



A Families Code for Everyone



P. 3

Tourism

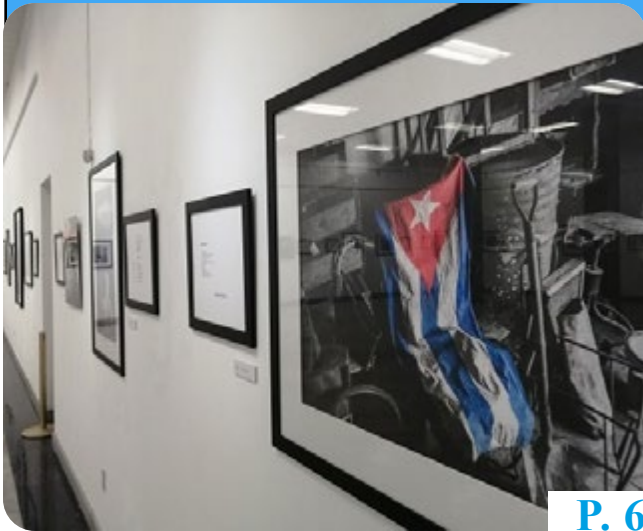
Leading
Institution in
Academic Tourism



P. 2

Culture

Photographer
Roberto Chile's
Work on Exhibit



P. 6

Cuba

Recovery
after
Hurricane Ian



P. 8

Leading Institution in Academic Tourism

By Yoandry **GUERRA**

HAVANA.- Havana's Conference Center, created 43 years ago, is considered a famous institution in the development of academic tourism in Cuba and the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Attached to the Palco Entrepreneurial Group, the center has hosted over 3,500 thematic meetings and congresses from 1979 to the present, and has welcomed over 1,551,000 delegates.

Congress professional organizer, Zósima López, who has worked at the center for 41 years, talked to **The Havana Reporter** about the services that characterize this institution in the tourist sector.

In her opinion, an element that contributes to the prestige this entity has gained in the national and international market is the high specialization of its human resources, as their professionals make clients' expectations true, in a personalized way.

We try that the social program is on a par with the scientific program, which is the core of a congress, López noted.

She added that those responsible for gastronomic services are used to attending high numbers of people in a short time, which contributes to the pace of the academic activity and the fulfillment of the schedule foreseen.

In a world environment in which the academic tourist market is more and more diverse, variety of offer is another



The center has hosted over 3,500 thematic meetings and congresses from 1979 to the present. PHOTO: ACN.

element that characterizes the Conference Center, she said. "We have a wide-ranging number of companies with base units that facilitate the coordination of services," the official noted, while saying that other entities of the Palco Group – such as the graphic design and printing company and the customs and transit agency – guarantee the social and scientific programs' logistics.

With the start of the pandemic of COVID-19 and the enforcement of restrictive health measures aimed at minimizing its impact, 2020 marked a before and after for the institution, whose conference rooms remained empty. However, a period of crisis also represents an opportunity to reassess procedures and ways of doing, and in the case of this facility, they later on started to conduct hybrid mass events – in situ and on-line.

This modality had only been implemented in corporate meetings with few people and in presentations of business executives, she stressed.

According to the specialist, the institution is going back to its normal activity and its calendar for the second half of this year already includes events such as the Agroforestry Convention, Abogacía 2022 (Law Conference) and the International Forensic Medicine Congress, among others.

The organizer highlighted that this pace is on par with the institution's working philosophy, aimed at having a deep knowledge of the profile of those who hire their services. In order to guarantee the success of an event, we go beyond the purely economic vision of the contractual relation and offer an experience as comprehensive as possible, she concluded.

Eco-Gastronomy managed Varadero Gourmet 2022

By Yoandry **GUERRA**

VARADERO.- The Varadero Gourmet International Festival celebrated its 12th edition in Cuba, after a two-year break due to COVID-19 in the world.

Eco-gastronomy was the pretext for business executives, producers, chefs and specialists of the sector to debate and exchange experiences on the topic, for four days, at the Plaza América Varadero Conference Center.

At the opening ceremony, general director of the Palmares S.A. Extra-Hotel Company, Jorge Luis Acosta, stated that betting for this topic means recovering autochthonous culinary tasks, taking care of history and defending people's culture.

Acosta, President of the Organizing Committee and senior representative of the entity that summoned this event, also highlighted that eco-gastronomy represents an

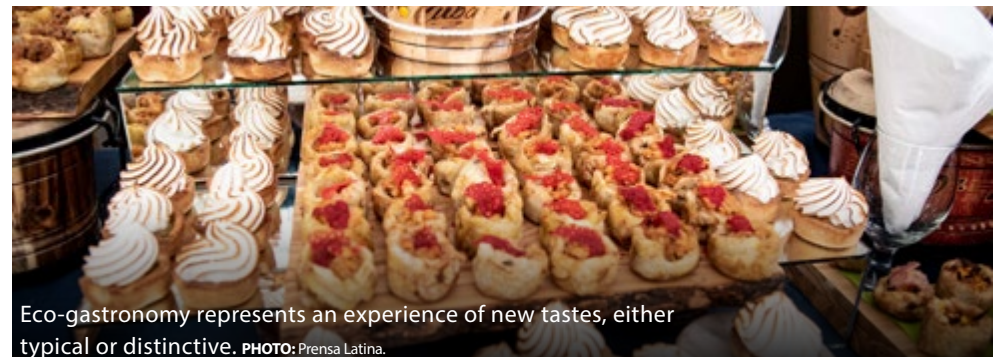
experience through which guests' palate new tastes, either typical or distinctive.

The official affirmed that those who bet for this culinary line at present have the objective of being part of a tasting experience that combines the basis of the traditional cuisine with contemporary processes and techniques.

In this sense, sustainability – a philosophy or concept that, applied to business management, was the common ground for many of the Varadero Gourmet participants – is a key ally of eco-gastronomy.

The Bartenders Pichy Company staff, a group of youngster from Matanzas province who use sustainable practices that result in distinctive and tasty drinks, is in line with this vision.

One of its members, Erick Suárez, explained that the initiative tries to make a best use of fruits' residues, and added that by doing so, a lemon, for example, is not only useful for its juice.



Eco-gastronomy represents an experience of new tastes, either typical or distinctive. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

By crushing its zest with sugar, this can also be reused as a source for syrups, he commented.

Similarly, Suárez noted that they use other citrus such as grapefruits as decoration for their drinks, and for that reason, they reuse both, the fruit's zest and pith.

"If we open ourselves to the possibility of not letting the product die after its first use, products themselves, establishments' owners and the environment will appreciate it," he stressed.

Another experience shared at the Varadero Gourmet Festival was the one presented by Fabio Restaurant, attached to Palmares, an institution that currently uses a concept

addressed at fostering sustainable gastronomy. After the refurbishment of the building, located in the Vedado neighborhood (Havana), Fabio's management is focused on a healthy menu and an evolutionary cocktail that also bring products' taste out, said commercial specialist Nelson Campos.

We try to follow the mantra "from the garden to the table" to the letter, in our desire to promote not only the use of a healthy raw material but also fresh. With that purpose in mind, Campos referred to the alliances they have forged with national suppliers and certified farms that provide one hundred percent ecological consumables.

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A Families Code for Everyone

By Yoel **DE ARMAS**

HAVANA.- The Cuban Families Code became law after its approval in a nationwide referendum in which Cubans living abroad previously participated.

As a result, the country has become the ninth Latin American and Caribbean nation to have a rule that appeals to love, respect and inclusion.

The National Electoral Council (CEN) informed that 6,251,786 people exercised their right to vote, which represented 74.01 percent in relation to the number of voters registered (8,447,467).

