



The light that enlightened science in Cuba



P. 7

Cuba

Sounding the Country Out



P. 3

Economy

Economy Looks for Solutions based on Science



P. 14

Sport

Guadeloupe Succeeded. Who's next?



P. 15

Nature and Rural Identity in TURNAT 2022

By Francisco **MENÉNDEZ**

HAVANA.- Nature, adventure and rural identity are included among the main topics of an important international tourism event to be held in September in Cuba: TURNAT 2022.



Pinar del Río, one of the venues of Turnat 2022. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Each year, nature and adventure trips, in addition to visits to rural areas, attract people from all over the world and that is the reason why Cuba bets for these recreational modalities, for the attractions they offer.

Sales director of the Ecotur Travel Agency, Francisco Longino, highlighted

the 13th edition of the International Nature Tourism event to be held in September.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, Longino commented that this is an important event in which over 200 specialists of this recreational modality are expected to participate.

The official recalled that this event started in 2000 in the westernmost province of Pinar del Río, and at the beginning, they were held in different venues. At present, it is held every two years.

On this occasion, the western region –Havana, Artemisa, Mayabeque, Pinar del Río and the Isle of Youth– will be the venue of the event, which will include 12 groups composed of 18 people each.

Those groups will deal with modalities such as hiking, riding, air sports, bike tours, birds watching, diving, kayak, nautical events, rural farms, motorcycling, fishing and accessible tourism.

In order to guarantee the event, 62 suppliers from the provinces included as scenarios and territories, are involved.

The event is aimed at showing Cuba's nature prospects and is mainly addressed at specialists, tour operators, travel and commercial agents and other people responsible for organizing such forms of holidays.

TURNAT includes one day for theoretical presentations and talks, while the rest of the days are dedicated to the practical and in-situ knowledge of spaces favorable for such modalities.

The opening includes a colloquium on rural tourism at the Cuban Agrarian University, in the Mayabeque province.

Costa Rican Ana Báez and Mexican Claudia Peralta (San Luis de Potosí) are included among the lecturers.

Other topics to be dealt with in this event include links with the Cuban medical systems for quality tourism and accessibility, to facilitate differently-abled people a natural recreation.

Unique features of this edition include the organization of Post-tour, from September 25-28, for TURNAT participants interested in prolonging their stay in Cuba in order to know other nature areas.

Tourism Tries to Recover Rising Spiral

By Roberto **F. CAMPOS**

HAVANA.-The efforts made by Cuban tourism managers and workers seem to bear fruits and meet the expectations devised, as data show the rising spiral of the travel industry.

Development director at the Cuban Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) Alexander Sierra stated his confidence in the industry's prospects in his speech at the XV International Journalism and Tourism Seminar.

In this event, organized by the Tourism Department of the Cuban Journalism Union (UPEC), Sierra provided an outlook on the sector's current situation in the island.

In his lecture, entitled 'Tourism Commercialization and Development Strategies in Cuba in the post-pandemic period', the official explained that the country has the conditions needed to overcome the economic difficulties, which are felt not only in Cuba but also in the world.

At present, Cuba has 77,809 hotel rooms, almost half of them are five stars. About 48 percent of the hotel facilities are part of the Gaviota Group; 22 percent of Cubanacan; 18 of Gran Caribe and 12 of Islazul.

Of the data mentioned before, 50,000 rooms are managed by important foreign hotel companies, such as Meliá, Iberostar, BlueDiamond, Roc, Barceló, Blau, Kempinski, Accor, NH, Axel, Be Live and Sirenis.

Management contracts were signed with 18 foreign firms, mainly Spanish and Canadian.

The main issuing markets include Russia (until February), Canada (which is potentially reaffirmed as the first), Cubans residing abroad, Spain, Germany and the United States.

Until June 16th, Cuba received 623,541 foreign visitors, and MINTUR plans to receive 2.5 million this year – of the 4 million foreseen to be received before COVID-19.

In view of this year's prospects, the country has the intention of reviving entertainment

and nature tourism, concern for climate change and its effects and transformation of the industry, to make goods and services sustainable.

In this sense, Sierra talked about the Tarea Vida (Life Task) program, a State action directed at the maintenance and recovery of sandy beaches. In line with this, he added that 114 tourist resorts have been studied in Cuba as part of a soil census, including nine tourist regions to develop recreational activities.

The most recent examples that show foreign companies' trust on the potential rise of tourism in Cuba include the Meliá

(Spain) and Blue Diamond (Canada) chains, which state their optimism.

Meliá-Cuba Marketing and Communication director Maite Artieda commented that the company she represents is in alliance with local authorities to offer a healthy tourism, and in relation to innovation. She added that they work in coordination with the Cuban Medical Services to offer specialized attention in their hotels.

With more than 30 years of work in Cuba, Meliá is still fascinated with this destination, said the Spanish executive, who added that they are now rediscovering the country and its tourism.



Development director at the Cuban Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) Alexander Sierra. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

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Translation: Dayamí Interian/Yanelly Interián
Graphic Designers: Fernando Fernández Tito
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Assistant Staff: Yaimara Portuondo
Advertising: René García
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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

Sounding the Country Out

By Rafael **CALCINES**

HAVANA.- To encounter the reality and the problems of the population far from the offices and meetings in the capital and to look for solutions attending to the concrete situations of each place, appears today in Cuba as a way of governing more and more frequently.

The so-called governmental visits to each of the Cuban provinces frequently make headlines in the press, as part of a strategy in tune with the new Constitution of the Republic, which foresees higher autonomy and management on the part of provincial and municipal authorities.

One of the most recent actions of this type, conducted at the eastern province of Las Tunas, included a large team headed by Cuban Prime Minister Manuel Marrero and composed of Vice-President of the Republic Salvador Valdés Mesa, in addition to other deputy prime ministers, ministers and deputy ministers.

This visit, the third to the territory in less than a year, included eight municipalities and 466 economic entities. In its two-day duration, participants evaluated 77 programs, including the fulfillment of the remarks made in previous visits.

Visits were made to 20 neighborhoods in which work is done to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants, who in many cases face vulnerable situations. As informed as part of the visit's summary,

these visits included face-to-face talks with about 8.600 neighbors, who spoke about their problems, hopes and ideas.

As the Prime Minister explained, in the two previous visits, provincial and municipal authorities were instructed to deal with 68 measures, of which 62 were already met. Other 82 remarks were made, whose solutions will be checked in a subsequent visit.

One of the strengths of this work method lies on the analysis and search for solutions to each territory's specific problems, over

and above those that affect all the country, like the shortages of material resources that are often caused by the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba.

In the case of the Las Tunas province, participants in this governmental visit drew attention to key problems such as housing deterioration. In this regard, they focused on the need to boost programs addressed at the granting of subsidies, the elimination of dirt floor and attention to mothers with three or more children.

The importance of making a better use of the micro, small and medium-sized companies dedicated to the manufacturing

of construction materials was also stressed. As it has happened in visits to other territories of the country, participants acknowledged the joint work municipal authorities, local entities and neighbors have conducted to improve vulnerable communities.

Marrero highlighted that having the resources needed to improve living conditions in the communities is not enough; it is essential that neighbors feel close to local leaders, who must pay attention to collective and individual needs. A few days later, the head of government toured the special municipality of Isla de la Juventud.



Cuban Prime Minister Manuel Marrero visited Las Tunas, the third to the territory in less than a year. PHOTO: ACN.

Same Opportunities and Rights

By Melissa **KING**

HAVANA.- Women's presence in all fields of life in Cuba is characterized by equality of sexes and rights, as endorsed by the country's political will since the triumph of the Revolution, in 1959.

Since then, the Cuban government has adopted a series of measures and programs aimed at making radical

changes and transformations in the life of the Cuban women.

Those measures include universal and free access to education and health, without any form of discrimination; access to employment and decision-making, and respect and guarantee to sexual and reproductive rights, among others.

Particularly noteworthy is the creation of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) in 1960, as a platform for the defense of women's rights and the struggle for their participation on equal terms with men in all spheres of political, economic and social life of the Caribbean nation.

At present, more than 60 years after the triumph of the Revolution, Cuban women represent over 50 percent of the members of the National Assembly of the People's Power (Parliament), 51 percent of the provincial Governments and 34 percent of the municipal Governments.

