



World Balance

Page. 3



Cuba-USA

Terrorist List

Page. 4



Science and Technology

Scientific Advances

Page. 5



Culture

Jazz Plaza 2025

Page. 6



Economy

Group of Creditors

Page. 13



Doors Remain Open to Tourism

By Teyuné **DÍAZ** and Benjamín **MICERINOS**

HAVANA.- The year 2025 is just beginning and the Cuban tourism authorities intensify actions to speed up the long-awaited recovery of the travel industry.

A meeting of officials of the Tourism Ministry (MINTUR) affirmed the sector's objectives for the present year and topics already dealt with, considered successful in principle.

A press conference, at the halls of Havana's Hotel Nacional, included MINTUR communication director Yadira Ramírez; sales director Gihana Galindo; head of operations and quality María del Pilar Macías, and events director Yanet de Armas.

Some of the data announced in the said meeting pointed at what started as a rising spiral by the end of 2024 and potentials for this year.

Efforts underway at present are particularly directed at the Canadian, Chinese, Russian, Turkish and Latin American markets through promotion and sale campaigns, digital and traditional, including the use of social media and influencers.

Officials referred to the Cuba Unique Campaign (Cuba Unica), which describes the people of the island and its destinations as special, and stands out through articles, topics, investments, businesses, marketing and events.

In this sense, the campaign makes use of the familiarization tours (FAM), a structure of priorities, programs, websites and social media, particularly the Cuba Travel portal.

They also confirmed Canada as the main and traditional market of tourists to Cuba, with 39 percent and new countries, such as Brazil (11 percent), Peru (25), China (48), Türkiye (12) and Portugal (20).

In relation to air connections, they highlighted the return of Avianca airline (Colombia, Ecuador and Central America), as well as the diversification of destinations

such as Cienfuegos (center) and Manzanillo (east). They also mentioned Sunwing (Canada).

The sector also benefits from flights to Santa Clara (center) to join trips to Jardines del Rey and Cayo Santa María, while Turkish Airlines added a fifth weekly frequency to the island and China Airlines makes operations with a hub in Madrid, plus a fifth LATAM frequency with a hub in Peru.

Officials also talked about the diversification of a fleet of land vehicles for rental; the increase of corporate tourism; multiple destination (particularly in the case of Mexico), and the inclusion of new tour operators and travel agents from Brazil, Peru, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Greece.

The sector's new features include Jeep Safari, with the renovation of the four-wheel-drive vehicles used in this modality, in addition to ecotourism and farm trips, linked to nature, adventure and rural tourism.

To foster all these actions, entry requirements to the country were eased through the electronic visa, which will coexist with regular mechanisms until June 30 the present year (when the first will prevail) and the establishment of temporary telephone lines for seven days, travelers' constant request.



Many Canadian tourists prefer to visit the resort of Varadero. PHOTO: Mintur.

AI-Tourism Relationship

By Francisco **MENÉNDEZ**

HAVANA.- Cuban professor and researcher José Luís Perelló talked about the relationship between tourist distribution worldwide and Artificial Intelligence (AI) upon the basis of its opportunities and stressed that this year is important for such a connection.

As part of his usual comments, the scholar said that a crucial period is foreseen in 2025 for tourist technology with the arrival of Artificial Intelligence agents.

Although the prevailing speech in the sector suggests that these tools will democratize tourist distribution, allowing suppliers to be directly in touch with consumers, reality seems to be more complex.

Idealist narrative pictures a future in which AI agents eliminate middlemen, simplifying travel planning and empowering suppliers.

However, an in-depth analysis shows that online travel agencies (OTAs) will not only survive this transition but could also grow stronger.



Idealist narrative pictures a future in which AI agents eliminate middlemen. PHOTO: Internet.

The development of AI agents is headed by technological giants such as Google, Microsoft, Meta, Amazon and Apple, as well as emerging actors such as OpenAI, Anthropic and Perplexity. These companies are investing billions of dollars in an attempt to master the big race for AI.

Google launched its universal agent based on Gemini, while Microsoft included Copilot to its digital ecosystem and works on Magnetic One, its own web assistant.

Meta, for its part, tries to standardize its AI model with its network of users and smart devices, while Amazon combines its infrastructure in the cloud with Alexa.

In that line, Apple remains loyal to its strategy of cautious innovation, promising a revolutionary launch at the right time. OpenAI is at the head of newcomers with its chatbot and its ecosystem of developers. Anthropic stands out for its security approach and Perplexity enjoys popularity with its real-time response capacity.

There is a key element, though, that joins these actors: their reliance on advertising incomes.

Both, the giants and the newcomers, acknowledge that the development and maintenance of AI models require constant flows of capital, and advertising still is a reliable source to cover those costs. The business model behind the AI agents points to an expansion of the digital marketing channels.

Companies such as Google and Meta, which account for the world's highest advertising incomes, consider AI a natural extension of their platforms, while Amazon, which is already placed third in the field of advertising incomes worldwide, generated 50 billion dollars last year.

Even Apple, known for its hardware, expects to reach 10 billion dollars in respect of advertising incomes in 2025.

This suggests that AI agents are not a threat for OTAs but a new field where the latter could have the lead.

The Havana Reporter
YOUR SOURCE OF NEWS & MORE

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

President: Luis Enrique González
Editorial Vice President: Edilberto F. Méndez
Editorial Director: Ariel Barredo Coya
Art Direction: Anathais Rodríguez
Chief Editor: Ilsa Rodríguez Santana
English Editor: Isabel García

Translation: Yanely Interián
Graphic Designer: Fernando Fernández Tito
Chief Graphic Editor: Francisco González
Circulation: Commercial Department
Printing: Prensa Latina

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

Solidarity and Peace Defense



Brazilian theologian Frei Betto spoke about justice as the path to attain Peace and the Balance of the World. PHOTO: Endrys Correa.

By Melissa **KING**

HAVANA.- International solidarity with Cuba and defense of peace and fair causes were the focus of the sessions held in this capital as part of the VI International Conference for World Balance.

Summoned by the José Martí International Solidarity Project, the meeting started on January 28, the day in which the 172nd birthday of Cuban National Hero was celebrated and the year that marked the 130th anniversary of his death in combat fighting for the freedom of his homeland, in May 19.

The opening day, attended by president Miguel Díaz-Canel, included a lecture by Brazilian theologian Frei Betto, who spoke about justice as the path to attain Peace and the Balance of the World.

The Dominican friar, a famous intellectual, rejected the decision taken by the United States government to include Cuba again in the state sponsors of terrorism list and stressed that "they are the terrorist state par excellence."

Frei Betto defended a policy that brings governments closer to citizens, advocates people's unity and gets away of domestic fights that cause favorable division for the enemy.

He also highlighted the importance of the José Martí thought to defend justice and the daily practice of ethics in the present era.

World leaders and representatives of social organizations urged to foster dialogue between civilizations, without hegemony trends and based on a culture of peace. They also reiterated their solidarity with Cuba and rejected the reinstatement of the island in the list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism.

Meanwhile, archbishop Santiago, Exarch of the Mexican, Central American and Caribbean Metropolis, stated in his

speech that the forum "should take into account those who do not have a voice, the humble, the indigenous and the oppressed..."

For his part, Pope Francis sent a message to the conference participants stressing that "hope shows itself as an adequate value for this forum held in Havana, because, thanks to its aspiration of being open, plural and multidisciplinary, it has the capacity of taking a look at the reasons that move people's heart at present."

In his letter, the Supreme Pontiff recalled those present at the meeting that the topic of the Jubilee the Church celebrates this year is, mostly, hope.

The event, held until January 31, welcomed over one thousand delegates from 98 countries – 600 of them, foreign participants – and included the holding of the youth forum Con todos y para el bien de todos (With everyone and for the benefit of all), in addition to the International Meeting of Departments on José Martí Studies and the United Nations Associations Meeting, a space that defended multilateralism.