The exit poll, to which the population that wished to take part in the democratic exercise had access, determined

that 3,936,790 Cubans (66.87%) voted Yes for the law that replaces the 1975 legislation; while one 1,950,090 citizens (33.13%) voted No.

The result thus shows the diversity of opinion in the country, which already has a legal norm to solve family issues and conflicts that had no legal support before.

The endeavor of the participating specialists and the population that stated their opinion to change and add ideas to the document during the popular consultations held, was democratically endorsed at a time in which the island undergoes one of the most difficult situations in its history.

In addition to the blockade imposed by the United States for over 60 years, Cuba faces destabilization campaigns and other actions by those who hate the Revolution and want to witness the fall of the socialist conquests.

At first, many people questioned the need of implementing a Family Code at a moment in which priority was to be focused on other social issues; however, it was also essential to extend rights to all the people, regardless of their religious beliefs, sex, race or political definition, as stated in the Constitution of the Republic approved in 2019.

By putting an X in the Yes box, the Cuban people bet for diversity, for the possibility everyone has to define his/her destiny; for understanding, solidarity, respect to children and for grandchildren's responsibility to their parents and grandparents.

However, the Code will require preparation on the part of the Cuban jurists, who are responsible for enforcing version 25 of the norm approved by the National Assembly of the People's Power last July.

It will also require people's knowledge, so that they can demand the fulfillment of their rights and denounce the violation of these. To do so, the population should have to reread the document and even go into the glossary of terms in depth, as this allows its understanding and favors the acquisition of an inclusive language.

Cuban specialists affirmed that this is just the beginning. There is a lot to do in practice with this fair, necessary, updated, modern norm that grants rights and guarantees to all people and family types.

In the meantime, the Cuban people are happy because "love, affection, peace, inclusion and social justice prevailed," stressed the President of the legislative body, Esteban Lazo.

"The Code also breaks with taboos we have, and the most important thing is that we have grown as a society," affirmed Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel.

It is a victory of the Revolution and the socialist construction of justice in the country, he said.

"We have more rights today, and it was a vote for Cuba," stated the President after knowing the results of the voting that concluded in the victory of an intense, long process, with misunderstandings but fair and respect for all people.



Voting center in one of the districts of Sancti Spiritus province. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



President Miguel Díaz-Canel casting his vote at the referendum. PHOTO: Estudios Revolución



On September 24, prior to the voting, a concert was held in the streets of Havana. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Biden Further Extends the Blockade



The Democratic president signed last September the extension of that punishment, for an additional 12-month period. PHOTO: Internet.

By Deisy**FRANCIS**

HAVANA.- Joe Biden is the twelfth president of the United States who ignores the overwhelming international call to lift the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba for over 60 years.

Last September 2, the Democratic president signed the extension of that punishment, for an additional 12-month period, through the so-called Trading with the Enemy Act.

In a memorandum spread by the White House and addressed to the State and Treasury Departments secretaries, Antony Blinken and Janet Yellen, respectively, Biden justified that the extension of this unilateral measure is grounded on the one issued on September 7, 2021, which was to expire on September 14.

This ruling "is in the national interest" of the United States, stated the president, who added that the extension will be valid until the same date of 2023.

After the announcement of the decision, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez warned in a message published in his Twitter account that by extending this measure, Biden "becomes the twelfth president of the United States to ratify the framework that endorses the policy of abuse vs #Cuba and its people."

He also recalled that this policy "is rejected by almost all the international community member countries."

This archaic Trading with the Enemy Act, endorsed by the Federal Congress on October 6, 1917, grants the President the power to restrict trade with those

countries the United States consider "hostile."

It even grants the possibility of imposing economic sanctions in times of war or any other national emergency period, and forbids trade with the enemy or its allies during war conflicts.

By virtue of this law, the oldest of its type, the Cuban Assets Control Regulations were adopted in 1963, after Democratic president John F. Kennedy declared the blockade on Cuba in 1962.

During his term of office, Donald Trump (2017-2021) strengthened those punitive measures against the island and, as expected, extended the enforcement of the law, which establishes the basis of that siege against Cuba.

The legislation is part of a legal framework that includes other laws and regulations, such as the Foreign Assistance Act (1961), the Export Administration Act (1979), the Torricelli Act (1992), the Helms-Burton Act (1996) and the Export Administration Regulation (1979).

For more than 60 years, the persistent U.S. blockade has caused material damages to Cuba amounting to over 147.8 billion dollars, not including humanitarian damages, according to official data from 2021.

Last year, when urging his U.S. counterpart to listen to the world call and put an end to the blockade, President Miguel Díaz-Canel affirmed that Cuba and the world need solidarity.

At the end of September, Washington announced that it will restart visa procedures at its embassy in Havana in early 2023 and will reinforce its staff to speed up the process.

Tiny Numbers of Visas

By Ivette**FERNÁNDEZ**

HAVANA.-Five years after the United States authorities decided to halt the granting of over 20,000 immigrant visas to Cuban applicants, the possibility the locals have to access that program is still extremely limited.

Tiny snippets of information are provided on the resumption of consular services, keeping in suspense thousands of people who wait for progress in their requests.

The most recent of these announcements, spread on September 1 by the U.S. Embassy in Havana, indicated that the Citizen and Immigration Service had started to conduct interviews at the Cuban venue on August 18th.

However, they immediately clarified that the process would not be immediate because of the lack of staff.

Beneficiaries should not take any steps to get ready for an interview until the petitioner receives a notice, the announcement said, while adding that new invitations are not being sent yet.

The decision, eagerly awaited by those who wait for their petitions to be processed, has come after a great number of announcements whose benefits, in the end, will be really tiny.

After a presidential campaign in which he said he would declare himself in favor of the resumption of operations in Havana, the government of Joe Biden informed last March 3 that it would "initiate limited resumption of some immigrant visa services as part of the broader expansion of the Embassy's functions" in Cuba.

Then, on April 6, the State Department announced that the processing would start in May and would only be for parents of U.S.

citizens, stating that most of the services would still be conducted in Georgetown, Guyana – the site where Cubans have to travel to since 2017 to conduct such process.

On May 16, the White House stated its will to respect the total of 20,000 annual visas for Cuban emigrants, but always with the reception of most of the requests in Guyana. Later on, the U.S. Embassy in Havana announced that in addition to visas for the parents of U.S. citizens, they would also consider spouses and children under the age of 21.

Authorities of the Cuban Foreign Ministry have repeatedly denounced that none of those categories contribute to reaching the total number of annual visas agreed upon in the migratory agreements, and that consular arrangements in Havana are highly restricted due to the imposition of new limits.

Cuba constantly reaffirms its commitment to a legal, safe and orderly migration, efforts that were undermined as a result of the halt in the U.S. commitment.

The Cuban government has discussed these issues directly and through the diplomatic channels with the government of the United States.

It has stated that the stance the United States maintains at present toward Cuban applicants wishing to emigrate is abusive, inconsistent with the bilateral agreements signed, negative for the region's countries, because it encourages illegal, irregular and unsafe migration, both by land and sea, said General Director for Consular Services and Cuban Residents Abroad at the Cuban Foreign Ministry, Ernesto Soberón.



Cuba constantly reaffirms its commitment to a legal, safe and orderly migration. PHOTO: Internet

Safe Diagnosis for 35 Years



Immunoassay Center director, Niurka Carlos. PHOTO: Granma.

By Ana Laura **ARBESÚ**

HAVANA.- A leading institution in the development of kits for the diagnosis of genetic diseases, HIV and hepatitis B & C, the Immunoassay Center celebrated its 35th anniversary with the provision of 2,094 services in Cuba and its presence in 378 international labs.

The center started its path in the second half of the 1980s, after obtaining the first results of the tests conducted for the identification of fetuses' congenital defects – Alpha-fetoproteins, aka AFP, one of the prenatal tests.