The above was acknowledged by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, whose report on the island states that Cuba is again placed second among the five countries that reach the classification of equality of sexes in the Parliament, and the second in the world with the higher rate of female legislators.

Similarly, 87.2 percent of the Cuban women involved in the economy have the degree of middle or higher studies, compared to 66.7 among men.

At the end of 2019, of the 89,214 people dedicated to scientific and technological activities in the country,

53 percent were women, and of the 7,750 categorized researchers, 68 percent were also women.

Unlike other countries of the world – such as the United States, where the right to abortion has been revoked in spite of strong protests in that country – Cuban women have the right to control their body and decide on the number of children they want.

Abortion in Cuba is legal, safe and free, and is practiced in health institutions by medical and nursing staff.

Family planning is a right couples have, particularly women. In addition, the right to enjoy maternity and paternal leaves is guaranteed, as well as leaves to grandparents or any other relative families decide based on circumstances.

In spite of achievements such as equal payment in productive areas and management tasks, in addition to acknowledgement to women's contribution to the family as the core of the society, they still face certain forms of sex discrimination that prevent their fulfillment.

For that reason, the implementation of the National Program for Women's Progress (PAM) is essential to overcome those barriers.

In alliance with FMC, PAM aims to promote women's progress and equality of rights, opportunities and possibilities, as endorsed in the Constitution of the Republic. It also aims to go in depth on objective and subjective factors that are still present in the Cuban society and prevent attaining higher results in the economic, political, social and family fields, in view of their eradication.



The government has adopted programs aimed at making radical changes in the life of the Cuban women. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken. PHOTO: Internet.

The Hypocrisy of Sanctions

By Adriana **ROBREÑO**

HAVANA.-The hypocrisy of the government of the United States in its endeavor to break Cuba seems to have no limits, and in that effort, Washington insists on maintaining a policy of aggressions against the island that is far from being successful.

As part of its most recent sanctions, the U.S. government announced last June that it would impose visa restrictions on five Cuban officials, a common practice that comes on top of the strengthening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade.

Although the names of the people sanctioned were not mentioned, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken informed that such a measure is addressed to those who, in his opinion, deny the Cuban people basic human rights and are involved in the sentences given to those who participated in the riots that took place on July 2021.

With such sanctions, the government of the United States tries to "support the Cuban people," said Blinken, who did not mention the blockade as one of the reasons for the economic situation the country faces.

Voices from several countries, including the United States, demand to lift that unilateral siege.

Recently, the Municipal Council of the city of New Haven, Connecticut, approved a resolution demanding President Joe Biden and Congress to put an end to the blockade against Cuba and in favor of normalizing relations between both countries.

The text says that the blockade contributes, to a large extent, to the shortages of food, fuel and medical supplies in Cuba.

The New Haven resolution joins the call of other U.S. cities, such as Hartford and Boston, that also demand the lifting of sanctions against the island.

In relation to the said sanctions against the officials, Cuba considers that these are part of the aggressive escalation promoted by the White House.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez described these restrictions on the five officials as an act of aggression, as they are "individual sanctions based on untruthful and totally groundless accusations."

Rodríguez stated that Washington "once again uses coercive measures against Cuba as an act of aggression," however, we "will not be broken, they only provoke our strong rejection," he added.

Although Biden promised to revert the policy of his predecessor, Donald Trump (2017-2021), against Cuba during his electoral campaign, in practice, he maintains the same strategy of the former president, with some cautious steps.

Last May, the White House reported the elimination of limits on remittances, the reauthorization of so-called people-to-people group travel and the family reunification program, all suspended by Trump.

It also referred to the increase of consular services in its embassy in Havana and the restart of regular and charter flights to the Cuban provinces.

To Havana, those regulations, which allegedly ease the U.S. policy toward Cuba, do not imply a radical change.

In fact, less than a month after the announcement of an apparent easing, Blinken informed about the visa restrictions on the Cuban officials, and the economic blockade is still in effect, as well as the most aggressive aspects of the over 200 measures adopted by the former Republican president.

Cuban to Join UN-CEDAW

By Ibis **FRADE**

HAVANA.- Cuban jurist Yamila González will soon join the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) after being elected at the UN with the highest number of votes casted.

The vote held on June 23rd acknowledged the work conducted by the Doctor of Legal Sciences and Titular Professor at the Faculty of Law of the University of Havana, who reached 143 of the 187 ballots.

Once the news was known, Cuban permanent acting representative to the UN, Yusnier Romero, stated that González's election is an acknowledgement to Cuba's prestige in the field of genre equality and women empowerment.

González is the vice-president of the Cuban National Union of Jurists and the Cuban Society of Civil and Family Law. She is also the coordinator of the "Justicia en clave de género" (Genre Justice) project, works as family mediator and is a member of the National Committee of the Cuban Women's Federation.

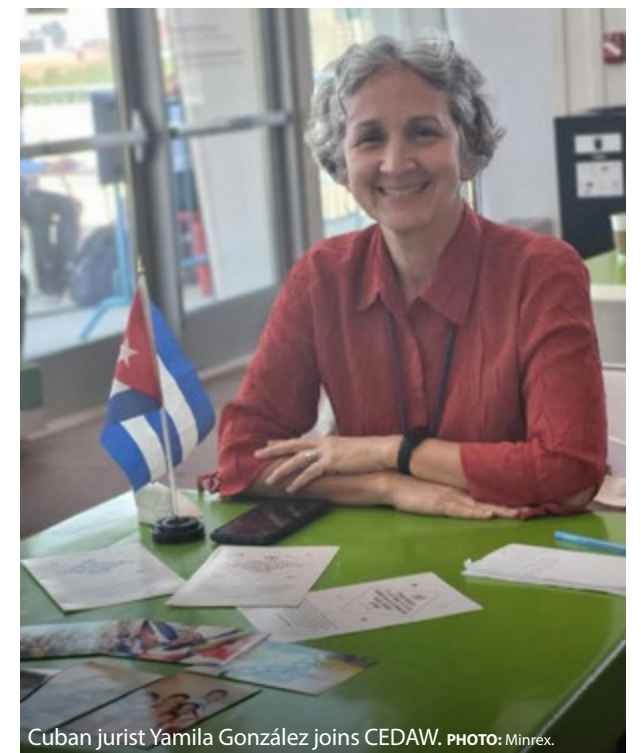
The Cuban jurist will join CEDAW for the 2023-2026 period, said the Cuban mission to the UN.

CEDAW is a United Nations independent body of experts that supervises the application of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The very same day Yamila González was elected to join that Committee, Cuban researcher María Guadalupe Guzmán received in Paris the International L'Oréal-UNESCO Award "Women and Science," another acknowledgment that also ennobles the work of Cuban women, particularly in their role as scientists.

Guzmán presented the results of her research on dengue at the French Academy of Sciences, where she also shared information about the fight against COVID-19 and the vaccines developed in Cuba.

The prestigious award, granted to a Caribbean scientist for the first time, is assumed by Cuba as an acknowledgment to women's prominent role in sciences and their empowerment in the society at large.



Cuban jurist Yamila González joins CEDAW. PHOTO: Minrex.

Studies on NeuralCIM Neuroprotector Continue

By Ivette **FERNÁNDEZ**

HAVANA.- Studies on the NeuralCIM neuroprotector drug (NeuroEPO) continue in the capital with the start of the classification consultation of patients that will join phase III of clinical trial.

Search of potential candidates for the phase III study, to begin in the capital on a subsequent date, has already started, while phase IV will be conducted in other provinces of the country, First Deputy Director of the Molecular Immunology Center (CIM), Kalet León, said in a press conference.

The NeuroEPO molecule, an erythropoietin with a low sialic acid content and similar to the one that is naturally produced in the brain, proved to have positive effects in patients suffering from light and moderate Alzheimer, after the first clinical trials conducted in Cuba.

According to Doctor of Sciences Teresita Rodríguez, the product's manager, the formulation proved to have low side effects, while promoting the formation of new blood vessels and the expansion of neurotransmitters, preventing cellular death and having an anti-inflammatory effect, among other benefits.

For her part, Doctor of Sciences Leslie Pérez commented that for these new phases of study, the Cuban product would be compared to Donepezilo, a medication approved by the regulatory agency of the United States.