Other activities included in the agenda were the World Congress of Poets for Peace and in Defense of Life, and the III International Colloquium of Cuban Historians.

Coordinator of the Organizing Committee and the José Martí International Solidarity Project, Héctor Hernández, stressed the need of building a better future, as National Hero José Martí, to whom the event was dedicated, dreamed of.

Hernández affirmed that Cuba does not organize these conferences to gain prestige but thinking on humanity, because "the huge number of present conflicts, the arms race, climate change and social injustice, are just some of the reasons that make us work together."

Call for a Comprehensive Local Development Approach

By Lisván **LESCAILLE**

HAVANA.- Cuban Prime Minister Manuel Marrero urged provincial governments to implement development strategies in keeping with national projections. Such actions are addressed at correcting distortions and boosting the economy, the head of Government affirmed.

The government's work approach should be comprehensive and should not be based on isolated actions, stated Marrero at a recent meeting with governors and the special municipality of Isla de la Juventud.

President of the National Assembly of People's Power (Cuban Parliament), Esteban Lazo, also attended the meeting through a videoconference.

The Prime Minister urged to implement measures that includes in the government program, which should become a working guideline for territorial authorities' attention to municipal problems, as efficient as possible.

The potentials of our municipalities should be very clear, and based on

these, we should be able to solve the problems that affect their electors, Marrero said after discussing the 2025 goals and objectives with government officials.

In that regards, he urged to revise the mechanisms for leaders' selection, to fill in positions in provincial and municipal government areas and structures, and to prepare the workforce so that this conducts its duties with quality.

From the Revolution Palace, the seat of the executive and through videoconference with the territories, the meeting also discussed topics such as the progress made in food production and the quality of the harvest hiring process, in which deficiencies are still present, participants said.

Clarifications were also made on the economic plan and the 2025 budget, as well as on the preparations for the forthcoming Population and Housing Census, among other topics, sources indicated.



Marrero urged to implement a working guideline for territorial authorities' attention to municipal problems. PHOTO: Estudios Revolución.

Donald Trump Reinstates Cuba in Terrorist List

By DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- Shortly after assuming the presidency of the United States for the second occasion, Donald Trump revoked the order issued six days before by his predecessor, Joe Biden, who had removed Cuba from the unilateral state sponsors of terrorism list.

The president elect announced that he would also cancel at least 78 executive orders by the previous administration, which he described as "destructive and radicals," and affirmed that measures would be without effect in five minutes.

In January 14, Biden took the late decision that Cuba "should no longer be designated as a State sponsor of terrorism," as the White House confirmed in a release on the notification made to the Congress by the then president.

He also issued an exemption of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, also known as Liberty Act, for a period of six months and cancelled the National Security Presidential Memorandum 5 of 2017 on the policy toward Cuba to eliminate the so-called restricted list.

Measures were welcomed as a basic justice duty to Cuba and a step in the right direction, although the blockade remained in effect.

During his first administration (2017-2021), Trump implemented a policy of maximum pressure against Cuba, which he intensified with the inclusion of 243 additional measures.

Eight days before leaving the White House, in 2021, the Republican president included Cuba in the list from which it had been removed in 2015, a decision Biden maintained in effect until the very end of his mandate.

Meanwhile, in Havana, the government's top authorities stated that Cuba remains unyielding in spite of its reinstatement in the United States terrorist list.

They denounced that Trump's action tries to strengthen the economic war Washington triggered,



President Donald Trump revoked the order issued by his predecessor, Joe Biden. PHOTO: Internet.

while president Miguel Díaz-Canel stressed that the measure his U.S. peer took is an act of arrogance and disdain, which does not take anyone by surprise and has domination objectives.

The Cuban president denounced that this action is also a joke and an outrage that confirms the discredit of the unilateral lists and mechanisms of coercion implemented by the government of the United States.

Cuban minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez described these and the rest of the new measures Washington has taken as medieval and a civilizing regression, and said that "blind with arrogance, president Trump decides without reason that Cuba sponsors terrorism. He knows he is lying. His objective is to increase the punishment and the economic war against the Cuban families," he affirmed.

Cuba Reaffirms Commitment to Regular, Ordered and Safe Migration

By ErnestoVERA

HAVANA.- Cuban minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez reaffirmed the island's commitment to dialogue and cooperation as the ways to attain a regular, ordered and safe migration.

In his virtual speech at the meeting on Human Mobility in the Northern Route of the Continent, hosted in the City of Mexico, Cuba's top diplomat denounced the impact the United States blockade has in relation to that topic.

Rodríguez stated that Washington's siege causes shortages and poverty to the people and influences the migratory potential and the rise on the flow of persons to that northern nation.

Meanwhile, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and head of the Cuban delegation to the meeting, Anayansi Rodríguez, stressed that closing borders, making mass deportations and criminalizing migration, are not the solution nor the way such a complex situation should be handled,

which she described as one of the main global phenomena of our time.

She also said that solving the current situation of poverty, inequality and disparity that particularly prevail in developing countries is a must for a lasting

solution and to attain an ordered, safe and regular migration.

That also requires genuine international cooperation and the political will of the developed countries, including the fulfillment of the Official Aid to Development, she stressed.



The meeting was attended by delegations from Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Venezuela and Mexico. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

The meeting was attended by ministers, deputy ministers and heads of delegations from Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Venezuela and the host country.

A communiqué issued by the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Affairs stated that the meeting was held because of the challenges the region faces in the field of migration and in order to coordinate actions to protect immigrants' human rights, prevent abuse and mistreatment.

According to the source, participants debated the ways to manage a regular, safe and ordered migration from a humanitarian approach, as well as how to integrate migrant populations and strengthen international cooperation to deal with the phenomenon from its structural and current causes, and in all its cycle.

The event was held prior to the arrival to the White House of president elect of the United States, Donald Trump, who threatens to conduct mass deportations in spite of the proven contribution migrant communities have made to that nation.

Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Sectors' Achievements in 2024

By Lourdes PÉREZ

HAVANA.- The Cuban Biotechnological and Pharmaceutical Industries Group (BioCubaFarma) added new scientific achievements to its work in 2024, directed at producing medication, equipment and technological services to improve health.

According to the Juventud Técnica magazine, over a hundred of those results were achieved by entities attached to BioCubaFarma.

Such accomplishments include the introduction, in the national health system, of the SumasignalFQ trial (real-time PCR kit for the diagnosis of cystic fibrosis) by the Immunoassay Center.

The development and granting of the sanitary registration in Cuba to a new medication with fixed doses for high blood pressure control – Losartán-Hidroclorotiazida 50/12.5 milligrams – by the Medsol Company, is also included among such results.

Three processes developed by the Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center (CIGB) also stand out: first, new clinical and non-clinical evidence of the therapeutic effects of Juzvinza; second, the approval, by the United States Food and Drug Administration, of a new medication under research for clinical study phase three of the Heberprot-P in that country. The third is the transfer of technology of the Hebernem/Aikexian product to the Shandong Lukang Heber Biotec, Co Ltd. joint company, for introduction in China's agricultural production.



BioCubaFarma added new scientific achievements to its work in 2024, including the introduction of the SumasignalFQ trial. PHOTO: Internet.

Other accomplishments, linked to the Cimab S.A. company, include the clinical development of nimotuzumab, with focus on the market, at the BLP joint company after obtaining three sanitary registrations, in addition to the introduction of two guidelines in China's medical insurance.

Meanwhile, the Molecular Immunology Center got two relevant achievements: new evidence that endorses the efficacy and safety of NeuralCim in patients with Alzheimer-like mild and moderate amnesic syndrome, and preclinical evidence of the cardioprotective effect in murine models of

ischemia reperfusion of the P3R99 antibody applied as passive therapy.

In addition, the AFT Scanner – a computer app to manage fixed assets – developed by the Information Technology Company (ETI) was also registered and introduced.

Other achievements include the granting of the sanitary registration, by the National Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology Institute, for the local development of new products, such as anti-crust protective powder, mouth wash and two types of shampoo, developed by the Roberto Escudero Pharmaceutical Lab Company.

