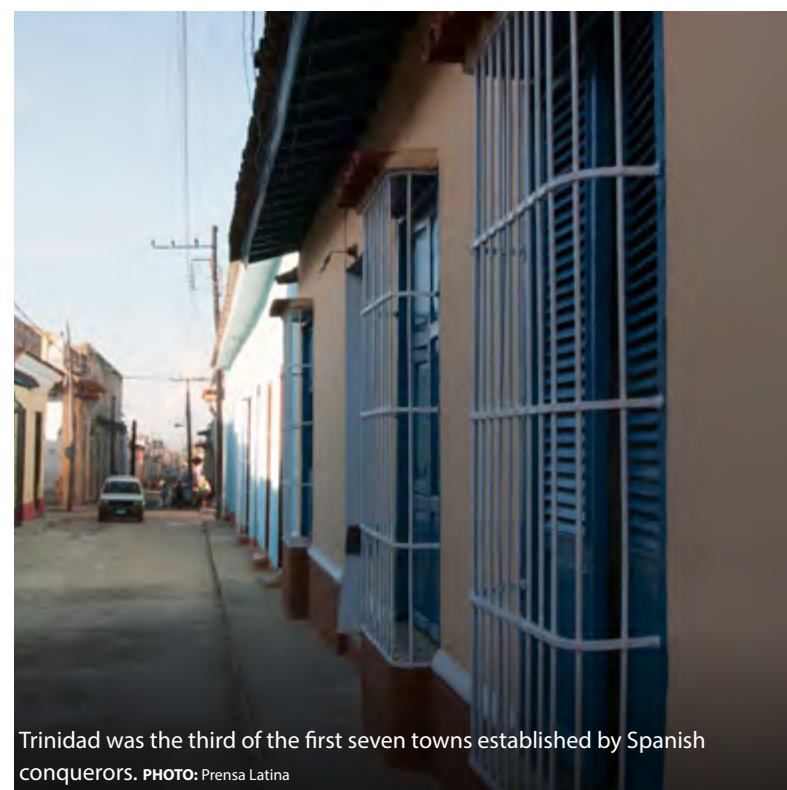
Visitors come up with narrow streets or small squares as they get familiar with the local history and stories passed down from one generation to another.

Even the names of its streets have survived the passing of time, with poetic terms and others alluding to the calendar of saint's days. Although some streets have names like Dolores (Sorrow), Amargura (Bitterness) or Desengaño (Disappointment), its inhabitants are very happy there.

Colonial houses, churches, streets and a welcoming atmosphere, where reality and myths become one, are part of that magic that captivates visitors, making them want to come back over and over again.

Prestigious personalities have visited the locality, such as German researcher Alexander von Humboldt, whom Cuban teacher José de la Luz y Caballero called the second explorer of Cuba.

Today, like in the past, the magical atmosphere that has prevailed for centuries and the peculiar affection of its inhabitants continue to be the city's main attraction.



Trinidad was the third of the first seven towns established by Spanish conquerors. PHOTO: Prensa Latina



# The Bright Light Queen

By José **FULGUEIRAS**

**VILLA CLARA.** The Villa Clara province, a tourist queen seated in its throne at the central region of Cuba, is surrounded by virgin beaches in which the flora and fauna create a mysterious place. The territory, with a population of about 790,000 inhabitants and an extension of 8,412 square kilometers – Cuba's fifth largest area – is predominantly flat, although it includes a small strip of the Escambray mountain massif.

After arriving to the territory, either by land, air or sea, visitors can either walk along the streets of Santa Clara – a city that evokes its benefactor Martha Abreu and Commander Ernesto Che Guevara – or tour San Juan de los Remedios, the eighth village founded by the Spanish colonizers in Cuba, in the 16th century. About 59 kilometers away from Santa Clara, in Caibarién, the 48 km-long and man-made causeway begins. Built over the sea, this path was granted the Ibero-American Alcántara award.

The keys that are connected to the mainland thanks to the causeway have about 17 kilometers of beaches, which caress fine sands in Las Brujas, Ensenachos and Santa María, three gems of the Cuban geography.

