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Cuba and Havana Nominated for the Wanderlust Travel Awards

By Roberto **CAMPOS**

HAVANA.- Cuba and its capital, Havana, were nominated for the 2025 edition of the Wanderlust Travel Awards, sponsored by that British travel magazine.

The island, which has also been nominated in previous editions, competes this time in the categories of World's Most Desirable Country and World's Most Desirable Island; meanwhile, Havana competes in the category of World's Most Desirable City.

According to a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry, other awards Cuba is bidding for include Most Desirable Country for its Culture and Heritage, Most Desirable Country for its Nature and Wildlife, Most Desirable Country for Adventure, Most Desirable Country for its Gastronomy, and Most Desirable Country for its Sustainability. The nominations recognize travelers' preference for natural landscapes, the warmth of the people, and the cultural richness of the nation and its main city, the report states.

The nomination for one of the most influential awards in the tourism sector

in the United Kingdom, organized by Wanderlust since 1993, is considered here as a sign of the country and its capital's recognition among the world's most beloved destinations.

It reaffirms Cuba's right to develop with dignity, sovereignty, and respect for its cultural identity, the text reads, while emphasizing that Cuba has been among the British public's favorite destinations in previous editions.

More than 200,000 citizens are expected to vote in 2025, and the result will be a benchmark for travelers and tourism professionals, as it has happened since the creation of the awards.

Voting will remain open until October 17 on the official website of the British magazine Wanderlust.

Tourism is a strategic sector of the Cuban economy, essential for generating incomes and jobs, especially amid the economic,

commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the United States government, the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasizes, and states: "A positive result at the Wanderlust Travel Awards will contribute to strengthening Cuba's image as a responsible and sustainable destination, capable of attracting travelers from around the world and diversifying its offerings in culture, nature, adventure, gastronomy, and sustainability".



Havana competes in the category of World's Most Desirable City. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Wax Museum, a Tourist and Cultural Attraction

By Benjamín **MICERINOS**

BAYAMO.- While there are more than 50 important wax museums in the world, Cuba has one in the eastern city of Bayamo, which annually attracts the attention of travelers from all over the world.

This museum features life-size reproductions of outstanding national figures from all fields of life, as well as some world-renowned figures such as American writer Ernest Hemingway.

Director of the Bayamo Wax Museum, Ismari López, is passionate about her work. She greets visitors with a smile and offers many explanations.

Museums of this type are not a new phenomenon, but they continue to attract interest because the centuries-old technique used is always a source of curiosity, education, and entertainment.

The first Cuban gallery of wax reproductions was opened in 2004, in a small place on the Paseo del General García, in this eastern city. Three years later, on December 29, 2007, the gallery became a real museum, now located in another building on the same pedestrian street.

A significant number of wax figures are on display there. Most of them are reproductions of Cuban birds and reptiles, which are on display in a room specifically dedicated to natural sciences. This cozy museum showcases important popular personalities from the Bayamo region, such as Francisco Jerez, a tireless defender of local history who dedicated his life to preserving the city's historic center.

Another figure on display is that of Rita La Caimana, a unique local character who went down in history thanks to the lyrics of a well-known song performed by the popular duo Los Compadres.

All the pieces that are part of the permanent exhibition were modeled in polychrome wax by young brothers Rafael and Leander Barrios Milán, together with their father and teacher Rafael Barrios Madrigal.

The unusual reproductions, bearing the Barrios family seal, began to become known in the early 1990s among the locals of their hometown of Guisa, and also among tourists passing through that colorful town, located in the Sierra Maestra mountain range.

They were responsible for creating the wax bust of American singer Nat King Cole that adorns the Hall of Fame at the Hotel Nacional de Cuba in Havana.

The sculptures of prestigious musicians, such as Benny Moré, considered one of the most prolific Cuban composers and singers – aka El Bárbaro del Ritmo – are highly valued within the institution's collection.

Also on display are the reproductions of Compay Segundo; Polo Montañés, aka the Guajiro Natural; Sindo Garay, and Carlos Puebla, a virtuoso guitarist and singer of political and social compositions.

Since its inauguration by the middle of 2004, the institution has received more than 500,000 visitors, thus becoming one of the city's major attractions.



On December 29, 2007, the gallery became a real museum. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

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Parliament Analyzes Progress and Challenges of Government Program



President Díaz-Canel stated that the Children, Adolescents and Youths' Code is a source of pride for Cuba. PHOTO: Vladimir Molina.

By Melissa KING

HAVANA.- The Cuban National Assembly of People's Power focused discussions of the V Ordinary Period of Sessions of its X Legislature on a deep analysis of the Government program to revitalize the economy.

From July 14 to 18, more than 400 deputies shared their views and opinions on the development of the government strategy in their territories, first in the Permanent Commissions meetings and then in the plenary session.

When presenting the results of the Government plan, Prime Minister Manuel Marrero acknowledged that while progress has been made in several areas, the results the population needs for their well-being have not been met yet.

To this end, Marrero emphasized that the goals for the second half of 2025 include increasing food plans and production according to the potential; implementing the new management, control, and currency allocation mechanisms; and transforming the official money exchange market.

The Prime Minister affirmed that actions will be taken to increase support for people, families, and groups living in vulnerable situations, to contribute to reducing social inequalities.

He also announced that work is being done on an updated policy for wage organization, the decentralization of competencies to the territories, and an improvement and greater control of pricing mechanisms.

In these sessions, the legislative body also analyzed the state of the economy in 2024 and the first semester of 2025.

According to Minister of Economics and Planning, Joaquín Alonso, the 2024 gross domestic product (GDP) recorded a decline at constant prices of 1.1 percent, slightly lower than that of 2023, though the economic contraction trend is maintained.

In addition, the GDP by economic activity showcases an asymmetric tendency, with positive records in some sectors and activities.

As part of the parliamentary agenda, the MPs approved the guidelines for the country's foreign policy for the 2025-2028 term, as well as the Civil Registry Law, the Sports System Law, the General Regime of Violations and Administrative Sanctions Law, and the Children, Adolescents and Youths' Code.

On the latter, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel stated that this norm is a source of pride for Cuba, along with the Families Code.

The president also referred to the approved constitutional reform, which he described as legitimate and fair, as it reflects the country's current realities and is faithful to history.

This reform removes the established requirement of being up to 60 years old to be elected to the position of President of the Republic for the first term.

The National Assembly approved this Bill following the Constitution and in its capacity as the only body with constituent and legislative power in Cuba.

Call to the IX PCC Congress

By The Havana Reporter Editorial

HAVANA.- The IX Congress of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) will take place from April 16 to 19, 2026, according to the announcement made at the PCC Central Committee plenary session held in early July. The meeting will focus on seeking solutions to the island's economic situation, based on the actions outlined in the Government's Program to correct distortions and revitalize the economy, as was announced.

Priorities on the Congress agenda include, among others, increasing national production, with emphasis on food and ways to collect foreign currency, as well as the recovery of the National Electricity and Energy System, topics that require prompt response.

Other issues to be addressed include: strengthening the socialist state enterprise, achieving macroeconomic stability, and ensuring an appropriate relationship between the state and non-state sectors.

It also includes reducing inflation, foreign investment, efficiency, and savings, in addition to boosting science and innovation management, social communication, and digital transformation for social development.

The document emphasizes that the PCC is committed to continuing to improve socialist and participatory democracy, to attain as much justice as possible.

It also points out that the organization, a follower of Martí, Fidel, and Marxist-Leninist ideals, as the guiding political force of society, has the responsibility to lead the people, mobilize them to produce, develop, and create.

The PCC is working to achieve results that improve the living conditions of the population in the shortest time possible, in addition to providing solid support to the social progress achieved by the Revolution, and reducing the social gap that has arisen in recent years from the extreme pressures of the United States, the text reads.

The Congress will be an ideal opportunity to discuss the role the Party plays in promoting revolutionary values and understanding of national history, culture, and identity.

He added that discussions will also cover political, media, and community communication, political-ideological work, crime prevention and response, and the leading role of youth organizations and movements in political processes.

Before the event, a wide consultation process will analyze the documents to be presented, alongside Party members, political and administrative leadership structures, and mass, social, and student organizations.

The IX PCC Congress will pay tribute to several Cuban founding fathers. It will take place in the year that commemorates the centenary of the birth of the historical leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro.



