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Ecotur Champions Natural, Inclusive and Accessible Tourism

By Raquel **DÍAZ**

HAVANA.- The Ecotur Travel Agency is the only entity specialized in nature, adventure and rural tourism in Cuba, whose attractions and unique products expand the island's offerings as a tourist destination.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, the agency's deputy director, Magela Solana, commented that Ecotur currently has the strength of sharing businesses with several international operators, as a result, they have the means to create offers for those seeking to immerse themselves in the Cuban essence. This, in addition to the expertise of its tour guides and qualified staff for this type of tourism, ensures a high-quality offering for visitors who choose to explore the island with Ecotur and enjoy unforgettable experiences, Solana said.

The official added that the agency also has partnerships with several agrotourism farms, which enrich the catalog of experiences and promote authentic rural tourism on the island, providing a deep immersion in local life and its most deep-rooted customs.

Similarly, Ecotur cooperates with the Agrarian University of Havana, whose projects expand the agency's capabilities and offer new perspectives for the development of sustainable activities.

Solana highlighted that because of the Afro-Cuban inheritance and the presence of temples dedicated to Yemayá (African deity) and showcasing ancestral traditions,

Ecotur promotes tours of those places, where visitors can discover the local spirituality and culture and enrich their experience on the Cuban destination.

Ecotur's offerings include safaris, bicycle tours of the Viñales destination and its mogotes (limestone formations) – in the western Pinar del Río province – as well as horse rides and bicycle tours.

The agency offers solutions to different types of travelers, guaranteeing inclusion in all programs, regardless of physical conditions. In this sense, it facilitates the use of scooters to people with reduced mobility, to ensure visitors' comfortable tour and full enjoyment of all destinations.

In relation to the Chinese market, Solana explained that the agency is seeing an increasing demand among this segment, with visitors looking for new experiences and a deeper contact with the culture, thus the importance of adapting to new tendencies. Chinese tourists look for unique products and offerings in Cuba; they want exclusivity, and Ecotur is working to meet those specific demands with new proposals, she stressed. At the recent International Tourism Fair, the agency's proposals included the launch of tents that can be installed on top of jeeps and tours of agrotourism farms, where visitors can get familiar with the Cuban authenticity and its tastes, she added.

Solana announced that next October, Cuba will host the X Ibero-American Rural Tourism Meeting, an international event of great importance for the sector, of which Ecotur is the official host.



Ecotur offers solutions to different types of travelers, guaranteeing inclusion in all programs, regardless of physical conditions. PHOTO: Panchito González.

Cienfuegos Attracts Curious Visitors

Text and Photo Francisco **MENÉNDEZ**

CIENFUEGOS.- Located in the south-central region of Cuba, Cienfuegos stands out for the beauty of its landscape and cultural traditions, which in 2025 attract the attention of curious travelers from around the world.

Known as La Linda Ciudad del Mar (The beautiful seaside city) or La Perla del Sur (The southern pearl), Cienfuegos is a colorful and clean seaside city, perfect for tourism, that European travelers prefer.

Founded in 1819 by French settlers, led by Louis De Clouet, the city is considered by many as the cleanest and best organized in the Cuban archipelago, with plenty of charms at hand.

A World Heritage Site, a recognition granted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2005 for its elegance and preservation, Cienfuegos had the first urban historic center in Latin America to receive such a distinction.

The recognition was granted for the excellent preservation of the city's heritage assets, taking into account its area of origin, as well as for its neoclassical buildings, which include the

Cathedral of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, the San Lorenzo College, the Town Hall and the Tomás Terry Theater. According to scholars and tour guides, the Casa de los Leones and the Ferrer, Blanco and Goitizolo palaces also stand out for their architecture.

Cienfuegos, the capital city of the homonymous province – which covers a surface of 4,180 square kilometers – has a deep-water bay and a mountainous zone close to the city. The region is ideal for recreational boating, ecotourism, and adventure tourism, activities promoted by the authorities. For this reason, the city welcomes visitors from around the world who come to enjoy its beautiful diving sites, especially in the Guajimico area.

Located at about 254 kilometers east of Havana, the region treasures beauties that attract different types of travelers looking for active rest.

TOURIST FUTURE

Cienfuegos is, above all, a modern city with a tourist development plan set for 2030, whose main objective is to turn the territory into an inclusive and strong recreational destination, as authorities of the sector acknowledge.

In light of such development, it focuses actions on the Rancho Luna-Punta La Milpa region, with projections from

2019 to 2027, in addition to the Punta Barrera and Playa Inglés-La Tatagua region, from 2020 to 2028.

The distinctive element of its culture, though, includes music and artistic performances, which complement an attractive proposal for visitors looking for something else than the sea.

In line with such proposals, this month, the Benny Moré Cultural Center for Arts, across from the José Martí Park – in the city downtown – is to be opened.

Bartolomé Maximiliano Moré (Santa Isabel de las Lajas, Cienfuegos, 1919-Havana, 1963) –also known as El Bárbaro del Ritmo and El sonero Mayor – was a famous and beloved Cuban singer and composer.



Cienfuegos is a colorful and clean seaside city, perfect for tourism. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

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Seeking a Path to Development



The debates also addressed the creation of markets and investments financed by territorial contribution, among others items. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

By Mirna **GONZÁLEZ**

HAVANA.- President Miguel Díaz-Canel expressed that the recent ANEC congress adequately identified the structural problems of the Cuban economy and proposed solutions.

In the closing speech of the National Association of Economists and Accountants of Cuba (ANEC) event, the President affirmed that the documents discussed highlight the economy's distortions and structural problems, and proposed actions. He also stressed the commitment and contribution of the Cuban economists and their crucial role in the country's sustainable development, and the importance of its members' resilience and creativity in overcoming current economic challenges with scientific rigor and professionalism. Díaz-Canel noted that the ANEC documents provide guidance and support for the Government's Program to eliminate distortions and boost the economy again. He added that the documents discussed in the Congress adequately identify the structural problems of the Cuban economy and propose solutions, and best describe the economy's distortions and structural problems.

In his speech, the head of State said that it is essential to strengthen ANEC, involve its members in government decisions, in order to promote the development of socialism and economic sovereignty upon the basis of unity and participation within the association.

In this regard, he proposed the organization to define the three pillars promoted in government management: digital transformation, science and innovation, and communication.

Head of the ANEC Commission on Contribution to the Cuban Economy, Francisco Borrás, commented that the discussions addressed topics linked to macroeconomic stabilization; the recovery of external revenues and their increase through exports; debt management; fiscal and tax policy; budget reduction; banking, and exchange rate policy.

The debates also addressed changes in resource allocation mechanisms; the creation of markets; improvement of institutional and regulatory frameworks; investments financed by territorial contribution, and transformations in the Cuban business system, Borrás added.

They also included topics on encouragement and recovery of agricultural production through essential transformations to boost the agricultural sector and food production, as well as the mobilization of domestic reserves for the development of the sugarcane industry. Regarding the strengthening of accounting and cost management, Borrás spoke about the need to achieve a true hierarchical structure of accounting activities; establish a certification program for accountants; ensure the quality of financial statements, and resume the use of cost systems.

Vatican's Visit to Cuba Strengthens Cooperation

By Melissa **KING**

HAVANA.- The recent visit to Cuba of the Vatican's Secretary for Relations with States and International Organizations, Monsignor Paul Richard Gallagher, reaffirmed the common will to continue strengthening bilateral relations.

During his stay in the island, Gallagher attended several activities, including a thanksgiving mass for the beginning of the pontificate of Pope Leo XIV, held at the Havana Cathedral and presided over by the archbishop himself.

In that context, the Vatican's senior representative affirmed that "Cuba has a special place in the heart of the Holy Father." He emphasized that during nine decades of bilateral relations, the Vatican has felt the closeness of the Cuban people.

Monsignor Gallagher recalled that the last three popes' visits to Cuba evidenced the close bond with the Cuban authorities, bishops and faithful. He also stated that "for the common good of all Cubans, the Vatican will continue accompanying this nation."

In addition, he urged to respond to the Pope's call to live in communion within a united Church and in a reconciled world, under the principles of peace, justice and truth.