Las Brujas is surrounded by a two km-long beach that has one of the most beautiful coral reefs of the Sabana-Camagüey archipelago, also known as Jardines del Rey.

This captivating place is famous for its impressive shore, its fine and white sand and the turquoise, crystal-clear waters that can be enjoyed by bathers and are an ideal place for world-class fishing. Ensenachos, for its part, has two white sand beaches that contrast with the green and blue sea in a practically virgin environment. The Iberostar Ensenachos Resort & Spa Hotel gives this destination an exclusivity hallmark.

The bottom of the sea shelters 24 diving sites ideal for contemplation and underwater photography. The Gaviota Marina and its diving center offer sea journeys, with a variety of catamaran trips and dives guided by professional divers.

The Cayo Santa María beaches, which specialists have selected among the world's best, include Perla Blanca, Las Caletas, Cañón and Cuatro Punta, with outcrops that



Ensenachos has two white sand beaches that contrast with the green and blue sea in a practically virgin environment. **PHOTO:** By the author and INFOTUR.

look like backdrops protecting the intoxicating princess. In this area, which has an extension of 18 square kilometers, the Cayo Santa María Aquarium-Dolphinarium is located. Opened in 2012, its facilities include six safe sections in which over 12 bottlenose dolphins – several of which were born in captivity – live and are trained.

## **VILLA CLARA'S HISTORIC SITES**

Santa Clara, the province's capital, treasures museums, ancient churches, the La Caridad theater, the Los Caneyes motel and parks full of history and culture.

The most representative monument, though, is the Ernesto Che Guevara Sculpture Complex, which was opened in 1988 and has been visited by millions of people from different countries of the world, especially after 1997, when the mortal remains of Argentinean-Cuban Commander and his guerrilla comrades were laid to rest there.

In the outskirts of the city, a statue of John Paul II is found since 1996, in the exact same place in which the Supreme Pontiff celebrated the first mass during his historic visit to Cuba, from January 21-25, 1998.

Another outstanding place is San Juan de los Remedios, a city which is over 500 years old and is famous for its parrandas (carnival festival).

The Remedios parrandas, celebrated on December 24 every year since 1820 and declared a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2018, are a national party that were inspired by the Carmen and San Salvador towns – identified by the emblems of El Gavilán (The Sparrowhawk) and El Gallo (The Rooster).

One of the many places of interest in Villa Clara includes the San Juan Bautista de Remedios church, the oldest in Cuba, rebuilt in 1692 over the structure of a temple originally built in 1570.

## A Stalagmite in the Depths of 'Hell'

By Rina **GONZÁLEZ**

**CIENFUEGOS.** In "hell's cave", hidden in the geography of the central province of Cienfuegos, is the largest stalagmite in Cuba, a calcareous formation considered for several years as the highest in the world. Even though it lost supremacy, it is still one of the highest in the world, with 67.2 meters of height and 30 diameters in the base, according to examinations conducted by experts of the National Speleological Society and international professionals.

Located in a cave known as Martín Inferno (Martin's Hell) and about five million years old, the reddish stalagmite can be admired from a natural balcony situated on the cavity. Its color is the result of the decomposition of iron ore combined with calcium carbonate.

This formation, found at a 93 m deep pit-hall called 'hell's cave', is guarded by other two stalagmites – 32 and 35 meters high – and by two authentic gypsum flowers of about 30 meters of height.

In order to measure it, it was necessary to tie threads to hydrogen balloons, among other resources. Photographing the stalagmite, an event that happened in the 1990s, was also difficult.

Omar García, a photographer from the Cienfuegos province, was the person behind this exploit. To do that, he had to use three powerful magnesium bombs, a highly-sensitive film, a powerful flash and filters.

In 2011, a multidisciplinary team managed to light up the stalagmite and the formation was then recorded with a TV camera for the first time.

But as interesting as the giant 'stone' itself is its environment, cave Martín Inferno, located in the Guamuha Massif known as Escambray, 57 kilometers away from the city of Cienfuegos and about 25 km from Trinidad, in Cuba's central region.

