



P. 3

Cuba - U.S.A

From extension to extensión

Culture

Book Fair, Biggest Party of the Cuban Culture

Economy

Major Cooperation with Algeria



P. 4



P. 6



P. 14

Recovery of the Meliá Santiago

By Graciela **ARIAS**

SANTIAGO DE CUBA.- The Meliá Santiago Hotel, a tourist icon in Cuba's east, is undergoing a gradual recovery of its services, a few months before its opening to national and international visitors, said Spanish manager Javier Piqueres.

The business executive made reference to the increasing presence of travelers from the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Spain, as a result of circuits to this region and the priority the Cuban economy gives to foreign currency raising.

Piqueres stressed the connections with producers and local suppliers have in the light of sustainability and to guarantee the material resources needed for the quality of each offer, a distinctive feature of this international lodging chain.

He added that he feels himself a Cuban, which is coherent with Meliá's loyalty to this country, since the entity started operating in the island, in the early 1990s.

It is remarkable that in just three months, the hotel has recovered its splendor, as it was closed for three years because of COVID-19. During that period, almost all its areas stopped their activities, amidst the standstill of tourism in Cuba, he commented.

According to Piqueres, the entity has one of the highest occupancy rates in the city. He also talked about the several projects in place and the will to conduct solidarity actions and contribute to local development, highlighting the city's culture, traditions and particularly its condition as creative city of music. Some of the international events that will endorse such intentions include the International Domino Tournament, the FIDANCE Dance Festival, the ExpoCaribe Fair and the Instagram event, which will foster exchange among people from different latitudes.



The hotel was closed for three years because of COVID-19.

PHOTO: Internet.

Cuba's First Pet-Friendly Hotel

By Angel **SANTA CRUZ**



Villa Tortuga Hotel, in the Varadero Beach resort. PHOTO: Internet

MATANZAS.- The Villa Tortuga Hotel, an establishment attached to the Gran Caribe Entrepreneurial Group and located in the Varadero Beach resort, will be Cuba's first pet-friendly hotel, a unique option for tourists wishing to enjoy vacations in the company of their pets.

The term 'pet-friendly' is a concept established worldwide to define those facilities – either hotels, restaurants, bars or cafes – in which the entrance of pets is allowed and where animals and their owners can enjoy a series of added values that foster their comfort.

Sales Vice-president of the Gran Caribe Group, Diana Beatriz Olivera, said that the Villa Tortuga Hotel will be the first of its type in Cuba to offer this service, which is very popular in the world.

Traveling with pets and finding a hotel in which these are welcomed is more and

more frequent at present, as it allows tourists to stay with their animals in rooms adapted to the needs of these, she stressed.

Pets' access to facilities of this type includes a number of requirements, such as having a good hygiene, being vaccinated and wormed and carrying an identification collar or leash.

Important hotel facilities in different parts of the world – such as the Milestone Hotel (London), Calistoga Ranch (California), Le Meurice (Paris) and The Boat Hotel (Scotland) – are included among the best pet-friendly establishments.

With about 300 rooms, either standard or superior, the Villa Tortuga Hotel is part of the 14 facilities – including three complexes – managed by the Gran Caribe Group in Cuba's main sun-and-beach destination.

THE Havana Reporter YOUR SOURCE OF NEWS & MORE

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

President: Luis Enrique González
Editorial Vice President: Lianet Arias
Editorial Director: Ariel Barredo Coya
Art Direction: Anathais Rodríguez
Chief Editor: Ilsa Rodríguez Santana
English Editor: Isabel García

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

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

A Strategic Alliance



President Miguel Díaz-Canel and President Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Campeche. PHOTO: Internet.

By Manuel ARCE

MEXICO CITY.- President Miguel Díaz-Canel's recent visit to Campeche, a follow-up to Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's visit to Havana last year, consolidates a fruitful alliance between both countries.

Topics dealt with at the Cuban capital, some in progress and others pending start, were the core of this short but productive fifth meeting between both presidents.

At the meeting held in Campeche, the fifth between both Presidents, topics were related to an active participation in the construction of a new national health system in Mexico, which is very difficult and complex, as it is built upon the ruins of the system that was in place for almost four decades, when neoliberalism prevailed in this country.

Mexico spent literally 40 years without training the medical specialists required by the population, and was guided in the training of doctors by the mercantilist schemes that dedicating time and money to university careers in medicine and nursing was not profitable.

To a large extent, that conception is responsible for the death of about 346,629 Mexicans during COVID-19, many of whom could have been saved if the health conditions would have been better and more efficient.

A high deficit of specialists, including general doctors, and a poor distribution of professionals – concentrated in private hospitals and clinics in big cities and urban centers – threatened that plan.

As IMSS-Wellbeing Director Zoé Robledo said, on May 2022, Mexico summoned its nationals to fill 14,323 vacancies out of the capital in over 30 specialists, but only 21 percent of these were filled.

RECONVERSION OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM

Cuba actively participates in the reconversion plan of Mexico's health system by sending specialists, which rose to 610 since August last year. With new commitments resulting from this visit, another one hundred will be added in the next weeks.

Cuba is also present in professional formation, Cuban Minister of Public Health José Ángel Portal stated at the bilateral IMSS-Wellbeing Health meeting. The Minister added that 1,274 Mexicans have graduated from the Cuban medical universities, where there are 603 students from that country, 509 of them in postgraduate courses.

Similarly, the island is involved in the medicine supply plan, as it is integrated to the consolidated medicine buying program for 2023-2024, in which 19 items from the Cuban labs are adjudicated in areas such as anesthesiology, pulmonology, ophthalmology and cancer treatment, for an initial amount of 80 million dollars, according to Mexican Health secretary Jorge Alcocer.

Other relevant moments of Díaz-Canel's official visit, on February 11, include the incorporation of Cuba as co-sponsor of the Latin American and Caribbean Public Health Regulation Agency, to unify regulatory arrangements, attain more efficient processes, reduce costs and generate access to technical capacities in the region.

Mexico and Colombia presented a route of work to set-up an agency, with the purpose of making progress in public health self-sufficiency and guarantee access to safe and efficient, quality medications for the region, which now includes Cuba.

According to Mexican coordinator to

the agency, Alejandro Svarch, the topic was dealt with in Buenos Aires, at the presidential summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held last January – something atypical for a topic of technical nature and on medicine regulation.

At the said summit, the proposal to create that solidarity alliance, which has already been approved by 10 countries of the region, was materialized.

The plan's objective is to create a regional market of generic medication at accessible prices. In addition to vaccines to fight emerging diseases or those that affect

vulnerable populations, and avoid foreign conditions, to prevent situations such as the insufficient, negligent and discriminatory supply of vaccines against COVID-19.

The idea behind the creation of the agency is to administer and use the continent's resources to attend the needs of all the countries of the region, without discriminations or obstacles because of ownership right.

All these facts and perspectives are more than enough to consider that Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel's visit to Campeche consolidated a strategic and fruitful alliance between Mexico and Cuba.

Women: Example of Resistance and Conquests

By Milagro PICHARDO

HAVANA.- Cuban women celebrate this month of March by being a fundamental part of the political, economic and social life of the country, demonstrating the rights they have won and working to close the inequality gaps that still exist.

Thanks to their endeavor in favor of justice, peace and development, they represent at present 53.4 percent of the Cuban Parliament, and in the next legislature, they are expected to increase their presence by 55 percent.

With the implementation of the National Program for Women's Empowerment – a governmental strategy aimed at promoting equality – historical demands are materialized and additional strategies are created to meet other demands.

Women are 42 percent of researchers in Cuba – either titular or assistant researchers. They are also in the majority in relation to specialization categories in advanced technology.

In addition, they represent 69.6 percent of the public health system; 53.5 percent of the sciences, innovation and technology system, and 48 percent of the scientific universe.

According to data provided by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, 53 percent of the 89,214 people dedicated to that sector's activities are women.

An increase is also seen in the initial enrollment of women in higher education, even in those

careers that are traditionally for men, a research of the Havana's Technological University (CUJAE) indicates.

Unlike international patterns and cracks associated to the type of activities men or women should carry, they show high occupancy figures in all sectors of the Cuban economy, and their work is paid without any type of discrimination.

A rise is also evident in the number of female executives and the national technical force, where they represent 38.4 and 66.2 percent, respectively, according to data provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security at the end of 2021.

Cuban women's life expectancy at birth is 80.4, according to the National Statistics and Information Office. This figure is higher than the region's average (72 years), established by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

However, it is not all a bed of roses in a society that still has to make a lot of progress in the field of equity.

This particular topic is essentially present in the fight against genre-based violence, at a time in which this is the world's most generalized human rights violation, according to UNWomen.

Cuban women and government institutions still have to strengthen preventive work, attention to mothers in vulnerable situation and social work in the communities.

There is still a long way to go in the educational and cultural fields to educate the family in authentic equality principles.



Cuban scientists were recognized with the order Carlos J. Finlay. PHOTO: Miguel Guzmán.

