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FITCuba Shines again at the Tourist Markets

By Roberto **CAMPOS**

HAVANA.- The 42nd edition of the International Tourism Fair (FITCuba 2024) makes an additional contribution today to the recovery of the travel industry in the island and stresses the importance its landscapes play in the global recreational markets.

Held from May 1 to 5 at Jardines del Rey, in the central province of Ciego de Ávila, the event gathered tour operators and travel agents from the Caribbean and the rest of the world interested in appreciating the development the industry has had in the country and its links with the rest of the nations.

Over one thousand specialists and journalists from all continents and markets with an interest in the Cuban tourist sector's update attended the event, authorities of the Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) indicated.

Airline representatives, tour operators, travel agencies, hotel managers,

transportation representatives, suppliers and other experts were included among such participants, in addition to a group of specialized journalists.

The fair, held at the Gran Marena Cayo Coco Hotel, included a presentation on the businesses and possibilities the sector's professionals can find in Cuba.

Under the promotion campaign Cuba es Única (Cuba Unique), the recreational potentials were presented, giving special attention to the Latin American and Caribbean regions, in addition to Russia and other markets, such as the European. Since the second half of the 20th century, Cuba has laid the foundations for the establishment of tourism; however, 1959 – the year the Revolution triumphed – marked the start of a maxim directed at the promotion of the country's natural, cultural and historical attractions, leaving behind the stigma that Cuba was a perfect site for vice and gambling. Cuba's first international tourism event, the ninth Tourism Agents Convention (ASTA), was held in Havana from October 17 to 24, 1959.

On that occasion, over two thousand agents from 82 countries, accompanied by their relatives, visited the Cuban capital – an unprecedented number in comparison to the eight conventions held before.



The fair was held at the Gran Marena Cayo Coco Hotel.

PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

The Interesting World of Recreational Diving

By Francisco **MENÉNDEZ**

HAVANA.- Diving-related tourism grows everywhere, especially in places with conditions for their practice, like the Caribbean and practically magic scenarios that are unknown to many people.

That is the opinion tourist guides and instructors share at present, particularly in the social media and the main websites on the topic, where they stress that diving tourism is a passionate activity that allows exploring the mysteries of the underwater world.

The information comes from the main destinations for this type of holiday in the world, like Tubbataha (Philippines), where since the beginning of March and until the middle of June, travelers can find white and black tip sharks, whales, hammerhead, tiger and zebra sharks, manta rays, nudibranchs, giant parrotfish, turtles and barracudas.

In such a scenario, the water average temperature is 28.3 Celsius degrees, with an average visibility of 30 to 40

meters of depth and outstanding points of immersion such as Amos Rock, Shark Airport, Jessie Beazley and Delsan Wreck.

The Tubbataha Reefs National Park, declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is a thousand-square kilometer natural reserve that consists of two atolls and is located in the Sulu Sea.

Other exceptional scenarios are the Galapagos Islands (Ecuador), a site with an incredible variety of sea life, followed by the Cocos Island (Costa Rica), a remote and protected paradise with a large diversity of fishes that is famous for its exciting immersions and abundant marine life.

Maldives is another place considered essential for its vibrant coral reefs, sharks, rays, turtles and colorful fishes, a luxury diving experience in crystal-clear and warm waters. The list also includes the Palau Island, with jellyfish and shark lakes, underwater caves and a large biodiversity, a real paradise for diving lovers, with relevant sites such as the Peleliu Rocks. At present, there are over seven million diving fans in the world – 3.2 in Europe – who enjoy such sites, which also include Australia, particularly Queensland, with about three thousand kilometers of reefs.

Bonaire, a Dutch island in the Caribbean, is also famous for its iconic Blue Hole, a 125-meter deep drain that can even be seen from the space.



In Tubbataha (Philippines) travelers can find white and black tip sharks and whales.

PHOTO: Internet.

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Translation: Yanely Interián
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Assistant Staff: Yaimara Portuondo
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Calle E, esq. 19 No. 454, Vedado, La Habana-4, Cuba
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Fax: (53)7833-3068 E-mail: thr@prensa-latina.cu

Present and Future of Younger Generation Under Debate



The young stated their concerns about topics linked to school dropping out and non-involvement in work life. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

By Melissa KING

HAVANA.- The XII Congress of the Cuban Young Communist Union (UJC) recently discussed the responsibility that important sector of the society has in the country's present and future.

Met at the Havana's Conference Center, delegates analyzed the UJC organic functioning, its political and ideological work and younger generations' participation in the economic battle and the defense of the homeland.

In those exchanges, attended by different ministers, the young stated their concerns about topics linked to school dropping out and non-involvement in work life, pregnancy in early ages, drug addiction and attention to vulnerable families.

The delegates approved amendments to the UJC bylaws, addressed at revitalizing the life of the organization, consolidating it as the real vanguard, increasing its scope and influence, and improving its ideological-political work.

In addition to being a space for debate, the XII Congress became a platform to denounce the impact of the U.S. blockade and the inclusion of Cuba in the unilateral list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism.

At the event, representatives of different national sectors took the floor to talk about how the unilateral siege hinders possibilities of growth in their sectors, in spite of the efforts the island makes to overcome such obstacles.

The young also expressed their will to continue defending the right the

Palestinian people has to live with dignity in their own land and denounced the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

One of the main topics under discussions at the UJC Congress was the need the organization has to continue developing actions to adapt itself to present times and add younger generations to its ranks.

Head of the UJC Foreign Relations Department, Mirtha Brossard, told **The Havana Reporter** that the organization must overcome ideological challenges such as the media campaign against the country launched by U.S. circles of power.

At the closing of the event, Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel referred to the challenges the organization and the young face and praised them for their victories, against the imperialism's logic "that pretends to absorb them, to empty them, to make them surrender and deny their luck and history."

"The great merit of the Cuban youth that lives, studies and works here, amidst problems with transportation, blackouts, inflation and other evils associated to our own insufficiencies, is that they overcome all that and go out every day to fight in order to make Cuba a better country," he stressed.

The president also praised their commitment to fair causes, their solidarity and defense of the legacy of leaders Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro, as well as other historical figures.

Authorities Urge to Speed up Actions to Boost Economy

By Ernesto VERA

HAVANA.- Cuban Prime Minister Manuel Marrero urged to enter a more dynamic and intensive stage in the implementation of measures to correct distortions and boost the economy again in 2024.

The statements were made at the monthly meeting with the governors and the mayor of the special municipality of the Isle of Youth, in which the head of Government stated that the way these provisions are implemented is inaccurate. From the Palace of the Revolution and through videoconference with the territories, Marrero stressed that important things are not done and it is essential to take exemplary measures in defense of the interests of the people.

The Prime Minister highlighted that the Provincial Council should not be limited to giving tasks but also to evaluating the administrations that do not meet their function and follow up socials programs, for which unity of action among all leaders and higher attention to the population are essential.

He also talked about the decentralization process of competences to the municipalities; reduction of the fiscal deficit; development of the national entrepreneurial system and integration among all economic actors, with emphasis

on the micro, small and medium-sized companies (MIPYMES).

