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The Event Industry

By Ángel **DARIAN**

VARADERO.- The 39th Congress of the Federation of Congress Organizing Entities of Latin America (COCAL) held at the Meliá Internacional de Varadero Hotel positioned Cuba as a safe destination in the organization of events. The growth of the event industry at the international level, as one of the most important sources for income generation at present, becomes a key opportunity for countries to foster that sector and include it among its tourist attractions. Cuban Minister of Tourism Juan Carlos García stated, in the framework of this congress, that the event industry represents a priority segment in the economic growth and recovery strategy of the Latin American region, in pursuit of promoting inclusion, transformation and professional development. To Cuba, being the host of a COCAL congress for the third time – the two first, in 1998 and 2000 – allowed showing the country's capacity in the area of organizing events, thanks to a well-designed hotel infrastructure and modern technologies that are in tune with the international context. COCAL president Luis Ricardo Martínez pointed out

that Cuba conducted a perfect organization of an event that will be remembered for its hospitality and the high organizational level of all pre-congress processes, including the holding of the forum for leader-students that showed the potential of younger generations. Cuba hosted a Congress that faced huge challenges because of the impacts caused by the coronavirus pandemic;

however, through masterly lectures on education and the professionalization of the industry with topics focused on networking, transformation and inclusion, each moment was highly valuable, Martínez commented.

Fostering pacts and public policies; holding talks and sharing experiences to grow, are some of the COCAL strategies implemented in the 39 Congress, which was attended by 338 participants from 20 countries of the world, including Europe, Latin and North America.

Cuba is a COCAL member nation since 1980 and its objective is to grow within the event industry and contribute to the national tourist growth, an important source for economic development.



Cuba showed the country's capacity in the area of organizing events. PHOTO: Internet.

Enjoy Travel Group Opens New Routes

By Roberto **F. CAMPOS**

HAVANA.- As part of the initiatives of different agencies and tour operators working with Cuba, routes and programs were recently opened to promote this destination around the world, as is the case of those prepared by Enjoy Travel Group of Spain. Sales Vice-President of the abovementioned company, Luis Jiménez, stated his satisfaction for the start of operations from Barcelona to Cuba.

In statements to The Havana Reporter, the executive stressed that the first trip of this type arrived in this capital in July with four Fam Trips (tourist familiarization trips) that opens the doors to a new connection, in this case from Cataluña.

Jiménez commented that the trip is facilitated by a code flight shared with Cubana de Aviación in a 275-seat A340 plane and added that the start was successful.

The initiative includes four Fam Trips: the Spanish Nero Group of travel agencies; the Cataluña Team Group; an accessible tourism team and another composed of Italian agencies.

The Cataluña region, thus, connects to Havana with a direct flight, while allowing connections with other cities, such as Aragón, Valencia, the Balearic Islands and south France.

The above is the result of RENFE connections and its high-speed trains that move passengers from places such as Lyon, Marseille and Montpellier to Barcelona in just three hours – a market Enjoy Travel already has in south France and which the entity will move from there to the Cuban capital.

With the support of the Cuban Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) and hotel chains such as Iberostar, Meliá, Blue Diamond, Kempisky and Aston, a new possibility is opened to tourists, with a route as comfortable as possible.

Another interesting element is that the first group included clients headed by the president of the Ibero-American Network for Accessible Tourism, Diego González, who offers advice on the creation of exclusive packages on this regard, in addition to accessible tourism travelers from Germany and the Netherlands, Jiménez added.

On the other hand, the flight from Barcelona promotes multiple destinations, especially between Mexico and Cuba, with weekly frequencies that can combine weddings and honeymoon segments in the Cuban capital and in Mexican destinations such as Cancun, Mérida and Monterrey.

Enjoy Travel is a vertical, wholesale operator that has been active for over 20 years and now offers 24 hours client assistance and advice in Cuba in addition to complete programs of either circuits or combined trips.

This type of trip from Barcelona will be extended until the end of next October and its objective is to locate it in an important position every year, with the collaboration of wholesale agencies such as El Corte Inglés, among others. Those weekly charter flights to Havana are a step in this company's strategy, aimed at increasing air capacities to Cuba from different areas of the world, a strategy in which Spain plays an important role, Jiménez concluded



Sales Vice-President of the Enjoy Travel Group of Spain, Luis Jiménez. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

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Parliament Discussed Important Topics for the Country



Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel urged to act with rigor and avoid that those who do not work earn more than those who work honestly. PHOTO: Vladimir Molina.

By Melissa **KING**

HAVANA. - The first Ordinary Period of Sessions of the Cuban National Assembly of People's Power (Parliament) discussed important topics for the people, paid special attention to youth issues and the battle against crime and civil disobedience.

At the three-day meeting, preceded by a two-day commission meeting at the end of July, the deputies had an intense agenda that included the approval of the Military Penal Code and the Policy for the Comprehensive Attention to Children and Adolescents, addressed at fostering the development of those groups, as well as respect to their rights and their social inclusion, upon the basis of equality.

Parliament members discussed different measures to support the battle against crime and illegalities, including endorsement to law-enforcement bodies in their work against those scourges, in addition to speeding up those penal processes.

In that context, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel urged to act with rigor and avoid that those who do not work, do not contribute to society and move in an environment of illegality, earn more than those who work honestly.

The President stated that all factors of the national economy must act in accordance with the law and the regulations established, "without stigmatizations nor absurd generalizations that in the end are as harmful as the problems that are intended to be solved."

"Everybody is essential and we must defend everyone's participation in the national economy, without forgetting that such a defense includes respect to legality," he stressed.

The implementation of the Food Sovereignty and Nutritional and Food Security Law was the center of debates among parliament members, who knew that the norm still does not meet the expected results, a year after its implementation.

Deputy Prime Minister Jorge Luis Tapia told the assembly that the Law itself does not solve problems in this field; it is necessary to reach each piece of land, plot and backyard with the capacity of producing.

He considered that the organization of local food systems is the solution to reach food sovereignty and nutritional and food security, and that requires their urgent, sustainable and resilient development.

During the sessions, it was informed that 74 percent of the State budget for 2022 was dedicated to endorse expenses and social programs of the Revolution, in addition to the recovery of the provinces affected by hurricane Ian, the Supertanker Base fire (Matanzas) and the Saratoga Hotel accident (Havana).

As part of the analysis of the Cuban economy performance in 2023, the parliamentarians knew that last year, a light and asymmetric growth was registered, as while some activities reported increases, other high-impact activities had a tendency to contraction.

According to the report presented to the legislative body, general inflation reached 39 percent in 2022, mostly caused by an increase of prices in the food and non-alcoholic drink sectors, which until the end of that year, reported an inter-annual price rise of 63 percent.

Adverse macroeconomic and productive tensions continue in 2023, when inflation in the first five months reached 15 percent, while inter-annual inflation until May rose to 45 percent in comparison to the same period of 2022.

Cuba Denies Having Bought Medication from the U.S.

By Mel **SMITH**

HAVANA. - Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez denied the alleged authorization on the part of the United States to Cuba to buy medication in that country, a statement the Ministry described as false.

In his Twitter account, Rodríguez commented that the fact that the island can acquire medical supplies through subsidiaries of U.S. companies in third countries is also false.

He explained that the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act (TSRA) of 2000 was drafted to make any transaction practically impossible.

The top Cuban diplomat added that in order to make an operation of this type, a specific license of the Bureau of Industry and Security of the Department of Commerce is required, with very rigorous procedures that usually discourage suppliers.

He stressed that the regulatory agency that issues the license needs the guarantee

of having a proof, with inspection, of the export destination, ensuring that this is not used in the biotechnological industry, among other requirements.