Discovered in 1967, the cave has five big halls: one at the entrance, at the camping area, the ball field, the snow area and the abovementioned 'hell's cave,' which in addition to the galleries, give the cavity a 793 m lineal development and a 179 m slope.

Researches have revealed that the cavity has two entrances, one of which is 650 meters above sea level. For this reason, in order to get in, people have to go down along 10 meters in a practically vertical position.

It looks like an insurmountable fall to the depths of the Earth; thus, its name is not surprising. It is associated to the legend of an alleged runaway slave called Martín who, escaping from his pursuers (or from the bees, according to another version) fell on the abyss. The cave is a National Monument, a site where fossils have been found and the mother of the stalagmite that has filled the Cubans with pride.

The Son Doong cave, in Vietnam, is the site where the world's highest formation of this type is located at present. Called Hand of Dog, it is 70 meters high. The Cuban stalagmite, thus, is now very close to the podium, until nature amazes us again.

## **SOYGRAF** GRAPHIC PRINTINGS *Printings for You* *A Graph, an Industry*

- **Leading company in four-color offset and digital Printing.** We are renowned for printing Newspapers, Books, Magazines, Catalogs, Short Articles, Leaflets, Labels, Signs, Posters, Calendars, Stationery, etc. Diversity of formats and mediums. Flexback, Wire-O, Staple binding.

- **Production and Commercialization of Diaries, Notebooks, Blocks.**

- **Manufacturing of Stamps, Engraving on Acrylic, Bilayer, Glass, Ceramic and Textile.**
- **Signs**

- **Graphic equipment repair service**

**Contact Detail**  
**SOYGRAF Newspaper Company**  
**Phone No.: 7 882 0643**  
**Production and Sales Director**  
**7 882 0356**

**Marketing Director**

**Address:** Calle Territorial No. 278, e/ General Suárez y Auditor, Plaza de la Revolución. La Habana.

**Website:** [www.Soygraf.com](http://www.Soygraf.com)



# Fabulous venue for tourist fair

By Roberto **CAMPOS**

VARADERO.- A famous Cuban beach named Varadero was chosen to host the 40th edition of the International Tourism Fair, FITCuba 2022, a perfect scenery of beautiful nature and very fine white sand.

The beach resort also has amazing hotel infrastructure and services that make it an ideal destination for the sun-beach choice that identifies Cuban tourism, including Plaza America convention center, where the meeting will take place.

Located on the Hicacos Peninsula, on the northern coast of Matanzas Province -about 140 kilometers west of Havana- Varadero has twenty kilometers of white sandy beach.

It began to grow rapidly as a recreational spot in the 1990s, but was officially founded on December 5, 1887. However, the first records of vacationers in the zone date back to 1840.

Varadero currently has about 50 tourist facilities with some 20,600 rooms -nearly 70 percent of them are four to five star hotels. One third of the tourists that come to the island visit Varadero.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the beach resort provided services to over 1,300,000 vacationers, with Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, Argentina and Russia as the main issuing markets of tourists to Cuba.

More recently, after Cuba reopened to tourists on November 15, 2021, Canadians and Russians have accounted for the majority of travelers to the island.

The name Varadero means a rather shallow sandy coast where ships run aground. Spanish voyager Sebastián de Ocampo discovered it in 1508 during his first exploratory trip to the island. It was first mentioned in 1540.

It is an ideal place for recreational water activities, excursions, diving, walking and other pastimes. The beach has received world recognition for its beauty and tourist facilities.



PHOTOS: Prensa Latina.