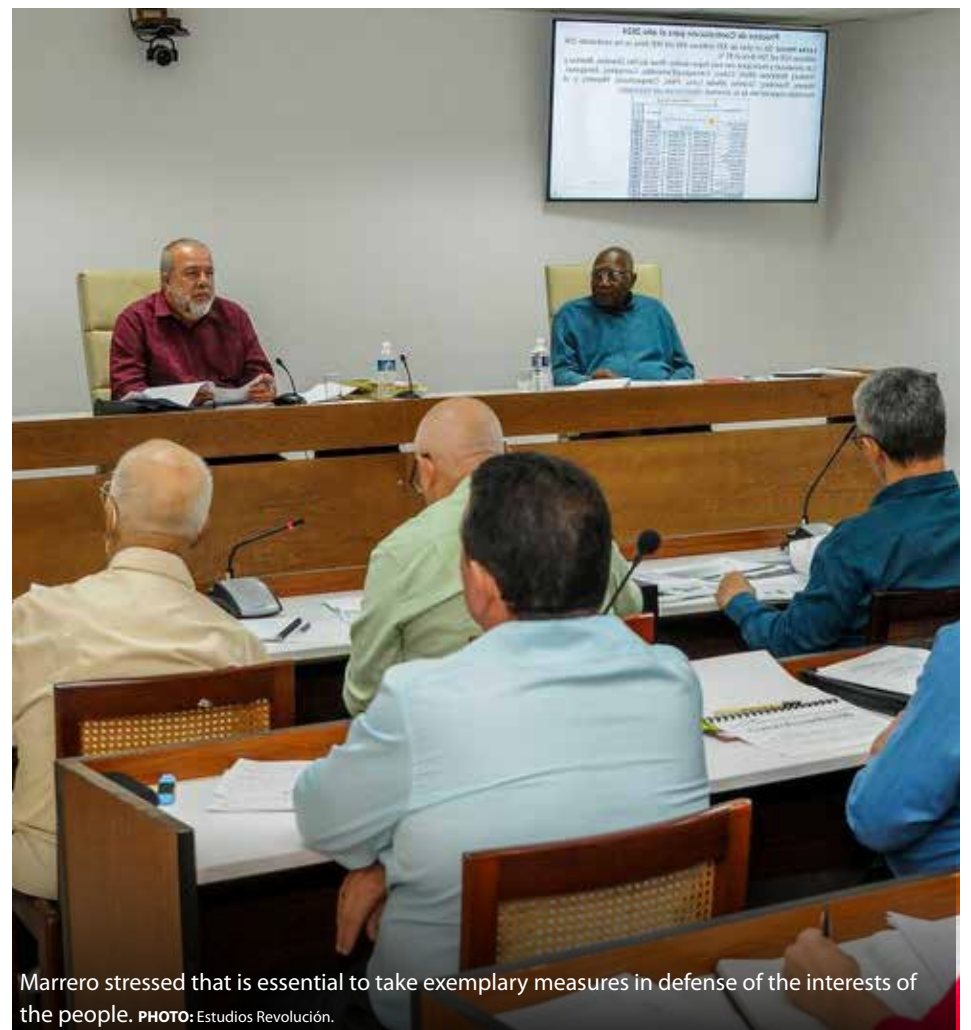
According to First Deputy Prime Minister of Economics and Planning, Mildrey Granadillo, topics discussed in April included food production; strategic management of territorial development; functioning of the state, socialist company, and resizing of the budgeted sector.

The agenda also included an update on the Law of Companies bill and the standardization of electronic systems of payment, according to official sources from the Presidency.

The meeting also analyzed the fulfillment of the housing program and local production of construction materials, among other topics.

Marrero recalled that the housing problem is one of the population's main dissatisfactions nationwide, and noted that the people must to be added to this process of houses' restoration and construction.

Members of the Political Bureau, Esteban Lazo, president of the National Assembly of People's Power and the Council of State, and Salvador Valdés Mesa, Vice President of the Republic, in addition to deputy prime ministers, also attended the meeting.



Marrero stressed that is essential to take exemplary measures in defense of the interests of the people. PHOTO: Estudios Revolución.

People Urge Biden to Keep Promise on Cuba

By DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- About 200 Cuban-American Democrats and hundreds of U.S. people signed a petition addressed to president Joe Biden for him to keep the promise which he has not fulfilled aimed at changing the policy the government of the United States has applied on Cuba.

"We are extremely disappointed and dismayed by his inaction, lack of courage and sensibility to undo the drastic and groundless executive measures imposed by his predecessor (Donald Trump)," says an opened letter posted by ACERE, a coalition of organizations that oppose the blockade on Cuba and is in favor of normalization of relations.

His campaign promise to undo the ravages caused by the previous administration on the Cuban families was one of the main reasons for which many of us supported you, they recalled.

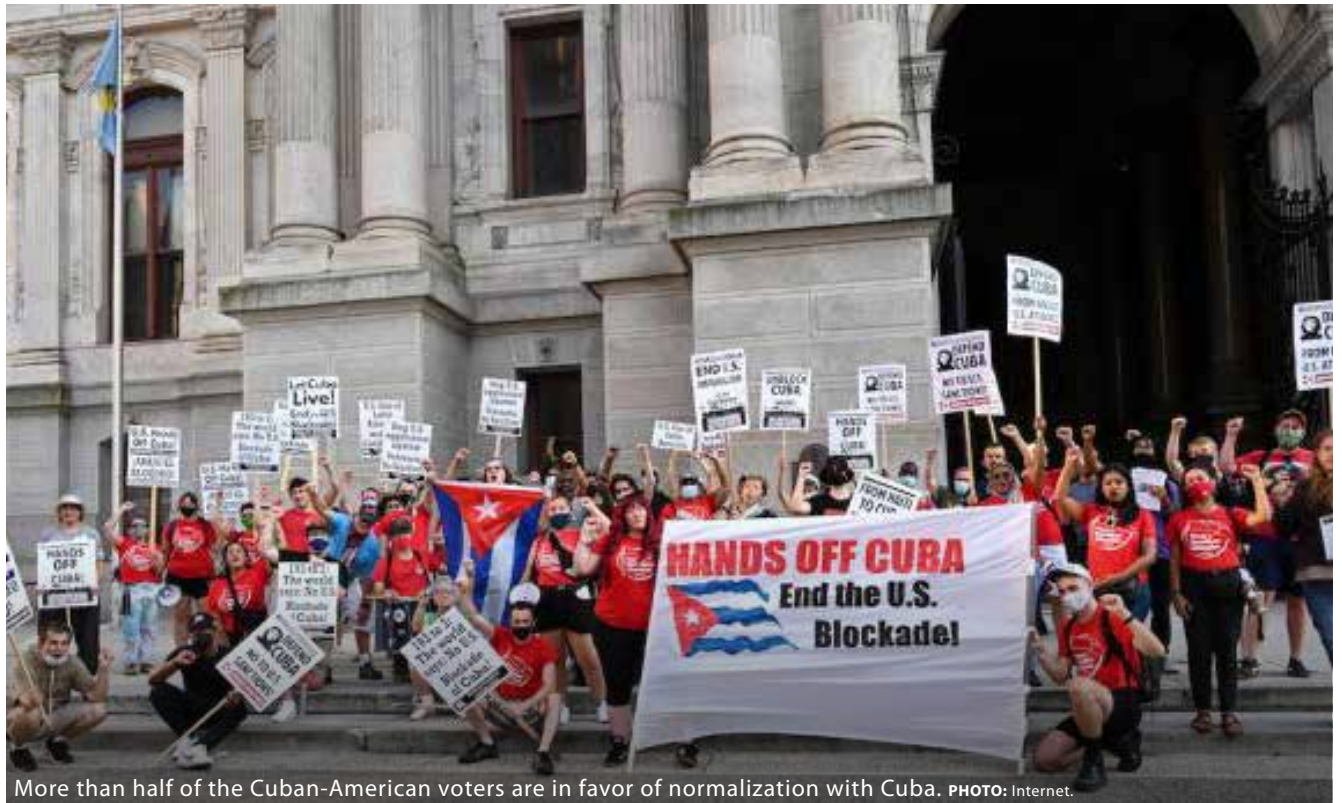
Signatories of the open letter also include two dozens of Cuban-American groups and U.S. people, like former federal, state and local officials; academicians; business owners; executives and investors.

The list also includes attorneys, architects, doctors, scientists, educators, artists, musicians, filmmakers and social workers, among others.

Recent surveys indicate that of the about 1.5 million Cuban-American voters, more than half are in favor of normalization with Cuba, while support is overwhelming among Democratic and younger voters.

Signatories warned president Biden that he will inevitably have to deal with the issue of his administration's policy toward Cuba, and in that sense, he will have two options: "a new policy of commitment with the island or maintaining the same failed policy that has been mostly applied in the last 60 years, as you did during your first term."

Only if you choose the first, you will continue winning a considerable part of our community vote, to whom this is a crucial and urgent issue, they stated in the letter.



More than half of the Cuban-American voters are in favor of normalization with Cuba. PHOTO: Internet.

But "beyond the Cuban-American community, we state the opinions of most of the U.S. people, who support normalization with Cuba and an eventual lifting of the embargo (blockade), which has caused so much unnecessary suffering to the peoples of Cuba and the United States," they added.