In Havana in particular, in addition to the clinical characterization of the product, patients involved in the study will be analyzed from the molecular point of view through the determination of beta-amyloid proteins in the cerebrospinal liquid, whose accumulation in the brain is identified as a precursor of Alzheimer, she added.

About 413 people are expected to be studied in the capital, while in the rest of the country, where the staff that will conduct the phase IV clinical trial is being trained, 1,456 people are to be included, said the doctor.

The dossier to request the start of the subsequent researches is currently in its preparation stage, to be handed in later on to the National Center for State Control of Medication, Equipment and Medical devices, the official commented.

Once approval is received, we hope to start studies on the last three or four months of the year, she stressed.

NeuralCIM, which has already been registered by the national regulatory agency, also has potential to be used in the treatment of Parkinson, ataxias and acute cerebral ischemia, the managers said.

The medication, created by CIM, is orally administered and hopes to restore the unbalance caused by neurodegenerative conditions in the brain and stabilize its physiological functioning.



Doctor of Sciences Leslie Pérez. PHOTO: ACN.

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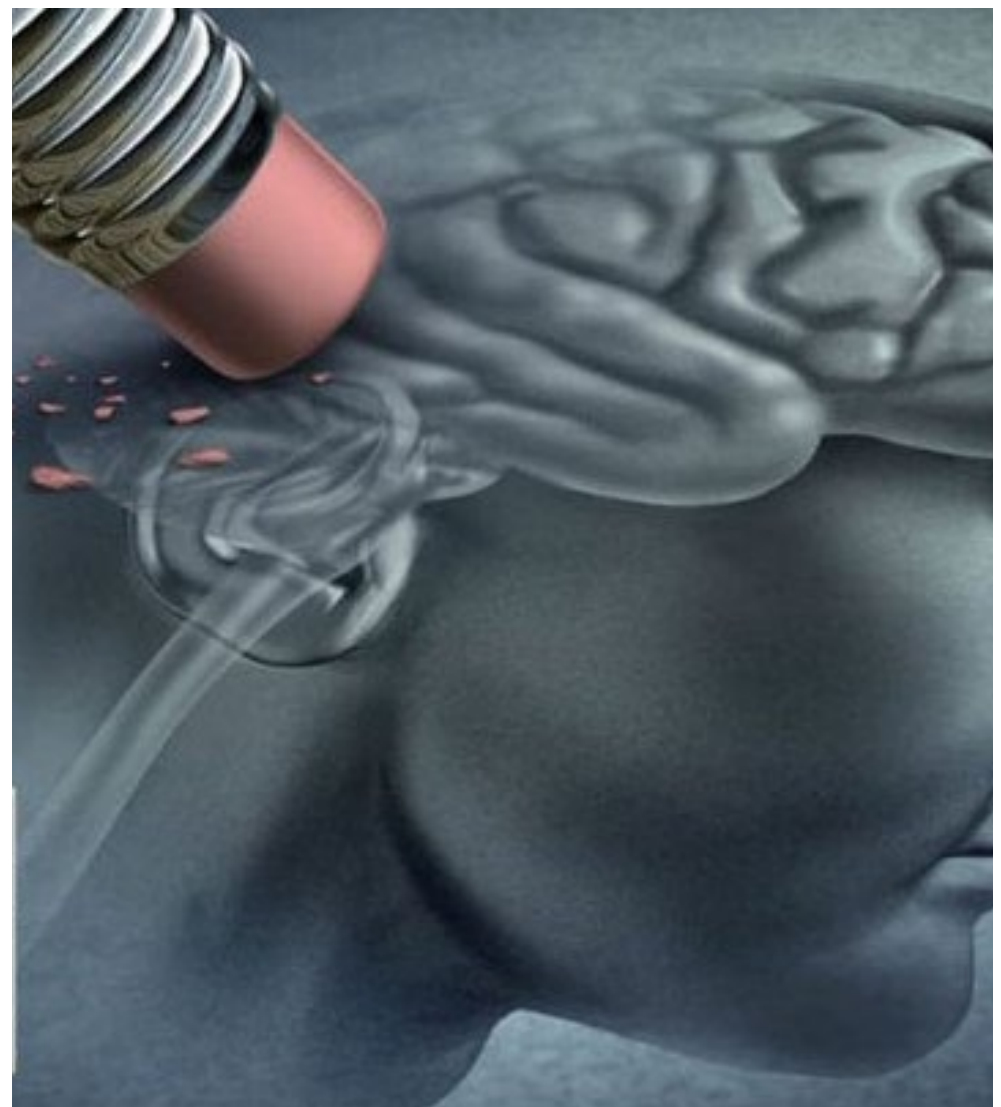
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Datos de contacto:
Ave 31 e/ 158 y 190, Playa, La Habana, Cuba +537 2716022 www.cigb.edu.cu
CIGBCubaCuba CIGBCubaCuba CIGBCubaCuba



Artistic, Cultural and Revolutionary Avant-garde

By Marlen **SAAVEDRA**

HAVANA.- Creators and intellectuals ratified the historic permanence of the National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (UNEAC) as the country's artistic, cultural, political and revolutionary avant-garde.

At a recent meeting of that organization, at Havana's Conference Center, poet, narrator and essayist Miguel Barnet stressed the contribution the island has made, as a sovereign nation, to the international principles of multi-polarity.

Barnet, Doctor Honoris Causa in Arts from the

University of Havana, referred to the young people's role in the future of the country, and the importance of listening to their opinions, without paternalism. He also reiterated confidence in the Revolution and its leaders.

According to the UNEAC Honorary President, the current situation of crisis, shortages of supplies and lack of foreign resources is mainly caused by the economic and political war, which has intensified as a result of the 243 measures implemented during the government of U.S. president Donald Trump.

For her part, director of the Cuban National Ballet Company (BNC) Viengsay Valdés highlighted the value teachers have in

classrooms. She also stressed the importance of reopening the ballet elementary center in Pinar del Río province and urged to include the Cuban Ballet School in the list of National Cultural Heritage Centers.

Renowned actress Corina Mestre stated the importance of passing laws that prevent the exodus of graduate students and artists, especially "because members of dance companies and professionals in the fulfillment of their social service abandon that period after their departure from the country."

Roberto Valera, 2006 National Music awardee, talked about the need for safeguarding classical and traditional rhythms as the basis for the formation of contemporary styles, apprehended in Cuban educational institutes and enriched by community idiosyncrasy.

With the attendance of Cuban president, Miguel Díaz-Canel, participants to the National Council plenary session rendered tribute to personalities who recently passed away, such as Eusebio Leal, Martha Rojas, Cecilio Avilés, Ambrosio Fornet and Fina García-Marruz.

Participants also recalled the 120th anniversary of birth of poet Nicolás Guillén, considered the

main representative of the so-called black poetry. Met in five commissions, they also debated about the agreements and opinions put forward at the IX UNEAC Congress, on 2019.

Cuban Culture Minister Alpidio Alonso acknowledged that it is essential to learn about how we should respond in the face of a provocation or manipulation of the country's symbols from the communication spaces, and praised the vitality and diversity of contemporary authors.

"The amount of money addressed to the articulation of projects against our culture is unprecedented. They create leaders, awards and scholarships; they harass our institutions; they try to discredit the artists who live in the country and promote boycott to national events," he revealed.

During her speech, vice-president of the Cuban Councils of State and Ministers, Inés María Chapman, urged to search for creative and new solutions, while highlighting that promotion of positive values and defense of socialism are some of the current challenges.



President Miguel Díaz-Canel and Luis Morlote, leader of the National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (UNEAC). PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Bolero: Tradition, Harmonic Heritage and Idiosyncrasy

By Jorge **PETINAUD**

HAVANA.- Bolero, endowed with a harmonic heritage in which Spanish and African elements come together, has been included since August 24, 2021, in the list of Cuban National Cultural Heritage, a distinction based on historiographical, musicological and sociological studies.

The research included institutions such as the National Cultural Heritage Council, the Cuban Music Research and Development Center, the National Music Museum and the National Cultural Centers Council.

Researchers and lovers of that romantic musical genre recently participated in the Boleros de Oro International Festival Colloquium, at the Rubén Martínez Villena Hall of the Cuban Union of Writers and Artists (UNEAC).

