



Against U.S. Blokade

Page. 4

Cuba

Agricultural
Transformations

Page 3



Science

Clinical Study

Page 5



Culture

Universal Painter

Page 6



Economy

FIHAV 2026

Page 14



Tourism Expectations and Potential”

By Francisco **MENÉNDEZ**

HAVANA.- Amid pressing economic challenges, Cuban tourism authorities believe that, for the immediate future, customers’ safety and confidence will be just as important as beaches themselves.

Marketing Director General at the Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) Lessner Gómez noted that tourist destinations such as Havana and Varadero play a key role in the country’s recovery efforts, including ensuring services, quality and safety.

Speaking to **The Havana Reporter**, the official said that “we can increase arrivals from countries with which we have direct connections, especially in Latin America, China, and Europe.” That would require continued work on information dissemination, rapid responses and direct communication with agencies, tour operators, airlines, and customers, he added. Gómez pointed out that strategies have been devised to further strengthen multi-

destination programs in the region, with attractive itineraries involving neighboring countries or destinations, as well as to diversify source markets and open new doors that do not rely on traditional markets.

The executive recalled that Cuba has an extensive hotel infrastructure with a large number of rooms —over 83,000— concentrated in destinations such as Varadero, Jardines del Rey, Havana, Camagüey, Holguín, and Cayo Largo, among others.



PHOTO: Internet.

He also affirmed that products such as sun and beach, nautical activities, nature tourism, cultural experiences, trips, golf, and events and entertainment are the most popular. Havana stands out as the primary destination for cultural and urban tourism, while Pinar del Río-Viñales is famous for its landscapes and nature, and Trinidad for its heritage assets. He emphasized that due to the economic measures imposed on the country by the United States government, tourism services have recently been reorganized to better align with demand.



Visitor arrivals from various source markets were taken into account, with priority given to Varadero and Havana, although a range of tourism products remains operational across the entire country.

Gómez highlighted the island’s assets as key to the industry’s future —despite existing challenges— and reiterated that one of Cuba’s major strengths in the vacation market is that it does not rely solely on sun and beach; it offers a hard-to-replicate combination of nature, heritage, living culture, and human interaction.

He also referred to the annual calendar of international events covering diverse themes: education, culture, sports, tourism, health, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, social sciences, science and technology, the environment, the economy, and agriculture —totaling more than 200 events each year.

This calendar provides contact details for organizing committees, allowing interested parties to access detailed information on each event.

He finally noted that more than 70 events are scheduled to take place during the final period of 2026.

Cuban tourism records sharp drop in international visitors

By Milagros **PICHARDO**

HAVANA.- As of July 2026, Cuba received 794,492 travelers, barely 50.2 percent of those recorded in the same period the previous year, equivalent to 787,773 fewer travelers, reported the National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI)

According to the entity, 419,863 international visitors arrived in the first seven months of the year, which represents 37.2 % of the figure for the same period in 2025, that is, 708,968 fewer foreign travelers.

The largest decline came from Canadian tourists, down by 350,737, followed by the Cuban community residing abroad, and US visitors, which fell by 52,021 and 39,944, respectively. Notable drops were also observed among travelers from Russia, Mexico, Argentina, Spain, China, Colombia, and France. ONEI defines a traveler as any individual who moves between two or more countries. When the movement takes place outside the country of residence, the person is considered an international traveler, regardless of the purpose of the trip or the mode of transportation used.

An international visitor is any person who travels to a country other than the one where they have their usual

residence for leisure, recreation, business or other personal purposes, for a period not exceeding one year.

Cuba’s tourism industry faces a deep crisis, highlighted by the withdrawal of leading international hotel operators amid the tightening of the economic blockade imposed by the United States.

Consequently, this policy restricts Cuban companies and hotel chains from securing investment funds and credit lines from both U.S. and international sources.

Access is heavily restricted on major travel platforms—including booking sites like Expedia, Booking.com, and Trivago, and distribution systems like Galileo, Worldspan, and Sabre—from which Cuban properties have been removed.

These pressures add to the cumulative effect of the unilateral sanctions imposed by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the US Department of the Treasury, Cuba’s inclusion on the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, and the updating of the list of restricted Cuban entities.

Similarly, cruise tourism has dropped sharply, while fuel supply shortages are disrupting international flights.

Amid this complex scenario, Cuba is seeking to expand business models in the tourism sector to contribute to its recovery.



The largest decline came from Canadian tourists, down by 350,737. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

The Havana Reporter
YOUR SOURCE OF NEWS & MORE

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

President: Jorge Legaña Alonso
Editorial Vicepresident: Moisés Pérez Mok
Editorial Director: Daily Pérez Guillén
Chief Editor: Ilsa Rodríguez Santana
Art Direction: Anathais Rodríguez
English Editor: José Eloy Richards

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

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

President Evaluates Transformations in the Agricultural Sector



Cuban president reaffirmed his confidence in the potential of workers and farmers. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

By Melissa **KING**

HAVANA.- President Miguel Díaz-Canel called on the agricultural sector for immediate results in food production during an extensive dialogue with representatives from Cuba's farming community, to evaluate the implementation of the Economic and Social Transformations.

At the meeting, held at the Havana's Convention Center, the president reaffirmed his confidence in the potential of workers and farmers, whom he described as the true guarantors of the country's food security and a vanguard capable of driving the rest of the production systems.

Participants in the meeting included cooperative members, individual producers, and executives from state-owned enterprises and micro, small, and medium-sized companies (MIPYMES), alongside members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba, according to a report by the Presidency of the Republic indicated.

Deputy Minister of Agriculture Telce Abdel explained that 162 of the 176 Economic and Social Transformations directly impact the sector, which is already benefiting from a comprehensive legal package that provides greater legal security for producers.

Various executives shared successful experiences resulting from these measures. President of the Poultry Business Group, Yoandris Beltrán, reported that the entity's

restructuring —along with its focus on value chains and renewable energy— enabled it to reverse projected losses and generate profits this year.

Meanwhile, the Emilio Córdova Agro-Industrial Grain Company, from the province of Villa Clara, expanded its rice cultivation to over 11,000 hectares, integrating non-state MIPYMES into the management of agricultural lands, mills, and drying facilities.

Díaz-Canel acknowledged that, despite these advances, obstacles and delays persist nationwide.

Nevertheless, he pointed out that producers have demonstrated that solutions exist even in difficult times, by adapting, innovating and organizing work.

The head of State emphasized that the transformations grant farmers real autonomy to decide what, how and in what quantities to produce, and how to market their products.

However, he warned that this independence entails the responsibility of ensuring that food reaches Cuban families.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Cuban president described the transformations not merely as a regulatory change, but as a shift in logic that turns producers into managers of their own productive destiny, reiterating that the country is built from the land, not from a desk.

New U.S. Sanctions

By Valentina **DONES**

HAVANA.-Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez denounced the latest offensive by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio against institutions and individuals in the nation.

The Foreign Minister warned via his X account that these new sanctions are part of Washington's policy of maximum economic asphyxia and collective punishment against the Cuban people.