To meet the above, the President of the United States can request inspection of "exports" in situ (on the field) to verify the purpose for which they were conceived (exclusively for the Cuban people's use and benefit), an absurd and inapplicable pretension, he commented.

The head of the Cuban diplomacy pointed out that because of the designation of the island as a state that sponsors terrorism, by the U.S. Department of State, the term of the license is for one year; "almost no one is willing to request an authorization to sale or trade for one year," he said.

Rodríguez added that ships involved in the transfer of authorized medication or medical supplies can enter Cuban ports as long as they have not carried cargo or persons to or from Cuba without license and do not carry non-authorized goods.



The fact that the island can acquire medical supplies through subsidiaries of U.S. companies in third countries is also false. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

While some Express their Hatred Many Give their Love

By DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- Hate, distancing or asphyxiation policies towards Cuba, a small neighbor that is though giant in its fight against demons, characterize reduced circles in Washington, in contrast to the love the U.S. people express. James Early, who worked at the U.S. National Museum for 32 years, talked to

The Havana Reporter (THR) about his admiration to Cuba, a country he considers an important part of his life, like many of his generation.

We understand well what the sanctions of a big country against a small nation mean and "that resistance of the Cubans in preserving their self-determination and sovereignty in spite of everything is what attracts the most, beyond ideologies," Early said.

About 50 economists and other experts on U.S. foreign policies and sanctions recently questioned the serious damages caused by the White House's unilateral coercive measures against Cuba and Venezuela.

The group headed a communication to New Jersey Democratic Senator Robert Menéndez in reply to a letter he recently addressed to members of the House of Representatives.

"Menéndez has a lot of power in the U.S. Congress's foreign policy as he chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee," International Communication director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), based in Washington, D.C., Dan Beeton, told THR.

He recalled that the Representative "comes from a family of Cuban exiles, so he has always been very tough in relation to the U.S. policy toward Cuba and the right's policy towards Latin America in general."

It is not unusual for a U.S. Senator to send an unrequested reply to a letter sent by members of the House of Representatives to the President, Beeton stressed.

border area of El Paso (Texas), sent a letter to President Joe Biden signed by other 20 representatives of the Lower House urging to lift sanctions on Cuba and Venezuela, partly because they contribute to migration to that country.

The letter received a positive coverage in the Washington Post and other media, while former officials of the Barack Obama administration (2009-2017) have rejected those measures of asphyxiation, pointing out their links to migration.

Biden was the vice-president when Barack Obama (2009-2017) noticed that the stick policies had not worked and decided to change them, although the objective remained the same.

In 2015, the embassies were reopened in Washington and Havana; over twenty favorable agreements were signed, and respect prevailed, from both sides, in spite of differences. The parties were then able to talk. Biden, apparently, turned the page on what Obama had made at the White House and has maintained, until now, the essence of the line Trump designed, which included the adoption of 243 restrictive measures against the Cuban people, many of them amidst a pandemic that brought the world to a standstill and worsen the crisis.



Robert Menéndez has a lot of power in the U.S. Congress's foreign policy as he chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. PHOTO: Internet.

DISTRICTS ON THE BORDER

On May 10th this year, congresswoman Veronica Escobar, whose district is in the

Support against the Blockade

Text and Photos by DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- Calls to President Joe Biden and the U.S. Congress to lift the blockade on Cuba constantly add more voices and actions, as the resolution recently approved by the Council of the City of New York.

It is significant because that council is one of the most respected leadership bodies in the nation, activist Rosemarie Mealy told **The Havana Reporter** when referring to the text of the initiative unanimously endorsed on June 22.

"The Council of the City of New York joined the wave against the blockade on Cuba that tours the United States," said Mealy when stressing that many U.S. sectors understand the need of lifting that siege.

The document also urges to eliminate all prohibitions that prevent U.S. nationals to freely travel to the island and demands the Biden administration to remove Cuba from the list of countries that, according to Washington, sponsor terrorism.

Shortly before leaving the post, on January 2021, the then U.S. president Donald Trump again included Cuba in that list, from which it had been removed in 2015 by the Government of Barack Obama (2009-2017).

The Republican president then adopted a policy of maximum pressure against the island, which his Democrat successor has maintained until the present.

About 90 city councils, county boards, legislative bodies, school boards, labor councils, trade unions (including the Professional Staff Congress of the University of New York) and other organizations have demanded the president to put an end to hostilities toward Cuba, Mealy commented. She recalled that New York is the seat of the United Nations and last year, "we saw 185 General Assembly

member states overwhelmingly vote, for the thirtieth time, against the economic, commercial and financial blockade on Cuba."

As the second most important city in the United States, the endorsement of this symbolic resolution by the City Council will represent a higher commitment and dialogue in this "shared hope of making normalization between both nations a reality," she stressed.

What happened in that city occurred in the same week actions in favor of the island were being conducted in the United States. Representatives of the National Network on Solidarity with Cuba knocked at the doors of congresspersons and senators; Gail Walker, co-

chairwoman of the organization, was arrested together with other two activists when they tried to peacefully meet Senator Robert Menéndez, one of the main opponents to rapprochement with Cuba in the U.S. Capitol.

Unlike Menéndez, those in favor of Cuba were personally welcomed by member of the House of Representatives for Massachusetts Jim McGovern, one of the most active congresspersons in favor of the normalization of relations between both nations.

A vigil was also kept at the Union Methodist Church building, near the Supreme Court of Justice and the federal Capitol, because "there are moments in which communities of faith are compelled to adopt prophetic stances and rise up and denounce injustice," Walker said. That week of actions concluded on June 25 with a big rally to the White House that included about one hundred U.S. organizations and social movements.



Activist Rosemarie Mealy said that the Council of the City of New York joined the wave against the blockade on Cuba that tours the United States. PHOTO: Internet.

Time vs Climate Change

By Joel **VARONA**

HAVANA. - Humanity has gone beyond the limits of nature and must now rush in light of the dark predictions about the planet's health, in which a better use of science is a must to face climate change and place the people in the center of everything, fostering South-South cooperation.

Time is running out in adopting necessary decisions and actions to revert this scenario, said Cuban Minister of Sciences, Technology and Environment Elba Rosa Pérez.

Impact on climate change is more and more evident and decisions resulting from negotiations for the implementation of the Paris Agreement (2015) do not make much progress. The worsening of climate change can only cause extreme hydro-meteorological events that are more harmful to human beings, territories, crops and even productive and power generation systems, Pérez said at the meeting of Ministers of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation of the Group of 77 + China held in the Cuban capital.

Secretary-general of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Petteri Taalas urged Ministers of the environment of all nations present at the meeting to redouble efforts to meet all actions that can save the planet.

We are alarmed to witness the increase of global temperature, in addition to the greenhouse gases induced by men, the official stressed.

Problems such as ocean acidification, sea and glacier melting, sea level rise and an increase of extreme meteorological conditions continue to get worse, he added.

Flooding and heat waves are happening in places where they never happened before; the same thing occurs with tropical storms, the WMO official indicated.

Taalas explained that hurricanes, cyclones and flooding cause severe damages to the economy, to the point that it is even hard for rich nations to immediately recover from the impact of those natural phenomena.

Year after year, we are witnessing the worsening of this situation and the most worrying thing is that so many measures taken do not make enough progress to revert the situation, regretted the expert, while stating his concern for deforestation, desertification and the increase of forest fires. He affirmed that the problems the biosphere faces are, to a large extent, the result of human beings' mistakes in relation to the atmosphere. In this regards, he drew attention to the loss of soils' humidity, which affects agricultural activity.