The Party's Congress will focus on seeking solutions to economic situation.

The Will to Strengthen Ties with Cubans Living Abroad

By Bryanna **GONZÁLEZ**

HAVANA.- Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bruno Rodríguez, reaffirmed the will to strengthen ties with Cubans living abroad and advocated for the establishment of cooperation mechanisms.

In a meeting with the press during the V Ordinary Period of Sessions of the National Assembly of People's Power, the minister stated that "a considerable number of compatriots live abroad; many of them are the result of the educational, scientific, and social work of our homeland. We should open the doors to all of them for active participation."

Rodríguez explained that during an exchange with MPs about the island's foreign policy, the role of Cubans residing in the United States and other countries was highlighted, as well as that their families play in defending independence and sovereignty, denouncing the blockade and rejecting Cuba's designation as an alleged sponsor of terrorism.

The head of the Cuban diplomacy emphasized that foreign policy is a cohesive expression of the people, and the guidelines discussed with the parliamentarians show, with realism and optimism, the capabilities and opportunities of the sector.

"There is confidence that, despite the adversities, Cuba has the capacity to advance in the recovery of its economy and in solving the serious problems affecting our families,

paving the way for development," he said.

The minister stressed that "Cubans living abroad have a deep bond with their nation, and promoting those ties should also encourage their participation in solving current economic problems, including local development."

General Director for Consular Affairs and Cubans Residing Abroad at the Foreign Ministry, Ana Teresita González, reiterated that strengthening those ties is a priority of the Cuban foreign policy.

The official commented that there are policies designed to attain higher involvement of compatriots in the defense of the homeland, in the fight against the blockade and in efforts to remove the island from the unilateral list of State sponsors of terrorism.

The aim is to promote their engagement in the country's economic and social development, she added.

"This policy goes beyond the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; it is transversal; it involves all bodies of the Central State Administration and all territories, where they can promote local projects efficiently," she affirmed.

González also stated that the Cuban consulates and embassies are actively working to connect Cubans residing abroad with priority sectors, such as the provision of raw materials and supplies that help reactivate the country's installed industrial capacity.



The Minister had a meeting with the press during the sessions of the National Assembly of People's Power. PHOTO: Vladimir Molina.

Pressures against the Tourism Sector

By Francisco **MENENDEZ**

HAVANA.-Economist and researcher José Luís Perelló recently commented on the new U.S. measures that directly impact the Cuban tourism sector.

The analyst criticized the recent signing of a memorandum by U.S. President Donald Trump that prohibits U.S. tourism to Cuba.

The document is included among the U.S. government's aggressive policies against the island, similar to those Trump implemented in his first term, including the application of a legal prohibition on U.S. tourism to Cuba, in addition to the economic blockade, Perelló affirmed.

According to the memorandum, economic practices that disproportionately benefit the Cuban government or its military, intelligence, or security institutions will be eliminated.

The text also establishes efforts to expand the internet, promote a free press, free enterprise, and free association with the country.

A fact sheet indicates that some economic exceptions will be made for transactions to advance U.S. policy objectives or support the Cuban people.

The memorandum also states that the administration has no intention of reinstating the Wet Foot, Dry Foot policy, which allowed Cuban migrants to remain in the country once they touched U.S. soil.

Trump signed a travel ban earlier this year that includes Cuba and 11 other countries.

Additionally, the memorandum indicates that Trump will order a review of human rights abuses in Cuba, including alleged illegal detentions and inhumane treatment, and will request a report on fugitives from U.S. justice living in Cuba or being protected by the Cuban government.

These elements have already been promptly rejected by the Cuban authorities and solidarity groups worldwide. In another memorandum, the U.S. government instructs executive agencies to share information when granting funding for energy infrastructure projects and critical minerals and materials.

This section seeks to ease regulatory burdens on companies that must occasionally submit multiple applications to different agencies.

To simplify the process, the memorandum advocates for the creation of a Common Application for federal funding in this area.

These measures worsen Cuba's already difficult economic situation and, in particular, aim to further erode the island's tourism, at a time when authorities and industry professionals renew efforts to revive the travel industry.



The new measures of Trump's government included a legal prohibition to the U.S. tourism to Cuba. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Call to BioHabana 2026

By Ana Laura **ARBESÚ**

HAVANA.- The Cuban Biotechnology, Pharmaceutical and Medical Technology Industry Group (BioCubaFarma) has invited the global scientific and business community to attend the 3rd edition of BioHabana 2026, which will be held in Varadero from May 18 to 22.

The event's venue, Plaza América Convention Center, in the famous Varadero resort, is a space for building collaborative networks among scientists, opinion leaders, entrepreneurs, and businesspeople, the call highlights.

Healthcare innovation requires the interconnection of innovation ecosystems worldwide. The internationalization of R&D&I activity and the globalization of high-tech companies are global trends in the biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and medical technology sectors, the call emphasizes.

BioHabana 2026 will continue the debate initiated in previous editions, introduce new topics, and generate a high-level segment with leaders of biopharmaceutical companies to analyze current development trends in the global biopharmaceutical industry.

According to the organizers, the 3rd edition of BioHabana will promote bilateral meetings to discuss potential scientific or business collaborations and will encourage preparation for those exchanges.

The meeting will host symposia with keynote addresses, workshops, posters, and/or oral presentations on the following main topics: Autoimmune Diseases; Innovation in Business Models for High-Tech Sectors; Cancer Immunotherapy; Infectious Diseases, and Neurodegenerative Diseases.

Other topics include Chronic Inflammation and Aging; Bio processes; Development and Space Design; Medical Technology; Artificial Intelligence; Agricultural Biotechnology; Academia-Business Collaboration, and Innovation Management.

The program includes special sessions on Strategy and Technologies for fighting new pandemics, as well as the Regulatory Agencies workshop.

The agenda also foresees the presentation of the Business and Investment portfolios and the BioCubaFarma 2026-2027 product catalog.

The holding of a Biotechnology, Pharmaceutical, and Medical Technology Industries Trade Fair was likewise announced.

The call adds that a new revolution in biological sciences is witnessed in the present century, as a science of convergence with Nanoscience and Data Science, which captures the complexity of biological systems.

In this regard, the "One Health" concept reveals the need for a holistic approach, including food production and environmental protection, in addition to human health.

BioFarmaCuba is the leading group in Cuba's biotechnology, pharmaceutical and medical technology industries.



BioFarmaCuba is the leading group in Cuba's biotechnology, pharmaceutical and medical technology industries. PHOTO: ACN.

Preservation of Protected Areas

By Dai **LIEM**

HAVANA.- Cuba places great importance on the conservation of its protected areas, with their beautiful ecosystems and landscapes recognized worldwide and regionally.

On the topic, **The Havana Reporter** spoke to the director of the National Protected Areas Center (CNAP), PhD Omar Cantillo, who said that about 4,500 people are involved in this National System.

He emphasized that Cuba is the fifth most biodiverse island in the world, and no other small country gathers so many values in its diversity.

Cantillo stressed that the National Protected Areas' System is made up of 230 areas and covers more than 20 percent of the national territory.

The expert affirmed that just the Alejandro de Humboldt National Park, in eastern Cuba, treasures two percent of the planet's entire biodiversity.