# Costa Rica Elected an Anti-System President

By Alejandro GÓMEZ

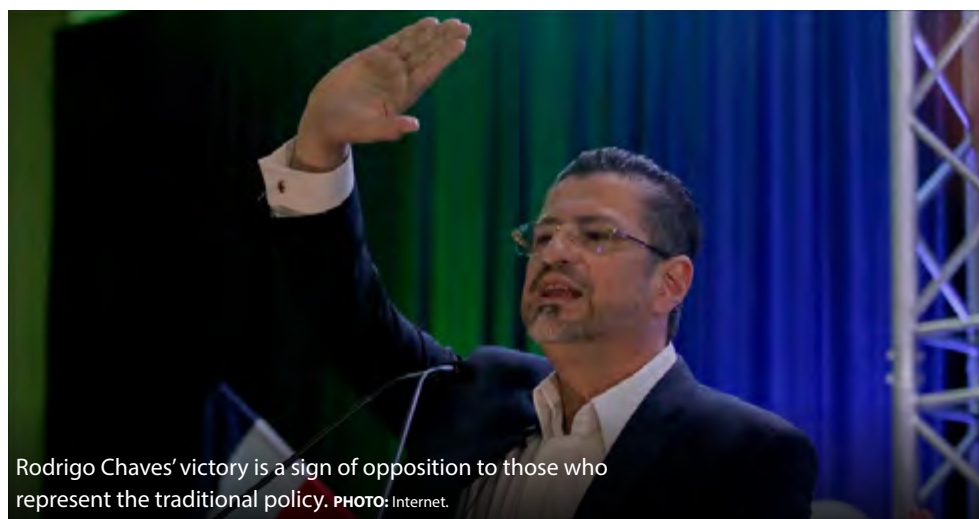
SAN JOSÉ.- Costa Ricans elected Rodrigo Chaves, from the Social-Democratic Progress Party, to run the country during the 2022-2026 term on the assumption that his anti-system stance will help eliminate the structures that prevent solving the serious problems the country faces. The 60-year old economist and former official of the World Bank, who was outside the country for over 30 years, eventually returned to Costa Rica at the end of 2019 to act as Minister of the Treasury Department, a position he only held for 184 days because of serious disagreements with the Government – which benefitted him in his presidential race, due to the unpopularity of president Carlos Alvarado's administration. The Costa Rican voters voted for a change in favor of a person that, according to them, can help them improve the difficult life conditions they face, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic but present in the country long before, and as a result of which, this Central American nation is included among the 10 most unequal in the world.

Chaves' victory over former president José María Figueres (1994-1998), from the National Liberation Party (PLN), is also a sign of Costa Rican voters' opposition to those who represent the traditional policy, which in recent decades has been marked by scandals of corruption and favoritism to the most powerful sectors. The abovementioned situation, in addition to other evils such as the high unemployment rate, the poverty in which 1.5 million citizens live (450,000 of them in very poor conditions), the high cost of living

and school delay (increased because of the pandemic), are the main challenges the Costa Rican president will have to face from May 8, 2022 to the same date of 2026. Although those problems were included among his main electoral promises, Chaves and his cabinet will have to negotiate and get to agreements with other forces represented in the Legislative Assembly in order to meet his government plan, as with only 10 seats, he is at a disadvantage with the 19 seats his main opponent and obstacle, PLN, has.

Nor should Chaves fail to live up to the trust placed in him by voters, who ignored the accusations against him because he concluded almost 30 years of work at the World Bank overshadowed by allegations from two female workers who attributed to him 'sexual advances' and a 'pattern of unwanted inappropriate behavior' between 2008 and 2013.

The new president will have to win the over 1.5 million Costa Ricans who did not go to the polls (43,23 percent of abstention) for being disappointed with politicians, in addition to the 50,960 voters whose ballots were left blank or declared null and void. Chaves' future administration will also have to face the obstacles representatives of major national, agribusiness and pharmaceutical companies, among other sectors, will put on his way, because as said during his campaign, their intention is to put an end to his privileges. In May, for third occasion in a row since 2014, the representative of a non-traditional party will take on the presidency of Costa Rica, unlike PLN, a party created in 1951 that suffered its third defeat in a row in the race to the presidency – and the first time to be 12 years in the opposition.



Rodrigo Chaves' victory is a sign of opposition to those who represent the traditional policy. PHOTO: Internet.

**TRAVEL Insurance**

[ People traveling to and from Cuba ]

the unexpected should not ruin your trip

**ESICUBA**

[www.esicuba.cu](http://www.esicuba.cu)  
esicuba\_clientes@esicuba.cu



# For a sustainable and sovereign agriculture

By Cira**RODRÍGUEZ**

HAVANA.-The 23rd edition of the International Agribusiness and Food Fair, FIAGROP 2022, showed the efforts made in Cuba and the main programs implemented so far in achieving sustainability and self-sufficiency in agriculture and livestock production.