New signs were also obtained on the pharmacological action, efficacy and safety mechanisms of Cneuro-201 in non-clinical models by the Cuban Neurosciences Center. The demonstration of the safety and efficacy of Biomodulina T for the treatment of thymic hypoplasia in children, a product developed by the National Center for Bio-preparations, also stands out among the main achievements.

Finally, another accomplishment is the development, registration and introduction of the Combiovent pulmonary ventilator for adult patients' treatment at ICU, an equipment developed by the Combiovent Company.

Russia's Five Oceans Marine Project

By Ana Laura ARBESÚ

HAVANA.- The Atlantic Race Cruising catamaran docked for several days in Cuban ports and brought to the island a group of sailors involved in a marine environmental project that, during its second season, tours several places of the world.

We could not stop coming to this friendly country, captain of the sailboat, Oleg Dudkin, told **The Havana Reporter** on the project, whose first season went from 2020 to 2022, when they toured 30 countries and docked in over 100 ports of the world.

On the objectives of this initiative, he said that their purpose is to contribute to the development of sport, cultural cooperation among nations, science and popular diplomacy.

We travel and join the most important regattas, and in relation to science, we have

several agreements with institutions and conduct different tasks linked to ecology and research, he explained.

Samples collected in the different oceans are highly welcomed by the scientific community, which values our support and appreciate receiving marine material from far-off places such as the Pacific Ocean, he stressed.

On the initiative's social mission, he highlighted that in each journey, they include a person with some disability; in this case, a person without arms. By doing so, we can show that any person can travel under a sail, he commented.

The sailor, who has also climbed the Kilimanjaro, explained his popular diplomacy concept, which is part of the main objectives of each journey. It has to do with relations between the people, and that shows that the world has a human character.

The team headed by Dudkin exchanged their experiences on the ocean with the Havana audience at Quinta de los Molinos, the venue of one of the city's botanical gardens that has become the headquarters of environmental, scientific, cultural and entrepreneurial projects. This site shows what the people can do at present in Cuba to improve the Cubans' quality of life.

The Five Oceans project started its tour last November, in Tenerife and after a 20-days transatlantic journey, it arrived in the Caribbean and reached Saint Lucia.

In Cuba, the catamaran also docked in the central province of Cienfuegos (December

21) and after a stop in the island, it will continue touring the Caribbean and Latin America, to then cross the Panama Canal, in March.

Founded in 2021, the Five Oceans Club is composed of a community of sea and ocean lovers, who make explorations and help science study the problems of those ecosystems in the world.

Their stop in Cuba was endorsed by the Russian house of the Havana city Historian Office, the Russian Embassy in Cuba, the Russian Agency for Cooperation, the Cuban Environmental Agency, among other organizations.



In the first season (2020-22), Five Oceans Marine Project toured 30 countries and docked in over 100 ports of the world. PHOTO: Internet.

40th Edition of the Jazz Plaza Endorses its International Prestige

By Danay **GALLETTI**

HAVANA.- The 40th edition of the Jazz Plaza International Festival, held from January 26 to February 2, included an outstanding national and international program, a feature of this iconic Cuban event opened in 1980 by showman Roberto "Bobby" Carcassés.

The program, with venue in the Havana, Santiago de Cuba and Villa Clara provinces – the latter, for the first time – included over 300 concerts, film screenings in Havana's cinema theaters, special presentations and meetings with professionals of both industries.

In addition to showcasing the skills of famous world instrument players, the event also included the granting of the Jazz Plaza 40 stamp to over one hundred personalities and institutions linked to the development of this project and to the Cuban culture system.

Although the image of painter Zaida del Río, National Visual Arts awardee in 2023, enhanced the prestige of this edition,

the festival also proposed exhibitions such as In Jazz We Trust, by Lilien Trujillo and the collective exhibit Restrospectiva (Retrospective), at Fábrica de Arte Cubano, and Jazz Journey, by Rick Swing, at Teatro Nacional.

In addition to the international forum of the musical industry, aka Primera Línea, the festival also included the Leonardo Acosta In Memoriam colloquium, organized by Neris González Bello in Havana, which exhibited a theoretical agenda on occasion of its 20th anniversary, plus tributes, documentary screening, lectures and panel sessions.

In relation to tributes in particular, on this occasion, the Jazz Plaza Festival dedicated a space to the 80th birthday of Cuban piano virtuoso Frank Fernández, while the staging of Ricitos Valdés y los Tres Ositos en el bosque de Irakere, was the present of the La Colmenita children's theater company to the band that changed Latin America's jazz scenario.

The program also included concerts by the López-Nussa family, with the expertise of Harold, Ruy Adrián, Ruy and Ernán in their respective instruments; the traditional Cuba Vive Gala, by Nachito Herrera and guests, and the launch of albums by trumpet player Mayquel González and pianist Dayramir González.

International personalities that attended the event included U.S. Ted Nash, Danielle Ponder, Orbert Davis and Jon Cleary; French Jacky Terrason; Brazilian Renato Borghetti; Germans Matthias Bublath and Wolf Kerschek, and Azeri Amina Figarova.

Rolando Luna returned to the event accompanied by the National Symphonic Orchestra, directed by Joaquín Betancourt, in a concert entitled Súper Danzones de Cuba y más, while Los Hermanos Abreu performed Dos miradas, dos caminos.

Outstanding pianist Roberto Fonseca, the Jazz Plaza artistic director, closed this edition of the festival with his proposal From Buena Vista Social Club. The event included the

participation of over 400 international artists, mostly from the United States, Italy and Colombia, and over 800 national figures.



Outstanding pianist Roberto Fonseca was the Jazz Plaza artistic director. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Free Rein to Myths and Cuban Identity in Art

By DaiLiem **LAFÁ**

HAVANA.- National visual arts awardee, Manuel Mendive, a Cuban artist who gives free rein to myths and cultural roots in his art, celebrated his 80th anniversary.

Born in Havana, on December 15, 1944, Mendive graduated from the San Alejandro Academy in 1963. A year later, he presented his first individual exhibition and since then, his work has toured some of the most important art institutions in the world.



Manuel Mendive is famous for being a painter who shows his Cuban identity. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Mendive is famous for being a painter who shows his Cuban identity, with a strong presence of the African roots, particularly the Yoruba pantheon.

He combines different techniques, styles and colors on different painting medium and textures: canvases, wood, leather and even human bodies are good for him to highlight his creativity, present in his extraordinary myths and pictorial stories.

As maximacubart.com states, Mendive knows the secrets of that African pantheon and as a good scholar, he reveals that the connection between divine and corporeal elements goes beyond the imagination, even beyond what people can dream of.

His works, with a strong earthy strength, lead us to the very genesis of creation. To that, it is essential to widen our look, to leave concepts behind and open our hearts.

In his pieces, the artist masters the art of light, one of the most influential elements in universal painting and gives each face the necessary clarity, as if the very sunlight would be getting into the canvas and offering a texture as natural as possible.

Winner of the National Visual Arts Prize (2001) and member of the National Association of Cuban Writers and Artists, UNEAC, his extensive endorsement includes the International Award of the II Havana's Art Biennial Festival (1986), the Félix Varela Order (1994), the Alejo Carpentier

Medal (1988), among others. In addition, in 2015, he was granted the Doctor Honoris Causa title by the Havana's Art University.

He has likewise received international acknowledgements such as the distinction of Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters by the Ministry of Culture and Francophonie of the Republic of France (1994); the UNESCO Five Continents Medal (2009) and the Adam Montparnasse Award at the XXIV Salon de Mai, in Paris, France (1968).

His collective exhibitions abroad include, among others, the Ibero-American Art exhibit at the Velázquez Palace, in Madrid (1990) and the Latin America Surrealist Artists exhibit at the Boshum Museum, in Germany (1994).

His varied performances abroad include "Nature, Spirit and Man", from Cuba to the World, one of his most recent works (2018), exhibited at the Kennedy Center, in the United States.