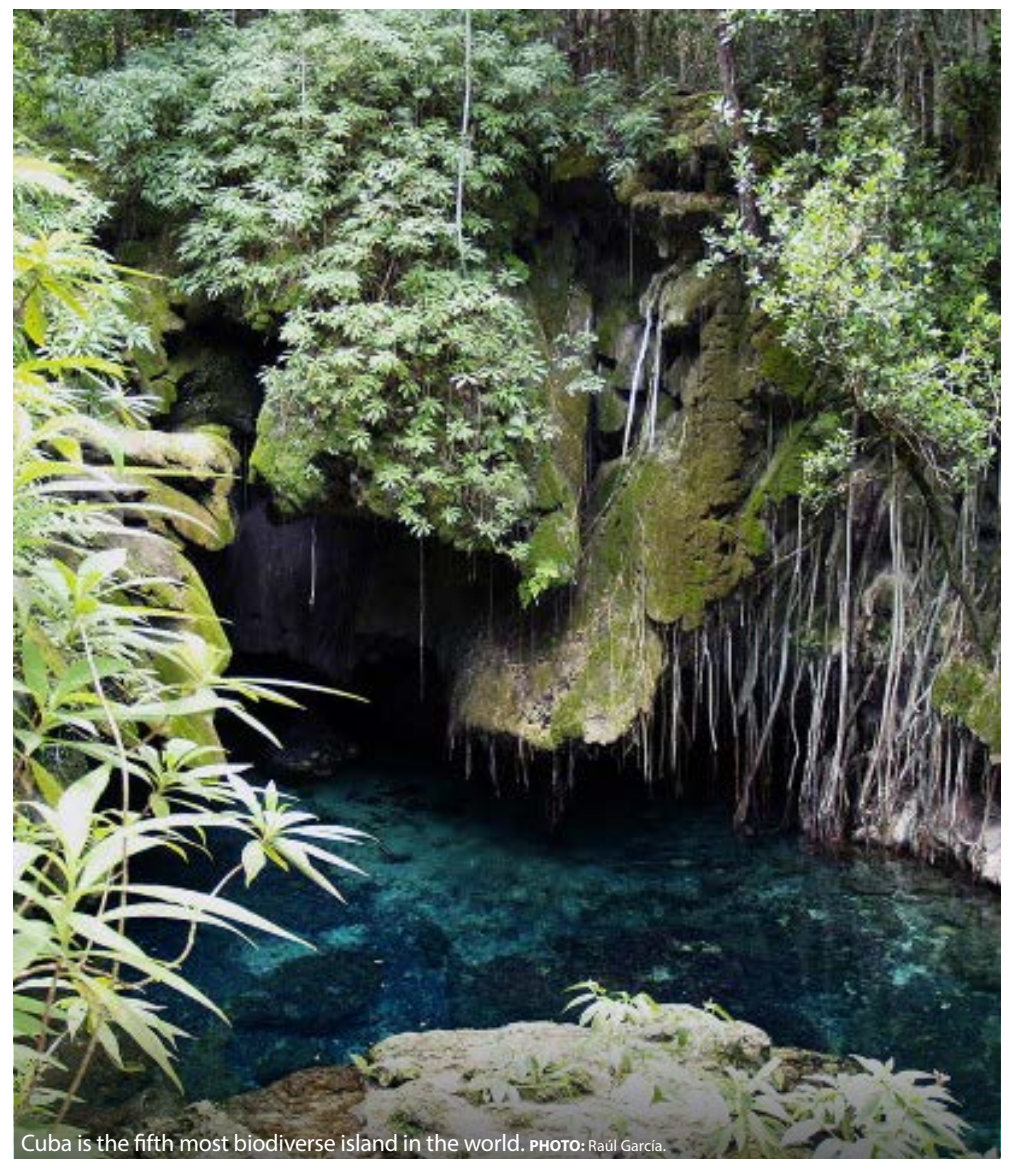
The director added that preservation efforts include a highly skilled professional potential, which is linked to science, technology and innovation – a feature that distinguishes Cuba from other nations.

In this area, he mentions three fundamental challenges: achieving the system's financial sustainability; being less dependent on the state budget, and progressively improving the quality of life of the people living in the protected areas. A third challenge we have ahead is increasing protected areas' surface, also considering international commitments, he added.

Cantillo also referred to the institution's participation in the XV International Environment Convention (Cubambiente 2025), held from July 2 to 5 at the Havana's Conference Center.

The agenda of this meeting included the holding of the XIV International Protected Areas Congress, which had the highest attendance, with 80 percent of foreign participation. This is an event in which international collaboration stands out, he affirmed.

The above is the result of the way we manage works, which is different, and because here, there is security in funding. "And because universities, communities come here, and an entire scientific community is ready to help in the Protected Areas," he concluded.



Cuba is the fifth most biodiverse island in the world. PHOTO: Raúl García.

Caribbean Festival Closes its Doors

Text and Photo Yugdani**VICET**

SANTIAGO DE CUBA.- After seven days of cultural exchanges, artistic presentations, and theoretical events addressing identity and integration, the 44th edition of the Caribbean Festival closed its doors in this southeastern city.

Before the closing parade at the Céspedes Park, the provincial government granted the Con el Esfuerzo de Todos Venceremos (With Everyone's Effort We Will Overcome) Award to several groups carrying on ancestral cultural practices, and also to their leaders, for their contributions to the Santiago de Cuba and the national culture.

Researcher Orlando Vergés, leader of the Casa del Caribe and the Caribbean Festival, was especially awarded with the Mausoleo José Martí Distinction from Beatriz Johnson, member of the Party's Central Committee and its First

Secretary in the province and Governor Manuel Falcón.

Vergés earned this distinction in recognition of his work in favor of the preservation of the cultural identity through the promotion of bearer groups, as well as for his dedication to the successful holding of numerous editions of the Caribbean Festival.

After the award-winning ceremony, dozens of Cuban and Caribbean groups paraded along the Aguilera Street, in the Santiago de Cuba patrimonial center, until the La Alameda seafront, where "the devil burned," thus closing the Festival.

The 45th edition of the Fire Festival, to be held in 2026 and which already promises to be a special event, as the one that has just ended, will be dedicated to the indigenous cultures and the African diaspora of Colombia.



Dozens of Cuban and Caribbean groups paraded along the Aguilera Street, in the Santiago de Cuba patrimonial center, until the La Alameda seafront. PHOTO: Archivo.

Educate, Raise Awareness and Research

By Adis**MORERA**

HAVANA.- María del Carmen Zabala, the distinguished Cuban professor and researcher, is an example of perseverance and strength in the face of her era's challenges, demonstrating that work done with love and sensitivity dignifies an outstanding life and career.



María del Carmen Zabala is one of the most prominent voices in social development. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Her face reflects the gratitude, nobility, and humility of a woman who is one of the most prominent voices in social development, inequalities, poverty, vulnerabilities, intersectional work, social policies, and equity analysis.

A PhD in Psychological Sciences and research professor at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) at the University of Havana, Zabala affirms that the path has not been easy. The complex environment in which she grew up, in addition to certain health limitations, did not define her existence.

I am one of the many Cuban professionals who have managed to develop a career as part of a generation that had all the possibilities to achieve the highest levels of education, without any restriction or disadvantage.

All it took was motivation, interest, will to study, and to continue along that path, she said in an exclusive interview with **The Havana Reporter**.

From one of the FLACSO halls, in a rather gentle tone, she recalled her childhood, the time she was a student and the necessary family support. "I am the first professional in my family, and like many people of my generation, I didn't

have the professional support nor the cultural knowledge that would have been an advantage on that path."

However, she always had the support of her loved ones concerning her studies and achievements, "despite living in a disadvantaged and even marginalized community," she added. Her strength is evident in her work and in what she has been able to achieve throughout an exceptional career, in which she has had multiple responsibilities and has received several awards and recognitions too.

Zabala, who is also the coordinator of FLACSO Cuba scientific area of Social Inequalities and Equity Policies, has been granted the Award for Highest Impact Innovation on Local Development (Ministry of Higher Education, 2023); the Scientific Work Distinction (2023); four Cuban Academy of Sciences Annual Awards, and the Cuban Education Distinction, among others.

Entering the University of Havana, an institution from which she graduated as an excellent psychology professional, was her childhood dream. After that, she completed a diploma in Development and International Relations (FLACSO, 1992) and then a master's degree in Social Development (FLACSO, 1996). The level and high scientific standards of the FLACSO specialists led her to consider joining the organization, unaware that she would later become one of the most diligent and committed researchers of that academic institution.



Chilean Copper, among Barriers and Opportunities

ByCarmen**ESQUIVEL**

SANTIAGO DE CHILE.- The United States' decision to impose a 50 percent tariff on copper causes uncertainty in Chile, the world's leading producer of the red metal; however, it also represents an opportunity to diversify exports.

According to data provided by the Under-Secretariat of International Economic Relations, copper topped the list of the most exported goods in 2024, with sales exceeding 50 billion dollars.

