



The Attack on the Moncada Garrison



P. 3

Cuba-U.S.A

Opposing Summits



P. 4

Health & Science

Another Success of the Biotechnological Cooperation



P. 5

Economy

Efforts to solve energy problems



P. 14

Cayo Largo del Sur Revitalizes

By Kamila **MARTÍNEZ**

CAYO LARGO DEL SUR.- Cayo Largo del Sur, a beautiful and exuberant spot located south of Cuba, shows new winds of renovation as a tourist destination, now managed by the Canadian Blue Diamond Resorts Hotel Chain.

As a result of the 40th edition of the International Tourism Fair, FITCuba 2022, a business agreement was signed with the Cuban Gran Caribe Group to grant the Canadian company the management of all the hotel and extra-hotel facilities located in that destination, where there are four hotels and five tourist villages with a capacity of 1,300 rooms.

According to Blue Diamond Promotion and Communication director, Miguel García, the company foresees to start joint operations in the 2022-2023 winter season, for which buildings must be previously evaluated and classified according to the chain's standards.

However, work will start before, as the first visitors will be received in July, Deputy Director of the Cayo Largo del Sur Tourist Company, Alain Magdaley, told **The Havana Reporter**. We will start with a small group; the main body of travelers should arrive during the high season, said the director, who added that different airlines are conducting the hiring process for both, the season and the July-November period. The Vilo Acuña International Airport, the main access to this spot, is getting ready to welcome vacationers and improve the comfort and the infrastructure of its facilities after a

capital renovation that took advantage of the suspension of operations due to the pandemic of COVID-19.

Work was conducted in the extension of some areas, the hydraulic facilities, the floors, the improvement of all activities related to the airport's operations, among others, said the airport's deputy director, Yaisel Santana.

The air terminal must be ready to attend 500 passengers simultaneously, and for that, it now has improved cafeterias, a new VIP hall and facilities for border sanitary control, such as visitors' temperature scanner at their arrival.

Magdaley highlighted that Canada is the main issuing market to Cayo Largo, with about 62 percent of tourists, followed by Italy with 24 percent. Then, Cuba, Germany and Argentina are included.

For that reason, alliance with Blue Diamond is strategic, because it will allow to increase the number of Canadian tourists in this spot. In this sense, Commercial Vice-President of the Gran Caribe Group, Diana Olivera, explained that being in partnership with the company, in addition to facilitating the entity's know-how in the services sector, will also allow to access an advantage Blue Diamond has: its own airline, Sunwind, which will increase commercialization capacity.

"The essence is to be in a better position, to have a better name, to add people, and the association is exceptional in that sense," Olivera commented.

The capital renovation of the Vilo Acuña airport complements that scenario, because when works finish, bigger airlines will be able to land.

Cayo Largo is a destination with unique features; it is one of Cuba's most beautiful spots, and everybody is determined to renovate it "in style," said Blue Diamond Promotion and Communication director.



Cayo Largo is a destination with unique features; it is one of Cuba's most beautiful spots. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

TripAdvisor Acknowledges Iberostar Hotels

By Ania **TERRERO**

HAVANA.-Eight hotels of the Iberostar chain in Cuba received the annual awards granted by TripAdvisor to facilities that systematically receive the positive opinions of travelers.

In the 'Best of the Best' category, which awards quality and luxury, the Iberostar Grand Packard hotel was placed eighth among the 25 best hotels of the Caribbean. Iberostar Selection Ensenachos, Coral Level at Iberostar Selection Ensenachos, Iberostar Selection Holguín, Coral Level at Iberostar Selection Holguín, Iberostar Selection Playa Pilar, Iberostar Daiquirí and Iberostar Parque Central, were also awarded in the Travelers section.

As a result, Iberostar Hotels & Resorts Cuba stands out as a destination that is in great demand and highly accepted by travelers who visit Cuba, said the hotel chain in an official statement.

Iberostar Grand Packard, included in the Caribbean's Top 10 luxury resorts, has a privileged location in Havana's historical center, according to the communiqué.

Its five-star category is a complement to its geographical location and contributed to its positive reviews in the TripAdvisor site. Its halls for the MICE segment (events, incentives and conventions), with a capacity for 450 people, and its 321 deluxe rooms, turn the hotel into a referent in the heart of Havana. Over 80 percent of the Iberostar hotels worldwide are located at first line beach, a rule that is also met in Cuba.

"The inclusion of six of its sun-and-beach facilities in the list of the Caribbean's best is a sign of the importance the Spanish chain gives to the excellency of its buildings and, of course, the beauty of Cuban beaches, the chain stated. Its bet for Cuba and its potentials remains in place, endorsed by public acknowledgment to facilities that are a referent for visitors all over the national territory, the chain added.



The Iberostar Grand Packard hotel was placed eighth among the 25 best hotels of the Caribbean. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

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Advertising: René García
Circulation: Commercial Department
Printing: Prensa Latina

Publisher: Agencia Informativa Latinoamericana
Prensa Latina, S.A.
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The Attack on the Moncada Garrison

By Ernesto **VERA**

HAVANA.- 69 years after the assaults on the Guillermon Moncada and the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes garrisons in the eastern cities of Santiago de Cuba and Bayamo, respectively, the island continues its efforts to consolidate its project for a socialist, sustainable and prosperous nation.

Traditional celebrations for July 26, the National Rebellion Day, is aimed this year at fostering the country's main economic, social and defensive tasks.

With that objective in mind, improvement of the quality of life in vulnerable neighborhoods and communities was intensified from July 1st to 31st, in addition to housing construction and others actions, as part of the implementation of the Economic and Social Strategy of the Cuban Revolution. Other actions include food production, sugar cane sowing and the recovery of the electricity generation capacity.

The strategy is also directed at making progress in the country's development amidst the world economic crisis that has gotten worse because of the pandemic of COVID-19, whose effects are stronger in Cuba due to the blockade imposed by the United States for over 60 years, which directly affects the population.

Member and secretary of Organization of the Cuban Communist Party's (PCC) Political Bureau, Roberto Morales, said that the date,

whose central ceremony will be held at the province of Cienfuegos, is an exceptional occasion to honor, through their work, the sacrifice of the youth.

For that reason, the PCC leadership acknowledged all the provinces of the country, "which has risen to the face of adversities and has taken part in one of the most beautiful chapters of heroism and consecration in the defense of our nation and our colossal act of justice against the constant imperialist aggression."

JULY 26TH IN HISTORY

At the dawn of July 26th, 1953, 120 young men headed by Fidel Castro attacked the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes garrisons to start an armed uprising against the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship (1952-1959).

The first group, headed by Abel Santamaría, would seize the Civil Hospital next to the fortress; the second one, in which Raúl Castro participated, would occupy the Justice Palace, a tall building from which the main action would be backed up; the third group, which included 90 members and was headed by Fidel Castro, would seize the garrison's headquarters.

The action was thwarted when an unforeseen guard started a skirmish and the shots alerted the garrison, forcing the attackers, lower in numbers and weapons, to withdraw.

The regime responded with special cruelty. Batista ordered to kill 10 revolutionaries every one soldier dead in action, eliminated



Moncada Garrison is now Ciudad Escolar 26 de Julio. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

constitutional guarantees in all the national territory and censured the press and the radio. In the subsequent trial, the then young lawyer Fidel Castro conducted his self-defense. In his speech, he denounced the crimes committed by the tyranny and the hardships the people had suffered under that Republic, while presenting the social programs to be undertaken after the triumph of his cause.

After serving prison in the then Isla de Pinos, an amnesty granted due to popular pressure allowed the revolutionaries to live in exile and prepare an expedition that would return with 82 men to start the fight against Batista at the Sierra Maestra mountains, in the country's east, which ended up with the revolutionary triumph in 1959.

Social Plans and Attention to Vulnerable People

By Orlando **ORAMAS**

HAVANA.- Retaking historical social programs of the Cuban Revolution and strengthening new plans are a priority for the Cuban government, which encourages citizens' participation in such efforts.

In line with the improvement of the epidemiological situation and the control of the pandemic, those purposes multiply with the mass and successful COVID-19 vaccination campaign, which has allowed reducing infection and deaths to a minimum.

For that reason, Cuban authorities eliminated the use of masks as of May 31, although new faces were already seen before in different neighborhoods of the national geography as part of the recovery actions conducted with the participation of the people and different institutions. In these communities, considered vulnerable, homes and sidewalks are refurbished and telephone system services are provided, in addition to other actions.