We need you to have the courage to implement what the majority of the Cuban-American community and the overwhelming large portion of the people in the United States and the world believe is right, the petition concluded. The letter was signed by former vice-chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Democrat Jorge

Quintana; president of the University of Washington, Ana Mari Caucé; founder and former director of the Center for Democracy in the Americas, Sarah Stephens, and musician and composer Arturo O'Farrill, winner of six Grammy awards.

Other signatories include Hollywood executive and member of the Finance Committee of the Democratic National Committee, Andy Spahn; vice-president of the Richardson Center for Global Commitment, Stuart Ashman; former National Intelligence officer for Latin America, Fulton Armstrong, and Busboys and Poets founder and executive director, Andy Shallal, among others.

Trump's Devious Ideas on the Caribbean Island

By DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- Donald Trump, the United States potential Republican presidential candidate in 2024, already showed the stance he will assume on Cuba if he returns to the White House; if he clamped down on



Trump describes Cuba as a failed state because of the shortage situation the very government of the United States has inflicted on the Cuban people.

PHOTO: Internet.

the blockade before, he now promises to finish the work.

At least, that is what one can interpret from a video he posted on his network, Truth Social, where he echoed publications that try to describe Cuba as a failed state because of the shortage situation the very government of the United States has inflicted on the Cuban people as a result of over six decades of a strong economic, commercial and financial blockade.

With an arrogant and interference rhetoric, Trump stated that leadership in Cuba could "be changed" if he is reelected on November 5 and tries to separate his "admiration and support for all the brave people of Cuba" from the "vile communist regime."

"It's not easy and we appreciate it and it's gonna be changed," said the former president who, when leaving the executive mansion without saying goodbye to his successor, Joe Biden, on January 2021, left things boiling: 243 measures that tightened Washington's unilateral siege and the inclusion of Cuba in the list of countries that sponsor terrorism.

Evidently, the former president does not admit in the you-know-who video that it was the reinforcement of the blockade under his administration (2017-2021) and the re-inclusion of the island in the arbitrary list – the line Biden later on adopted – the ones that have led the country to face the stranglehold situation.

In relation to the popular demonstrations in Santiago de Cuba, Trump was lavish in (dis)crediting the island's authorities, which he blamed for the Cubans' suffering because of a "terrible food shortages" and "energy blackouts."

Although the current Oval Office incumbent has essentially followed Trump's policy on Cuba, the magnate considered that "unlike crooked Joe Biden, who has been very weak on the communists, I stand with the Cuban people. He couldn't care less."

In a recent interview Deputy General Director of the Department on U.S. Issues at the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Johana Tablada, expressed to **The Havana Reporter**, the official warned that "most or

the vast majority of the maximum pressure measures" have remained in place.

They are "extreme, inhuman measures directed at avoiding the entrance of sources of support to the Cuban economy and our population, with the purpose of destabilizing the country," Tablada stressed. In the meantime, anti-Cuban actions continue in the U.S. Congress. Mario Díaz-Balart, a member of the House of Representatives for Florida, posted on X the points to promote "democracy in Cuba."

Díaz-Balart, chairman of the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Subcommittee at the House Committee on Appropriations, issued a statement that includes all six remaining appropriation bills for the 2024 Fiscal Year. Broadcasts to Cuba of the so-called Radio and TV Martí will be given a breath of fresh air. They also urge to deny visas to government officials and international organizations they identify as having ties with the Cuban medical cooperation, and call for higher restrictions for the so-called "entrepreneurs program."

Combiovent Ventilators Increase Presence in the Health System

By Lourdes **PÉREZ**

HAVANA.- The first Cuban lung ventilator for adult intensive care Combiovent, developed by the company Combiomed, part of BioCubaFarma, expands its presence in the national health system.

Until the present, eight of these machines have been introduced in two Havana hospitals: four in the Diez de Octubre Clinical-Surgical Hospital and four in the Miguel Enríquez Clinical-Surgical Hospital; the health staff responsible for their operation are undergoing training.

The above was informed by Combiomed general director Arlem Fernández when launching the new technology in the framework of the BioHabana 2024 congress, an international event held at the beginning of April at the Varadero resort, in Matanzas province.

The official explained that the A5709-model machine, whose sanitary registration was approved last March 28, is being introduced in the national health system.



Combiomed general director Arlem Fernández presented the new technology in BioHabana 2024 congress. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

"We started distribution in Havana's sanitary units and we will gradually get to other provinces," stated Fernández, who highlighted the product's big chances of export.

These ventilators provide temporary or permanent breathing to patients who

cannot breathe by themselves or need ventilation support due to a disease, trauma or other condition.

Their most relevant feature is that they cover all the ventilation spectrum and include non-invasive forms of continuous positive pressure support.

Other outstanding elements are the inclusion of a high-benefit turbine, low noise and high reliability, a breathe-in, breathe-out and proximal sensor, among other features.

Cuba started developing intensive care ventilators for adults on March 25, 2020 due to the need resulting from the pandemic of COVID-19; since then, they have undergone an intense process, until their registration four years later.

A multidisciplinary team worked on the development of this machine. "To define the requirements, we counted on doctors' participation. The Center for the State Control of Medications, Equipment and Medical Devices also accompanied us in each stage," Fernández added.

Combiovent was granted the 2022 Quality Award at the "Salud para Todos" (Health for All) Fair.

With more than 30 years of work, this digital medical technology company is responsible for doing research, developing, producing, commercializing and providing technical services to electronic and automation machines used in the medical field.

Defense of Biodiversity with more Protected Areas

By Cira **RODRÍGUEZ**

HAVANA.- Cuba added this year 144 new zones to its list of protected areas, on occasion of the National Protected Areas Day, held last April 12 and in an effort to preserve nature and slow down the impact of climate change.

The areas recently included in the protected list cover 18.54 percent of the country's total surface, which represents 15.94 percent of the land extension and 22.76 percent of the Cuban platform. In addition, it represents 87 percent of the total space to be protected, as identified by the national system.

These new areas are added to the 263 already registered by the end of last year, which in total include a group of natural, land and sea zones of national, regional and world interest.

There is another group, still in process of identification, that until 2030 will undergo approval and declaration, to increase protection coverage to 22.30 percent, said Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) Adiane Taboada.

Cuba faces important challenges that, in the world context of protected areas preservation, require strengthening

resilience of those zones and their communities to the impact of climate change, in addition to interconnection to other preservation strategies and extension of results through collaboration with different actors.

Other topics include implementation of the principles of circular economy in natural

resources management and involvement of the population in decision-making, Taboada stressed.

The island already shows good results in those endeavors, such as progress in studies on the values of biodiversity in the country; updating of the national legal framework for preservation of biological diversity in situ and the adoption, in 2023, of the National Protected Areas System Plan until 2030.

The Deputy Minister stated that amidst a difficult socioeconomic scenario, protected areas' protection and surveillance is still a vulnerable issue; for this reason, Cuba gives priority to access to technologies that increase effectiveness of those actions and

allow financial sustainability to execute new projects.

Making progress in the process of approval and declaration of new areas; training the staff involved in this task on the new legal instruments, and fostering national actions that contribute to attaining the world goals on biodiversity protection, are also given priority.

Some of Cuba's most important protected areas are the Alejandro de Humboldt and Desembarco del Granma national parks, both, a Heritage Site; Baconao; Ciénaga de Zapata; Cuchillas del Toa, and Sierra del Rosario, all a Biosphere Reserve, in addition to Viñales and the Topes de Collantes natural park.



Cuba faces important challenges that require strengthening resilience to the impact of climate change. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Jorge Perugorría: From Amateur Painter to Acting

By Ariana **ARAUJO**

HAVANA.- Cuban artist Jorge Perugorría started his career as a visual artist at a Community Culture Center; he then became a famous actor in Cuba and today is the 2024 National Cinema awardee who makes painting exhibits.



Cuban artist Jorge Perugorría is the most universal male face of the national filmmaking.

PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

From an amateur painter to acting and vice versa, the most universal male face of the national filmmaking granted an exclusive interview to **The Havana Reporter** in which he confessed his particular ties with canvases. I have a strong connection with the amateur movement; in fact, I started in community painting at Boyeros municipality, in the Cuban capital, he said.