"He will fail in his attempt to bring us to our knees. We will never renounce our sovereignty and independence, won over nearly 70 years of Revolution," Rodríguez stated.

Last month, the U.S. Secretary of State announced sanctions against 11 entities and individuals linked to the development of Cuba's military capabilities and the exploitation of the island's mineral resources.

The department detailed the designation of eight institutions and three individuals. The entities designated in the defense

sector are the Simulator Research and Development Center, the Naval Research and Development Center, the Infantry Weaponry Research and Development Center, and the "Grito de Baire" Research, Development and Production Center.

In the nickel sector —a key industry for the Caribbean nation— sanctions were imposed on the Computing, Communications and Electronics Technical Services Company; the Nickel Engineering and Projects Company; the Capitán Alberto Fernández Montes de Oca Nickel Research Center; and Pinares S.A.

The sanctions are based on Executive Order 14404, signed by President Donald Trump on May 1, which expands the range of restrictions and pressures against the island in pursuit of the explicit goal of regime change in Cuba.

Despite these attempts at maximum pressure, the island is moving forward in the implementation of economic and social transformations aimed fundamentally at improving the population's quality of life amidst the intensification of the blockade and the energy siege.



Several entities in the nickel industry are included in these new sanctions. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Silent Genocide

By Milagros**PICHARDO** and Ever**MELLADO**

HAVANA.- The United States blockade against the country, which includes a severe energy siege, is a silent genocide against the island's population, Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez emphasized.

While presenting a report to the domestic and foreign press accredited in Havana, regarding the damage caused by this policy—which he described as criminal—Rodríguez affirmed that this is the result of a coldly calculated plan of collective punishment, with the malicious aim of breaking up the Cuban Revolution.

The Foreign Minister commented that, added to the energy blockade, there is persecution of shipping companies transporting essential supplies to the island, and mentioned the more than 7,000 containers seized abroad containing primarily food, medicines and hospital equipment and supplies.

He stated that, in the face of Cuba's efforts to transform its energy matrix, Washington targets the importation of photovoltaic systems intended to provide power to hospitals and basic services.

The data show an increase in infant mortality rate from 4 per 1,000 live births in 2018 to 9.9 in 2025. "These are children, not numbers; these are deaths that should not occur because of depriving Cuba of its robust and effective public health system," he noted.

Rodríguez highlighted that the cruelty of this collective punishment is also evident in the thousands of Cubans who struggle daily to get to work without public transportation, as the vehicle fleet is practically paralyzed due to a lack of fuel.

"It is the same ruthless sentiment and destructive spirit behind the genocide being committed in Gaza.

In Cuba, it is silent, without bombs, but it kills nonetheless," he stated.

Despite the extraordinary pressure and intimidation exerted on member states by the United States government, its State Department, embassies and diplomatic missions, our people are confident in the overwhelming support of the global community, he pointed out.

Rodríguez also confirmed that no negotiations are underway at present with the U.S. government, nor are there any defined roadmaps, and said that while dialogues were previously held with the State Department, they yielded no progress due to a lack of political will on Washington's part.

The diplomat reiterated Cuba's willingness to continue holding talks based on international law, free from pressure and on terms of absolute equality, grounded in principles of mutual respect, reciprocal benefit and non-interference in the Caribbean nation's internal affairs.

Regarding the ongoing economic and social transformations, he explained that there has been no official statement from the U.S. government, though he clarified that external opinions are not required, as these measures represent the sovereign exercise of the Republic of Cuba and its people.

Addressing Washington's offer of \$100 million in humanitarian aid, he specified that, to date, the only action taken has been the shipment of a single package of food and hygiene products for 700 families.

He challenged the State Department to explain when the actual delivery of this aid will begin, whether it will include medicines and food—priorities for the Cuban people—and why it is taking months to materialize.

Regarding Washington's recent executive orders designating Cuba a national security threat, he stated that the U.S. authorities are lying.

The minister warned that any attempt at direct military aggression would trigger a bloodshed, and affirmed that Cuba would defend its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity with its customary determination.

He emphasized that the island expects an overwhelming support at the October 28 United Nations vote to end the blockade imposed by the United States, despite Washington's pressures.

He noted that he would denounce before the UN General Assembly the damage

this policy of strangulation inflicts on the Caribbean nation, while reiterating his country's desire to live in peace.

He also pointed out that the total cost of the damage caused to Cuba by the blockade between March 1, 2025 and February 28, 2026, reached a record \$8.083 billion—seven percent higher than the substantial figure reported previously.

In this regard, he added that the cumulative damage resulting from the more than six decades of blockade amounts to \$178.7 billion (at current prices)—a 4.7 percent increase over the figure cited in the last report.

The minister warned that the blockade is not merely a matter of statistics, because behind every figure lies a family suffering the daily consequences of a policy he described as a coldly calculated plan aimed at achieving political objectives.



Due to the persecution of shipping companies transporting essential supplies to the island, more than 7,000 containers are seized abroad. PHOTO: Internet.

UN Confirms Consequences of U.S. Hostile Policy

By Antonio**RONDÓN**



The report proves that the United States is lying when it attempts to hold Cuba responsible for the consequences of its cruel actions. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

GENEVA.- Through a report by a Special Rapporteur, and by means of data gathered in Cuba, the Human Rights Council (HRC) was able to verify the fallacy of the U.S. claim that the blockade does not exist, ambassador Rodolfo Benítez denounced here.

"The United States says there is no blockade

or energy siege on Cuba. The Special Rapporteur's report exposes the liar," stated the Cuban Permanent Representative to the HRC at the UN body's 63rd session.

Referring to the report by Special Rapporteur Zaina Jallad, the diplomat affirmed that, based on solid evidence gathered during her visit to Havana, she concluded that these measures not only exist but are being steadily intensified and are causing enormous damage.

The report also demonstrates that this policy flagrantly, massively, and systematically violates the human rights of the Cuban people, including their right to food, health, education, development, and life, he stressed. There can be no greater cynicism than stifling a whole country and blaming others. The Rapporteur's report proves that the United States is lying when it attempts to hold Cuba responsible for the consequences of its cruel actions, he emphasized.

The Ambassador explained that the Rapporteur determined that, despite the

Cuban government's sustained efforts to protect the population and mitigate the impact, the U.S. coercive measures are of such magnitude and persistence that they cause shortages of essential goods and services in Cuban homes.

Washington maintains that its policy toward Cuba is legal and that the blockade is an exclusively bilateral matter, Benítez noted in his address, which was followed by a long list of speakers supporting the Special Rapporteur's report.

The Rapporteur's exhaustive legal analysis categorically denies that assertion and demonstrates that the blockade must be lifted, because it violates international law and infringes upon the sovereignty and jurisdiction of other States, he added.

At the same time, the official denounced the United States' perverse and deliberate aim of inflicting extreme hardship and total strangulation upon Cuban families.

He noted that, by doing so, they are attempting to cause a humanitarian tragedy in order to destabilize the country and achieve their political objectives.