Since then, the idea to create a center that would use the ELISA (Enzyme-Linked ImmunoSorbent Assay) immunoassay and the SUMA (Ultra Micro Analytical System) techniques was devised; techniques that were already being used in the world at the time but which Cuba adapted to use less reagents and samples.

We are part of people's health since they are in mothers' womb, Immunoassay Center director, Niurka Carlos, told **The Havana Report**. Since graduation, Carlos is a member of the group of scientists who have provided different reagent kits to the Cuban health system for the mother-child program, cancer control and prevention, epidemiological surveillance and blood certification.

We are endorsed by all these years of experience in the organization, together with the Ministry of Public Health, of those detection programs; without the support of the sector's staff, this technology and its facilities would not reach all the people, she stressed.

Founded on September 7, 1987 by the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, the center is disseminated at present throughout the country with its reagent

kits for detection and for the diagnosis of contagious diseases such as dengue, Chagas and leprosy.

In addition, they produce pregnancy tests, tumor marker tests and others, such as IgE – an immunoglobulin that detects predisposition to suffer allergic diseases in newborn babies.

One of the most sensitive tests, for its family reach, is the diagnosis kit to detect diseases in babies, including the mother-child program. Specialists training, technical assistance and external quality control, characterize this center, which is able to conduct over 11.8 million tests to detect mother-to-fetus contagious diseases.

Actively involved in COVID-19 control and treatment in Cuba, since the start of the pandemic, the center's scientists also produced new rapid-testing kits for the detection of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

The institution, composed of over 500 staff, has turned Cuba into one of the countries in the world with a complete Alpha-fetoprotein program to detect neural tube defects.

The center obtained over 44 million determinations in the blood, placenta and organs' certification program, and over 70 million in epidemiological surveillance.

The High-Tech Company Certification, the contribution of six new products for the battle against COVID-19 and the conduction of 33 projects that give priority to molecular biology development, with nine diagnosis kits – four of them in the advanced stage – are other strengths the institution stands out for. In addition, as a result of its tests, Cuba became Latin America's second country to provide full coverage to congenital hypothyroidism. The center also contributed to the declaration of Cuba, in 2015, as the first country in the world to eliminate HIV transmission from mother to fetus.

Abdala
Cuban Vaccine

Abdala
Vacuna anti-COVID-19 de subunidad proteica/
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Wellbeing: A key in Quality of Life

By Joel Michel **VARONA**

HAVANA.- The United Nations considers wellbeing as a set of actions in the community that benefit the quality of life of its inhabitants, and by virtue of this, Cuba pays special attention to the initiative created in 2011 by the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO).

For this reason, from September 10 to 16, Cuba joined the 2022 Wellbeing Week, an action aimed at having a higher number of environments in which people can conduct healthy and enriching activities.

Activists from different sectors should promote a healthy recreation linked to the practice of exercises in parks and sport facilities, where neighbors can jog, walk, ride bicycles and swim.

The week was appropriate to inform the people about certain diseases and make a census to identify those who suffer communicable diseases in the area.

On this year's week, whose main motto was "Our neighborhood, our health," representative of the Pan-American and World Health organizations –PAHO and WHO, respectively– in Cuba, José Moya, said that it is important to foster a healthy life in the communities and create social cohesion.

Susana Suárez, director of Environmental Health of the Ministry of Public Health, explained that it is vital to take care of the neighborhood environments, since it must be seen as a whole and not in isolation.

All members should participate in the fight against any type of pollution, including acoustic pollution, she said.

Actions can be promoted worldwide, but they will be more effective if they have a local impact, added the director, who also affirmed that it does not matter how small a neighborhood is, as the inhabitants' benefit will always be bigger in terms of health. "People should be empowered, as they are part of problems' solutions, and what we achieved in the Wellbeing Week will be a starting point," she stressed.

Photographer Roberto Chile's Work on Exhibit

By Yilian **ARZUAGA**

HAVANA.- The José Martí National Library of Cuba is hosting the photographic exhibition *Donde anida la poesía* (Where poetry dwells), the most recent project of photographer Roberto Chile, winner of the José Martí National Journalism Award in 2019.

The artist invited 20 poets to write texts based on graphic suggestions, including writer and ethnologist Miguel Barnet and poet Nancy Morejón, National Literature Award winners in 1994 and 2001, respectively.

Sponsored by the Cuban Cultural Assets Fund and Collage Publications, the exhibition includes the same number of literary productions by renowned Cuban writers, such as awardees Norberto Codina and Alfredo Zaldivar, who used the images as a source of inspiration.

With the support of Banco Sabadell, from Spain and the Argentinean Resumen Latinoamericano mass media, the initiative was coordinated by researcher, art critic



The exhibition includes literary productions by renowned Cuban writers. PHOTO: Cubadebate.

and essayist Rafael Acosta de Arriba and it also includes the works of writers Víctor Casaús and Alexis Díaz Pimienta.

The list of personalities that joined this work also includes artists Marilyn Bobes, David López, Yanelys Encinosa, Basilia Papastamatiú, Soleida Ríos, Ricardo Acostarana, Sender Escobar, Maylan Álvarez and Miguel Hayes.

On exhibit at the El reino de este mundo gallery, of the abovementioned cultural institution, the selection includes photos

of different projects the author has conducted, such as *Guanabacoa*; *Somos*; *Fidel es Fidel* and *Convergencia*.

Images stand out for the use of black and white and chromatic displays, which favor the link between the images and the literary proposals.

In his capacity as personal camera person Chile accompanied the leader of the Cuban Revolution in his trips throughout the island and the world since 1984, of which

he keeps a large testimony of its scope and dimension.

His work had great repercussion in different national and international mass media since June 2011, when he inaugurated his photographic exhibition *Afrodescendientes*, Guanabacoa-Cuba at Casa de América, in Madrid (Spain). This work was later launched in the Cuban, Argentinean and United States capitals, as well as in the city of New York.

Chile has participated as photography director, cameraperson and producer in different Cuban and foreign productions, in which he has promoted the work of outstanding Cuban figures in the fields of music and contemporary visual arts.

On January 2008, he created the project *Alas con puntas*, which gathered 12 artists of different expressions to show their works, as a tribute to José Martí.

The most renowned audiovisual works of this artist, who is also a documentary maker, includes *Desafío*; *En las laderas del Himalaya*, *En mis ojos brillas tú*; *Hágase la luz*; *Elogio de la virtud*; *Oda a la Revolución*; *Sencillamente Korda*; *Soy Tata Nganga*, and *Esencias* (La Colmenita en Estados Unidos).

Latin American Film Festival Closes Registrations

By Claudia **HERNÁNDEZ**

HAVANA.- The list of works for the 43rd edition of the Latin American International New Film Festival, to be held in Havana, included the official admission of over 2,300 scripts, by the time registrations were closed.

With its return to the Cuban cultural scene, from December 1 to 11, the country's main film event will strengthen its regional prestige and will exceptionally accept works from previous years, due to the impact of the global pandemic of COVID-19 that has caused delays in its productions.

In this sense, the organizing committee informed that it would accept films shot from 2020 to 2022 that "make a contribution to the Latin American and Caribbean cultural identity's enrichment and reaffirmation, based on their meanings and artistic values."

Organized by the Cuban Film Institute, the event not only fosters seventh art from the continental vision, but will also include a large screening of worldwide-famous contemporary films.

Since the previous edition, in which over 160 films from about 20 countries were shown, the Festival has



relaxed its competitive requirements in order to foster the participation of the continent's filmmakers, without losing sight of the proposals' quality standards.

A unique feature of this edition is that the Diversity Award will be granted to the best Latin American work on the queer topic (genre and sex identity), as a bet for the permanent inclusion of this theme in the movies and a task for the independent jury appointed by the Festival.