Census are also conducted to identify single mothers, elderly in need and youngsters who neither work nor study, to provide them new opportunities.

An example of those communities is the Buena Vista neighborhood, in Havana, where old wooden houses are replaced by brick homes, in spite of the difficult situation the country faces as a result of the economic, commercial



President Miguel Díaz-Canel has visited many of those communities. PHOTO: Estudios Revolución.

and financial blockade imposed on Cuba, which has gotten stronger.

President Miguel Díaz-Canel has visited many of those communities as part of governmental visits that have taken him to other areas of the national geography.

In one of his recent visits, the President visited the Borrás-Marfán children hospital, the seat of the National Cochlear Implant Group, an endeavor created in 2005 by historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro.

MAIN BENEFICIARIES

According to the most recent report Cuba submitted to the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, the main beneficiaries of the social plans conducted in the island are women, senior adults, children and adolescents.

In this sense, a program is under way to provide individual attention to minors, adolescents and the youth in order to face the migratory flows promoted from the United States and its policy of harassment against the Cubans.

The Cuban Constitution establishes that all the people are equal in the eyes of the law, without any type of discrimination, and that explains the promotion and development of programs such as the one conducted against Racism and Racial Discrimination, as well as the program on Women Progress, in addition to those addressed to vulnerable people and differently-abled persons.

In this regard, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS) and other governmental institutions approved over one hundred legal norms, general resolutions and other laws.

MTSS legal director Yudelvis Álvarez explained that such norms include Bylaw No. 56 on Working Women Maternity Leave and on Family Responsibility, in addition to Bylaw No. 36, which modifies the Social Security Law.

This and other improvements made were praised by the director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for Latin America and the Caribbean, Harold Robinson, in a recent visit to Havana, on the occasion of which, the official highlighted that the Cuban experience is essential in the drafting of social policies directed at reaching the region's Sustainable Development Objectives and the UN 2030 Agenda.

Opposing Summits



The IX Summit of the Americas put some distance since the very moment of its preparation stage and its motto. PHOTO: Internet.

By Deisy **FRANCIS**

HAVANA.- Two summits were held at the same time in Los Angeles in June: one, of selectivity and exclusion, summoned by the government of the United States and OAS; the other one, of the Peoples, which was attended by over 200 social movements and gave voice to those who are ignored in official agendas.

Promoted as an event that would try to "unite" the region to face "pressing challenges," the IX Summit of the Americas, held from June 6-10, put some distance since the very moment of its preparation stage and its motto, "Building a sustainable, resilient and equitable future," was just a babble.

Activist Kenia Alcocer said that it is a "regrettable colonial decision" that the White House has excluded Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua from a meeting that should be attended by leaders from all 35 countries of the region, on equal terms.

Alcocer, a member of the Unión de Vecinos, Eastside Local of the Los Angeles Tenants Union, told **The Havana Reporter** that what happened "does not surprise us, but it is sad." She also criticized the hypocrisy of talking about democracy "when in the Senate of the United States, only one person can halt a legislation that could help millions of people during the pandemic" of COVID-19.

In this country, we are part of the over 140 million poor and destitute people (out of a population of about 330 million inhabitants) who fight for being included in the electoral processes, because citizens are being deprived of their right to vote, she commented.

I believe that the government of the United States is not only excluding three countries that are looking for better life conditions for

their people, but also its own people, she warned.

Stephanie Brito, of the International Popular Assembly, was accurate: "the United States has lost its moral authority. A country in which inequalities prevail (...) has no reason to summon a summit on the promotion of democracy and freedom."

When the Summit of the Americas was being held, the House of Representatives Select Committee started the public hearings on the attack to the Capitol, on January 6, 2021, considered the worst attack to democracy in the history of the United States

For that reason, it should have been awkward for the host nation to use its own example to talk about democracy with interlocutors of a region that is more and more fractured, observers said.

Belize Prime Minister Johnny Briceño described as "unforgivable" that not all the countries of the Americas were invited and stated that, as a result, the meetings strength diminished.

Argentinean President Alberto Fernández, for his part, urged to change the rules of future summits, as the host does not have the right to decide who attends and who does not.

"We would have definitely wanted to have a different Summit of the Americas. The silence of those absent is calling us," he added.

In the meantime, the maxim of unity and integration as a response to the continent's problems was the maxim of the People's Summit, held from June 8-10.

Argentinean communicator Majo Giovó affirmed that she never saw such a big gathering of social movements in Los Angeles. "It is a political achievement, and the objective is to come up with a comprehensive agenda," she stressed.

Solidarity from Miami to Los Angeles

By Adriana **ROBREÑO**

HAVANA.- Signs of solidarity with Cuba and demands for the end of the blockade imposed by the United States on the island were recently heard in several U.S. cities, from Miami to Los Angeles, where the People's Summit was held.

A new caravan, summoned as every month by the Bridges of Love project, gathered Cubans and emigrants in the southern city of Miami, Florida, to demand the Joe Biden administration to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade.

According to activist Elena Freyre, president of the U.S.-based PazAmor organization, the Cuban emigrants have a strong commitment to the fight for the lifting of the blockade.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, Freyre, who is also the director of the Foundation for the Normalization of U.S.-Cuba Relations, said that the initiative is a demand for Cuba and its people and celebrates the announcement the Joe Biden administration made on May 16th this year on the alleged easing of restrictions.

The regulations, which Cuban authorities consider limited – because the essence of the blockade is maintained – ease some restrictions imposed during the Donald Trump government (2017-2021), such as the removal of the limit on family remittances and the restart of commercial flights to all the Cuban provinces.

The Miami caravan against the blockade welcomed those changes, which we have been demanding for the last two years, but they are not enough to meet the needs of the Cuban family, said coordinator of the Bridges of Love project, Carlos Lazo.

The Cuban-American activist and member of other solidarity groups, such as the Antonio Maceo Brigade, considers essential to remove Cuba from the list of terrorist nations, "a defamatory accusation that undermines the country's capacity to access the international bank system."

In the light of the economic strangulation the island is subjected to, a campaign promoted from the United States by Bridges of Love, Codepink and other platforms, allowed collecting 25,000 dollars to buy a solution needed for liver transplants for Cuban children.

As part of a first donation, they carried to Cuba the materials needed for the surgery of two children, although eight had the same needs. For that reason, it was necessary to increase the collection, which was faced with obstacles due to U.S. companies' refusal to sell medications to Cuba.

In the meantime, in Los Angeles, California, solidarity with Cuba was present at all times in the Peoples' Summit, an event held in parallel to the IX Summit of the Americas, which was organized by the Biden administration and excluded Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

With demonstrations against the coercive measures imposed by Washington and carrying posters in public places with the phrase 'Let Cuba Live', the voice in favor of the island was felt both, in the alternative forum and the Biden meeting.

In addition, a group of U.S. activists handed in a letter at the Los Angeles Convention Center, the seat of the IX Summit, demanding the White House to put an end to sanctions, exclusions and blockades.



In Los Angeles, California, solidarity with Cuba was present at all times in the Peoples' Summit. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Another Success of the Biotechnological Cooperation



The PanCorona project was created at the request of the Chinese counterpart after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. PHOTOS: Embassy of Cuba in China

By Yolaidy **MARTÍNEZ**

BEIJING.- Collaboration in biotechnology between Cuba and China exhibits, as a new achievement, the presentation before the National Intellectual Property Office of the Asian country of the first patent of the PanCorona vaccine, designed to combat infections with different strains of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus and even prevent Covid-19.

This important legal step forward occurred more than one year after the start of joint researches to obtain the groundbreaking product, which is based on the combination of parts of the virus that are preserved and are not so much exposed to variation to generate antibodies, with those addressed at cellular responses. The PanCorona project was created at the request of the Chinese counterpart after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world and is endorsed by the Cuban Ministry of Sciences and Technology. Scientists from China and from the Cuban Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center (CIGB) developed the antigen at a facility opened in the city of Yongzhou, in the central province of Hunan, with the purpose to conduct there researches between both nations.

PanCorona is a recombinant medication, made on the vaccine development platform in which CIGB is more experienced, with successful backgrounds such as that of hepatitis B, in addition to two of the Cuban vaccines against COVID-19, one of them Abdala.

"It is a strategy that could provide protection against epidemiological emergencies of new coronavirus variants in the future," said Gerardo Guillén, CIGB director for Biomedical Researches.