One way or the other, such reasons affect human health, people's quality of life and even their work performance, the official stressed.

Ministers of Environment, Science and Technology play a vital role in the improvement of our species' life in the planet and they should not let time run out before attaining such endeavor, he concluded.

Japan's Donation for Hospitals' Digitization

By Lourdes **PÉREZ**

HAVANA. - Cuba received a donation of information resources from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Embassy of Japan in Cuba for hospitals' digitization.

Five of these Cuban institutions will benefit from the project, which promotes hospitals' digitization for imaging diagnosis with the purpose of improving the quality of this and the efficiency of hospitals' operations. By digitalizing the information needed to offer accurate diagnosis of diseases, such as X-ray images and the construction of a Local Area Network, the medical staff can share their research.

The donation - which includes 150 switches, connection devices and 100 computers for the institution involved in the project - is a follow-up to previous cooperation efforts by Japan.

The assistance allowed providing equipment for pathological anatomy and imaging services to 34 Cuban health institutions, for an amount of 10 million dollars, said Cuban first Deputy Minister of Public Health Tania Margarita Cruz at the event held at the Comandante Manuel Fajardo Clinical Surgical University Hospital of Havana, one of the institutions that benefit from the project.

The official added that relations between both nations grow stronger upon the basis of mutual respect and cooperation, amidst the International economic crisis, the post-pandemic period and the strengthening of the U.S. blockade that severely affects the health system.

Japanese ambassador to Cuba Hirata Kenji expressed joy for the contribution JICA makes in favor of digitization in the field of medical attention in the island, which influences on the quality of services patients received. He also described the project as a symbol of friendship between both countries.

The Head of the JICA office in Havana, Ashida Tatsuya, commented that the initiative has a duration of three

years, which initiated in April 2022 and includes the training of specialists.

In this context, director of the aforementioned hospital, Mirtha Miranda, highlighted that this collaboration has allowed implementing new technologies, improving standards of medical attention and increasing capacities.

The Head of the Imaging Service of the same institution, Dr Abel Fernández, told **The Havana Reporter** that this is "a good experience; having a digital system in the institution is a strength."



Japanese ambassador to Cuba Hirata Kenji expressed joy for the contribution of JICA. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Caribbean Festival: Cultural Diversity and History

By Ariana **ARAUJO**



The 42nd edition of the Caribbean Festival rendered tribute to Mexico and its life and death celebrations. PHOTO: Uneac.

SANTIAGO DE CUBA.- The Caribbean Festival, held in this eastern Cuban city, radiated a wide range of regional folklore activities that included poetry, troubadour music and lyric art, among other artistic expressions.

The city welcomed the 42nd edition of this event, which rendered tribute to Mexico and its life and death celebrations, a practice that accompanies this sister nation's everyday life and in which spirituality, magic, diversity and history come together.

In the same scenario, the tangible culture of that nation stood out as an Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, as declared by UNESCO in 2003.

With the splendor that characterizes every annual festival held in Santiago de Cuba, the event included theoretical exchanges on the historical links Cuba and Mexico have maintained.

Over 20 outdoor locations welcomed this party, whose program included workshops on popular religions in Cuba and the Caribbean, ceremonies and rituals and a popular music forum.

To a large extent, the festival relied on exhibitions and the awarding of the Caribbean International Hall, in addition to dances; street activities; a tribute to the Runaway Slave; the

snake and Fire parades; the Sol, Mar y Folklore Caribeño (Sun, Sea and Caribbean Folklore) concert and the Devil's Burning, in which the people was the main protagonist.

The El Caribe que nos une (The Caribbean that unites us) International Colloquium and the granting of the Casa del Caribe International Award were also conducted as part of the festival.

The tattoo art also burst into this party with the program on the world network for this practice's copyright, whose International Day is celebrated on July 17th – another reason to include it in this year's Fire Festival.

The call to the International Tattoo and Piercing Meeting was a perfect occasion to establish hygienic-health measures in tattoos and piercing centers in Cuba.

Contest in this skill required the attendance of Cuban and foreign professionals, who used La Catrina in their tattoo designs as the main topic of the event.

It could also be called the Tattoo Festival, as contestants participated in styles and techniques such as Realism (color); Realism (black & grey); Neo-Traditional, Traditional (American old school, Asian) and Free Style (free).

The latter also included the Tribal, Trash Polka, Geometric, Fusion Art and Mandalas procedures, in addition to Black Work, Tipping and mixed techniques.

At the tattoo award ceremony, the event was summoned for the July 2024 edition.

A Look at Handicrafts in Arte en La Rampa

By Adis **MORERA**

HAVANA.- The 22nd edition of the Arte en La Rampa Handicrafts Fair brings new proposals to all ages and tastes at its unusual venue in Havana to last until September 2.

About 130 artists from the capital, grouped in 65 stands, meet at the Pabellón Cuba exhibition site to captivate the audience with attractive creations that include footwear, clothing, gold and silver articles, ceramic and leather works, among others.

As every year, this location welcomes important exponents of the Cuban music and other artistic expressions, such as dance, visual arts, literature, stage performances and creations for children.

The event started with the exhibition of Viaje Infinito (Endless trip), by artist Rolo Fernández and a photo exhibit in honor of the 60th anniversary of Pabellón de Cuba, organized by the Art Galleries Department

of the Cuban Cultural Assets Fund (FCBC) Collage Habana.

The fair's cultural program includes concerts, Saturdays and Sundays, at the exhibition site's main stage, a perfect occasion to welcome consolidated musical projects and young singers – the latter, with a large participation in this edition.

Events such as A escena con, La tarde del jazz, the Tres tasas gathering (hosted by troubadour Silvio Alejandro), Por los caminos del arte (hosted by Marianela Dufflar) and the rural gathering, will again be conducted.

Other activities include the presentation of some of the Cubadisco 2023 award-winning songs and the space Encuentro con, hosted by journalist Magda Resik. The first days of August were reserved for the Cultural and Creative Industries Workshop. A unique feature of this fair was the launch of the line of toys Biyaya, on occasion of Children's Day, between the FCBC and the Base Entrepreneurial Unit of the Musical Instruments

Factory. The said line proposes simple solutions for children up to the age of five.

According to its director, Aldo Peña, the project started as a result of the connections the creators had with the community and their interest to contribute local development.

Biyaya uses the remainders of main productions with a minimum of operations

included, in addition to wood and simple designs that represent the Cuban culture and traditions.

Toys were conceived following specific norms of design that guarantee their safety and are manufactured based on children's psychomotor development.

Several musical bands are expected to perform on August 13, such as Karamba, Síntesis and Interactivo, as part of a tribute to Commander in Chief Fidel Castro on the anniversary of his birth.



About 130 artists from the capital meet at the Pabellón Cuba exhibition site to captivate the audience with attractive creations. PHOTO: ACN.



Ice Mermaid facing the challenge of the seven seas

By Carmen **ESQUIVEL**

SANTIAGO DE CHILE. – Chilean Bárbara Hernández, world ice water swimming champion and winner of two Guinness records, is known as the Ice Mermaid, an image she enjoys as a result of being a strong woman and competing in extreme situations.

In spite of all the victories achieved on behalf of her country, the 37-year old athlete is a humble person who has won over 100 medals, although she does not like counting them because what matters is the privilege of doing what she does, the swimmer affirms.

In the middle of her preparation to complete the challenge of the seven seas, she agreed to talk to **The Havana Reporter** at the seat of her training, the Universidad Católica pool.

