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# FITCuba 2025's Successful Close

By TeyunéDÍAZ

HAVANA.- The 43rd edition of the International Tourism Fair (FITCuba 2025) exceeded expectations after welcoming representatives from 58 countries, about 1,500 foreign professionals, and more than 2,500 national professionals from the state and private sectors. In statements to the press, Cuban Minister of Tourism Juan Carlos García said that such attendance successfully integrated the Cuban tourism product.

Regarding the sector's restructuring, García stated that Prime Minister Manuel Marrero spoke about a regulatory framework of transformations that includes bigger powers to businesspeople, improving their competitiveness and managing their incomes with greater flexibility.

The leasing of hotel facilities will also be authorized, which he said would have a positive impact, while eliminating higher structures that limit management at the grassroots level, mostly in areas such as foreign investment.

When addressing issues regarding connectivity and new markets, García recalled that since 1993, the leader of the Revolution, Fidel Castro had the vision of turning this region into a tourist product, an idea that failed to materialize for years and now faces challenges, although there are conditions to begin, he added.

In the minister's opinion, issues related to insurance, destination marketing, and the creation of attractive products are part of an approach to complement Cuba's tourist offer and turn the country into one of the leading destinations in the world.

In the present edition of FitCuba, China was the guest of honor, which was a success, "given its potential to become one of our main tourism sources."

According to Prime Minister Manuel Marrero, the recovery of the Cuban tourism sector requires a bold strategy that combines structural reforms, innovation, international cooperation, and local empowerment.

Ensuring that the tourism sector becomes the driving force of the Cuban economy is a priority, Marrero affirmed. For this, it is essential

to restructure the so-called chimney-free industry, update the regulatory framework, and implement policies to encourage foreign investment and new business modalities associated with real estate.

He included in that relationship, facilities for foreign currency transactions; the use of new payment cards and the acceptance of cash payments (USD, EUR, and CAD); the launch of new air operations; facilities for the sale of tickets in cash, and the elimination of the health fee at international airports, ports and marinas.

He also highlighted the importance of creating public-private alliances between major tourism providers, MIPYMES (micro, small and medium-sized companies) and the self-employed, who provide a significant complementary offering, diversifying the tourism product because, in addition to the sun and beach offer, Cuba has attractions that can promote and foster other modalities.

The head of government mentioned among such offers the nature, ecotourism and rural tourism; cultural, heritage and historical tourism; health, well-being and quality of life; scientific and educational tourism; cruise ship modalities; recreational boating and diving; congress, event, meeting and incentive tourism, and community and local tourism.



China was the guest of honor of this edition. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

## Joining People and Knowing Cuba with Amistur

By ClaudiaDUPEIRON

HAVANA.- Amistur Cuba S.A., a leading tourism agency specialized in sociopolitical programs, fosters bonds of solidarity and enhances tourism through close exchanges with the Cuban people.

At the recent Cuban International Tourism Fair (FITCuba 2025), Amistur held more than 60 business meetings with 35 current and potential clients to explore new business opportunities, and exchanged with tourism service providers whose products can enhance their specialized offer.

A leader in building people-to-people bridges by promoting exchanges with society, representatives of this agency signed four new contracts and renewed seven agreements for the upcoming tourist season.

They also signed two collaboration agreements and began the process of hiring 13 operators who already market Cuba as a destination but were not familiar with Amistur's product. Among the operators who coordinated future agreements with Amistur Cuba S.A. during the holding of FITCuba



A new feature of Amistur campaign includes the launch of the 30th Anniversary Route. PHOTO: Adelante.

include companies from Vietnam, China, Peru, Mexico, Venezuela, Spain, and the Dominican Republic.

As part of the event, Amistur Cuba S.A. launched its "Travel, Discover, and Connect" campaign to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its foundation, in January 2026, and facilitate visits to Cuba by solidarity groups.

Amistur invites travelers to explore the beauty of Cuba, engage with its culture, and discover new horizons, said Mailin Sánchez Maldonado, the company's Marketing Manager.

A new feature of this campaign includes the launch of the 30th Anniversary Route, which allows travelers to discover

Cuba through two different options: the Western and the Eastern Routes.

The first of these proposals starts in Havana with a visit to the Fidel Castro Center, a tour of Old Havana's Historical Site, and a meeting with the La Colmenita Project. It goes on with a tour of Soroa, in the Artemisa province, and a visit to the Orchid Garden, in the same area, followed by a tour of the Los Malagones Museum, in the Pinar del Río province, where visitors can learn about the history it treasures and interact with rural communities.

After this route offers a tour of the Ciénaga de Zapata (Zapata Wetland), in the province of Matanzas, where visitors can learn about the history of Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs Invasion), explore the Korimakao Project, and visit the crocodile farm. The trip will then continue on to the Cienfuegos-Villa Clara section, with a tour of the Botanical Garden, the Che Guevara Mausoleum, and the Armored Train.

The Eastern Route, on the other hand, includes trips to the cradle of revolutionary history and the cultural wealth of Cuba's eastern side. The Villa Clara-Santiago de Cuba section offers visits to the Moncada Barracks and includes an overnight stay at the Casa de la Trova.

On the Guantánamo-Baracoa route, visitors can explore nature trails, enjoy community experiences in local neighborhoods, and take an excursion to the Duaba River. Once in Santiago de Cuba, they can visit the Santa Ifigenia Cemetery, the San Pedro Castle, and the San Juan Hill.

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# Toward Food Sovereignty



Delegates supported the social and economic project undertaken by the government. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

By Rafael **ARZUAGA**

HAVANA.- The 13th Congress of the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) ended its two-day session on May 17, the date in which Cuba celebrated on Farmers' Day and the 66th anniversary of the first Agrarian Reform Law.

Nearly 400 delegates from all over the country attended the meeting and stated their support for the social and economic project undertaken by the government led by Miguel Díaz-Canel, while stressing their commitment to contributing to the government's efforts to achieve food sovereignty on the island.

The main objective of this event, held at Havana's Convention Center, was to share practices and adopt strategies to increase agricultural production. The meeting discussed topics such as the organization's structural consolidation, its political work, and productive and economic issues.

The Association's work is essential to meet food projects and programs that are part of the government's agenda and have priority in the nation, to reverse the current difficult economic situation.

ANAP members, leaseholders, owners, tenants and rural families manage 45 percent of Cuba's arable land and own 80 percent of the livestock.

Speeches focused on the importance of giving priority to exportable products such as tobacco, coffee, cocoa, honey and

charcoal, while increasing the harvest of rice, beans, corn and other products than allow substituting imports.

Other topics dealt with the need to make greater efforts to recover livestock farming and increase the sowing of plantains, yuca (cassava), sweet potatoes, malanga (taro), grains, fruit trees and short-cycle crops.

Participants also debated the pressing need to increase sugarcane production, protect livestock, and efficiently exploit the land through the application of science and agro ecology, the use of bio products, and animal-drawn equipment.

There was also consensus that the economic blockade imposed by the US government is the main obstacle to the nation's agricultural and livestock growth, although this does not contribute to inefficiencies linked to organizational or subjective problems.

At his speech at the closing session, President Miguel Díaz-Canel stressed that despite US hostility, farmers provide 70 percent of the food consumed in Cuba. He also urged to increased agricultural production to meet the domestic demand and reduce food import costs.

Díaz-Canel said that "with a larger productive base, as we increase production, we will be able to dedicate a significant amount of the foreign currency allocated to food imports to purchasing inputs to have more products."

# Cuba is Open to Respectful Relations with the U.S.

By Lianet **ARIAS**

MEXICO CITY.- Cuba is open to a constructive and respectful relationship with the United States, and we see no reason why the current president, Donald Trump, would be opposed to doing so, Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossío affirmed.

In statements to the Mexican press, the Deputy Foreign Minister said that, obviously, "it would mean having to recognize that Cuba is a sovereign state" that has the right and the prerogatives of self-determination.