The initiative focuses on coronaviruses, not only because of the world crisis caused by SARS-CoV-2, but also because that family of viruses is one of the most prone to be passed on from animals to humans

(a phenomenon known as zoonosis), with precedents such as MERS, in the Middle East, or SARS-CoV-1.

"Predictions and scientific rationality indicate that we will unfortunately have to suffer new epidemics as a logic result of the increase of the world population, animal production and people's movement," the scientist explained.

The PanCorona vaccine shows, once again, the success of the Cuba-China cooperation in the biotechnological field, made official in 2004.

Exchange in this area allowed the birth of joint ventures such as Lukang-Heber, for agricultural biotechnological products; Biotech-Beijing, manufacturer of medications such as Nimotuzumab for nose-pharyngeal cancer, and ChangHeber, in Jilin, where recombinant Interferon alpha 2B (IFNrec) is obtained.

The last mentioned product was one of the over 30 medications chosen by the Chinese National Health Commission at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 due to its potential against infections with the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

Now, with the running of the Yongzhou center, biotechnological cooperation is expected to be given a fresh boost, as its construction is included in the policy approved by the Chinese government to promote innovation capacities through local administrations.

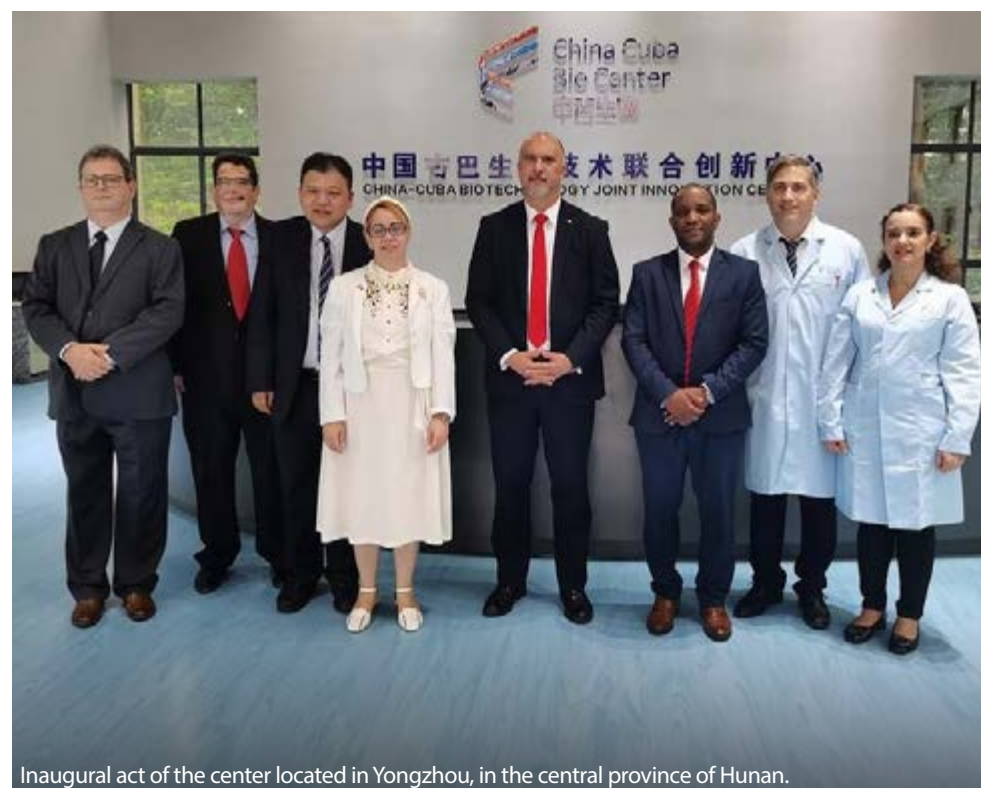
The assembly of equipment and labs, designed by Cuban specialist, concluded there in 2020.

During the opening ceremony, on May 2021, Cuban ambassador to China, Carlos Miguel Pereira, appreciated those who contributed to materialize this project in spite of the inconveniences resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. He also highlighted that the facility is set to become a national and international referent.

"It (the work) will not only allow the materialization of new scientific projects in the field of human and animal

biomedicine, but also cooperation in the formation and academic training of scientists from both countries, which is essential," said the ambassador. Similarly, he ratified the support and accompaniment of the embassy, the government's authorities, the BioCubaFarma group and CIGB in particular, the main

strategic partner behind the management and development of this initiative. The ambassador finally stressed the endorsement of two out of the six initial projects, including the one related to the joint development of PanCorona, by the Chinese Ministry of Sciences and Technology.



Inaugural act of the center located in Yongzhou, in the central province of Hunan.

Artist Adds Color to Havana Neighborhood

By Danay **GALLETI**



Urban artist Delphine Delas. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

HAVANA.- Urban artist Delphine Delas added one of her renowned murals to the social appearance of the popular San Isidro neighborhood, in Havana, as part of the celebrations for the French Culture Month in Cuba.

Born in Bordeaux and with family ties in Bacalan, one of the city's emerging areas, the professor came to Havana thanks to the so-called Cubacalan Operation, an action promoted by Bordeaux Parallaxes, an independent French association.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, Delas commented that, in the summer of 2021, that European city welcomed one of Cuba's street art representatives, a person known by the pseudonym of Mr Myl, who did large frescos with Bordeaux artist Möka 187.

A graduate in Art History from the École du Louvre and the Paris Sorbonne University, the academic held constant exchanges in the digital platforms with Mr Myl, an advocate of street art in the Cuban capital,

to design the work that they finally made in San Isidro.

"From France, I looked for information on the history of the neighborhood, made some sketches and once I came here, I included color to the initial drawings. I thought about its composition and construction. The idea to add symbols such as the flower and the butterflies gradually arose," she commented.

Spectators are unable to distinguish if the figure portrayed in the piece is a man or a woman; in fact, the mural has several readings and interpretations and is the result of the dialogue between the artist and the area's residents, and of her personal view on the sociocultural context and the idiosyncrasy of the geographical area.

"As part of my work, I pay attention to whatever happens, to the area near my murals. It is important for me that neighbors wake up, open their windows and see my creation," affirmed the famous French

artist, whose knowledge is influenced by mythologies, legends and Art Nouveau.

As part of what she calls "artistic responsibility," one of her objectives is to favor proximity between the author, passersby and nearby residents, and the San Isidro mural repeats elements that are part of her visual art's aesthetics and identity, such as frames, curves and golden colors.

Those populated neighborhoods experience a visible transformation through urban art, said Catherine Castagnera, Bordeaux Parallaxes director, who added that the idea lies on the promotion of new links between both cities, united by ancient bonds of culture and emigration.

"We have the intention of creating dynamics with representatives of new generations of artists in France and Cuba, and between two port cities that are opened up to the sea and have areas declared as World Heritage Sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)," she concluded.

Records of the Year

By Claudia **HERNÁNDEZ**

HAVANA.- The Cubadisco 2022 award, a prize granted in Cuba by professionals of the record industry, acknowledged the best productions of the year during its 25th edition, in Havana.

The record *Mujeres con sombrero*, by popular singer and Latin Grammy winner Isaac Delgado and producer Juan Manuel Ceruto, received two awards: one, for the notes of singer and songwriter Marta Valdés, and another one in the anthology and version section.

In the audiovisual category, trova singer Liuba María Hevia was acknowledged for her studio concert *La nueva escuela*, a tribute to the ICAIC Sound Experimentation Group. The Sampling vocal group, for its part, was recognized for its live recital on the occasion of its 30th anniversary.

Cubadisco 2022 also granted an award to tres player Yarima Blanco, in the traditional folk music category, for

the contribution of her album *Pa mi tres*, a collaboration between EGREM and Soundwear Productions directed by Grammy awardee and musical producer Roniel Alfonso.

In the meantime, the archive music award was granted to singer and songwriter Amaury Pérez for his CD *Casi todo*, while *Ofrenda*, by Jorge Amado and other singers, won the chamber music and musicology notes awards.

Other albums selected include *La Rosa de Jericó* and *50 Grados*, by vocalists Ivette Cepeda and Kelvis Ochoa, who won the song and contemporary song sections.

The theme *La fuerza de un país*, by the Buena Fe group and a tribute to the doctors who faced the pandemic, was granted the Best Single award.

The CD *Será que se acabó*, by trumpet player and vocalist Alexander Abreu and his band, Havana D'Primera, won the Grand Prize of Cubadisco 2022, a musical industry event that acknowledges the best productions of the year.