The Vatican's representative also met with Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel, who

extended his greetings to Pope Leo XIV and reaffirmed Cuba's willingness to continue strengthening constructive dialogue between both parties.

The head of State affirmed his satisfaction for receiving the archbishop once again and pointed out that the visit took place in the context of the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the Vatican.

Díaz-Canel highlighted that ten years ago, the then-president Raúl Castro visited the Vatican and Pope Francis made a pastoral trip to the island.

During the meeting, the president requested to send his cordial regards to Pope Leo XIV and extended a formal invitation for him to visit Cuba. "It would be an honor to receive him. He would be treated as his leadership at the head of the Catholic Church deserves," he stated.

Díaz-Canel highlighted that Cuba remains committed to respecting and improving religious freedom, as proclaimed by the Constitution, and praised the achievements made in relation to different religious faiths. The visitor extended the Vatican's and Pope Leo XIV greetings, and stressed that "with this constant dialogue that is stated at this moment, we are committed, along with the Cuban Episcopal Conference, to work to further improve our relationships and promote the Catholic Church cooperation in Cuba for the benefit of the entire population."



Monsignor Paul Richard Gallagher during a thanksgiving mass for the beginning of the pontificate of Pope Leo XIV at the Havana Cathedral. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

From Maximum Pressure Policy to Maximum Aggression

Text And Photo DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- Almost twenty measures have already been taken by the Government of the United States to punish Cuba since Donald Trump took on his second term in Office, on January 20.

"We are not surprised," said Johana Tablada, deputy general director for U.S. Issues at the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a dialogue with **The Havana Reporter** (THR) during her recent work visit to Washington DC.

Her stay here occurred during the announcement of total prohibitions and entry restrictions to the United States for citizens from 19 countries, including reports on the pressures and announcements of visa cancellations for Central American officials whose governments participate in some form of medical collaboration with Cuba.

Tablada stated that the "State Department currently operates like a private company. Millions have already been allocated to pursue Cuban doctors; those millions have already been distributed (...) or those who have devoted a good part of their lives to living off funds from the United States government to discredit Cuba on any issue."

And now these budgets must be executed and they will continue to fabricate, to buy testimonies and we will continue to hear those lies because "the United States' policy runs through an avenue of fiction, where things are

invented, other peoples are financed to repeat those inventions and then Cuba is punished for that invention no matter what," the diplomat affirmed.

On the other hand, for some time now, there has been talk of including a group of countries that are not welcomed in the United States. Cuban foreign minister Bruno Rodríguez warned about the racist nature of this measure, which distinguishes nations in a discriminatory way and in our case, comes to justify a policy that was already being applied, she added.

We are also in a situation of "abuse by that government, particularly by its Secretary of State, who has made this issue personal and has turned it into his delusional focus to stifle the Cuban Revolution, to starve the Cuban people, to provoke shortages and scarcities," pointed out Tablada, who did not rule out that "more unpopular measures could come."

"These measures are not only prejudicial for those of us who live in Cuba; these measures divide the Cuban family, impose great pain on people who need to see each other, visit each other," she stressed.

"In other words, a personal agenda is being taken to a state agenda. I believe that this is not even popular among the Cuban emigrants, nor the threats of mass deportation, nor all the forecasts of the measures that would make life more difficult for their relatives," she emphasized.

There are weeks in which two or three measures have been implemented,

and in these cases, they have been masked by provisions that affect other countries extraterritorially.

"Most of these measures have been taken with total opacity; I mean, they have been

implemented from day one, the first being to put Cuba back on the list of states that allegedly sponsor terrorism, which was done as part of a package of 78 decisions so that no one would notice it," Tablada affirmed.



Johana Tablada, deputy general director for U.S. Issues at the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

PHOTO: Internet.

Richmond City Council Urges Removal of Cuba from the U.S. Terrorist List

Text and Photo DeisyFRANCIS



The Proclamation noted the blockade inflicts daily hardship and deprivation on the Cuban people. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

WASHINGTON.- The Richmond City Council (California) approved a proclamation urging the United States government to remove Cuba from the arbitrary list of state sponsors of terrorism and to lift all economic sanctions. Issued at a solemn session in June and signed by Mayor Eduardo Martínez, Deputy Mayor César Zepeda and Council Member Claudia Jiménez, the proclamation emphasized that for the past 64 years, the United States has imposed an economic, commercial and financial blockade on Cuba.

The unilateral siege, which at current costs represents losses to the Cuban economy of approximately five billion dollars each year, impedes most of relations and trade with the U.S. and punishes other countries that attempt to interact with the island, the proclamation noted.

"The consequences of this embargo (blockade) continue to inflict daily hardship and deprivation on the Cuban people, generating shortages of basic goods such as food and medicine, and severely restricting international financial and commercial opportunities," the text underscored.

In addition, it prevents Cuba from obtaining vital equipment and supplies and even hinders the humanitarian aid response to catastrophic events such as hurricanes.

The text recalled that in 2021, Cuba was reinstated on the list of state sponsors of terrorism at the end of Donald Trump's first term in the White House, reversing the decision of the Barack Obama-Joe Biden administration in 2015.

With the influence of the Cuba solidarity movement here, many initiatives to end the embargo have been promoted and approved in recent years in municipal councils, state legislatures and unions representing millions of people in the United States.

On October 30 last year, 187 of 193 countries voted in favor of lifting the blockade on Cuba in the UN General Assembly, with the opposition of the United States and Israel.

"On behalf of the Richmond City Council, I hereby urge our Congressional delegation to pass a legislation that eliminates those aspects of the embargo (blockade) that have been codified in law," the mayor highlighted in the Proclamation.

He also insisted on eliminating all U.S. sanctions against Cuba and allowing both peoples to travel and trade freely. At the City Council meeting, the Proclamation was presented to Cuban Embassy diplomats David Ramírez and Yasser Ibarra.

Richmond and the Havana municipality of Regla, in Cuba, have been sister cities since September 1999.

A High-end Industry

By Ana Laura **ARBESÚ**

HAVANA.- In celebration of its 39th anniversary, the Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center (CIGB) has launched a communication and educational campaign in its social media to portray the history and meaning of its extensive portfolio of products.

Under the tag #CIGB Aniversario/¿Sabías qué?(Did you know), the emblematic leading institution of the Cuban biopharmaceutical industry, which reached the 39th anniversary of its founding on July 1st, is publishing in several posts the origin and development of its drugs,

including the Heberbiovac_HB vaccine, obtained in 1989 and the first with that technology produced in Cuba.

Turned into a milestone of the Cuban science and exported to several countries later on, its recombinant DNA technology allowed having a highly-effective and safe formula, comparable to the world's best and pre-qualified by the WHO, said the CIGB.

Through that innovation, Cuba managed to control Hepatitis B, the CIGB recalls when highlighting that the injection is included in the Cuban National Vaccination

Program since 1992 and has protected millions of Cubans.

The institution, which has created antiviral, immunomodulatory, antibacterial and bacteriostatic products and medications for neuropathic and ischemic diabetic foot ulcers, just to mention a few of the products included in its large portfolio for human health, stands out for the development of one of the world's few pentavalent vaccine that protects children against five diseases with a single shot.

The Heberpenta-L liquid pentavalent vaccine provides protection against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type b infections with a single shot, simplifying vaccination schemes.

Unlike other pentavalent vaccines (that are lyophilized), its liquid form, ready to be used, avoids errors in its preparation and facilitates its application in mass immunization campaigns.

Thanks to its advanced technology, it offers high efficacy (more than 95%) and a safety profile endorsed by clinical studies.

In addition, as it is a product made by the Cuban biotechnology sector, it is accessible to countries with limited resources. Its design favors a lasting immune response, protecting children particularly during their first years of life – as it is applied since they are two months old. With its use, Cuba and other nations progress in eliminating communicable diseases, proving the impact of the Cuban science to the service of global health, the CIGB highlights. Opened on July 1, 1986, the institution is a major research-productive center with cutting-edge equipment, important production capacities and a staff dedicated to the development of products in all stages.