He stated that through the unprecedented tightening of the blockade, since last January the United States has imposed a brutal energy siege on Cuba and is threatening reprisals against any country that supplies oil to the island.

The fuel shortage is having a devastating impact on almost every area of society, the ambassador highlighted.

Cuba is under the threat of military aggression. Using a pretext that borders on the absurd, the United States has designated our small island as an alleged threat to the security of the military superpower, Benítez pointed out.

He also asserted that remaining silent in the face of what is currently being done to Cuba undermines international law and makes the planet even more insecure.

Clinical study being evaluated in patients with advanced melanoma

By Joel Michel**VARONA**

HAVANA.- The Cuban Center for Molecular Immunology is assessing the progress of a clinical study with the 2C12 molecule in patients suffering from advanced melanoma.

This clinical trial will take place in two provinces: One in Havana, at the National Institute of Oncology and Radiobiology and the Hermanos Ameijeiras Clinical-Surgical Hospital; and the other in Villa Clara, at the Celestino Hernández Robau Oncology Hospital.

This scientific advancement from the largest island in the Antilles is part of ongoing researches to expand therapeutic options against cancer.

The therapeutic candidate, 2C12, presents characteristics similar to pembrolizumab,

an international treatment that stimulates the immune response against tumor cells.

According to press reports, the initial phase of the study will focus on patients with advanced melanoma, specifically targeting skin cancer cases that can't be treated or have spread to other parts of the body.

2C12 is administered in cases of advanced metastatic melanoma ineligible for surgery, in patients with metastatic lung cancer as a second-line treatment, and in patients with refractory Hodgkin lymphoma.

The development of this alternative addresses the need to find accessible therapeutic options given the high costs of certain oncology medications in the international market.

It also responds to the challenges Cuba faces in acquiring these drugs due to the economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed for more than 60 years by the United States.



The authorship of the clinical studies belongs to the Cuban Center for Molecular Immunology. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

New forms of pharmaceutical services on the rise

By Michel**ROVAN**

HAVANA.- The addition of non-state management models into pharmaceutical services in Cuba is on the rise with the evaluation of 36 projects for the administration of community pharmacies.

Cristina Lara, National Director of Medicines and Medical Technologies at the Ministry of Public Health, explained that existing state-run pharmacy locations will not be leased out for this new operational model.

Of the proposals submitted, three are currently in the established process, and another 14 have been approved for the following procedures.

Lara told the press that this new initiative will allow non-state entities to run community pharmacies, offer pharmaceutical services, and market medicines and other health-related products.

These establishments must meet all medication storage and dispensing requirements and have qualified professional staff in charge of technical operations.

Pharmacies operating under non-state models may determine their own medicine and product portfolios in compliance with established regulations.

The official warned that they cannot market hospital-use medicines, products classified as drugs, and products on restricted national lists. Additionally, all pharmaceuticals

must be registered with the regulatory authority of the largest of the Antilles

She added that all medicine imports must go through the two existing importers: Medicuba, under the Ministry of Public Health, and Farmacuba, part of the Cuban pharmaceutical industry.

She emphasized that the marketing of pharmaceutical products demands specific handling because it directly impacts on people's health. Pharmacies transitioning to non-state management models will remain fully subject to established public health regulations and controls, noted the national director of Medicines and Medical Technologies at the Ministry of Public Health.

Cuba is in for an early and active winter

By **The Havana Reporter Staff**

HAVANA.- The upcoming 2026-2027 winter in Cuba is expected to have an early and very active start, with rainfall above historical averages.

Sources from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment and weather authorities also explained that these forecasts are based on biometeorological projections for Cuba and surrounding regions.

They added that this behavior is linked with the weak structure of the Arctic Polar Vortex, as well as the frequent formation of subtropical or extratropical lows near the western part of the largest of the Antilles and the high frequency of frontal systems and continental anticyclones.

Weather authorities also noted that the El Niño climate event is likewise expected to intensify from strong to very strong, reaching its peak during the final quarter of this year.

This phenomenon will be accompanied by sea surface temperature anomalies exceeding 3.5 degrees Celsius in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean.

According to experts, this condition will alter atmospheric circulation patterns and climate risks across the island of Cuba and across the surrounding region.

Hence, a high probability of severe weather events is forecast for the occurrence of severe weather events, characterized by heavy rainfall, strong winds, and electrical storms, mainly in the western region.

According to specialists, biometeorological risk will progressively increase starting in late September.

They warned that this scenario may cause cardiovascular, respiratory, and allergic meteoropathies associated with the abrupt weather changes expected and the presence of periods of consecutive days with cold temperatures, caused by the greater frequency of incursions of air masses of Arctic origin.

The probability of significant cold events will be high from November to February.



Pharmacies operating under non-state models cannot market hospital-use medicines and products classified as drugs. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Wifredo Lam, the Most Universally Renowned Cuban Painter

By Pedro **RIOSECO**

HAVANA.- Wifredo Oscar de la Concepción Lam y Castilla, the most universally renowned Cuban painter, died in Paris on September 11, 1982, at the age of 80. He achieved a prominent place in major galleries worldwide with a body of work that included African and Chinese elements, present in Cuban culture. His paintings hold a permanent place in leading museums across Europe, the United States and other countries worldwide. His most notable works include *La jungla*, *La silla*, *Malembo*, *Canto a Camosis*, *Arpas cardinales*, *Presente eterno*, *Escalopendre*, *Flor luna*, *Luz de arcilla*, and *Rumor de tierra*. His solo exhibitions were particularly notable at the First Papers of Surrealism in New York, as well as at the surrealist exhibitions in Paris, Prague, Milan, Cuba, and the Institute of Modern Art in Chicago, among other international cultural centers.

Lam was born on December 8, 1902, in a humble neighborhood of Sagua la Grande, in the Villa Clara province. The son of a Chinese merchant and scribe and a mulata criolla (mixed-race Cuban woman), he carried African, Spanish, Chinese, and indigenous heritage in his blood.

He showed an early aptitude for drawing and painting. The local history museum in his hometown treasures some of his early works. In 1920, he enrolled the San Alejandro Professional School of Painting and Sculpture in Havana, where he studied until 1923. The portraits and landscapes he created there immediately opened him the doors to the Association of Painters and Sculptors of Havana and its Fine Arts Salons. He traveled to Spain in 1923 to study painting on a scholarship from the Sagua la Grande city council.

He studied at the San Fernando Academy in Madrid, traveled across the Iberian Peninsula, and built a visual vocabulary that evolved from academic-style portraits and landscapes.

Lam participated in the defense of the Spanish Republic. He joined international artistic brigades and the painters' union of the General Union of Workers (UGT). In 1937, he painted a large canvas entitled *La Guerra Civil* (The Civil War) – inspired by the drama of the conflict – which is now in a private collection in Caracas. In 1938, he moved to Paris, where he met Spanish artist Pablo Picasso, with whom he had a close friendship. Picasso introduced him to the Parisian art world, where he became close with André Breton – the ideologue of

Surrealism – and Benjamin Péret, among other renowned European poets and writers. His personal charm allowed him to enter the most exclusive circles of the artistic avant-garde of the first half of the 20th century, and his artistic language rapidly evolved toward a highly restrained style characterized by compositional simplicity and formal schematics, indebted to Cubism. On June 30, 1939, he opened his first major solo exhibition at the Galerie Pierre in the

French capital. When World War II broke out, Lam moved to Marseille and illustrated a poem by André Breton that appears in the book *Fata Morgana* (1940).