I dropped it at a given time and then found acting as a way of expressing myself with which I felt a lot better, and that is how I made a career as an actor; then, with the passing of the years, I took the art of painting again, he commented.

That is perhaps the amount of time I dedicate to paintbrushes, in addition to film and documentary direction, the reason that has made me distance myself from the theater, which I am fond of, stated the Cuban actor, who is also a member of the Hollywood Academy of Arts and Film Sciences.

The renowned actor considered that in all Cuban artistic expressions there are

outstanding figures that represent and put Cuba on the map, but in visual arts in particular, specifically in contemporary art, it is incredible the high number of creators that today are in the vanguard worldwide, he stressed.

FRESA Y CHOCOLATE: A STARTING POINT

The Cuban film *Fresa y Chocolate* (Strawberry and Chocolate) (1993), which is based on the book *El lobo, el bosque y el hombre nuevo* (The wolf, the forest and the new man), by Senel Paz – who also wrote the film's script – represented to Perugorría the starting point for new projects, the before and after of his successful career.

However, prior to this film – for which the actor and directors Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (Titón) and Juan Carlos Tabío received several awards – a series aroused interest in the national television.

When the emblematic Cuban actress Mirtha Ibarra told him about the film, he was working on the TV program *Aventuras* (Adventures),

in the series *Shiralad: el regreso de los dioses* (Shiralad, gods' return) (1993).

I did a casting when I was making that series and Mirtha told me about the auditions for the film; then, she personally took me to meet Titón and he told me to go, the actor said.

I went having the character of David in mind, whose role was given to Vladimir Cruz, but the filmmaker wanted me to do Diego as he already had other actors for that character, he commented.

I left a rather skeptical, because I thought: "No, they are going to choose an experienced actor for Diego," but Vladimir and I, who have the same age, were selected and we worked for him to look younger and for me to look older.

Fresa y Chocolate is a singing to friendship, tolerance, respect to difference, he stressed.

This production, which was favorably received, is the first Cuban film to be nominated to the Best Foreign Film in the Oscar Awards, in 1994 and a year later, it won the Goya Award to the Best Spanish-speaking Feature Film by the Spanish Academy.

Piña Colada Festival, A Big Cultural Party

By Adis **MORERA**

HAVANA.- Great art and the music of national and foreign artists embraced each corner of the Cuban province of Ciego de Ávila during the XXI Piña Colada Festival, held from April 3 to 7.

Outstanding Cuban musicians, such as Arnaldo y su Talismán, Buena Fe, Laritza Bacallao, David Blanco, Divan and Maikel Blanco y su Salsa Mayor, shared the stage with artists from Panama, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico at the city of Ciego de Ávila and the nearby Morón municipality, the sub-venue of the event.

Communities, educational centers and other places of social and productive interest enjoyed the love and talent of an artistic brigade composed of musicians and famous actors such as Bárbaro Marín, Belissa Cruz, Denys Ramos and Flora Borrego, who were captivated by the same feeling.

Piña Colada also included the 8th Music and Youth Symposium, in which workshops, lectures, practical lessons and presentations by creators from the territory and other latitudes, were conducted.

Musician and founder of the festival, Arnaldo Rodríguez, described as excellent the presence of pedagogical schools and humanity career students in music sessions, lectures

and exchanges of experiences with other cultures, such as the Panamanian.

Another attraction of the event was the play *Fátima y el parque de la Fraternidad* (Fátima and the Fraternity Park), which was masterly performed by actor Ray Cruz.

Based on the homonymous story of Cuban writer and ethnologist Miguel Barnet, the piece has received great acclaim in Cuba and abroad, the reason why **The Havana**



Outstanding Cuban musicians shared the stage with artists from Panama, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. PHOTO: Cubavisión.

Reporter had an exclusive interview with its protagonist, a young actor who is considered one of the most outstanding faces of acting in Cuba.

The artist confessed that he had the intention of making a single presentation; however, the admiration the audience felt for him and the staging forced him to make a second performance – his 48th until now.

I think this is a necessary, contradictory piece; it talks about the life of a transsexual, of everything he has experienced and can continue experiencing, he said.

In his opinion, "this is just a pretext to talk about other topics, such as reality of Cuba at present, migration, how lonely we are feeling, and that affects me a lot, as an actor and Claudia Zaldívar too, with whom I share the direction."

The festival also celebrated the anniversaries of the Young Communist League and the José Martí Pioneers Organization, as well as the 60 years of the Music Recording and Editing Company (EGREM).

It also paid tribute to Ciego de Ávila musicians Nelson Oney and Eliseo Simón; to the 25th anniversary of Corávila, and to Pablo Menéndez and his band Mezcla.

The Piña Colada Festival, which founder Arnaldo Rodríguez described as a big cultural party, seduces this city every year with one of the country's most important and authentic events.



Voces del Sur Global
Voices of the Global South



Prensa Latina, New Challenges 65 Years Later

By Luisa María **GONZÁLEZ**

HAVANA.- Prensa Latina will reach its 65th anniversary on June 16, determined to face the new times with the same impetus as when it was founded, and involved in innovative projects in tune with the times.

In an era in which technology is more advanced, hyper-spread of information is a constant and fake news proliferate, the agency (born in 1959) strengthens its mission of making a truthful, objective journalism, committed to the fair causes of the world.

To assume that challenge, Prensa Latina strengthens its efforts from its headquarters in Havana, as well as over 40 correspondents all over the world.

Focused on increasing and expanding its international presence, the agency reaffirms itself as the Cuban mass media that produces more news every day and consolidates itself as an entity capable of providing information in the most varied formats.

Not only the 350 news published daily in Spanish and other five languages contribute to this result, but



Argentinean journalist Jorge Ricardo Masetti was Prensa Latina first president. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

also Photography, Radio and television services; the numerous publications, headed by Orbe; the Internet and multimedia content editorial department, and the team responsible for guaranteeing a permanent presence in the social media.

At the same time, the agency diversifies its lines of businesses and in addition to increasing advertising options in its printed media, it is also involved at present

in modalities such as web audiovisual advertising and narrowcasting services in airports nationwide.

All that is done with the premise of exploiting today's technological tools and making a journalism that meets its foundational mission, which is more important every day.

Born shortly after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, on the idea of Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara and Argentinean journalist Jorge Ricardo Masetti – its first president – Prensa Latina emerged to spread all over the world Cuba's determination to build its own model of development, as well as the fair, emancipation causes of the peoples from Latin America and other places of the world.

Attached to that spirit and amidst the 21st century's convulsed whirl, the agency is immersed in new projects, such as the launch of the multilingual platform Voces del Sur Global (Voices of the Global South), the result of the international conference New Operation Truth, organized last January by Prensa Latina as part of the celebrations for its anniversary.

Representatives of mass media from 30 countries met at the event and agreed to run a joint project aimed at uniting forces to get a better positioning in the world media scenario.

Prensa Latina took over the coordination of the platform, which was already online in March and in a few weeks has managed to add some fifty collaborators, including media and personalities.

Like that, the agency celebrates a new anniversary, loyal to its principles and determined to face present and future challenges.



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Support to the Cuban Revolution

By Melissa**KING**

HAVANA.- About four million Cubans ratified their support to Socialism and the Revolution during the mass demonstrations and gatherings held on occasion of May 1st, International Workers Day.

Cuban flags and posters on the proletarian party decked the mass gathering of students, professionals, workers, families and solidarity groups all over the island.

In Havana, about 200,000 people from five municipalities and more than 100,000 friends of Cuba gathered at the Anti-Imperialist Tribune to celebrate May Day.

In the presence of leader of the Cuban Revolution Raúl Castro and president Miguel Díaz-Canel, the people gathered at the capital city voiced their rejection to the blockade imposed by the United States for over six decades, which affects the lives of more than 11 million Cubans.

General secretary of the Cuban Trade Union (CTC) Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento stated that the event was dedicated to the heroic act of the Cuban people, whose efforts are focused on the recovery of the economy, the main battle.

The trade union leader urged to work in order to consolidate the socialist state, and thus guarantee the growth of the goods and services offer that favors reduction of prices.

Guilarte affirmed that International Workers Day is celebrated when the Palestinian people suffers the biggest crime.