"If the United States were at least capable of doing that, or addressing what I would call strategic interests that truly concern the entire American Unión, the United States society, I believe we could have a relationship, he stressed.

The official referred to those persons who have made political careers and have gotten rich through the business of hostility toward the island, but "this does not necessarily represent the feeling" of the Cuban community there, or that of the majority of American society.

The diplomat expressed his conviction that if the majority of the U.S. people were well informed and fully aware of the nature of that government's policy toward Cuba, and the harm it causes to the population, they would openly oppose it.

In relation to the Trump administration's stance on the island, he talked about the strong influence of the anti-Cuban sectors, and added that even though there has not

been an open, declared statement, they have already taken action.

In addition to the economic, commercial and financial blockade that Washington has maintained in place, such actions also include the reinstatement of Cuba in the unilateral list of states that allegedly sponsor terrorism.

Fernández de Cossío also referred to the aggressive stance of the current US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, on the island.

"We don't know what he might be thinking, we don't really know what level of authority he has in the government, nor how he would respond to a presidential decision concerning our country," she said.

"However, Cuba has no problem interacting with whomever represents the United States government, as long as it is a dialogue, a respectful exchange in which we can clearly state our opinions," he affirmed.

The diplomat highlighted that his country is not asking the United States for money, soft loans, donations, or preferential trade treatment, but rather something very simple.

"That we are treated for what we are, which is a fully sovereign state, that has the capacity and determination to build its future the way we see it, not the way the U.S. leaders see it," he stressed.

"That's not too much to ask for; that's how Cuba has relations with the rest of the world, the exception is the United States," he concluded.



Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossío. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



# Another Expression of Hatred

By DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- In tune with the United States Congress's hardest policies on Cuba, Florida Representative Carlos Giménez called for tariffs on governments that hire Cuban doctors, who are protected by collaboration agreements. In a letter sent to Secretary of State Marco Rubio, he echoed Washington's defamation, manipulation, and discredit campaigns against the Cuban health missions and called for economic penalties on foreign governments benefiting from those services. Such a stance is part of an effort to cut off much-needed incomes to Cuba, which has lived under the scourge of the economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the government of the United States for over 60 years.

Giménez "strongly" urged Rubio to "take immediate action" by working with officials in the Donald Trump administration against countries that continue to engage with this form of collaboration with Cuba.

According to the House of Representatives member, "these countries are complicit in supporting a regime that practices slavery,"

a statement that has not only been denied by the Cuban government but also by professionals themselves, who have stated that a medical mission is based, above all, on voluntary participation.

He also issued threats on his social media to Cubans living in the United States for them

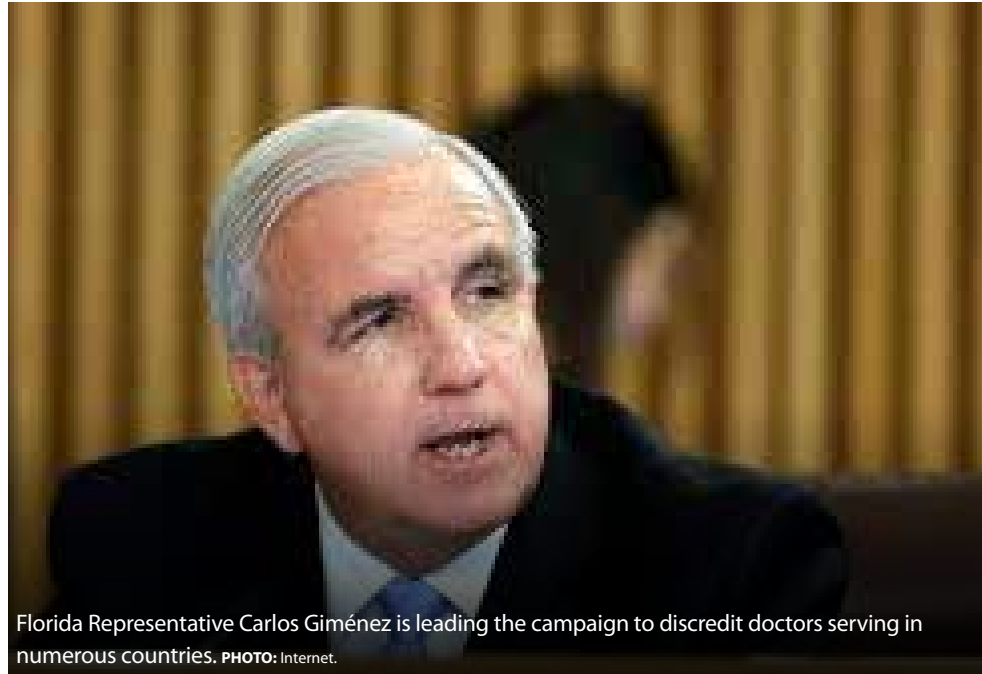
to limit their family contacts with the island. If you send remittances or travel to Cuba, "you do it at your own risk. Do not complain then. You have been warned," he said.

The politician also sent a letter to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, in which he urged him to end all travels to and from Cuba, in

addition to prohibiting remittances from US citizens to family or friends in the island. According to Giménez, this measure would have an impact on "the Havana regime. We must eliminate the dictatorship," he stressed, while insisting on doing it with great precision. Three Cuban-Americans sit in the House of Representatives from Florida: Mario Díaz-Balart (Fort Lauderdale, 1961), María Elvira Salazar (Miami, 1961), and Giménez (Havana, 1954), the only one born in Cuba. Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez denounced last February another attack on the medical missions. The United States government suspended visas associated with international medical cooperation agreements, he then said, while warning that this is a new, unjustified aggression against the Cuban people.

Cuba condemned Washington's decision to pause "the application mechanism for a group of visa categories used for government officials and their agencies," through which "dozens of passports" are rejected.

Since 1963, more than 600,000 Cuban doctors, nurses, and health staff have worked in 164 countries, and currently, their contingents are deployed in 56 nations on almost all continents.



Florida Representative Carlos Giménez is leading the campaign to discredit doctors serving in numerous countries. PHOTO: Internet.

## Acosta Danza's Successful Performance in the United States

Text and Photo DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- The Cuban Acosta Danza company performed in early May at the Kennedy Center, one of the emblematic cultural institutions in the United States capital, in which a packed theater granted the ultimate reward: the respect of the audience with a prolonged ovation.

For 100 minutes, at the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Hall, the company founded by renowned Cuban dancer and choreographer Carlos Acosta (Havana, June 2, 1973) captivated the audience, experts, and those eager to explore the company's methods, with Cuban Eclético.

Their performance combined the fluid movements and versatility of its dancers, who went from classical to modern ballet with an excellent combination on the stage, where the music, the staging, the wardrobe, and the lighting were also members of the cast, without a doubt. The company's artistic director, Yaday Ponce, told **The Havana Reporter** (THR) that tension arose on the first night. "We had little time to rehearse, but the audience reacted extremely well; they truly welcomed us very happily."

Acosta Danza, which returned to Havana for a brief stay before traveling to the United Kingdom, presented a show full of energy during its three-day performance at

the Kennedy Center, which included five pieces from the company's repertoire.

Satori (2018, choreography by Raúl Pedroso); Faun (2017, by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui); Paysage, Soudain, La nuit (2018, by Pontus Lidberg); Impronta (2017, by María Rovira), and De Punta a Cabo (2016, by Alexis Fernández), were included in the company's show.

Ponce added that since the very beginning, Acosta Danza was devised by its creator as a company that brings together all dance styles, "contemporary technique, folklore, Cuban technique; we are a melting pot, as he says and that's what we want to convey."

Dancers are ready to assume all the challenges that contemporary times now impose, she added. "In this performance, we wanted to show dancers ready to stand on pointe, to dance rumba, to dance contemporary pieces, plus 'the Cuban identity that defines us.'"

The artistic director also talked about the company's "younger generation," because "very few of the founders remain, so we've been able to maintain that legacy, that continuity."