First Deputy Agriculture Minister, Rodolfo Rodríguez, corroborated the assertion when highlighting that, in spite of the impact caused by the U.S. blockade and the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, particularly in the production of food, vegetables, and livestock.

In this sense, he praised the responsibility of all forms of production that make farming an indispensable source of food and raw material supply for the different industries. This task involves some 4,800 cooperatives, 310 enterprises and 876,000 people.

These are great efforts aimed at alleviating the lack of basic supplies and the impact of natural events such as drought, which are the main problems the sector is facing now.

Among these actions Rodríguez stressed municipal self-sufficiency and the major role played by urban and family agriculture, farming cooperatives and individual producers.

He also praised the approval of the National Plan on Food Sovereignty and Nutritional Education, whose main

objective is to facilitate local food systems that result into healthy population; together with other measures and programs intended to make production more dynamic, as progress has been attained but results are yet insufficient.



First Deputy Agriculture Minister, Rodolfo Rodríguez.

In order to achieve that goal, efforts are made to encourage internal credits, as well as cooperation projects which, together with foreign capital investment, are complementary alternatives to recover agriculture and the food industry.

Among the steps taken, he also highlighted the creation of the Agricultural Promotion Bank which, since September 2021 up to date, has benefited over 1,000 producers with credits for production and investment. Similarly, the number of cooperatives doing business with foreign capital and those authorized to import and export products has increased.

Also encouraging is the granting of unused land and the updating of norms to commercialize agricultural products, as well as the construction of organic fertilizer and pesticide plants by the Labiofam and Azcuba entrepreneurial groups.

In line with this, 93 measures were adopted to reactivate the sugar agribusiness in order to safeguard its heritage, culture and history and diversify the sector, based on productive connections and the overall development of food and agricultural productions.

FIAGROP 2022 included a business forum that promoted the business portfolios of the Ministries of Agriculture and Food Industry and the Azcuba Entrepreneurial Group, in addition to opportunities for foreign investment.

## 3D Printer for Housing Construction

By Ania**TRINQUETE**

HAVANA.-The development of a 3D printer to contribute to meeting the national housing construction plan is the main objective of a recent agreement signed between the Havana Metallic Production Company (EPROMAP) and AlaSoluciones S.R.L., a micro, small and medium-sized company (MIPYME).

The printer, to be produced by specialists from both institutions, will allow printing modules for different buildings, such as homes and schools.

AlaSoluciones co-founder, Yosué Montes de Oca, told **The Havana Reporter** that their intention is to make a positive impact on the national plan, "based on the substitution of imports and the revitalization of constructions' progress."

According to official data, the Cuban housing stock amounts to 3,824,861 homes, of which 39 percent are in poor or bad technical condition. The housing deficit, for its part, amounts to 929,695 homes. As a result, it is necessary to build 527,575 homes and rehabilitate 402,120.

In order to face this situation, the 2021 housing construction plan intended to finish 44,643 homes, but this goal was not met by 42 percent. This year, 38,000 homes are to be finished, a number that is still well below the population's needs. For this reason, initiatives such as the one conducted by AlaSoluciones and EPROMAP can be an important contribution.

AlaSoluciones, Chain Innovation

The AlaSoluciones project was created in 2017 under a self-employed work license with the purpose to turn passion for airplane modelling into something else.

In 2020, it joined the Havana's Scientific-Technological Park as a technology-based company.

AlaSoluciones offers technological solutions through the development and deployment of unmanned air vehicles and remote-perception stations, "that is, unattended weather stations, reception of atmospheric variable data, especially associated to precision agriculture," Montes de Oca commented.

They also designed four unmanned vehicles, three of which were air vehicles, including one related to robotic falconry, to keep flocks of birds away from airports' runways.

At present, they have an aquatic drone in operation specialized in measuring the depth of inside waters such as lakes and reservoirs, which allows calculating the real amount of water.