From extension to extensión

By Deisy**FRANCIS**

HAVANA.- U.S. President Joe Biden has not made any difference with respect to Cuba. His promise to change the policies of his Republican predecessor, Donald Trump, has barely had a cosmetic touch-up since May of last year to date, while the essence

of the economic, commercial and financial blockade that has been imposed on the Cuban people for more than six decades is maintained and applied with full rigor. The Democrat extended for one more year in September 2022 the long-standing Trade with the Enemy Act, approved by Congress on October 6, 1917 and with which the Regulations for the Control of Cuban

Assets were established in 1963, after the blockade was declared a year earlier by the also Democrat President John F. Kennedy. "By extending the application of the Trade with the Enemy Act, Biden becomes the 12th President of the United States to ratify the framework that sustains the policy of abuse against Cuba and its people, which is rejected by almost all member countries of the international community," Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez wrote on Twitter. Now Biden signed another extension. He extended for one more year the national emergency with Cuba, in force since 1996 after the downing of two light aircraft that violated the Caribbean island's airspace, despite repeated warnings. In accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), the national emergency with respect to Cuba continues, said the occupant of the Oval Office in his notification, published on the official White House web page on February 17. The President ratified this measure declared by another Democratic Governor, Bill Clinton, on March 1, 1996, as a result of the shoot down by Cuba of the planes belonging to "Brothers to the Rescue", a counterrevolutionary organization linked

to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the most reactionary sector of Cuban-Americans in Miami.

The action allows the U.S. Government to regulate, in territorial waters, the anchorage and movement of vessels from that nation or third countries that will travel to Cuban territorial waters.

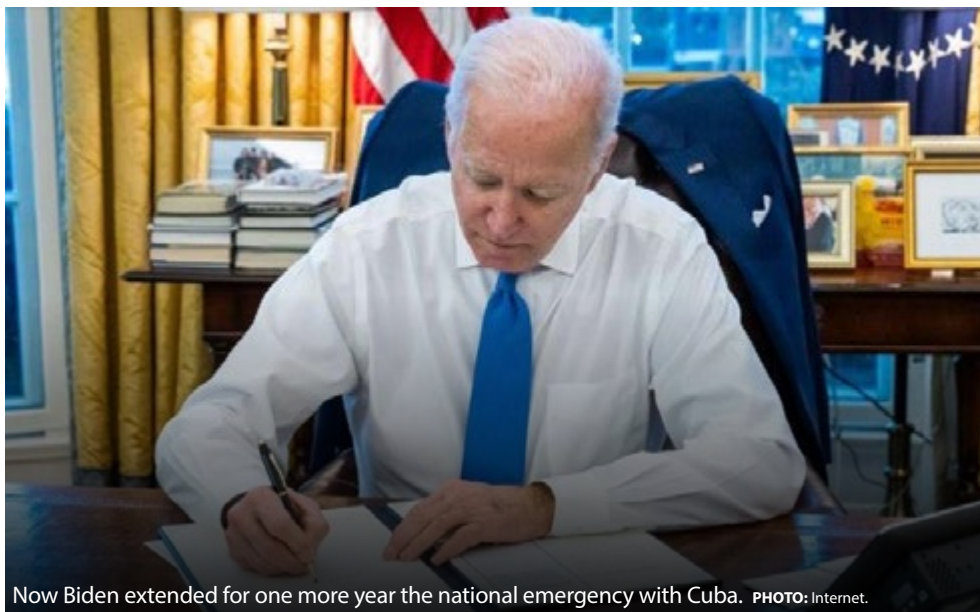
Biden recently said he wants to talk about Cuba, at least that's what he expressed to Bob Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in a brief exchange at the end of his State of the Union address on Feb. 7.

"Bob, I need to talk to you about Cuba," he commented, smiling. "Okay," the New Jersey Democratic lawmaker replied. "I'm serious," Biden added and turned to other members of Congress.

The event did not go unnoticed by the press. It immediately sparked interest and speculation.

For the Cuban government, any change towards a normal relationship with its neighbor will have to pass, inexorably, through the elimination of the country from Washington's unilateral list of state sponsors of terrorism and the lifting of the blockade.

Trump added Cuba to that list in one of his last actions before concluding his term in January 2021, after Barack Obama (2009-2017) decided to remove that designation in 2015, which had been in force since 1982.



Now Biden extended for one more year the national emergency with Cuba. PHOTO: Internet.

The list that comes from fiction

By Claudia**GONZÁLEZ**

HAVANA.- A list that according to former U.S. officials becomes a fiction created to reinforce the logic of the blockade against Cuba, in real life keeps the Caribbean nation without access to credits, while those who seek to trade with it are penalized.

The list of alleged State sponsors of terrorism, drawn up on the basis of Washington's arbitrary standards and which also includes Iran, Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, makes banks avoid processing payments from these territories and distances them from the international financial system.

According to Havana's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez, such designation constitutes a pretext by the White House to damage the island, since it raises the country's risk and implies paying between a third more or double to acquire supplies.

The few suppliers that decided to maintain ties with the island increased their prices, while the United States applies intimidation and persecution measures against companies that supply basic resources such as fuel, the Foreign Minister explained.

Cuba first appeared on that list in 1982, under Ronald Reagan (1981-1989), until in 2015 when the Barack Obama administration (2009-2017) decided to remove it as part of the process of normalization of relations between the two countries.

Nine days before the end of his term, on January 11, 2021, the Donald Trump administration (2017-2021) announced the reincorporation of the island to that list, another action that undid the path of thaw in bilateral ties undertaken by his predecessor and one of the more than 240 coercive measures applied against that nation in just four years.

Then, the White House alleged that Havana provided asylum to leaders of the Colombian National Liberation Army, who were offered safe haven as part of the peace negotiations with the government of the South American country, facilitated by Cuba and Norway, and supported by Obama and the Vatican.



Linguist Noam Chomsky said that Trump's decision in the last days of his administration was an act of revenge. PHOTO: Internet.

Even in that context, former analysts and officials who worked on Cuba policy in Republican and Democratic administrations acknowledge that the "consensus position" in the U.S. intelligence community has been for decades that the Caribbean nation does not sponsor terrorism.

In declarations to NBC News, Fulton Armstrong, former National Intelligence Officer for Latin America, described this official nomination by Washington as false.

Ben Rhodes, who was Obama's Deputy National Security Advisor, assured that using this designation as a weapon for purely political purposes is not only wrong with respect to Cuba, but runs the risk of delegitimizing what should be a tool to punish the real state sponsors of terrorism.

Meanwhile, William LeoGrande, a professor at the American University of Washington, said that Havana's presence on the list is ironic coming from a country that does carry out attacks against the island, in addition to applying a fierce economic, commercial and financial blockade for more than six decades.

Since 1959, Cuba has been the victim of assassination attempts, sabotage and paramilitary aggression by exiles, many trained and sponsored by the United States during the Central Intelligence Agency's "secret war", he said.

In the opinion of U.S. linguist Noam Chomsky and Indian historian Vijay Prashad, Trump's decision in the last days of his administration was an act of revenge, and for two years the current president, Joe Biden, has maintained that resentful policy that punishes Cuba, not for terrorism, but for promoting peace.

Members of the American civil society, the city council of cities such as Minneapolis (in Minnesota), faith-based institutions, international organizations, countries and world leaders are demanding that Biden and Congress remove Cuba from this unilateral nomination.

Underwater Fiber Optic Cable to be Operational in April

By Lourdes **NAVARRO**

HAVANA.- Next April, the Arimao international underwater fiber optic cable that connects Martinique to Cienfuegos province will be operational, allowing an improvement of communications and make progress in the computerization process of Cuban society.

The project's implementation is based on an agreement between the Cuban Telecommunications Company (ETECSA) and French Telecoms Operator Orange, through Orange Marine.

The installation of this project was conducted from the Pierre de Fermat cable ship and was extended for over 2,500 kilometers.

In this process, Cuban authorities took into consideration the protection of the marine ecosystem and damages in areas with high concentration of plants, in addition to leatherback sea turtles' spawning periods.

The construction of a station in Cienfuegos province was also conducted, for technical services that will facilitate connection.

The linking process and future tests are currently underway, after completing the physical maritime deployment. Work is also underway to complete the terrestrial part,

as well as the integration of the equipment and systems of the interconnecting points. ETECSA President Tania Velázquez affirmed that the project will allow increasing capacities of the Internet connection and broadband services.

The official added that some of the project's most important benefits include the diversification of the country's international connectivity, complementing Arimao with the only route of this type, until now: the ALBA 1 system, the result of the Cuba-Venezuela cooperation.

Actions planned by the Cuban telecoms operator are aimed at reducing network congestion through mobile data, particularly during peak hours – from 20.00 to 22.00, local time, when about two million clients on average are connected at the same time – she said.

Velázquez commented that over 7,600,000 mobile lines are activated in Cuba at present, of which over 6,700,000 access Internet.

In 2022, ETECSA registered a significant increase in the demand of this service by about 63 percent of the traffic volume – from 189,000 terabytes in 2021 to 309,000. In addition, 500,000 new lines and over a million new clients connected to Internet through their data were registered, thus the rise in network connection.

Dengue Vaccine Project Makes Progress

By Miriam **CÉSAR**



Dengue is a disease transmitted by the Aedes Aegypti mosquito. PHOTO: Internet.

HAVANA.- Cuba makes progress in a dengue test and vaccine, which could be a reality this year, said BioCubaFarma president Eduardo Martínez.