In that regard, she appreciated "the support we have from the school to train our dancers. That has allowed us to go on with the company's work, which is what we set out to do from the very beginning, and we are happy for that."

Dancer and choreographer Raúl Pedroso, one of Acosta Danza's founders, told THR that "since the beginning, Carlos had the idea of uniting all possible styles that existed in Cuba in a single cast."

"I believe that this mixture, which is like a stylistic mosaic, characterizes not only Acosta Danza but Cuba as a nation, all of us as Cubans, who are so resilient and have a truly extraordinary capacity for adaptation," he stressed.



Acosta Dance's performance at the Kennedy Center was warmly received by the audience.

# Hurricane Season Outlook

By Ana Laura**ARBESÚ**

HAVANA.- The Atlantic and Caribbean hurricane season officially began on June 1st, and weather institutions have started issuing their predictions long before the National Hurricane Center began its continuous region monitoring. This season, which will again start with the names of storms formed in 2019, will begin with Andrea, followed by Barry, Chantal, and after Dexter, which will replace Dorian, in line with the World Meteorological Organization's rules to discard the names of catastrophic events. This list follows with Erin, Fernand, Gabrielle, Humberto, Imelda, Jerry, Karen, Lorenzo, Melissa, Nestor, Olga, Pablo, Rebekah, Sebastien, Tanya, Van, and Wendy. The Cuban Institute of Meteorology (INSMET) also announced its forecasts. The entity predicted danger to Cuba being affected by a hurricane in the upcoming Atlantic and Caribbean Hurricane Season is moderate, with a 50 percent chance, the entity predicted. The report stated that at least one tropical storm could affect Cuba, with a 70 percent probability. In its forecasts, INSMET explained that the oceanic and atmospheric conditions regulating tropical cyclone activity in this region will be favorable for this cycle, which finishes in November 30, to be active. Specialists predict the formation of 15 tropical cyclones, eight of which could become hurricanes, while 10 could develop in the Atlantic, three in the Caribbean Sea and two in the Gulf of Mexico. Forecasts also indicate that there is a 75 percent probability that at least one hurricane will develop and intensify in the Caribbean. Meteorologists explain that the main reasons behind the active season are warmer ocean temperatures and the shift



The INSMET predicted moderate danger to Cuba in the upcoming Hurricane Season. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

from a weak La Niña phenomenon to neutral conditions in the Pacific. Statistics indicate that in 2024, 18 depressions and an equal number of storms were formed, in addition to 11 hurricanes, five of which were intense. As a result, the season was considered hyperactive. That season's most powerful hurricane was Milton, which was formed in the Gulf of Mexico, became the second category 5 cyclone in 2024, the most intense Atlantic hurricane since Wilma in 2005 and Dorian in 2019, considering its wind speed.

Milton was followed by Oscar, which formed in mid-October. Its ephemeral three-day life was enough to hit Cuba's east as a category 1 event. According to predictions, November, the last month of the season, was expected to be active, which is not common by the end of the cycle. However, in that month, Patty, Rafael, and Sara were formed. Rafael, a category 3 cyclone, crossed Cuba's west from south to north, just a couple of weeks after the devastation Oscar caused.

## An Art and Nature Site to be Enjoyed by the Family

By Amaia**MARTÍNEZ**

HAVANA.- In the heart of Havana's city center, on Carlos III Avenue, a site surrounded by different species of flora and fauna is ideal for family recreation, and options are suitable for all ages. It is Quinta de Los Molinos, a property that was the country house of Cuban General Captains during the Spanish rule in the 19th century, which later on became the residence of Generalissimo Máximo Gómez, after the end of the War of Independence (1895). In Quinta de Los Molinos, Havana's second Botanical Garden, visitors can enjoy the shade of large trees such as the Ceiba and the Baobab, in addition to appreciating the colors of various species in the butterfly house and watching red-footed tortoises roam its ponds, bridges and paths. This place, the crossing of Cuba's first railroad track (Havana-Bejucal) and a National Monument, offers Havana residents, tourists and visitors a wide range of activities that combine protection of nature and the environment with the enjoyment of the arts. Among such activities, a free sterilization campaign for dogs and cats was recently

held under the auspices of Spanky Project USA, benefiting 136 pets. On the World Biodiversity Day, on May 22, Cuban experts gave keynote lectures on the main milestones and challenges in plant and animals' care on the island. In addition to scientific activities, the Quinta offers opportunities to enjoy the arts surrounded by nature. One of these activities is "Cinema in the Garden" – aka family cinema picnic. The

most recent film screened as part of this project was Night at the Museum: The Return of Kahmunrah, the first animated film in the Night at the Museum series. Prior to the screening, visitors also enjoyed Cuban short films and cartoons, including Elpidio Valdés, by Juan Padrón, inspired by a colonel in the Liberation Army during the mid-19th century wars of independence. The Quinta's list of offerings also includes the traditional Entrepreneurship Festival,

while on Mother's Day, celebrated in Cuba on the second Sunday of May, the site hosted the second edition of the Flower Festival, a thematic festivity celebrating the arrival of spring. Tours of its facilities on the colonial train, educational creative cooking workshops and concerts for children and young people are included in the program of this place, which has become a benchmark for all the family thanks to its endless proposals.



Quinta de Los Molinos is Havana's second Botanical Garden. PHOTO: Internet.



# Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo, a Love Ritual

By: Martha **SÁNCHEZ**

HAVANA.- Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo offered Cuba a healing experience, a ritual worth sharing because it spreads love, happiness, and good energy to the rhythm of traditional music from southern Italy.

Antonio Castrignanò and his Taranta Sounds band masterfully accompanied the evolutions of Core meu (My Heart), the title of the famous French choreographer Jean-Christophe Maillot's show in honor of revolutionary Maurice Béjart, because it blends emotions, feelings, sensuality, and joy.

Thanks to instrumentalists' prominent role and live singing, in constant interaction with the dancers, the performance joined the Cubadisco 2025 International Fair's program, the most important event of the Cuban recording industry, held last May.

The organizing committee of the event awarded, Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo and Antonio Castrignanò and his band, with the highest prize: the Cubadisco Honorary Award, in recognition of a stage production that can make anyone fall into a trance for

its extremely high level of communication with the audience.

Music, dance, lights by Samuel Thery and an effective costume design by Spanish Salvador Mateu – who has collaborated with Milos Forman, Pilar Miró, Pedro Almodóvar and brands such as Chanel, Dior, Valentino and Givenchy, among many others – conspired to offer a kind of optical illusion.

The production combined Italian folklore, contemporary dance elements, pointe technique, and academic ballet steps with the pizzica, a Salento variant of the tarantella, a well-known Neapolitan dance with lively movements that gained great popularity in that southern European nation.

In the Italian region of Puglia, at the ends of the Mediterranean, people thought that

the ancient folk dance was a remedy for the hypothetical and metaphorical bite of the tarantula, the biggest spider of the Theraphosidae family, native to Europe.

Maillot rescues the myth and redefines its meaning by presenting a ritual from beginning to end that captivates everyone for an hour and 10 minutes. The ceremony gets deep into the soul, manipulates the energy of the environment and of the body, removes burdens, relieves weight, and lightens the spirit.

Princess Carolina Grimaldi of Monaco traveled to Havana with the dance company she re-founded in 1985 to witness that magical connection with the most diverse audiences that arts make possible.

On May 17 and 18, the Teatro Nacional de Cuba hosted a revival of this ritual, based on the belief that "if you dance, you will never die," as one of the verses of the song Core meu, beautifully performed by Castrignanò, reads.

Popular wisdom captured in the musical themes reveals another truth: "Love is beautiful for those who know how to dance." Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo proves it from the heart.



Music, dance, lights, costume and design conspired to offer a kind of optical illusion. PHOTO: PanchitoGonzález.