The CD, a coproduction between the Producciones Abdala studios and the Spanish Páfata company, also received two awards in the Dancing Music and Sound Design categories for bringing together over 20 hits of the 1980s and 1990s.

The orchestra, founded by Abreu in 2007, compiled famous Cuban son and salsa themes, such as *Échale limón*, *Más rollo que película*, *Mi Salsa*, *Tú no me calculas*, *Una aventura loca*, *El baile del buey cansao* and *Lo que siento es leleley*.

During the awards ceremony, at Teatro Astral, in Havana, the jury distinguished the musical production of Abreu and pianist Tony Rodríguez, as well as the teamwork of the Havana D'Primera band.

Será que se acabó includes the participation of musicians such as Elito Revé, Manolito Simonet, Samuel Formell, César Pupy Pedroso, Maykel Blanco and Alain Pérez.

Giraldo Piloto, Leonel Limonta and Lázaro Valdés, in addition to National Music Award winners Adalberto Álvarez and José Luis Cortés, recently deceased, also participated in the production.



Replacing Fossil Fuels

By TeyunéDÍAZ

CUBA AND DE-CARBONIZATION

HAVANA.- Cuban economist Ramón Pichs recently highlighted the importance of efficiency and energy saving in the de-carbonization of the world's productive process.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, the director of the Cuban Center for World Economy Research stressed the need of considering the supply and the demand, in addition to replacing fossil fuels with renewable energies. The expert explained that it would be inconceivable that, as part of those de-carbonization processes, fossil fuels – the main cause of greenhouse effect gasses – could be replaced with renewable energy sources (RES).

The reason is that the use of certain RES can have negative environmental consequences, and to use the so-called clean energies on a large scale, options related to the demand should be considered, as serious consequences could also arise, the expert noted.

Solar energy, among others, also depends on certain natural resources for the construction of the equipment, like lithium, said Pichs, with a PhD in Economic Sciences.

A sustainable de-carbonization process should consider the effects of the supply and the demand in what regards saving and the efficient use of energy, he added.

In the case of Cuba, huge efforts have been made, for years, to make an efficient use of energy and RES, the expert commented.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the National Energy Plan was drafted; in 2005, the so-called Energy Revolution started, and more recently, programs linked to the use of renewable sources were boosted, Pichs said.



The director of the Cuban Center for World Economy Research, Ramón Pichs. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

However, those processes take place under difficult conditions in Cuba, because of the negative effect of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States and the monetary and financial restrictions resulting from this.

On top of this situation comes the fact that we are a developing country, in addition to the rise in the oil market prices because of the conflict in Ukraine, he stressed.

While the world makes rapid progress in the de-carbonization process, for Cuba, any delay can have negative consequences, warned the expert.

This is largely due to the fact that as the world goes on with the de-carbonization process, protectionist measures and barriers to the entry of products with a high content of carbon could be imposed, Pichs explained.

In addition, funding for those nations that endorse the use of fossil fuels instead of promoting RES or options of energy efficiency could be cut or affected.

These are elements to consider when making a relatively rapid progress on the de-carbonization process, the expert highlighted.

Cuba addresses those issues upon the bases of legality, bearing in mind the Constitution approved in 2019, the documents that govern the country's socio-economic strategy and the Tarea Vida (Life Task) State plan of 2017, where adaptation has been identified as a national priority, he concluded.

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There were lots of special moments, including the performance, by students of the Havana's National Music School. PHOTO: Ileana Piñeiro.

Son Captured the Hearts in France

By Waldo **MENDILUZA**

PARIS.- Music, as an expression of peace and friendship among peoples has no border. An example of this was seen in the colorful French city of Enghien-les-Bains, where the Cuban Son captivated the audience for a whole week.

Over 15,000 people gathered on June 11th on the shores of the lake located in the abovementioned Parisian Region city to celebrate the end of the Cuban Week at the rhythm of the young and rising Cuban band El Niño y la Verdad, whose repertoire invited the French and Latin American audience to dance.

The evening included a perfect combination: the performance of talented musicians, a floating stage on the Enghien-les-Bains lake, a sunset and an audience that applauded the artists and was, at the same time, the protagonist of the event.

With themes such as *El Hijo del Viento*, *Sufriendo tú amor* and *Cha Pa' mi Muchacha*, in addition to the classic A

Bayamo en Coche, in honor of Adalberto Álvarez, the El Niño y la Verdad band closed in style an event that daily filled the facilities of the city's Arts Center (CDA).

During all five days the event lasted, concerts, an exhibition, dance lessons, the screening of the film *El Benny*, the sale of typical Cuban dishes and cocktails, and a lecture on the origin of the musical-dance genre, attracted people from different generations and sectors of the society.

In an atmosphere of tradition and modernity, Cuban ambassador to UNESCO, Yahima Esquivel, announced the submission, on March 2023, of the file for the candidature of Son to the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, a news that increased the merit of this meeting. It is a rhythm that goes beyond the borders of culture to contribute to a lifestyle, an identity and a musical expression of the nation, stressed the diplomat.

There were lots of special moments, including the performance, by students of the Havana's National Music School, of songs that enrich the legend of this catchy genre, such as *La Engañadora*, by Enrique Jorrín; *Siboney*,

by Ernesto Lecuona; *No hay como mí Son*, by Abelardo Barroso, and *El Manisero*, by Moisés Simons.

The illustrated lecture *La Semilla del Son* (The root of Son), by French researcher Dominique Roland, who has studied this genre's origin and influence for over 30 years, with the support of Cuban specialists, was also favorable received.

Roland, the director of the Enghien-les-Bains CDA, is precisely the architect of the bonds this beautiful city has had with Cuba for over 20 years, bonds that have gotten stronger with the appointment of the French commune as a UNESCO Creative City, a condition the Cuban cities of Havana, Santiago de Cuba and Trinidad have.

In an interview to **The Havana Reporter**, Cuban Deputy Minister of Culture Fernando León stated his appreciation for the role the Parisian Region city plays in the promotion of different Cuban art expressions, and highlighted the strengthening of ties.

He also stressed the work done, which has allowed continuing having these relations, and the importance that the activities conducted during the week have included Son as its main protagonist, in its aspiration of being included in the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

In addition to the signs of love for Cuba and interest in its culture, signs of solidarity with a country subjected to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States for over 60 years, were also evident along the week.



Impact of the Pandemic



Specialist and acting director of the Center for Studies on the Caribbean, Gabriela Ramos. PHOTO: ACN.

By Consuelo **ABREU**

HAVANA.- The VII International Colloquium on Cultural Diversity in the Caribbean, organized in Cuba by Casa de las Américas, went beyond the academic field to focus its attention on the impact of COVID-19 in the artistic scenarios.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, specialist and acting director of the Center for Studies on the Caribbean and member of the organizing committee, Gabriela Ramos, talked about the presence and expertise of international guests such as Jacqueline Laguardia.

A member of the Department of International Relations at the St. Augustine Campus, in Trinidad & Tobago, the expert referred to the situation of the creative industries before the pandemic and warned about the ignorance of its potentials by the governments of the sub-region.

According to Ramos, the isolation and mobility restriction measures in place as a result of the epidemiological crisis deepened that situation, although the promotion, production and spreading of cultural goods and services have an influence on the economy and on the interrelationship between the countries of the area.

The Casa de las Américas specialist made reference to other topics, such as intangible heritage management, by recalling the work conducted at the Cuban easternmost province of Guantánamo, the training of professionals in rural communities

and awareness raising to safeguard their practices. Other presentations included the registry of the sociological work, based on the use of different ethnographic tools, and the readjustment of the methodology used in that study, linked to religious traditions of African origin – particularly Regla de Ocha-Ifá.

Some of the lectures conducted at this event highlighted the importance of virtual platforms and the social media as an alternative for the exchange of experiences and knowledge and for interaction during isolation, including its role in arts' curatorial management, with the emergence of exhibitions in those spaces.

In the last two years, Casa de las Américas took the digital scenarios to bring the people closer through culture and critical thinking. In this sense, the center held two series of sessions on Caribbean social thinking and recently fostered its literary award and the Mayo Teatral stage season.

"Our region, in endless need since colonization and affected by the effects of poverty, natural disasters, extractivism, violence of all kinds, class struggle and dependence, has again been put to the test," acknowledged Gabriela Ramos in her presentation.