The center's main lines of work include the creation of recombinant proteins and hormones, vaccines and diagnosis tools and monoclonal antibodies production.



GIGB is a milestone of the Cuban science and exports its products to several countries. PHOTO: Internet.

Biodiversity Loss, A Major Problem

By Lourdes **PEREZ**

HAVANA.- As in many countries around the world, the loss of biodiversity in Cuba is one of the major environmental problems.

According to experts, the main causes include the destruction and fragmentation of habitats, primarily due to deforestation, unsustainable agricultural practices, environmental pollution and forest fires.

These factors also include climate change and the impact of hurricanes, in addition to poaching, illegal logging, illicit trade and the introduction and spread of invasive exotic species.

Data provided by PhD in Biological Sciences and director of the National Biodiversity Center, Carlos Mancina, indicate that 35,569 species have been identified in the country, 24,948 of which are terrestrial; 8,646, marine, and 1,975, freshwater species.

The island also has 7,251 categories of vascular flora, representing 254 botanical families of 1,724 genus.

PhD in Biological Sciences Eldis Rafael Bécquer, principal curator of the National Botanical Garden herbarium at the University of Havana, added that there are about 3,000 endemic species.

This number places Cuba among the seven islands with the highest percentage of endemism in the world, along with Papua New Guinea, Madagascar, the Galapagos Islands and the Canary Islands.

However, specialists warn that around 50 percent of the national flora species are under some degree of threat due to illegal trade, a harmful practice that affects more than 30 species.

In recent years, several species of cactus and orchids, some of which are exclusively found in the country, have even disappeared.

The fauna of the Cuban archipelago does not escape this situation. An example of this is that all four species of sea turtles that nest in the national territory are in danger of extinction due to poaching and incidental fishing, climate change and pollution, commented director of the Marine Research Center of the University of Havana, PhD Julia Azanza.

According to PhD in Biological Sciences and president of the Cuban Zoological Society, Roberto Alonso, reptiles and amphibians are among the most threatened and endangered groups.

Alonso pointed out that although Cuba ranks second in relation to the number of amphibian species in the Caribbean – with 71 known species, all of them of the anura order (frogs and toads); 69 native and 94.4 percent endemic – they are disproportionately threatened.

In light of these huge challenges, he recalled that in July 2024, the country approved the National Biodiversity Program, which is coordinated by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment and is the main national environmental policy platform to face biodiversity loss.



Forest fires are among the causes of loss of biodiversity. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Federico García Lorca Returns to Havana

By: Verónica **LASTRES**

HAVANA.- Spanish filmmakers José Antonio Torres and Antonio Manuel launched the documentary *Lorca en La Habana* (Lorca in Havana) at the Varona Auditorium of the University of Havana (UH), where they also met with university students from the capital.

Produced by the Plano Katharsis Andalusian production company, the film was screened by the Cervantes Department in honor of the 95th anniversary of Federico García Lorca's visit to Cuba.

The event was chaired by José Antonio Torres and Antonio Manuel, directors of the documentary; Luis García Montero, director of the Cervantes Institute; Ciro Bianchi, a prestigious Cuban historian and author of *Lorca: Pasaje a La Habana* (Lorca: A Trip to Havana), and José Antonio Baujín, director of the Cervantes Department at the UH.

"From the very beginning, our intention was for Cuba to speak about Lorca; to take him out of the Hispanic context and show

a different Lorca; the traveler, the one who enjoyed life, because his life changed here, and this was one of the places where he was happiest," said Torres, one of the film's directors.

Here, the mask that had shielded him from that antiquated, Catholic, dictatorial Spain fell away. Here, he not only felt freedom and brotherhood with the most disadvantaged but also resolved to return—because fighting for the Republic meant fighting for himself," expressed Antonio Manuel, the other filmmaker.

Lorca en La Habana is a dramatic compilation of most of the moments the Granada-born poet experienced in the Cuban capital.

The film's most significant aspects include the portrayal of emblematic historical figures such as Nicolás Guillén, Flor Loynaz, José María Chacón y Calvo and Adolfo Salazar, who had a relationship with Lorca in Cuba, and that of the poet himself narrating his memoirs.

The testimonies of researchers Ciro Bianchi, Urbano Martínez, Tania Licea, and artistic director Rubén Darío complement the story.

The launch of the documentary was done as part of the Lorca Days, a group of activities held in the capital and

the western province of Matanzas in commemoration of the poet's trip to Cuba.



The film honors García Lorca on the 95th anniversary of his birth. PHOTO: Archivo.

Lianet Martínez Pino, A World of Art from Cuba

By Mario **MUÑOZ** and Danay **GALLETI**

HAVANA.- Visitors to the Osaka Art Fair, in Japan, enjoyed the image of thousands of unlit matches and shapes formed by charcoal in the works of Cuban artist Lianet Martínez Pino.

The young creator (32 years old) has never been happy with the two-dimensional space, and although she is good at painting, she prefers to add to her work any material with a past, a history, which takes on new life in her hands. Eight of her most recent works are on display on the Japanese island of Yumeshima, the event's venue, as part of the 2025 Osaka-Kansai World Expo, which is promoted this year under the central theme "Designing the Future Society for Our Lives."

For the artist, 2025 began with important commitments and expectations, including her recent participation in art exhibitions in Mexico and the United States. She is now exhibiting her work in Japan and later on, in New York and Miami.

Martínez Pino is not afraid of new challenges, and to face them, she has been getting ready for the past years, since she knew she loved art, as a child, in her native Cienfuegos province.

In an interview with **The Havana Reporter**, she commented that her parents are doctors and her father, a gastroenterologist, took her to hospitals, where she learned about laparoscopies and endoscopies. However, what called her attention the most were the instruments used in that profession, and during the consultations, she ended up drawing.

As a result, from the painting workshops, where she started to get interested in creation and made her first still-life pieces, she



Eight of her most recent works of the young painter are on display on the Japanese island of Yumeshima. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

went to the Benny Moré Arts School, in that south-central seaside city of Cuba, where she studied for three years. Afterwards, she enrolled the San Alejandro Fine Arts Academy, in Havana.

"It is beautiful because throughout my career, I have linked those objects I saw when I was with my father, like the lab glassware, to my work. I make photographs with that type of fragmented pieces, and I have been influenced by that," she said.

In relation to the evolution of her style along the years, she commented that creation is not a formula to her, but "a free body, which you have to develop and transform as you transform yourself naturally in life."

Hence, I think that it has evolved; first, because I want everything to change in time, I do not want to follow a pictorial or sculptural or photographic line but rather to follow ideas, and then let the medium adapt itself to that idea, not the other way around, she affirmed.

I describe myself as an artist and artists have to change with their time and according to their personality too, and that is what I like, that it has evolved that way.

Pino added that there are different ways work ideas emerge, because sometimes they come to you, but at other times, they arrive through readings, films...

I get absorbed in a daily creative whirlpool in which ideas begin to pop up and I start reconnecting myself with objects, even dreams, readings, and that is how ideas also change.



Voces del Sur Global
Voices of the Global South



From Silence to the Cinema, A New Story on Che's Guerrilla

By Jorge **PETINAUD**

LA PAZ.- Bolivian filmmaker Verónica Córdoba focuses attention on the shooting of the documentary *El Paquete* (The package), a story about Efraín Quicáñez (aka Negro José), who rescued the survivors of the Commander Ernesto Che Guevara guerrilla.

"It is great news; we finally received a fund to materialize this story about Quicáñez, who rescued the survivors of the Commander Ernesto Che Guevara guerrilla and took them through very difficult paths," she said in statements to **The Havana Reporter**.

Córdoba pointed out that Negro José (Quicáñez's guerrilla name) crossed the borders of Chile with the five guerrilla survivors and then accompanied them around the world, until they were finally welcomed in Havana by historic leader of the Cuban Revolution himself, Fidel Castro.

"It is a story that we wanted to tell for a long time and we are very happy that we are able to do the shooting during the months of June and July," she stressed.

The director, communicator and writer added that, "together with Quicáñez, we are going to go on this journey again, we will follow it along these roads where everything has changed with time, but I believe that a very revealing documentary will come out".