The athlete said that she started swimming at the age of seven, at pools, "although I met the world of open waters, such as the sea, rivers and lakes, at the age of 17 and I have specialized in extreme swimming, in places with temperatures under five degrees and also in long distances." She stressed that she does not wear neoprene suit, which helps keep body heat, but a regular bathing suit, nor cold

insulating grease. "In this discipline, I am the current world champion and I already have two Guinness world records, the latter in the Antarctic, of 2.5 kilometers," she said.

According to Hernández, this sport, which hopes to be included in the Winter Olympic Games program, has added more countries but Nordic nations are, without doubt, the strongest.

This discipline is also practiced more and more in the United States and Europe.

It is part of the International Winter Swimming Association, based in Finland and is similar to open waters, but temperature is the main difference.

At present, she trains to complete the challenge of the seven seas, which consists of crossing seven channels or straits around the world that are chosen by the World Open Water Swimming Association based on their degree of difficulty.

"I already completed the Molokai Channel (Hawaii), where temperatures are warmer but which is long (47 kilometers) and where there are sharks.

"I also crossed the Catalina Channel (33.7 km between California and the Catalina Island); the English Channel (34 km between England and France); the Strait of Gibraltar (14.4 km between Spain and Morocco); the North Channel

(35 km between Ireland and Scotland), and the Cook Strait (26 km, New Zealand).

"If everything goes well, the last challenge will be in Japan, the Tsugaru Strait, 27 km that are swum at night."

A graduate of psychology at the Universidad de Chile, she admits that this discipline helps "getting adapted to complex or extreme conditions, which in addition to sport, allows us to overcome difficulties, work tolerance on frustration, pain and get in contact with nature as the main purpose."



The athlete specialized in extreme swimming, in places with temperatures under five degrees and also in long distances.

PHOTO: Internet.



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Goals of the Genetic Engineering Center

By Fidel **MANZANARES**

CAMAGÜEY.- The Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center (CIGB) of this city celebrated its 34th anniversary with new challenges and research for plagues' control in agriculture.

Created on the eve of July 26th, 1989 by the leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro, celebrations for the date included a science and technology forum on the institution's projects and prospects.

Nemesio González, CIGB director in this province – the largest in Cuba – told **The Havana Reporter** that two research projects are in progress at present to have new bio-products for plagues' control, in order to increase resistance and protection.

González commented that the center also works in a project related to the development of a therapeutic vaccine for prostate cancer control.

"We are concluding the information required by the Center for the State Quality Control of Medications to conduct a clinical trial and then register the product," he said.

The CIGB of Camagüey province has long put on the market the HeberNem bio-nematicide, which is used to control the population of nematodes in several cultivations.

Focused on turning Cuba into a country of science, technological development projects such as this are conducted in view of their future production, thanks to the infrastructure Cuba has in this field.

The official also stressed that the center is likewise working on a vaccine candidate for rabbits' hemorrhagic fever, "a project we want to speed up in light of Cuba's needs."

Other research include a vaccine candidate independent of Gavac (an immunogen against Rhipicephalus tick) to try to control those mite in other species, not only in cattle and another study to control ectoparasites in fish, such as sea lice. The official highlighted the effort the scientific team daily makes amidst the financial difficulties the country faces

and the effects resulting from the U.S. blockade, which prevents access to technology and forces to look for raw materials in China or Europe.

In spite of this panorama, which also includes energy problems, the executive assured that solutions are being sought and "we have photovoltaic panel projects with strategies to reverse the electro-energy matrix" as well as studies on the potential of the roofs of our institutions and to cover this energy demand," he concluded..



The CIGB of Camagüey has long put on the market the HeberNem bio-nematicide. PHOTO: ACN.



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Following the Path of Rutas y Andares

By Daimarelys **PÉREZ**

HAVANA.- The summer Rutas y Andares (Routes and Walking tours) project, of the Havana City Historian's Office (OHCH), includes a large, inclusive cultural program addressed to the Cuban family, to be conducted until August 25.

Since July 4, the project allows families to enjoy a different summer, going from one museum to another, touring public and virtual spaces and following thematic routes and workshops.

This large project includes a tour of the tea culture, traditional ceramics and the daily life of those who inhabited Havana in ancient times, tours that will mark different itineraries to galleries, with the aim of proclaiming communities' sustainability and wellbeing. OHCH Communication director Magda Resik stated that this family space is a beacon of citizens' links with patrimonial values, to love the Havana historian Eusebio Leal taught us to revere.

Rutas y Andares is a public program that has been conducted for 23 years now; "it is like a participatory communication strategy, because it nourishes from the opinion of each of the generations," said OHCH Cultural Management director Katia Cárdenas when explaining how a project of this nature is kept in time.

One of the pending plans of this project is the inclusion of the Castillo del Príncipe (Prince castle), one of the many patrimonial sites to be restored in the city.

Other programs include Rutas Especiales (Special Routes), particularly those that involve La Quinta de los Molinos (The windmill country house); El arte de conservar el patrimonio (The art of preserving heritage), or El silencio y la esperanza (Silence and hope) – the latter, dedicated to painter Servando Cabrera's centennial anniversary.

La Quinta de los Molinos, an emblematic Havana site surrounded by a rich nature and located in the heart of the city, welcomes children and seniors every week as part of a proposal called Aprendiendo sobre la fauna (Learning about the fauna).



The project allows families to enjoy a different summer. PHOTO: Internet.

The said site, known by all the people of the city, regularly welcomes those interested in getting close to a varied flora and fauna.

La Quinta de los Molinos is an important national monument, the former residency of hero Máximo Gómez during the colonial time. At present, it houses Havana's Botanical Garden and a museum on the General's life.

The Los Andares (The walk) project, for its part, will implement Andar con los andantes (Walking with travelers), a proposal designed following requests made by participants of previous editions.

Other projects include Andar la arquitectura (Touring architecture); Por la huella europea en el Centro Histórico (Following the European influence in the Historical Center), or *Sistema defensivo de La Habana Colonial III* (Colonial Havana's defensive system III).

For kids, stage performances of children groups, sport-recreational activities, clown shows and the attractive Enanos en bici (Dwarfs in bikes) routes – of the cycle-mobility school for children – are also organized.

Varadero Josone Big-Time Music Festival

By Mario **MUÑOZ**

VARADERO.- The third edition of the Varadero Josone Festival: Rumba, Jazz & Son will take place in this famous Cuban beach resort – 132 km east of Havana – from August 21 to 27, 2023, announced the general director of this event, Cuban singer and musician Isaac Delgado.

The festival, to be conducted in the aforementioned location of the Matanzas province, will include over 20 bands from Spain, Puerto Rico, Mexico, the United States, Venezuela and Cuba, Delgado said. On behalf of Cuba, main artists and bands include Alain Pérez, Elito Revé y Su Charangón, Muñequitos de Matanzas, Los Van Van, Maykel Blanco y su Salsa Mayor, Divan y Los 4, who would invite attendees to dance at the Josone Park, where seven concerts will be performed each night, with free entrance to the audience at 23.00 hours, local time, he added. Delgado explained that the Teatro Sauto, in the city of Matanzas, will be an additional venue of this event, which celebrates the 330th anniversary of

the foundation of this city – aka the Athens of Cuba – and the 160th anniversary of the foundation of that emblematic hall, a National Monument.

The Chévere de la Salsa, as he is also known, commented that it is a satisfaction that the Teatro Sauto joins the event's program and highlighted the possibility this initiative offers to the older people from this city who cannot travel to Varadero to be able to enjoy high-quality artistic proposals. For his part, the director of the Teatro Sauto, Kalec Acosta, said that it is a privilege for his institution and for the city of Matanzas to be part of a Festival that emerges from Cuba's largest sun-and-beach tourist resort and praises the country's contemporary cultural values.