The opening text of the Colloquium also highlighted the defense and confidence on the articulation of cross-sectorial networks and accompaniment to advocates of feminism, environmental and community initiatives, in addition to creative industries' artistic-cultural coordination.

Havana's Biennial Promotes Value of Design

By Yana **HERNÁNDEZ**

HAVANA.- The third edition of the Havana's Design Biennial included in its program activities focused on boosting this art and its value in favor of Cuba's economic development.

The Habana Espacios Creativos (Havana Creative Spaces) project, a cultural center dedicated to promoting youngsters' original proposals in the field of arts, communication and new technologies, was the main exhibition venue of this event.

During the first week, the Biennial included the masterly lecture 'Design with everyone,' by Cuban specialist Gisela Herrero, in addition to 'World Design Capital Valencia 2022 and the importance of the public space as an identifying element,' by Spanish María Luisa Gallén.

The event, directed at the industry, resources and the contemporary society, included the exhibition 'Sustain Able Voices-Young Sweden Design' at the Saúl Yelín Hall of the Latin American New Film Festival venue.

The agenda also included the talk 'New scenario of MYPIMES in Cuba. New economic actors' need and association,' by Cuban expert Johana Odriozola, and the personal exhibition De cabeza (Upside down), by 2021 National Design awardee Pepe Menéndez.

On this occasion, the Havana's Biennial was attended by international representatives from Mexico, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Colombia and Argentina, among others. The mural dedicated to Havana was made by Nelson Ponce, Raúl Valdés (Raupa) and Edel Rodríguez (Mola).

In addition to the official opening of the Italian Design Day in Cuba, the event promoted the masterly lecture 'Coffee and design: from sustainability to lifestyle,' by David Dolcini, whose topic was linked to objects, materials, senses and interconnected gestures.

From the Centro ReDi- Taller Profesor Arq. Roberto Gottardi, the program exhibited the intervention of Cuban specialist Gisela Herrera, director of the National Design Office (ONDI) and Giulio del Federico, Attached Head of Mission of the Italian Embassy in Havana.



Italian Design Day in Cuba. PHOTO: Prensa Latina

Guaranteeing Hydraulic Investments

By Cira**RODRÍGUEZ**

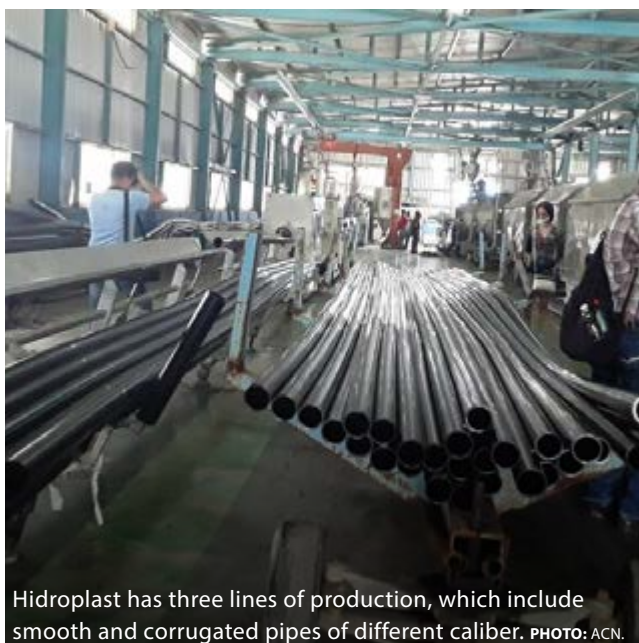
HAVANA.- Hidroplast Company guarantees the demand of hydraulic investments in Cuba with the production of 1,010 kilometers of high-density polyethylene pipes this year, the , said engineer Iván Paz, Hidroplast director.

In order to meet the demands of the National Hydraulic Resources Institute, the abovementioned entity has three lines of production, which include smooth and corrugated pipes of different caliber – the latter, the only of its type in the country – as well as elbows and water meter connections.

During a tour of the factory, the official commented that the entity has leading-edge technology for the processing of the raw material used, which is characterized by its high resistance in the transportation of fluids with or without pressure, with a lifespan of up to 50 years.

These pipes can be used to carry drinking water, corrosive industrial wastes and low-temperature gasses, as well as to protect telephone cables, irrigate agricultural areas and carry sewage to the bottom of the sea, and their conditions are better than those of steel, cast iron, asbestos-cement or fiberglass pipes.

Paz highlighted that due to difficulties in the acquisition of raw materials, because of the economic blockade imposed by the United States, the factory's innovation movement analyzed and implemented through lab



Hidroplast has three lines of production, which include smooth and corrugated pipes of different caliber. PHOTO: ACN.

studies a reduction in polyethylene consumption indexes and pipes' diameter, without affecting their quality, resistance and other parameters.

As a result, 75 tons of that product were saved last year, while 100 tons have been saved in the course of the present year, which represents an important monetary saving for the company and the country, as one ton of polyethylene costs about 3,000 dollars in the international market, he added.

For its proven efficiency, Hidroplast was responsible this year for the manufacturing of 24 kilometers of pipes for the transportation of sour gas from the oilfield to the treatment plants, after undergoing the tests and certifications required, something unique in Cuba, as few countries of the world produce these pipes.

This represents an important economic contribution due to imports' substitution, which exceeds 15 million dollars, the official highlighted.

The company's future projections include the creation of an economic association with foreign capital to increase production capacity and volumes and thus be able to export, without neglecting national hydraulic investments' demands.

Hidroplast has three plants in the provinces of Havana, Ciego de Ávila and Holguín, equipped with modern lines for the manufacturing of cleaning and sewage pipes.

Floridita among the Best

By Francisco**CAMPOS**

HAVANA.- The director of the Floridita bar-restaurant in the capital, Orlando Blanco, expressed his satisfaction with the selection of his establishment as one of the outstanding in North America's Best Bars 2022.

The famous Havana establishment is placed 40th in the 50 Best Ranking, thus being included among the best quality bars.

The annual list of that website celebrates the best of the international drinking industry.

In statements to The Havana Reporter, Blanco expressed his satisfaction at the acknowledgement and highlighted that the award is the result of the experience, creativity and respect for traditions that distinguish the Floridita staff.

Located at one end of Obispo street, in Havana, El Floridita became famous worldwide for being one the favorite

bars US writer Ernest Hemingway, Noble Literature prize laureate, frequented during the time he lived in Cuba.

Originally known as La Piña de Plata (Silver Pineapple), the establishment was opened in 1817. Throughout the years, the place, specialized in seafood and with an excellent Habanos menu, has welcomed several personalities.

Its most outstanding clients include Paco Rabanne, Naomi Campbell, Matt Dillon, Danny Glover, Jack Nicholson, Fito Páez and Jean Paul Belmondo.

In 2012, a Cuban team of bartenders made the World's Largest Daiquiri, with 275 liters, for which it was included in the Guinness Records book.

El Floridita has also hosted international cocktail contests and has historically been one of the gastronomic facilities frequented the most by travelers who come to Havana. The list of 50 Best Bars gets to North America for the first time and includes establishments in the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean.

Bars are included according to the criteria of over 250 experts, and selection is a unique opportunity to bring together cocktail aficionados and the region's mass media specialized in the drinking sector.



El Floridita became famous worldwide for being one the favorite bars of Hemingway. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

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The Capital's Highest Point

By Isaura **DIEZ**

HAVANA.- Planned as the road epicenter of the Cuban capital, Revolution Square provides space to the largest sculpture of National Hero José Martí, the iconic image of Che Guevara and buildings that contrast the original design.

The construction of the then Civic Square concluded in 1959 and in spite of its 60 years, it is still the city's highest point, thanks to its over 112-meter tall tower.

As of the 1930s, several contests were summoned to choose the project of the monument to José Martí, but it was not until 1943 that the results of the last contest traced the route to be followed.

Architect Aquiles Maza and sculptor Juan José Sicre won first place for their design of the José Martí Temple; their colleagues Govantes and Cabarrocas won second for the design of the current National Library, and a team that designed an obelisk with a five-star base as symbol of freedom won the third.

The statue of the Martí is 18 meters high and the marble used for its construction was extracted from an area near El Abra, in the former Isle of Pines (Isla de Pinos), where the National Hero was first exiled.

The pyramid is 112.07 meters high, from the street level to the top of the tower, while the total height is 141.95 meters above sea level, including the lights and the flags.