The years following his return to Cuba, 1941, marked the decisive period of his career.

"He introduced certain shifts to the Euro-Western pictorial tradition in which he had been trained, creating hybrid concepts that until then had no precedent in the history of art."



Lam's work included African and Chinese elements, present in Cuban culture. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Photo Exhibition in Rome Denounces the United States

Text and Photo Mario **MUÑOZ**

ROME.- *Patria o Muerte*—Voices of an island that resists) is the title of a photographic exhibition by Italian artist Valerio Bispuri, recently opened at the Santa Rita Hall in this capital, which denounces the U.S. blockade against Cuba. The display, open to the public free of charge throughout September, featured 34 photographs taken by the artist, during a trip he made last June and July to Havana, Santiago de Cuba and other locations in the eastern part of the island.

Divided into four narrative sections, the images draw attention to the daily hardships the Cuban people endure and their resilience capacity to face the crisis caused by the US intensified economic, commercial, and financial blockade.

At the opening of the exhibition, Cuban Ambassador Jorge Luis Cepero emphasized that the photographs reveal the weariness and the marks left by a daily life that has become extraordinarily difficult.

"We also recognize the criminal intent of those who, from another State, pull the political strings to inflict as much suffering as possible on a nation, to completely stifle its citizens, with the declared aim of subduing them and bringing them to their knees," he stressed.

These are plain images that show the country's deterioration and the severe energy problems it faces; they "tell the story of the criminal attack and the policy of silent genocide that the United States of America is waging against Cuba," the diplomat affirmed.

Also speaking at the inauguration, Cultural Advisor of Roma Capitale, Massimiliano Smeriglio, noted the exhibition's importance and quality, while criticizing Washington's policy toward the island, which he described as a "medieval siege."

In another address, president of the Italy-Cuba National Friendship Association Marco Papacci spoke of the harsh reality the people of the Caribbean island is living, a time of immense hardships caused by the criminal blockade.

But through the lens of his camera, amidst the light and shadow, the Italian artist also reveals the faces of a country that has become a global example of resilience; a nation

defending its identity and seeking ways to move forward. Bispuri recounted that, despite the island's current situation, the Cubans' response of resistance along his journey was the slogan "Homeland or Death," immortalized by Commander Fidel Castro, a phrase that has accompanied the Cuban Revolution for over 60 years and which he adopted as the title of his exhibition.

Sponsored by the Tempi Moderni cultural association, the exhibition was supported by Roma Capitale and its Department of Cultural Activities, in collaboration with Zètema Progetto Cultura.



The photographic exhibition by Italian artist Valerio Bispuri was recently opened at the Santa Rita Hall in Rome. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



Voces del Sur Global
Voices of the Global South



Belka and Strelka paved the way for Gagarin

By Germán FERRÁS

MOSCOW.-66 years ago, two small stray dogs set out from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in the Kazakh steppe, on a journey into space and immortality.

Belka and Strelka were the names of these two living beings, the first in history to orbit our planet for 25 hours. The story began much earlier. Shortly after the end of the Great Patriotic War, the team of rocket designer Serguei Koroliov was working on a fundamental question: could an organism survive a launch, weightlessness and the return from space?

Before risking a human life, Soviet scientists needed answers. And dogs were chosen because they were resilient, could be trained and researchers knew their physiology well.

Belka and Strelka were not the first. Other dogs had flown before, and some experiments ended in tragedy. Laika, launched in 1957, became the first animal to orbit the Earth, but did not survive.

In the case of Belka and Strelka, both underwent months of training and had to live in confined spaces, along with vibrations, accelerations, centrifuges and long periods inside an airtight capsule, designed by scientists for the occasion.



They also learned to feed themselves through a special system designed to function during weightlessness. Finally, the historic launch took place at 15:44 (Moscow Time) on August 19, 1960.

From Baikonur, Sputnik-5 rose into the sky, reaching an orbit approximately 306-339 kilometers high. Belka and

Strelka were not the only ones aboard: there were also mice, insects, plants, seeds and other organisms intended for different scientific experiments. It was practically a small biological laboratory flying around our planet.

During the flight, doctors recorded their electrocardiograms, blood pressure, temperature, breathing and movements. Cameras made it possible to observe them from the ground. At first, everything proceeded normally, although Belka appeared quite nervous during part of the mission.

After 17 orbits around the Earth and more than 25 hours in space, the decisive moment arrived. On August 20, the capsule descended and landed approximately 10 kilometers from the planned point. Belka and Strelka were alive.

The success was much more than a scientific curiosity. It demonstrated that Soviet technology could keep an organism alive during an orbital flight and, above all, return it safely to Earth.

After returning, the two became genuine celebrities. They appeared before the press, were taken to schools and shown to children throughout the Soviet Union.

One of them, Strelka, even had puppies, one of which, named Pushinka, was given as a gift to Jacqueline Kennedy, the wife of the then US president.

Almost 8 months later, on April 12, 1961, Yuri Gagarin made the first crewed spaceflight in human history.



THE GETAWAY CAPITAL MODERN AND EXCLUSIVE

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

www.bluediamondresorts.com

LPL
PRENSA
LATINA

**La mayor casa editorial
de publicaciones seriadas de Cuba**
The largest publishing house
of continuous publications in Cuba

www.prensa-latina.cu

Twitter: @PrensaLatina_cu YouTube: PrensaLatinaTV Facebook: @AgenciaPrensaLatinaOficial
Instagram: @prensaletinacuba Telegram: @PrensaLatinaNoticias Messenger: TesoroLatino



Aging will advance and population will decrease by 2040

By **The Havana Reporter Staff**

HAVANA.- The National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI) reported that the aging of the Cuban population will reach 36 percent by 2040, and that the Caribbean nation's population will have shrunk to about 8.38 million inhabitants within 15 years."

Those projections were disclosed in this capital by Alfonso Fraga, Deputy Head of ONEI, who stressed that having this demographic projection is strategic.

He emphasized that current economic measures and development projects, to succeed, require accurate data on both present and future populations. This prospective analysis was presented last September at the scientific conference for Statistical Worker's Day.

In the demographic block, innovative methods were also presented for estimating the results of the National Employment Survey (ENO) without the need for field data collection. This means savings in resources and greater speed in data processing.

During the meeting, participants analyzed the modernization of national statistical systems, emphasizing automation, artificial intelligence, and innovative digital communication strategies.

The discussions also covered the strategic communication challenges of using digital platforms to connect official figures with the public, while directors and specialists shared their experiences implementing the Balanced Scorecard for economic statistics.

Participants reviewed a proposal to improve primary data collection, drawing on the experience of the capital's municipality, Plaza de la Revolución, to optimize data quality and timeliness.