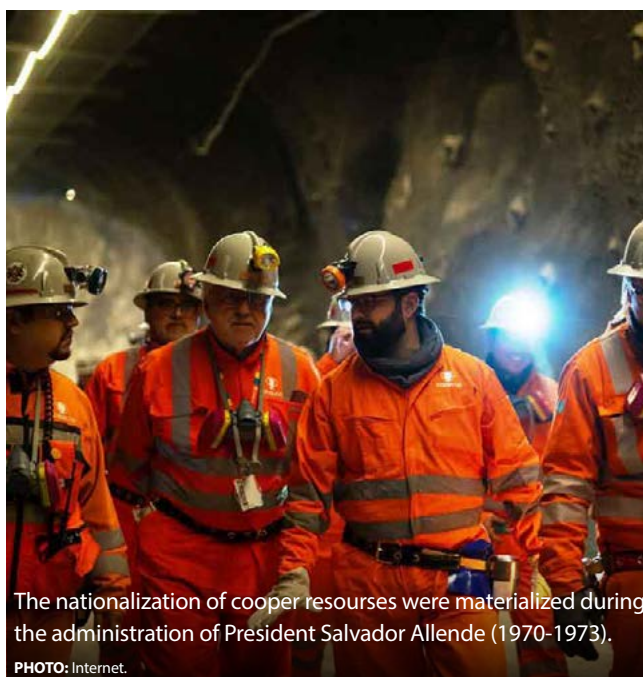
Asia accounts for more than 70 percent of those purchases, with China being the primary destination (52.1), while the United States barely accounts for 11 or 12 percent of the refined product.

For that reason, experts consider that the impact the tariffs U.S. President Donald Trump plans to apply to the metal, starting August 1, will be limited.

On the other hand, copper demand will not decline because it is present in almost all sectors: housing, construction, industries, transportation, and telecommunications, among many others.

Moreover, it is widely used in new technologies, from mobile devices, computers, satellites, and Artificial Intelligence to electromobility and energy transition.

In this scenario, analysts consider that rather than a problem, this could be an opportunity for Chile to diversify



The nationalization of copper resources were materialized during the administration of President Salvador Allende (1970-1973).

PHOTO: Internet

president of the Mining Council, Joaquín Villarino, said on television.

THE NATIONALIZATION OF COPPER

According to the Memoria Chilena website, since 1905, the main copper deposits in the country were exploited by American capital, and those were the 'real sites' in the national territory.

From the second half of the 20th century, the relationship between those companies and the local state was marked by successive controversies regarding investments, prices, and taxes.

In the 1960s, the ideas of reclaiming natural wealth gained strength in Latin America, and the government of Eduardo Frei Montalva (1964-1970) proposed a new copper policy known as the *Chilenización* (Chileanization) of copper.

This allowed Chilean companies to participate in the ownership and management of large-scale mining through partnerships with foreign capital.

But the rise in prices and the high profits of U.S. corporations reignited the debate here about the need for nationalization, which materialized during the administration of President Salvador Allende (1970-1973).

On July 11, 1971, the National Congress approved by unanimous vote the total recovery of the red mineral, considered the country's main wealth and the first export resource.



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Prensa Latina Joins New Global South Media Network

By Ariel **BARREDO**

RIO DE JANEIRO.- The Latin American News Agency, Prensa Latina, was officially accredited as a member of the joint collaboration mechanism promoted by the Global South Media and Think Tanks Forum, boosted by the BRICS. The news agency will thus be one of the media outlets joining this new inclusive network, chaired by the Chinese Xinhua news agency, after its creation in July in this Brazilian city.

"We have maintained ongoing support with Prensa Latina since the first cooperation agreement signed by both agencies 62 years ago", said Xinhua president Fu Hua when presenting the certificate that accredits the entity as a member of the emerging alliance.

Under the slogan "Let the BRICS speak, let the Global South be heard," the initiative aims to promote the unity, influence, and development of countries of the region in the media spectrum.

The forum was attended by managers, experts, and representatives from the BRICS' main media structures, as well as by other countries that have stated their interest in increasing cooperation with the bloc.



Prensa Latina received the accreditation as a member of the joint collaboration mechanism. PHOTO: Prensa Latina..

Call to the Juan Padrón Animation Forum

HAVANA.-The 46th International Festival of the New Latin American Cinema convened the Juan Padrón in memoriam Animation Forum at its next event in this capital, scheduled for December 4-14.

Through this call, Cuba's major film festival opens the third edition of this event to pay tribute, as every year, to the creator of the iconic Elpidio Valdés character.

The Forum will advise on projects in development, conduct talks, conferences, screen short films aimed at children, and carry out other activities related to the various specialties of animated filmmaking.

This event once again represents an opportunity to highlight late Cuban creator Juan Padrón's work and legacy for Latin American animation.

Padrón (1947-2020), the author of other classics in animated works, such as *Vampiros en La Habana* (Vampires in Havana), won the affection of the Cubans from the beginning of his work for portraying Cuba's idiosyncrasy and history through the scrutinizing lens of a participant observer.



The Festival pays tribute every year, to the creator of the iconic Elpidio Valdés character.

Valencia's Project of Solidarity with Pinar del Río

By Fausto **TRIANA**



The initiative seeks to strengthen local food systems for the benefit of families from three agricultural cooperatives. PHOTO: Internet.

MADRID.-An initiative focused on food systems in Pinar del Río, Cuba, is supported by the Unió de Pobles Solidaris NGO, with the support of the Generalitat Valenciana.

A comprehensive report sent to **The Havana Reporter** by Cubainformación coordinator, José Manzaneda, states that the idea is coordinated in Cuba by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP).

It is a 2025 cooperation project officially entitled 'Building local, sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems in Piloto and Pueblo Nuevo rural popular councils, in Consolación del Sur.'

According to the source, following a participatory diagnosis of the population itself, the program is conducted in the Consolación del Sur municipality, in the western Cuban province of Pinar del Río, and seeks to strengthen local food systems for the benefit of families from three agricultural cooperatives.

In addition to maintaining their main activity – the production of quality tobacco – the cooperatives have achieved improvements in food production capacities, mainly of animal origin. They have also created several jobs, primarily for women.

The immediate benefits of the initiative are the rehabilitation of protected cultivation houses, shade houses for vegetable production, and new controlled and sustainable irrigation systems powered by photovoltaic solar panels.

Additionally, the project includes various machinery, such as several tractors and tillers; the installation and complete equipment of a small fodder factory for livestock's sustainable feeding; the rehabilitation of a building for pig breeding; the placing of fences in extensive breeding areas, and a center for the processing of pork and other minor livestock species.

In addition to highlighting improvement in the field of marketing, the article pointed out that beyond the productive component, the program also includes interventions in social areas, such as support to several daycare centers located at the cooperatives.

A video summary of the details of this and other ideas related to the Cuban reality, and responses to different situations, is being showcased in Spain as part of the conference entitled 'Achievements and Challenges of the Cuban Biotechnology. Creative Resistance vs the United States Blockade.'

Rafael Pérez-Accino emphasized that "for Unió de Pobles Solidaris, international cooperation for development is essential, and we have been committed to Cuba since 2004."

"We have conducted cooperation projects in different parts of the country, and we started precisely in this province of Pinar del Río in 2004," he said.

Following the Footsteps of a Black Mambí Great-Grandfather.

By Mario **MUÑOZ** and Danay **GALLETTI**

HAVANA.- Discovering the rich history of his Black Mambí (rebel) great-grandfather changed the course of Arístides Hernández's life – aka Ares. Amid the isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, he dedicated himself to organizing his family genealogical tree.

The life of Benigno Najarro Girón and his participation in the struggles for Cuba's independence from Spanish colonialism are the focus of the renowned visual artist's research, which he conducted in the same archives where

so many other Cubans delve into the traces of their Iberian past.

The award-winning Cuban cartoonist told **The Havana Reporter** that to organize his family tree, he spoke with his sister Idania and contacted his cousins Eneida, Popi, Bambi, Rolandito and Cecilio to exchange information and photos. "My cousin Cecilio Barroso was the one who shed light on my great-grandfather. He told me that as a child, he would accompany his grandmother, Carlota Najarro, to the old cemetery in Cienfuegos – a city in Cuba's south-central region – to take flowers to his great-grandfather's tomb, after collecting his veteran's pension.

"That detail about the veteran's pension is what gave me the clue that my great-grandfather had been a Mambí. We did not know that, at least the closest relatives. The oldest ones did not tell us, and that is how the research began", he said.

Since then, Ares has not stopped his search for information; first on the internet, supported by his wife Odette Bello, which resulted in an article in English. Then, publications continued to appear with new details about his participation in combats and expeditions.