The monument has an inside elevator, a 579-step staircase and a viewpoint on top that allows seeing a range of up to 60 kilometers.

The José Martí Memorial, opened inside the base of the monument on January 28, 1996, has five halls that correspond to the points of the huge star on which the obelisk is erected.

The square, a site of major events, gatherings of the people and the government, parades, concerts, solemn evenings, among other activities, started to be known as Revolution Square on July 16, 1961.

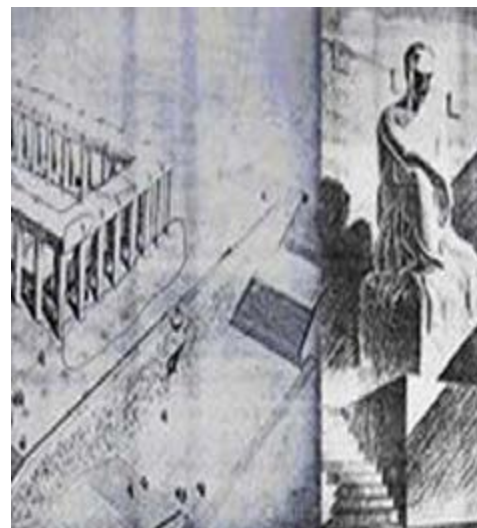
One of its most iconic elements is the sculptural relief of the Argentinean-Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto 'Che' Guevara on the façade of the Ministry of Interior, based on a photo taken by Alberto Korda.

Another sculpture with similar features, also made by Enrique Ávila, is that of guerrilla Commander Camilo Cienfuegos, on the building of the Ministry of Communications.

The square is frequented by national and foreign visitors as its open and outdoors format is one of the main exponents of the history of the Revolution, headed by Fidel Castro.



PHOTO: Prensa Latina, Ecured.



Tough Start for the Chilean Government

By Carmen **ESQUIVEL**

HAVANA.- After its first three months, the Chilean government faces a complex scenario marked by inflation, the conflict in La Araucanía and insecurity, problems inherited from previous administrations which, nevertheless, eroded its popularity. "Here in Chile, it is often said that governments have a few months of honeymoon or wedding march, but Gabriel Boric's government had neither of them, he immediately engaged in an intense and dizzy agenda," analyst Hugo Guzmán told **The Havana Reporter** via WhatsApp.

The director of the El Siglo newspaper said that main concerns include tension and violence in La Araucanía, where the Mapuche people live, but where large agroforestry companies, private consortia and drug gangs operate.

Another problem that has persisted for years is the increase in violence, homicides and serious criminal acts, such as the one that occurred on the May Day demonstration, when members of the organized crime shot at a group of journalists and killed

a communicator, something that did not happen since the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990).

A third problem is inflation, which reached 10.5 percent in April, breaking double digits for the first time in three decades.



Gabriel Boric's government immediately engaged in an intense and dizzy agenda.

PHOTO: Internet.

"Those are just three elements that have put the government in a very sensible situation, very problematic, and which cause a lot of tension," Guzmán warned.

IMPORTANT STEPS

In spite of the adverse scenario, the analyst recalled that important steps were taken in this period, such as the minimum salary increase from 350,000 pesos (425 dollars) to 400,000 (485 dollars), the highest raise in the last 26 years, and the increase in subsidies for workers of small and medium-sized companies (SMC).

The country signed the Escazú Agreement on the protection of the environment, a process of tax reform is under way to allow to collect more taxes from super-millionaires, and the pension system will be modified to increase the extremely low pensions, he explained.

Another progress made is the announcement of an investment in the education infrastructure and logistics, and a plan for the La Araucanía area – known as Buen Vivir (Good Way of Life) – that foresees to improve education, health and the granting of land to the Mapuche people.

"I would end by saying that a human rights agenda based on truth, justice and non-repetition was established, which is very important because there had not been an agenda on the topic here for years," he stated.

In his first public statement before the National Congress, on June 1st, Boric announced ambitious plans, such as the presentation of a welfare reform bill at the Parliament in August, by virtue of which every person over the age of 65 will have the right to a basic pension of 250,000 pesos (350 dollars), guaranteed by the State.

"We know that the time for a comprehensive healthcare system reform has come. For that, we will present a bill that will create a Universal Health Fund with the objective of being more fair in access to services, improving attention, increasing solidarity in financing the system and reducing household expenses," he said.

Chile is also drafting a new constitution whose 499-article draft bill will be submitted to the President on July 4th, who in turn will call a referendum on September 4, when 15 million Chileans will vote to either approve or reject it.

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Looking for an Answer to People's Problems

By Karina **MARRÓN**

HAVANA.- The need of making the 2023 Economy Plan and State Budget meet the problems of the population and society, without neglecting the international context, was one of the issues Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel stressed in relation to the drafting of both proposals.

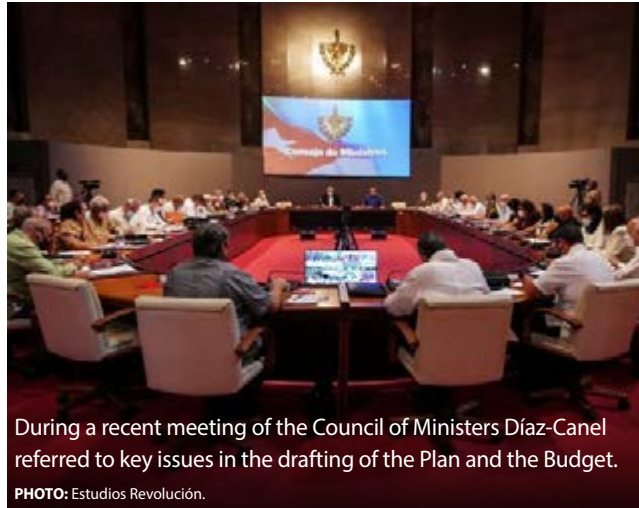
"We have to lead the country, upon the basis of our own efforts, of our own talent, to a different situation in the economic and social fields, and that should be reflected in the program we are drawing up for 2023," the President highlighted during a recent meeting of the Council of Ministers.

Díaz-Canel referred to key issues in the drafting of the Plan and the Budget, such as commitment in the work to be done, responsibility, diligence and, above all, to do it as realistic as possible.

In this sense, he said that the forthcoming global food crisis is, according to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), an element that should be dealt with in a particular way.

Another aspect to consider is the sudden hike in food prices, which requires to urgently allocate the necessary resources to produce in the country everything that we can.

He also highlighted the importance of boosting the Food Sovereignty and Nutritional Education Program, in



During a recent meeting of the Council of Ministers Díaz-Canel referred to key issues in the drafting of the Plan and the Budget.

PHOTO: Estudios Revolución.

addition to endorsing the new law on the topic approved at the National Assembly of the People's Power (Cuban Parliament).

Díaz-Canel insisted on the participation of workers of all entities and bodies, so that they make proposals, because they are the ones who experience the everyday difficulties and can contribute to ideas for their solution.

The President also urged to promote actions that allow guaranteeing the population's basic needs, such as

food, medication, transportation services, health, social attention, communal services, water supply, sewage treatment and electricity, among others, at the lowest costs.

He referred to the strengthening of the state company as an important element to attain such purposes, and this implies making changes in companies' management, when needed, and promoting qualified youth to senior positions, he noted.

He also recommended offering the entrepreneurial system all powers possible to diversify productions and services and turn state companies into a key entity in the attention, connection and linkage with the private sector, in order to make a good use of all potentials.

Prime Minister Manuel Marrero, for his part, urged to pay attention to local development strategies when drawing up the Plan and the Budget's proposals, although he made it clear that it is not possible to solve all the problems of a municipality in just one year.

However, solutions to citizens' main problems, including neighborhoods in state of vulnerability, should be endorsed in those governing documents, he affirmed.

For the first time, the municipal assembly will make a decision on the topic, which represents an opportunity for delegates to be actively involved and to put forward, since the beginning, the interests of their communities, highlighted the Head of the Government.

New winds for tradition

By Camila **MAYO**

HAVANA.-The La Conchita Preserves and Vegetable Factory is undergoing a renovation process that will give new winds to its over 60 year-old tradition of producing fruit jellies and pastas, among other products.

The entity, located in the westernmost province of Pinar del Río, became Cuba's first basic entrepreneurial entity (UEB) to be directly turned into a company, without having to become first into a subsidiary.