The Cuban movie theaters will also show postproduction projects wishing to stand out in this section, which will be included in the Industry Section – dedicated to showing the progress, challenges and future shootings being conducted in Latin America.

In parallel, the work of over 100 artists summoned to the film posters' exhibition will also be included.

Resilient to the health crisis that affected the world, the event does not give up in its traditional purpose of showing the continent's realities, outlooks and challenges, and will grant the usual Coral Awards in the Fiction Feature, Opera Prima, Documentary, Animation, Unpublished Script, Poster and Postproduction categories.

Seminars, exchanges, talks and lectures will characterize this edition of the Festival, sunken into a film industry that faces a changing time, to be shown from its multiple spaces.

Founded in 1979 by Cuban filmmaker and intellectual Alfredo Guevara, this annual event will try to prove that it is able to captivate its loyal audience and become a platform for the convergence of all artistic expressions.



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Two Centuries Since Decoding Egyptian Hieroglyphics



By Alfred RuthLELYEN

CAIRO.- Two hundred years ago, on September 1822, French philologist Jean- François Champollion carried out an important task for linguistics and humanity: the deciphering of the hieroglyphics used in ancient Egypt, which would open a door not only to the writing of one of the first historic civilizations, but also to its thousand-year-old culture.

Since centuries before, different scholars had tried to unsuccessfully decipher the enigma hidden behind those symbols and whose code had been lost 1,500

years earlier. However, in 1799, the Rosetta Stone was discovered during a French military campaign headed by Napoleon Bonaparte (1798-1801).

This granodiorite stone (black compact basalt) is a fragment of an Egyptian stele that includes a decree issued at Memphis in 196 BC by a council of priests to honor Ptolemy V on occasion of his first reign.

To the luck of human knowledge, the text appears in three types of scripts: the upper part, in hieroglyphic, used by the religious caste; the middle part, in demotic, used in the society for everyday purposes, and the lower part, in ancient Greek, the typical writing of the Ptolemaic dynasty and administration, of Greek origin.

Historian, linguist and Egyptian-mystery lover Jean- François Champollion was the one who dedicated years of his life to compare all three texts and ultimately deciphered the meaning of the hieroglyphs, which had been inaccessible for a long time.

Born in France in 1790, Champollion was interested in the study of eastern languages since he was very young, to the point that at the age of 16, he had a good command of Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Chinese and other Asian languages.

In 1820, motivated by the enigma, he undertook the project of deciphering the hieroglyphic script and came to eclipse the achievements of another scholar, British Thomas Young – who had made the first progress on this process before 1819.

Through his knowledge on Coptic – the last stage of ancient Egyptian, written in Greek letters – the French was able to establish connections between the symbols he studied and the sounds he already knew from the Coptic words, to then find a link in the Greek text of the Rosetta Stone.

The hieroglyphic script includes signs that represent sounds and other ideas, which scholars basically believed that were just symbolic. The young philologist's major contribution lies on the discovery that these also had a phonetic value.

After studying the stone – a paper copy, as the original one has been preserved at the British Museum since 1802 – Champollion discovered that in order to represent the initial sounds, the Egyptians used an image; for example, for the letter L, they used the image of a lion, while for the letter A, they used a vulture.

Following this reasoning, he ended up completing a hieroglyph alphabet that allowed reading papyrus and inscriptions in tombs and temples' walls.

Because of the impetus he gave to Egyptology and the understanding of the Egyptian culture, he is considered the father of this scientific knowledge field.

In order to commemorate this anniversary, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiques launched the start of a campaign that will include a program entitled "Ancient Egyptian Language," aimed at explaining and spreading the meaning of that society's signs and symbols.



Jean- François Champollion and the Rosetta Stone. PHOTO: Internet.

Recovery after Hurricane Ian

By Ernesto **VERA**

HAVANA.- Cuba puts resources and efforts in the recovery of the territories affected the most by Hurricane Ian, which lashed the western end of the archipelago on September 27 with sustained winds of over 200 kph and intense rains.

After several days of hard work, Mayabeque and Havana provinces and the special municipality of the Isle of Youth are gradually returning to normal, while forces from all the Cuban regions collaborate to restore basic services and rebuild facilities damaged by Ian in Artemisa and Pinar del Río, the most affected provinces.

The tropical phenomenon was particularly destructive in Pinar del Río, a province Ian crossed from South to North in about six hours, causing severe damages to agriculture, economic infrastructures and basic services such as the power grid, water supply and communications.

At least 53,401 houses were affected there –5,064 of them, totally destroyed– and 6,780 people were evacuated in 22 shelters, many of whom still remain there.

Power linemen brigades from several provinces collaborated with local forces to restore the electricity system, destroyed by the fury of the weather phenomenon.

In the affected municipalities, the population collaborates in waste collection and cleaning tasks with the support of people from other areas of the province, State and Revolutionary Armed Forces and institutions.

The province also received donations of food, paint and fowler beds collected by the United Nations Association of Cuba, the Quisicuba religious institution and private entrepreneurs, while artistic brigades bring joy to the communities in spite of the pain. The inhabitants of Vueltaabajo –in Pinar del Río province, worldwide renowned for the quality of its tobacco – also received the solidary help of the World and Pan-American Health organizations, the United Nations Development Program, and countries such as Mexico and Venezuela.

On October 3, Cuba welcomed the last of the 16 flights made by four aircrafts of the Mexican Air Force that arrived to the island with electricity materials, while specialists of that sector collaborated in the resumption of the service.

From the Venezuelan port of La Guaira, the Carmita and Karola Sky motor ship departed to Cuba with 400,000 food modules, half a hundred electricity transformers, wires and over 22,000 square meters of zinc sheets to repair the roofs of houses damaged by the hurricane.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel visited Pinar del Río territory on several occasions, since the emergency was declared, to verify the recovery actions and talk to the inhabitants, whom he passed on confidence and the will to recover the damages caused by Ian.

In his Twitter account, the Head of State affirmed that “it is a difficult situation, damages are considerable, over 200 families have totally lost their homes. But the people of Pinar del Río are not alone. All of us together will get out of this.”



Mexico sent electricity material in 16 Air Force flights. PHOTOS: Prensa Latina.



Power linemen endlessly work to restore the electricity service.

At the door of the university

By Karina **MARRÓN**

HAVANA.-On September 5th, over 1,697,000 general education students and about 280,000 undergraduates went back to school to continue the 2021-2022 academic course and as part of this, an important stage is approaching: entrance examinations to higher education.

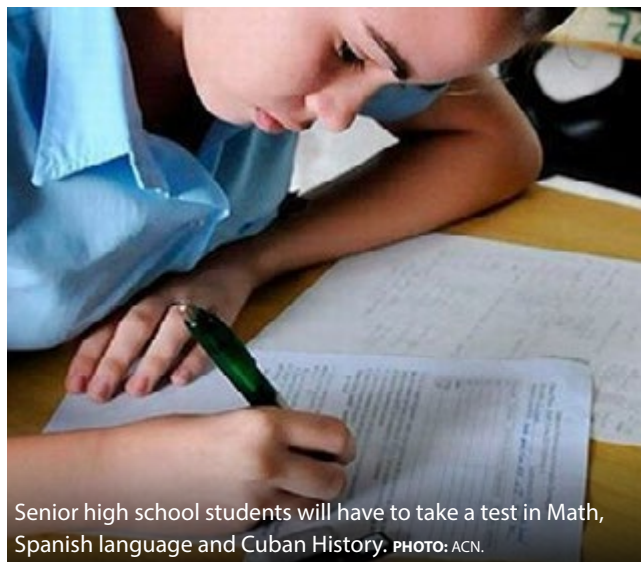
As of November 15, senior high school students wishing to study at any of the country's universities will have to take a test in Math, Spanish language and Cuban History. Enrollment and Labor Allocation Director at the Ministry of Higher Education (MES), René Sánchez, told the press that two summons will be conducted: the ordinary, for all students and the special, for those who are not able to attend the first summon due to exceptional reasons. In the case of the latter, exams will take place in January 2023.