Some of Mendive's important collections are treasured at the National Fine Arts Museum, in Havana and in other institutions in Spain, France, the United States, Japan, Tanzania, the Philippines, Hungary, Colombia and Panama, among other countries.

On the occasion of maestro Mendive's 80th anniversary, the exhibition of 130 pieces was launched at the National Fine Arts Museum under the title Pan con guayaba, una vida feliz (Bread with guava, a happy life).



Jacqueline Arenal in a García Márquez's Work

By Daimarelys **PÉREZ**

HAVANA.- Being a cast member in the Netflix series One hundred years of solitude represented, to Cuban actress Jacqueline Arenal, an act of complicity with the author and his monumental novel.

Recalled for the role of Verena Contreras in the popular Cuban TV soap opera Tierra brava, the actress told **The Havana Reporter** that she is convinced that the intention all the people involved in the series had and have is to pay a tribute to the Nobel Prize for Literature awardee in 1982. The mega production, whose first two chapters were premiered at the beginning of December in Havana during the 45th edition of the Latin American International New Film Festival, is based on Gabriel García Márquez's master piece.

I always say that he was not only a wonderful writer but also an incredible and unique human being, Arenal said.

Also recalled for her leading role in the film El siglo de las luces (1992), by Cuban director Humberto Solás, the actress affirmed that during the shooting process, affection for García Márquez was felt, which actually means a tribute to his person and work.

I felt that we were all working thinking on him and to him; it was like saying, I am part of your story and try to be totally loyal to something so perfect, she added.

I would describe it as a deeply conspiratorial act and if we could ask Gabo and he were able to answer if he feels this adaptation as a tribute, we would feel deeply flattered, the actress commented.

To Arenal, being a part of the team was a privilege and the fact that it was screened here was a greater pleasure.

The Cuban audience is highly connected to García Márquez in general; One hundred years of solitude is an emblematic novel on which there are different opinions and for that reason, I think that everybody has its own Macondo, she stressed.

In view of the collective imagination, playing a role in this work, so wonderfully written, was a huge responsibility but also a privilege to any actor, she affirmed.

Arenal played the role of Leonor Moscote, the wife of Don Apolinar Moscote, who gets to Macondo as mayor from the conservative government.

Leonor is a complex character that embodies vulnerability and strength at the same time, in an oppressive scenario. Although at the beginning she might seem to be a conventional wife, she reveals tensions between the social and personal hopes that surround her.

In spite of the impositions she faces, she also shows moments of resistance and humanity, leaving an imprint in the Buendía family, she said.

In statements to THR, Arenal talked about how she got to the project and her commitment to the work. "All the cast members of this production and finally, those of us chosen to play the characters, went through a lengthy casting process," she commented.

First, selection was made through images and scenes we sent via the Internet from where we were; then, those of us pre-chosen, participated in an in-situ casting," the actress explained.

It was long, because they were trying to be rigorous in the fact that any actor were as natural and close as possible to Gabo's description in the novel, and it finally concluded with the good news of being selected, she said.



THE GETAWAY CAPITAL
MODERN AND EXCLUSIVE

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

www.bluediamondresorts.com

PL
PRENSA
LATINA

**La mayor casa editorial
de publicaciones seriadas de Cuba**

**The largest publishing house
of continuous publications in Cuba**

www.prensa-latina.cu

[@PrensaLatina_cu](https://twitter.com/PrensaLatina_cu) [PrensaLatinaTV](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) [@AgenciaPrensaLatinaOficial](https://www.facebook.com/AgenciaPrensaLatinaOficial)
[prensalatina.cu](https://www.instagram.com/prensalatina.cu) [@PrensaLatinaNoticias](https://www.facebook.com/PrensaLatinaNoticias) [TesoroLatino](https://www.facebook.com/TesoroLatino)



In the Spirit of Celebration, 553 People are Released

By Melissa**KING**

HAVANA.- Cuba announced the releasing of 553 people serving prison sentences for different crimes stipulated in the law, in the spirit of the Ordinary Celebration of 2025 proclaimed by Pope Francis.

Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel informed the Supreme Pontiff of such decision in a letter issued to the Vatican early January, the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement published in its website.

The text states that “releases are conducted on the basis of a thorough analysis, taking into account the different modalities established in the law and as part of the fair and humanitarian nature of the Cuban penal and penitentiary systems.”

In that sense, the Ministry added that as part of the close bilateral relations with the Vatican, the Cuban government has been in touch with the Pope and his representatives in relation to the processes of review and release of imprisoned persons.

As part of that practice and under the provisions established in the national legislation, over ten thousand people serving prison sentences were released in 2023 and 2024 and are benefitting from different modalities foreseen in the law, the text added.

The Ministry also recalled that in June 2023, Díaz-Canel paid a visit to the Vatican and had a meeting with Pope Francis, which was preceded by a meeting between the Supreme Pontiff and the head of the Cuban diplomacy, Bruno Rodríguez, in August 2022.

According to the text, “among the different issues of common interest and on the international scenario, information on the topic was provided in those meetings and a deeper analysis was made on the unfair nature and the negative effects of the United States policy on Cuba.”

The text also stressed that the Pope has given clear signs of empathy and affection towards the Cuban people.

The Ministry highlighted that Cuba has a respectful, honest and constructive relationship with the Pope and the Vatican, which facilitates decisions such as the one recently taken, within the requirements established by the legislation in force, the humanitarian nature of the Cuban penal system and the fulfillment of the obligations to the domestic order and people’s safety.

On this decision, president Miguel Díaz-Canel affirmed in his X account that this is a regular practice in the Cuban penal code and the reason why “we took the

unilateral and sovereign decision of releasing 553 people imprisoned for different crimes.”

Last December 24, Pope Francis called on governments of the world to execute, during the , initiatives that give hope back to the people and urged to “think of the wars, of machine-gunned children, of the bombs on schools and hospitals.”

Relations between Cuba and the Vatican were established in 1935 during the pontificate of His Holiness Pius XI. The Caribbean nation was one of the first Latin American countries to establish relations with the Vatican.



The Cuban president with Pope Francis during his visit to the Vatican in June 2023. PHOTO: Estudios Revolución.

Works in Progress to Increase Water Supply

By TheHavanaReporter**EDITORIALSTAFF**

HAVANA.-Cuba makes progress in works to increase the water service to the population thanks to a national program directed at modernizing networks and connections nationwide.

According to official information published by the national media, networks in operation at present allow benefitting 79 percent of the population.

The so-called Water Supply Program is endorsed by 629.7 kilometers of networks and pipelines, 89,863 new connections to the aqueduct systems and the installation of over 65,000 water meters.

According to these sources, efforts include the ongoing installation of a new water pump named Tulipán Palatino, in Havana, where over 2,200,000 people live.

Data spread by the National Hydraulic Resources Institute (INRH) indicate that in 2024, over 600,000 Cubans received the service through water trucks, a figure the country was able to reduce as of October thanks to investments or maintenance works.

Water service supply through trucks had a higher impact on the Santiago de Cuba, Granma, Holguín, Villa Clara, Mayabeque, Artemisa and Pinar del Río provinces.

Such data were discussed at the Cuban Parliament’s recent session, last December, based on a INRH report that affirmed that works to improve this situation continue to

be conducted nationwide through the Comprehensive Hydraulic Development Program.

Ongoing actions have a government priority and are followed by deputy prime minister Inés María Chapman, who recently visited the execution of the first stage of the new Marino-Palatino pipeline.

This project will favor water supply to the inhabitants of the Cerro and Plaza de la Revolución municipalities, in the capital. Chapman had previously visited the engineering works the INRH conducts at the San Luis municipality, in the Santiago de Cuba province, where this vital service must reach 15,000 inhabitants of that eastern region.



The Water Supply Program include the installation of a new water pump in Havana. PHOTO: Granma.