Regarding his experience as a researcher, he said that he did so to write the book *Historia del Humor Gráfico en Cuba* (History of Graphic Humor in Cuba) and compilations of contemporary Cuban cartoons published in brochures.

"I am a researcher in the sense of my training as a doctor, of my curiosity every time I organize an exhibition. But I had not done anything like this", the Cuban painter affirmed.

According to Ares, the Operations Diary of Lieutenant Colonel Rafael M. Cañizares y Quirós, one of the first texts he found, mentions that Benigno Najarro Girón became a captain in the Liberation Army.

In that research, he came across the name of Orlando García, a historian from Cienfuegos who had researched his great-grandfather and his presence in the War of Independence, he said.

García was a student of Eneida Najarro, my great-grandfather's granddaughter, and his grandfather fought under my great-grandfather's order. Hence, following this coincidence, Ares met him two years ago in Cienfuegos. They shared the information they had and decided to continue researching together.

Since then, they have undertaken a more in-depth and intensive search of all the material they had and the ones that continue to appear. Orlandito did it in Cienfuegos and Ares in Havana, at the National Library, the Institute of Literature and Linguistics, the Historical Archive of the Historian's Office, the Cuban Photo Library, and the National Archive.

The Cuban cartoonist emphasized that the advice of René González, director of the Fidel Castro Center and an expert on the history of the War of Independence and the Liberation Army, was very important in this research process.



Historian Orlando Félix García (left) with Ares. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Art to Nourish the Soul

By Daimarelys **PÉREZ**

HAVANA.- The collective exhibition included in the visual arts competition *Miradas que alimentan: Arte para la conciencia* (Nourishing glances: Art for Conscience), sponsored by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Cuba, was opened with the participation of 58 artists and 70 works.

In this edition, which emphasized the importance of nutrition as the foundation of a healthy life, Liesther Amador won the first prize with a glass sculpture called *Fragmento de un pasaje con arcoiris* (Fragment of a rainbow passage) (2025), which is already on display for visitors' enjoyment.

The second prize went to Yasiel Álvarez, for the work *Clara Resistencia* (Clear Resistance) (2025) and Jarol Lázaro Rodríguez, for *El aliento de los Dioses* (Gods' breath) (2024). At the opening ceremony, WFP Cuba representative Etienne Labande stated his pleasure at the resumption of this type of competition, which the United Nations sponsors.

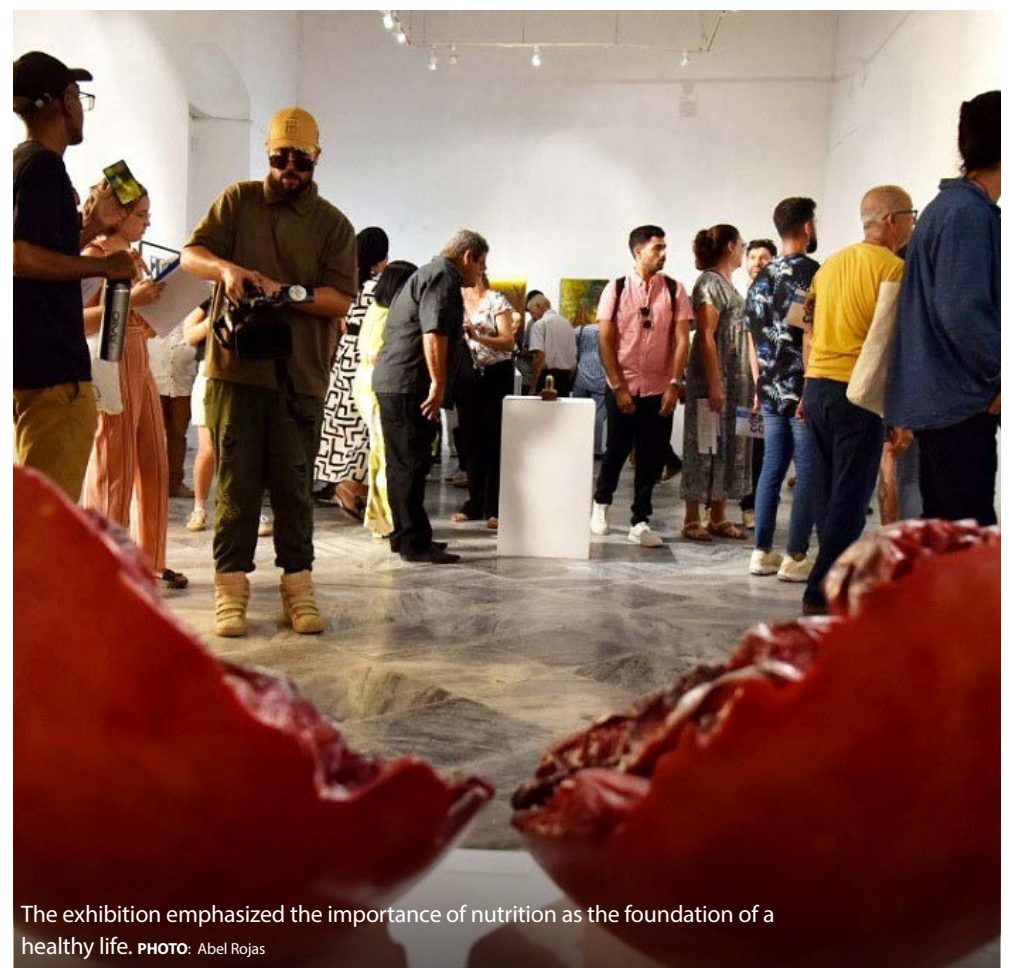
Labande said that they not only sponsor this visual arts competition, but also a photography contest that has a specific schedule, as well as the International Children's Plastic Art Competition. These are three events that I hope you can enjoy, as they include excellent art, he stressed.

WFP is not only focused on how to produce food; our agenda also involves how to use these products and how to ensure that each person has clarity and confidence when consuming them, commented the representative of this UN body in Cuba.

Labande also affirmed that in nearly 25 years of work in this administration, "I have learnt that our interventions in food security – either in response to emergencies or through sustainable development initiatives – only have a significant impact when accompanied by strong communication."

He added that many channels are needed to touch minds and hearts, and what channel is more powerful and universal than art?

The official emphasized that food insecurity is a global challenge, and art is a tool to address that challenge.



The exhibition emphasized the importance of nutrition as the foundation of a healthy life. PHOTO: Abel Rojas

Cuban Observatory Updates Gender Equality Guidelines.

By ZahilyVILATÓ

HAVANA.- The Cuban Observatory on Gender Equality (OCIG) updates indicators. Specialists and managers of the National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI) and the Cuban Women Federation (FMC), the entities responsible for developing the digital platform, announced that 21 of the 33 indicators the Observatory monitors were contextualized.

ONEI specialist, Anays Montequín, explained that the tool includes a renovated interface with population data updated to 2024, in addition to provincial and municipal dashboards that allow users to visualize the evolution of the Cuban population since 2013.

The website also offers detailed information on the National Program for the Advancement of Women (PAM) while breaking down statistics in areas of special attention, such as women's economic empowerment, the media, education, prevention, and social work.

It also assesses issues linked to access decision-making, legislation, and rights related to the regulatory framework and the system of protection against all forms of discrimination and violence, sexual and reproductive health, and statistics and research on gender equality.

Montequín highlighted that the number of women aged 15 and over, dedicated exclusively to unpaid domestic work and family care (three out of every 10 women) has decreased. This figure rises to 35 percent in rural areas, but in previous years it exceeded 40 percent.

The Observatory also found that men continue to represent the majority of landowners, although a slight increase in female ownership is observed.

Another aspect is that inequality between women and men in the holding of seats in local governments continues

to narrow, and that gap fell from 29 points in 2018 to 11.6 points in 2024, the Observatory indicated.

It was also reported that the results of last year's municipal elections revealed that 44.2 percent of delegates to the Municipal Assemblies of People's Power are women, while men represent 55.8 percent.

In the meantime, the National Assembly of People's Power shows a female majority, with 55.7 percent of the seats held by women, according to the results of the 2022-2023 electoral process. This growth contrasts with the 1981 indicators, when men held 77 percent of parliamentary seats compared to 23 percent in the case of women.

OCIG update is based on administrative records, national surveys and specialized studies. Its statistics are aligned with the PAM objectives, the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Cuba's commitments to gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean.