Candidates will be able to choose among 103,008 quotas in different university disciplines – over 3,000 more in comparison to last year's academic course.

Higher education in Cuba includes three different modalities: daytime courses, for which 53,263 quotas are available; semi-presence-based modality courses,

with 44,325 quotas, and distance learning courses, with 5,500 quotas.

In order to access any of these modalities, students can apply for the discipline they would like to study and based on their average academic grades in high school and the entrance examinations grades, a scale is drawn up to allocate the different careers.



Senior high school students will have to take a test in Math, Spanish language and Cuban History. PHOTO: ACN.

According to Sánchez, this year, the first allocation will be for all those students who pass the entrance examinations with a minimum of 60 points, while the second one will be for those who do not pass the exams. There will also be a third allocation for those students who did not take the exams on the year they graduated and a fourth for graduates of the technical and professional education, the Manual and Agricultural Workers Faculty, high school students of previous courses and others the Provincial Enrollment Commission considers appropriate.

Some careers, such as Journalism, International Relations and some University of Arts (ISA) disciplines, will maintain their special entry requirements, although students will not have to take the entrance examinations.

In addition, students who did their senior year at the University College – that is, at any of the country's universities – will be directly allocated their career and will not have to take the math, Spanish language and history tests.

Another new feature is that for the 2022-2023 academic year, semi-presence-based modality and distance learning education students will not be required to pass all three subjects in the first year of university.

Fake News among Canvases and Literary Pages

By Liz**BOBADILLA**

HAVANA.- The incidence of fake news during the COVID-19 pandemic became an inspiration for Cuban artist Wilfredo Prieto, who turned the false information into paintings and later took them to the pages of a book.

The pictorial exhibition, the first of the proposals created by Prieto, fostered exchange in present times, the use of information, instability in the social media, deliberate and deceitful misinformation, says, the exhibition's review.

Under the concept of temporary curatorship, the exhibition questioned consensus taken on as truths, to the point of disregarding absolutely everything and believing in emotional lies, said the author, who highlighted the relevance of this research for the understanding of Art History itself.

Launched on March 2020, the exhibition had one peculiarity: it was inaugurated everyday with 12 new pieces, as part of a daily exercise in which Prieto read national and international news and interpreted that information through his work.

The homonymous volume recently launched at the National Museum of Fine Arts, for its part, combines the exhibition's images with the testimony of the exchange the artist had with Patrick Charpenel, director of the New York Museum, in the United States.

Edited in collaboration with Zolo Press, the volume evokes Prieto's creative process in 2020, when he followed local and international news and took inspiration from them to create a series of 12 daily paintings, whose title was taken from headlines, the text says.

Prieto's work is characterized by fostering spaces for reflection on power, social relations' paradoxes and the



Artist Wilfredo Prieto turned the false information into paintings. PHOTO: La Jiribilla.

incidence of economic and political changes, by giving a new meaning to everything that exists, either ideas, gestures, objects or everyday life materials.

On this occasion, the painter's work questions again the basic structures of contemporary culture, while inviting to think about consumption, society and thought itself, encouraging the audience to rethink from distancing/ banishment, which introduces a moral and aesthetics dimension in arts.

The author, a native of the central province of Sancti Spiritus and a graduate of the University of Arts (ISA) – 20 years ago – spreads his aesthetic speech through conceptual art and has been acknowledged for his installations, objects and performances.

His individual and collective exhibits have attracted the audience in Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Spain, the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Russia, Argentina, Portugal and France.

Nasobuqueña Tropical Tours China

By Yolaidy**MARTÍNEZ**

BEIJING.- The series La Nasobuqueña Tropical (Tropical masked women), by Cuban artist Flora Fong, tours China, and after its first stop at the Hainan province, this summer, it is now exhibited at the southern Guangdong province, to delight the audience of different areas, including her father's native region.

The series will be exhibited in China until November 8 at the Overseas Chinese museums of Guangdong, Jiangmen and Taishan – the latter, the place where Fong's father was born.

The arrival of the exhibit to Taishan will be a dream came true for the artist, as she wanted her work to be exhibited in the place where her roots come from.

To Fong, rendering tribute to her father is highly important, because as she told me a few years ago, he gave her all his support since she was a child to study art and be a member of the Chinese community in Cuba.

The latter awakened her desire to conduct projects through culture, in order to strengthen relations between both nations through a long-standing friendship.

As foreseen, the presentation in Taishan should take place on October 20, as part of the celebrations for Cuban Culture Day.

Diplomatic sources told **The Havana Reporter** that the exhibit has been exceptionally welcomed and in the last few days, it has been visited by young people interested in the development of Cuban art and major exponents.

The travelling series was first exhibited in China at a facility in Hainan at the end of July, on the occasion of the 175 years of the Chinese presence in Cuba.

It is foreseen to be shown in the cities of Shanghai and Beijing, because it also renders tribute to the 62 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between both socialist states, on September 28.

In November last year, the La Nasobuqueña Tropical was exhibited at the Cuban National Decorative Art Museum. The series is composed of 13 medium and large-size paintings that appeal for the re-contextualization of masks in the prevention of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, the agent responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Paintings show the harmonic mixture of the Asian and Caribbean cultures, as Fong was inspired by the landscapes prevailing in Cuba, her home country and China, her ancestors' homeland.

The series also includes elements that identify Cuba, as it honors women, the protagonists of the difficult times we experience at present, while sending a message of love and optimism in the face of the new conditions.

"As an artist, I could not evade that reality. I started with a small painting, then the mask became a fan

that revealed the diversity of the Cuban landscape. In that adornment, a twilight or a starry night can appear. It also artistically replaces masks," said Flora Fong.

During her last trip to China, in 2019, she stated that whenever she stays in that country, she can better understand the education her father gave her, as well as his way of being, thinking and acting in life.

On that occasion, Fong exhibited her series El Caribe Ming: imagen, caligrafía, verso (The Ming Caribbean: image, calligraphy, verse), which is again inspired by her roots and in which she combines the Cuban landscapes' vibrant colors and typical elements with the over five-millennium old Chinese symbols and poems.



The series it is now exhibited at the southern Guangdong province. PHOTO: Courtesy of the Cuban Embassy in China.

Redesign of Educational Texts

By Amaia **MARTÍNEZ**

HAVANA.- Avatars who accompany students in their path through the educational field, curiosities and other didactic resources will join the new collection of texts that are redesigned for the general education system, a unique project in Cuba.

This task includes the compilation of over 200 books that are part of three different sub-collections addressed to the primary, secondary and high school levels and is conducted in view of the Cuban educational system's improvement process.

Headed by the Higher Institute of Design (ISDI), the University of Havana, the Ministry of Education and its main publishing house, the project already finished its first stage, which included texts for first and fourth grades (primary school).

Notices, charts, curiosities, questions and answers, tasks and the attractive avatars (characters) who grow up together with students, will be present in the pages of this collection, ISDI Teaching Vice-Dean Ernesto Fernández told **The Havana Reporter**.

Academics have never faced a project like this, which requires a different organizational structure. "Strategic decisions were taken in illustration styles, typographic

codes, texture, chromatic definitions and language for each of the teaching levels," he said.

Senior Communicational Design students work with authors in this process and the first-grade texts A leer (Reading) and Sonorín (Sounds), as well as the fourth-grade texts Matemática (Math), Lengua Española (Spanish Language) and El mundo en que vivimos (Our world),

were already finished, commented Cuban academic and typography professor, Maite Fundora.