"Cuba and its people do not remain indifferent to these serious violations," he stressed.

In Santiago de Cuba, the country's second most important city – located in the east – president of the National Assembly of People's Power (Cuban parliament) Esteban Lazo headed the rally, that

gathered about 300,000 people at the Mayor General Antonio Maceo Grajales Revolution Square.

At the opening speech, the CTC provincial secretary Orlando Beltran stated that workers expressed their firm condemnation to the indiscriminate bombings launched by Israel that has caused the death of dozens of thousands of Palestinian people, mostly women and children.

Solidarity brigades from France, Spain, Germany and other nations also condemned the economic,

commercial and financial siege that prevents the overall development of Cuba's productive forces, in addition to fostering political subversion, violence and break of the Cubans' commitments to their institutions.

Meanwhile, Camagüey's Revolution Square, where historical leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro last spoke to the people of this province (1989), thousands of workers got together on the occasion of May Day.

In Santa Clara, a city located in the country's central region, the people and workers gathered at the Che Guevara Square, at the memorial where the Argentinean-Cuban commander's remains are kept.



Four million participated during the mass demonstrations on occasion of May 1st. PHOTO: Panchito González.

Challenges and Achievements in Women Empowerment

By Melissa**KING**

HAVANA.-Although Cuba has reached several achievements in women empowerment, there are still cultural barriers and believes that have to be overcome, as they harm and discriminate girls, adolescents and women.

Over 300 women gathered in this capital debated about those barriers at the XI Cuban Women Federation (FMC) Congress.

At the event, the delegates analyzed topics linked to youth as a guarantee of the organization's continuity, its functioning, women's economic empowerment, prevention work and social care.

Several recommendations were made in such discussions on the need of fostering women employment, especially of young girls, as well as the creation of community projects and the promotion of measures that allow increasing this sector's quality of life. The importance of extending the work the FMC conducts to all Cuban women in all corners of the country, was also highlighted.

The participants stressed the need of developing scientific researches that allow studying the implementation of public policies with a genre approach, to make progress towards full equality.

They also referred to the importance of strengthening the fight against drugs, social lack

of discipline, corruption, crimes and other negative behaviors.

Similarly, the delegates talked about the importance of promoting the implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy for Prevention and Attention to Gender Violence in the family environment through actions such as "Dialogues in favor of families free from violence."

The main topics of discussion included the prevention work, the fight against drugs and pregnancy in adolescence – the latter, a phenomenon that experts already consider a social problem in the island.

At the closing of the event, Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel highlighted the historic value of an organization that was created to solve women's problems but also to foster equality and human dignity. The president referred to the challenges the FMC faces in the current context, marked by the U.S. blockade, while recalling the legal guarantees women enjoy in Cuba.

Díaz-Canel urged the organization's members to tirelessly work from the grassroots levels to have an impact on the lives of the people living in vulnerable situations.

For his part, leader of the Cuban Revolution, Raúl Castro, who has participated in all the FMC congresses – since its creation on August 23, 1960 – stated his satisfaction and pleasure for the work the organization has conducted in difficult times resulting from the increasing aggressiveness of the U.S. imperialism.



Over 300 delegates gathered in Havana for the XI Cuban Women Federation (FMC) Congress. PHOTO: Vladimír Molina.

Cuban National Ballet: A Fine Wine

By Fausto**TRIANA**

MADRID.- The names of Alicia, Josefina, Loipa, Aurora or Mirta, sacred in the Cuban National Ballet (BNC), seem to reappear again in younger generations, as spectators in Spain showed with their standing ovation.

They are just like a fine wine, or at least that is how the European specialized critics described them since the very beginning of the BNC tour, which will also include Portugal. The debut started in Oviedo, Asturias, where a box sign raised expectations: "sold out." Shortly after, an ovation confirmed the success of the Cuban ballet premiere in that Iberian nation.

All the capacities of the Campoamor Theater – 1,491 persons – were sold out for the presentation of the full version of Don Quixote, performed by the Cuban dancers with their director, Viengsay Valdés, at the top.

Valdés, who assumed the direction of the Cuban National Ballet in 2020 after the untainted leadership of late Alicia Alonso, excelled herself in the role of Kitri, together with Angelo Montero as Barber Basilio and Gabriela Druyet as Mercedes.

The tour continued in San Lorenzo del Escorial, with another staging of Don Quixote and a rehearsal with the audience at the Escorial Theater Auditorium, northeast of Madrid.

In Móstoles, Toledo, Granada, Andalucía; Cádiz, Estepona, the company changed the repertoire and presented Giselle. Then, in Málaga, they again played Don Quixote, while in Melilla, they presented a concert program.

In Alicante, in the Mediterranean coast, they again performed Don Quixote at the Main Theater, in this occasion, to celebrate the International Book Day and the Day of the Spanish Language.

On the southern coast and with the same piece, they offered two performances at the Murcia Theater Auditorium, while in Altea, Comunidad Valenciana, they played Giselle at the Theater Auditorium, in the month of April.

This month, in Catalonia, the Cuban company will indistinctly perform Don Quixote and Giselle in Terrasa, at the Factoría cultural center; San Cugat, at the Theater Auditorium, and Manresa, at the Kursall Theater.

The press of the different cities in which this 76-year old company showed its virtues praised their performances as follows:

It is one of the most prestigious dance companies in the world and plays a prominent role in the Spanish-American contemporary culture. Main expression of the Cuban ballet school, which on the basis of the cultural legacy that offers several centuries of tradition in stage dance, has attained its own physiognomy in which that inheritance combines with essential features of the national culture.

By May 10, the BNC will offer two performances in Lisbon, capital of Portugal, at the Belén Cultural Center.

Back to Spain, on May 15, the company will act at the Santander Sport Palace, with the premiere of a piece with choreography of Andrea Morricone and on May 22, they will act in Sevilla and then in Rioja Don Quijote.

It has been announced that this intense tour will also include León, Salamanca, Torrejón de Ardoz and Zaragoza, with four performances at the Main Theater.



Cuban National Ballet is one of the most prestigious dance companies in the world. ФУТО: Prensa Latina.

Alfredo Sosabravo: Colors that Still Last

By Damarelys**PÉREZ**



Sosabravo (1930) a modern nonagenarian man commented that he has a lot of strength to paint.

PHOTO: Trabajadores.

HAVANA.-The bright colors of Cuban visual arts maestro Alfredo Sosabravo's work were the light of the goals that today shape the shades created like evolution.

In the past, he had his own and peculiar style, which is preserved in the present and will last in the future; that is the way he reached the unique personality that today characterizes his paintings, sculptures, glasses and all the group of materials used to obtain that aesthetics.

In an exclusive interview with **The Havana Reporter**, Sosabravo (1930), a painter, engraver, sculptor, drawer, ceramist and modern nonagenarian man (94) who is still active, although more slow, commented that he has a lot of strength to paint but he now does it with less rigor to take care of himself.

I keep painting as I used to do; I do not lack the enthusiasm nor the strength, but I have limited my working hours not to become weak because of my physical age, not my mental age, the artist said. Since last year, I stopped long journeys because it is a waste of energy, he stressed.

I respect my waking hours in the morning, my meal hours; I have now added to my daily routine taking care of a beautiful garden I made and after breakfast, I walk for a while through that garden, which I enjoy a lot, Sosabravo told THR.

A painter after all, he is captivated by his love and bent for that range of colors that come from nature.

He talked to this news media about the way he carefully organizes his daily activities, without stopping from meeting his friends, taking a nap or using his paintbrushes.

In relation to the rest he gets after lunch, the creator explained how he does it.

After that sacred moment, I take a short nap, seated not lying down, but I always like to be active, both physically and mentally, he affirmed.

A lover of romance, thriller and mystery films, like those of Agatha Christie, Sosabravo lives life with love and wisdom; he respects it, appreciates it and enjoys it.

He is considered one of Cuba's most important visual arts and design artists and for being so rigorous in his work, he has also become one of the most original architects of visual arts' two-dimensional expressions in the country.

I have been thinking of doing a personal exhibit for some time now, but we lack the space and I cannot do it at the Fine Arts Museum because there are difficulties due to the stairs, he regretted.