On September 2021, when the creation of micro, small and medium-sized companies (MIPYMES) was approved in the country, AlaSoluciones was one of the 35 first companies to be set-up.

On the advantages of this process, Montes de Oca highlighted the possibility of creating productive connections with state companies such as EPROMAP, in search of clients and suppliers, as these "have premises available, machinery, specialized staff in different areas."

The alliance established between EPROMAP and AlaSoluciones shows the potential advantages of this new form of management, based on its capacity to establish connections with the state sector and generate productive flows even more dynamic.

According to updated data of the Ministry of Economics and Planning (MEP), about 2,614 economic actors have been approved in Cuba since the start of this process, on September 2021. Of the total of MIPYMES set up so far, 2,523 are private, 51 are state and 40 are cooperatives.



AlaSoluciones co-founder, Yosué Montes de Oca.



The project was created in 2017 under a self-employed work license. PHOTO: AlaSoluciones.



# Economy Strives to Speed up its Pace



Ninety percent of Cuban population has received all the vaccination scheme against COVID-19. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

By Karina**MARRÓN**

HAVANA.- As the second half of the year approaches, the Cuban economy is compelled to speed up its pace so as to achieve the predicted outcomes. Yet, the local authorities sustain the possibilities do exist for the Gross Domestic Product to grow four percent in 2022, as envisaged.

However, in order to achieve this goal, it will be necessary to implement the 158 measures approved as part of the Economic and Social Strategy for this period more effectively and urgently, said Vice Prime Minister Alejandro Gil, who is also the Minister of Economy and Planning.

Nonetheless, the first trimester of the year showed a gradual recovery in aspects like the exports of goods, in particular rum, sea products, honey and nickel; as well as in the production of some agricultural produce.

It's worth mentioning that the production of root vegetables and vegetables was higher than in the same period of 2021, with a consequent increase in the supplies for the population. However, the results are yet insufficient to meet the demand.

The production of milk, another product that is essential to replace imports, also recorded better numbers at the beginning of the year, when some 31 million liters were collected. The increase in the producer's price had a positive impact on those results.

Other basic foodstuffs such as rice, beef and pork meat are pending tasks for the national agriculture, which is committed to implementing 63 measures to boost the sector.

Meanwhile, tourism showed signs of recovery, even when it is still suffering the

consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and coping with new challenges, such as the interrupted arrival of Russian travelers due to the conflict in Ukraine and the sanctions against that country.

It is a challenge for the island's leisure industry, which nevertheless maintains the aspiration of receiving 2.5 million international visitors by 2022, for which it is working with other markets such as Turkey and opening new hotel facilities.

Something that can benefit the arrival of tourists to the island is the easing of entry requirements. Beginning on April 6, the mandatory PCR or antigen test upon entry to Cuba was eliminated, as well as the complete vaccination report.

The situation of 439 enterprises that reported losses in the first trimester of the year is undoubtedly one of the negative points of the Cuban economy. Although smaller compared to the end of December (500), it is a critical number for a country that needs better performances and greater efficiency.

Inflation is another topic that worries the cabinet, as "irrational prices, both on the state and non-state sector, persist," noted the Vice Prime Minister.

It is our duty to face this situation with effective measures, he said before the Council of Ministers.

In this sense, the government is looking for alternatives such as the gradual implementation of a single, inclusive pricing policy, on an equal footing for all the economic actors.

In addition, efforts are being made to identify suppliers that produce goods with the least possible amount of imported materials, so as to commercialize them on the state-run chain in Cuban pesos.

## Investments are a Priority

By Camila**MAYO**

HAVANA.-Cuba is prioritizing investments in 22 agricultural and livestock projects with views to increasing food production, stated the Agriculture Ministry's (MINAGRI) Director of Investments and Development, Luis Enrique Díaz.

In statements made in this capital, the director recalled that over the past few years, the country has steadily increased the funds assigned to the sector in order to boost its development, particularly in the production of rice, grains, vegetables, fruits and livestock.

According to statistics presented in Parliament last December, this year the government would assign over 13,734,000 Cuban Pesos (about \$572 million) to agriculture, which accounts for 12 percent of the total budget predicted for investments in the country.