In her opinion, the texts redesigned respond to the new codes children and adolescents use, who consume a lot of video games and didactic applications. It is our intention that the textbooks are more similar to their favorite short stories books, she said.



The Higher Institute of Design (ISDI) participates in the Project. PHOTO: Prensa Latina



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The Mysteries of Bariay Key

Text and Photos Roberto **CAMPOS**

HAVANA.- In Cuba, there is a natural park at the Bariay Key that treasures a lot of history and attracts people's attention for being considered the site where Christopher Columbus disembarked, on October 28, 1492, according to researchers.

Named after the admiral, the area recreates both the stay of the Spaniards at that time, and especially the presence of the Taino indigenous community, their culture, traditions and religious dances.

This wonderful location is surrounded by green vegetation and virgin nature, and its huge park recalls the time when both cultures met.

Bariay Key is located in the northern coast of the eastern province of Holguín, one of

the major tourist areas in Cuba. This place is a must-see, as it appears in the navigator's diary, in a mixture of basic Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Catalan.

The landscape is dominated by a gently undulating plain on the north and a slope on the south, formed on volcanic rocks in which erosive processes prevail.

A monument erected in 1992 in Punta de Sabaneta, on the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing, recalls that extraordinary event.

For biographer Antonio Núñez Jiménez (1923-1998), Bariay is the House of Columbus, because that scenario symbolizes the door that opens the road to Cuba's modernity. There are plenty of comments on the beauty and mysteries that this place treasures for pilgrims from all over the world..



Towards a New Constitutional Process

By Carmen **ESQUIVEL**

SANTIAGO DE CHILE.- Chile retook the path to a new constitutional process after the setback suffered in the plebiscite on a proposal to change the Magna Carta, which dates back to the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990).



The referendum was a setback for progressive and left sectors. PHOTO: Internet.

In the referendum held on September 4, rejection to the text easily won by 61.86 percent of the votes casted, against 38.14 percent in favor, in a day in which over 13 million Chilean people exercised their right to vote.

After knowing the results, President Gabriel Boric stated his commitment to build a new process together with the Congress and civil society. For that reason, he summoned main leaders of the Chamber of Representatives, the Senate and the governing and opposition parties to Palacio de La Moneda. In an interview granted to **The Havana Reporter**, journalist and director of the El Siglo newspaper, Hugo Guzmán, said that the referendum was a setback for progressive and left sectors. "A big mistake in the process towards a constitution that was considered a lawful, multinational, equal, democratic participation instrument," he said.

Guzmán added that the reasons of this result are attributed to a variety of factors. "First, we cannot forget the fake news and misleading campaign that twisted the constitutional text."

In addition, there was a fear-based media campaign, which stated that pensions

would be withheld and properties and houses expropriated, as well as that women would be able to abort after eight months of pregnancy and the national anthem and flag would be changed.

Another factor that had an influence on the referendum's results is that legal and technical mistakes were made since the Constitutional Convention, and the topics under discussion were not properly informed, the journalist commented.

A major contradiction happened in this election, as in the first plebiscite held in 2020 – after the 2019 social riot – about 80 percent of the population was in favor of changing the 1980 Constitution, which citizens considered to be obsolete and the main cause of privatization and inequality.

The proposal submitted to referendum included articles on topics such as acknowledgment to native people, defense of the environment and women's rights and universal access to basic services such as education and health.

Other articles, however, caused controversy in a conservative country; that is the case of declaring Chile as a multinational and intercultural State in which different peoples

and nations coexist, as well as the change in the judicial power and the elimination of the Senate.

Guzmán also made reference to the post-plebiscite scenario: "Institutionally, the process has to continue because it is the populations mandate to move forward towards a new fundamental law. The topic now is: how will it continue?"

He explained that the left talks about reelecting another convention to draft a new proposal, although some right, extreme right and even liberal and social-democratic sectors want the process to be conducted from the Parliament or by a group of experts. The path is hard, because right and progressive forces at the Senate and the lower house are practically tied, and discussion there would be tough.

In the meantime, the Constitution imposed by the dictatorship is still in force, with some reforms made during the political transition governments.

According to some politicians, the country should have a new Magna Carta by September 11, 2023, when 50 years would have passed since the Coup d'état against the government of Popular Unity, headed by Salvador Allende.

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Boosting the Economy with Bold Decisions

By Cira**RODRÍGUEZ**

HAVANA.- In the last two months, Cuba has passed crucial proposals and measures to activate the domestic market, increase export incomes and reactivate national production.

Such actions, aimed at boosting the economy – affected by the strengthening of the U.S. blockade and COVID-19, which has lasted over two years – are also an incentive to

increase national currency offers, control budget deficit and rise foreign currency incomes.

After the re-establishment of the foreign exchange market – last August – private micro, small and medium-sized companies (MIPYMES) were authorized to participate in joint businesses with state entities and with foreign investment, while the import of non-commercial goods was eased.

Later that month, information was also provided on the participation of foreign capital in the Cuban wholesale and retail market.

Through the foreign exchange market, the national financial system will be able to attract the foreign currencies handled on the informal markets to then invest them in the socio-economic development and sustainability, said Cuban Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economics and Planning, Alejandro Gil.

Regarding the sale of foreign currency, one of the most awaited economic measures by a large part of the Cuban population, it benefits natural persons and for now only in cash, explained Marta Sabina Wilson, Minister-President of the Central Bank of Cuba.

On the topic of foreign trade, although it will continue being the monopoly of the State, Cuba widened the scope of foreign investment for both, the wholesale and the retail activities – an option that was only available for goods and services production.

Similarly, joint ventures will be created, on a selective basis, for the retail trade, with the purpose to increase efficiency in the sector – as the general consensus is that the country does not make a good use of the benefits of this option to access markets, new logistics administration techniques, financing and technologies.

Foreign capital will be promoted in the commercialization of raw materials, consumables, food, cleaning products, equipment to boost national production development and others, including renewable sources of energy for electricity generation systems.

The objective is that foreign investment contributes to activate the country's infrastructure – warehouses, industries, factories – which is underused today because of the lack of resources resulting from the lack of financing. The idea is that foreign investors put their medium goods and consumables in the national territory, using their technologies, experience and know-how to directly supply national state and private actors, so that these do not have to rely on imports.

These businesses can be materialized through the modalities approved in the Foreign Investment Act, which include joint ventures or companies with full foreign capital. However, as explained, the modality foreseen for the retail activity exclusively includes joint ventures, in order to pre-finance the national industry, acquire its products and commercialize them in the country.



MIPYMES were authorized to participate in joint businesses with state entities and with foreign investment. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Informality Marks Labor Recovery in Latin America

By Miriam**CÉSAR**

HAVANA.-Low economic growth, high inflation and a global crisis aggravated by the war in Ukraine, affect the labor markets in Latin America, where higher informality is registered in spite of being one of the region with best outlook in 2021.

A new report on the subject by the International Labor Organization (ILO) stated that the slowdown in the upturn observed this year is slowing the recovery of employment, and although it places unemployment this year at 7.9 percent, the same level as before the pandemic, it shows an upward trend along with informality and poverty.

The UN entity indicated that regardless of regional averages, each country has a different reality, as shown by 10 of the 14 countries analyzed that did not reach their level of employment of 2019 in the first quarter of the year, and that only three of them recovered the economic participation rate they had before COVID-19.

During the course of this year, employment reactivation has been grounded on informal jobs, to which 50 to 80 percent of the upturn is attributed. This means that at least one in two workers remain in informal conditions, with all its implications.

Data show that in the case of youngsters, informality reaches an average of 63 percent in 11 countries, which is a lot higher compared to adults (48%).

Author of this study, Roxana Maurizio, recalled that informality is a structural problem of the region and added that this type of job is

unstable, generally will low incomes, without protection or labor rights.