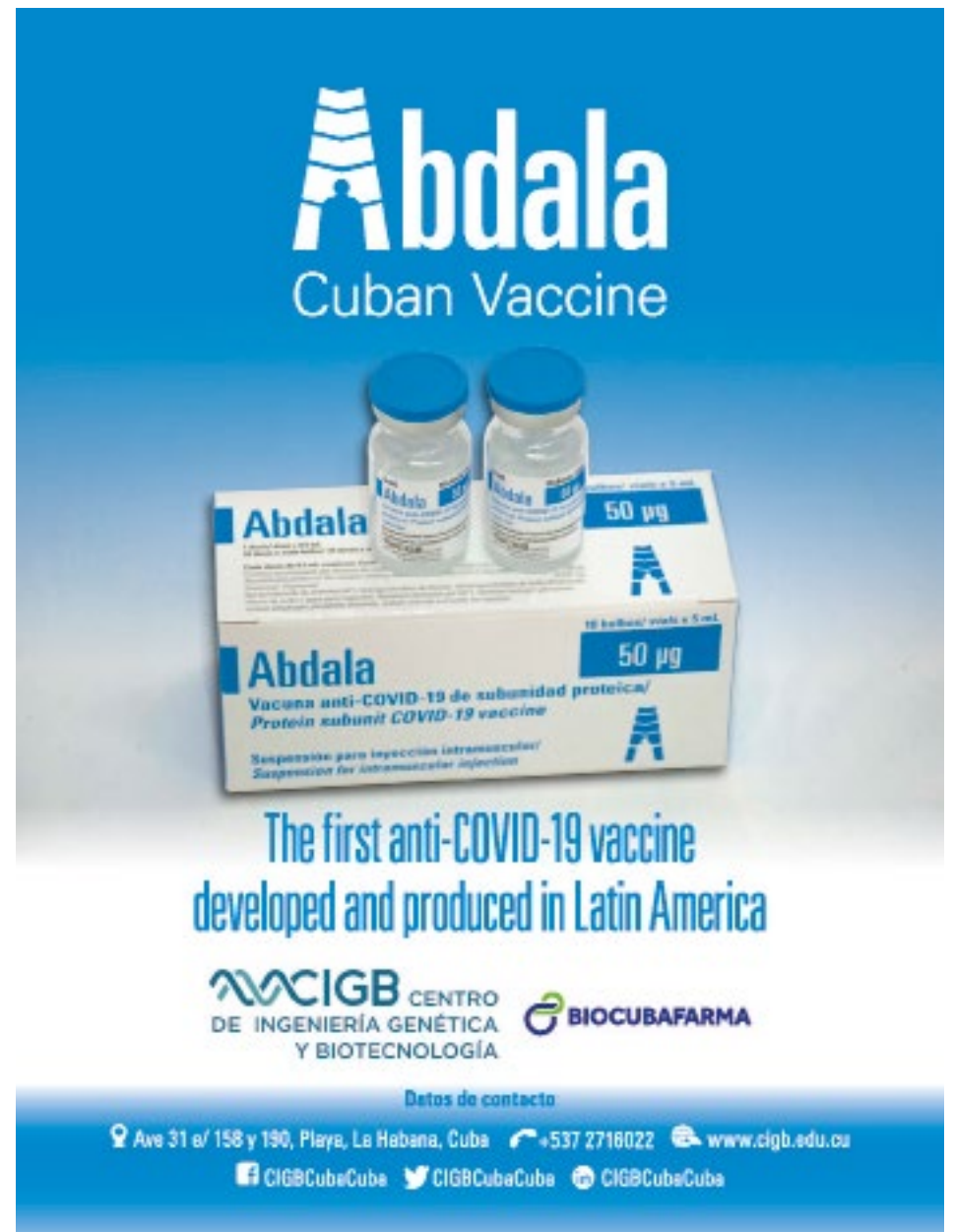
After a meeting to follow-up on these processes, Martínez stated that important progress is seen, and added that the new rapid test system should be ready this year, for its supply to the Public Health Ministry.

The official also commented that there are good probabilities to have the first

vaccine candidate against dengue, while stressing the significant impact of both projects on the Cuban population's health and wellbeing.

According to a press release, the new rapid test system will allow determining if it really is dengue, since the first symptoms appear, and if a second infection is present. This will contribute to giving personalized treatment to patients, thus avoiding for their condition worsened, they become seriously ill or die.

In relation to the vaccine, specialists affirmed that the obtaining of this is complex because dengue – a disease transmitted by the Aedes Aegypti mosquito – has four serotypes and immunization has to be provided against each of them at the same time, in order for the product to be effective. On that process, the BioCubaFarma president explained that if the vaccine candidate is ready this year, clinical trials in humans could start in 2024.



BioCuba Farma specialists affirmed that the obtaining of this is vaccine is complex. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Book Fair, Biggest Party of the Cuban Culture

By Liz **BOBADILLA**

HAVANA.- As every year, the Havana's International Book Fair welcomed thousands of Cuban and foreign visitors, who turned venues into a place of healthy, family parties. The 31st edition of this cultural event, held from February 9-19, again offered new moments full of history, diversity and protagonists from different countries.

Colombia was the guest country of honor, an appointment Colombian Vice President Francia Márquez appreciated. The government of this country organized, in record time, a delegation that included over 20 writers, artists, promoters and personalities.

At the opening speech, Márquez highlighted the value of this fair, a reaffirmation of the friendship bonds through arts. "...Let it revive our Caribbean and African roots," she said.

Under the premise of Cuban National Hero José Martí, Reading is Growing, 4.2 million books came out, including 4,200 printed titles and over one thousand digital volumes, according to president of the Cuban Book Institute (ICL) Juan Rodríguez.

On this occasion, the fair dealt with the cultural impact of new formats on the sector, while assuming inclusive reading as the key topic, in order to attain a plural fair, "in which culture, language, countries and formats intertwine in favor of a book industry for all publics."

"Reading is no longer a mere literary enjoyment, but a way to decipher codes and ways of access to information and knowledge," thus, this event tried to articulate a creative space with equal opportunities, "a fair in which reading is shown in all its forms, ways and concepts," Rodríguez explained.

The event also rendered tribute to poet and essayist Fina García Marruz and scientist Antonio Núñez Jiménez on their one hundred anniversaries of birth. The career of bibliographer Araceli García-Carranza and writer Julio

Travieso – 2021 National Literature awardee – was also ennobled.

At the San Carlos de la Cabaña Fortress, the Havana's Historical Center and other 15 sub-venues, the fair welcomed publishing houses, writers, booksellers and promoters from 40 countries, in addition to a representation of 120 Cuban and foreign exhibitors.

Personalities present in this event included writer Hernán Rivera Letelier, Chilean National Literature awardee in 2022, who described the fair as the ideal refuge for the spread of his testimonial prose.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, Letelier, considered one of the most important authors of the Hispanic-American region, said that this was his tenth visit to Cuba – five of them as part of the book fair.

"I love coming here, as I can draw inspiration even from the air. It smells of music and I have a great time. Three of my books were published in Cuba and there is another volume for its future spread," stated the author of titles such as *Himno del ángel parado en una pata* (Hymn of the angel standing on one leg) and *La contadora de películas* (The big screen storyteller).

"Cuba has organized the best fair possible," noted Rodríguez, who affirmed that after touring the capital and since March 2nd, the event can be enjoyed in the rest of the island, from the western provinces to the country's east, where the fair will be closed.



Colombian Vice President Francia Márquez in the Havana's International Book Fair. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Fabelo Takes Center Stage in Madrid

By Fausto **TRIANA**

MADRID.- Cuban artist Roberto Fabelo's vast universe has taken center stage in this capital, through an exhibition that brings him closer to Francisco de Goya and a performance that highlights his work.

The Ibercaja Foundation joined 160 engravings that are part of Francisco de Goya (1746-1828) versatile work with 13 works of Fabelo (1951) at the exhibition *Mundos. Goya y Fabelo* (World. Goya and Fabelo).

The proposal, about two creators separated by centuries but with similar artistic messages, is a kind of a dialogue between some of the famous Cuban artist's pieces and Goya's engravings that are part of the series *Los Caprichos* (The Whims) and *Los desastres de la Guerra* (The Disasters of War), stated the event's organizers.

The installation *Liderazgo* (Leadership), which includes 21 multicolor sculptures of

rhinoceros that invite to reflect about the nature of our society, stands out as part of the exhibition.

However, the most striking piece, for its visual impact, is *Sobrevivientes* (Survivals), a group of giant cockroach sculptures with human faces that can be seen at Palacio de Linares, seat of Casa de América, a frequented place because of its proximity to the emblematic Cibeles Fountain.

Sobrevivientes is a tribute to Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and a kind of a warning about the risks of ego and power, according to experts.

The exhibition's curators stress Goya's influence on Fabelo's work, as both artists use idyllic, mysterious and absurd resources, in addition to animals, with the purpose to catch the public's attention.

The Conde Duque Center of the Spanish capital will host the exhibition until July 30th this year.

Roberto Fabelo is considered one of Cuba's most important visual artists.

A painter, draftsman, engraver, illustrator and sculptor, he was born in Guáimaro (Camagüey province) and has conducted

over 42 individual exhibitions in 11 countries, including Spain.

His work includes elements of expressionism and surrealism and his images show a division from fantasy and reality.



Cuban artist Roberto Fabelo uses idyllic, mysterious and absurd resources with the purpose to catch the public's attention. PHOTO: Internet.



Latin America's Poverty Under the Eye

By Mirna **GONZÁLEZ**

HAVANA.- The disputes between the different views on poverty in Latin America subsequently have repercussions on how the phenomenon is approached and solutions are sought, said Geydis Fundora, PhD in Sociological Sciences. The specialist, a professor at the Cuban Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, explained that social movements' academic and political agenda pretends to change analysis on the phenomenon of poverty, impoverishment and impoverished people.