The Observatory on Gender Equality informed about the system of protection against all forms of discrimination and violence. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

A Cultural Summer, Despite Economic and Energy Challenges

By MarceloGARCÍA

HAVANA.- Despite the challenges posed by the economic and energy crises, which have hindered the implementation of many initiatives, Cuba's cultural institutions have prepared a diverse program of activities for this summer.

The Ministry of Culture and the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry have developed activity programs considering the possibilities and conditions of each region. However, implementation often faces challenges due to nationwide electricity shortages.

This reality forces the suspension or rescheduling of concerts, film premieres, and other events owing to constant power outages that cause unrest among the population.

However, in the face of such challenges, the government is striving to provide options for the Cubans who want to enjoy a well-deserved vacation in July and August.

These days, and for the rest of the coming weeks, movie theaters in several Cuban provinces have opened their doors with varied programs for all ages as part of the Summer Film Festival.

In line with these proposals, Havana's Casa de las Américas offered guided tours, concerts, workshops, and book launches, especially for the enjoyment of children, adolescents, and young adults.

Under the slogan 'A House for Children,' the prestigious institution developed options

for young audiences interested in learning about the Latin American and Caribbean history and art that this center keeps in its various halls.

The Music Recording and Publishing Company (EGREM) joined the summer proposals with the holding of the 1st Innovation Fair at the 31 y 2 Cultural Center in Havana, featuring artists, researchers, creators, and managers.

In addition, under the slogan: 'Summer that sounds like EGREM,' music will reach Havana's squares and communities to enrich the summer season: Karamba, Buena Fe, Arnaldo y su Talismán, Maykel Blanco y su Salsa Mayor, Issac Delgado, Elain Morales, and Alain Pérez will be some of the invited artists and bands. Meanwhile, the Rutas y Andares (R y A) patrimonial project began its itinerary in July with visits to ethnographic museums, the Quinta de los Molinos botanical garden, and various summer workshops.

These tours are part of the cultural tourism options for families and are an opportunity to approach and learn about the valuable cultural heritage that Havana's Historic Center treasures, said Director of Cultural Management at the City Historian's Office, Katia Cárdenas.

It is also an opportunity to share this experience with the little ones, to connect with family and friends, and to truly discover all the beauties of this part of Havana and the proposals we have far beyond, because it is a way to learn in a funny and attractive way, she added.



Movie theaters have opened their doors with varied programs for all ages as part of the Summer Film Festival. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Elegance by the Seashore

By Sabdiell **BATISTA**

CIENFUEGOS.- Cienfuegos Club combines natural beauty with elegance and luxury. Located on the southern coast of Cuba, it offers a unique experience for water sports enthusiasts and sea lovers.

One of the main attractions of the former Cienfuegos Yacht Club is its stunning location, surrounded by crystal-clear waters and in a beautiful and peaceful residential area that offers breathtaking panoramic views.

Its proximity to Cienfuegos' historic center makes it an ideal place to explore the city and enjoy its rich culture, of which this elegant building is a part. Opened on August 28, 1920, the aim of this Club was to promote sports practice and recreation for the city's wealthy families.

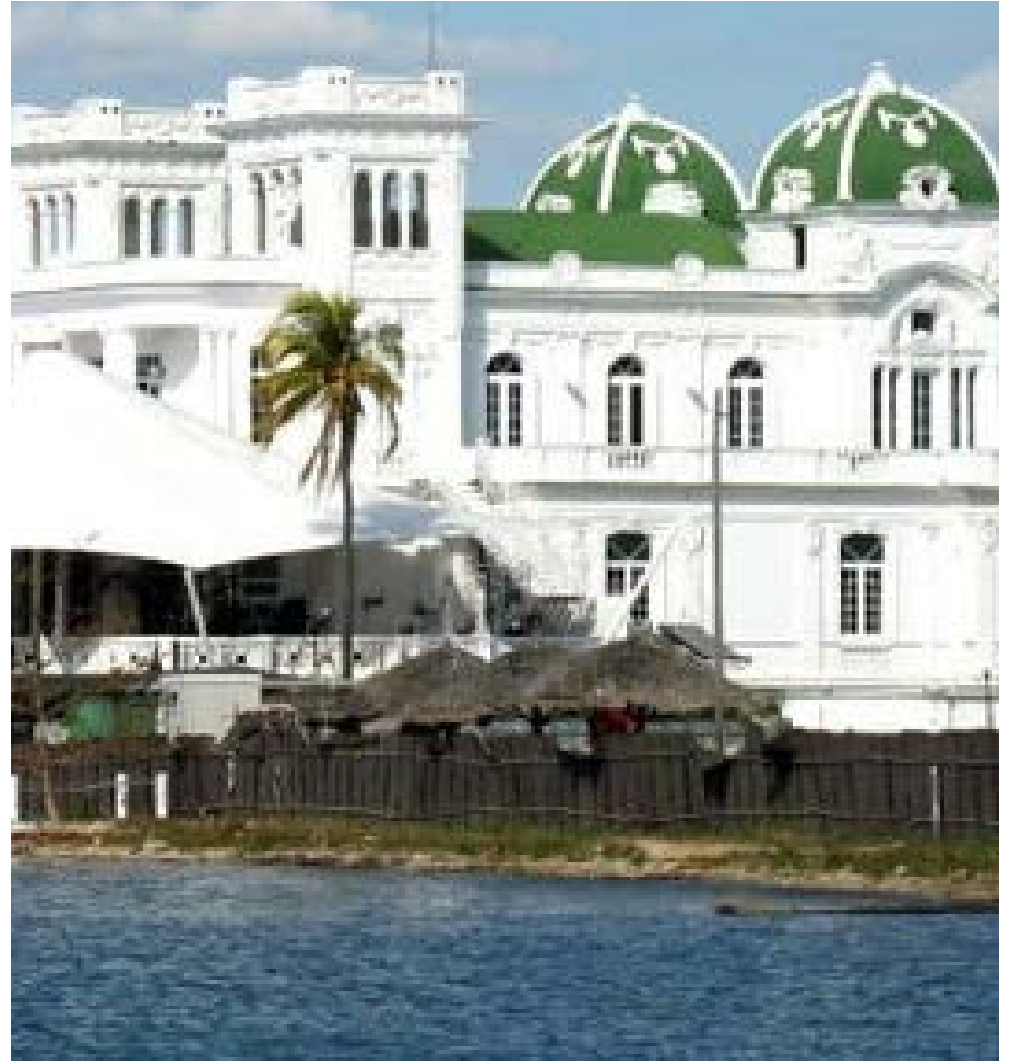
At the time of its founding, rowing regattas made this place a renowned venue among

those built in the Punta Gorda residential area and established the city as a hub for the future development of water sports. Currently known as the Cienfuegos Club, it is also famous for its excellent infrastructure and high-quality services. The Club's marina can accommodate a large number of boats, from small launches to luxury yachts.

It also offers boat and equipment rental services, allowing visitors to enjoy activities such as fishing, diving and snorkeling, car and motorcycle rentals, and the outdoor playground and pool.

The club's facilities include two restaurants and a bar, each serving delicious local and international dishes and refreshing drinks. It also features a location offering beautiful views of the sea.

In short, the Cienfuegos Yacht Club is a wonderful destination for those seeking a unique experience in a stunning marine environment.



Global South Raised its Voice in Brazil

By Osvaldo **CARDOSA**

BRASILIA.- In times of geopolitical uncertainty, climate crisis, and global inequality, the 17th BRICS Summit, held on July 6 and 7, sent a clear message from the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro: "The Global South doesn't wait, it acts".

For the first time, the bloc, initially composed of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, now has gathered 11 full members, 10 invited partners, and a dozen international observers.

Intense days of debates, political gestures, and speeches tried to set the course for a new planetary order, with the Global South at the forefront.

In its role as the host country, Brazil raised its voice without asking permission; it rather took the floor with strength, headed by its president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

"It's up to us to take care of this," Lula stated at the plenary session on the environment, health, and the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30).

Brazil, to host COP30 in November in Belém, capital of the northern state of Pará, wants this event to be historic. It will be the first

time a Conference of the Parties is held in the heart of the Amazon, the world's green lung and a benchmark for climate future.

In that regard, Lula warned about the acceleration of global warming and the risk of tropical forests reaching a point of no return, asserting that solutions lie in outnumbering renewable energy by three and energy efficiency by two, and ensuring a fair transition.