This process is part of the transformation the government approved to increase efficiency in state companies and which involves the restructuring of some of them. Going from an UEB to a company will allow stepping up the speed of development and that is an opportunity for new projects, which include the production of other products and the assembly of new lines of preserves packing, said Idalberto Rodríguez, La Conchita director.

It was not a random decision; it was based on the factory's solid work in the production of food, which is acknowledged throughout the country and beyond for its different lines, particularly guava and mango jellies and pastas, the official told The Havana Reporter.

Rodríguez added that their prestige has allowed them to reach foreign markets, especially in China and Europe, with two essential products: guava bars and mango pastes.

He also commented that having the status of company forces them to think big and

that's the reason why they participated in the Cuba 2.0 Food Fair, held from May 24 to 26, in which they showed their wide range of offers to attract new clients.

The event, held at the Pabexpo exhibition site, was also an excellent opportunity to look for suppliers, as one of the entity's working lines is directed at growing up in this field.

The official highlighted that they also work in view of productive connections with different companies and producers, both state and locals – an area in which they have reached favorable results and hope to make more progress following their participation in the Fair.

La Conchita has 44 registered lines, which, in addition to guava and mango pastes, include jellies, tomato paste, guava in syrup and other fruit preserves, many of which are sold at tourism areas and in the freely convertible currency shops.

Reducing the amount of sugar in their productions, in addition to regaining the guava preserve market, are part of the entity's development lines, Rodríguez noted.

The director also stressed the role innovators and rationalization specialists play in the company, as well as that of people with over 40 years of work experience, whose expertise has allowed to keep the industry functioning and to preserve the Pinar del Río tradition in this field.

Our products are highly accepted and our purpose is to increase production; we have a new thermos-cooker that will help us reach that goal, but our priority is to maintain our quality, he concluded.



La Conchita prestige has allowed them to reach foreign markets, especially in China and Europe.

PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Efforts to solve energy problems

By Miriam **CÉSAR**

HAVANA.- Since the second half of May, Cuba is facing an energy situation that is still tense and has caused instability in the National Energy System (SEN) due to unforeseen breakdowns in several power generation units, in addition to planned maintenance.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel stressed that the country's priority is to work on strategies that give greater stability to the National Electric System. "There is only one commitment: to deliver results, which are aimed at preventing the repetition of similar situations", he pointed out. Since that month, electricity supply has been cut off for several consecutive hours

in different provinces, including the capital.

Although the cause remains the same – the strengthening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States – Cuban authorities continue to be concerned and engaged, as that siege is the main obstacle for the acquisition of resources or any action that guarantees the stability of the national economy.

Díaz-Canel has said that the fact these things happen shows how evil that policy imposed by Washington is; it also shows that government's double standard, as they say that they would do their best for the Cuban people to have better possibilities of life.

The president commented that thermoelectric plants have the capacity to generate the capacity that the country needs when there are no peaks and they do so with national fuel, a product that is also available to work with stability.

On national television the head of state denounced the United States persecution that obstructs, with the imposition of the economic, commercial and financial blockade, the access of Cuba to energy markets.

The country always finds ways to solve these effects, and informed about an agreement that will allow investments to be made in several generation blocks, which will bring more stability to the system, he emphasized.

Currently, the strategy is focused on carrying out maintenance in the plants with the highest installed capacity and guaranteeing their rapid incorporation.

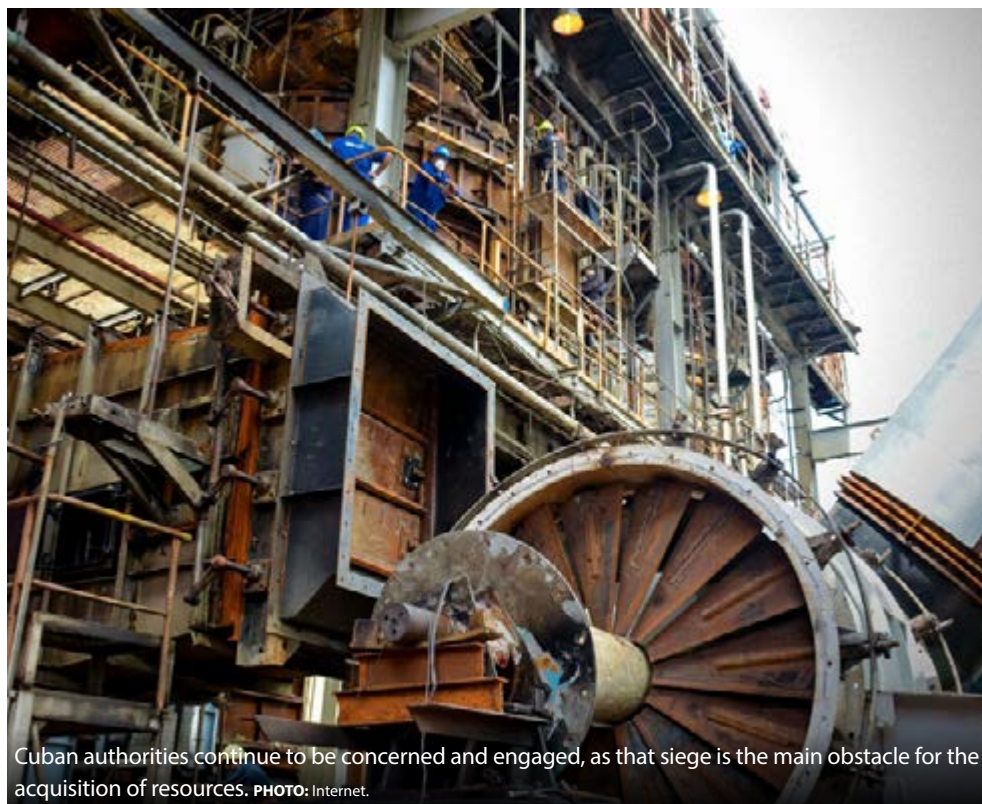
When referring to the breakdowns, he mentioned that a group of them are related to the fact that the country has been unable to count on the appropriate financing, needed to conduct pending maintenance in a group of plants, in addition to several unforeseen breakdowns in a short period of time.

On planned maintenance, the president said that the financing available is used to give priority to a group of plants, which will allow recovering power.

For that, hard work is conducted, because processes are gradually planned and take time, especially because of the levels of damage accumulated.

In view of the complex scenario, work is conducted without a break, he affirmed, while highlighting the need of endorsing "SEN workers' responsible effort with sensible saving and through the rational use of energy in all areas possible, from the state and productive sectors of the economy to the residential area."

Data provided by the Ministry of Energy and Mines indicate that the oil barrel price amounts to over 110 dollars, when months ago it fluctuated between 50 and 60; that is, it has doubled. On top of that, Cuba has to pay an additional 30 percent above the international market price, one of the direct effects of the U.S. blockade.



Cuban authorities continue to be concerned and engaged, as that siege is the main obstacle for the acquisition of resources. PHOTO: Internet.

Sharing Agricultural Experiences

By Raquel **DÍAZ**

HAVANA.- Cuba needs to mobilize and integrate all experiences and knowledge to increase food production, going from scientific talent to the experiences producers themselves have, an expert indicated.

National director of Urban and Sub-urban Agriculture at the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG), Elizabeth Peña, told The Havana Reporter that this is a challenge that includes research centers, popular knowledge and, of course, sciences that are at standstill.

We have resources such as soils and water, but we must know how to make a better use of them in order to make progress in people's wellbeing; for that, innovation is essential, both from scientific institutions' side and from producers' side, she said.

The Urban and Family Agriculture Program is an example of that, the expert commented. Every three months, tours are made to all the municipalities of the country, and the alternatives used to solve the different problems producers face are incredible, she stressed.

These include particular irrigation systems, the use of biological products to fight plagues and diseases, and even the use of organic fertilizers to enrich soils, she added.

The current national and international situation shows why we must use our own resources. Cuba is a country subjected to a blockade and we will continue being

blocked; there is a global economic, financial and food crisis, and the pandemic of COVID-19 is still present, Peña commented.

All those problems affect us when trying to develop our food production systems; thus, there is no other way than mobilizing our resources and knowledge in order to face that situation, she stressed.

Our approach to agricultural production today is different; our objective is to have sovereign, sustainable systems with municipal autonomy, which demands a lot of transformations in order to strengthen governability at that level.

On the topic, she mentioned that changing the entrepreneurial management system is an essential element to truly back up that autonomy.