It is an essential element when defining how to position demands for its transformation, considering that poverty is the result of existing inequalities and unfair stratifications in Latin America's development models, the specialist told **The Havana Reporter**.

It is a phenomenon that reemerges depending on the different social expressions; for example, COVID-19 was a trigger, but we should not be confused and hold that health situation responsible for poverty, which is nothing but a structural expression of the region.

It is a situation closely linked to the development models implemented in the countries of the area, which caused the

phenomenon of poverty, as appreciated when analyzing the economy's ways of organization, the distribution of land, services or provisions, she said.

There are interesting and shocking data that should commit us to its solution; it is horrifying that about one third of Latin America's population live in conditions of poverty, and 13 percent in abject poverty, she stressed. That means that over 200 million people have insufficient incomes to cover their basic needs, and even worse, over 80 million people do not have resources, not even to cover their family shopping basket.

Although in the 2003-2013 period international research showed results about the reduction of abject poverty, this did not disappear, in spite of the different social reforms made at the time by progressive governments in power.

Projections on the goals of the 2030 Agenda included the possibility of reaching the foreseen goals, at least by over 50 percent. However, the pandemic reverted part of the progress made in poverty reduction, although that was not the only cause, Fundora commented.

The specialist highlighted that COVID-19 added a more complex and deeper problem to the continent's historical trends, and showed that poverty is intertwined with other elements such as gender, age, generational, ethnic and

territorial inequalities, including those that affect people in vulnerable situations. All these conditions worsen and reinforce poverty, she stressed.

The professor mentioned two important ideas: first, not to look at this scourge as a condition exclusively focused on individuals who live in that situation, but as an impoverishment process, as it exists in parallel to other processes of enrichment.

It is related to how the dynamics of property, heritage, labor distribution is organized, or to citizens' organization, she noted.

The other important approach is that poverty has to be understood as an effect of the way Latin America's socio-classist structure is organized, equally marked by those development models.



Geydis Fundora, professor at the Cuban Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences. PHOTO: José Tito Meriño.

Publicidad y Noticias
a la vista del viajero

Servicio de
Narrowcasting

La Agencia Latinoamericana Prensa Latina S.A. pone a su disposición un nuevo servicio de publicidad en colaboración con ECASA, a través del Narrowcasting en las pantallas ubicadas en las terminales aéreas del país.

LPL
Prensa Latina

ECASA

Si está interesado en promover sus productos y servicios por nuestra plataforma contáctenos:

Agencia Informativa Latinoamericana
Prensa Latina, S.A.
Calle 21 No. 406 entre F y G, Vedado, La Habana, Cuba, CP 10400.

OFICINA COMERCIAL
(53) 7832-7777 / (53) 78301344
rene@cl.prensa-latina.cu /
ernesto@cl.prensa-latina.cu
<https://www.prensa-latina.cu>

SOYGRAF
GRAPHIC PRINTINGS

Printings for You
A Graph, an Industry

- **Leading company in four-color offset and digital Printing.** We are renowned for printing Newspapers, Books, Magazines, Catalogs, Short Articles, Leaflets, Labels, Signs, Posters, Calendars, Stationery, etc. Diversity of formats and mediums. Flexiback, Wire-O, Staple binding.
- **Production and Commercialization of Diaries, Notebooks, Blocks.**
- **Manufacturing of Stamps, Engraving on Acrylic, Bilayer, Glass, Ceramic and Textile.**
- **Signs**
- **Graphic equipment repair service**

Contact Detail
SOYGRAF Newspaper Company
Phone No.: 7 882 0643
Production and Sales Director
7 882 0356
Marketing Director
Address: Calle Territorial No. 278, e/ General Suárez y Auditor, Plaza de la Revolución. La Habana.
Website: www.Soygraf.com

Left Parties for a Better and Necessary World

By Melissa**KING**

HAVANA.- Intellectuals and representatives of over 30 countries stated the need to foster debates for a better, necessary and possible world during the 1st International Meeting of Theoretical Publications of Parties and Movements of the Left.

The meeting held in the capital in February reflected the participants' commitment to the exploited and to social justice.

According to Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel, the holding of this type of events is essential to build thought consensus, especially for action.

In his speech during the first day of the event, the Cuban Head of State highlighted that we live in a context in which the imperialist logic of domination is tried to be imposed, and this is, essentially, a cultural fight in its wider conception.

They are trying to erode our essence, take our identities away from us and make us assume the values they propose, for which they have the research machinery, the technologies and a powerful entertainment industry, he stressed.

To face it, we must find our own logic; build platforms against cultural colonization; defend values such as equity, solidarity; fight against exclusion, inequalities, discrimination, and build referents or find them in our histories, the president added.

In that sense, delegates agreed on a plan of action in which they "defend unity in diversity in the wider sectors of the revolutionary left, in four basic fronts: anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, anti-fascism and social justice."

They also agreed to create a group of editors to be articulated with the Network in Defense of Humanity and to permanently denounce the genocidal nature of the U.S. blockade against Cuba, which violates international law.

In addition, they will support and spread "the holding, in Brussels, of an International Court against the Blockade, in the last three months of 2023" and decided to support, starting this year, the Red Books Day, each February 21 (anniversary of the Communist Manifesto), as well as the holding of a large demonstration for peace in the participating countries.

Denouncing and fighting cultural neocolonialism; defending historic memory; rescuing and spreading the work of the pro-independence heroes of the peoples of

the South; creating a digital library with the best works of the left thought, were also agreed upon.

Other actions include the implementation of research programs on the challenges the left has in the face of the imperialist media war, and the conduction of courses linked to these topics.

The next edition of the International Meeting of Publications of the Left will be held in Caracas, in November this year, while Havana will host another edition in February 2024, the rejection of the Monroe Doctrine and on the 65th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.



President Miguel Díaz-Canel, said this type of events is essential to build thought consensus. PHOTO: Estudios Revolución.

Hemingway Marina Strengthens Relations with U.S. Community

By Ania**TERRERO**



Commodore Escribá and Dr. James Cavanaugh in the International Hemingway Marina.

PHOTO: Internet.

HAVANA.- The Cuban International Hemingway Marina strengthened friendship and cooperation relations with the U.S. yacht community and Chicago Yacht Club member, Dr. James Cavanaugh.

As part of his first visit to Cuba, Cavanaugh was welcomed at the seat of the Hemingway Marina by National Captain of the Cuban Coast Brotherhood, Commodore José Miguel Díaz Escribá. The Hemingway Marina has worked in favor of the establishment of friendship and cooperation relations with the international yacht community, particularly the U.S. community, Escribá said.

He added that several obstacles had to be overcome in order to strengthen and increase those links.

Dr. Cavanaugh, who has a yacht at Lake Michigan, stated that he was interested in participating in the 2020 St. Petersburg-Havana Regatta, although this could not be held because of COVID-19.

The U.S. visitor joined the Cuban International Hemingway Marina's family members as a sign of support to the prestige this Cuban entity has obtained. He agreed with Commodore Escribá about the role Nancy Sindelar, member of the Chicago Yacht Club, has played in the establishment of friendship and cooperation relations between both nautical institutions.

Sindelara has visited the seat of the Cuban nautical institution on several occasions, during Hemingway Colloquiums, organized by the Hemingway Museum.

A Round-trip Audiovisual Journey

By AriannaLEÓN

HAVANA.- Cuba and the Canary Islands' common past, migration and an identity able to cross borders, are the central themes of the documentary *Retorno* (Return), by Cuban actress and filmmaker Blanca Rosa Blanco.

The film, which started its tour of the Cuban screens on February 10, is based on the Fiesta de los Indianos de La Palma (Party of the Spanish Emigrants from La Palma), in the Canary Islands, a celebration that annually gathers emigrants or their relatives, who arrived in that European territory by the turn of the 20th century.

The work shows the presence of the Cuban culture on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, as well as their impact on the generations of people who made that round trip and brought daily practices, languages, gestures, ways of dressing and doing, like an everlasting luggage.

Blanco told **The Havana Reporter** that the audiovisual is an opportunity to rediscover our identity in an apparently far-off place, and "it is encouraging in difficult times such as these; I think that the idea is that people acknowledge where they come from, where we have been and the place we belong to."

What we have somehow had is a round-trip culture, stated the filmmaker, while stressing the project's value to present a common and painful phenomenon such as migration.

Surprised by the presence of the Caribbean country, Blanco recalled that the documentary "was born from the feeling of being part of a people whose heritage lives in other parts of the world, it was like retaking the personal Cuban identity, the fact of saying that there is something of me that is here and there is something of everyone".

"I wanted to start doing research with the purpose to tell the story that were linked to memory, culture, tradition, family; that was the main motivation," said the creator, who discovered many artists who had dedicated their works to this topic.

For 52 minutes, the film uses festivity as a pretext "to represent, render tribute to and reveal curious data about the Cuban emigrants who arrived and still live in this European territory," stressed Blanco, who is also an actress.



The work of filmmaker Blanca Rosa Blanco shows the presence of the Cuban culture on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

PHOTO: Cubadebate.

Produced by the Cuban Film Institute and shot in both countries, the film shows the different expressions of identity of the Canaries travelers settled in Cuba, as well as the common features of the peoples of both territories. Directed by Carlos de la Huerta, the work includes the testimony of people who have documented the festivities or the relationship between both islands – one, in the Caribbean; the other one, in the Iberian territory – which is shown at present and is celebrated on a specific date of the calendar, breathing in the essences of the Cuban identity from food, music, cigar aromas and rum.