The Brazilian president proposed an urgent reorganization of global priorities: climate justice, public health and sustainable financing. "There is no right to health

without investment in sanitation, education, and housing."

Criticism of structural inequalities was another focus of his speech. In a direct message, he denounced that diseases like cholera and Chagas still kill because they affect the poor, not the rich. "If these diseases affected the Global North, they would already be eradicated," he stressed.

The meeting reaffirmed support for the leadership of the World Health Organization (WHO) and celebrated the concrete progress of the Tuberculosis Research Network, endorsed by the New

Development Bank (NDB, a BRICS financial institution) and the United Nations health agency.

Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3), related to health and well-being, was championed as an unavoidable commitment. The event showcased the bloc's inclusive ambition: it was attended by top leaders of the UN (António Guterres), WHO (Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus), the World Trade Organization (Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala), and NDB (Dilma Rousseff), among others.

The defense of peace was also present in his speech. Lula admitted that the planet is experiencing the most unstable period since World War II, with widespread belligerence and no legitimate authority to mediate.

He questioned the United Nations' loss of credibility and its inability to respond to conflicts such as those in Iraq, Libya, Ukraine, and the Gaza Strip. "No one asks permission to wage war. They just make decisions and carry them out. And the UN loses the authority to negotiate," he affirmed.

For Brazil, the summit was a showcase for the new role it wants to play in the world: as mediator of the Global South.



The bloc now has gathered 11 full members, 10 invited partners, and a dozen international observers. PHOTO: Internet.

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Authorities Outline Actions to Recover Transportation

By Lisván **LESCAILLE**

HAVANA.- Cuban Minister of Transportation Eduardo Rodríguez explained to MPs the prospects for the recovery of the sector with foreign currency management schemes that ensure self-sustainability and the provision of quality services.

In his speech at the National Assembly of People's Power (parliament), the minister referred to the complex operational situation of the activity and outlined actions aimed at increasing state transportation services, based on external sources of income.

In this sense, Rodríguez detailed the incomes generated from taxes on vehicle sales, according to the recently approved regulations, which already contribute to expanding the capabilities of the sector.

He emphasized the ministry's plan to restore public transportation services in all provinces and municipalities, particularly in rural and mountainous areas, with the resources already being collected.

Such incomes will allow for the acquisition of tires, batteries, and essential supplies for the gradual restoration of the vehicle fleet in the territories, he added.

According to Rodríguez, they will also continue to increase the purchase of electric cars, including minibuses for route service, and the restoration of railroad transportation.

The ministry hopes to improve the state transportation offer, based on the hiring and provision of financial and material resources

that should allow the replacement of motor coaches for interprovincial railroad service, in addition to the tracks' improvement, he said.

The minister also emphasized the entity's efforts to modernize the catamarans and achieve greater effectiveness in mobility between Havana and the Isla de la Juventud municipality.

Investments are also made to improve national and international air connectivity, he stressed.

The National Assembly of People's Power acknowledged the efforts of the Ministry of

Transportation (MITRANS) staff and officials but recommended greater effectiveness in actions addressed to the recovery of the sector. The parliamentary commission that evaluated MITRANS management highlighted the search for specific solutions to the problems, to stop the decline of economic indicators, and achieve self-sustainability.

The report indicated that the transportation body is still unable to meet the mobility needs of the population, among other reasons, due to fuel shortages, vehicles' poor technical conditions, and the lack of

foreign currency funding for the purchase of spare parts, pieces, and other supplies.

In light of these realities, greater preparation is required from the sector's staff and officials. Improvement in work systems and more efficient actions to help reverse this situation are also needed.

In their speeches, MPs referred to difficulties with the main indicators related to passenger and cargo transportation, which are not being met due to the aforementioned shortcomings. They also urged to raise the quality of service provided.



Minister Rodríguez informed they will increase the purchase of electric cars and the restoration of railroad transportation. PHOTO: Vladimir Molina.

Cuba Consolidates Its Agroecological Tourism

By Fidel Alejandro **MANZANARES**

CAMAGÜEY.- El Justo Agroecological Farm is emerging as a model of sustainable development, merging agricultural production, tourism, and social commitment in this Cuban province.

This project, which is part of the provincial Agroecological Farms for Tourism program, stands out for its environmental approach and its contribution to local economic growth, attracting both national and international visitors.

According to press reports, the farm is diversifying its services with ecotourism activities that display the region's biodiversity, reinforcing its appeal to the international market.

With a vision focused on solidarity, El Justo expands its social benefits through the sale of low-priced food and livestock projects to distribute milk to vulnerable residents.

Experts indicate that initiatives such as this position Cuba on the map of sustainable rural tourism, a booming global sector that values authenticity and community impact.

The nation, known for its beaches and culture, is now betting on agroecological experiences,

diversifying its offerings, and reducing the seasonal nature of traditional tourism.

For economies such as Cuba's, this model represents a stable source of income that creates jobs and promotes food sovereignty through ecological practices.

The farm is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing responsible production, local consumption, and ecosystem protection.

Internationally, countries such as Costa Rica, Italy, and Spain have capitalized on this niche, proving that rural tourism contributes to GDP and strengthens cultural identities.

Cuba, with its vast rural potential and sustainable tourism policies, could replicate these successes, attracting European and Latin American travelers interested in authentic experiences.

El Justo thus emerges as an example that can be replicated in other regions of the island, where agroecological tourism can become a pillar for territorial development.

This commitment reinforces Cuba's image as a multifaceted destination, combining sun and history with a deep connection between the land and its communities.



El Justo is part of Camagüey Agroecological Farms for Tourism program.

PHOTO: Internet.

Authorities Broaden Methods for Collecting Foreign Currencies

By Rolando **BENITO**

HAVANA.- Difficulties in managing foreign currency incomes continue to be the primary obstacle to boosting Cuba's economic plans and programs, according to reports released during last month's parliamentary sessions.

As indicated by Prime Minister Manuel Marrero, measures are being taken to reverse this situation by collecting revenues from exports, providing incentives to foreign investment, easing foreign business negotiation processes, and stabilizing the national financial system.

When updating members of parliament met in the V Period of Sessions of the National Assembly of People's Power (parliament) on the progress of the government plan to relaunch the economy, Marrero shared information about the approval of 29 self-financing schemes in foreign currency for exporting companies.

He said that agricultural producers are paid in foreign currency for replenishing their activity. He added that they guarantee economic actors who establish connections with the Mariel Special Development Zone to receive payments in the same currency.

Cuba is taking measures to boost foreign investment, including the simplification of project and business evaluation and approval processes, which has raised dissatisfaction among investors, the prime minister affirmed.

"Marrero also stressed the urgent need to enhance the efficiency of employment agencies, ensuring easy access to job opportunities in companies operating with foreign capital.

Cuban Minister of Economy and Planning, Joaquín Alonso, talked about the challenges the sector faces due to the U.S. pressures.

Alonso emphasized that the Cuban economy has been marked by the transformations resulting from the Ordering Task, the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the irrational, inhumane, and genocidal economic war of the United States government.

The global economic crisis and the "errors, deviations and negative trends that also affect the management of the economy, both at the macro and microeconomic levels," are added to the above situation, the minister said.

In this context, he emphasized that the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States has been intensified in recent years, particularly with the new approval of a presidential memorandum that reinforces the economic sanctions. Such acts violate the rights of the Cuban people and are the main obstacle to Cuba's economic and social development, he stressed.

In his report on the state of the Cuban economy, the minister referred to the recovery of items such as tobacco, lobster, and seafood products; however, he clarified that foreign currency incomes from exports reached 91 percent by the end of the first half of 2025, lower than that of the same period in 2024.

Alonso also spoke about the slight over fulfillment reached with the medical services export plan. "Notwithstanding, the business modality in Cuba has been facing difficulties with medical supplies and disposable materials, which affects international sales and programs requested at low prices."



Prime Minister informed about the approval of 29 self-financing schemes in foreign currency for exporting companies. PHOTO: Vladimir Molina.

Government Announces Pension Rise

By Caridad **SMITH**

HAVANA.- The Cuban government announced a pension rise, starting next September, for those who receive up to four thousand pesos due to age or disability, and for those who have a unified payment due to a spouse's death.