"The theoretical event was dedicated to the declaration of the genre as a Cultural Heritage of Cuba and Mexico and the 100th anniversary of the birth of César Portillo de la Luz," coordinator of the event, Alicia Valdés Cantero, told **The Havana Reporter**.

Cantero, author of the *Dictionary of Outstanding Women in Cuban Music*, affirmed that this edition was also dedicated to the 100th anniversary of creation of the Cuban radio and the 35th anniversary of this international festival.



On the debates conducted, she informed that at the opening lecture, Roberto Méndez talked about avant-garde music and mentioned others such as Yosbel Hernández, Rolando Rensoli, Zaida Capote and Wilma Alba Cal.

Throughout these years, the Boleros de Oro Colloquium has been an important space for the historical, theoretical and cultural analysis of this musical expression that was born in Cuba and has contributed to the Latin American and Caribbean identity.

According to the organizers, that was the line followed by the lecturers, who talked about the 95th anniversary of birth of the 'King of Filin,' José Antonio Méndez (June 21, 1927 – June 10, 1989) and the 120th anniversary of birth, in Matanzas, of the author of *Aquellos ojos verdes* (Those green eyes), Nilo Menéndez (September 1902 – September 1987).

In relation to this composer, an orchestra director and pianist who became a naturalized U.S. citizen, a study was presented on his role as one of the main exponents of Caribbean sounds in that country since the 1920s.

Participants also made reference to violinist and singer Rafael Lay Apesteguía, the architect of the Aragón Orchestra sound, and José Tejedor, one of the most important bolero singers in Cuba who enjoyed great popularity in the 1960s with songs such as *En las tinieblas* (In the darkness).

The opening ceremony of the 35th edition of the Boleros de Oro Festival was held at the Covarrubias Hall of the Cuban National Theater and included performances at the Julián del Casal Cultural Center, in Old Havana, and the Oficio de Isla Hall, at Avenida del Puerto, where the show Luz (Light), directed by Osvaldo Doimeadiós, was presented.

A matinée at the Benny Moré Salón Rosado, by the Charanga de Oro band – founded and directed by flutist José Loyola – marked the closing of the festival, in its 2022 edition.



from nature
to your hands



The light that enlightened science in Cuba

By Claudia **DUPEYRÓN**

HAVANA.- Cuba's achievements in the medical and biotechnological fields are recognized worldwide. However, it would be impossible to talk about them without mentioning the work of the leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro, who turned scientific development into a constant challenge and a national objective.

His vision about the future was crucial in the creation of different entities, such as the National Scientific Research Center (CENIC), which was inaugurated in 1965 and became the core of a megaproject composed of other institutions that are part of the Havana's Western Scientific Area.

The development of those institutions led to the creation of a powerful and efficient infrastructure for science development.

"We are proud to inaugurate this center, which is not a luxury, it is a promise of health and welfare for our people, it is a promise of income for our economy," he said during the founding of Cuba's Molecular Immunology Center, on December 5, 1994.

At the time, other similar entities had already been created and at present, there are over 30, according to official data.

The main objective of these entities is to foster the development of biotechnology, the medical-pharmaceutical



Fidel Castro turned scientific development into a constant challenge and a national objective. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

industry and state-of-the-art technology, in order to face health problems, food, among others.

Since then, biomedicines and vaccines have been produced and exported to all five continents.

Just to mention a few, any Cuban, since their birth, is immunized against 13 diseases and eight of those vaccines are produced in the country. The anti-meningococcal and anti-hepatitis B recombinant vaccines, which have made an important social, economic and strategic contribution, are also part of children's vaccination scheme.

On the other hand, the Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center (CIGB) has been the entity responsible

for Heberprot-P, the only drug in the world designed for the treatment of diabetic foot ulcers, which has been validated in several countries of the planet.

CIGB is also responsible for Mambisa and Abdala, Cuba and Latin America's first vaccine against COVID-19.

Another important place, founded in 1987, is the Immunoassay Center, dedicated to the production of kits for research on HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B & C, alpha-fetoprotein in pregnant women, hypothyroidism in newborn babies and immunoglobulins E, among other parameters.

The first steps Cuba took in the immunology field, under the aegis of Fidel Castro, have allowed us to have today other vaccines against COVID-19, like Soberana 01, Soberana 02 and Soberana Plus, produced by the Finlay Vaccines Institute.

Cuba became the first Latin American country to present a product developed by its scientists to combat the disease, and to take it to phase III of clinical trials.

Fidel's work was not only directed at fostering these centers, but also human capital in areas such as medical sciences.

He was also behind the creation of the 1st Contingent of the "Carlos J. Finlay" Medical Sciences Group, on January 6, 1982.

Years later, on September 19, 2005, he created the Henry Reeve International Medical Contingent, whose main role is to provide immediate cooperation in any country that suffers a catastrophe, such as hurricanes, flooding and other phenomena, in addition to facing serious epidemics.

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When it is finished it will operate 34 wind-driven generators. PHOTO: Granma

Winds under a Woman's Power

By Raquel **DÍAZ**

HAVANA.- Cuba's first wind park, with a capacity for 51 megawatts, is being built in the eastern province of Las Tunas, a complex work that, since its birth in 2013, is headed by a woman: Adela Álvarez.

In order to know more about this project, **The Havana Reporter** talked to Álvarez, director of the Las Tunas Herradura 1 Wind Park Basic Preparation and Construction Entrepreneurial Unit.

At the exchange, the official explained that her entity is a pioneer in the construction of a center of such magnitude, which will be directed at the commercialization of wind-driven energy.

The project is designed to operate 34 wind-driven generators, of which 22 are already in the country. Thus, once pending works finish, operations with that minimum scheme could start, she commented.

Twenty wind-driven generator bases have already been melted, while a substation and a maintenance and operation center are undergoing the construction process, Álvarez noted.

In relation to the substation, she explained that it has a 33-meter long and 11-meter wide control house. The place, she added, is destined for the conversion of the current generated by the wind-driven generators.

THE PROCESS

When appointed as head of the project, in 2013, she barely knew what the construction of a wind park meant; she did not even know that the God of Winds was named Aeolus, she joked.

To start the construction, it was necessary first to study the soils that would serve as support for the towers, as well as to clear six-meter wide roads and conduct engineering and geological research in each of the platforms in which the equipment was to be mounted.

Soil researches were conducted in 2013 and 2014; then, in 2015, experts carried out the project, and in 2017 the construction of the first bases started, with a high degree of complexity due to the depth, Álvarez recalled.

At that time, all the bases had water – the lowest level was 30 centimeters – and that made works even harder, as the smelting

could last up to 14 hours, and they always started in the afternoons in order to control temperatures.

Today, the bases built have good quality, but the most important thing was to stick to the project, the time and controls in order to evaluate the results, she stressed.

Once this work, which Álvarez has accompanied since its inception, is completed,

it will be handed over to the team responsible for its operation, and it will finally begin to generate electricity from wind.

There was only one more question to ask Álvarez: how did she manage to combine her roles as a leader, a mother, a wife and a woman? The answer is in my family; it would have been impossible without them, she affirmed.



The project, since its birth in 2013, is headed by a woman: Adela Álvarez. PHOTO: Prensa Latina

Omara Portuondo Says Goodbye with Vida

By Claudia **MADEN**

HAVANA.- At the age of 90, Cuban diva Omara Portuondo conquers applause on stages in Latin America and Europe, witnesses of her endless voice during her last world tour called Vida (Life).

The famous Diva of the Buena Vista Social Club started her international tour in Guatemala, a Central American nation in which she shared the stage with young singer Gaby Moreno.

"My endless appreciation to Gaby Moreno for inviting me to share the stage in her concert, my first presentation in this beautiful country; my greetings to the Guatemalan people," the artist said.

In her second stop, the so-called "Bride of Feeling" dazzled the audience at Cali, Medellin and Bucaramanga after taking the flavor of the Cuban music to the homeland of García Márquez.

"Colombia, I am going there to sing to you", the singer announced in her digital platforms, which show the successful tour she and her band have made.

Portuondo also won the Spanish city of Cartagena, after showing off her vocal talent at the Spanish La Mar de Músicas Festival, the starting point of this European tour that was hosted at the Paco Martín Auditorium.