With the photography of Alexander González, the documentary exhibits the story of those Spanish emigrants who traveled to and settled in different Cuban regions

and then returned "with their pockets full of money" and memories, to retake or start their lives in the Canary Islands. To confirm that narrative, the filmmaker took as point of reference the work of photographer Selu Vega – who has documented that carnival of the Spanish emigrants for years – and the book *El Viaje* (The Journey), by writer Elsa López, who bore testimony of those journeys at the end of the 19th century.

Filmmaker Teodoro Ríos, author of the film *Mambí*, also offered his experience, while residents in La Palma exhibited that cultural syncretism that is part of the daily life, because of the Cuban legacy present in each European person who left and came back home, or those descendants that also made their way to Spain.

Michel Mirabal's Work Heads to Venice

By AriannaLEÓN

HAVANA.- Like a prelude to a tour that will end up at the Venice Biennial of Architecture, in Italy, Cuban artist Michel Mirabal recently presented his project *Arquitectura de un sistema* (Architecture of a System) at the Havana's National Fine Arts Museum.

The artist also presented the video-art that will accompany the exhibit, *Éxodo: causas y consecuencias* (Exodus: causes and consequences), directed by filmmaker Alejandro Pérez, with music by virtuous Cuban pianist Frank Fernández.

Mirabal's exhibit, curated by Nelson Herrera Ysla, will be shown at the Loredan Palace as part of the abovementioned Italian event, to be held from May 18 to July 23. The work includes a selection of pieces conceived as an integral part of the artistic system and its relation to life. The pieces also promotes reflection on those elements "like autonomous aesthetic discourses

in which installation plays an essential role," said the curator.

They combine a "plurality of shapes and structures that talk about their creative, interdisciplinary connections and are intertwined around the artist's vision of the world that surrounds him, both locally and globally," Herrera Ysla highlighted during the presentation of this complex project, in which each piece adds different elements, with a rich expressive language.

The central theme of the aesthetic discourse is based on the work that represents the solar system, installed at the European facility, which shows colored plastic spheres on the floor, where the sun is the system's illuminating center.

A group of works related to migrations and exodus, a common theme in any region of the world, come out from the image, "a global metaphor of what our countries and societies mean... and the human beings that inhabit those places."

"Mirabal shows us only a part, without the intention of telling everything, because he acknowledges the difficulty of telling everything at once;" for that reason, he turns to the video, "this time with black and white dramatic intensities," while images alert to the dangers of violence, wars, discrimination and hunger.



Mirabal's exhibit will be shown at the Venice Biennial of Architecture, in Italy.

PHOTO: Internet.

Chronicles to think and laugh

By Elizabeth **BELLO**

HAVANA.- A Cuban journalist is inspired by the experiences of her daily commute by public transport to write detailed and spicy chronicles on social networks, now compiled in the volume "A bus is a country".

The literary work is one of the novelties of the 31st International Book Fair of Havana and its author, Yuliet Pérez Calaña, known on social networks as Yuli de Cuba.

Speaking to **The Havana Reporter**, she explained that the experiences in a bus are as diverse and spicy as the ajíaco that makes up the national culture and reality. Referring to the origin of this volume published under the Áncora Ediciones Publishing House. The also sports commentator, recounted that when she started working on the Islavisión TV channel, located in the special municipality

of the Isle of Youth she had to travel about 16 kilometers.

She had to use public transport every day to go to work and the situations she lived in the buses were, some very nice, others disastrous, she explained.

She recounted that during that period she met many people. "That's where these narratives were born, as a way to take advantage of daily experiences in a creative way and decompress a little," she recalled.

"I started posting these chronicles regularly on my personal Facebook account, Yuliet PC, and they began to gain followers and impact. The people who joined to read them, wanted to see the previous ones. The narrations traveled almost all of Cuba from cell phone to cell phone and part of the world.

The community that is today the Yuli of Cuba began to gather around these chronicles. "These texts, more polished, edited and accompanied by the caricatures



Yuliet Pérez Calaña, known on social networks as Yuli de Cuba. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

of the prominent humorist Laz, resulted in a book," she added.

Referring to the dose of reality and fiction contained in the chronicles of Yuli de Cuba, she revealed that "they all start from a real base, something that happened to me or other people, who write and give me their experiences; sometimes rises of tone. I exaggerate, I caricature characters and context, seeking to make the writing more likeable; but they are all real.

The chronicle is that, "history," she reflected. This shrewd and witty chronicler is natural at incorporating empathy, humor, satire

and daring into journalism, with which she avoids a rigid and gray vision of the profession. Pérez Calaña is very active on social networks, mainly Facebook, in which she has made a very popular identity with a daring speech and in a casual, open way, free of prejudices and taboos, various topics of sexuality, gender and other topics. She considers that "social networks are a very powerful means to post your content and reach a greater number of people, while providing immediate feedback that is almost impossible in traditional media and a further public expansion.

Aguada de Joaquín as a tourist haven

By Francisco **MENENDEZ**

BAYAMO.- A bend between the mountains of eastern Cuba named Aguada de Joaquín constitutes a significant setting for those seeking adventure and nature tourism.

In the Sierra Maestra, mountaineers find that perfect place to test their luck and strength, while contemplating a well-preserved natural landscape, on the way to Pico Turquino.

This elevation, the Real del Turquino, constitutes the highest point of this archipelago with 1 974 meters above sea level. It's surroundings impact the traveler due to its nature, and the traditions of the muleteers and peasants of the area.

Precisely, there is a resting point between the mountains known as the Aguada de Joaquín, which has many stories, both for walkers on their ascents, and for the surroundings full of history and truly hard tasks.

The farm has a proper mandate or address in an Aguada, near the ecological community of La Platica and Jiménez, one and the same area for the map of the nearby province of Santiago de Cuba.

This place is composed of two houses, one for the rest of the hikers and the other where the kitchen and dining room, the living room, another rest, and in their areas proliferate gardens and several solar panels to supply electricity to the place.

In those mountains, the leader of the Cuban Revolution of 1959, Fidel Castro, and his companions, such as the Cuban-Argentine guerrilla Ernesto Che Guevara, had their headquarters.

In the Aguada, 10 people work, guaranteeing food and rest for travelers, just five kilometers from Turquino, the most difficult ascent and descent of the entire trail.



THE GETAWAY CAPITAL
MODERN AND EXCLUSIVE

For the enjoyment of all customer segments, **38** hotel products with more than **11,000** rooms in the country's most important tourist destinations.

www.bluediamondresorts.com

On the Way to Bariay and the Cristóbal Colón Park

By Roberto **CAMPOS**

HOLGUÍN.- There is a natural park in Cuba that treasures a lot of history and attracts hundreds of travelers from all over the world, particularly Europeans.

The Cristóbal Colón (Christopher Columbus) Park, in Cuba's eastern – where the Bariay Key is also located – is the site where the Spanish Admiral disembarked, on October 28, 1492, according to researchers.

The region recreates both, the Spanish stay at the time and the presence of the Taínos indigenous people, including their culture, traditions and religious dances, which visitors can enjoy thanks to a group of dancers wearing the wardrobe of the time. There is also an enclosed Taíno village, where archeologists discovered burying sites and plenty of remains that corroborate the abovementioned statement.

This wonderful location is surrounded by green vegetation and virgin nature, including a monument-park that 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 Admiral Cristopher Columbus disembarked there on October 28, 1492.

Columbus described this place in his Navigation Diary, in a mixture of basic Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Catalan languages.

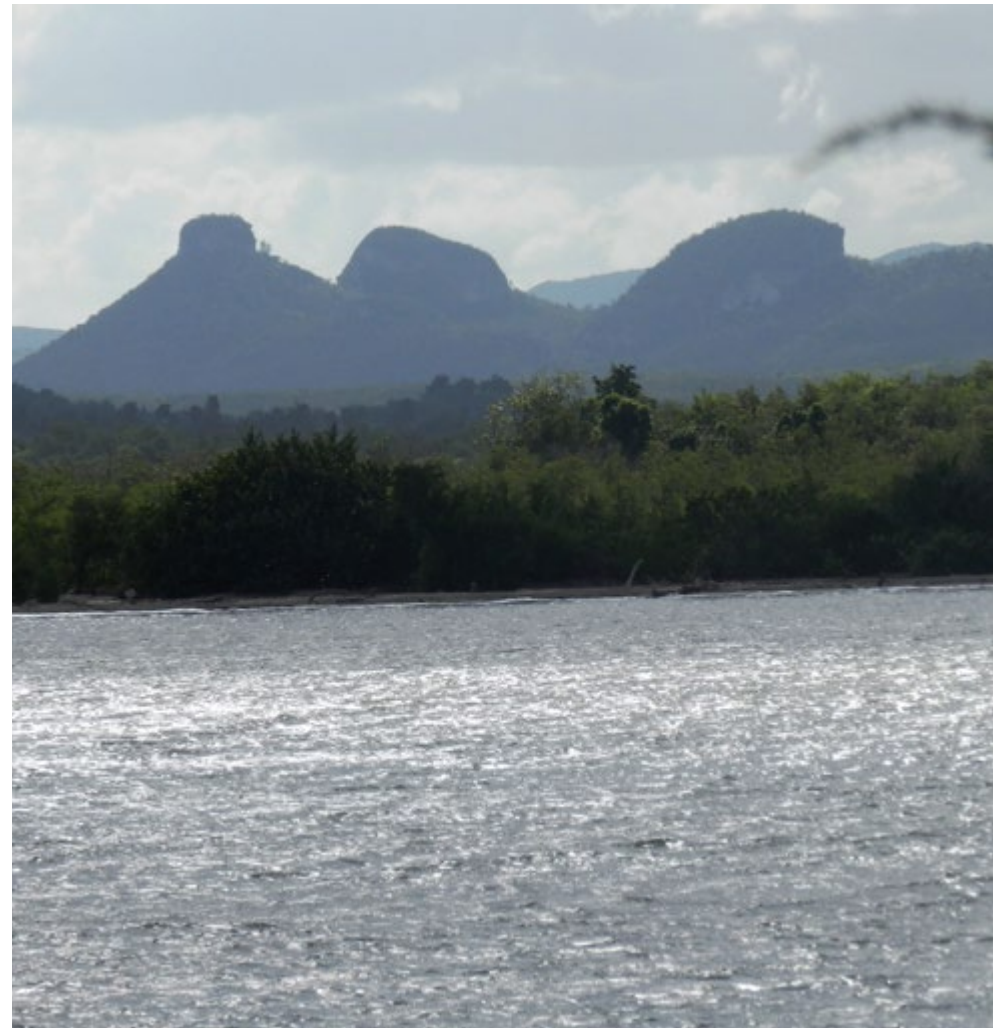
The landscape is dominated by a gently undulating plain on the north and a slope on the south, formed on volcanic rocks in which erosive processes prevail.