Efraín Quicáñez (aka Negro José), rescued the survivors of the Commander Ernesto Che Guevara guerrilla. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

A PIECE OF CAKE

Veteran Bolivian revolutionary fighter Efraín Quicáñez (94) is the author of the book *Pan Comido* (Piece of cake) that recounts the details of the operation conducted in 1968 to rescue the Cuban and Bolivian survivors of the Commander Ernesto Guevara (Che) 's guerrilla.

Endowed with a privileged memory, in talks to THR he recalled that in a meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolivian Communist Party (PCB), whose Organization Commission he joined, he was informed that the survivors were in La Paz and it was necessary to take them out of the country.

"That's a piece of cake", he said, and because of that, at the beginning of 1968, he was entrusted with that mission.

For that reason, Quicáñez became the main guide through Oruro and until they got to Chile as part of a troubled operation in which he led Cubans Harry Villegas (Pombo), Leonardo Tamayo (Urbano) and Dariel Alarcón (Benigno).

The group was also composed of Bolivian guerrilla Guido Peredo (Inti), David Adriázola (Darío), Julio Méndez (Ñato) and PCB militant Estanislao Vilca, who supported the task.

In an interview granted to this publication, Negro José recalled that the journey through several Bolivian cities was long and difficult, as they had to cross high rivers and hide in several caves.

They finally managed to reach northern Chile on foot in February 1968, where, thanks to the mobilization of the then Senator Salvador Allende and other leftist leaders, they were able to surrender to the authorities under safety conditions.

From Chile, they were expelled by the government of Eduardo Frei and traveled through several territories in Asia, Oceania and Europe until they arrived in Cuba, where they were welcomed at the José Martí International Airport by historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro.



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Youngsters Revive Attack on the Moncada Barracks

By Lisván **LESCAILLE**

HAVANA.- The attack on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Barracks, in Santiago de Cuba and Granma, respectively, marks its 72nd anniversary on July 26. This event would be indescribable without the perspective of young people.

Most of the participants in those actions, which today go beyond history books, protagonists' stories and popular imagination, were only 17 to 30 years old in 1953.

Headed by Fidel Castro, the group sought, by means of the weapons, to bring their humiliated nation to the dreams of social justice and absolute independence, championed a century earlier by National Hero José Martí and other patriots of the time.

In that context, the country faced a chaotic situation in such vital areas as health, education and employment. Ordinary Cubans lacked the essential means of support and the poorest suffered all kinds of abuse and harassment.

The capture of the main fortress in the country's east, and that of Bayamo – allegedly, the one that supplied reinforcements to the government troops – sought to unleash the armed struggle

against the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship (1952-1958).

The courage and determination with which the youth assumed that risky mission, even unaware of its content, elevates their

example to epic proportions, judging by the daily testimony of the Santiago de Cuba inhabitants.

"Attacking the country's second most important fortress, which had a large

weapon potential and a high number of soldiers, was an unprecedented feat," said young Yadira Durand.

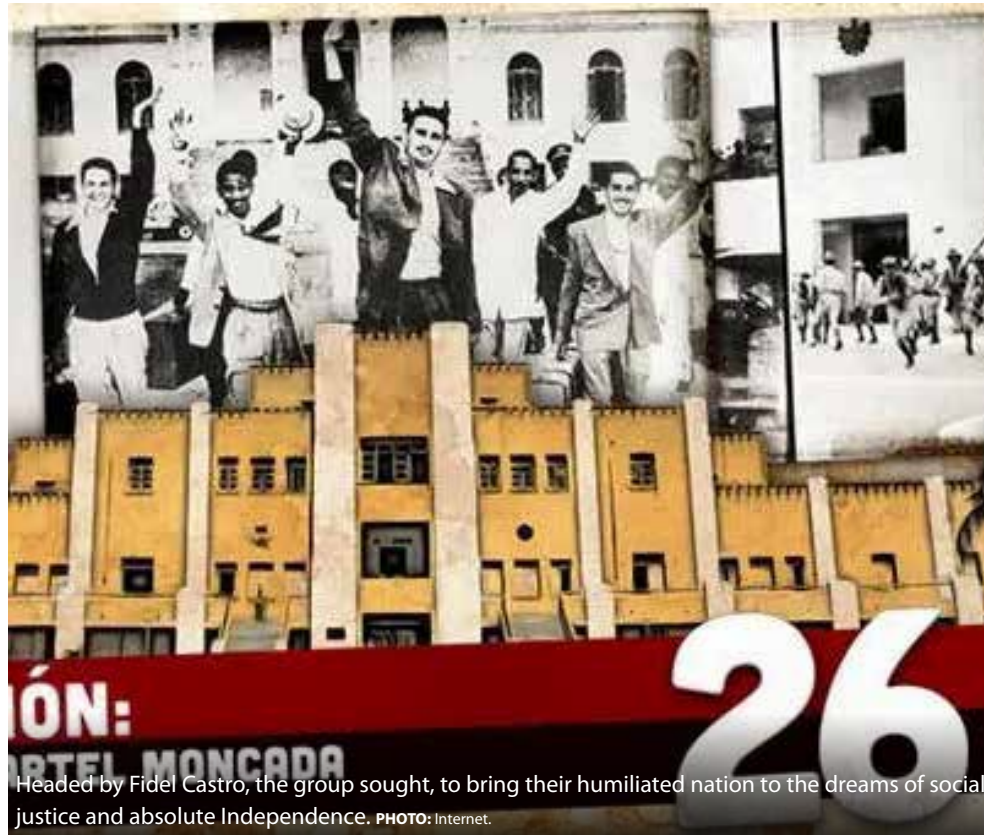
"On January 28, 1953, during the Marcha de las Antorchas (Torch March) celebrating the Centennial Anniversary of the Apostle José Martí, the Cuban people demonstrated the profound moral foundation of Martí's ideas. That went unnoticed by tyrant Batista, in his blindness for power and lack of foresight," the young girl said.

Accounts reveal the display of courage and dignity of the attackers who, outnumbered and outgunned, were unable to achieve their goal, but exhibited the revitalization of the national liberation movement.

Collective memory also records the massacre of insurgents, following the dictator's order to eliminate ten revolutionaries for every soldier killed in combat.

Survivors, who were arrested after a fierce manhunt, were tried and sentenced to prison. However, although the attempt is considered a military defeat, it marked the turning point toward achieving definitive independence in January 1959.

The feat, 72 years later, is revived by younger generations through the pages of books, anecdotes, visits to museums, protagonists' testimonies and daily efforts to preserve the achievements.



Headed by Fidel Castro, the group sought, to bring their humiliated nation to the dreams of social justice and absolute Independence. PHOTO: Internet.

First Cultural Science and Innovation Fair

By Adis **MORERA**

HAVANA.-The First Science, Awareness and Innovation Fair for sustainable development in the cultural sector will take place from October 15 to 17 in the Cuban capital, spokespersons for the Ministry of Culture announced.

The event will be held on occasion of the Cuban Culture Day and will have several thematic, including the promotion of cultural innovation; innovation as a

strategic tool for the development of culture, and its leading role in entities that produce goods and services. Director of Science, Innovation and Environment of the Cuban Ministry of Culture, Alegna Jocomino, stated that the fair, initiated in the municipalities from June 5 to 20, is celebrate at the provincial level from July 19 to 21.

The event will promote coordination between different social actors and the results of science and innovation, she added.

The grassroots process will provide a space for theoretical and practical exchangers to promote culture through

innovation and generate new proposals for technology transfer, Jacomino added.

The fair's agenda will include keynote lectures, panels and workshops, as well as an exhibition area where institutes, councils and companies of the cultural sector will show their highlights in the fields of creation and innovation.

"It will be a perfect occasion to recognize territories, projects, institutes and councils that have played a prominent role in innovation in the arts and culture."



The fair's agenda will include keynote lecture, panels and workshops, as well as companies of the cultural sector. PHOTO: Granma.

Musician Arnaldo Rodríguez's Story in a Documentary

By Ariadna **ARAÚJO**

HAVANA.- With a solid career, Arnaldo Rodríguez has established himself as one of Cuba's most popular artists in the music and business industries, a story that has recently been taken to a documentary.