## Hello, Laura de la Uz

By Daimarelys **PÉREZ**

HAVANA.- Skilled Cuban actress Laura de la Uz currently divides her time between the stages of Havana and Andalusia, the Spanish autonomous region where she has been organizing and staging the \*Cuba Cultura\* Festival for over a decade.

Regarded as one of Cuba's most essential actresses, she made her film debut in 1990, while still a student, starring in "Hello, Hemingway", for which she earned the Coral Prize for Best Female Performance at the 12th International Festival of New Latin American Cinema.

Today, the artist runs a cultural space in Huelva, promoting various aspects of Cuban culture. About this and other topics, she spoke with **The Havana Reporter**.

The Cuba Cultura Festival has been held in that city for 12 years in collaboration with two Andalusian friends of our family, serving as a meeting point for different cultures and civilizations, recounted De la Uz.

"Since we started the event, we have hosted great exponents of Cuban culture across all disciplines—from architecture, literature, film, theater, and painting to Cuban design, illustration, and, of course, music," commented the renowned actress.

Last year, for example, we invited pianist Roberto Fonseca to the festival, but in previous editions, we hosted visual artists such as René Francisco and Ernesto Rancano. She also recalled that musician Ernán López-Nussa performed at the event and that many other Cubans have been honored in Huelva.

It's a festival organized by friends—a couple there who run an art center called "Harina de Otro Costal" (literally "Flour from Another Sack," meaning "A Different Story"). He's a painter, and she's a cultural manager. The four of us joined forces—my husband and I, and the two of them. One year, we flipped it around and brought the Huelva Cultura Festival to Cuba with the support of the Ministry of Culture, and it was a huge success, she recalled.



Laura de la Uz is one of Cuba's most essential actresses.

PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

### THE WALL OF WORDS: AN OPENING, NOT AN OBSTACLE

The film La pared de las palabras (Wall of Words), by acclaimed Cuban director and 2007 National Cinema Award winner Fernando Pérez, was an unforgettable experience for Laura de la Uz, who portrayed a character inspired by real life.

This thought-provoking feature delves into the complexities of human communication, the weight of pain, and the boundaries of sacrifice. De la Uz delivered a masterful performance as one of the patients in the mental health institution where the story unfolds.

Her portrayal of Orquídea—a woman consumed by obsessive political rhetoric—demanded intense emotional and expressive precision that the actress herself generated -and generates- with her already superb performance.

On how much De la Uz contributed to her character, she said that she was fully involved in the mental health institution where the film was shot. That's where Orquídea is from and I took some of the characteristics of an inpatient girl, a tremendous young woman, who escaped whenever she could, she recalled.

She emphasized that working with Fernando (Pérez) is a privilege, a blessing and a gift from the universe to start a career with a director like him and with a film like Hello, Hemingway.

Fernando has given me everything, entering the cinema and all his experience, his way of making art, his way of being in this world; I learned a lot from him.





# Journalist, War Correspondent and Combatant

By Jorge LUNA

HAVANA.- Jorge Ricardo Masetti, first director of the **Prensa Latina Latin American News Agency**, went from being a young and agile journalist of several genres to an experienced war correspondent and later on, a revolutionary combatant, always defending the truth. Sixty-one years ago, on April 21, he disappeared as a guerrilla fighter at the Salta forest, Argentina, his native country, at the age of 34. His short life, though, was very intense as a combatant, always trying to let the world know the truth, particularly about the young and threatened Cuban Revolution.

With vast experience in several Argentinean media, he met in Buenos Aires – where he was born, on May 31, 1929 – a group of Cuban exiles, and in 1958, he was among the first journalists to secretly interview the rebel leaders in the Sierra Maestra, to clarify the objectives of the fight against the Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship.

As a result of that journalistic work, which he shared with his combat rifle, he published his book *Los que luchan y los que lloran* (Those who fight and those who cry), which gathers early testimonial articles on the Cuban liberation process.



Sixty-one years ago Masetti disappeared as a guerrilla fighter at the Salta forest, Argentina. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

In a historic speech that **Prensa Latina** treasures in its patrimonial archives, on October 1960 (just one year and a half after founding the news agency), he recalled that "as war correspondent, we saw combatants fighting in the Cuban mountains, almost unarmed but with great courage, and we saw how Cuban farmers were massacred with American grapeshot."

We saw students falling in the cities as a result of American grapeshot. We, war correspondents at the front line, made our reports to let readers know how a people who wanted to be free was being machine-gunned by the bombs and the grapeshot of the greatest imperialist power on earth, he added.

Upon an invitation from Commander Ernesto Che Guevara to come to Cuba, immediately after the triumph of January 1st, 1959, he took part in the complex organization of "Operation Truth," which gathered about 400 foreign journalists in Havana to reveal the reality of the country amid Washington and its main news media's smear campaigns.

**That is how Prensa Latina emerged**, on June 16, 1959, whose leadership he assumed at the age of 30. Even before the creation of our agency, slanderous accusations began directly from the U.S. Department of State. We were attacked in every way, Masetti affirmed.

Being a small agency, being minimal what we can do, reaching the Latin American people where the big newspapers are controlled by monopolies such as the big radio and television companies, being our task minimal, what has been done against us is huge, because of all the power of the U.S. propaganda, he denounced after 18 months of activity.



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# For Greater Global Cooperation against Pandemics

By The Havana Reporter **Editorial Staff**

GENEVA.- Cuban Minister of Public Health José Ángel Portal highlighted the recent approval of the world's first Pandemic Agreement and stressed that its implementation requires greater international cooperation. During his participation at the 78th World Health Assembly held in this Swiss city, the head of the Public Health Ministry (MINSAP) said that Cuba welcomes the approval of the Agreement for the prevention, response, and recovery from pandemics. He recalled that over the past three years, Cuba actively engaged in the negotiations and preparations of this important legal instrument, which impacts prevention, response, and recovery actions in light of future pandemics worldwide.

"Diseases do not recognize borders, ideologies or development levels; that's why uniting efforts to confront them is not an option but an urgent need," Portal commented when referring to developed nations' contribution and commitment to the rest of the states so that these can ensure their citizens sufficient and sustainable resources they cannot otherwise obtain.

"We reaffirm our willingness to share our experiences and innovations for the sake of global health, as it is a duty to humanity to ensure that the benefits

of this agreement reach everyone," he affirmed.

The minister added that "now more than ever the world needs unity, solidarity and shared responsibility. Cuba is and will always be in favor of life," he said.

In the framework of the event, held until May 27, Portal met with the director of the Pan American Health Organization

Jarbas Barbosa, whom he thanked for the organization's support to Cuba in promoting access to quality health services.

Portal also held meetings with health ministers and authorities from the Bahamas, Russia, Dominica, and Saudi Arabia, among other countries. In such exchanges, the parties reaffirmed their

commitment to advance cooperation in this important sector.

In talks with the director-general of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Pierre Krähenbühl, the Cuban minister reiterated Cuba's commitment to the humanitarian principles that guide the ethical and humanistic revolutionary medicine work.



The Cuban minister said that diseases do not recognize borders, ideologies or development levels. PHOTO: Internet.

## New Legal Norms Will Undergo Parliamentary Debate

By Lisvan **LESCAILLE**

HAVANA.- A group of draft bills and other legal regulations approved by the Cuban Council of Ministers will be submitted to the National Assembly of People's Power (parliament) for debate in the upcoming legislative session. According to official reports, the Council of Ministers session, headed by Prime Minister Manuel Marrero, discussed the draft bills

of the Cuban Sports System, the General Violation and Administrative Sanction Regulation, the Civil Registry, and the Code of Childhood, Adolescents, and Youth.

Concerning the sports system's draft bill, head of the National Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation (INDER), Osvaldo Vento, stated that the proposal is

"a modern, inclusive, solid and transparent law that guarantees and confirms the Cuban sports system's best experiences."