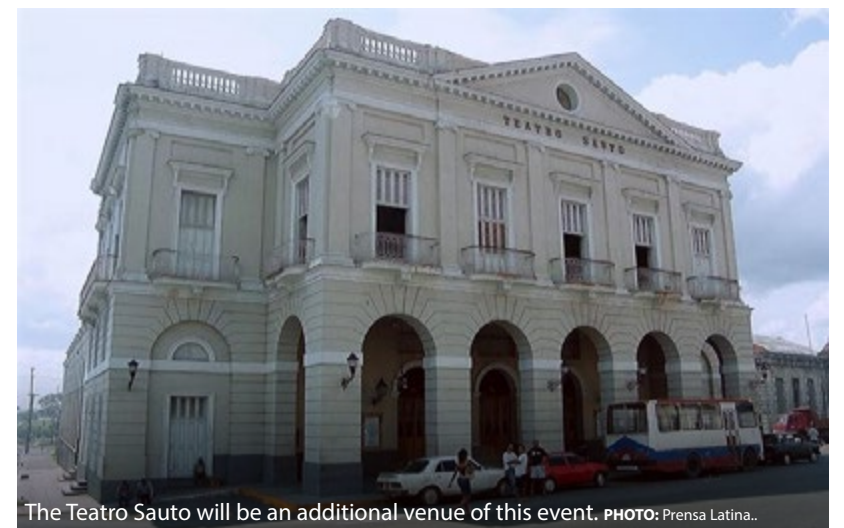
General director of the Music Recording and Editing Company (EGREM) Renier Rodríguez described the event as a platform that will allow showing Cuba's real cultural and tourist image to the world.

Delgado also informed that Colombia will be the guest of honor and that they expect the attendance of salsa artist Yuri Buenaventura, who has in turn invited several bands that represent

the rhythm of that South American nation's pacific region to the music party in Cuba.

"The idea is to make a festival for everyone's likes and expectations. Besides, we believe that in the future, it will be an event as big as the Latin American Film Festival or the Ballet Festival, which the Cuban and the foreign audience who visit us enjoy," the famous artist told the Tele Yumurí TV channel.

In addition to Isaac Delgado, the Festival is organized by the Cuban Ministry of Tourism, the Paradiso and Palmares agencies, the Cuban Ministry of Culture and EGREM.



The Teatro Sauto will be an additional venue of this event. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Industries Use Oil Refineries' Waste as Fuel

By Sabdiel **BATISTA**

CIENFUEGOS.- The Cienfuegos Oil Refinery, the largest of its type in Cuba, uses the wastes of its production to produce alternative fuel for other industries.

The Refinery's General Manager, Irenaldo Pérez, told **The Havana Reporter** that at present, they have a chain of continuous production with fixed products such as LPG, gasoline, diesel, turbo fuel and fuel for power generation. He stated that from its production, a petrolized sludge is obtained as waste that is later is used as alternative fuel at furnaces of the Cementos Cienfuegos S.A. Factory, Cuba's main cement factory, thus productively connecting the territory's two largest industries.

The refinery has an environmental responsibility and for that reason, destinations are sought for the petrolized sludge, which can be used as fuel by industries with large furnaces – such as foundries and sugarcane mills – thus attaining an effective production connection.

With this procedure, industries that use the petrolized sludge discarded by the Cienfuegos Refinery can reduce a considerable part of the fuel imported and protect the environment by eliminating potential sources of pollution. The Cienfuegos S.A. Oil Refinery will be one of the exhibitors and sponsors of the first Exposur 2023 International Fair, to be held in September in this central Cuban province, in which the alternative and efficient use of petrolized sludge as fuel will be shown.

In 1992, Cuba signed the Basel Convention, whose objective is to reduce the levels of waste exchanges to protect human health and the environment through a dangerous waste movement control system. With these actions the Cienfuegos Refinery has taken, the convention is ratified and imports are substituted.



A petrolized sludge is obtained as waste that is later is used as alternative fuel at furnaces of the Cementos Cienfuegos S.A. Factory.

PHOTO: Cubadebate.

3rd Edition of Patria International Colloquium

By Cira **RODRÍGUEZ**

HAVANA.- Cuba convened the 3rd edition of the Patria International Colloquium for March 14 to 16, 2024, in the framework of the Cuban Press Day.

A unique feature of this edition is that the event will be opened to the audience and will be held at the halls of the PABEXPO exhibition site at the same time the XIX Informática 2024 (Computer) Fair and Convention will take place, though the latter will be extended until March 22, stated the President of the Cuban Journalist Union (UPEC) Ricardo Ronquillo and First Deputy Minister of Communications Wilfredo González during a press conference.

The Colloquium will promote the exchange of ideas on digital, political communication and the sovereign development of ideas to strategically articulate collaboration projects, technologies and the left's formation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

To follow up its two previous editions, the 2024 colloquium hopes to turn

Cuba into a proper space to foster a new international communication order and put across sovereign technologies that can be easily shared, in alliance with the Ministry of Communications and other related entities.

Ronquillo stated that Latin America faces a dilemma, as 70 percent of its population is connected to the Internet and 80 percent to the social media, but the United States and western powers control access to those sites and manipulate them according to their interests.

He added that, in the region, there are no articulation projects such as Patria; for that reason, he appreciated the presence at the press conference of the ambassadors of the People's Republic of China, India, Iran and Venezuela to Cuba.

He also appreciated the attendance of top officials from the embassies of the Russian Federation, Belarus, Argentina and Vietnam, because of the contribution they



The audience will be held at the halls of the PABEXPO exhibition site in Havana. PHOTO: Pabexpo.

can make to the event's promotion and the understanding of that problem.

The 3rd edition of the Patria International Colloquium looks forward to the attendance of experts from Latin America and other regions of the world, for which the Cubatur Travel Agency prepares an exclusive tourist package aimed at those interested in attending the event.

The program of this meeting will include debates on topics such democratic rules for the use of artificial intelligence, ways to go beyond diagnosis and criticisms to transnationals and the creation of an entity to channel collective action in those fields.

Workshops on the production of content in different technological medium,

the challenges of artificial intelligence, international copyrights in the digital society, political participation of youth and the successful experiences of the Global South in the field of communication, will also be conducted.

On Patria, Cuban Minister of Communications Mayra Arevich stressed that it is a mechanism to face pursuit to Cuba by media paid from abroad and to raise the voice of our peoples, united and articulated. The XIX edition of the Informática 2024 International Fair and Convention, for its part, will support and promote policies for information technologies' use and development and will try to establish alliances between national and foreign entities.

Wide variety of wild birds

Text and Photos by Raul GARCIA

SANCTI SPIRITUS. - Mountains, valleys and large areas of vegetation in this central Cuban province are at present a reproduction and shelter place for a large number of wild, endemic birds.

The above statement was granted to **The Havana Reporter** by Abel Hernández, representative of the Antonio Núñez Jiménez Foundation for Nature and Man, the current map of the territories bird fauna, which has an important impact on our wellbeing, both physical and mental. According to local studies, over 600 fauna species are registered in the province - 90 of them birds - which requires control on the part of specialists in order to know about mates, nests, reproduction and even preferred places of habitat, he commented.

At present, watch is maintained over the species of cately and parrots at the Lomas de Banao Ecological Reserve, as well as the colony of over one thousand species of pink flamingos at the Tunas de Zaza Flora and Fauna Shelter, in the southern Sancti Spiritus area.