A few years ago, the director of the famous Talismán band founded Mambo S.R.L., a project that has become a brilliant initiative through which the audiovisual material was shot, in addition to other events such as the Habana Mambo Festival.

From its headquarters in the capital, Casa Mambo holds events and undertakes various cultural activities,

including the presentation of the documentary *En la Cuerda del Talismán*, which chronicles the life of the musician and producer from his native Ceballos town, in the Cuban province of Ciego de Ávila.

As he said in the audiovisual material, he knew he would be a musician since he was a child and grew up listening to popular national bands such as Los Van Van, La Original de Manzanillo and Karachi.

His life was also marked by the Nueva Trova movement and its founders and main exponents: Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés. However, he admits that the Síntesis band showed him the path to the future.

When I was 10 years old, I heard "El baile del buey cansao" by Juan Formell y Los Van Van, and that incredibly rich

"tumbao" that the bass made was a revelation for me, in addition to the electric bass itself, an instrument which I studied, he explained.

I love the bass and I remember asking my dad, 'How can someone make a song like that?' That is how I wrote what I call my first song, entitled *La vaquita cansa* (The tired cow), Arnaldo recalled, laughing.

I also remember that we had a little band in the town of Ceballos that was made up of my high school classmates and me; we were crazy about The Beatles, he recalled.

Those things leave an imprint in the life of a teenager. I sign with the initial letter of my name, Arnaldo, followed by the initial letter of each of the Liverpool band's members. It is a crazy thing, but it is stuck with me for life, the musician added.

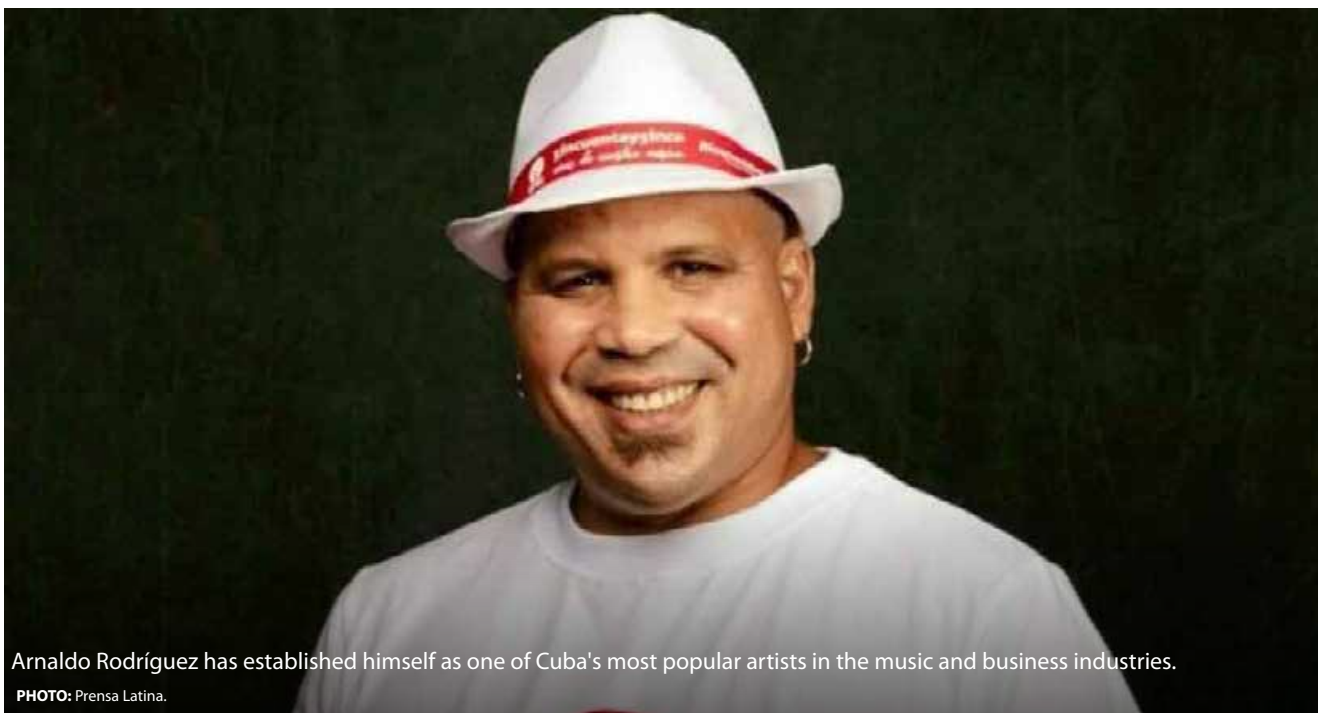
I have no prejudices in relation to music and I am very pleased to have had that exposure to The Beatles and to all kinds of rhythms, which has allowed me to develop a work that reaches the people, he affirmed.

When I have to play technical complexities, I do so and when I don't, I rely on a clear and transparent dialogue with the audience or listeners, he commented.

Musicologist and music producer Élsida González talked about Arnaldo's career with other bands and told THR that she is happy to remember the time when he had great success with his previous orchestra and still decided to form his own band.

"Everyone thought it was crazy, because starting something new is always a little bit scary, but now, more than 20 years later, we are celebrating the career of a son of the Music Recording and Editing Company (EGREM)," she stressed.

González added that Arnaldo Rodríguez is perhaps one of the artists with the longest careers within EGREM, and "it's a pleasure to have him in our company because he has been able to produce advertising projects, documentaries, albums and even his music for campaigns and commissioned songs, which he said is very difficult to do."



Arnaldo Rodríguez has established himself as one of Cuba's most popular artists in the music and business industries.

PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Nisia Agüero, a Life Dedicated to Community Culture in Cuba

By Daimarelys **PÉREZ**

HAVANA.- A lifetime is not enough for Cuban cultural promoter, Nisia Agüero, to give all the love she treasures for community children, even when she has just celebrated her 90th birthday.

For this reason, Agüero was recently honored at the Teatro Nacional de Cuba, a cultural institution she directed, and the Acacia Gallery, next to the Gran Teatro de La Habana.

At the opening of an art exhibition in honor of this prominent social worker, she spoke to **The Havana Reporter** about her desire to contribute more to the community.

At 90, I don't have much left to do, but I would like to continue.

working with the neighborhood and with little children. I find it difficult to undertake some tasks, but I would like to promote activities in the "La Timba" neighborhood, adjacent to Paseo Avenue.

"I was there when I worked at the Teatro Nacional," she recalls, while adding that in her neighborhood, in Nuevo Vedado, it is difficult for her to promote the community work she would like to do with the children, "because there are hardly any kids there."

Agüero is a pioneer in many areas of the country's cultural life, especially attending grassroots communities. The passion for this discipline turned her into a pioneer completing several postgraduate courses in social research.

She continued this role in Mexico with a project entitled Community Development, sponsored by the UNESCO through the Regional Center for Fundamental Education for Latin America.

"I don't really know if I am a cultural promoter; I actually work, but I don't think so. However, I've been doing community work since I was 11 years old because my mother was a social worker and I learned this humane task from her," she said.

When I was young, I traveled to Santiago de Cuba and after several jobs at the Ministry of Social Welfare, I was appointed to lead the province of Oriente and said: "No. How am I going to do that if I can't even lead myself?" the artist said with a smile, adding that after so much wandering during that early youth, she fell in love with the social work.

That's also how she met one of her greatest loves, her husband Mario Escalona Reguero, a distinguished internal medicine doctor with whom she raised three sons.

Professionally, one of my loves was Alfredo Guevara (filmmaker, founder of the Cuban Film Institute and director of the International Festival of New Latin American Cinema), she commented.

Alfredo was my brother. I loved him deeply and I get emotional when I talk about him. On the other hand, another of my greatest passions is my work, the work I continue to do, to this day, with the community, Agüero concluded.



Singer-songwriter Silvio Rodríguez attended the tribute to Nisia Agüero on her 90th birthday. PHOTO: Panchito González.