Additionally, Minister of Justice (MINJUS) Oscar Silvera said that the Civil Registry bill aims at improving, computerizing and strengthening that service's institutional framework, in line with the current context. The law regulates the organization and operation of the Registry, the recording of facts and acts registered, their publication, and effects derived from its content, the source indicated.

Regarding the draft Law on the General System of Contraventions and Administrative Sanctions, Silvera noted the issue's

complexity, citing legislative fragmentation and low public awareness of existing regulations.

The proposal will not only rule the general violation and administrative sanction regulation but also the administrative sanctions applicable in relation to their commission, the minister added.

In addition, Minister of Education (MINED) Naima Trujillo affirmed that the Code of Childhood, Adolescents and Youth will promote the comprehensive development of that age group and will guarantee their rights. She also stressed that its enforcement would include the involvement of different actors.

The said legislation will rule the content of such rights, whose essential pillars will be the right to life, survival, development and participation, as well as non-discrimination and acceptance of children, adolescents and youth's diversity, the head of MINED said.

The meeting, attended by Parliament president Esteban Lazo and Vice President of the Republic Salvador Valdés, approved the proposal for the Viñales Geopark's application as a UNESCO Global Geopark. The governmental body also signed the Urban Territorial and Urban Development Plan for the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba, which rules aspects linked to physical and spatial structure, housing and urban image of the nation's second largest and most populous city



Council of Ministers session discussed several draft bills. PHOTO: Estudios Revolución.



# Romerías de Mayo, a Space for Young Creators

By Mario **MUÑOZ**

HOLGUÍN.- Each year, for more than three decades, the best exponents of Cuba's young art meet at the Romerías de Mayo (May procession) festival, an event held in this eastern city to share experiences, new creations, stage performances, painting exhibitions, and literature and musical events.

The 32nd edition of this festival, held from May 3 to 8, welcomed over 350 Cuban artists and more than 100

foreign guests from 18 countries, including Argentina, Canada, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.

Considered the World Festival of Artistic Youth, the event's theme dealt with cultural industries favoring young art and featured about 500 activities and 20 events on different art expressions.

In this regard, one of the highlights was the space Palabras Compartidas (Shared words), dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the Territorial Publications System and the 130th anniversary of the death of José Martí, on May 19.

Other events included the Memoria Nuestra Congress of Thought, a platform for dialogue on culture, held for four days at the Revolución Hall of the La Periquera Provincial History Museum.

This event featured 13 research and 12 projects by young experts from Havana, Cienfuegos, Pinar del Río, Guantánamo, and the State of Yucatan, Mexico. It also included five keynote lectures and the launch of the book *Fidel y la industria editorial cubana, una Revolución desde las letras* (Fidel and the Cuban editorial industry, a Revolution from arts), by Francisca López Civeira and Fabio Fernández.

Other attractions this party of young art offered were the Bloguerías de Mayo media event, and Babel as the core of visual arts, which celebrated its 30th anniversary.

The festival's proposals also included Cámara Azul, with the panel Alfredo Guevara. Un fundador (Alfredo Guevara. A founder), who dealt with the intellectual work conducted in creating Cuban and Latin American film institutions and projects.

Concerning music, the Destrabando la Trova, Quiero una Canción, Rockmerías and Electroromerías projects were held in over 20 cultural centers of the city.

In a press conference, national chairman of the Hermanos Saíz Association, Yasel Toledo Garnache, spoke about the opportunity Romerías de Mayo offers to give visibility to new cultural management platforms for young creators from all over the world, focused on art's distribution and expansion without borders.

Garnache emphasized the scope and level of summoning of this event, nationally and internationally, and stressed the essential work territorial institutions and bodies conduct.

The festival's program included regular spaces such as Babel, dedicated to visual arts, which celebrated its 30th anniversary at the Provincial Visual Arts Center, and Bloguerías de Mayo, which this year focused on artificial intelligence (AI) and its impact on art, journalism, and cultural industries.



Over 350 Cuban artists and more than 100 foreign guests from 18 countries participated in the Romerías de Mayo. PHOTO: Internet.

## A Musical Bridge to Havana

By Dailila **ALONSO**

HAVANA.- The Un Puente hacia La Habana (A bridge to Havana) festival, which celebrated its 13th edition in May, offered the audience three memorable days of music and culture.

Dedicated to Venezuela and Spain, the event is still a space to unite cultures and to position Cuban music worldwide. The current edition features a first-class program and big surprises.

Guest artists included Waldo Mendoza; Karamba; Buena Fe; Ivette Cepeda; Cándido Fabré; Maikel Blanco y su Salsa Mayor; Will Campa y la gran Unión; Omslig D' León; Enid Rosales, and many others.

The main venues were the Casa de la Cultura, located at Plaza de la Revolución municipality, on Calzada and 8 streets, and the Casa de la Música de Plaza on 31 and 2 streets.

The event's activities were addressed to all audiences, including children, youth, adults, and seniors.

A new feature of the present edition is that it served as a threshold to the Cubadisco

2025 festival, the largest event of the Cuban discography.

To this end, both festivals were linked like a bridge, filled with electronic music, singing, alternative and popular music, and numerous activities for popular enjoyment.

This music festival thus paved the way for Cubadisco, with the performance in Havana

of Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo, a prestigious European company.

From May 16 to 18, at the Avellaneda Hall of the Teatro Nacional de Cuba, the company performed "Core Meu" to a packed house.

One of the festival's highlights came near the end, when the president of the Cubadisco festival, Jorge Gómez, and the president of the Cuban Institute of Music, Indira Fajardo, presented Omslig D' León with the 2025 Cubadisco Honor Award for

his father, acclaimed maestro and musician Oscar D' León.

Similarly, the festival and "360 Producciones" granted a special recognition to Omslig D' León and Javier Key as participants in the present edition.

Chairman of the Organizing Committee and leader of the Karamba band, musician Jorge Luis Robaina, told the press that these celebrations seek to raise visibility and strengthen alliances in the music world.



Among the artists present in this edition of A bridge to Havana was Buena Fe. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



# Days of Intense Emotions

By Germán **FERRÁS**

MOSCOW.- During his recent visit to Russia, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel affirmed that "we experienced days of intense emotions and promising dialogues," while adding that friends are not indifferent to his country's economic situation, a topic discussed during his stay.

The Cuban head of state arrived in the Eurasian country on May 4 at the Pulkovo Airport, in St. Petersburg, where Governor Alexander Beglov welcomed him.

Díaz-Canel began his official activities with a tribute to those who defended Leningrad (today, St. Petersburg) at the Pikarievski monument complex.

He later had official talks with Beglov at the Smolni Palace, during which they discussed bilateral cooperation in the economic, cultural, and educational fields, among other sectors.

In Smolni, he laid a wreath at the Vladimir Lenin statue. He visited the office of the leader of the October Revolution, and after inaugurating the exhibition Oh, La Habana Tránsito (Oh, Havana Transit) featuring works of art on Cuba in tribute to emblematic places and aspects of the Cuban society.

In that famous city, the Cuban president toured scientific and technological centers of great importance for the Russian-Cuban bilateral cooperation, such as the Vertex

pharmaceutical company, where he learned about the production of medicines and cosmetics.

He also visited the electromagnetic compatibility and climate testing laboratories, comprehensive testing, and innovative energy centers attached to the PJSC Rosseti Intelligent Digital Networks Laboratory.



Presidents Vladimir Putin and Miguel Díaz-Canel reviewed medium and long-term plans for political, economic and trade cooperation.

PHOTO: Internet.

Once in Moscow, the Cuban president held a round of negotiations with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, where they reviewed the progress of the current bilateral agreements and medium and long-term plans for political, economic, and trade cooperation.

He also met with deputy head of the Russian Security Council, Dmitry Medvedev; laid a wreath at the monument of the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, in the Sokol Park, and had a meeting with Russian communist leader Guennadi Ziuganov, who awarded him the commemorative medal for the 80th anniversary of the Great Victory.

Díaz-Canel, along with the president of the Federation Council (Senate), Valentina Matvienko, inaugurated an exhibition dedicated to the 65th anniversary of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and Cuba.