Paco Martín, director of the La Mar de Músicas Festival until 2018, told the international press that "I had a commitment with the Cuban diva to present all her projects in Cartagena."

"In 2019, we were told that Omara was going to retire and we brought her to the jazz festival, but Portuondo is much too much Portuondo and she joined the program once there was an opportunity to do it," Cartagenas Culture councilor Carlos Piñana commented.



Omara Portuondo and Gaby Moreno in Guatemala. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

After the announcement of her retirement on February 2022, the renowned singer confessed her reasons for singing to Life 'and turning around.'

"I celebrated my 90th birthday in the middle of the pandemic and I never imagined that I could reach this new youth singing (...) To me, singing is living, is my way of being. If someone asks me about my favorite place, it will always be the stage," she said. On vital learning, Omara also acknowledged that "so many sad stories, so many goodbyes, makes us understand the value of life, family and friends."

"Making the most of every moment and setting things to music can be the best learning of all these years," she affirmed in a moving personal statement shared with her fans in far-off countries.

Her retirement will not be definite and immediate, although she will for sure retire from international commitments. With Vida, she hopes to say 'see you' to her fans on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, and return to Cuba, her Cuba, to continue recording and being present in special events.

Dance Workshops and Courses

By Danay Galletti **HERNÁNDEZ**

HAVANA.- The Litz Alfonso Dance Cuba company (LADC) organizes summer courses and workshops for students and dancers on topics such as flamenco, Cuban popular dances and urban dance.

The space dedicated to the flamenco, held at MalecónART 255 and conducted in coordination with the ECOS company, included artists such as Ana Rosa Meneses, director of the abovementioned company, in addition to Sandra Sardiñas and Angela Badell.

At the same stage, renowned maestro Miguel Ángel Herrera and LADC dancers Miguel Ángel Díaz and Eduardo Prieto conducted the workshops on Cuban popular dances.

For their part, dancers and professors Lorena Flores, Eduardo Prieto and Aylín López conducted the urban style workshops. On Saturdays, students participated in an exchange on the lessons learnt, as a conclusion to the workshop. According to the cultural institution professor and choreographer Litz Alfonso conducts, lessons were given Monday through Friday, from 17.00 to 20.00 hours, prior registration at MalecónART 255. In this same period, but at its venue in Old Havana, LADC conducted the 28th edition of its

summer courses, whose topics dealt with fusion dance, ballet, flamenco and Cuban popular dances and were addressed at active students and dancers of any discipline from seven to 30 years old.

In parallel to this, the company, founded more than 30 years ago, rehearsed its renowned show Cuba Vibra (Cuba Vibrates), staged from June 6 to 10 at the Deutsches Theatre Munich, Germany's largest theater which was opened in September 1876 and is dedicated to invited stage art groups.

The two-hour staging, sponsored by Oz Production, includes a varied repertoire, with themes in English and Spanish that tour popular music and Cuban dances from the second half of the 20th century to the present day at the rhythm of chachachá, mambo, conga and bolero.

The website of the European theater acknowledges that LADC is a theater mega star both in Germany and the United States, winner of several awards and protagonist of Cuba Vibra, "a suggestive and passionate tour of the culture that has made the island famous since the 1950s." According to the site, all four soloists and 13 members of the company performed a story narrated under the influence of national genres and accompanied by an eight-member live band that provided an authentic sound.

Deutsches Theatre Munich also acknowledges that the company has been one of the most valued in Latin America and the Caribbean in the last three decades, because of its perfect mixture that represents the Cuban cultural mosaic, history and identity.



This is the 28th edition of summer courses in Litz Alfonso Dance Cuba company. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Regla's Permanent Attraction

By Benjamín MICERINOS

HAVANA.- Regla, the area where the Afro-Cuban root breaths from the pier and fills the visitor with colors and interest. Access to this sea town, located in Havana, can be by boat or car, the less common way.

Many fantasies should have filled the souls of the first inhabitants of this village, where magic and history are an ideal attraction for tourism and whose indigenous name – Guaicanamar – means facing the sea.

Legend has it that a man called Antonio El Peregrino brought the image of the Virgin of Regla in a painting and built a sanctuary in 1687, which was destroyed by a strong storm five years later and rebuilt again by the devotee.

Several names and stories are intertwined later on, such as that of Pedro de Aranda y Evellaneda, a traveler who brought the sculpture of the virgin from Spain and donated it to the sanctuary in 1696.

Whether true or false, the virgin is today a strong presence in the heart of many Cubans, especially those who live in Regla and particularly in the families that profess African-origin religions.

Apart from the Christian beliefs on the saint, the virgin became Yemayá, the goddess of the sea, as a result of the imagination of the African slaves. The colors of Yemayá, the mother of the rest of the gods – known as Orishas – are blue and white.

Either in one religion or in the other, the virgin takes possession of Regla.

Its silhouette is permanently found in the chapel of this town, wearing a robe and accompanied by three fishermen that cannot be mistaken by those who accompany the Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre, Cuba's Patron Saint, named Oshún by the Afro-Cubans.

Anyway, Regla is an ideal place to walk around, an attractive and interesting location for foreigners.

The people who live in this town speak loud, make lots of gestures, but are specially proud of being part of this territory, where



The Regla Chapel is among other places of religious interest in the location.

black people's roots are undoubtedly seen here since 1687. In 1714, the Virgin of Regla was proclaimed as the town's patron saint.

When disembarking in this town, a busy avenue and cobbled streets appear. The closest to the jetty is Santuario, where the Regla Chapel and other places of religious interest are located.

About 41,500 people live in this fishermen town, which is near Casablanca, another town that came to life in the 18th century, at the side of the La Cabaña colonial fortress.

One of the symbols of Regla is the Lenin Memorial Monument, at the hill named the same – an initiative created in 1924 by the then municipal (socialist) mayor Antonio Bosch y Martínez, who passed a decree to plant an olive tree in memory of the Great citizen of the World, Vladimir Ilich Lenin.

In the revolutionary period (after 1959), the current monument, a symbol of the municipality, was erected.

Another symbol is the Shield of Regla, made by artist Armando Arocha Vento and devised by Eduardo Gómez Loaces (1904-1975), a journalist and municipal historian.

Forest Policies and Tools

By Jean D'LUX

HAVANA.- The Cuban Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG) started debates about new programs and tools aimed at favoring forest development in the island, as part of a climate resilience program.

Drafting and improving public policies and management tools that contribute to the Cuban forest sector's development was the objective of a national workshop recently held in the island, official sources indicated. The meeting was part of the project named 'Climate Resilience in the Cuban Agricultural Ecosystems' (IRES), a plan MINAG implements with the technical assistance of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the financing of the Green Climate Fund (GCF). MINAG leaders and officials, as well as representatives of its different agricultural, forest and cattle-raising groups, attended the meeting, in addition to the Ministries of Sciences, Technology and Environment,

Economics and Planning, and research institutes.

Opened by MINAG national director for Forestry and Wild Flora and Fauna, Arturo Forteza, the workshop was aimed at validating the proposal on public policies and management tools, which will count on the technical endorsement of the IRES project.


The meeting allowed to make progress in the setting-up of a schedule for the drafting and improvement of such objectives, according to sources.

Until 2007, IRES had been conducted in seven Cuban municipalities that are vulnerable to climate change: Los Arabos (Matanzas province); Corralillo, Quemado de Güines and Santo Domingo (Villa Clara province), and Jobabo, Amancio and Colombia (Las Tunas province).

Expected results include the development, discussion and analysis of reforms that endorse the implementation of agricultural and forest, wood and pastoral, and forest systems, in order to improve ecosystems' climate resilience and services.



The authorities are drafting and improving public policies that contribute to the Cuban forest sector's development. PHOTO: Internet.



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Colony-Sigüanea

Text and Photos Roberto **F.CAMPOS**

HAVANA.- A perfect spot for watching the sunset is located in the beach in front of the Colony Hotel, in the Isle of Youth (Isla de la Juventud), a small island in the southwestern part of Cuba where different tones please the most demanding travelers.

In that location, colors fill the resort and the natural environment, which includes a swampy area and other places ideal for taking pictures.

All these places can be enjoyed in the journey along the Sigüanea Road, in the Isle of Youth.