Authorities call for advancing the country's digital transformation

By DaiLIEM

HAVANA.- In the final session of the National Conference of the Cuban Computer Scientists Union (UIC), Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel urged to make further progress in the country's digital transformation.

At the Havana's Conference Center, the venue of the event from June 17 to 18, Díaz-Canel said that the members of this organization are the driving force behind this task.

Minister of Communications, Mayra Arevich, referred to the important contribution the Young Communists League can make in the face of the current challenges, which include not only the digital transformation of the society but also the responsible development and use of Artificial Intelligence.

Arevich stated that the UIC has been and will be a spearhead to achieve those objectives.

In addition, she acknowledged the role of its members not only as ordinary spectators of technological change, but also as the ones responsible for their implementation in the face of the limitations resulting from the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the government of the United States.

During the meeting, in which Omar Correa was elected as the organization's new chairman, the Union's new regulations were also analyzed and approved.

The meeting became a space for reflection and strategic planning for the UIC, in which participants analyzed the progress made to date on the objectives set in recent years.

The UIC gathers specialists, researchers, developers, academics and managers linked to the information and communication technologies.

The delegates debated about integration, innovation and professional training, as well as opportunities for

international training and certification in a sector of great importance for the society.

Additionally, initiatives related to knowledge management, community digital literacy and work with people from different age groups across all provinces were presented.

The debates emphasized the need to promote vocational training in technology and computer sciences since early ages, and to enhance work with new university talents.

Aspects such as progress in digital platforms and advancements in cybersecurity were also discussed, while acknowledging the limitations the country faces in developing related activities.

Yudí Rodríguez, a member of the secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and head of the Department of Attention to Services, highlighted the impact this organization has in the country's economic transformation, in addition to the advancement of the digital banking and e-commerce process and the promotion of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.



The conference highlighted the importance of young people's contributions to the country's current challenges. PHOTO: Internet.

Rally against US blockade concludes meeting in Dominican Republic

By MarielaPÉREZ

SANTO DOMINGO.- The 7th Meeting of Cubans resident in Latin American and Caribbean countries, held in the Dominican Republic, concluded with a rally against the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba.

Delegates from 13 nations, members of the Dominican Solidarity Campaign and other friends of Cuba raised their voices before the monument to hero Francisco Caamaño, in the colonial zone, to denounce the inclusion of the island on Washington's unilateral list of state sponsors of terrorism.

"For Cuba, Together We Create," "Long Live a Free Cuba," "All Cubans for the Homeland," "Cuba is not alone" and "Down with the Blockade," read the banners carried by many of the participants, along with dozens of Cuban flags.

Chairman of the Máximo Gómez Association of Cubans Resident in the Dominican Republic, Enrique Portuondo, expressed the commitment of his compatriots to defend the homeland, the Cuban identity, truth and unity.

The blockade is not only an archaic policy, but also a flagrant violation of the human rights of the Cuban people. Raising our voices against this unfair measure is an act of justice and love for the sovereignty of the peoples, Portuondo said.

National coordinator of the Dominican Solidarity Campaign, Roberto Payano,

praised the achievements of the Cuban Revolution and its solidarity and internationalist vocation.

The event held in the Dominican Republic brought together delegates from 13 countries, including Nicaragua, Haiti, Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela. During their stay in the country, the Cubans visited Baní, the land of Mambi Máximo Gómez, known as the Generalissimo and leader of the Cuban Liberation Army.

There, they visited a replica of the house where he was born, made with palm-tree-leaves roof and earthen floor, and laid a wreath at the bust located in the park that carries his name, in the heart of this municipality, in the Peravia province.

They also toured historical and cultural sites in the city of Santo Domingo.

The two-day meeting was closed by General Director for Consular Issues and Attention to Cubans Living Abroad, Ana Teresita González, who reiterated her government's willingness to listen to her compatriots' proposals.

González added that it is comforting to share spaces such as this, characterized by the exchange of honest ideas based on respect, which seek nothing less than greater and more coordinated activism among Cubans and the search for ways to support the homeland in its defense and development.

The 8th regional meeting of Cubans resident in Latin American and Caribbean countries will take place in Colombia, in 2027, it was reportedly stated..



The meeting conclude with a rally at the monument to hero Francisco Caamaño, in the colonial zone of Santo Domingo city. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Varadero, Cuba's Ever-Vibrant Resort

Text and Photos Roberto CAMPOS

HAVANA.- Varadero is a mythical beach that faces difficult times with its beauty and the regular visit of people from all over the world.

The history of this beach resort, the most important in Cuba, is closely linked to pirates, corsairs and a natural environment that offers unique moments to recreational boating lovers.

Varadero's coat of arms says it all: concentric circles symbolizing indigenous heritage; a Spanish fort as a sign of colonization, and lines representing 10 Cárdenas families, the town's founders.

These elements accompany legends, chronicles and references to this beach in

2025, which many wish to visit to swim in its waters.

Officially founded on December 5, 1887 by the merged communal named Los Decembrinos, several wooden houses with Spanish tiles were built there, and with the passing of time, the site became known mostly for the boom of its rowing regattas, seashells, snails and seahorses.

The geological formation of the site dates back to the Quaternary Era and the peninsula's name, Hicacos, refers to a green tree with thorny leaves, a typical cactus that once covered this 22-kilometer-long stretch of land whose widest part measures 700 meters.

At present, Varadero is the most important beach resort in Cuba, a highly frequented place that is constantly listed among the world's Best Beaches.



The Cristinazo that Shook Buenos Aires

By Martin **HACTHOUN**

BUENOS AIRES.- What the government of Javier Milei wanted to prevent finally happened on June 16, when they attempted

to imprison, humiliate Cristina Fernández and the people responded with a historic protest that shook this capital.

Called the Cristinazo, an impressive sea of people flooded Plaza de Mayo, in front of the Presidential Palace and the surrounding

streets, despite strict controls established by the authorities on highways leading to the capital and passenger searches at terminals to prevent protesters from arriving.

A diversity of slogans were seen on banners and flags: 'Argentina with Cristina,' 'The people with Cristina,' 'Support for Cristina,' 'Marching for democracy,' 'We march to Plaza de Mayo, Always with Cristina,' 'Let's go with her,' 'They come for her, we go with her,' 'Corrupt Court,' 'Cristina is innocent,' among many others.

In a process that jurists and her defense attorneys described as flawed, full of irregularities and violations of judicial norms since the very beginning, the former president was sentenced to six years in prison and a lifetime political ban. Because of the popular pressure that immediately took to the streets, she was granted house arrest.

Leaders of the Partido Justicialista (PJ) and other political groups are now demanding her freedom through a national and global campaign entitled 'Cristina Libre.' Her defense attorneys will take the case to international justice and human rights organizations.

"There is no justice here; there is a judicial mafia. It is not right to say that justice

sentenced Cristina Kirchner, but the officials appointed by (former president) Mauricio Macri," said senator Oscar Parilli.

"When Cristina announced that she would be a candidate, all the ghosts woke up. The Court's judges must be very dirty because they resolved in days what was supposed to take months and years due to the complexity of the case," the legislator from Unión por la Patria highlighted.

"This is a peaceful demonstration to precisely denounce the violence and political aggressiveness against those who think differently," affirmed governor of the Buenos Aires province, Axel Kicillof, who also joined the demonstration.

"It's a protest against the austerity policies that cause unemployment, deprivation, harm the industry, small and medium companies, education, culture... Milei said he had a plan; that is the plan and people have come to denounce it."

Amid the big demonstration, it was known that the Brazilian deputy of the Workers' Party Paulo Pimenta confirmed that during President Inacio Lula Da Silva's trip to Buenos Aires, in the first week of July, he will visit Cristina.



An impressive sea of people flooded Plaza de Mayo, in front of the Presidential Palace and the surrounding streets. PHOTO: Internet.

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Suchel-Proquimia, Key Tourism Partner

By TeyunéDÍAZ DÍAZ

HAVANA.- The Suchel Proquimia Cuban-Spanish joint venture has gone beyond its initial role as supplier of chemical products to become a key partner in the Cuban tourism, said the company's commercial director Jorge Cueto.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, Cueto affirmed that Suchel Proquimia's value goes beyond the sale of products, as it assists customers in the correct use of chemicals, while guaranteeing safety standards, reducing human error and being committed to eco-efficiency.