Other activities in Moscow included a visit to the Moskvich automobile factory; a tribute to Liberator Simón Bolívar, in the square named after the Venezuelan hero, accompanied by President Nicolás Maduro, and a meeting with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia at the Danilov Monastery.

On the final day of his visit to Russia, Díaz-Canel attended the military parade that marked the 80th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory in the Great Patriotic War, and shortly before his return to Cuba, he held a cordial meeting with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping.

## NAM's Support to Cuban Medical Collaboration

By Rolando **BENITO**

HAVANA.- Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez thanked the Health ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) for their rejection of the United States' campaigns against Cuba's international medical collaboration.

"We thank the Health ministers of NAM's 121 nations for the strong statement they issued rejecting the US campaign against Cuba's medical collaboration," the minister said in a message shared on X. He also affirmed that Cuba will continue saving lives and sharing its limited resources with those nations that need them most.

The document states that the bloc's stance indicates that promoting international cooperation and solidarity is a duty of States. In this context, "we express our deep appreciation, gratitude, and recognition to the Cuban health professionals who offer their services in different countries."

At a virtual meeting before the 78th World Health Assembly, held in Geneva from May 19 to 27, the ministers rejected the campaign to discredit Cuba's medical cooperation and deprive the peoples receiving it of essential health services. The text reads: "Health is a human right, and millions cannot be deprived of its access for political reasons. Such

attempts ignore that the shortage of professionals in the sector is an urgent problem worldwide, whose solution requires more international cooperation and solidarity."

The statement adds that Cuba dedicates significant efforts and resources to health, and today has one of the highest ratios of doctors per capita in the world, which allows it to make an important contribution to global health.

According to records from the Ministry of Public Health, over 605,000 professional collaborators of the sector have completed missions in 165 nations in the last 60 years. Their feats in the fight against Ebola in Africa, blindness in Latin America and the Caribbean, cholera in Haiti, and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic stand out.

Additionally, the text states, several brigades of the "Henry Reeve" International Contingent of Doctors Specialized in Disasters and Major Epidemics carry out humanitarian work in many countries, Neither the discredit campaigns nor the effects of the blockade have prevented Cuba from continuing to save lives (...) The Cuban medical collaboration will continue as a symbol of hope, selflessness, humanity, and solidarity, the statement from the NAM Health Ministers concludes.



Over 605,000 Cuban professional collaborators of the health sector have completed missions in 165 nations in the last 60 years. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



# Natural Charm

Text and Photos RobertoCAMPOS

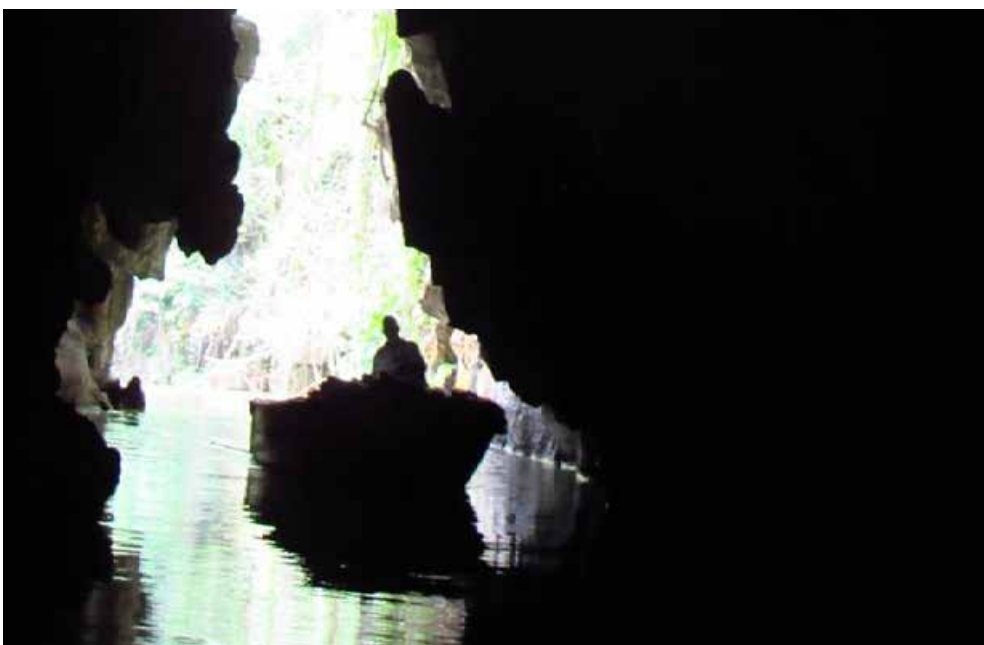
PINAR DEL RÍO.- Without doubt, one of Cuba's most amazing tourist destinations is Pinar del Río, the country's westernmost province, which, this year, tries to break new ground despite hurricanes and other problems.

Professionals of the tourist sector toured the region's beautiful landscapes after the 43rd Cuban International Tourism Fair (FITCuba 2025 - April 30 to May 3), an event that highlighted the province's natural surroundings and potential for adventure trips.

Pinar del Río, located in the island's westernmost region, is one of Cuba's

most fascinating places, renowned for its spectacular landscapes, world-famous tobacco production, and heavenly keys.

Its major attractions include the Viñales Valley, declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the northern keys, such as Levisa and Jufías, with their virgin beaches and crystal-clear waters. The Viñales Valley, Pinar del Río's natural and cultural heart, stands out for its mogotes (unique limestone mountain formations), tobacco fields, and rural traditions, a perfect destination for those who love nature and Cuban culture.





# Global South Faces Complex World Context

By Isaura **DIEZ**

BEIJING.- The 4th China-CELAC Ministerial Meeting showcased the world both regions' commitment to South-South cooperation, amid an international context marked by conflicts and protectionism.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and China approved the Beijing Declaration and a Plan of Action for the next three years to enhance economic and commercial ties and increase people-to-people exchanges.

In this regard, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced five programs to expand cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), ranging from credits to training scholarships and new projects.

Beijing will promote cooperation in infrastructure, agriculture, energy, mining, and emerging sectors such as clean energy and artificial intelligence.

China will implement technology programs and encourage its companies to invest more in LAC. It will also provide a 66 billion Yuan (over nine billion dollars) credit line for regional projects.

China's program includes 3,500 government scholarships for technical

training, 500 scholarships for Chinese language teachers, 300 positions for poverty reduction specialists, and 1,000 spots in the "Chinese Bridge" program for cultural visits.

According to Xi, his country will finance 300 "small but beautiful" projects with high social impact.

The president advocated for a development path tailored to the region's characteristics. He also rejected external interference and emphasized that intimidating practices only promote self-isolation.

During the meeting, presidents Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, from Brazil; Gustavo Petro, from Colombia and Gabriel Boric, from Chile,

called for regional unity upon the basis of its diversity.