However, Díaz noted that, rather than waiting for the budgetary allocation, the institution and the enterprises attached to this organization should exploit their own potential to obtain sources of funding.

Among these alternatives he mentioned the sale of produce to the tourist industry and to the Mariel Special Development Zone, exports, as well as becoming more efficient in the implementation of the ongoing actions, so that they bear the fruits needed.

With regards to foreign investment, Díaz said that they work with capital from countries like China, Russia, Belarus and India, as well as with international cooperation projects.

The investment program features the construction of over 200 rustic crop storages, the incentive to coffee production, both in the mountains and the plains, and the introduction of irrigation machines to increase the agricultural area planted with coffee, which currently comprises 7.0 percent only.

In addition, actions are carried out to develop the production of livestock and cocoa, while the infrastructure to process and store tobacco is being enlarged and efforts are made to look for value added products from honey, he explained.

The director praised the cooperation projects financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Prodecafé and Prodegan; as well as the bio-pesticide plants in Havana and the central province of Villa Clara, which is in the last phase of construction and with modern technology.

In the rice field, the processing capacity, equipment and transportation systems are being modernized with views to produce nearly 500,000 tons. In the meantime, the actions carried out in the pharmaceutical area reach the Vaccination Plant -with the cooperation of India- and the recovery of the national network of agriculture-related labs.



Director of Investments and Development, Luis Enrique Díaz.



# Boxing on Professional Circuits

By Adrián **MENGANA**

HAVANA.- After decades of unquestionable results, Cuban boxing was given the green light to compete in the professional circuits, an action endorsed by the signature of a contract with the Mexican Golden Ring Promotions Company.

Olympic champions Julio César La Cruz, Arlen López, Roniel Iglesias and Andy Cruz – today's sensation – will show their talent in the professional arena as part of the Domadores de Cuba team, said president of the Cuban Boxing Federation Alberto Puig.

This good news was announced at the Mesa Redonda radio and television program, where it was also informed that the Cuban strategy is aimed at guaranteeing boxers' constant sport and competitive training, so that the discipline continues staying at the top of the international scenario and thus contribute to the economic aid of boxers, the boxing troupe and the team's medical staff, Puig added.

For more than three years, the Cuban Federation had been trying to get to an agreement in line with the philosophy of the Cuban sport and for the benefit of boxers who, as a result of this agreement, will train in Cuba and will then participate in professional events with their coaches and doctors, to finally return to the island. In the first phase, top national athletes will compete as a team and will be under contract for three years, which will lead to a higher preparation of boxers and better

incomes for these – up to 80 percent.

This year, the Domadores de Cuba team will hold up to five matches. Coaches will receive 15 percent of the profits, while the medical staff will receive five, Puig commented before ruling out the setting-up of a professional championship in Cuba. He also recalled that since 2014 and until 2018, the Cuban team participated in the World Series and won the Cup on three occasions, thus ratifying the potential the Cuban boxers have to succeed in professional events.

In the Río de Janeiro 2016 Olympic Games, several Cuban boxers faced professional boxers and until now, 22 victories have been attained and no defeat, which has helped to gain experience and improving quality and technical expertise.

According to Puig, who is also the national commissioner, the reduction in the number of weight categories to be fought in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games – from eight to seven, in the men's division – will represent an additional requirement for the Cuban boxing's aspirations.

For a country like ours, traditionally represented by athletes with possibilities of reaching medals in most of the categories, having one boxer less forces to make a better selection and to be more efficient, he stressed.

The new initiative is part of the development strategy of the Cuban boxing, directed at strengthening mass sport and identifying athletes from the grassroots level, in a country where talent exists, Puig concluded.



Olympic champion Julio César La Cruz. PHOTO: Jit.

# Successful Half-Marathon

By Reinaldo **WOSSAERT**



Francisco Estévez and Yumisleidis Mestre became champions of the men and women categories, respectively. PHOTO: Jit.

MATANZAS.- Runners, officials and sports legends from Cuba described as successful the third edition of the Varadero Half-Marathon, an event that hopes to be a referent for long distance races in the region.