She also estimated that the current economic situation and inflation affect real incomes, generating a loss of purchasing power, which in turn causes the phenomenon of working poor. This situation urges to implement policies that create formal jobs, strengthen labor institutions such as minimum wage and collective negotiation, support companies and guarantee universal access to social protection and the sustainability of incomes to vulnerable employees.

"That scenario requires social dialogue to have a key role in the transit through that path, taking care of employees and employers' needs and possibilities," said the labor economics specialist. Such a mechanism would have great value for working women, who suffered the most serious impact of the health, economic and labor crisis in sectors that were very much affected, such as the hotel trade, services and homes.

Informality is higher among women, which prevented them from being the beneficiaries of employment and income sustainability policies implemented by different governments of the region to alleviate the effects of the emergency measures adopted during the pandemic.

To them, the consequences of that disease represented a backward step equivalent to over 18 years in the level of participation in the labor market.

With this background, ILO regional director Claudia Coenjaerts, warned that greater informality and an increase in the number of working poor are shaping up to be major challenges for Latin American and Caribbean labor markets in 2022.



During the course of this year, employment reactivation has been grounded on informal jobs. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Chamber of Commerce Announces New Services

By Ania**TERRERO**

HAVANA.- On the road to its 60th anniversary, the Cuban Chamber of Commerce undertakes a period of transformations that includes the updating of services with the purpose in strengthening the companies' value chains, competitiveness, internationalization and digital transformation.

The new actions include the results that endorse export maps, export diversification programs, territorial development plans and local development projects, said the President of the Cuban Chamber of Commerce, Antonio Carricarte.

At a press conference at the headquarters of the abovementioned entity, legal department specialist Leyanis López stated that the objective of these transformations is to foster a space for exchange with an innovative dynamic, where all actors involved in commerce come together.

"Programs were created to provide an answer to members, who requested an updating of the formation, information and promotion services and are in tune with the country's economic development plans," she affirmed.

As part of the updating process, the Cuban Chamber of Commerce also created sectorial clusters that gather members in structures that are more coherent, include common interests and problems and facilitate

a personalized work from the institution, Carricarte commented.

Agriculture, cattle raising, information and communication technologies, biopharmaceutical industry, hydraulic resources, electronics, health, education and consultancy services are included among the sectors chosen.

The entity is also working on the incorporation of new economic actors to its activities and the inclusion of these in the first entrepreneurial mission to a commercial fair in Santo Domingo represents an important landmark.

In this sense, Vice-President of the Cuban Chamber of Commerce, Rubén Ramos, said that in relation to the internationalization processes developed, over 230 agreements have been signed with Chambers of Commerce, associations and international organizations.

In addition, over 60 plans of action are conducted with different countries on specific objectives, based on the priorities of the Cuban development plans and the opportunities those countries offer.

"We now have the challenge of making a better use of those documents, in the interest of companies and the country's development," he said.

Ramos also mentioned that they are now involved in the preparations for the next edition of the Havana's International Fair and a mega business round to be held on October 2023 in coordination with the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI).

The Cuban Chamber of Commerce, composed of 1,072 companies, has a varied structure but a common objective: growing in and contributing to the country's development. The new actions will allow both, adjusting our work to the economic situations and achieving higher effectiveness, Carricarte concluded.



The Cuban Chamber of Commerce. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Committed to New Ties

By Ainoa**TRINQUETE**

HAVANA.- A delegation from the Indian Economic Trade Organization (IETO) visited Cuba to explore joint businesses in sectors such as manufacture, food production, electronics, health, biopharmaceutical industry and renewable energies. In an exchange between a dozen Indian business executives and about 40 representatives of national entities, the participants analyzed topics related to potential imports, exports, investments and financial mechanisms that foster bilateral ties.

According to exclusive statements by IETO President, Asif Iqbal, the current mission is a follow-up to the work the organization conducted a few months ago to renew commercial ties between both nations.

"Our first visit was four months ago and we hope to pay a third visit in November, during Havana's International Fair, to materialize projects in specific fields," he said.

The official also highlighted the importance of the meetings held at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Health and Food Industry, which allowed identifying niche markets and mechanisms that simply exchanges.

On the establishment of financial relations, he recalled the recent visit of a Cuban banking delegation to India, whose debates were retaken in a new meeting in Havana.

"We are trying to establish some kind of money exchange facility for the rupee and the Cuban peso and identified

opportunities for small Indian banks to come to the island," Iqbal explained.

He stressed the interest many Indian manufacturers from small and medium-sized companies (PYMES) have in entering Cuba in sectors such as full processing and manufacture. "They make lots of finished products and want to foster the export of rice, spices and other food, in addition to electronic items," he commented.

India is a leading country in manufacturing processes, "but we now want to bring manufacture and agriculture here; we want to process food on the island, not to import products from abroad," he affirmed.

On the work conducted by IETO, the official stated that their main objective is to identify paths to bring the peoples of both countries closer through the PYMES, as "people to people contacts are essential for companies' growth and for the creation of local jobs for the Cubans."

India is looking for a market such as the Cuban, as social and economic contexts are similar in both nations. This is a good opportunity to bring our products, he added.

During the entrepreneurial forum, held at the halls of the National Hotel, in Havana, the Cuba-India Section of the Cuban Chamber of Commerce was created, with the purpose to contribute to strengthening economic links and foreign trade development, and boosting foreign investment.

President of the Cuban Chamber of Commerce, Antonio Carricarte, commented that the new structure will not have a formal or advertising role, but will be addressed at "working in collaboration with the Cuban authorities to create mechanisms that favor bilateral trade."

For her part, Cuban Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, Déborah Rivas, said that visitors' interests are in line with the priorities of the National Development Plan.



Indian Economic Trade Organization (IETO) President, Asif Iqbal.

PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

The Privilege of Being Alive

By JhonahDÍAZ

HAVANA.- Although her smile is shrouded by an absolute modesty, the life of Ana Fidelia Quiros (Cuba, 1963) stands out for unusual features, such as iron muscles, immortal faith and courage in the face of obstacles.

The former player, who won several prizes in her sports career, happily talks about her past. She has nice dreams, just as when she was a child, although some scars show the imperfection of her existence. However, they do not cast a shadow over the greatness of the person who conquered the world's main track and field stadiums.

Seated in one of the halls of the Prensa Latina Latin American News Agency, Quiros -not Quirot, as she was always applauded- talks about her present in her usual low tone, without the speed she showed in her youth and made her become a two-time world champion in 800 meters.

I work with the President of the Cuban Athletics Federation, Alberto Juantorena, in the discipline I practiced. I also take part in different activities as a guest, both in Cuba and abroad, she proudly said.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, the two-time Olympic medalist -bronze in Barcelona 1992 and silver in Atlanta 1996- commented that last May, she finished a

tour of 10 Italian cities in which she met members of the Italian-Cuban National Friendship Association (ANAIC) and other friends of Cuba.

When talking about that experience, Quiros-aka the 'Storm of the Caribbean'-made reference to the love people who have never visited the island expressed for Cuba; people who are united by friendship bonds as part of a group with over 60 years of creation.



Ana Fidelia Quiros won two-Olympic bronze medals in Barcelona 1992 and silver in Atlanta 1996. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Born in the eastern municipality of Palma Soriano, in Santiago de Cuba province, she talked about the donations ANAIC made after the explosion at the Saratoga Hotel in Havana and the fire at the Supertanker Base, in the Matanzas city's industrial zone.

Quiros, who was at death's door in 1993 because of a domestic accident as a result of which she suffered second and third-degree burns in 40 percent of her body,

kneeled in the face of an unlikely recovery and not even the grim reaper was able to reach her.

She recalled that millions of people paid constant attention to news on the state of her health and "because of that, I always say that I have a duty to the Cuban people, and I thought of them in each of my competitions, just as I thought of the unforgettable leader of the Revolution, Commander Fidel Castro Ruz".