As a result, the company, which supplies 60 percent of the country's tourism sector, ensures that visitors see Cuba as a safe and healthy destination, the official commented.

At the recent 5th International Hotel and Restaurant Fair (HostelCuba 2025), Cueto said that the company's services include the installation of automatic dosing equipment in kitchens, swimming pools and laundries, as well as staff training to avoid errors that lead to poisoning.

He stated that in response to the global demand for eco-friendly practices, Suchel Proquimia is promoting its EcoCompact system, a sustainable approach that allows reducing single-use plastics by implementing concentrates in hotel areas such as kitchens, laundries and other technologies.

Cueto explained that they use concentrates mixed with water in

automatic dosing equipment for greater precision and savings, which allows customers to control and reduce transportation and storage costs and minimize human errors in the preparation of cleaning solutions.



Suchel Proquimia is primarily dedicated to the production and marketing of hygiene and disinfection products for all sectors. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

The proper preparation of these solutions avoids problems with market satisfaction, which is why the company is considering implementing process control technologies to enable real-time monitoring and adjustments from the office, he said.

Cueto highlighted that the Iberostar hotel group is a pioneer in adopting this system and is currently expanding it across its network.

SOME FACTS

Suchel Proquimia is a joint venture established in Cuba since 1999. It is primarily dedicated to the production and marketing of hygiene and disinfection products for all sectors.

Founded by Don José María and later on kept by his children, Suchel Proquimia has grown over time and is currently present in more than 20 countries. Its commitment to innovation and sustainability continues to drive its success in an increasingly competitive market.

Although the largest of the company's factories is located in Cuba, based on the fundamental concept of import substitution, they also produce in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Chile. This geographic diversification makes it easier for them to implement control systems here, used in other nations, he affirmed.

Regarding production levels, Cueto explained that they produce around eight thousand tons, with the capacity to double production if the market requires and could finance it.

Japan to advise on introduction of renewable energy



The project aims to improve the electricity generation and distribution system management and control with the introduction of renewable energy. PHOTO: Cubadebate.

By LauraBARÉS

HAVANA.- Japanese specialists in renewable energies are working on a technical advisory project to promote the introduction of renewable energies in Cuba, a project led by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

This information follows an exchange with specialists from the Cuban Electricity Union (UNE), which included professionals from West Japan Engineering Consultants, Inc. (WJEC, President: Akiyama Yasuharu), Tokyo Electric Power Services CO., Ltd. (TEPSO, President: Yasuhiro Kubo), and Yachiyo Engineering Co., Ltd. (YEC, President and CEO: Tsutomu Takahashi).

According to a JICA press release, the two-year technical collaboration project aims to improve the electricity generation and distribution system management and control with the introduction of renewable energy.

The project's CEO, Mr. Iwata Tsunehisa, along with Japanese experts and JICA representatives, held the first meeting with UNE experts in Havana last May to launch the project.

According to a research included in the Master Plan Study Project in the Energy Sector for the Development of Renewable Energy in the Republic of Cuba (completed in 2023), 83.5 percent of the electricity generated in the country in 2022 came from oil; 12.5 from natural gas; 1.8 from biomass; 1.3 from solar energy; 0.8 from hydroelectric power, and 0.3 from wind power.

Cuba's policy is directed at introducing more sources of renewable energy in a context where climate change is inextricably linked to the pursuit of sustainable development. In 2014, the country set the goal of generating 24 percent of the electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030.

Due to the deterioration of the country's electricity generation infrastructure, which has led to frequent power outages, renewable energy sources are being massively introduced, the press release indicated.

This is a new challenge in the operation of the National Electricity System, for which the Cuban side requested technical assistance for the training of the staff that operates the electric network, in order to achieve stability with the safety and reliability required.

ALBA-TCP Fosters Greater Agricultural Cooperation

By Juan Carlos **DÍAZ**



The AgroAlba Expofair proposed to develop strategic alliances to facilitate access to productive lands. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

CARACAS.- The first AgroAlba Expofair, held in the Venezuelan capital, resulted in the signing of 14 agreements on lines of action that will allow progress toward greater integration and cooperation among member countries.

Promoted by the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-People's Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP), the event finished in four agreements and memoranda between Venezuelan and Cuban entities.

According to reports, the instruments signed by the Ministers of Agriculture and Fisheries and other authorities covered a cooperation program between the Ministries of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Bolivarian Republic and the Cuban Ministry of Food Industry.

A work plan was also established between the Venezuelan Ministry of Productive Agriculture and Lands and its counterpart in Havana, to implement the AgroAlba project. Other documents agreed upon during the meeting include a letter of intent between the Bolivarian Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Blue and Green Economy of the Commonwealth of Dominica, in addition to a memorandum of understanding for bilateral cooperation in various areas of interest.

Created on December 14, 2004 by the initiative of then-Presidents Hugo Chávez and Fidel Castro, the recent ALBA-TCP meeting agreed to solidify this mechanism as a strategic

cooperation body, aimed at strengthening its member countries' agricultural, livestock and agro industrial productions.

To this end, they proposed to develop strategic alliances to facilitate access to productive lands, as well as providing technical and logistics support to guarantee the effective production of priority crops for the food sovereignty of their peoples, and establishing a regional investment fund for agrifood development.

Participants also agreed to work on a unified phytosanitary and zoosanitary certification system to facilitate agricultural, livestock and fisheries trade within ALBA-TCP, and to establish a joint fishing fleet as a mechanism to stimulate and strengthen supportive and complementary economic relations among its member States.

They also discussed the creation of a research network for the fisheries, aquaculture and science sectors, with the aim of strengthening scientific research and innovation in that sphere.

They also announced the inclusion of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the ALBA-TCP Social Council and its incorporation into the Council of Social Movements of the Bolivarian Alliance.

According to ALBA-TCP Executive Secretary Jorge Arreaza, these agreements will promote greater integration and cooperation, with priorities for sustainable and agroindustrial transformation projects.

Scientific Center Works in Favor of Sustainable Tourism

By Neisa **MESA DEL TORO**

CIEGO DE ÁVILA.- Staff and managers at the Cayo Coco Coastal Ecosystem Research Center (CIEC) are committed to finding environmental solutions to achieve sustainable development in the Jardines del Rey Cuban tourist destination.

The scientific institution, located on the northern coast of the central province of Ciego de Ávila, is responsible for ensuring compliance with environmental standards in hotel, extra-hotel and tourism-related facilities, a sector of major importance for the national economy. Environmental monitoring, consulting, training and ecosystem surveillance are among the main scientific and technical services the center provides, CIEC Deputy Director Liset Hernández said.

A multidisciplinary team is responsible for diagnosing outdoor areas, the beach sector where facilities are located, in addition to analyzing the use of energy sources and managing liquid and solid wastes, chemical products and hazardous waste, Hernández added.

Another important service includes the evaluation of beach resorts' conditions and the recommendation of good practices for their conservation, as the foundations for the granting of the National Environmental Tourist Use Beaches Recognition, a leading tourism product in Jardines del Rey. CIEC director, Maikel Gómez, highlighted that the team also has the mission to conduct environmental impact studies

before investments begin, due to the fragility of coastal ecosystems. This action requires strict monitoring to mitigate the negative effects of anthropogenic processes, in harmony with the principles of green tourism.

Created on the initiative of historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, the center's mission is to

ensure sustainable tourism development and promote research and environmental conservation efforts.

CIEC's important scientific results also contributed to the recent selection of Ciego de Ávila as the host province for the central activities for July 26, National Rebellion Day.



The CIEC is responsible for ensuring compliance with environmental standards in hotel, extra-hotel and tourism-related facilities. PHOTO: CIEC.

Javier Sotomayor, Ibero-American Sport Legend

By Fausto **TRIANA**

MADRID.- The bar has remained unshaken at 2.45 meters since 1993, and Javier Sotomayor is again in the news: GLORIA Ibero-American Sports Legend Awardee. Born in Limonar, in the western Cuban province of Matanzas, on October 13, 1967, he has just been honored by the jury

of the GLORIA Awards, an initiative held for the first time in history by SSM-Sports Summit Madrid.