Ballet Beyond Borders Captivates the Audience at Theaters and Streets

By Martha **SÁNCHEZ**

HAVANA.- The magic of the Ballet Beyond Borders (BBB) HAVBANA 2025 shocked the Cuban capital and the city of Cienfuegos from January 7 to 13 with masterly lessons, lectures and a series of stunning performances by artists from all five continents.

Dancers from several countries got together at the Nacional and Tomás Terry theaters and the halls of the Liza Alfonso

Dance Cuba (LADC) venue, the entity that organized the event in coordination with the Rocky Mountain Ballet Theater of the United States.

The renowned Cuban company is settled in Old Havana, the city's oldest town, whose population was able to enjoy street performances, as one of the objectives of the event is precisely to go beyond the borders.

The second edition of the BBB in Havana included a contest (Dance Challenge) for dancers, professionals and amateurs from different nations, in the categories of Ballet,

Contemporary/Modern ballet, young Choreographer (up to the age of 30) and an Open section that included hip hop, flamenco, ballroom dancing, claqué and all forms of cultural ethnic dance.

The audience was able to enjoy the art of South African dancer Andile Ndlovu, from the Washington Ballet; Rumanian dancers Alina Ciceo and Domsa Radu; Italian Corinne De Bock; Mexican Ángel Vizcaíno; kathak choreographer and instructor of Indian origin but born in the United States, Farah Yasmeen Shaikh; Canadian Marsha Kwan; Italian Giovanni Giordanno, and U.S. Chrome Glacier and Kasper the Saint, among other foreign participants.

A group of dancers from the Rocky Mountain Ballet Theater of the United States and LADC also captivated the audience since the very first day of the event with a flashmob at the Belén Square, in addition to the staging of scenes from Habana Fénix, a successful show premièred by the Cuban company in 2023 that earned its creator, maestra and director Liza Alfonso, the National Choreography Award of the Cuban National Union of Writers and Artists (UNEAC).

The company also staged El Hombre, the closing scene of the piece Elementos, where the Spanish and the African roots intertwine and the Cuban features emerge as identity, pride, strength and fusion.

Leading dancers of the Cuban National Ballet Company Grettel Morejón and Dani Hernández gave a touch of distinction to the closing gala, held in Havana on January 11, with a passionate performance of the third pas de deux of Love Fear Loss, by Brazilian choreographer Ricardo Amarante.

Famous guests in this edition included renowned U.S. director and choreographer Vincent Paterson, whose works for the cinema, the theater and even Broadway, including concert tours, the opera, musical videos, the television and commercials, have been awarded in several countries.

His career includes choreographies for Madonna and Michael Jackson that became iconic creations.

HAVBANA 2025 was an opportunity to know the man who gave the Pop movement many of its memorable moments.



The second edition of Ballet Beyond Borders returned to Cuba thanks to the collaboration between the Liza Alfonso Dance Cuba company and the Rocky Mountain Ballet Theater, from the United States. PHOTO: Internet.

New Inhabitants Invade Havana during the Biennial

By Ariadna **ARAUJO**

HAVANA.-The Havana Visual Art Biennial Festival shows in this XV edition a more contemporary and bold development, with fanciful figures that seem to have arrived from other worlds, as well as the related activities.

Murals, sculptures, installations and a huge outdoors exhibition hall show interests, dreams and even concerns, arising artists' purest, extrovert creativity, such as that of Cuban Karyl Bullaudy and his recent work. Pablo y José... Se dice cubano is the name of a tribute to two outstanding Cuban figures: singer and songwriter Pablo Milanés and National Hero José Martí.

In this work, Bullaudy shows a part of his career in the areas of painting, installation and sculpture.

A tour of Havana's National Fine Arts Museum, one of the main venues of the Biennial, allows us to know important visual arts personalities

from Cuba and other Caribbean nations, in addition to Africa and the United States.

Topics such as violence, decolonization, femicide or discrimination against black women, are a constant in most of the works shown at the Universal and Cuban Art Museum.

Puerto Rican artist Gisela Colón turns personal into universal in her work, showing individual and collective armed conflict.

As metaphors, these creations symbolize bullets (armed violence) turned into mountains, thus channeling negative energies and becoming vehicles of resilience, according to the artist.

Another exhibit, by Cuban Belkys Ayón – follower of the perspectives Wilfredo Lam started – renews engraving and printing techniques.

Hasta que la muerte nos separe (Till death do us part) is one of the most prominent and iconic pieces of the installation made by Anaida Hernández (Puerto Rico), exhibited in the 1994 edition of this festival and in

which she portrayed the first 100 women documented as victims of femicide.

That is how the XV edition of the Havana Biennial is lived in the old city that since November 15 last year has inspired those who visit its traveling galleries.

Meanwhile, the emblematic Havana Malecón (seawall) welcomes a good part of this important and sui generis visual arts event. Each corner of the seawall tells a story that today evokes our idiosyncrasy.

The festival again arrived in the Malecón, where the painted walls of multifamily buildings facing the avenue are the protagonists of 3D works and an exultant

creativity turned into each author's inner world.

Nelson Villalobos's new mural of big dimensions (100 x 15 m) calls the attention of drivers and passers-by as part of the Acera Sur (South sidewalk) initiative, the new name of the Detrás del Muro (Behind the wall) project. In this work, the artist undertakes a huge task, still unfinished and based on the recurring and enigmatic heads that look at the sky.

These figures, which have already become Havana's permanent inhabitants, are part of the installation works conducted at the Malecón, which will be finished on February 28, the day the event will be closed.



The emblematic Havana Malecón (seawall) welcomes a good part of this important and sui generis visual arts event.

Cuban Trade Union in the Face of New Challenges

By Alina **LÓPEZ**

PINAR DEL RÍO.- Secretary General of the Cuban Workers Union (CTC) Ulises Guilarte affirmed in this western city that the island's trade union faces new challenges in light of its XXII Congress.

The organization is the object of criticism by members, who call for the improvement of its work and action in light of the ongoing transformations in the country's work scenario, said Guilarte, a member of the Party Political Bureau who chaired the XXII Congress Conference held in this city. The official stated that employment has been re-shaped in Cuba as a result of the diversification of the non-state management forms.

More than 13 percent of the country's economically active population currently works in medium and small-sized companies, non-agricultural cooperatives and self-employed activities, including the state socialist company, he commented.

Trade union leadership is a must to guarantee the constitutional rights and those granted

by the Labor Code, which will be subject to changes at present, he added.

Delegates attending the Conference discussed topics such as productive and services efficiency; the battle against

criminal activities, and the granting of honorary titles, which do not fully praise the heroism of humble men and women.

Member of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee and first secretary of

this political organization in the Pinar del Río province, Yamilé Ramos, criticized lack of attention to retirees who, in different moments, faced obstacles and made history.

Unity is today our most strategic weapon, the official stated.

At the Conference, participants elected the new provincial committee and ratified Rubén Lloga as the CTC provincial secretary general.

Trade union sources indicated that until January the present year, 135 municipal Conferences were held prior to the XXII Congress, in addition to virtual meetings of CTC national and provincial trade union secretary generals.

In his speech at the Havana's provincial plenary session of the CTC XXII Congress Conference to check the progress made in the municipal conferences, Guilarte highlighted the importance of strengthening trade union's municipal structures in the capital, for being the most industrialized province and the territory that should make the highest economic contribution to the country.



Secretary General of the Cuban Workers Union (CTC) Ulises Guilarte. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

ALIMPORT
Empresa Comercializadora de Alimentos

"Alimentación Para Todos"
"Food For All"

ALIMPORT, is an integrating Company of the Foreign Trade Business Group GECOMEX, with over 50 years of experience in the Activity of Foreign Trade and it takes care of the execution of Operations of Importation of foodstuffs, Raw Materials and other Consumer Goods for the Wholesale Commercialization.

ALIMPORT commercializes a wide range of food products and raw materials that satisfy the demand of our national clients. To sign a contract with our company, you must be registered in our Suppliers Portfolio.