Almost three decades later, she described that year as the toughest of her career, although she closed the season with her favorite result: a surprising silver medal in the Ponce (Puerto Rico) Central American and Caribbean Games.

She then recovered her shape and did not stop until she mastered the Gothenburg 1995 and Athens 1997 World Championships, to increase her list of achievements, which includes the aforementioned Olympic medals and other victories in Pan-American and Central American and Caribbean Games, in addition to World Cups.

I feel pleased with my career, she says a few minutes before acknowledging that she still has not got over the idea of not being an Olympic champion, in spite of her almost undefeatable potential and the fact that she won over 30 races consecutively from 1987 to 1991.

Unexpected Change of Direction

By GonzaloCRESPO

HAVANA.- The Cuban Baseball Federation (FCB) made an unexpected move by appointing Armando Johnson as manager of the Cuban National team to the V World Baseball Classic, to be held in March 2023.

The decision was both warmly and coldly received by the Cubans, but clears the way towards this tough competition.

Although Johnson has had an over 20-year long work career in the diamond, he will make his debut as manager of the Cuban National team and will be responsible for their performance at the Pan-American Games to be held in Santiago de Chile and the Central American and Caribbean Games in San Salvador .

Through an official statement, the entity informed that the experienced coach will head the country's national squad in top events until 2024, as part of the "new strategy for our sport's development."

"The decision implied deep analysis of each candidate's professional competence, including a follow-up to their results at the 61st National Baseball Series and their international performance," stated the release, published in the Jit digital site.

The statement added that Johnson "has a long and fruitful career as manager" and "with Cuban minor category teams," before mentioning the silver medal he reached a few weeks ago at the U-23 Pan-American Championship held in Aguascalientes, Mexico.

However, few people expected his appointment, though they are now giving him their vote of confidence, while he plans strategies in order to give a good image at a tournament that could include the toughest national teams in the history of this event, if the arsenal of other participants is considered.

Cuba's main achievement in previous editions of the World Baseball Classic (WBC) is second place reached in 2006, when the country lost 6-10 against Japan in the match for the event's title.

On that occasion, Cuba made a good impression for its game and was able to defeat powerful countries such as Puerto Rico, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic, in addition to Panama and the Netherlands in the initial stage.

The Cuban team has been included in Group A of the next WBC, thus competitions are scheduled for the Taichung (China Taipei) Intercontinental Stadium, from March 9-13, 2023.



Armando Johnson was appointed manager of the Cuban team to the V World Baseball Classic. PHOTO: JIT.

Actions in France against Washington's Siege

By **Waldo MENDILUZA**

PARIS.- The 82nd edition of the French political-cultural festival, Fête de l'Humanité, included the condemnation of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba, a siege against which new initiatives were launched.

Debates on the situation the island faces, aggravated by Washington's siege for more than 60 years; solidarity acts, and a call to a European platform to take actions against the blockade to a higher level, marked the celebration of the forum, held last September at a former airbase outside Paris, where Cuban flags and the image of Che Guevara decorated different stands.

European organizations and personalities summoned by the Cuba Coopération France (CubaCoop) Association agreed to activate a platform with two working lines: first, demanding the European Union (EU) to take a decisive and practical stand against the blockade and its extraterritorial scope, and second, fostering collaboration with the island.

Cuba needs political solidarity, but also our cooperation with concrete projects



CubaCoop president, Víctor Fernández, during Fête de l'Humanité. PHOTO: Ileana Piñeiro.

that help the country move forward in its socio-economic development, CubaCoop president, Víctor Fernández, told **The Havana Reporter**.

In that sense, he pointed out that action should be taken with the EU to designate banks that are obliged to maintain links with the island, in response to the refusal of most of them to work with the Caribbean

country for fear of U.S. pressures and sanctions.

We also have to foster foreign investments in Cuba and the entry of Cuban products in the European markets, based on Brussels' support and legal protection, he stated.

In addition to CubaCoop, the platform launched at the Fête de l'Humanité was also endorsed by the Italian Agency for

Economic and Cultural Exchange with Cuba; the Spanish Solidarity for Development and Peace (SODEPAZ) Organization; European MP Manu Pineda; President of the Spanish Communist Party José Luis Centella; first vice-president of the European Left Party Maite Mola, and French parliamentarian leader André Chassaigne, in representation of the French Communist Party.

Cooperation is part of the solidarity; political support to Cuba is needed, as well as economic initiatives. We cannot forget that Cuba does not wait for others to ask for their support; they did not do it in Africa, neither during the pandemic of COVID-19, so it is our turn now, said Pineda, vice-president of the Cuba Friendship Group at the European Parliament.

The operation "Containers for Cuba," launched in September 2021 by French General Confederation of Labor (CGT) trade unions, was also launched at the Fête de l'Humanité.

Head of the Cuban delegation to the Fête de l'Humanité, MP Yoerky Sánchez, highlighted and appreciated all signs of love and solidarity with the island in this mass forum.

The United States cannot block solidarity, nor love and friendship, he affirmed.

Democracy Hurt by Hatred

By **Glenda ARCIA**

BUENOS AIRES.- On September 1, the image of a man pointing a gun at Vice-President Cristina Fernández shocked Argentina, a country that witnessed the revival of hatred and threats against a democracy restored 39 years ago.

Photographs and videos on the event immediately flooded the national and international mass media, which still keeps an eye on any detail or progress made on the investigations about the case.

Presidents from different countries, parliament members, officials and social organizations immediately condemned the attack and expressed their solidarity with the former head of State.

Thousands of people crowded into the main streets of Buenos Aires and other Argentinean cities to denounce the attempt and demand the immediate stop of violence.

All of the sudden, Argentina was not the same. Alarm on the strengthening of an extremist tendency, fueled by hatred discourses from political, judicial and media spaces, started to ring.

On many occasions, assassinations have been recorded in history as the prelude of major tragedies. Those who committed such acts shattered the peace and opened the doors to huge social unrests.

Entire nations succumbed to prophets of hate, warned President Alberto Fernández during his recent speech at the United Nations General Assembly.

Attack on the vice-president not only affected peace but also tried to disturb a virtuous collective construction that next year will be four decades old, he said.

The president recalled that in 1983, the country restored democracy and started "a long path in which different political forces have taken turn in the Government."

THE FACTS

Around 21:00 hours local time, of Thursday, September 1st, 35-year old Fernando Sabag – of Brazilian nationality – pointed a gun at the head of the Senate chairwoman when she was greeting a group of people gathered outside her residence, in the capital's neighborhood of Recoleta.

Although he pulled the trigger, the weapon – loaded with five bullets – did not go off and the individual was stopped by citizens who turned him in to the Federal Police (PFA).

According to preliminary reports, the Bersa pistol he carried was ready to be shot and had been used shortly before the attack, but investigations are conducted to find out if a wrong use on the part of the aggressor prevented the bullet from getting into the chamber and be shot.

The attacker, whose mother is Argentinean, was detained in 2021 for possession of inappropriate weapons (a big-size knife) and is accused of genre violence and animal mistreatment. The individual has tattoos with Nazi symbols.

During a raid on his house, the PFA found 100 bullets and a laptop, which was analyzed in addition to his cellphone and whose information was deleted by investigators for reasons that are still unknown.

Two weeks after the attempt, in her first public appearance, the vice-president said she was grateful for the support given to her and urged the people to rebuild the social pact established after the last military dictatorship the country suffered (1976-1983).

The former president affirmed that what could have happened to her was not the most serious thing but the

violation of the agreement established by the society almost 40 years ago. Restoration of democracy meant recovering life and the possibility of discussing about politics and eradicating violence.



Attack on the vice-president affected peace and tried to disturb a virtuous collective construction. PHOTO: Internet.