At the closing ceremony, Juana María Pantoja, head of the ONEI, recognized the dedication of statistical workers and reaffirmed the institution's commitment to continuous process improvement, transparency in information, and the essential role of statistics as an input for decision-making in the country.



By 2040, the elderly population in Cuba will reach 36 percent of the total population. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Study Reveals Presence of Toxic Microalgae in Cuban Waters

By **Sabdiel BATISTA**

CIENFUEGOS.- A scientific team from the Cienfuegos Center for Environmental Studies (CEAC) identified six species of the genus *Gambierdiscus* —producers of ciguatoxins— in samples taken from the Havana coastline, the institution reported today.

Research conducted by the institution and published in the journal *ACS Environmental Au* included specialists from CEAC, the Institute of Agrifood Research and Technology, and Rovira i Virgili University, in Spain.

The Center for Scientific Research and Higher Education of Ensenada, from Mexico, also participated.

The study enabled the isolation of 35 monoclonal strains of benthic microalgae. Key findings include the fact that *Gambierdiscus caribaeus* was the most represented species among those analyzed, while the presence of *Gambierdiscus australes* was recorded for the first time in Cuban and Caribbean waters.

Through bioassays and mass spectrometry analyses, researchers confirmed the production of C-CTX5 by a Cuban strain of *Gambierdiscus silvae*, an evidence that reinforces the species' role as a significant source of ciguatoxins in the region.

Chemical analyses also revealed the presence of other metabolites —such as gambierone and 44-methylgambierone— in the studied strains. These results expand knowledge regarding microalgae biodiversity in the Caribbean.

The study was carried out as part of the CIGUATOX project, funded by the Agency for Nuclear Energy and Advanced Technologies, with the support of Spanish research programs and the European BlueShellfish project.

Ciguatera is a form of food poisoning associated with the consumption of fish contaminated with ciguatoxins, a public health issue in tropical and subtropical regions. The data provided by CEAC contribute to environmental monitoring and the prevention of health risks in Cuba.



Gambierdiscus caribaeus was the most represented species among those analyzed. PHOTO: Internet.

Lizt Alfonso Dance Cuba sets the pace through audiovisual media

By Marlén **RUIZ**

HAVANA.- The Lizt Alfonso Dance Cuba company, recognized for its excellence nationally and internationally, sets the pace with the local premiere of the documentary *Mi sueño cubano* (My Cuban Dream), by Spanish filmmaker Christian Dehugo. According to a press release, the film is scheduled to open in cinemas during the last week of October, the same month the group celebrates its 35th anniversary.

"Presented at several international film festivals, the piece offers a look at the ensemble's work and its impact on audiences over the three decades since its creation by the renowned teacher and choreographer Lizt Alfonso."

The film premiered in October 2025 during the Valladolid International Film Festival in Spain, and this year it was selected to close the Havana Film Festival New York in the United States. The material "offers a perspective on the dimensions reached by Lizt Alfonso's dream and how it has transformed the lives of generations of Cubans, carrying educational, academic, social and artistic repercussions".

According to the director, what drew him most to the Cuban teacher's project "was her commitment to fusion dance. She began at just 24 years old—a time when blending ballet with flamenco was considered somewhat aberrant."

"That is what sets it apart from the rest of the schools on the island. The truth is, it is very complicated to do something original without disrespecting either flamenco or ballet," Dehugo added in statements to *Diario de Valladolid*.

Lizt Alfonso "is tenacity, resilience, dedication, passion...", the filmmaker described her to the Spanish press.

After its screening in cinemas in the Cuban capital, the documentary will be shown in Portugal, at InShadow – Lisbon Screendance Festival, scheduled from November 9 to December 15.



The film of Spanish filmmaker Christian Dehugo presents the ensemble's work over the three decades since its creation by Lizt Alfonso. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Ballet Legend María Elena Llorente, passes away

By Verónica **NUÑEZ**

HAVANA.-María Elena Llorente, prima ballerina and maître at the Cuban National Ballet (BNC), died here on September 20 at the age of 80 due to complications from heart failure.

Born in this capital on May 20, 1946, Llorente began her training at the School of the Pro-Arte Musical Society and later at the Alicia Alonso National Ballet Academy. After joining the BNC in 1962, she was promoted to soloist in 1967 and to first dancer in 1976.

For more than half a century she distinguished herself through her technical assurance, elegance and stylistic mastery; she took on roles such as Lisette, Swanilda, Giselle, Myrtha, Aurora, Odette-Odile and Kitri, among others.

She participated in premieres and revivals of works by Cuban and foreign choreographers, including *Hamlet*, *The Lovers of Verona*, *Afternoon in the Siesta*, *Cecilia Valdés*, *Equinox* and pieces by Hilda Riveros, the Cuban company said on social media.

She was the first dancer of the BNC to incorporate pas de deux such as *Grand Pas*

Classique, *La Bayadère*, *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux*, and *Le Corsaire*.

In May 1977 she performed with the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre, of New York, an event described by Harry Belafonte as a historic moment.

"Her last performance as a dancer took place on October 28, 2002, at the closing gala of the 18th International Ballet Festival of Havana, with the premiere of *Souvenir*,

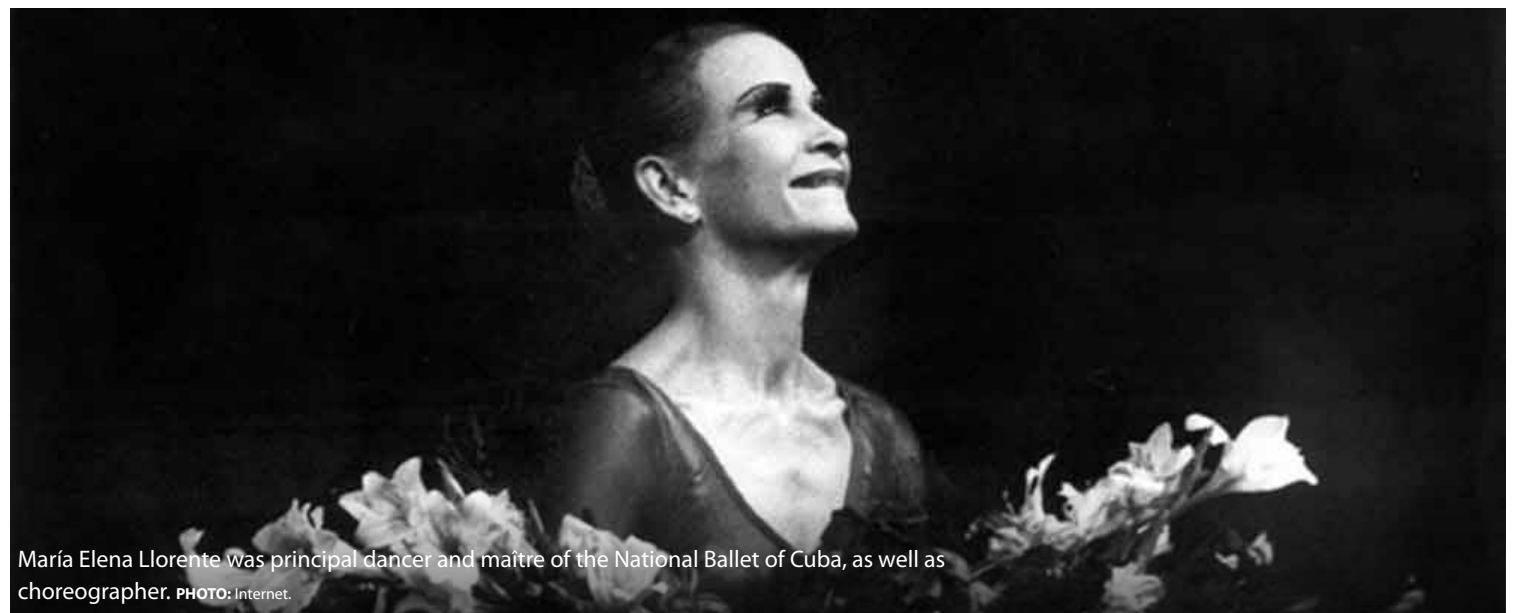
created for her by Eduardo Blanco, the statement added.