Empresa Comercializadora de Alimentos **GECOMEX**

CONTACTEMOS / CONTACT US

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

Correo / Email:
alimport@alimport.com.cu

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

University Stands Out for Scientific and Economic Contribution

By Yunier **SIFONTE**

SANTA CLARA.- The Marta Abreu Central University of Las Villas (UCLV), the main higher education institution in Cuba's central region, generated an income of over 340,000 dollars in direct exports in 2024, thanks to its scientific research programs.

PhD Luis Antonio Barranco, rector of this university – located at about 270 kilometers east of Havana – said that the contribution the academic center made in import substitution reached 560,000 dollars, mostly in the areas of food production, construction and telecommunications.

Last year, the center's main lines of work were linked to ecological cement and abrasive powder production, vegetable biotechnology, bio-products and air photometry.

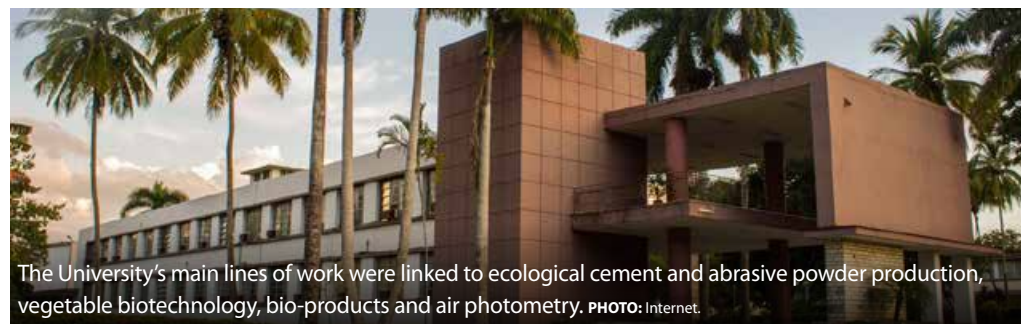
Another element in that direction was the link with the Villa Clara Scientific-Technological Park, the first of its type in the country that has an industrial approach.

UCLV deputy rector for research, innovation and postgraduate courses, PhD Raciél Lima, commented that the implementation of different business models also allowed executing 383 science, technology and innovation projects, with representation in all areas of knowledge.

The main achievements reached by this university, considered Cuba's most multidisciplinary institution, include the opening or consolidation of 66 international projects, for about 500,000 dollars.

According to Lima, over 300,000 dollars of that amount were associated to collaborative studies with other universities of the world, in favor of scientific research and to test results that cannot be attained with the equipment existing in the country.

With 54 careers distributed in 12 faculties, UCLV also stands out for its connection with Cuban companies and bodies, as well as for the contribution it makes to solve national and community problems.



The University's main lines of work were linked to ecological cement and abrasive powder production, vegetable biotechnology, bio-products and air photometry. PHOTO: Internet.

Havana's Maceo Park

Text and Photos Roberto **CAMPOS**

HAVANA.- A beautiful Havana park recalls the liberating deeds of one of Cuba's most outstanding patriots: General Antonio Maceo.

The place stands out for its appearance, sculpture and environment, ideal for a photograph but mostly for being a tribute to a man who fought against Spanish colonialism.

José Antonio de la Caridad Maceo y Grajales was a Cuban soldier and politician, major general and lieutenant general of the Liberation Army, a mambi (guerrilla) leader known as El Titán de Bronce (The Bronze Titan).

Maceo was born on June 14, 1845 in the eastern Santiago de Cuba province and died in combat on December 7, 1896 in the western town of Punta Brava. His most evident commemorative site is the Antonio Maceo Park, in the capital, which is also a

monument on his life erected across from the Havana Malecón (seawall).

For the construction of the park, a contest was held on February 2, 1911 to select a project, whose winner was Italian sculptor Domenico Boni, although the design was made by architect Francisco Centurión.

The monument was inaugurated on May 20, 1916, although the rest of the park was not finished then. In 1925, based on the project presented by architect Francisco Centurión, a decision was taken to restore the state of neglect the site had for many years.

The result of such actions became the target for protests, including that of historian Emilio Roig who, from the pages of the *Carteles* magazine, called upon the leaders of the time, specially Secretary of Public Works, Carlos Miguel de Céspedes, to build a park with the name of Maceo.

However, it was not until 1960 that the park underwent a capital renovation and got the appearance it has at present.



Building the peace of the just in Venezuela

By JuanCarlosDÍAZ

CARACAS.- Described as a historic day, Nicolás Maduro's recent swearing-in ceremony launched a message to the world: 25 years later, the Bolivarian Revolution continues its course of independence and sovereignty, in spite of the hybrid war against it.

At the event, held at the Legislative Federal Palace of the National Assembly (Parliament), the head of State, reelected for the 2025-2031 term, affirmed that this swearing-in ceremony is "a great victory of Venezuela for peace".

Even though this process has been a permanent victim of the imperialist siege in all its forms since its birth in 1998, with the popular victory of commander Hugo Chávez, it has also known how to go on with intelligence, courage and unity.

National and international extreme right's conspiracy plans, endorsed by the U.S. imperialism and its satellite Latin American and European governments in particular, will not stop because as Maduro said on January 10, "imperialism and the extreme right will not learn any lesson".

The president acknowledged that as a people, they face unacceptable trends that "want to kill us and destroy the idea of homeland and Republic", but warned that they will continue defeating those trends "with the law and the Constitution in hand". According to the president, the Bolivarian Republic starts a new stage, which is not free from challenges and difficulties, to face inside and outside, but with the conviction of going on with their consolidation as a

historic project, built upon the best Latin American and progressive ideals of the world.

The very same day of his swearing-in ceremony, Maduro reiterated that his first decree to sign will be the creation of a commission composed of national and international experts to make progress in a constitutional reform.

"We have to update this 25-year old beauty (Constitution) to make it better, to make it

bigger and for that reason, I summon and will sign the decree to create the National Comprehensive Commission for the Drafting of the Constitutional Draft Project", he said.

The president recalled that this process will lead to the democratization and definition of the profile of the new Venezuelan society and economy. The new stage will be directed at strengthening the process headed by commander Hugo Chávez.

Maduro affirmed that Venezuela "is in peace, in democracy, in full exercise of national sovereignty and the people moving forward in this new stage".

"We will build the peace of the fair people, equality of the people, prosperity and the new popular and revolutionary democracy", he affirmed in front of thousands of representatives of social, popular and political movements from all five continents. The president also urged to resist with strength the threats and deceptions of the imperialism.

What the people lived on January 10, 2025 was a clear struggle between good and evil, because the U.S. imperialism and its servants turned the Venezuelan presidential election into a world election because "it was the crown's jewel", he added.



President Maduro received great popular support when he won the elections. PHOTO: Internet.

**INSURANCE
TRAVEL**

JUST TO CUBA

ESICUBA
Seguros Internacionales de Cuba, S.A.

www.esicuba.cu esicuba.diantes@esicuba.cu

Agreement to Restructure the Debt

By WaldomMENDILUZA

PARIS.- Cuba and the Paris Club agreed to amend the terms for the payment of the debt, an agreement that offers the island better conditions to meet its commitments in the face of a challenging economic scenario.

Last January, a delegation headed by Deputy Prime Minister Ricardo Cabrisas met in this capital a representation of 14 countries of the Group of Creditors, led by chairman of the Paris Club Bertrand Dumont. Negotiations ended with the signing of an agreement.

The Cuban party referred to the difficult situation the nation faces; factors that have an influence on such circumstances, and the actions underway to reduce them.