Another important place in this territory is the Topes de Collantes Grand Natural Park, at the Escambray Mountain Range, with a rich variety of flora and fauna species - over 50 percent of birds are endemic and natural pine and eucalyptus forests are abundant, among other wood trees.

In addition to the Caguanes National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve located in the Yaguajay municipality, it includes the Caguanes Keys, the Guayaberas Swamps and the inlets known as Piedras Keys.

Hernández, a master of Ecology Sciences and author of over a dozen texts on birds, talked about the populations of crane at the Guayaberas Swamps - the biggest and less common wild bird in Cuba - and the pigeon species, in addition to the hummingbird - the world's smallest bird - in all natural and urban environments.

According to studies conducted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), 31 threatened species are located in the province- most of them within the vulnerable and endangered categories, and some in the crucial period.



Guatemala's Electoral Chess Set Turns Off

By Zeus **NAYA**

GUATEMALA CITY. - The electoral chess pieces in Guatemala continue to move, some in a position contrary to legality, with crude and dangerous maneuvers, openly disrespectful of the popular will expressed at the ballot box on June 25.

Analysis of the present scenario indicates that this process is more catastrophic than the fourth conducted before, even prior to electoral campaigns.

Politics' underlying judicial nature excluded three parties that were inconvenient to the system from the race to the country's presidency: first, Movimiento para la Liberación de los Pueblos; second, Prosperidad Ciudadana, whose candidate headed the polls, and finally Podemos.

However, the most complicated position happened with the surprising advance of center-left, progressive or moderate reform Semilla party and its candidate, Bernardo Arévalo, to the presidential balloting.

The elites related to organized crime still do not accept the leap in the script that the polls did not foresee, the different, the alternative to power turned into reality, the

possibility of future changes in the national administration.

The so-called "corrupt peoples' pact" tried to kidnap democracy on two occasions: first, with the presentation of an endorsement on alleged irregularities in the elections, and then, like a technical coup, to leave the Semilla party out.

Last July 1st, the Constitutionality Court (CC) advised the Electoral Supreme Court (TSE) to suspend the announcement of

the electoral results due to an appeal submitted by nine groups.

On July 12, at the request of the Special Attorney's Office against Impunity (FECI), the Seventh Court of Criminal Authority ordered the suspension of Semilla's legal status, gave a 24-hour term to take it out of the contest and then used force against the TSE.

In light of the immediate popular pressure on the streets and the social media, in

addition to the firm and united defense to do away with the constitution, the CC granted a provisional endorsement to the said party, to the detriment of the suspension imposed.

The decision was received like a balm, eased tensions and allowed TSE to make results official and give green light to the calendar on the road to the second round. Political counselor Helmer Velázquez stated that Plan B fell apart; the population did not swallow the bait, there are no street disorders but there is an increasing social rejection to the process' derailment, he affirmed.

However, FECI recently raided for the second time the TSF Register of Citizens to get files of the Semilla members and terrify its representatives.

Social, indigenous, religious, entrepreneurial, university and press organizations condemn the electoral concealment and defend presidential balloting and normal elections, if they could be called like that by now.

Arévalo denounced a severe crisis of persecution that affects them as a party in the political race, as well as the impact on those who opposed illegal practices, in reference to the vertical position on the TSE Register of Citizens.

Regardless of disrespectful moves of the law by some, many continue to risk themselves in favor of democracy in Guatemala.



Surprising advance of candidate Bernardo Arévalo, of Semilla party. PHOTO: Internet.

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Direct Foreign Investment Increases

By Carmen **ESQUIVEL**

SANTIAGO DE CHILE.- In keeping with the trend noticed in the region after COVID-19, Direct Foreign Investment (DFI) in Cuba doubled in 2022 in comparison

to the previous year, according to data provided by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The annual report that UN body presented in its headquarters – the capital of Chile – indicated that 224,579,000,000 dollars were

received in the area in 2022 as part of that concept – 55.2 percent more than that of 2021.

This is the highest historical value since this indicator was registered, in line with the recovery after the pandemic, although it is not clear whether similar levels will be maintained in 2023.

In relation to DFI in Cuba, ECLAC executive secretary José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs told **The Havana Reporter** that last year, the country registered a breakthrough with the installation of 35 new foreign capital businesses – 18 more than in 2021.

The amount received exceeded 400 million dollars, 200 million more than in the previous year, the official indicated, while adding that key sectors for Cuba included food production (28%), tourism (18%), oil (16%) and industry (14%).

In works conducted with the Cuban government, we have identified that the main opportunities are linked to the promotion of exports, which is essential for foreign currency raising, given restrictions to access international markets, Salazar-Xirinachs commented. Within Cuba's potentials, he mentioned biopharmaceutical products, traditional exports of nickel, rum, cigar, sugar and the exploration of new items, such as cobalt – a mineral of which Cuba has the world's third largest reserve.

Other areas include computer and professional services, as Cuba has a large number of graduates in those fields, added the executive secretary.

ECLAC highlighted the benefits of the Portfolio of Business Opportunities, a policy design that provides updates on data related to investment projects, while systematizing information on sectors, amounts and provinces.

Cuba also has a single foreign investment window, an incentive that allows speeding-up permits, licenses and authorizations, ECLAC indicated.

The report issued by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean stresses that almost all the countries of the region received more foreign investments, being Brazil the main receptor (41% of the total), followed by Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Argentina and Peru.

In the Caribbean area, DFIs were particularly fostered in Guyana and the Dominican Republic, while Costa Rica was the main beneficiary in the Central American region.

More than half of foreign investments (54%) were received in the sector of services, especially in the fields of financing, electricity, gas and water, information and communications, and transportation, although the areas of manufacture and natural resources also increased.



JOSÉ MANUEL SALAZAR XIRINACHS
The executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs. PHOTO: Internet.

The Land of Marble

By Inocente **GARAL**

SANCTI SPÍRITUS.- In Cariblanca, at the mountain range of the Fomento municipality, in this central Cuban province, the Crema and Rojo Escambray (cream and red) marbles that are in high demand for tourist, health and scientific center projects in Cuba, are extracted.

During a visit to the Unidad de Base Empresarial (UEB) attached to Mármoles del Centro, **The Havana Reporter** learned that the said entity also includes the Pelo Malo quarry, in the Villa Clara province – which produces Verde Serrano (dark green marble) – and the Campiña quarry, in Cienfuegos province – which produces the Rojo Campiña (red marble) importers require.

Thirty-three years have passed since Cariblanca started the local and social transformation of a highly agricultural, rural area, that started to be known as the 'land of white gold' when one of the country's largest jasper reserves was found. According to specialists of the Empresa Geominera del Centro, the deposit – at the edge of the steep Guamuhaya mountain

range – is estimated to be exploited for over a century, at the current production pace, even though reserves can double or triple useful time.

Ten years ago, Cariblanca marble workers helped including their entity into the Comprehensive Management System by meeting basic conditions: quality,

environmental management, security and health.

Pedro Pablo, a resident who lives near the plant and is almost 70 years old, acknowledges that the big summit that many called a 'mogote' (limestone formation) and is covered with vegetation, came to benefit the local and national economy. "We lived over a rich mine," he said.

Engineer Yanileidy Aguiar, the UEB director, stated that everything is used, from the blocks' cut to the byproducts resulting from

the lamination and shining processes, "and we look forward to more," she stressed.

The quarry, whose staff have several years of experience, grows every year with the opening of new areas of exploitation and the gradual installation of new extraction technologies.

In addition, it is one of the province's key entities to substitute imports and increase offers abroad.

Production residues are also used in the program for local production of construction material, as pieces such as baseboards and other items addressed to companies are produced, which are then sold to the population.