Sosabravo has the right and the reason when he affirms that he has gone beyond the age of 90 physically and mentally in peace, in shape, which he is able to achieve without and with excesses: Without them, respecting hours, both of meals and rest, because he does not want to be an "exhausted elderly," he said laughing. With excesses, yes, of happiness, harmony, smiles and joy; these and knowledge are never in excess, he concluded.

Another Round of Cuba-US Migratory Talks

Text and Photo Deisy **FRANCIS**

WASHINGTON.- The impact of the blockade was one of the main topics Cuba stressed during the recent migratory talks with the United States, affirmed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlos Fernández de Cossío. In an interview with The Havana Reporter in this capital, at the end of the meeting, the diplomat said that as usually done in that type of exchanges, they analyzed the fulfillment of migratory agreements, which date back to 1984.

Those documents' key point is mutual commitment to guarantee that migration between both nations be orderly, regular and safe, which entails fulfillment by both parties, the official commented.

"What happens is that we cannot forget the political environment of those agreements, the world's current situation, even though there are factors that are not included in

the letter of those agreements," he said.

De Cossío also mentioned that it is evident that for Cuba, with a migratory potential as that of any other Latin American, Central American or South American country, people's socioeconomic conditions have a major influence on that decision.

"The extraordinary and peculiar thing about Cuba is that those socioeconomic conditions are the result of a strong influence of the policy of the United States Government, which has a big economy and strong power that is precisely directed at asphyxiating the Cuban economy, depressing incomes, the population's standard of living, affecting essential services," he affirmed.

That policy is directed at "destroying the social justice system from which the wellbeing of most of the Cuban population depends on, and for that reason, it is a topic that inevitably has to be debated, to be mentioned in the migratory rounds of talk

when we analyze the common purpose of ensuring a regular, safe and orderly migration," highlighted the official.

"The economic blockade is a means of aggression, an instrument to cause a political result through damage to the Cuban population's standard of living," he added.

De Cossío stated that that unilateral siege "grew stronger under the government of Donald Trump and continues to intensify and grow stronger during the present government of Joe Biden, whose term of office ends next January."

To Cuba, it is also extremely important that visa processing for temporary visits

to the United States, what they call non-immigrant visas, resume in Cuba and we said so, added the deputy minister.

When assessing the present round of talks, Fernández de Cossío affirmed that the meeting was held in a pretty professional environment, characterized by understanding and in which Cuba stated its arguments to Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the Department of State, Eric Jacobstein. During his stay in Washington, Fernández de Cossío met over a hundred Cuban residents in the United States, whom he reiterated his Government's will to continue strengthening ties with his nationals living abroad.



During his stay in Washington, Fernández de Cossío met over a hundred Cuban residents in the United States. PHOTO: Archives.

Science in Favor of Education in Latin America

By Yugdani **VICET**

SANTIAGO DE CUBA.- The Latin American Pedagogic Epistemology Study Center (CESPE) coordinates an international academic network of 28 countries, including 17 Latin American nations, to make education respond to the current development needs and demands.

The above was stated in an interview with **The Havana Reporter** by CESPE General President, Carlos Viltre, doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, during a work visit to this eastern Cuban city, in which he conducted a pre-doctoral diploma course and exchanged with local institutions on the field.

On the current state of education in Latin America, Viltre commented that it is a mixed, dynamic and complex educational space, with pedagogical visions and trends that are applied from different perspectives.

The historical-cultural, constructivist, inclusive and even behavioral approaches coexist in the region and are still present in each of the countries, he added.

He also affirmed that CESPE hopes to renovate education in the region, and with that purpose in mind, they have over half a hundred centers, such as the Latin American José Martí University, in Mexico; the Unión Bolivariana University, in Venezuela; the Sao Paulo University, where the international relations headquarters is located, headed by Dr Rita de Casia Lima y de Castro.

The professor said that the academic network excels because "we have a large upgrading portfolio that includes short and long courses, seminars, workshops, nine international diploma courses and master, doctoral and post-doctoral courses.

About 17,435 people access these programs in Latin America, according to statistics compiled until January, he noted.

In the case of Cuba, we have to adapt to Artificial Intelligence, new technologies, education-applied neurosciences, which are not included in the curricula, Viltre commented.

Because of that, "we are providing competences to Cuban teachers and educators; an example of that is the International Neuro-Educational Diploma Course," he stated.

"But Cuba also makes a major contribution to Latin America from the network, thanks to the Cuban Pedagogy School experience," he said. In this regards, experts of Matanzas University were present at the Panama University during the most recent International Summer School.

The doctor of Pedagogical Sciences finally affirmed that CESPE's main objectives are aimed at giving teachers the tools that allow them transform the educational practice in and outside classrooms, to educate through the use of science and respond to the field's development perspectives.

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Dirección / Address:
Infanta # 16, 3er. Piso, e/ 23 y Humboldt, Vedado, Plaza de la Revolución, La Habana, Cuba.

Correo / Email:
alimport@alimport.com.cu

Sitio Web / Website:
www.alimport.com.cu

Day Care Centers in Cuba

By Milagros **PICHARDO**

HAVANA.- Day care centers (nursery schools) in Cuba recently celebrated 63 years of their foundation, an initiative fostered by historical leader of the Revolution Fidel Castro to guarantee women's full incorporation to the work force.

Those centers, which receive children in early childhood, are one of the Revolution's most noble and everlasting works that contribute to the formation of children, by creating habits and rules of conduct that support education at home.

Late heroine Vilma Espín was responsible for organizing their creation, taking in mind teaching activities according to each age and with the objective of fostering children's comprehensive and

multifaceted development, in addition to socialization, so important for formation at early ages.

According to historical records, before the triumph of the Revolution (January 1st, 1959), there were only shelters for children living in social disadvantage conditions and Children's Homes in which orphans, abandoned kids and single mothers were left, without any guarantee of the conditions needed for their healthy, physical and mental development.

As a genuine work of the Revolution, these institutions came to stay since April 10, 1961 and until the present, and we have to be grateful to them, because they are still functioning in spite of the difficult situations the country has faced and all their staff put a lot of effort to educate children with the love and professionalism they required.



Ecuador Faces International Discredit

By Adriana **ROBREÑO**

QUITO.- Ecuador was under siege by the international critics after the forced arrest, last April 5, of former vice president Jorge Glas, who had been granted asylum by the Mexican government in his embassy in this capital.

The violent assault on the Mexican embassy, far from being a story, meant the immediate breaking-off of relations by the administration of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who now demands the suspension of Ecuador from the United Nations Organization (UN).

After the invasion of the Mexican diplomatic mission, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) stated its concern for a wrong precedent to be set in the region.

At the regional bloc's virtual summit of heads of Government and States – in which Noboa did not participate, but his Foreign Affairs minister, Gabriela Sommerfeld – all speeches criticized the Ecuadorian head of government's behavior and agreed to say that he violated the Vienna Convention.

Some experts describe Ecuador's current situation as a diplomatic wreckage and a condemnation was filed at the International Court of Justice.

Venezuela announced the closing of its consulates in Quito and Guayaquil; Honduras and Bolivia called their heads of mission to consultation, while Colombian president Gustavo Petro announced the suspension of a bilateral cabinet with Ecuador because what happened "is very serious."

In the meantime, the young Ecuadorian president defends their incursion into the foreign mission without any sign of regret

and suggested having talks with López Obrador with "ceviche or tacos."

A point of consensus the CELAC leaders reached was the call to respect asylum norms and grating Glas the safe-conduct required to facilitate his transfer to Mexico. While the former vice president is on a hunger strike in a maximum-security prison since the very day he was arrested, his defense will file a lawsuit against the State and will appeal for his release.

At a hearing at the National Court of Justice, Glas affirmed that he was the victim of mistreatment and torture during his arrest at the Mexican embassy and described the methods used to subjugate him as torture.

The court declared the detention as "illegal" and "arbitrary;" however, it decided to maintain the politician in prison for having two pending sentences and a case under investigation – all, for alleged acts of corruption, although his defense and his followers warn about the absence of evidence against him.

To the Ecuadorian government, the asylum Glas was given by the Mexican government is illegal, because of his legal situation in the national territory. However, many consider he is politically persecuted and a symbol of the lawfare.