In this regard, Cabrisas pointed at the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba for over 60 years, a policy that has grown stronger in recent years and is the

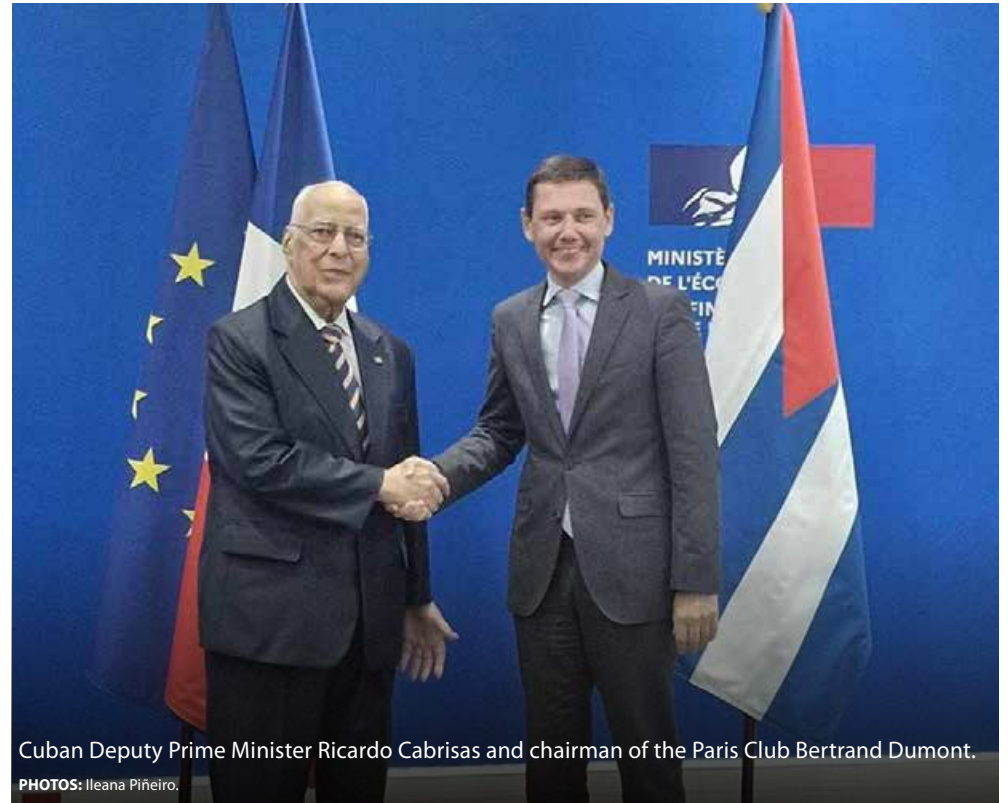
main obstacle for the island's development. In his speech, the official appreciated creditors' sensibility to deal with the issue; their understanding of the topics explained, and the role the European Union has played in negotiations, particularly France, the host country.

He also ratified Cuba's will to honor its commitments and make the necessary efforts in that direction.

It is now the moment to make progress, in the shortest time possible, in the signing of bilateral agreements, he stressed.

Cuba's Group of Creditors include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

After signing the agreement for the restructuring of Cuba's debt payment, with the popular Guantanamera song in the background, co-chairman of the Paris Club, William Roos, summed up the meeting, held in an environment of respect and understanding.



Cuban Deputy Prime Minister Ricardo Cabrisas and chairman of the Paris Club Bertrand Dumont.

PHOTOS: Ileana Piñeiro.

Submarine Cable Triples Internet Connection Capacity

By LisandraPÉREZ

HAVANA.- ETECSA executive president Tania Velázquez highlighted that the implementation of the Arimao submarine cable allowed increasing connection capacities and diversifying sources of access to the Internet in Cuba.

The official of the Cuban Telecommunications Company (ETECSA) pointed out that since the cable came into operation, consecutive expansions have been made, resulting into a 380 gigabyte global connection – which triples the 2021 connection capacity.

Internet traffic in the country has considerably increased, mostly through mobile devices; however, in

spite of such growth, it is a must to continue investing in other infrastructures, such as radio bases and platforms, to guarantee a quality connection with the world, she added.

Velázquez affirmed that consumption pattern in Cuba has changed in recent years, especially because of the new economic actors, but also because of the search for information and entertainment. For these reasons, finding solutions for a more effective connection is a must.

In spite of having eight million active cellphone lines – 95 percent of which can access the Internet – there are still quality problems, many of them in connection to energy difficulties, she said.

Experts estimate that 80 percent of the submarine cable capacity is used, but investments in the network have not increased at the same rate as traffic.

Arimao is an effective project, with good services functioning and we have configured links well; it is a design that functions with stability, but the rate of investment in the nation has not been at that level, she commented.

The ETECSA president added that 76 percent of computer terminals in Cuba support 4G and 90 percent of equipment are smart devices.

In relation to Internet use, social networks such as Facebook and Instagram are the most used, while YouTube and WhatsApp are highly used by the population, and access to game sites and online shops has increased.

The official stressed that e-commerce is also on the rise, being Transfermóvil the platform used the most – with over five million users and a 30 percent rise in 2024.

Velázquez spoke about the network problems and energy challenges and affirmed that although the company has a clear projection for 2030, the rate of investment is not the best.

In this regards, she said that projections point at taking optical fiber to homes, but the financial resources needed to meet those needs – which include not only investing to grow but also sustainability and maintenance of network elements – are not available.



Internet traffic in the country has considerably increased, mostly through mobile devices. PHOTO: Tribuna.

MIPYMES: Making Progress Based on Advice

By Claudia **DUPEYRON**

HAVANA.- Cuba's legal context to foster economic actors was recently updated because of the priority of this sector and the need to have the proper advice in order to boost micro, small and medium-sized companies (MIPYMES).

That was the objective of the Forum on Legal Services to MIPYMES, conducted in this capital by Bufete Internacional (International Law Firm).

During the event, law and finance specialists debated topics linked to the legal framework and context in which those companies develop and how to access bank financing in the country, among other issues.

Over a hundred representatives of Cuban MIPYMES attended the Forum at the Gran Canaria Hall of the Meliá Habana Hotel, where experts also referred to topics such as responsible practices that contribute to the economic, social and environmental development of the nation and the territories, upon the basis of non-state economic actors' social responsibility.

Specialists such as PhD Yanet Alfaro, Bufete Internacional Legal Director, talked to the participants about the different legal services modalities that that institution offers to consolidate such companies.

Alfaro made reference to permanent and specific contracts, including social agreements/decisions referred to public contracts, in addition to statutory amendments, valuations and several pre-feasibility studies.

Meantime, MSc Leyanis Méndez, legal adviser on negotiation processes, talked about companies' social responsibility and interaction with clients, suppliers and competitors.

The specialist also mentioned the importance of identifying MIPYMES' capacity to contribute to solving or

minimizing specific social problems, knowing recipients of such actions, and activities that allow working in that direction.

The event was a guide for those who have already established their businesses but also for those who are starting a project. Other experts, like lawyer Isabela de la Peña, stressed the importance of making a legal diagnosis of private companies.

Such action has huge benefits for companies, such as compliance with the law, prevention of conflicts

and lawsuits, improvements in decision-making and protection of companies' assets.

The last day of the Forum, topics dealt with companies and the financial sector and included the expertise of professor Francisco (Paco) Borrás, Cuban Academy of Sciences awardee (eight occasions) and vice-president of the Cuban Economists and Accountants Association.

Other experts included PhD Jorge Alfredo Carballo, specialist in social and environment protection, risk evaluation, cultural and creative industries, and economy of culture.



More than a hundred interested parties participated in the Forum on Legal Services to MIPYMES. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Territorial Development

By TheHavanaReporter **EDITORIALSTAFF**

SANTA CLARA.- The central province of Villa Clara will foster eight strategic development lines in 2025, boosted by unique industries in Cuba, sources indicated during the celebrations of the National Science Day.

As part of the sector's projections in this province, about 278 kilometers east of Havana, the Villa Clara Scientific-Technological Park stands out – the third of its type in the country and the first whose approach is essentially industrial. The territory works on strategic development lines directed at sectors such as food production; energy; tourism; industry; science, technology and innovation; natural resources and environment; infrastructure, and sustainable social development, which have a priority because of their impact on the transformation of the society.