The Rojo Campiña and Crema Escambray varieties are characterized by their hardness, which allows making thinner sheets of different sizes. Such conditions facilitate a varied offer to the tourism sector, the housing program and other clients.

The progress made is the result of the acquisition, in recent years, of extraction equipment, marble block cutters, load means and the improvements made in cutting and finishing plants' industrial process.

The Cariblanca marble mountain is located in one of the most beautiful inter-mountainous valleys of this central Cuban region and has reserves to continue benefiting the development of this community, with an important contribution to Old Havana restoration.



The quarry opens new areas of exploitation and the gradual installation of new extraction technologies. PHOTO: Escambray.

Economy to Face Structural Transformations

By Martha **ANDRÉS**

HAVANA.- Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel stated that the Cuban economy should face an essential program of structural transformations, in addition to a macro-economic stabilization program, in the next three years.

At the closing of the First Ordinary Period of Sessions of the National Assembly of People's Power (ANPP, Cuban Parliament), in its X Legislature, the President commented that the nation should move in that direction as a guarantee of achieving an environment that favors financing to development in the medium term.

After the debates held by the deputies during the three days of this parliamentary meeting, in which issues such as the production and commercialization of food and the abusive prices of goods and services were addressed, the head of state insisted on the importance of making use of the measures approved to address these and other problems.

The leader of the Cuban Communist Party said that the economic, commercial and financial blockade the United States has imposed on the island, particularly its extraterritorial nature, in addition to the world economic crisis and the slow recovery attained after the pandemic of COVID-19, continue to be the main

obstacles to the economy in the short, medium and long terms.

In spite of that, reports indicate that the measures adopted show a light tendency of recovery, without reaching the expected results, he affirmed.

The President warned that the implementation of those guidelines always entails risks; thus, families in vulnerable situations should be kept in mind in order to prevent them from suffering any negative impact.

On the other hand, he explained that although the national electricity system is not at the peak of its functioning yet, it has recovered, with a more favorable situation than in 2022. He then appreciated the effort the sector's staff has made to attain such result.

He highlighted the performance of tourism, because, although the goal set for this year of receiving 3.5 million visitors will not be achieved, the indicators for 2021 and 2022 will be surpassed.

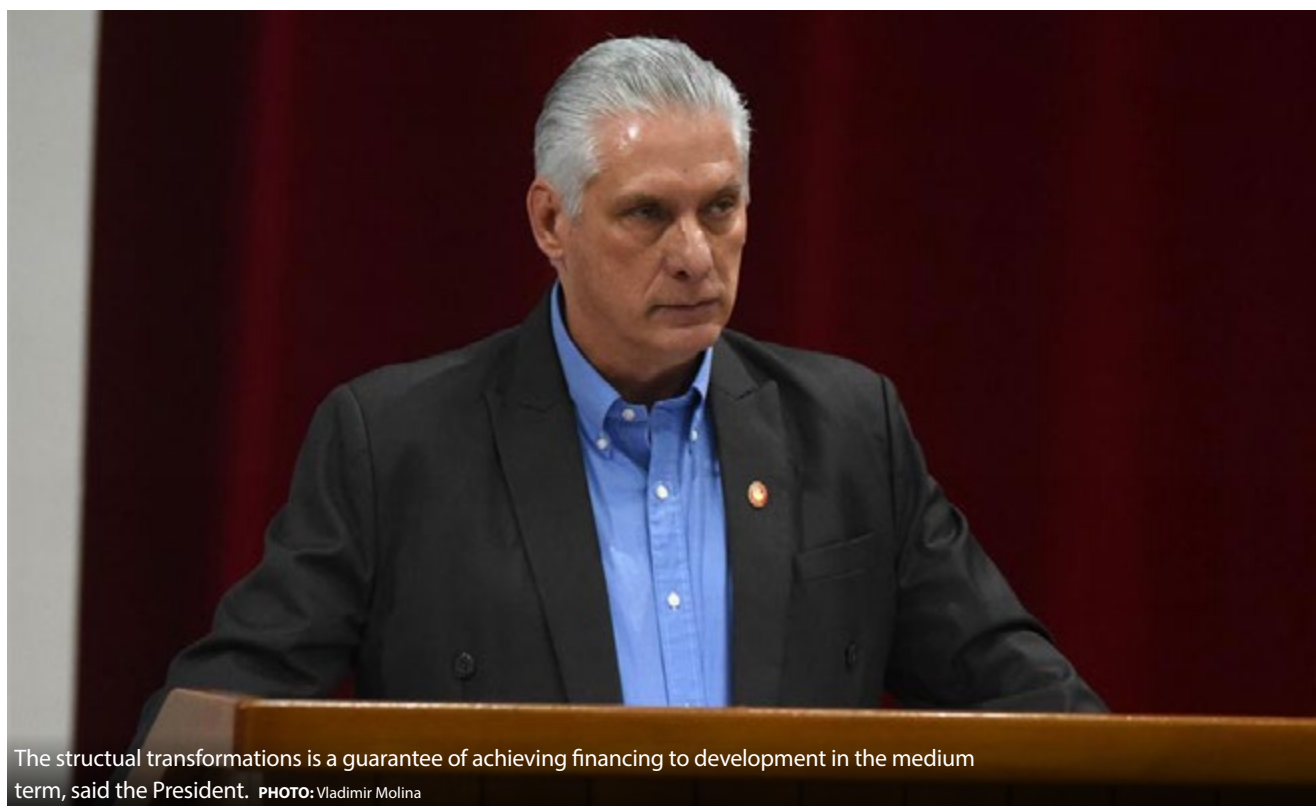
He added that the recovery, intervention and increase of the exchange market already started and that the basis, projects and joint programs of foreign investment were established in sectors such as energy and agriculture.

The work mechanisms and systems to recover incomes coming from remittances and other services related to foreign currencies' collection were also restructured, he said.

As part of the implementation of the measures presented at the Parliament to foster economic development, multidisciplinary teams of experts of the academic sector, economists, officials and leaders worked together, he stressed.

In relation to this topic, he mentioned that work is conducted to identify distortions of the model, which has allowed designing a gradual strategy to make progress in the country's macro-economic stabilization in the second semester of this year and the first of 2024.

The President concluded that the First Ordinary Session of the X Legislature will be long remembered "for the complexity of the period Cuba lives, for the topics discussed and for the way in which they were debated."



The structural transformations is a guarantee of achieving financing to development in the medium term, said the President. PHOTO: Vladimir Molina

Cienfuegos Prepares for Exposur Trade Fair

By Sabdiele **BATISTA**

CIENFUEGOS.- The government of Cienfuegos prepares the Foreign Investment Opportunity Portfolio to be presented at the Exposur 2023 International Trade Fair, to take place in this central Cuban province from September 14 to 17.

As part of its Development Strategy, the region acknowledges Foreign Investment as an external source of financing to access cutting-edge technology and diversify and increase export markets and substitute imports, said Foreign Trade Director Yanet González.

The Exposur International Trade Fair is an opportunity to promote foreign investment businesses, a way to attract external resources that can contribute to the territory's

economic and social development in the short, medium and long terms, González added.

Cienfuegos' Opportunity Portfolio includes 35 projects distributed in the municipalities of Cienfuegos (13), Cumanayagua (6), Cruces (5), Aguada (4), Rodas (3), Lajas (2), Abreus (1) and Palmira (1).

The fair's objectives are directed at promoting those projects, identifying foreign investors and start negotiations, which would allow local companies and new actors of the economy to become Cuban parties in foreign capital businesses. The event will be an opportunity to join foreign investment to short-range local development projects, with emphasis on those linked to food production.