Many of the people living in the area work at the Bariay National Monument-Park, a tourist center that offers services to both national and international visitors.

The meeting of both cultures is recalled there through a monument erected in 1992 in Punta de Sabaneta, on the 500th anniversary of that extraordinary event.

Bariay Key and Bururú became a bay. These areas were previously part of the northern coast of the San Salvador de Bayamo Village, known as the Maniabón Highlands. It was not until 1752 that both areas joined the Holguín province's jurisdiction.

According to biographer Antonio Núñez Jiménez (1923-1998), Bariay is Columbus' Home, while according to Havana City Historian Eusebio Leal (1942-2020), it symbolizes the door that opens the route to Cuba's modernity.



Guatemala Restricts Native Peoples' Political Rights

By OllantayITZAMNÁ

GUATEMALA CITY.- Guatemala is one of the most culturally mega-diverse countries of the continent. According to the 2018 national census, over 44 percent of the Guatemalan population declares themselves to be indigenous people. However, from the anthropological point of view, over 90 percent is genetically indigenous.

With about 108,000 km² and a population of 17 million people, over 10 million live under the poverty line – almost all, of Mayan native origin.

In two centuries of Republic, native and rural peoples were never allowed to be politically organized in Guatemala, nor were they elected as governors, in spite of being the majority from the demographic point of view.

In 2016, rural communities and native peoples in resistance, organized by the Rural Development Committee (CODECA) movement, decided to create their political organization, after long and historical debates, to participate in the elections and implement their transformation project for the country.



In Guatemala over 10 million live under the poverty line, almost all of Mayan native origin.

PHOTO: Internet.

In 2018, they managed to attain the registration of the Movement for People's Freedom (MLP) political organization. At the 2019 general elections, MLP was placed fourth.

2023 ELECTIONS

Since before the creation of MLP and for the last three years, communities and peoples did not stop to organize, raise awareness and politicize the country's popular sectors. But during the course of the present electoral process, the Electoral Supreme Court (TSE) has refused to register the MLP presidential binomial, in spite of their fulfillment of the legal requirements.

As a result, MLP communities and peoples undertook the "legal path" by challenging, appealing, submitting protection of the law... although, through that path, it is clear what the final result would be: leaving indigenous and rural peoples out of the electoral campaign.

By doing so, the Guatemala State not only restricts or violates the political rights of what are called "rejected" vice-president candidate Jordán Rodas, former Human Rights Attorney (PDH), but also the collective political right the indigenous peoples have as subjects of socio-political rights.

In the light of the TSE refusal to favorably resolve the appeals submitted by MLP,

communities and peoples announced that "we will not hold a new national assembly, nor we will go for a new binomial. Our current binomial meets all the legal requirements..." With all legal resources exhausted in the country, they will go to international instances such as the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (CIDH) and others.

The proscription of political organizations in Guatemala is not a new topic. Pro-communist political parties suffered that punishment for "being different," from the ideological point of view, from conservative or liberal parties or for opposing U.S. interests, during the two centuries of the Republic.

However, MLP is not pro-communist. So, why does the Guatemala political system try to proscribe this organization?

Its proposals include fostering a Popular and Pluri-national Constituent Assembly process to create a Pluri-national State with territorial autonomies and revising all public goods and services privatization contracts in effect to nationalize again those goods.

The inclusion of Guatemala in regional integration processes, such as CELAC, ALBA, etc., in order to free the country from the U.S. control, is also part of those proposals.

INSURANCE TRAVEL

JUST TO CUBA

Seguros Internacionales de Cuba, S.A.

www.esicuba.cu esicuba.clientes@esicuba.cu

Follow us on social media icons

Chamber of Commerce Revives in its 60th Anniversary

By Teyuné **DÍAZ**

HAVANA.- The Cuban Chamber of Commerce (CCC) revives in its 60th anniversary and moves toward a process of transformation and integration into the national economy plans, said CCC president Antonio Carricarte.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, Carricarte commented that the main objective is to effectively connect that body to the National Economic and Social Development Plan, as well as to the sector's development and export strategies. CCC tries to effectively and efficiently use the resources and tools at the disposal of its members to promote foreign investment,

either at missions, fairs or events held in Cuba or abroad, the official added.

All the actions the Chamber conducts must have a positive impact and transformations, including the creation of clusters that allow identifying interests and deficiencies in different sectors, are headed in that direction, he stressed.

Carricarte recalled that CCC is a platform that allows giving visibility to main problems and objectives, with the purpose to join institutions and authorities and foster their link.

In that sense, the Chamber's services are grouped by programs whose objectives are aimed at effectively supporting Cuban business executives in areas such as internationalization, chain of value, competitiveness to materialize exports and sectors linked to digital transformations.

On the latter, he stressed the need of conducting the digital transformation of the country, a phenomenon on the rise as a result of the increase of the use of those ways to access the international market, a need at present when talking about competence. Thus, if business executives do not use those forms, international insertion would be more difficult.

Another line of action the entity makes emphasis on includes the creation of

wealth in the territories. With that purpose in mind, actions conducted must be connected to territorial development strategies.

A CCC branch was created in all the provinces in order to have a higher impact, especially on producers responsible for meeting competences and the certifications needed to make progress on their export objectives, Carricarte commented.

CCC is a voluntary association of business executives who enjoy equal benefits and includes either traditional or private actors, although the latter need higher support in their internationalization goals; for that reason, support actions are also provided, he recalled.

With the new organization of the sector, private business executives will be able to discover systems that can either facilitate or hinder connections, which will produce positive results, he added.

The intention is to create the conditions so that those interested in joining the Chamber can find a place, but also to strengthen the entity's digital capacity, as there are over six thousand micro, small and medium-sized companies (MIPYMES) of which only about 100 work with CCC.



President of the Cuban Chamber of Commerce Antonio Carricarte. PHOTO: Miguel Guzmán.

Cooperative Strengthens Relations with the Dominican Republic

By Marta **CABRALES**

SANTIAGO DE CUBA.- The Marco non-agricultural cooperative (CNA), with headquarters in the eastern province, established cooperation relations with the municipality of Maimón, in the Dominican Republic, an action that will favor the development of that area.

At the entity's general assembly of partners, the CNA president, Marco R. Hierrezuelo, spoke about the encouraging results reached since 2016, a period in which sales have confirmed the entity's adequate and efficient management as part of its insertion in the new path the Cuban economy undertakes.

Ramón A. Cabral, Maimón mayor – a municipality located in the Monseñor Nouel province – stated that he hopes those links would foster mutual progress not only in the non-agricultural sector but also in other fields such as culture and sport.

For his part, the Santiago de Cuba governor, Elio Rodríguez, affirmed that they shared the will of reaching higher levels of wellbeing in both countries based on common historical and cultural roots, amidst the Cuban State investment strategy.

Rodríguez urged to extend those endeavors to food production and stressed the noble and sensible fraternity bonds that characterize relations between the peoples of the Dominican Republic and Cuba, which also include an invitation to attend the next Santiago de Cuba carnivals, a Cultural Heritage. At the meeting, the business portfolio was

presented and interests were expressed by Mohamed Alnami, NAMI Investment leader, and Gerzy Fernández, General Manager of Fernández Frías Engineers and Consultants, both involved in this cooperation project. Businesspersons from Brazil and Dominica also virtually stated their interests and experiences linked to design, quality of the

steel processes, powder paint production and storage conditions.

A memorandum of understanding was signed among representatives of Marco CNA, the Commercial Representation Hiring Agency (attached to the Ministry of Foreign Trade) and DINVAI Construcciones S.A.



Marco's sales confirmed the adequate and efficient management as part of its insertion in the new path the Cuban economy undertakes. PHOTO: Internet.

Major Cooperation with Algeria

By Teyuné **DÍAZ**

HAVANA.- The signing of eight documents between Cuba and Algeria will extend economic, commercial, financial and cooperation relations in different areas, reaffirming the over 60 years of historical friendship bonds.

The 23rd Cuba-Algeria Intergovernmental Commission, held on February 13 & 14, became a platform to approve the 2023-2026 Bilateral Economic Agenda and other legal texts, with the purpose to promote cooperation in sectors such as agriculture, health, sports and pharmaceutical industry.