In the 1950s, several hotels were built in Cuba with the purpose to create prestigious properties and beach facilities that were mainly addressed to U.S. tourism of the time and which often acted as casinos.

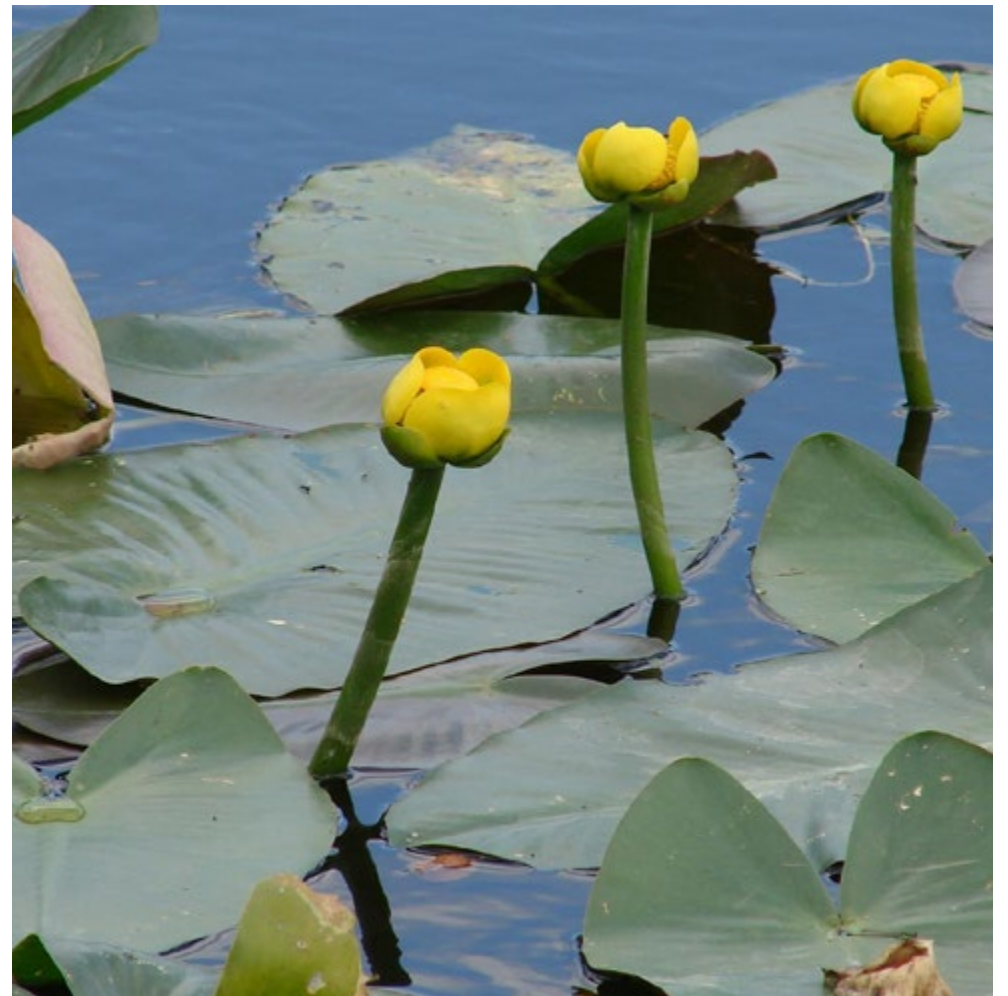
That was precisely the plan for the Colony Hotel. The architecture of the two-story complex still recalls that time; however, gambling is not the main reason to stay here, but the practice of water sports.

The Marina Colony International Diving Center is just five minutes away by car from La Fé, the island's main municipality.

This spacious complex has a swimming pool with solarium terrace in the garden, which in turn has a view of the Sigüanea Bay – where visitors can enjoy one of the best sunsets in this island.

The hotel facility has 80 rooms – 56 of them, standard – and 24 bungalows. All are equipped with air-conditioner, minibar, private bathroom, telephone, satellite TV, safety deposit box and hairdryer.

There is no doubt, however, that the sunsets are the most outstanding element of this site, which visitors should visit more than once.



Colombia: A New Era toward Change

By Odalys **TROYA**

BOGOTA.- The victory of the Gustavo Petro and Francia Márquez ticket during the Colombian presidential elections, in representation of the Pacto Histórico alternative and left forces coalition, had widespread repercussions not only in the country but in Latin America and the world. For a nation ruled for over 200 years by traditional parties that move away from the majority, with domestic conflicts such as the deeply rooted drug trafficking, in addition to paramilitarism and guerrilla organizations, that victory is a milestone in the history of electoral contests in Colombia.

"An electoral force composed of a coalition of political parties and progressive, liberal and democratic left organizations had never before had a success of that magnitude," academician Jairo Estrada told **The Havana Reporter**.

In his opinion, the importance of this event is undeniable if we consider that the secular control imposed by the ruling classes' political parties in the current regime of a democracy of exception is cut down.

This is also the case if we consider the implications of these elections for the geopolitical configurations of Our America, added Estrada, a professor at the Department of Political Sciences and academic director of the Master Course on Latin American Political Studies at the Colombian National University.

"It is of the greatest significance that a man from the lower classes and a black woman

of humble origin were elected to the presidency," he stressed.

They have different but renowned fighting careers: Petro, in favor of guerrilla demobilization, is a forerunner in institutional spaces of fight for power, particularly in electoral spaces.

Márquez, for her part, has joined social movements and ethnic people's resistance, especially in territories that for decades

have experienced war and violent dispossession.

According to Estrada, over and above the obvious restrictions the Pacto Histórico socio-liberal, progressive political project has from the cultural point of view, there is a possibility of consolidating a line of permanence in the road to political change. That line started with the signature of the Peace Agreement between the Juan Manuel Santos government, in representation of the State, and the then Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army, on November 24, 2016.

Mass vote for the Petro-Márquez ticket is the result of years of discontent and tiredness of an indolent regime of political, economic and cultural domination that managed to reproduce itself by using all forms possible, including the exercise of violence and State terror, stated the academic.

On top of this comes the permanent tutelage and unrestricted support of the government of the United States, which considers the country its main ally in its geopolitical pretensions of accessing strategic resources and restricting political projects that oppose its policy of imperial control.



For a nation ruled for over 200 years by traditional Petro's victory is a milestone in the history of electoral contests. PHOTO: Internet.

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Support to Renewable Energies Development

By Teyuné **DÍAZ**

HAVANA.- The path to the development of renewable energies in Cuba foresees the participation of the national industry, a sector that needs investments and the development of new products, said Vice-President of the GESIME Entrepreneurial Group, Jorge Luis Suárez.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, the deputy director of that entity explained that based on the Group's potentials, work is conducted to meet the objectives of the renewable sources of energy program and the energy efficiency the country requires.

In this sense, the Planta Mecánica factory, located in the central province of Villa Clara, is subject to an investment valued at about 12 million dollars and directed, in particular, at the molding and smelting areas.

This process, which started two years ago, is already undergoing the furnace assembly final stage, which will allow to increase possibilities and capabilities of production addressed at the industries.

The GESIME group conducts other investments on the renewable energies sector at the Las Tunas metallic structure factory, directed at supporting the wind program in the production of towers.

In addition, there is a line at the Minerva plant – also in the Villa Clara province – addressed at development for the

bicycle electric vehicles program and electric motorbikes, while there was an increase of those productions through an International Economic Association contract with a Chinese company.

The Roselló company also develops load tricycles and works in coordination with a Canadian supplier. At first, they only assembled equipment, but they are now producing different applications for loads that, in addition to the traditional ones, include alternatives for mail and bread transportation, the official noted.

These are modalities that will be introduced in the country when financial sources are available, he added.

The official highlighted that in the area of electric mobility, the goal is set on being able to export those products to the Caribbean markets, based on the demand in the region, which will allow to generate incomes that will be addressed to the national currency commercial network.

In a first stage, the companies that develop those products should be able to offer sustainability and guarantee services, but then, automotive services entities should be responsible for those actions, based on the traditional transportation workshops, Suárez explained.

Other incipient developments include the restructuring of combustion vehicles into electric vehicles, as well as the production or assembly of busses of that type, topics that are really important for the country.