In 2003, she made a special appearance at the gala for International Dance Day and, in 2012, she reappeared alongside Alicia Alonso and other figures at the Ballet Festival.

She also ventured into choreography, with a version of *Don Quixote* in 1988 and productions of *La Bayadère* and developed pedagogical work at the BNC, the National

Ballet School, the Choreographic Center of the Valencian Community and the Alicia Alonso Dance Chair—now the Alicia Alonso Institute of Dance—in Spain.

Among her honors are the Bronze Medal of the Varna International Ballet Competition, the Distinction for National Culture, the Alejo Carpentier and Félix Varela First Degree medals, and the 2015 National Dance Award.



María Elena Llorente was principal dancer and maître of the National Ballet of Cuba, as well as choreographer. PHOTO: Internet.

Vietnamese company installs solar modules in Cuban schools

By Roberto **HERNÁNDEZ**

HANOI.- Through the “Sun Without Borders” project, the Vietnamese company Thai Binh Green Power (TBGP) has announced the completion of solar panel and battery storage installations at five schools in Havana, as part of a broader plan to equip 20 educational facilities.

The Vo Thi Thang elementary school, in Havana’s municipality of Playa, was the first center benefited last May from the initiative, promoted by the Union of Friendship Organizations with Vietnam and the Vietnam-Cuba Friendship Association in Ho Chi Minh City.

The report by TB Solaro, a member of TBGP, obtained by **The Havana Reporter**, stated that systems of eight solar panels with 10- or 15-kilowatt batteries have already been completed at the Vietnam Heroico and Le Van Thang daycare centers, the Nguyen Van Troi primary school (Cerro) and the Ho Chi Minh polytechnic school, all in Havana.

Meanwhile, work began on the installation of the modules at the Cesáreo Fernández (Playa) and Nguyen Van Troi (Diez de Octubre) primary schools.

The other 13 educational institutions will be equipped with solar panels and batteries

in the coming months, based on a list coordinated between the implementing company and Cuba’s Ministry of Education which included vocational senior high schools in the western provinces of Pinar

del Río, Artemisa, Mayabeque, Havana, and Matanzas, and the Solidaridad con Panamá Special School.

The project also includes a daycare center (Amiguitos de los vietnamitas) and a primary

school (Mártires de Tarará) in the town of Ben Tre, in the Artemisa municipality of Bauta.

The fundamental condition is that the educational institutions be located within a 60-kilometer radius of Havana.

TB Solaro stated on its Instagram account that for many communities in Cuba, having a stable power supply not only allows classes to continue without interruptions, but also provides students with better conditions for learning and accessing knowledge.

“In the coming months, TB Solaro will expand this project to more schools across Cuba, bringing clean energy closer to education and communities,” the company added.

“We believe that each donated solar energy system not only lights a school but also illuminates the future for new generations of Cuban students,” it stressed.

Several fundraising campaigns have been carried out in Vietnam to support the construction of solar energy systems in Cuban primary schools, such as the one held in the southern city of Ho Chi Minh from July to November last year.

The Vietnamese government also donated four photovoltaic solar parks of 20 megawatts each, including 10 megawatts of battery storage, which were installed in the province of Mayabeque.



The Vo Thi Thang elementary school, in Havana’s municipality of Playa, was the first center benefited with the donation of Vietnam. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Towards Sustainable Governance at Cuban National Geopark

By Daily **PÉREZ**

HAVANA.- Specialists, managers, tour guides, and community leaders from the Sancti Spíritus, Villa Clara and Cienfuegos provinces participated in the workshop “Towards the Integrated Management of the Guamuhaya National Geopark.”

The Gaviota Tourism Group, in coordination with the Cuban ministries of Energy and Mines, and Science, Technology and Environment, spearheaded this initiative, which brought together more than 35 participants in Topes de Collantes.

The goal of the three-day meeting was to lay the foundations for a governance

model in that territory to ensure the protection of its geological heritage and foster socioeconomic progress through sustainable and responsible tourism practices.

The workshop included the launch of the geopark’s digital platform, which integrates a website and social media channels as tools for management, communication, and promotion.

The event also facilitated a meeting of the coordinating boards from the Sancti Spíritus, Villa Clara and Cienfuegos provinces, which oversee specific areas within the mountain range.

The exchange led to the creation of a national technical team responsible for

the unified, integrated management and harmonization of practices across sites belonging to the National System of Protected Areas.

Places holding this designation include Topes de Collantes, Lomas de Banao, Hanabanilla, the Yaguanabo Valley, the San Juan Peak, the Martín Inferno Cave, El Purial, Aguacate-Boca de Carreras, and Guajimico.

The Guamuhaya National Geopark spans a vast area of 2,143 square kilometers and is home to fifty geosites of significant heritage value.

Of these sites, seven are classified as having international relevance, twenty-two are of regional significance, nine are of national

importance, and twelve are of local importance.

Guamuhaya’s natural wealth is complemented by other attractions, such as the ruins of distinctive coffee plantation, rural traditions, and the Valle de los Ingenios, in Trinidad.

The Cuban Council of Ministers granted the territory the status of Geopark in November 2025. With this designation —following those of the Viñales Valley (2021) and Gran Piedra (2024)— Cuba positions itself as a Caribbean referent in the management of areas that integrate geological conservation, environmental education, and local socioeconomic development.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) —which grants this designation globally— these areas are conceived as a “living laboratory” where science, the community and visitors interact with the history of the Earth.

To date, Cuba has only submitted one dossier to the international body: the Viñales Valley, which was proposed last year.

In order to be recognized as a Global Geopark, a territory must have defined boundaries and present a development project —primarily based on geotourism— that channels its benefits back into the management and conservation of the area.



The Guamuhaya National Geopark spans a vast area of 2,143 square kilometers and is home to fifty geosites of significant heritage value. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Havana's Architecture

Text and Photos Roberto F. CAMPOS

HAVANA.- As the capital of Cuba, this city holds lesser-known spots that leave a lasting impression on visitors, who walk around their streets in search of striking places of light and shadow, capable of captivating anyone.