As part of the tight working agenda, an Entrepreneurial Forum was also held with the participation of Cuban

President Miguel Díaz-Canel, Prime Minister Manuel Marrero and other high ranking officials.

The Algerian delegation included president of the Intergovernmental Commission and Health Minister, Abdelhak Saihi and Algerian ambassador to Cuba, Abdelkrim Benchiah, in addition to other state representatives.

The meeting, attended by over 60 Algerian business executives and about 130 Cuban entities, was aimed at holding discussions about areas under analysis and identifying business opportunities of common interest.

The parties analyzed topics related to the Cuban economy's perspectives and transformations; investments in Algeria and, most importantly, the management of Algeria's decentralized single window for trade, in the city of Oran, in addition to foreign investment in Cuba.

Business opportunities in the Maghreb member country and potentials of the Mariel Special Development Zone (ZEDM) – west of Cuba – were other topics dealt with in this meeting.

Presidents of the Chambers of Commerce of both nations, Antonio Carricarte (Cuba) and Kamel Hamenni (Algeria), signed a plan of action for joint work and stressed the commitment to continue maintaining bilateral relations and promoting trade and investment.

Cuban Health Minister José Ángel Portal and his Algerian counterpart, Abdelhak Saihi, also signed an agreement with the intention of strengthening cooperation bonds between the two public health systems. They also urged to increase medical cooperation and joint research.

Other topics included scientific exchange between the Algerian Pasteur Institute and the Cuban Pedro Kourí Tropical Medicine Institute; the development and production of vaccines against current African diseases; technology transfer with the pharmaceutical industry, and promotion of relations between the regulatory agencies of both countries.

Cuban Deputy Prime Minister Ricardo Cabrisas highlighted that the Business Forum was held at a time of profound global shock, because of the pandemic of COVID-19 and geopolitical problems such as that of Ukraine.

Cabrisas appreciated the support Algeria has given at the United Nations vote against the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba, which has worsened as a result of 243 additional measures approved by former president Donald Trump (2017-2021) and the inclusion of the island in the list of countries that sponsor terrorism.

The Cuban official stressed that the island needs to attract investment in infrastructure and modernize its industry and foreign trade with new products and services, and referred to the opening of sectors such as new technologies, renewable sources of energy, agribusiness, transportation and tourism.



The 23rd Cuba-Algeria Intergovernmental Commission became a platform to approve the 2023-2026 Bilateral Economic Agenda.

PHOTO: Estudios Revolución.

Entrepreneurial Spirit is also for the Youth

By Ania **TERRERO**

HAVANA.- "What are you going to talk about here, young girl?" That's what some Cuban business executives and officials might think when Adriana Heredia shares the results of Beyond Roots, the project she heads for the last six years to give visibility to the African culture in the national identity.

If we consider that of the over six thousand micro, small and medium-sized companies (MIPYMES) created in Cuba since their approval on November 2021, only 24.4 percent of its members are from 18 to 35 years of age and barely 24.6 percent are women, it is not a surprise that Heredia's experience challenges traditional conceptions.

But the 30-year old businesswoman affirms that even though sometimes

she felt she was misjudged because of her age and gender and imagined that phrases such as the abovementioned crossed her colleagues' mind, that has not been the general rule nor has it been an obstacle to go on.

A graduate of the Faculty of Economy at the University of Havana, in 2015 and a professor of that institution since the same year, Heredia cofounded

Beyond Roots on December 2016 to go beyond the roots of the Afro-Cuban culture from different perspectives.

The objective is to give visibility to the role African culture plays in identity, based on the acknowledgment that Cuba is the result of the mixture of races and cultures.

"We want to de-construct racial stereotypes; we defend responsible consumption practices and the use of natural products to care for hair and skin," she told **The Havana Reporter**. In order to do that, they started with tourist-educational experiences on Airbnb, directed at those who came

to Cuba interested in knowing about that part of the Cuban idiosyncrasy.

"Those first steps made us realize another problem: the lack of souvenirs to connect people with the knowledge they acquired," Heredia said.

They decided then to open a place where tourists could find those souvenirs and the idea gradually developed and became an African-style shop, the first in Cuba.

As the businesswoman started to understand and assume the shortages she faced for years for having her natural Afro hair, the project expanded.

As part of that process, she and her team also understood that more than products, people "needed information, guidance and especially the possibility of being accompanied along that process, which in the particular case of women is complicated, because it means breaking with stereotypes, adapting to a new way of looking and learning to love a hair that people has taught you to hate for years," she commented.

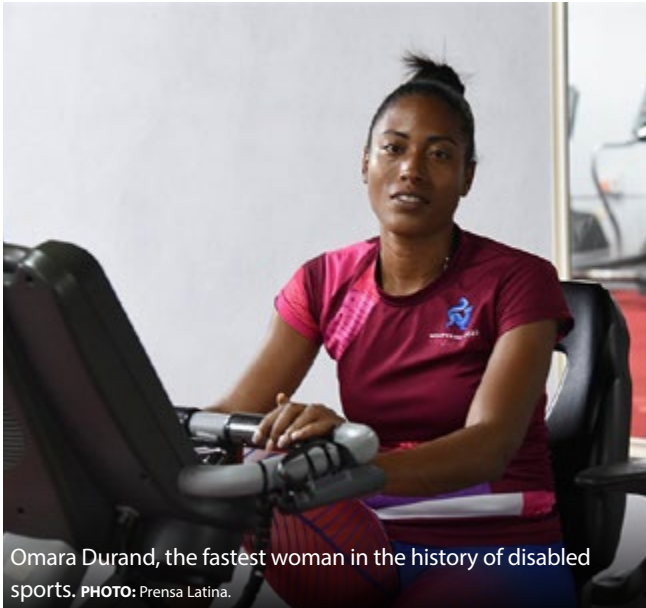
Then, they opened a third line of work aimed at organizing events and workshops to promote Afro aesthetics and identity, businesses, creative industries and responsible consumption. In addition to this, they later on created their own collections of clothing and provided serigraphy printing services.

"We recently have a new baby: Beyond Roots Salon, because, of course, if people have the products and feel part of a community, they often request stylish service and personalized attention to the hair, and that's why we undertook that world," she stressed.



Adriana Heredia (right) heads the project Beyond Roots to give visibility to the African culture in the national identity. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Omara Durand, Paralympic Star



Omara Durand, the fastest woman in the history of disabled sports. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

By AdriánMENGANA

HAVANA.- Young Omara Durand forgets for a few moments her sight problems and outstrips everyone with a demonic race at the Antonio Fernandez School for Blind and Visually Impaired Children in the eastern province of Santiago de Cuba. Professor Reynaldo Cascaret is amazed at the velocity of the 7-year old girl and since then, invites her to pursue athletics,

confident of her capacity to overcome a congenital disease caused by cataract. "Since then, I started practicing sports," the eight-time Paralympic champion told **The Havana Reporter** after finishing another exhausting training session at the Pan-American Stadium, east of Havana. The fastest Paralympic woman in the history of disabled sports, recalled with nostalgia and pride her stay at the first special education center, in the community of Boniato. "They taught me there how to make the bed, eat, cook, clean; to be a good, organized woman and specially to be independent and understand that I could do things in spite of having a disability," she commented. She was more confident when she enrolled at the Israel Reyes Provincial High Performance Training Center, at the age of 12, and when she later on joined the national team at the Giraldo Córdova Cardín Sport Center. "I thought that it was going to be hard, because before, I shared my life with visually-impaired kids, but I was well accepted at the regular teaching. Thanks to the preparation I received at the primary school, I was able to face each challenge and carry on a normal life," she affirmed.

ON THE ROAD TO GLORY

Durand made the best of her path through both academies, to consolidate a sport career characterized by a strict discipline and strong training, which helped her make her debut at the international arena in style, winning the 100 and 200 sprint races at the Sao Paulo 2007 World Blind and Visually-Impaired Games.

That same year, she won another three medals at the Río de Janeiro Para-Pan-American Games in 100, 200 and 400-meter sprint. However, when she attended the Beijing 2008 Games, she had not had a good training program because of an injury in her right thigh and suffered a muscle distension that affected her from the psychological point of view, preventing her from obtaining a medal. With the support of her coach Miriam Ferrer and the strength of the Cuban sport medicine, Durand appealed to her huge will power and prodigious anatomy to return to the track totally recovered. She was then able to delight her fans with the London 2012 Paralympic titles in 800 and 400 meters, forging her world legend. Cuban Omara Durand won her eighth Paralympic medal at the Tokyo (Japan) National Olympic Stadium, where she broke her own world record in 200 meters, T-12 category, with 23.02 seconds. The path, though, was not free of obstacles. After her pregnancy, her vision worsened and she had to start competing with her sighted guide Yuniol Kindelán who, together with Ferrer, helped her to recover self-confidence and reign again. After a sabbatical year, Durand returned to training, on September 2022 and her sights are now set on winning new titles in the T-12 category (deep visual impairment) at the World Para-Athletics Championship, from July 8-17 and the Santiago de Chile Para-Pan-American Championship, from November 17-26.