The deputy director of the GESIME Entrepreneurial Group, Jorge Luis Suárez. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

ExpoCaribe's Successful Return

By Marta **CABRALES**

SANTIAGO DE CUBA.- About 25 countries participated in the 17th edition of the ExpoCaribe International Fair in this beautiful eastern Cuban city, after an absence of three years because of COVID-19.

The regional event, inaugurated by Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment Rodrigo Malmierca, celebrated 50 years of relations between Cuba and CARICOM, a decision Belize Ambassador Lu Ann Burns

Martínez appreciated on behalf of the country that holds CARICOM pro tempore presidency.

At the closing of the event, official sources announced that 225 contracts were signed, including an agreement between Cuba and Jamaica for food production and another one with Trinidad and Tobago, for the export of fertilizers.

Both countries stated that air offices and divisions would be set up in Santiago de Cuba to improve trade and tourism in the Caribbean, organizers indicated.

Agreements between Belize and Cuba for the processing of fruits in that Cuban province – intended for Europe – were also signed.

Recognized by the Association of International Fairs of America (AFIDA) and its services' trademark, ExpoCaribe is registered at the Chamber of Commerce since 1998, renovated at the Cuban Patent Rights Office since 2008.

As informed, the next edition of this event will be held on June 2023, with the purpose of bringing closer the economies and the people of the region, and from other latitudes.

Countries participating in this edition included the Bahamas, Belize, Colombia, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Venezuela and Trinidad & Tobago, in addition to delegations from Africa, Asia and Europe.

ExpoCaribe was also honored with the presence of officials of the United Nations Organizations and the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Cuba.



Official sources announced that 225 contracts were signed during the regional event.



Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment Rodrigo Malmierca. PHOTOS: Prensa Latina.

Economy Looks for Solutions based on Science



Cuban President said that today science is the way to solve the difficulties. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

By Cira**RODRÍGUEZ**

HAVANA.- Ideas about the role universities and the scientific-technical community play in sustainable and inclusive development are often exchanged in Cuba.

This purpose takes into account the relevant role played by science and technology in confronting the COVID-19 pandemic, which made it possible to offer a social, scientific, political and health response.

Something similar should happen in the economy, as present challenges should find scientific and unique solutions, with a multidisciplinary, cross-sectorial and participatory approach.

The country has considerable capabilities in these sectors, but knowledge is still far from becoming the transforming social force that will drive the fulfillment of the National Economic and Social Development Plan until 2030.

This was stated by President Miguel Díaz-Canel himself, when he affirmed that there is still unused knowledge, which is why, among other reasons, the Science and Innovation-based Government.

The objective of this system is that governmental structures, in coordination with other actors, guarantee that science and innovation meet their functions, while favoring systematic dialogue between scientists and the Government.

The country's leadership recently evaluated SGGCI's implementation and progress, focusing attention on the integration of economic Sciences with other knowledge, such as Marxism, law and the rest of the social sciences. The achievements made by the Ministry of Economics and Planning (MEP) were included

among the most visible results of this new management tool, which has allowed this ministry to use unique methods and change its work, as compared to two years ago.

Just to mention an example, in 2020, MEP designed and implemented the Economic and Social Strategy, which was the result of the need to face the pandemic of COVID-19. At present, that strategy is an essential tool in the management of the economy.

In this sense, Deputy Prime Minister and MEP Minister, Alejandro Gil, affirmed that systematic control and follow-up of this initiative would contribute to make rapid progress in the reactivation of the national economy.

In this regard, the Cuban President said that today science is the way to solve the difficulties, because the economic problems to be studied are very complex due to the fact that no one has achieved the model to which Cuba aspires, therefore, it is a matter of innovating and building.

It is about following the path to consecutive approximations, to analysis of positive and negative experiences, making comparisons with other countries and keeping in mind our culture and reality, he said.

Díaz-Canel added that conceptualization of the boundaries between centralization and decentralization in the Cuban scenario and measurement of the strategic planning impact through macro-programs, are included among the Cuban economic challenges that are part of research topics.

Adequate relationship between the state and non-state sectors, analysis of the foreign investment model, studies on debts' management, development implementation in local and territorial areas, are also included.

Paths to Food Production

By Ania**TERRERO**

HAVANA.-Fostering a comprehensive management of knowledge on the agricultural sector, including unique agro-ecological aspects aimed at increasing sustainable food production, is a challenge in Cuba.

At a time in which the island undergoes a food and agricultural transformation process, it is vital to foster horizontal local systems that give producers higher autonomy.

That is one of the main objectives of the new project between the Cuban Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI) and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

The initiative, financed by the European Union, is directed at establishing new models of agro-ecological knowledge and technology transfer management, said national coordinator and researcher of the Alejandro de Humboldt Tropical Agriculture Research Institute, Niurka Puig. The project, named Sustainable Agro-Ecological Models (MAS), is focused on strategic topics that are given priority in Cuba's 2030 Development Plan and Territorial Development Policy and is based on the application of scientific, technological and innovation results, achieving resilient food systems with local reach.

With that purpose in mind, modules will be imported for agro-ecological, poultry, food, silage, freshwater fish, dried and liquid fodder, goat milk and cheese, bio-fertilizer and bio-pesticide, and seed production, among other products, directed at specific Cuban regions, said Puig.

According to MINAGRI International Relations Department specialist, Nadia Blanco, one of the main merits of this

initiative is its circular economy approach, which contributes to local self-sufficiency, the substitution of imports (a key topic for the country), and the promotion of a nutritional education.

In this sense, MAS national coordinator commented that all the modules were conceived so that consumables can be obtained from processes' wastes.

"Silage and dried fodder production will guarantee the availability of animal feed for longer periods for the cattle that will be involved in milk production, which in turn will provide the raw material needed for cheese production," she said.

In view of its proper application, the project has a three-year design that includes diagnosis, to identify opportunities; implementation, with the fitting out of each of the modules, and systematization, to evaluate impacts on each of the productive areas.

Over 14 institutions and about 200,000 inhabitants of those territories will be directly or indirectly benefitted in San Antonio del Sur (Guantánamo), Santiago de Cuba (Santiago de Cuba), Venezuela (Ciego de Ávila), Abreus (Cienfuegos), Martí (Matanzas), Güines (Mayabeque), Güira de Melena (Artemisa) and the Isla de la Juventud (Isle of Youth) Special Municipality.

However, since the first phase "units will be erected based on the successful work of other projects, and practices implemented in those actions will be identified in order to draft communication materials that will be published in the project's platform and be used as referent," Puig noted.

Although the project foresees the granting of resources to specific farms, successful pilot models will be reproduced in other provinces and will foster, in general, the application of scientific results in productive practice at the local level.



One of the main merits of this initiative is its circular economy approach, which contributes to local self-sufficiency. PHOTO: ACN.

Guadeloupe Succeeded. Who's next?

By Lemay **PADRÓN**

BASSE-TERRE.- After several months of intense activity, Guadeloupe hosted the I Caribbean Games, thus clearing the way for the holding of this event in 2025 in a venue still to be determined.

For five days of intense competition, about 800 athletes from 30 countries participated in seven disciplines, some, like swimming, with a demanding calendar.

As expected, Cuba dominated the general medal table and also had the honor of winning the first and last gold medals of this event, which went to the hands of swimmer Rodolfo Falcón Jr. and the Futsal team, respectively.

The Cuban delegation, composed of 58 athletes, won 21 gold medals, 16 silver and 16 bronze.

The small island of Guadeloupe efficiently organized the games and proved that modest but decent events can also be conducted.