It will also be a perfect occasion to present proposals of projects linked

to areas such as the food industry, tourism, agribusiness, industries, mining, energy, transportation and construction materials.

The Government of Cienfuegos will make emphasis on the eight projects it sponsors, seven of which are local development projects: four addressed to food production; two,

to textile manufacturing, and one to the local production of construction materials.

Cienfuegos is a province that has huge potentials for export and foreign investment, as it has an excellent commercial port, and international airport and a proper logistic infrastructure.

The Exposur 2023 International Trade Fair will include the attendance of businesspersons from Mexico, Egypt, India, France, Ecuador, Canada and other nations.



The Exposur International Trade Fair is an opportunity to promote foreign investment businesses. PHOTO: ACN.

Cuba: 74 Gold Medals and 3rd Place



Diorges Escobar, all-around champion in artistic gymnastics.

By Diony**SANABIA**

Photos Vladimir**MOLINA**

SAN SALVADOR.- Before the start of the XXIV edition of the Central American and Caribbean Games, Cuban sport authorities predicted that the national delegation attending those regional games would reach from 70 to 80 gold medals.

Apart from optimistic criteria such as that, it was evident that with such a number of medals, it would be impossible for the island to win the event and finish first, and that is what actually happened: like five years ago, in Barranquilla 2018, Mexico was crowned as the leader.

Such predictions came true at the event El Salvador masterly organized and hosted in record time, from June 23rd – the official opening day, although beach volley and table tennis competitions started two days earlier – to July 8th, without leaving behind the Dominican Republic, the sub-venue of seven sports.

The Cuban delegation, represented by 499 athletes (276 men and 232 women), met its main objectives, affirmed the delegation's deputy chief, José Antonio Miranda.

We have been consistent with the commitment and the purpose of achieving from 70 to 80 gold medals, the official said at a press conference in San Salvador a few hours before the closing of the games.

In addition to that figure, Cuba also won 59 silver medals and 63 bronze, thus finishing in the third place, behind Mexico (145-108-100) and Colombia (87-92-65). Mexico, founder and host of the first edition of these games (1926), obtained its 12th victory in an event in which it has always been present – the same number as Cuba, the only other winner of the Central American and Caribbean Games.

Miranda, who is also the High Performance director of the Cuban Institute of Sports, praised the Cuban athletes' performance in disciplines such as wrestling, track & field, judo, chess, handball, swimming, table tennis, artistic gymnastics and cycling.

He also highlighted performances in roller skating, diving, sailing and women's boxing, in which the Cubans made their debut.

As a sign of Cuba's solidarity, he acknowledged the work of the Cuban coaches who attended these games with 17 different delegations.

According to Miranda, Cuba showed indicators of efficiency in this event over those seen in Barranquilla 2018, even though on that occasion the island reached second place in the general medal standings.

We are pleased; our greatest respect to all athletes and coaches, and everyone involved in these results, the official stressed before stating that San Salvador 2023 allowed to continue assessing Cuba's sport reserve.

In that regards, he mentioned that there is a marked renovation of national teams, which will bear fruit in the next Olympic cycles, with a defined strategy until 2032, including participation in the Pan-American and Central American and Caribbean games.

We should not resign to Cuba's historical results in sports and have the intention of continuing among the first 20 nations in the Olympic Games, he reaffirmed.

The director also reiterated his appreciation to the Salvadorian authorities and people for the successful organization of this event and for always being willing to solve any problem. "They really saved this edition of the Central American and Caribbean Games," he stressed.

QUOTAS FOR THE PAN-AMERICAN GAMES

In addition to their outstanding performance, the Cuban athletes who participated in the XXIV edition of the Central American and Caribbean Games got 116 quotas in nine disciplines for the Santiago de Chile Pan-American Games, to be held next October and November in that South American nation.

Such results include three Olympic qualification records in track & field, the Cuban delegation said in a statement, which added that the objectives planned for this regional event were met.

In total, 20 sports reached medals: wrestling (15 gold); track & field (9); shooting (5); canoeing and swimming (4 each); chess, table tennis and rowing (3 each); weightlifting, diving, handball, boxing, taekwondo, fencing, artistic gymnastics and cycling (2 each), and volleyball, sailing and karate (1 each).

Such performances allowed Cuba to head the medal standings in wrestling, track & field, judo, table tennis, chess, handball and canoeing, in which the island reached 45 gold medals in total.

The statement of the Cuban delegation also highlighted that the country's athletes won 74 out of the 133 finals scheduled, which represents a 55.6 percent of effectiveness in this stage.

As predicted, we attended the most demanding edition of these games, in which Mexico and Colombia consolidated as powers of the region, the text added.

It was also mentioned that the Cuban athletes' participation was characterized by a mixture of hard work and pleasure, attached to fair play and respect to opponents and aware of the fact that, beyond results, "we have a duty to a people that knows how to reward noble gestures and dignity, although such attributes not always lead to medals."

According to the delegation's statement, what people lived those days of logic tension confirms the greatness of the sport system, conceived by the historical leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, with strengths to face limitations in training amidst a complex national situation, which has gotten worse because of the U.S. blockade.

After the performance attained in this event, the Cuban representatives already plan their course to the Pan-American Games, "without conformism, always looking forward to higher goals and loyal to dignity, the most valuable medals," the statement indicated.



Gold in women's 4X400 relay.

Brussels Summits Ratify Condemnation of the Blockade on Cuba

By Waldo MENDILUZA

BRUSSELS.- In mid July, the Belgium capital hosted the third European Union (EU) - Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit and the parallel Summit of the Peoples forum, events in which rejection to the blockade the United States has imposed on Cuba for over 60 years was ratified.

The meeting of Heads of State and Government included in its final declaration opposition to the application of extraterritorial laws, one of the components of the economic, commercial and financial siege Washington implements against the island.

The third EU-CELAC Summit, a space that represents 60 nations and over one billion inhabitants, warned about the consequences, for financial transactions, of the re-inclusion of Cuba in the U.S. list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism – a mechanism that lacks international endorsement.

In his speech at the event, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel was grateful for the rejection to the blockade and to the inclusion of Cuba, once again, on the list of sponsors of terrorism which he denounced as fraudulent and unilateral.



The Free University of Brussels hosted the Summit of the Peoples. PHOTO: Ileana Piñeiro.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, leaders of the Workers' Party of Belgium (PTB), Raoul Hedebouw and the Spanish Communist Party, José Luis Centella, demanded the end of the asphyxiation policy applied against the island and urged

the EU to assume a firm stance against the siege.

The blockade must be ended, as it is an attempt to Europe's competition in the economic field, which sanctions companies and banks that have the

right of trading with Cuba, Hedebouw stressed.

Centella, for his part, denounced the illegal and criminal nature of a policy that attacks all the people for the mere fact of choosing its own destiny with freedom.

In relation to the inclusion of the island in the list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism, the Spanish communist leader stated that it is shameful that a nation whose planes and soldiers are sent to world accuses a country that sends doctors and teachers.

Not far from the high-level forum, the Free University of Brussels hosted the Summit of the Peoples, in which demand for the end of the blockade on Cuba by the United States was categorical.

One of the panels of the meeting of social movements and progressive forces from Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe held debates on Washington's siege and its consequences, which were put forward as a serious violation of the Cubans' human rights. On the blockade, the Summit of the Peoples launched a call to hold an International Court in Brussels, on November 16 & 17, to judge and reject that policy.

What obviously is a crime must be given a legal treatment, and a crime must be judged and condemned, affirmed European MP Manu Pineda.



Thermal Center

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