On November 28, 2022, after serving five years in prison, he was given the temporary benefit of pre-release after the unification of two prison sentences of six and eight years for the Odebrecht and Bribery cases, but the measure was revoked.

At the beginning of this year, the justice ordered his detention for alleged embezzlement in the so-called Manabí Reconstruction case, which investigates an alleged public works embezzlement after the 2016 earthquake



At the regional bloc's virtual summit of CELAC all speeches criticized the Ecuadorian head of government's behavior. PHOTO: Internet.

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2nd International Transportation Fair

By Mirna **GONZÁLEZ**

HAVANA.- The 2nd International Transportation and Logistics Fair (FITL 2024) concluded recently in this capital with the signing of 47 contracts and over 140 business agreements, stated Cuban Minister of Transportation Eduardo Rodríguez.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, Rodríguez explained that all four transportation areas are included in those documents (aviation, railroad, sea and port, and motor), a sign of the Government's will to modernize and improve the quality of the services the population receives.

They will contribute to the improvement of transportation in Cuba, stressed the minister, who added that a collaboration agreement between the Havana health authorities and the MCV Comercial joint venture stands out among the main results. That entity will manage the exploitation of 15 ambulances to guarantee a higher sustainability, while its counterpart will be responsible for the medical staff.

Rodríguez commented that one of the agreements signed shows the intention

of increasing the acquisition of electric tricycles for mobility in short routes and another one deals with issues related to bus assembly in Cuba.

He added that there are other agreements addressed at developing charge stations based on renewable energies, in order to move forward with the transportation electrification process at a time in which oil is a limitation.



Cuban Minister of Transportation Eduardo Rodríguez. PHOTO: Panchito González.

The minister stated that at the fair, the objectives directed at revitalizing the sector's process of recovery upon the basis of the exchange of experiences, reaching of agreements and signing of new businesses that allow making progress in the improvement of transportation, were met.

These years of economic crisis created a difficult situation; however, spaces like this

allow different parties, either operators or the industry, to cooperate and sign agreements, the minister said.

One of FITL activities included a colloquium on the package-sending transit activity, in which an analysis was made of the problems detected in a previous meeting and guidelines were drawn for a better development.

Another important moment was the meeting dedicated to women, who talked about their lives in the sector and the challenge it represents, Rodríguez added.

The minister also referred to the International Cooperation Forum held with the participation of different foreign agencies and in which the Program for Transportation Resilient and Carbon-Low Development in Cuba was conducted, that will result in several projects directed at improving the economy and the service provided to the population.

FITL 2024 was a dynamic and interactive space and we hope that the agreements signed do not become a dead letter but be gradually implemented, and when we meet again to analyze these topics, they have certainly make progress, Rodríguez concluded.

Cuba and Grenada Sign New Cooperation Agreements

By Lisvan **LESCAILLE**

HAVANA.- Representatives of Cuba and Grenada signed cooperation agreements on environment, education, health, agriculture and fishing during an official visit by Grenadian Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell.

The visit, from April 11 to 14, coincided with the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, which Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel described as excellent.

During the bilateral talks, the Grenada's Prime Minister appreciated the welcome received and the permanent support his country has had in the formation of human resources and the economic activity, while the Cuban president praised Mitchell's leadership and hard work in favor of the development of that nation.

Mitchell also held official talks with his Cuban counterpart Manuel Marrero and acknowledged that in spite of the impact of the U.S. economic blockade on Cuba, the island's solidarity spirit remains unchanged.

The head of the small Caribbean nation described the progress of the agreements signed over a year ago in Saint George, Grenada's capital, as positive and stressed the new perspectives that are now created with his visit to Havana. Representatives of both nations signed different memorandums of understanding and agreements that include mutual cooperation in the fields of protection of the environment and battle against climate change, in addition to the development of education upon the basis of equality and respect, he stated.

The documents also promote technical assistance and scientific, technological and productive support in the aquiculture, agricultural and forest resources sector, as well as for cattle raising, food, technical formation, research, economic development and planning.

Cuba has been a great friend and a permanent support to Grenada, stated Mitchell, who highlighted the presence of a Cuban medical brigade in his country to support the country's health system.

In more than 40 years of political and diplomatic relations, promoted by historical leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro and assassinated former Prime Minister Maurice

Bishop, both nations have made progress in collaboration in different areas, such as health and construction and have explored other fields of mutual interest.

Díaz-Canel and Mitchell presided over the ceremony of signing of agreements and memorandums, which was held at the Palace of the Revolution, in the capital.

Other activities included in the Prime Minister's agenda were a tour of the Havana's historical center and a tribute to Cuban National Hero José Martí at the monument located in Revolution Square, where he laid a floral wreath.



Representatives of both nations signed different memorandums and agreements. PHOTO: Vladimir Molina.

Expansion of Electric Vehicles

By Teyuné **DÍAZ**

HAVANA.- The Vehículos Eléctricos del Caribe Company (VEDCA) strengthens its expansion in Cuba while searching for new markets and hoping to increase the range of products that meet the clients' needs.

In an interview with The Havana Reporter, VEDCA Cuban director, Julio Pérez, explained that the entity is an International Economic Association with the Chinese Tianjin Dongxing Industrial Group Co Ltd, in the modality of foreign investment, whose process started at the end of 2019 amidst the pandemic of COVID-19, which made construction processes difficult.

We are an association that counts on the support of both our governments, stressed Yunpu Wei on behalf of the Chinese counterpart.

The beginning was not easy, because of the limitations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The association started three years ago, from zero and only the electric motorcycles were produced; now, the situation is different, the official indicated.

At present, the factory assembles a large range of electric vehicles, such as mopeds, motorcycles and tricycles – the latter, for different uses, with roof, to transport people, goods or with AC conditions – Pérez said.

“But VEDCA does not stop; it has a huge challenge, which is consolidating medium-power electric cars,” he noted.

In this regard, the director added that they are conducting the first field tests, with positive results, as vehicles are comfortable, have nice conditions, speed reaches over 100 km and have an autonomy of 300 km.

The factory is designed for an annual production of 10,000 units in a work shift, but until the moment, it only operates

at 30 percent of its capacity due to negative factors (external and internal) such as the financial, logistics and market situation, in addition to the U.S. blockade against the island, he commented.

The official stressed that this year, they foresee to reach 50 percent of their capacity as a result of the adoption of new strategies. “The Cuban market is always changing and we have to adapt to those conditions,” he said.

In Pérez's opinion, the company's explosion started in 2023 after the consolidation of the sales through three main clients: the international payment channels (Isla Grande and Marketplace 23), the Panama Free Zone and the non-state sector, with payment capacity from abroad.

On sales in Panama, he affirmed that new distribution channels are opened: VEDCA offers handing in its products in Cuba, as well as post-sale services to Cubans who buy in that country, a modality whose sales already exceeds 120,000 dollars – from January to the present.

The proposal is not to export electric vehicles but its services (assembly, guarantee and post-sale) associated to the import of spare parts from China, he commented.

In relation to projections with the non-state sector in Cuba, he affirmed that it is essential to increase the sale of spare parts to private companies with assembly capacity, due to the impossibility of making retail sales, although a new shop will be opened this year in Havana to commercialize its range of electric products and load systems.



VEDCA assembles a large range of electric vehicles, such as mopeds, motorcycles and tricycles for different uses. PHOTO: Panchito González.

ICTs and Women Empowerment

By María **MAYORAL**

HAVANA.- Women entrepreneurs in Cuba seek to take advantage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for their labor insertion and the flourishing of businesses, without ignoring existing gender gaps in the country.

With an economic activity rate of about 55 percent, Cuban women represent 45.8 percent of the workers employed in the state sector of the economy and only 24.3 percent of those employed in the non-state sector, according to official data.

Four out of ten people who hold a license of self-employed workers are women; 24 percent of them are partners in micro, small and medium-sized companies (MIPYMES), and 28 percent are members of non-agricultural cooperatives, according to statistics provided by the Ministry of Economics and Planning.

In the ICTs entrepreneurial field, they hold 28 percent of technical and specialized positions, while in the Artificial Intelligence strategy area, they represent 25 percent, the Cuban Information Sciences Union indicated.