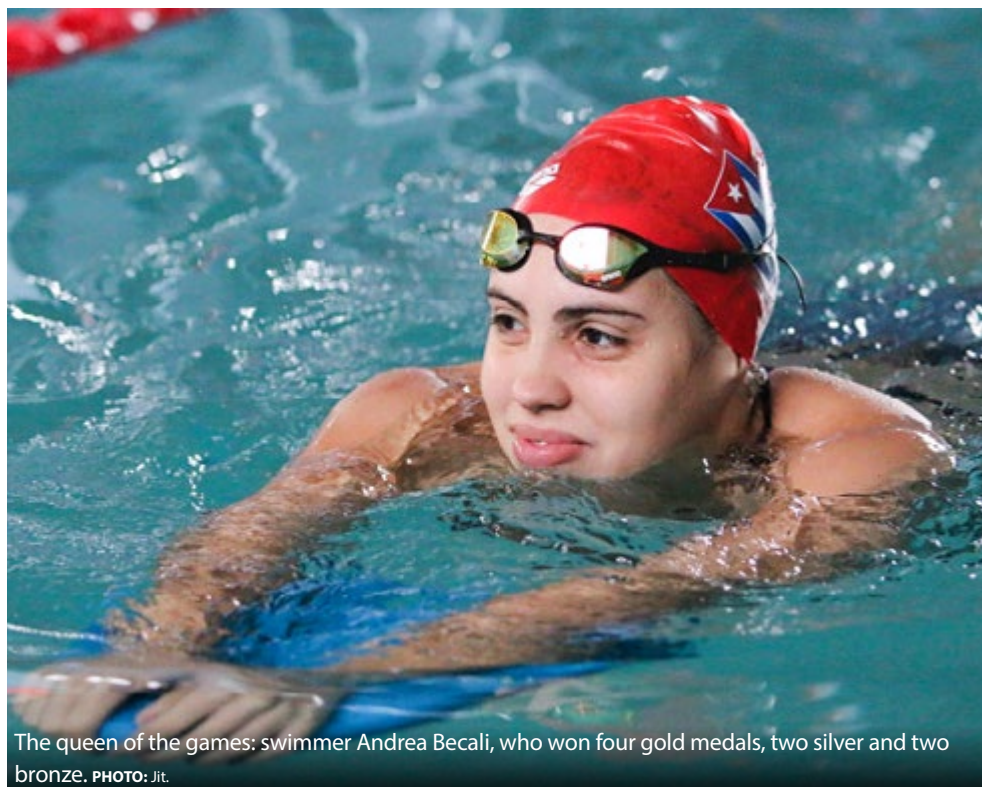
Of course, there are many details to be improved, such as respect for competition schedules; handing over of results in time, both to participants and on the event's website, and journalists transportation.

The most outstanding aspect, though, was the unconditional support of the audience – who was respectful with opponents and frenzy with locals – and the solidary spirit among competitors.

Thus, the feeling is that if Guadeloupe was able to host these games, other countries can too.

THE QUEEN

From the individual point of view, a Cuban girl became the queen of the games:



The queen of the games: swimmer Andrea Becali, who won four gold medals, two silver and two bronze. PHOTO: Jit.

swimmer Andrea Becali, who won four gold medals, two silver and two bronze.

The young athlete won the gold medals in 100 and 200 meter backstroke, 400 meter freestyle and mixed 4x100 medley relay; the silver, in 200 meter freestyle and mixed 4x100 freestyle relay, and bronze in 50 meter backstroke and the open water competition, on the last day.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, Becali, the swimmer from the capital, said that she had participated in Guadeloupe with the purpose of having a good performance, but did not expect to win so many medals.

I was surprised, I was coming for gold in backstroke, my specialty and I won 100 and 200 meters; I lost the gold medal in 200 meter freestyle for three hundredths of a second, perhaps because I was tired for swimming 100 meter backstroke before.

I am really happy because I made a great effort after coming almost directly from the World Championship. There were opponents that were different to the ones we expected, based on the ranking, but I did my best, she told **THR**.

On the fact of being considered the 'Queen' of these multiple sport games, she said that she was very happy.

It is a great honor to me. My family is more than happy, even though scores were not the best. I also see the support of my teammates; we are all returning happy, she commented, with visible signs of tiredness for the effort made.

The first edition of the Caribbean Games was, no doubt, a huge success, and the bar has been raised high for the next organizer of this event, which will offer possibilities of development to athletes of the area.

Granma, the Legitimate King

By Jhonah **DÍAZ**



Granma team won the 61st edition of the National Series. PHOTO: Cubadebate.

HAVANA.- As when we make a 360-degree turn, history and the news belts returned to the same point and Granma reaffirmed its crown as Cuban baseball champion.

The success was the result of hard team work carried out for over four months as part of the busy National Series, in its 61st edition.

Once again, the Matanzas team unfortunately savored the bitter taste of defeat after coming close to glory, unable to take revenge on a team that seems to know their weak points at the peak of these events.

The Alazanes de Granma team, directed by Carlos Martí, seemed huge in the match for the Series' title, after defeating the Cocodrilos de Matanzas team, headed by Armando Ferrer, by 4-3. The final play-offs were decided in the last match, which aroused emotions and drama in a country that lives and breathes balls and strikes.

Adrenaline also reached unsuspected levels as the final victory happened at the Mártires de Barbados Stadium, the venue of the winners, which caused a state of euphoria in a territory that has gotten

used to the pleasure of success, after becoming national champions in 2017, 2018 and 2021.

In fact, history does not lie and Granma is the sixth team to become Cuba's champion on four occasions, after Industriales, predominant winner with 12 titles; Santiago de Cuba, with eight; Vegueros, with six; Villa Clara, with five, and Pinar del Río, with four.

This victory gave higher status to Carlos Martí, who joined the list of Cuban managers who are ranked second for winning more titles – after matching Ramón Carneado (Industriales) and Higinio Vélez (Santiago de Cuba), four each – behind leader Jorge Fuentes (Vegueros), with five.

In an exclusive interview to The Havana Reporter, the winning manager said that "it was a hard victory, but my boys did their best at the right moment to defeat a great team such as Matanzas."

Now, on the road to the 62nd edition of the National Series – scheduled for 2023 – the Alazanes de Granma are still Cuba's best team.

Ecuadorian Government Yields to Popular Demands

Text and Photo By Sinay **CÉSPEDES**

QUITO.- The 18-day general strike staged in Ecuador forced the Government of the South American nation to listen to the people and yield to demands on issues considered sensitive for most of the people. The strike, summoned by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE) after the refusal of the Executive to give concrete answers to a ten-point agenda presented in 2021, was echoed by numerous social organizations, which felt affected by the demands.

Groups of women, peasants, workers, housewives and students joined the protests, conducted all over the country but centered on Quito, the country's capital, where the law enforcement forces suppressed the demonstrators, an action that was strongly denounced in Ecuador and abroad.

"The social protest paralyzed the country and the regime responded with repression, putting the nation at a dilemma between neoliberalism and democracy," political analyst and communicator Leonardo Parrini told **The Havana Reporter**.

In Parrini's opinion, the popular uprising was the citizens' response to the neoliberal

policies implemented by president of the Republic, Guillermo Lasso, which violate the right to health, education, employment and social security.

The protests ended up with the signing of an Act for Peace that gives the Executive 90 days to respond to the indigenous movement's demands.

Subsidies to fuel; suspension of extraction activities in ancestral territories; control of basic consumption products' prices; curb on strategic sectors' privatization, and budget guarantee for education and health, were included among the demands.

In this regard, Parrini said: "The government should meet the promises; otherwise, the country will go on strike again in 90 days."

In his opinion, the image of the president did not look well with the social uprising, because he was absent. However, "if someone takes the credit for having solved the strike, it is precisely the indigenous leader Leonidas Iza, CONAIE president."

"Peace was attained, but the way the government proceeds with all this remains to be seen. If it continues to rule as it has done until now, and wants to remain in power, it is a huge mistake,

because its survival depends on that," he warned.

With regards to the indigenous movement, he stated that when you look at it in the long term, it has been accumulating political capital since 2015, and in spite of its internal problems, the accumulation of those basis, which the mass media refuses to acknowledge, continue to increase.

"In political terms, the popular strike staged in Ecuador gives the State the responsibility of social policies back, thus returning to institutions the obligations of ruling according to the collective needs, not only of the economic groups that have become deeply entrenched in power at present," Parrini stressed.

Because of the strike, the Government and the indigenous movement, in representation of all the groups involved in the protest, started talks, with the support of the Ecuadorian Episcopal Conference as mediator.

Talks will be held in 10 technical tables and will deal with the following topics: subsidy to fuels and debt moratorium; productive promotion; employment and labor rights; energy and natural resources; collective rights and higher education; protection to national investments; price control; access to health and security.



Groups of women, peasants, workers, housewives and students joined the protests.

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