One of the ways could be to turn some basic entrepreneurial units, which were created at some point to attain sustainable agricultural production development, into micro, small and medium-sized companies, Peña explained.

It is important to look at local food self-sufficiency from the point of view of the lowest step of the country's political-administrative division, and even focusing on each of the seven thousand communities the country has, she noted.

According to the specialist, one of the main objectives of the Food Sovereignty and Food and Nutritional Security Law includes organizing sovereign, sustainable and local food systems, and articulating them with the actors of the

food production, commercialization, consumption and availability chain.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel has stressed that having sovereign and sustainable local food systems is a national security issue, she concluded.



National director of Urban and Sub-urban Agriculture at the Ministry of Agriculture, Elizabeth Peña. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Maintaining a Place in the Elite

By Lemay **PADRÓN**

HAVANA.- Cuban sports has for decades moved in high circles of the world, with outstanding performances in Olympic, Pan-American, Central American and Caribbean games.

A backward step in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games was overcome in London 2012, Rio de Janeiro 2016 and Tokyo 2020, in which Cuba was again placed among the world's best 20 nations.

However, Cuba's long-standing power in continental events, in which the island was always second (behind the United States), came to an end and this situation does not seem to change in the near future, due to the increase in the number of sports in competition and the economic difficulties the country faces.

These and other questions were addressed by the General Director for High Performance at the Cuban Institute of Sports (INDER), José Antonio Miranda, in an interview with The Havana Reporter.

His office, located in the Havana's Ciudad Deportiva (Sport City), is always in a rush; for that reason, to have a peaceful talk, it was necessary to close the door and turn off phones.

Miranda first commented that at present, work is not only conducted in view of the 2024 Olympic games but of the 2032 Olympic cycle.

As part of the critical route to Paris, he mentioned the I Caribbean Games, held from June to July; the V Para-Junior Games, in Bogotá, Colombia, from November 11 to 20, and the I Beach Games, from November 19 to 26, to be held in Colombia too.

In relation to 2023, strategic events include the Central American and Caribbean Games, in El Salvador and the Pan-American Games, in Chile.

This year, which is the first of the Olympic cycle, we have 51 events that are qualifying for the Central American Games in 25 disciplines; nine that are qualifying for the Pan-American and Paralympic Games and some for the Olympics too, although there are also over 20 cups and world championships.

Miranda also referred to some disciplines that are already qualified for El Salvador, such as field hockey, men's softball, shooting and cycling, while in the case of the Santiago de Chile games, 30 athletes already qualified in the 2021 Junior Pan-American Games.

"Just as we worked for Tokyo, we conduct personalized work with those athletes that are expected to have an outstanding performance in Paris. Sports that are given priority include athletics, boxing, wrestling, judo, canoeing, shooting and taekwondo. Those are our main potentials on the road to Paris 2024," he said.

On whether Cuba would be able to continue being a power in the continent, the official added that the Central American and Pan-American games are considered a preparation for the Olympic Games.

He stressed that the seven sports mentioned above can help Cuba to be placed among the first 20 in Paris, but in order to be placed again in the first position in the Central American and Pan-American region, other sports and disciplines are needed.

"As athletes but not sports are given priority, some disciplines limit development. That is a weakness our system has, due to the economic, financial and material restrictions that limit the development of all the potential," he concluded.



General Director for High Performance at the Cuban Institute of Sports (INDER), José Antonio Miranda. PHOTO: ACN.

On the Road to Paris 2024

By Adrián **MENGANA**

HAVANA.- To the beat of every feint, blow and knockout, the Cuban boxing squad gears its fearful machinery up to turn off Paris lights and reign once again under the five rings in the 2024 Olympic Games.

The Cuban boxers won four gold medals and one bronze in Tokyo 2020 and recovered their crown in the Belgrade 2021 World Championship, with five gold and two bronze, in spite of the impact caused by COVID-19 and the economic difficulties.

Eager to face new challenges, they already look at the future with the hope of improving their results and giving more credit to the Cuban sports movement and the national boxing school, which has won 41 Olympic titles and 81 in the world arena.

In order to materialize that goal and be more prominent, particularly in Olympic and world events, officials of the National Institute of Sports and the Cuban Boxing Federation (FCB) designed a new development strategy, after years of in-depth analysis.

The initiative includes participation in professional circuits and making rules in

force in its organizations more human, in order to improve constant training and diversify the range and the characteristics of opponents, said FCB president Alberto Puig de la Barca.

TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

The project includes the legacy of the Cuban Boxing School's founding fathers and the role of grassroots coaches. It also provides a source of income that benefits boxers, staff members and their relatives, and helps boost the discipline.

The Cuban boxers have won the World Series of Boxing on three occasions and have been placed second on two; have achieved a couple of victories in the AIBA Pro Boxing tournament; have emerged victorious in 22 events against professional boxers, under the Olympic regulation, and have a balance of seven victories and one tie against paid boxers in a match conducted in Mexico prior to the Tokyo Games.

A representation of six members of the Domadores de Cuba team, the name of the franchise in the World Series, made its debut in professionalism as one of the world's best by scoring a resounding

6-0 victory at the Palenque Ring of the San Marcos Fair, in Aguascalientes (downtown Mexico), five of them by knockout.

Winners on behalf of Cuba included super featherweight Osvel Caballero, bronze medalist in the Belgrade 2021 World Championship; super lightweight Lázaro Álvarez, bronze medalist in Tokyo 2020 and gold medal holder in Baku 2011; super welterweight Roniel Iglesias, Olympic medalist in London 2012 and Tokyo

2020, and super middleweight Yoenlis Hernández, world champion in Belgrade, Serbia.

All six winners are the product of the Cuban Boxing School, which is renowned in the world and has formed outstanding boxers such as Teófilo Stevenson, Félix Savón, Mario Kindelán, Roberto Balado, Héctor Vinent or Julio César La Cruz, just to mention a few.

The school has also formed 32 Olympic champions, 63 world champions and 64 world junior champions.



Outstanding boxer Julio César La Cruz. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Laws to Protect the Environment

By Ivette **FERNÁNDEZ**

HAVANA.- Cuba, an island vulnerable to the severe impacts of climate change, has established a legal framework adjusted to its peculiarities and addressed to giving priority to the protection of the environment.

The governments commitment to promote a sustainable development is evidenced by the design and implementation of policies such as the Natural Resources and Environment Macro-Program, which responds to the priorities established in the National Economic and Social Development Plan.

General Director of the Ministry of Sciences, Technology and Environment, Odalys Goicochea, acknowledged that the regulations are in correspondence with the current social problems and demands.

An example of this is the State Plan to Combat Climate Change, also known as Tarea Vida (Life Task), which was adjusted in order to give closer attention to social aspects and to the need of involving scientists and the people in problem-solving in the communities, Goicochea explained. Several strategies, such as the National Environmental Law approved for the 2021-2025 period – whose implementation will allow measuring the progress made in the field thanks to indicators such as eco mark and environmental quality indexes and climate resilience – show the efforts made in the drafting of regulations on this topic.

Another initiative, such as the one that establishes a transition to a circular economy, promotes the optimum

use of natural resources and raw materials, the official noted.

However, the main expression of Cuba's political will in favor of the protection of the environment is the recent approval, at the National Assembly (Cuban Parliament),



The project gives priority to the restoration of coastal wetlands.

PHOTO: ACN.

of the Law on the Environment and Natural Resources System.

In addition to being in accordance with international treaties and commitments on the field, the said legislation is based on the main environmental right principles stated in declarations on the topic in several summits.

On the other hand, the legislation rules the management of woodland systems and gives priority to the fight against desertification and soil degradation to stop the loss of biodiversity.

One of the main strengths this regulation has lies on its eco-systemic approach, because it fosters better practices in the comprehensive handling of the soil, the water and the living resources, thus promoting their preservation and sustainable use in a more equitable and fair way, experts say.

An outstanding example of the projects Cuba conducts is Mi Costa (My Coast), a program that gives priority to the restoration of coastal wetlands, such as swampy forests and pastures, mangrove swamps and the hydrological flows that connect them to sea pastures and coral reefs.

Other actions conducted to restore the coral barrier, as part of the Ecovalor International Collaboration Project, also benefitted these habitats.

Another sign of the efforts Cuba makes is the Manglar Vivo (Living Mangrove Swamps) initiative, an action that started in 2014 under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program to restore and protect those systems in Artemisa and Mayabeque provinces, essential to avoid coastal erosion.



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