In the private sector universe, the gap is wider: women barely represent two percent of those who run the over 100 technology-related MIPYMES created in the country, the Information Sciences Union estimated.

Like global tendencies, gender digital gap is seen here since childhood, as in tune with stereotypes, boys and girls start showing different tendencies in the field of knowledge, experts say.

For example, over 60 percent of university graduates are women; however, they barely represent 30 percent of the graduates of the Information Sciences University, a sector in which men master the programming specialties, which are linked to higher income opportunities.

A preliminary diagnosis conducted by the Cuban Women Entrepreneurs Network (RCME) casted other lights on the asymmetries and information and digital competences from a gender perspective, whose results were presented at a recent workshop sponsored by the United Nations Organization (UN).

As UN resident coordinator Francisco Pichón stated, it is one of the priorities of the United Nations Cooperation Framework with the Cuban Government and one of the areas of special attention of the National Program for Women Advancement.

Some of the groups that could count on RCME support include the female youth that dropped out of school because of early pregnancy or marriage in adolescence and women near their retirement age (60) who do not have the necessary skills to join the non-state sector, the official said at the meeting.

Considering the national context, UN-Cuba endorsed the diagnosis of information and digital competences, as well as the RCME workshop on the strengthening of capacities, although this is just the starting point in order to contribute to digital inclusion and the economic empowerment of female entrepreneurs in Cuba.



In the Artificial Intelligence strategy area, Cuban Women represent 25 percent. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Tie-Break on the Road to the Olympics Games

By Ángel **DARIÁN**

HAVANA.- Attending the Olympic Games represents the highest aspiration for an athlete at world level, a task that involves overcoming obstacles and running uphill putting the extra of champions, as it happens with the Cuban beach volleyball duo of Noslén Díaz and Jorge Luis Alayo. Two consecutive silver medals in the World Volleyball Pro Tours held in Recife and Saquarema, Brazil and the fourth place in Guadalajara, Mexico, gave them the hope to continue dreaming of Paris, after adding an important number of points. And although they are not included among the 17 best pairs in the Olympic ranking, their position (26) has touches of hope.

The addition of 2,200 points in the short number of competitions they have participated in paid good dividends for the Cubans, who in the next months hope to complete the Olympic requirement of attending 12 events that grant points for the ranking – a requirement counted as of January 1, 2023 until June 10, 2024. Such requirement seems to be an important incentive for Alayo-Díaz, who started the year with great impetus.

The Cuban pair will try to have a good performance in the NORCECA-Tlaxcala Continental Cup (June 19-24), even though this event does not grant points for the Olympic ranking.

It is notable that of the 17 pairs eligible to compete in Paris, a nation can be represented by two maximum; for that reason, two pairs from the United States and Brazil will be excluded and one from

Italy, Australia and the Netherlands, which are currently placed among the 18 best – this very position, currently in the hands of Norwegians Hendrick Mol and Mathias Berntsen, with 6,080 points.

Math calculations, different paths and tough fights in beaches from all over the world, characterize the final lap to get to the City of Light.

Alayo-Díaz have given the joy of beach volley back to the Cubans with hard work, good game and charisma, and although their team work has not always led to better results, their presence in Paris 2024 will depend on a tie-break, with the Cubans on match point.



Their recent successes in Brazil and Mexico gave them the hope to continue dreaming of Paris. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Pereira Improves Ranking and Focuses on Paris 2024

Text and Photo Yodeni **MASÓ**

BEIRUT.- Cuban Andy Pereira climbed two places in the ranking and is now placed 57 in world table tennis (WTT), on the road to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

The 34 year old experienced player added 30 points to his ranking (40) after his participation in the Feeder Beirut Tournament, where he reaffirmed himself as Latin America's fourth best player and Cuba's best.

"There are good chances if I keep playing and the purpose is to try to obtain the highest number of points in each of the events I participate in", Pereira told **The Havana Reporter** after knowing the most recent update of the WTT ranking.

Owner of Cuba's only victory in the Olympic Games in the individual category, the left-handed player avails of each training opportunity to try to guarantee his presence in the French capital and return to that level after the London 2012 games.

Up to 70 players, with a maximum of four (two men and two women) per National Olympic Committee, will be able to attend

the individual events, to take place in the South Paris Arena 4.

"I have a good position at present; I only need to keep adding points to get the quota by ranking. There is also a possibility at the Peru pre-Olympic tournament, which will be tough because the United States will join this year," he commented.

Pereira, a Pan-American runner-up in Santiago de Chile 2023, started the season in Singapore and then participated in two events held in Beirut, as part of an Olympic process that will include Feeder, Smash and Contender, in Europe, the Gulf and the Americas.

Winner in the double category in the first edition of the Beirut International

Tournament, with his partner Jorge Moisés Campos, the Cuban player continues training in this city and at the end of the month will travel to Germany.

"All competitions are important; the goal is to accumulate points and never stop competing. We need to be more involved in international events in which players with different styles participate, particularly from Europe and Asia," he said.

Before the closing of the ranking, on June 18, Pereira has confirmed participation in several tournaments, including the Lima pre-Olympic event, in the present month of May, where he will try to win one of the quotas in competition in the single category, in addition to the Contender Río de Janeiro (May 20-26) and Mendoza (May 27-June 2) – to be held before the closing of the Olympic ranking.

A multiple medal holder in competitions held in the Americas, Andy Pereira focuses his objectives on the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, to join his compatriots Daniela Fonseca and Jorge Moisés Campos, who are already qualified.



The 34 year old experienced player added 30 points to his ranking (40) after his participation in the Feeder Beirut Tournament. PHOTO: Granma.

A Cuban Woman in Antarctica

By Orlando **ORAMAS**

MONTEVIDEO.- Roxana Guerrero could not imagine that she would be the first Cuban woman to visit Antarctica, or at least the only one who went to that freezing continent to play music and sing.

The 20-year-old girl, who studied clarinet in her native and warm province of Holguín, in Cuba's east, recently performed in the continent that surrounds the South Pole with the Sodre National Junior Orchestra. Sodre is a state institution that promotes artistic shows and musical formation in Uruguay, where she currently lives in.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, she talked about her participation in the recording of the soundtrack of the audiovisual series *Continente de todos* (Everyone's Continent), in tribute to the 40 years of the Artigas Scientific Base in Antarctica, a facility opened on December 22, 1984 in King George Island, South Shetland islands.

The station is 100 kilometers off the Antarctica peninsula, about 3,012 km away from the city of Montevideo and 3,104 km from the South Pole.

Music took this Cuban girl to the Antarctica. She was chosen to compose a team of the



Roxana Guerrero recently performed in the continent that surrounds the South Pole with the Sodre National Junior Orchestra. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

junior orchestra, under the direction of maestro Ariel Britos and the participation of Spanish musician César Roig, the author of the series' soundtrack.

We traveled in a C-130 Hercules aircraft of the Uruguayan Air Force from Montevideo to Punta Arenas, in Chile. From there, to Antarctica, she said.

Guerrero described the Uruguayan scientific facility as a warm place, composed by cubicles and containers, where the staff conducts its activities and has the equipment they daily use for work.

"It is in front of the sea, surrounded by snowcapped mountains and rocks on which it is erected, to prevent land movements," she added.

We were two nights and three days with the objective of performing a concert, essentially Uruguayan, which the people at the Artigas Base enjoyed a lot and accompanied us when singing," the girl commented.

It was a concert for peace and science and included iconic compositions of the Uruguayan culture, such as *Ventiscas*, *La Cumparsita* or *Mi País*, the latter by black Rubén Rada, she explained.

And as the Uruguayans do not give up in saying that Carlos Gardel is one of their own, born in Tacuarembó, the farewell included three of the songs of who is also known as the "Zorzal Criollo."

We did an indoor concert for the Uruguayan expedition and another one at night, for the members of the Chilean, Chinese and Russian scientific bases, whom we had the chance of visiting, affirmed the young Cuban musician.

"We had the intention of doing an outdoor concert but the weather conditions were not favorable.

In spite of the southern summer, temperature reached about 10 degrees below zero, which was even a danger for musical instruments. In such conditions, we played a fragment of a work in tribute to nature, Guerrero explained.

During the days the junior orchestra was in that site, the Cuban flag was hoisted at the Artigas Base with other flags.



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