The so-called Saltamontes cubano (Cuban Grasshopper) was honored along with 19 other sports personalities in 13 categories at a ceremony held at the Albéniz Theater in Madrid, the Spanish capital.

Sotomayor stands out as one of the greatest symbols of the Ibero-American

sports. Sports Summit did not want to miss the opportunity to pay tribute to him. On July 27, 1993, in Salamanca, Spain, he established the high jump record that has been in place for 32 years.

When I have repeatedly asked him for his opinion on the end of his reign, his answer came with a smile and the phrase: "someday (...)".

A gold medalist at the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games and silver at Sydney 2000, Sotomayor

stands along other stars, such as former coach Toni Nadal; the Mexican América football club; Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr., and former Brazilian volleyball player Giba.

With this first edition, the GLORIA Ibero-American Sports Awards emerge as a recognition of the value and impact of sports and its industry, as well as its potential for growth in the coming years, said the organizers.



Sotomayor, called Cuban Grasshopper, was honored by the jury of the GLORIA Awards.



In Salamanca, Spain, he established the high jump record (2.45 meters) that has been in place for 32 years. PHOTOS: Prensa Latina.

Teófilo, an Epic Life Taken to the Screen

By Odette **DÍAZ**

MOSCOW.- Film director Alejandro Gil thought about telling this story for years, not only as a tribute to an idol, but out of a personal need. His childhood was marked by training in sports schools; he is a frustrated baseball player who found in Teófilo Stevenson (1952-2012) not only a huge boxer, but also a symbol.

After screening the films *Inocencia* (Innocence) (2018) and *AM-PM* (2023), Gil began shaping the script for *Teófilo*. He brought bouts back, rebuilt contexts and researched forgotten years, the producer told **The Havana Reporter**.

More than a biography, he wanted to tell an epic story, a human portrait of sacrifice and loyalty. By his side, Alcides Sagarra, the father of Cuban boxing, who also deserved his place in the film memory – a character played by Cuban actor Kike Quiñones.

The search for the protagonist was almost magical. A chance encounter with an old acquaintance led him to Alejandro Phillips, a young acting student with no experience in the cinema but with the face, the energy and the will.

He devoted himself to this role: trained for three and a half years, gained

weight, learned to box and lived in the shade of legendary Teófilo, even under the loving gaze of his family, in the La Delicias community, in the Puerto Padre municipality in the eastern Cuban province of Las Tunas.

"Quiñones, in the role of Sagarra, was the last to join. Together they traveled east, walked through Las Delicias and paid tribute. There, something quivered. The family felt Stevenson was returning, and the crew felt they had the blessing of memory," he recalled, visibly moved.

The shooting was a huge challenge. Gloves that no longer existed, a missing ring, technical shortcomings. But it was also an act of collective faith: technicians, actors, institutions like the National Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation of Cuba and the Cuban Film Institute. All united by a story worth living.

In Russia, where Stevenson won his third Olympic medal, they shot the final sequences. The Russian team welcomed them with professionalism and love. There were almost no differences: they were a single production team, shooting with rigor and passion.

Now comes the post-production stage. All that remains is polishing, cutting, putting everything together. But something is certain: they have made something greater than a film. They have created a

memory, a national emotion, a legend told in images.

It will not be a biography, Gil stressed. It will be a look at the greatness Stevenson embodied: loyalty, dignity, sacrifice.

And ultimately, it is also a letter to the Cuban cinema, which needs to tell these stories. Because, as its director says, "making films in Cuba is a luxury... but a necessary one."



Director Alejandro Gil said the shooting was a huge challenge. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Ecological Civilization in China

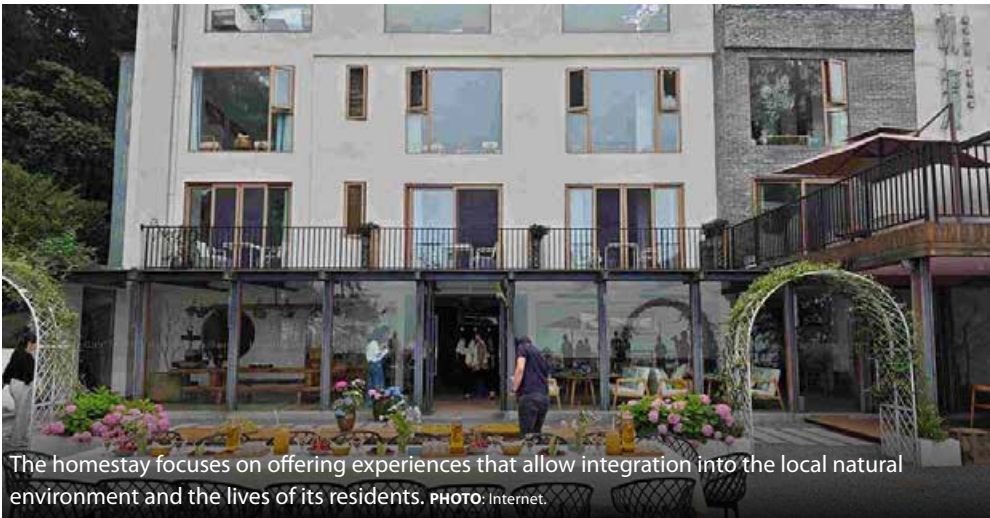
Text and Photo IsauraDIEZ

BEIJING.- The "ecological civilization" that China aspires to is a development concept that seeks to harmonize economic progress with environmental sustainability, an approach visible here through community initiatives, public policies, and private enterprises.

The Havana Reporter confirmed the success of this model during a visit to three locations in this southwestern municipality, particularly in the Beiquan Village, in the Jinyun Mountain, where there has been a radical change.

Twenty years ago, its inhabitants suffered electricity shortages, precarious roads and an economy based on subsistence agriculture, but now, 95 percent of the workforce is actively engaged in ecological protection activities, forest fire surveillance, burning bans and environmental monitoring," Long Tianzhen, a local leader, told THR.

He explained that following the Reform and Opening-Up policy, and in particular since the 1990s, residents began to change their way of thinking, developed rural accommodations, attracted investment and improved infrastructure.



The homestay focuses on offering experiences that allow integration into the local natural environment and the lives of its residents. PHOTO: Internet.

CULTURE AND NATURE IN HARMONY

The Jinyun Mountain Nature Reserve is an area rich in plant resources, particularly rare and endangered plants, and is famous for its proximity to the Chongqing urban area, which has a population of 32 million inhabitants.

In the past, the mountain's farms operated in a disorganized way and private construction entered forestland, severely damaging the environment. However, in 2018, the city launched a campaign for a comprehensive environmental management and the Beibei

District increased financial investment, demolished illegal buildings, explored ecological relocation and made systematic restorations.

As a result, the mountain's natural wealth became an economic driving force. The public policies that have made this possible include free architectural design, subsidized loans, training for entrepreneurs, environmental improvements and joint promotional campaigns, said the district's senior official for Culture and Tourism, Hu Yishan.

Rural accommodation and farm recreation are two forms of tourism. The first of these (homestay) focuses on offering experiences that allow integration into the local natural environment and the lives of its residents, while the second one is based on experiences related to agricultural production.

Sun Dehong, a homestay owner, explained that the participation of young people who have returned to the countryside has injected new energy into the tourism industry, since they actively manage family homestays and are convinced that this trend will further improve the quality of rural life.

On the outskirts of Chongqing, Li Yu has been managing an organic garden since 2011, a model of circular economy. After getting training in food safety, she eliminated herbicides and developed natural fertilizers with crop residues: "It takes five years for the soil to recover from an agrochemical," Li Yu told The Havana Reporter.

"We adopted large-scale, standardized and organic farming methods, which has significantly improved the quality of our products and has created job opportunities for local residents," she said.

With community participation (Beiquan), public policies (Beibei), and natural methods (Li Yu's garden), the municipality proves that development and sustainability can go hand in hand.



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