Caribbean Series, far from the podium

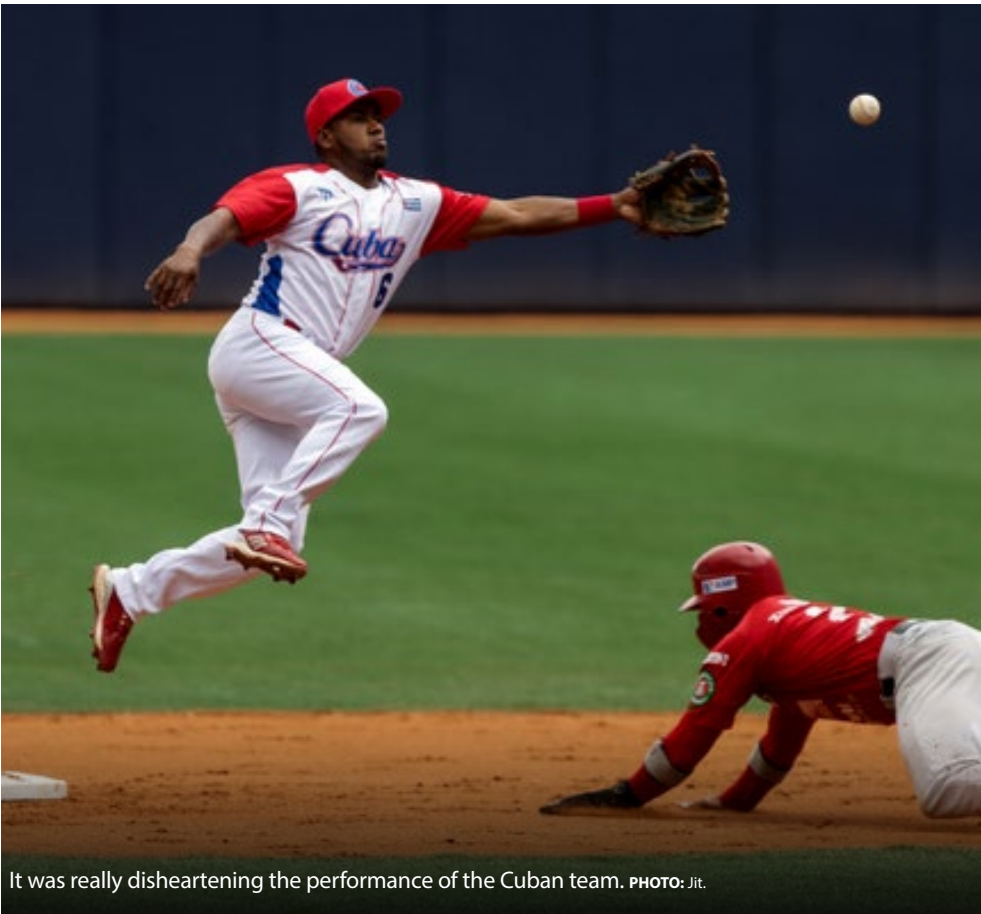
By LemayPADRÓN

CARACAS.- Ever since the roster of Agricultores for the Gran Caracas 2023 Caribbean Series was announced, it was known that it would be very difficult to win the title in the main baseball event of the region's Leagues. However, it was really disheartening the performance of the team that basically had players from Granma and Las Tunas teams, always at the gates of a victory, but chaining defeats one after another. Only against Venezuela they looked bad by all accounts, but against the rest they showed their faces and deserved even more, but baseball is like that, and you win by scoring runs. Once again, the offense is left to do its duty; not even because it was the team that hit the most balls during the National Elite League. Yet another proof that our hitters are far above our pitchers, on average, but more due to the latter's shortcomings than to the merit of the former. Before making any payroll for this type of games, the debate of whether we conform to win or for encouragement is a priority. One and the other are generally mutually exclusive, since without reinforcements it is very difficult to compete at this level.

Romanticism almost always conspires against the result, and it is necessary to look for other stimuli, no matter what. I understand the feelings of the coaches who want to die with those who took them to the national crown, but this is about Cuba, and the fans who go to the stands or follow the games through the media deserve much more. It cannot be a Cuban team that leaves a bad image because it lacks quality elements. Agricultores struggled with their weapons, but it was evident that they lacked pieces of all kinds. Were there really no other quality pitchers in the National Elite League to give them a hand, nor hitters with the tools to come out of the bullpen or replace another who is not hitting well, as was the case? I repeat, the incentive for the national champions has to be different, and those who are not starters must understand this. The formula to look good with them has to be found, and it is the pending subject of the authorities, both local and national. In any international event, the staff must have alternatives to not keep in the lineup men who have been blanked in more than 10 at-bats, and I say this without offending anyone; they themselves as professionals will understand that they are not helping

the team and must give way to a teammate to see if he does better. But when the manager looks at the bench and knows that what he has at

hand does not improve what is on the field, he has to rely on the awakening of his trusted men, something that did not happen this time. The old saying that you can't ask for pears from the elm tree comes back to the fore, unfortunately, and we continue living a déjà vu in Cuban baseball.



It was really disheartening the performance of the Cuban team. PHOTO: Jit.

Lorena Vázquez's Future as Doctor of Sciences

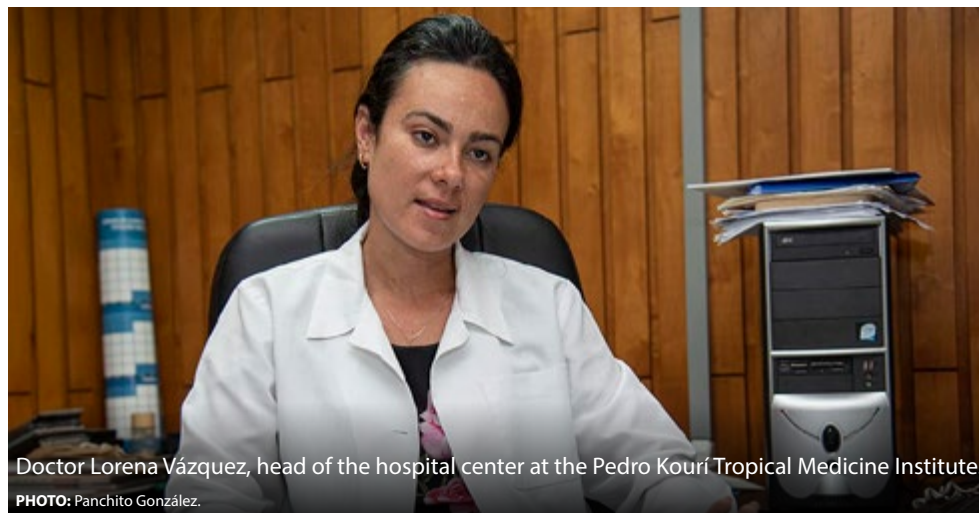
By Cira **RODRÍGUEZ**

HAVANA.- Encouraged by her humble working-class origin, Vázquez Bello wanted to be a doctor to cure her father, who suffered from leukemia. Unfortunately, he passed away by the middle of the first year of her studies of medicine in Cuba.

Far from shattering her hopes and illusions, this unfortunate event encouraged her to finish her studies and graduate in Internal Medicine, without suspecting the dizzying professional rise the future would hold for her. Today, at the age of 29, she is the head of the hospital center at the Pedro Kourí Tropical Medicine Institute (IPK).

Her curriculum as a student includes her formation at the Dr. Carlos Juan Finlay Central Military hospital and the Enrique Cabrera General Teaching hospital, until the sixth year of her studies, when she first joined IPK for a two-week rotation as part of an Internal Medicine internship.

When she graduated, in 2020, a professor told her that working in that institution would be an opportunity to know diseases, diagnostics, treatments and ways of acting different to those of other healthcare centers.



Doctor Lorena Vázquez, head of the hospital center at the Pedro Kourí Tropical Medicine Institute.
PHOTO: Panchito González.

IPK is at present Cuba's main authority on the disciplines of Microbiology, Parasitology, Tropical Medicine and Communicable Diseases Clinical Medicine and Epidemiology. It is also responsible for the generation and implementation of important scientific results, evident in the indicators Cuba shows in areas such as infectious diseases.

"I fell in love with this institute and since then, I dreamt of working here; so when I finished my residency in Internal Medicine, I decided to do my Master's Degree in

Infectious Diseases, which joining IPK on March 2021, because of the need of young staff amidst the pandemic of COVID-19, helped," she said.

Vázquez Bello told **The Havana Reporter** that in spite of the requirements needed to enroll an institution of such rigor, that demands years of experience, it was a stroke of luck for her and of many risks too, because she joined the first group of doctors who attended patients infected by SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19.

With no time to rest and long and hard days, she started working at room E of the IPK hospital center, a kind of an intermediate care unit where cases prone to complications were hospitalized, depending on their morbidities.

"It was a crucial stage in my professional life; I gained a lot of experience there, learned a lot. I had never faced positive COVID cases and in spite of getting the necessary preparation in terms of biosafety, it was difficult and complicated. I was scared to enter the red zone," she recalls.

However, she has fond memories of that time, when she made good friends, people who were grateful for the attention and care received, as they underwent serious and critical conditions of the disease.

"I had never been in that situation, but I felt really proud for the confidence trusted in youngsters, to the point that with just 29 years of age, I was appointed head of the Hospital Center, which is not a common thing, because it is a national and international reference institute."

"Renowned professionals such as Dr. Jorge Pérez Ávila, who in spite of being an elderly never stops coming here, helped me and continue sharing with me their experience. I admire them and hope one day I can be like them," she stressed.



Thermal Center **SAN VICENTE**

Privacy in a natural environment

Opportunity for Foreign Investment in Cuba

✉ vpp.smc@smcsalud.cu