Cuba's main tourist resort welcomed thousands of runners eager to show their endurance in an event in which locals Francisco Estévez and Yumisleidis Mestre became champions of the men and women categories, respectively.

Estévez, winner of the 10-km race in the recent Cuba Track and Field Cup, praised the organization of the event, whose competitive circuit he described as beautiful and warm.

A native of Bejucal, in the eastern province of Mayabeque, the long distance runner scored 1:10.19 hours, ahead of Spanish Bruno Villazón, who entered the finishing line 24 seconds later. Cristián de los Santos, also from Cuba, was placed third (1:13.39) "I am happy with the victory. I trained hard to achieve this goal. Not even COVID-19 prevented me from training. It is really rewarding," Estévez told **The Havana Reporter**.

For his part, Spanish Bruno Villazón – second in 21 km – described the views of the renowned Cuban resort as wonderful; he also congratulated the winner and guaranteed that he will participate in the next edition.

Mestre, for her part, scored 1:18.54 hours, ahead of teammates Yudisleivys Castillo (1:28.32) and Yelenia Pérez (1:43.57).

Former runner Ana Fidelia Quirot, two-time world champion in 800 m (1995 & 1997), told **The Havana Reporter** that her participation in the event is part of the daily training she conducts in order to have an excellent quality of life.

The 'Storm of the Caribbean,' as this two-time Olympic winner (1992 & 1996) is also called, commented that being physically active is good for her, and encouraged retired athletes not only to warm-down but also to continue exercising in order to be in shape.

Ana Fidelia was part of the group of sport legends who enhanced the competition's status with their presence, in addition to Dayron Robles, Anier García, María Caridad Colón and Alberto Juantorena, all of them Olympic champions.

Juantorena, Olympic winner in 400 and 800 m in Montreal 1976, also described the competition as excellent. He thanked the authorities for their support and congratulated all those who worked for the good running of this program.

As member of the Organizing committee, he said that in 2023, the event will summon runners of 42.195 kilometers; thus, it will be the Varadero Marathon, an event that will for sure be another party for runner.



# Sauto Theater, a Cultural Jewel

By Anthony **ALEJANDRO**

MATANZAS.- The Sauto Theater, a cultural and architectonic jewel, marked its 159th anniversary with a gala concert by the symphonic orchestra of this city which, since the 19th century, has been dubbed the Athens of Cuba.

The orchestra was conducted by Maestro César Eduardo Ramos, while soloist countertenor Frank Ledesma, a famous Cuban lyrical singer, was invited to join the concert, offering a varied program that delighted the public.

The majestic neoclassical building, which is a symbol of Matanzas city, was designed by Italian Daniel Dall'Aglio, who had already designed the Iturbide Theater in Mexico and had helped decorate Havana's Tacon Theater.

It has a U-shaped structure inside that includes over 700 seats, two balconies, and its first floor can be raised to convert the auditorium into a ballroom.

Considered one of the theaters with the best acoustics in the country, its lobby features Carrara marble statues that represent Greek goddesses. The main hall ceiling bears paintings of the muses and a peculiar chandelier.

Its imposing hall, similar to that of La Scala's in Milano, has served multiple purposes and welcomed all manifestations of the dramatic arts and music, together with shows and extraordinary plays.

Prestigious figures have performed there, such as Alicia Alonso, Frank Fernández, Sara Bernhardt, Anna Pavlova and Andrés Segovia; as well as famous companies and bands, both Cuban and foreign.



The Sauto Theatre was designed by Italian Daniel Dall'Aglio. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

## Hemodiálisis en Cuba



**SMC**  
COMERCIALIZADORA DE SERVICIOS  
MÉDICOS CUBANOS S.A.

Contáctenos:



72090977



smc@smcsalud.cu



Calle 44 #502 e/ 5ta Ave y 5ta A  
Miramar, Playa. La Habana, Cuba



www.smcsalud.cu

Síguenos en nuestras redes sociales



Comercializadora de Servicios Médicos Cubanos



SMC\_SaludCuba



Servicios Médicos Cubanos