According to chairwoman of the Scientific-Technological Park, Edelys Saavedra, coordination between academic research and the entrepreneurial and government system will be essential to develop the

economy, as well as focus on sustainable innovation, including an effective communication work that allows reaching the highest number of clients.

The presence in the province of this kind of unique industries in the country, such as Planta Mecánica, Ciclos Minerva or the Sagua la Grande Electrochemical

Company, is another work line than can contribute this year to territorial development and municipal autonomy.

Delegate of the Ministry of Sciences, Technology and Environment in the Villa Clara province, María del Carmen Velasco, explained that increasing the functioning of advisory technical committees and

transforming the entrepreneurial sector's science program are also essential to face technological obsolescence.

Villa Clara has 39 science development proposals directed at goods and services production, in addition to 27 teams linked to scientific development and 15 science, technology and information entities – a figure that positions the province among the country's most outstanding for its varied contribution to the government system upon the basis of science.

In the academic formation alone, the Marta Abreu Central University of Las Villas (UCLV) includes 22 PhD programs, 42 master courses and seven specialization courses, while medical sciences have two PhD programs, seven master courses and 67 specialization courses.

On occasion of the celebration of the Science Day, last January 15, specialists recalled that 5,960 research projects were conducted in 2024, over 20 of which had high impact results in the fields of knowledge and services provision.

Among such achievements, the Welding Research Center, attached to the UCLV, provided the technology for the manufacturing of abrasive powder to polish floors and terrazzo, based on the aluminothermic processing of industrial wastes and Cuban minerals.



Cuban Beach Volleyball Team to start 2025 Season in Mexico

By Julio César MEJÍAS

HAVANA.- Jorge Luis Alayo and Noslen Díaz, Cuba's main beach volleyball team, will start their 2025 competitive season in Mexico at the Yucatan Challenge Tournament, to be held from March 20 to 23.

Placed ninth in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and eighth in the world ranking (by the end of 2024), Alayo and Díaz will have a demanding calendar this year, in which there are other six Challenge events and eight Elite 16 stops of the World Pro Tour, in addition to the world championship.

Actually, three days after their participation in the Yucatan tournament (from March 26 to 30), they will compete in the first Elite 16 event of the year in Quintana Roo, also in Mexico.

The following month, they will stay in the Mexican territory to take part in the Veracruz Challenge tournament (April 3 to 6) and then, they will attend a similar event in Brazil – the Saquarema tournament, from April 10 to 13 – to then finish their tour of Latin America at the Brasilia Elite 16 tournament (April 16 to 20).

In May, they will travel to Xiamen, China (15 to 18) and then they will compete in the traditionally strong Ostrava Elite 16 tournament, in the Czech Republic (May 28 to June 1). After that, they will resume training

and competitions in other two European events: Gstaad, Switzerland (August 2 to 6) and Stare Joblonki, Poland (August 21 to 24).

In September, they will return to South America (venues still to be determined) to participate in other two Elite 16 tournaments in Brazilian cities, and after that, they will travel to Cape Town, South Africa, the venue of a similar stop (October 22 to 26).

Alayo and Noslen will finish the season in another outstanding Elite 16 tournament, in Doha, Qatar (November 5 to 9), in addition to the World Championship, foreseen to take place from November 14 to 21 at the Australian city of Adelaide.

The two Cuban players, who have played as a team since 2023, won that year two silver medals at the San Salvador

Central American and Caribbean Games and the Santiago de Chile Pan-American Games.

In the present Olympic cycle, their intention is not only to improve their results but also to be included among the world's Top-5 and reach the medal podium in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games.



The Cuban Beach Volleyball Team will have a demanding calendar this year. PHOTO: FIVB.

Growing, Diver Frank Abel's Objective

By Ángel SANTACRUZ

MATANZAS.- Growing, growing, growing...is the word young Cuban diver Frank Abel Rosales has in mind and the premise on which his aspirations to reach important results in 2025 are based.

Rosales, 19, acknowledged that his daily routine is focused on improving technical elements, an area in which he already shows an Olympic-level program of jumps, with an average degree of difficulty of 3.0 in one-meter platform and 3.4 in three-meter platform.

In diving, when programs include difficult jumps, if these are well performed, scores are higher and there are more chances of reaching medals in competitions, affirmed the young athlete, a native of the western Matanzas province.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, Rosales commented that 2024 was a positive year, with outstanding performances in several events, including

the Rio de Janeiro World Junior Diving Championship, in which he finished fourth in one-meter platform and ninth in three-meter platform.

In the finals, at the Julio Delamare Aquatic Park, I almost won a medal in both events caused I was second (in three meters) and third (one meter) before the last round, but I got a little bit nervous when I looked at the board, the diver commented.

Working on concentration to avoid those problems is another important element to polish in 2025, when he will take part in events such as the Canada Grand Prix, the Singapore World Senior Diving Championship and the Pan-American Junior Games.

Following the steps of great former diver José Antonio Guerra, from whom he draws inspiration, is Frank Abel's motivation, an athlete who is to grow stronger in this discipline and the main hope of the Cuban men diving team in future international events in the present Olympic cycle.



In the present Olympic cycle Frank Abel is the main hope of the Cuban men diving team. PHOTOS: JTT.

India's Culture, Tradition and Religiousness

By Livia **RODRÍGUEZ**

NEW DELHI.- Over 400 million people attend the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, the world's largest religious gathering and an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity that will take place until February 26.

According to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this pilgrimage embodies the country's endless spiritual inheritance and celebrates faith and harmony.

Maha Kumbh Mela, a sacred pilgrimage held on four occasions every 12 years, gathers millions of Hindu religion devotees who bathe in rivers, which they consider sacred, to purify their sins and reach spiritual freedom.

In addition to attending a series of rituals, they also undergo an odyssey that goes beyond the physical, cultural and even spiritual boundaries.

Each Kumbh Mela moment is determined by the sun, moon and Jupiter's alignment, which is thought to point at a favorable period for spiritual purification and self-enlightenment.

In addition, the ritual's location is rotated from the cities of Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik and Prayagraj, each at the banks of a



The holding of Maha Kumbh Mela Festival is thought to be determined by the combination of astronomy, astrology, spirituality, ritual traditions and customs. PHOTO: Internet.

sacred river, from the Ganges to the Shipra, the Godavari and the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna and the mythical Sarasvati.

Rooted in the Indian mythology and culture, Maha Kumbh Mela is a deep representation of humanity's endless search for inner peace, self-realization and spiritual unity.

The holding of this festivity is thought to be determined by the combination of astronomy, astrology, spirituality, ritual traditions and customs, in addition to socio-cultural practices.

Attendants include ascetics, such as Sadhus and Naga Sadhus, who practice an intense spiritual discipline; hermits who get out of withdrawal to join the Mela;

spiritual wisdom seekers, and everyday Hindu devotees.

Sacred bathing is the most important ceremony of this festival. In the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna and the mythical Sarasvati rivers – the latter known as Triveni Sangam – millions of devotees get together to conduct this highly meaningful ritual.

It is thought that by getting immersed into these sacred waters, sins are purified, setting both the people and their ancestors free from the cycle of rebirth and ultimately guiding them to the Moksha or spiritual freedom.

Pilgrims also attend a cult along the banks of the river and spiritual speeches delivered by sadhus and venerated saints. The origins of the Kumbh Mela date back to thousand years ago, with early references to the Maurya and Gupta period (IV century BC to VI century AD), according researchers of the Culture Ministry.

Although not as large as modern Kumbh Mela, initial gatherings drew pilgrims from all the Indian subcontinent, but with the passing of time, the importance of the Mela grew together with the rise of the Hinduism, with rulers such as the Gupta, who raised even more the festival's status as a venerated religious congregation.

FITSaludCuba

II International Medical Tourism and Welfare Fair

II INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL
TOURISM AND WELFARE SEMINAR

III INTERNATIONAL FOREIGN
INVESTMENT FORUM