Such spots feature architectural elements that can easily go unnoticed by passerby at first glance; yet, if looked closely, their details can catch the eye of those seeking something new.

These places are found in less-frequented settings: neighborhoods, nearby streets

or tucked-away corners that reveal details well worth capturing with a camera.

Such attractions await in many places: by the turn of a street corner, next to a bar, off the main routes or when we specifically set out to find them—as these images demonstrate. We soon realize that these are beautiful photographs of places that fill our memories and earn a spot in the albums that preserve our vacation recollections.

They are spaces that even poets seek out for inspiration, to capture memories and shape the thoughts and philosophies that can only emerge from the unknown and the new discoveries found while walking through Havana.



Reflections into Arévalo's Government in Guatemala

By ZeusNAYA

GUATEMALA CITY.- As the Bernardo Arévalo's administration in Guatemala approaches its three-year mark (January 2027), reflections of his tenure contrast a break from past practices and an absence of corruption, with a lack of concrete results in certain areas.

Compared to last April, the group believing the nation is doing well "but could improve" has clearly shrunk, while caution is once again on the rise, according to a perception survey released by Diestra, a local firm specialized in political analysis.

Expectations of a turnaround are losing ground to a more stable, critical assessment, noted the study, which surveyed over 70 opinion leaders from different backgrounds and ideologies.

Main uncertainty has shifted toward an increasingly defined perception. Looking ahead, the executive branch faces the challenge of operating amidst a climate of chronic pessimism, the analysis suggests.

The core issue is no longer merely asking for patience while awaiting results, but rather fighting a social narrative that has

already been considered ineffective, the text highlighted.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Transparency emerges as the most consistent attribute: respondents acknowledged a break from past practices and an absence of corruption at the highest levels.

However, several respondents characterized this transparency more as a perception or a narrative than a tangible

result, noting some erosion of the initial expectations surrounding President Arévalo's administration, which had been framed as progressive.

The majority cited an institutional and democratic vocation, including adherence to norms, the rule of law and the separation of powers, which bolsters the formal legitimacy of the Guatemalan administration, in office since January 2024. They also noted a positive relationship

with external actors, particularly the United States, which reinforces the government's legitimacy beyond Guatemala's borders.

Leaders observed that foreign policy extends beyond mere diplomacy, noting its positive impact on sectors such as tourism. They appreciated the Executive branch's reliance on bilateral agreements to carry out public works, a move the survey interpreted as a stop to improvisation and corruption.

The only strength of major importance was the education sector, driven by school renovations, expanded coverage and the leadership of the Ministry (personified by its head, Anabella Giracca).

According to the study, another tangible advance is the "Mano a Mano" program, designed to comprehensively combat extreme poverty and malnutrition in the most vulnerable municipalities.

Opinions consistently highlighted macroeconomic stability, a solid sovereign credit rating, and the promotion of foreign investment, while the most frequent criticism focused on a lack of implementation capacity, noting the government's failure to translate intentions into concrete results.



Analysts believe that the Arévalo administration lacks concrete results in certain areas. PHOTO: Internet.

INSURANCE TRAVEL

JUST TO CUBA

ESICUBA
Seguros Internacionales de Cuba, S.A.

www.esicuba.cu esicuba.dientes@esicuba.cu

Statistics for Understanding Life

By Dixie **EDITH**

HAVANA.- Every year, Cuba commemorates the first population census —September 6 to 8, 1970— which established the foundations for today's robust system of continuous statistics managed by the National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI).

Every year, Cuba commemorates the first post-revolutionary population census (September 6–8, 1970), which established the foundations for the country's current system of continuous statistics, managed by the National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI).

That population count, the first after the 1959 revolutionary victory, reached the most remote corners of the country to gather data on the general, educational, economic, and demographic characteristics of the Cuban population, including their housing conditions.

National population and housing censuses; Statistics Yearbooks; provincial and municipal population breakdowns; Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures; National Accounts' base year changes, and updates to the consumer price index are just some of the data and indicators that make up ONEI's daily work in Cuba.

With a workforce of over 2,500 employees spread across the country, the team also conducts specific surveys on fertility, employment, migration, aging, and gender equality —among other issues— while managing official relations with international statistical bodies.

However, producing official figures does not end with the publication of data and charts. Their true value lies in the ability to reach the public in a transparent, accurate and timely manner, a principle ONEI has identified as a recent challenge. "If information is not communicated clearly and accessibly, it remains trapped in reports that are read only by specialists or those with a specific interest in the subject. The rest of the society, including local decision-makers, loses the context needed to make informed choices," ONEI's head of communications Alejandra Morejón told **The Havana Reporter**.

The official explained that demographic data serve as the foundation for decisions that affect or benefit everyone's



ONEI also conducts specific surveys on fertility, employment, migration, aging, and gender equality. PHOTO: Prensa Latina..

daily life, ranging from how many schools are needed to how the healthcare system is organized.

She said that communication operates on two levels: on one hand, that of public policy, since a country that is aging and has had sustained low fertility rates for years needs to anticipate changes in healthcare, caregiving, employment, and social security.

On the other hand is the individual dimension. People often decide whether to have children, migrate, where to live, or when to pursue education without linking those decisions to the country's demographic landscape.

In this regards, Vice President of the Institute of Social Information and Communication Belkys Pérez Cruz affirmed that "if people do not understand that the population pyramid is inverted —with fewer young people and more senior adults— it becomes difficult to make decisions about one's career or whether to have children, particularly in a context where family and state support are crucial."

Morejón emphasized that the goal is not to dictate what should be done, but rather to provide reliable information so that decisions can be made based on knowledge rather than myths, excessive panic, or misinformation.

U.S. Threats Against International Shipping Lines

By **The Havana Reporter Staff**

HAVANA.- Cuba has denounced that 7,000 containers are being held up in ports around the world due to threats, pressure, and blackmail by the United States government against international shipping lines to limit and disrupt the Caribbean nation's foreign trade.

Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez warned via his X account that these actions add up to the energy blockade imposed by Washington, which is causing devastating humanitarian consequences for the Cuban people.

"Seven thousand containers remain in ports worldwide, containing cargo that was previously contracted and paid for in accordance with international trade norms. The majority contain food, medicines, and medical devices," Rodríguez added.

The minister emphasized that the sole objective of preventing their arrival in Cuba is to intensify the collective punishment the U.S. government is inflicting upon the Cuban people.

Local authorities have recently denounced that direct threats from the United States against international shipping lines are causing disruptions to cargo services bound for the island, thereby exacerbating shortages in the daily lives of Cubans.



Seven thousand containers previously contracted and paid remain in ports worldwide. PHOTO: Internet.

New bills to streamline banking transactions

By Milagros **PICHARDO**

HAVANA.- Cuba has introduced 10,000 and 20,000-peso bills into circulation to streamline banking operations and align currency denominations with current economic conditions.