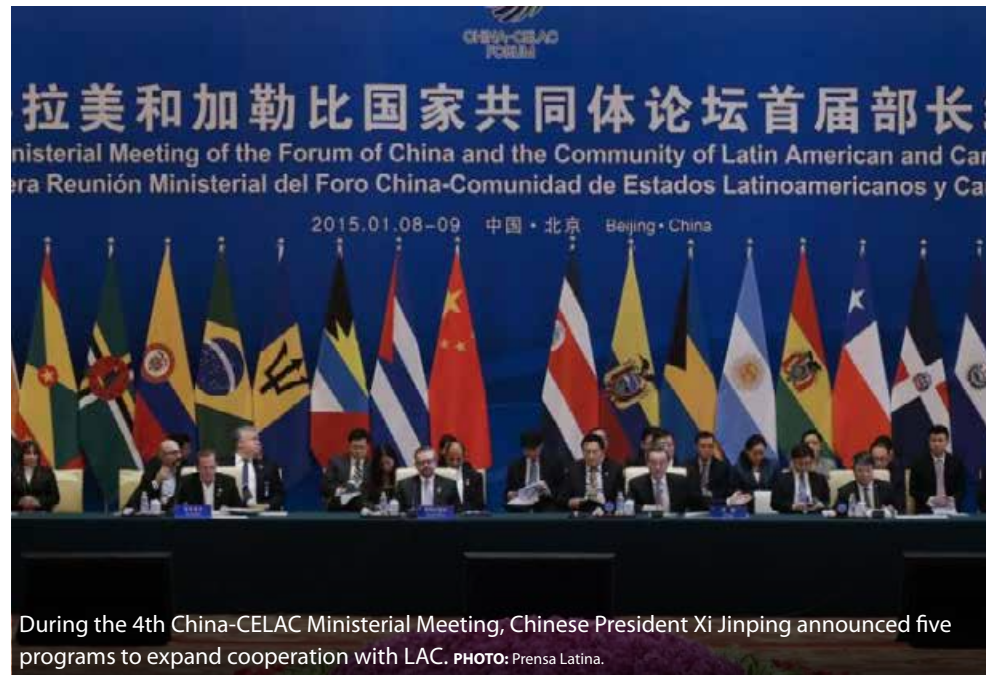
They also stated their commitment to multilateralism, rejected protectionism, and advocated for strengthening economic ties with China.

In Lula's opinion, Latin America faces a crossroads: whether to continue being a region marked by poverty or to become a hub of sustainable, inclusive, and fair development. The Brazilian president added that the region should work for a multipolar order in which developing countries have the right to vote in global affairs, while strengthening the South-South dialogue mechanism.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez affirmed in the meeting that cooperation within the China-CELAC Forum is essential in a complex global scenario "marked by the United States' attempts to reconfigure the international system."

Rodríguez condemned US efforts, which rely on pressure, threats, and the imposition of tariffs and other punitive measures.

In sum, the meeting highlighted the importance of promoting mutual respect, recognizing national differences, and adhering to the principles of sovereignty and the rule of law in international relations.



During the 4th China-CELAC Ministerial Meeting, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced five programs to expand cooperation with LAC. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

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# Cooperation and Understanding

By OdetteDÍAZ

MOSCOW.- Russian vice-president Dmitri Chernyshenko affirmed that the strengthening of relations between Havana and Moscow resulted from hard, permanent work between both nations in the last eight years.

The senior official described the current cooperation and understanding between the two countries as historic and expressed his respect for the Cuban people by stating, "Cuba is in our heart."

The leader spoke with the Cuban press following the meeting in this capital between the presidents of Cuba and Russia, Miguel Díaz-Canel and Vladimir Putin, respectively, during the Cuban president's visit to mark the 80th anniversary of the defeat of fascism.

Cuba is a reliable partner capable of paying the state credits and projects agreed upon in recent years, Chernyshenko said, while stressing the recent signing of a document called the 2030 Plan..

By virtue of that program, Russian companies and businesspeople have stated and confirmed their will to invest over one billion dollars in the Cuban economy, he affirmed.

At the meeting, Díaz-Canel and Putin had, on May 7, the Russian president confirmed the implementation of a special mechanism to subsidize the interest rates of Russian businesspeople for project financing, Chernyshenko commented.



Russian vice-president Dmitri Chernyshenko with the Cuban press. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

The purpose of this action is for them to invest in the Cuban economy, in those sectors that are considered essential for the country, such as electricity supply, agriculture, and lighting, among others, he said.

"We hope that as a result of this, more Russian businesspeople go to Cuba soon, which would help the Cuban economy to be independent and reach sovereignty in all senses," he added.

A special area of focus, the vice-president noted, was the tourism sector, and in that regard, he praised the island's natural conditions and the beauty of its beaches. He added that "Russian tourists can visit Cuba all year round, and we have the intention of becoming the country with the highest presence in the Cuban market."

The Russian senior official affirmed that there is still much work to be done in the

future and emphasized that it is impossible to achieve results as if by magic..

Chernyshenko took the opportunity to congratulate both nations on the 80th anniversary of the Soviet Union's major victory over fascism during the Great Patriotic War and the 65th anniversary of the resumption of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the giant Eurasian nation, on May 8..



Las Guásimas Photovoltaic Solar Park has an installed capacity of 21.8 MW. PHOTO: Internet.

## Photovoltaic Solar Park Opened in Santiago de Cubat

Text and photo YugdanisVICET

SANTIAGO DE CUBA.- The Las Guásimas Photovoltaic Solar Park, the first of four to be built in this eastern province, in the framework of the Cuban energy matrix change program, is already in operation with an installed capacity of 21.8 MW.

Opened in May, the facility has more than 42,000 panels and seven inverters, which reduce the use of over 20 tons of fossil fuel daily and represent a savings of 4.9 million dollars annually.

With a cost of 16 million dollars, and the use of Chinese technology, Las Guásimas is located in the Contramaestre municipality, over 70 kilometers from Santiago de Cuba city. This park will prevent sending about 31,600 tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

In that regard, General Director of the Santiago de Cuba Electricity Company,

Javier Calero, spoke about the ecological benefits linked to the use of solar energy and said that the park allows savings of over 1,150 dollars daily in fuel oil, diesel and other oil byproducts.

The official stated that two new parks are already in preparation in the San Luis municipality, while another area is being studied in Contramaestre and new fields are being identified for future investments.

The installation was inaugurated by Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the Revolution, Ramiro Valdés. Several companies were recognized at the event for their work in the assembly of panels.

Calero was also acknowledged for his commitment and work dedication.



# Economic Agreements

By Maria**MAYORAL**

HAVANA.- Cuban and Belarusian banks, companies, and institutions signed several agreements during the XII session of the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic-Commercial Collaboration held in this capital.

The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment (MINCEX) indicated that the Agreements are focused on the industrial and biopharmaceutical sectors.

At the end of the meeting, the Intergovernmental Commission's co-chairs signed the corresponding instrument, which outlines topics discussed, agreements, and work projections for the next period.

The closing ceremony was headed by MINCEX first deputy minister Carlos Luis Jorge Méndez and Belarusian deputy minister of Foreign Affairs Evgeni Shestakov.

The senior Belarusian official previously had a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Eduardo Martínez and headed political consultations between both nations' foreign ministries, accompanied by Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Anayansi Rodríguez.

Shestakov and his delegation's work program included exchanges with bodies and entities of the industrial, biopharmaceutical, and food sectors. A Business Forum organized by the Chamber

of Commerce of the Republic of Cuba was also held.

According to official statements, "contacts were characterized by an honest and direct dialogue that confirmed the progress made in the implementation of the agreements reached in top-level visits made in recent years."

In a press release, MINCEX referred to "the fulfillment of the agreements reached in the previous Intergovernmental Commission session held in Minsk."

According to this body, real potential for economic collaboration was confirmed, and both parties defined "the steps to follow to qualitatively increase the level of economic, commercial, financial and cooperation relations, in tune with the political and strategic partners' relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Cuba."

At the closing session, the co-chairs discussed the main topics of common interest and agreed that this XII meeting contributed to outlining the work priorities of institutions involved in bilateral relations in the short, medium, and long terms.

They also emphasized on the important role business circles from both nations should play in implementing the agreements.



The Agreements are focused on the industrial and biopharmaceutical sectors. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

## Consolidation of the Economy, a Key Objective

By Ernesto**VERA**

HAVANA.- Members of Cuba's Council of State reiterated the importance of progressing in enhancing the economy. In this context, the state-owned socialist enterprises and the development of agricultural production play a fundamental role.

These are the country's priorities at a time when the island is facing a complex economic scenario.

At a meeting held in this capital, the Council of State members also pointed out the importance of fostering

the export of goods and services, boosting production and the national industry to replace imports, and strengthening the banking process, among other aspects. Headed by the president of the National Assembly of People's Power (Parliament), Esteban Lazo, the debates also focused on the progress made in the Government's Program in correcting distortions, boosting the economy, and the guidelines for the country's work.