At the Fifth Ordinary Period of Sessions of the National Assembly of People's Power, Prime Minister Manuel Marrero informed about this measure, which will benefit 1,324,599 people – 79 percent of pensioners.

The head of government added that 82 percent of that number receives up to 2,472 pesos, and they will see an increase of 1,528 pesos. The remaining 18 percent of pensioners will receive an increase equal to the difference between their current pension, up to four thousand pesos monthly.

Marrero explained that this measure represents a partial rise in pensions, as it is not possible to undertake a comprehensive reform of these at present due to the lack of necessary financial resources.

The Prime Minister commented that the new provision requires an annual rise of 22 million pesos in the Social Security budget, and affirmed that pensions will continue

to gradually increase, depending on the economic situation.

During his speech at the parliamentary plenary session, Marrero emphasized that

progress has been made in the approval and implementation of social policies, and stated that Cuba will not stop making efforts to continue advancing and seeking solutions.

The leader affirmed that priority is being given to the social transformation of 1,252 communities, and added that the social assistance budget supported the care of 182,506 families, with more than 310,000 people currently living in vulnerable situations.



The pension rise will benefit 1,324,599 people. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

“Mijaín”, the soul of the giant on screen.

By Odette **DIAZ**

MOSCOW.- Some stories cannot be locked in one medal, nor even in five. Some feats do not end with the final whistle of the fight, but begin when silence falls on the canvas: such is Mijaín López's life.

This giant wrestler, born in the small town of Herradura, in the western Cuban province of Pinar del Río, has performed several Olympic feats but also stands out for his humbleness, deeply rooted character, and podium-proof humanity.

That essence is what the documentary “Mijaín” seeks to capture, a collaborative work that promises to be much more than an audiovisual tribute: it will be a gift to the collective soul of the Cuban people.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, Rolando Almirante, one of the film directors, said that the project is in the final stages of post-production.

The film, which brings together the efforts of three creators – filmmaker and photographer Ángel Alderete; sports journalist Héctor Villar, and the director himself, who shares these reflections – is the result of different perspectives: that of sport, of the image, and the soul.

Each of the creators approached Mijaín from their perspective. “I approach him from the human point of view; Héctor, from the sports’ view, and Alderete, from the photography point of view,” Almirante added.

The result is an emotional puzzle that, far from following the Aristotelian perspective

of cause and effect, is solved in the viewer's mind like a living fabric, going back and forth from the past to the present, between the roots and the heights.

The work refuses to follow the classic idea of “he arrived in Paris, competed and won.” Instead, it prefers to show the intricacies behind the feat: the man behind the myth.

Because it happens that Mijaín is not a bronze portrait. It is an immersion in the human being who, despite having achieved something never seen before – five Olympic gold medals in the same type of competition – he is still the man he always was: a good son, a good father, a noble friend, a dear Cuban,” the creator affirmed.

The film features him from his foundations, from the humility that is not lost, even when he stands at the top of the world podium.

Almirante tells the story as if he does not want to reveal every detail, and through the camera we discover that they take a distant journey to get closer to him: from Herradura to La Vega – his real birthplace – and from the Ciénaga de Zapata – where the family of his coach Raúl Trujillo lives – to the Bulgarian heart of Teteven, a high-altitude sanctuary where the Cuban wrestling team trains in the mountains.

They also arrived in Novosibirsk, in the Russian Siberia, where the Cuban wrestler traveled to after the Olympic Games to pay tribute to his idol, Alexander Karelin, an athlete from the Eurasian nation who competed in Greco-Roman wrestling, was a three-time Olympic champion and won nine world championships and 12 European championships.



Rolando Almirante, one of the film directors, said that the project is in the final stages of post-production. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Germán Mesa, Manager of the Cuban Team to the VI WBC

Text and Photo Boris **CABRERA**

HAVANA.- Germán Mesa was appointed manager of the Cuban team that will participate in the VI World Baseball Classic, scheduled for March 5-17, 2026, the Cuban Baseball and Softball Federation (FCBS) indicated.

Mesa, 58, will hold the position until at least 2028 and during that period, he will be responsible for leading the national team in major international tournaments.

The legendary number 11, considered one of the most spectacular shortstops in Cuban baseball, served as bench coach in the last World Baseball Classic (2023), where Cuba achieved a creditable fourth place after losing to the United States in the semifinals. He also assumed this role in the Premier 12, where the team finished in last place alongside Puerto Rico.

“Every time I step onto the field, I am determined to win against anyone,” Mesa recently told **The Havana Reporter**, confirming his competitive and ambitious nature.

In addition to his playing career, Mesa led the Industriales team to the 2010 title – the last crown of the iconic Havana team. He later succeeded abroad, with four championships in Nicaragua and second places in Mexico and Panama.

The current vice president of the FCBS, nicknamed ‘Mago’ (Magician) or ‘Imán’ (Magnet), affirmed that his style is based on observation and the experience gained over years of working with athletes and coaches with experience in professional baseball, including the American circuit.

Some of the greatest challenges he will face in maximizing the national roster include the recruiting of Cuban baseballers residing and playing abroad, including those enrolled in Major League Baseball (MLB). Another important challenge will be regaining the prominence Cuba has lost in recent international events.

The FCBS also confirmed former first baseman Danni Miranda as manager of the Cuban U-23 team that will attend the Pan American Tournament, scheduled for October 9-17 in the Dominican Republic.

Miranda, current manager of the Tigres de Ciego de Ávila, earned the trust of Cuban baseball leaders after his outstanding performance at the head of that team, which recently won the title of the Third Cuban Baseball Elite League.

In the remaining positions, Raúl Rodríguez Palacio, from Havana (U-12 team); Alexander Urquiola, from Pinar del Río (U-15), and Abeyci Pantoja, from Las Tunas (U-18) were chosen as managers of their respective teams.



Germán Mesa will be responsible for leading the national team in major international tournaments until 2028. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

A Biodiversity Lab in Costa Rica

By AntonioPANEQUE

PUNTA LEONA, COSTA RICA.- This beach, located in Costa Rica’s southeastern Pacific and considered by experts a natural laboratory with an ecological strategy, preserves five percent of the world’s biodiversity. Specialists and employees of this Beach Club offer spaces for relaxation and fun in contact with nature, and also provide instruction on how to preserve it, using a “regenerative” approach to recreate this environment. They insist that their portfolios of environmental projects solidify the practice and concept of Regenerative Tourism, which seeks to leave a positive impact on the places visitors choose, in addition to improving and revitalizing ecosystems and promoting interaction with communities through the consumption of local products. “Punta Leona promotes and leads this type of recreational and environmental activity in Costa Rica’s Central Pacific. “We do a lot of work, both on land and at sea,” reception manager Jairo Jara León told **The Havana Reporter**. The reserve where Punta Leona is located is known as Puntallona, which covers “approximately 25 hectares of the central



The protection of the Red Scarlet Macaw started in 1970 with the arrival of Professor Christopher Vaughan, from the University of Costa Rica. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Pacific, between the Agujas and Villacaletas areas, which include a Protected Natural Area, Wetland, Butterfly Farm, Aquiculture Nursery, Reefs, Coral Garden and Underwater

Museum, “all fully supervised by the State,” the manager said. These entrepreneurs develop in the sea what is known as “aquaponics,” which is like

hydroponics but involves growing plants (lettuce, tomatoes, chili peppers) using fish sediments, which we also preserve here,” the specialist explained.

PROTECTION OF RED-SCARLET MACAW

Ground-based initiatives include the protection of the red-scarlet macaw, essential for its colorful and vibrant touch to hotel and forest environments, whose fauna even has an impact on recreational areas where monkeys come in search for “more sugar than bananas,” although the infrastructure protects visitors from disturbances, Jara commented.

The protection of this bird started in 1970 with the arrival of Professor Christopher Vaughan, from the University of Costa Rica. He studied the area and found 25 pairs of red-scarlet macaws at the time and now, there are about 500.

The first thing the scientist did was to find the people who were catching these precious animals to sell them or keep them in domestic captivity, and then persuaded them to stop doing it and cooperate in their preservation actions.

Female red-scarlet macaw (Ara macao), a Latin American species with scarlet red and yellow feathers in the wings, lives in the area going from Mexico to Brazil and is considered an endangered species due to the reduction of its habitat and illegal trafficking by unscrupulous people.



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