Lazo emphasized the importance of effective popular and institutional control in all fields, particularly at the municipal level, a fundamental step in territorial development, and the comprehensive and collective contribution to this process.

According to reports, Minister of Domestic Trade, Betsy Díaz, explained the actions undertaken to meet the plan of measures following this body's rendering of accounts to the National Assembly of People's Power, in July 2024.

The minister specifically addressed activities improving retail trade, territorial management, electronic commerce, and bancarization in the sector.

Other topics included attention to recreation, institutional communication, science & innovation, and the fight against crime and illegal activities.

Prime Minister Manuel Marrero attended the meeting at the National Capitol..



The Council of State members pointed out the importance of fostering the export of goods and services. PHOTO: TC-Mariel.



# Preparations underway for the Men's Volleyball Nations League

By Julio **MEJÍAS**

HAVANA.- Veteran middle blocker Robertlandy Simón and outside hitter Miguel Ángel López (captain) will lead the Cuban national team to the upcoming men's Volleyball Nations League (VNL), beginning this June.

Simón again had an outstanding performance in the Italian Super League, in which his Piacenza team finished fourth and qualified for next season's CEV Cup, while Miguel Ángel shone in the Japanese league, in which his Osaka Bluteon team finished second.

Cuba is currently 12th in the world ranking, with 249.34 points, very close to places 10th

(Serbia - 259.28) and 11th (Canada - 254.46). In the American continent, the island is placed behind the United States (third - 365.87), Brazil (seventh - 305.87), Argentina (ninth - 266.94) and the Canadian team.

Once again, under the technical direction of coach Jesús Cruz, the Cuban team hopes to improve the ninth place reached in the previous VNL edition. With this purpose in mind, Simón and López will be supported by several players who combine youth with experience in professional leagues.

Such players include assistants Marlon Yant and Osniel Mergarejo, who performed well in Russia; center backs Roamy Alonso and Javier Concepción, and veteran David Fiel, who returns to the Cuban squad after several years away from its ranks, but

with the endorsement of his results in the Russian league.

Several young players seek a place in the regular squad after their performances in various foreign leagues, including opposite forwards Alejandro Miguel González and Daniel Martínez Campos, the latter, a prodigy who is not 20 years old yet, is 2.20 m tall and has had an outstanding performance in the Brazilian Sada Cruzeiro club.

Cuba will debut in the VNL on June 11 against Slovenia (fourth in the world ranking, 252.50 points) in the group whose matches will be played in Rio de Janeiro. The following day, they will face the host nation. On June 13, they will play Ukraine, and on the 15th, they will close the initial round against the United States.

After their stay in Rio, coach Cruz's players will travel to Europe to play the remaining two rounds of the regular season. They will first go to Belgrade, Serbia, and will finish in Poland.

On June 25, in the Balkan city, they will play the team that has been their main opponent in the last Olympic qualifiers, Germany (eighth in the ranking, 274.38). On the 26th, they will face the host nation and then the Netherlands (27) and Argentina (28).

On July 16, at the Polish venue, they will face Bulgaria (19th place, 161.06) and the following day, they will play the host team, leaders of the world ranking (401.31), Olympic runners-up in Paris, and bronze medalists in the 2024 Nations League. The Cuban squad's final matches will be against France - second in the world ranking (378.07) and 2024 Olympic and VNL champions - and China (24th place, 144.02). The 2025 VNL final will be played from July 30 to August 3.



Miguel Ángel López shone in the Japanese league, with the Osaka Bluteon team.



Robertlandy Simón had an outstanding performance in the Italian Super League. PHOTOS: Internet.

## Carlos Gattorno Receives Honorary Doctorate Degree

By Alejandro **ESTEBAN**

HAVANA.- General manager of the Marabana-MaraCuba marathon races, BA Oscar Gattorno, received academics, athletes, and fans' tribute after being granted the Honorary Doctorate Degree from the Manuel Fajardo University of Physical Culture and Sport Sciences (UCCFD).

Gattorno, who received the degree from PhD Silvano Merced Len, UCCFD rector, acknowledged the recognition granted by a school he graduated as a PE teacher 55 years ago.

"My first words are dedicated to all those present here, who despite difficulties, accompany me in this important moment of my professional life; to all those who have not shown their solidarity with this modest and humble PE teacher who more than five decades ago came out of this school that was then called Comandante Manuel Fajardo Higher School of Physical Education, or simply El Fajardo," he said.

Deeply moved, the guest of honor stated that the Honorary Doctorate Degree is an incentive to strengthen his work at the head of the Marabana and MaraCuba departments, while continuing to be a permanent activist of the Cuban sports movement, to make unattained dreams true.

His dedicated work and contribution to the development of athletics, particularly long-distance road races, were also acknowledged at the ceremony through the granting of

the World Council of Academics and University Researchers (COMAU) membership, a condition he received from the entity's chairman, Orlando Terré Camacho.



Gattorno received the Honorary Doctorate Degree from the Manuel Fajardo University of Physical Culture and Sport Sciences. PHOTO: Roberto Morejón/JIT.



# Japanese and Cuban Cultures in Camagüey Project

By Verónica NÚÑEZ

**CAMAGÜEY.** The idea behind MangaQba has never been to renounce the Cuban culture but to connect it with the Japanese culture, said the president of the project, Carlos Oliva.

MangaQba (pronounced Manga Cuba) is a sociocultural project that was created in the province of Camagüey in 2011 with the objective of promoting the Japanese culture, from anime and manga to more traditional aspects.

One of its main events is the Hanami Festival, which gathers hundreds of people every year to watch the fall of white oak flowers, similar to cherry blossoms in Japan, a tradition they have been celebrating for 13 years now.

For its thirteenth edition, the chosen theme was Japanese cinema, with a diverse program of activities that included film screenings, Dorayaki (food) tasting, interactions with cosplayers and people of Japanese descent, Yukata (traditional clothing) try-on, and a poster contest

followed with an exhibition based on Akira Kurosawa's film "Rashomon" (1950)..

Carlos Oliva, 24, told **The Havana Reporter** that MangaQba also focuses on creating a link with Cuban culture and nurturing the youth with the Japanese values they themselves admire.

The project initially started as a hangout for friends interested in Japanese issues, mainly anime and manga, which are the most well-known parts of Japanese pop culture.

From that moment on, that group of people began creating bonds and became interested in more specific aspects of the Japanese culture, and the Hanami Festival arose from the idea of gathering here, in the Province of Camagüey, projects or groups of people from Cuba interested in Japanese culture.

It has always served as the perfect excuse to bring them together and talk about what interests us, what we want to do, and on what basis to continue working to improve and critically enhance what we consume and do.

Hanami means spring in Japanese and is the tradition of sitting to contemplate



MangaQba, created in 2011, promotes the Japanese culture. PHOTOS: Internet.

the falling of the cherry flowers, which resembles the white oaks scattered around the city of Camagüey, whose flowers also change and turn pinky this time of the year. He said that the selection of the Japanese cinema as the theme of the event's latest edition had the purpose of finding a link between the cinematography of both countries and how they have influenced each other.

In previous editions, the event's themes had been linked to literature and painting; on this occasion, four films were chosen: 'three are rather contemporary because we have a very young audience and sometimes the reception of black and white films can be difficult'

The films were Hara-kiri (2011) by Takashi Miike; and Evil Does Not Exist (2023), by director Ryusuke Hamaguchi, an award-winning at festivals like Cannes and an Oscar nominated film.

The third film was Sweet Beans (2015), by Naomi Kawase, whose story is linked to a Japanese dish called Dorayaki, which is directly connected to one of the activities planned with the community of Japanese descendants.

Finally, we chose Rashomon (1950), a classic by director Akira Kurosawa, which celebrates its 75th anniversary and remains as one of the most iconic Japanese films you could mention.



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