The president of the Central Bank of Cuba (BCC), Juana Lilia Delgado, stated in the television program Mesa Redonda that with these new bills, the announced modification of the Caribbean nation's monetary series is completed.

She explained that the 10,000-peso bill features the likeness of heroine Haydée Santamaría, while the 20,000-peso note depicts Vilma Espín. The official noted that the planned changes for the Cuban banking and financial system are moving forward gradually. The rollout timeline aims to create a secure, modern, fast, and efficient system that can support economic recovery and better meet customer needs.

According to Delgado, the BCC has grouped

the financial system's transformations into two initial areas. The first being the opening and capitalization of the banking system, aimed at increasing institutional capital and diversifying stakeholder participation.

The second addresses credit, savings, and financing, aiming to boost banks' ability to extend loans, attract funds, and enhance financial intermediation.

The remaining two areas include innovation, payments, and new service channels, with a focus on digital transformation to make operations easier and accessible. Additionally, the foreign exchange and remittance markets will focus on restructuring these processes within the national financial system.

This package of measures is part of a gradual process to transform the structure and operation of the island's banking system. It seeks to expand banking capabilities, introduce new actors and technologies, diversify financial services, and better align the system with the needs of both the economy and the population.

FIHAV 2026 resilience amid difficulties

By Benjamín **MICERINOS**

HAVANA.- The Havana's International Trade Fair (FIHAV 2026) is demonstrating its resilience amid the island's economic difficulties and pressures from the United States. Despite this landscape, this year's event will be held virtually to connect Cuba with the world and finalize business deals, as organizers announced in this capital.

The Fair's Organizing Committee announced the launch of the official platform for the 42nd edition of FIHAV 2026 — scheduled for November 24–26 in a virtual format— and invited domestic and foreign businesspeople, including Cubans living abroad, to participate via the website cuba.feriahavana.cu.

On this platform, exhibitors will be able to showcase products and services, compete for the awards to be granted, and take part in the FIHAV 2026 program.

The event will feature thematic areas such as AI, Energy Transition, Tourism, and "Made in Cuba." It will include a pavilion for stands representing Cuba's territories, alongside the customary country-organized pavilions for stands belonging to foreign and Cuban businesspeople. In-person activities will include the updating of the Portfolio of Business Opportunities with Foreign Capital; a hybrid (in-person and virtual) business session, and meetings with businesspeople, including Cubans residing in the country and those living abroad, and foreigners present in the island.

Virtual spaces will also host business meetings organized by Cuban diplomatic and consular missions abroad, where official delegations are expected to participate.

At a press conference, Minister of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment, Óscar Pérez-Oliva, highlighted the creation of a space for dialogue with Cuban entrepreneurs residing abroad as a positive aspect of this edition.

Pérez-Oliva explained that the setting would be ideal for presenting details on the 176 economic and social transformations introduced in response to the economic crisis the nation is facing.

Speaking to The Havana Reporter, the minister addressed the expectations surrounding this edition, which is marked by Washington's financial targeting of foreign companies doing business with the Caribbean nation.

"We are aware that many foreign companies that previously provided services in Cuba have withdrawn due to the financial targeting resulting from the U.S. administration's maximum pressure policy," he affirmed.

He also emphasized that despite current conditions, they expect a strong turnout of foreign businessmen. While companies that participated in previous years will be absent, a significant number of new economic actors are expected to join.

FIHAV is the country's premier trade event and is considered an essential showcase for the Cuban economy.



Minister of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment, Óscar Pérez-Oliva, explained the features of this special edition. PHOTO: ACN.

New regulations drive transformation of Cuba's countryside

By Valeria **PEREZ**

HAVANA.- Cuba's agricultural sector has a new legislative framework that encourages its recovery through greater flexibility in land use and the input market.

Deputy Minister of Agriculture Telce González explained at a press conference the publication in the Official Gazette of one law, seven decree-laws, seven decrees, and five resolutions.

He pointed out that these provisions are characterized by their comprehensiveness, greater legal stability, organized decentralization, and broad participation of all economic sectors, aimed at achieving food sovereignty.

The official clarified that the land belongs to the people and will remain so; however, as more actors join the production process, it is necessary to update the legal framework.

Law 185 on Agricultural and Forestry Land, he explained, ratifies state ownership of land and introduces significant changes: it expands the usufruct regime for individuals, state, private, and mixed entities; increases the amount of land granted; and recognizes holders of usufruct rights over property improvements and housing.

It also authorizes the allocation of land for food production to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, as well as for ecotourism projects.

Decree-Law 121 on Agricultural Cooperatives expands their powers in foreign trade, bank financing, and direct imports;

allows secondary activities and recognizes the setting of prices by agreement between the parties.

Decree-Laws 123 and 124—governing animal genetic resources, and plant genetic resources and seeds, respectively—expand activities related to the prospecting, conservation, introduction, maintenance, documentation, and use of these resources by integrating technologies like artificial intelligence and big data.

Decree-Law 125, concerning mechanization, irrigation, drainage, and water supply, authorizes natural and legal persons to import uncertified equipment and broadens the definition of agricultural equipment.

Meanwhile, Decree 161 on the Marketing of Agricultural and Forestry Products allows producers to sell their crops freely without intermediaries. It also introduces incentives for foreign currency input marketing, expands the Agricultural Development Fund, and establishes the Agricultural Fund.

Additionally, Decree 162 updates the procedures for the slaughter, sale, and consumption of bovine and equine meat, offering greater flexibility, simplifying sanitary procedures, and opening new commercial channels.

The Deputy Minister added that Decree-Law 126 recognizes the non-state sector as an active participant in the use of land and fertilizers and Decree-Law 127 on Veterinary Medicine authorizes self-employed workers and non-state entities to provide services. It also authorizes the creation of private laboratories for official controls and extends veterinary care to all animal species, beyond companion pets.



Deputy Minister of Agriculture Telce González said that the provisions of the law are characterized by their comprehensiveness and greater legal stability. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

A Story Reborn in Moncton

By George **ROGER**

HAVANA.—Cuba's victory over Canada (3-1), achieved on Canadian soil and securing the only available qualifying spot for the Los Angeles 2028 Games, ended two cycles of Olympic absence.

The Cuban men's volleyball team secured its return to the Olympic Games by defeating Canada 25-21, 25-23, 23-25, 25-22 at the Avenir Centre.

The island claimed the only place left for Los Angeles 2028, ending an absence that included Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024. This result, more than just a ticket to the Olympics, represents a vindication.

Under the guidance of Jesús Cruz, the team overcame a hostile environment—with a crowd strongly supporting the hosts—and displayed great character on the most pivotal night of their recent history.

They dominated the first two sets and appeared to go for a quick finish, but Canada—fueled by the home crowd and a blocking game that served as their greatest weapon—won the third set, bringing uncertainty back into play.

That proved to be the turning point: the Cubans did not crumble; in the fourth set, they reasserted their dominance in attack and serving, sealing their qualification with a 25-22 win.

Marlon Yant led the offense with 25 points, supported by Miguel Ángel López with 22; both were pillars of a team that turned to power as its answer to pressure.

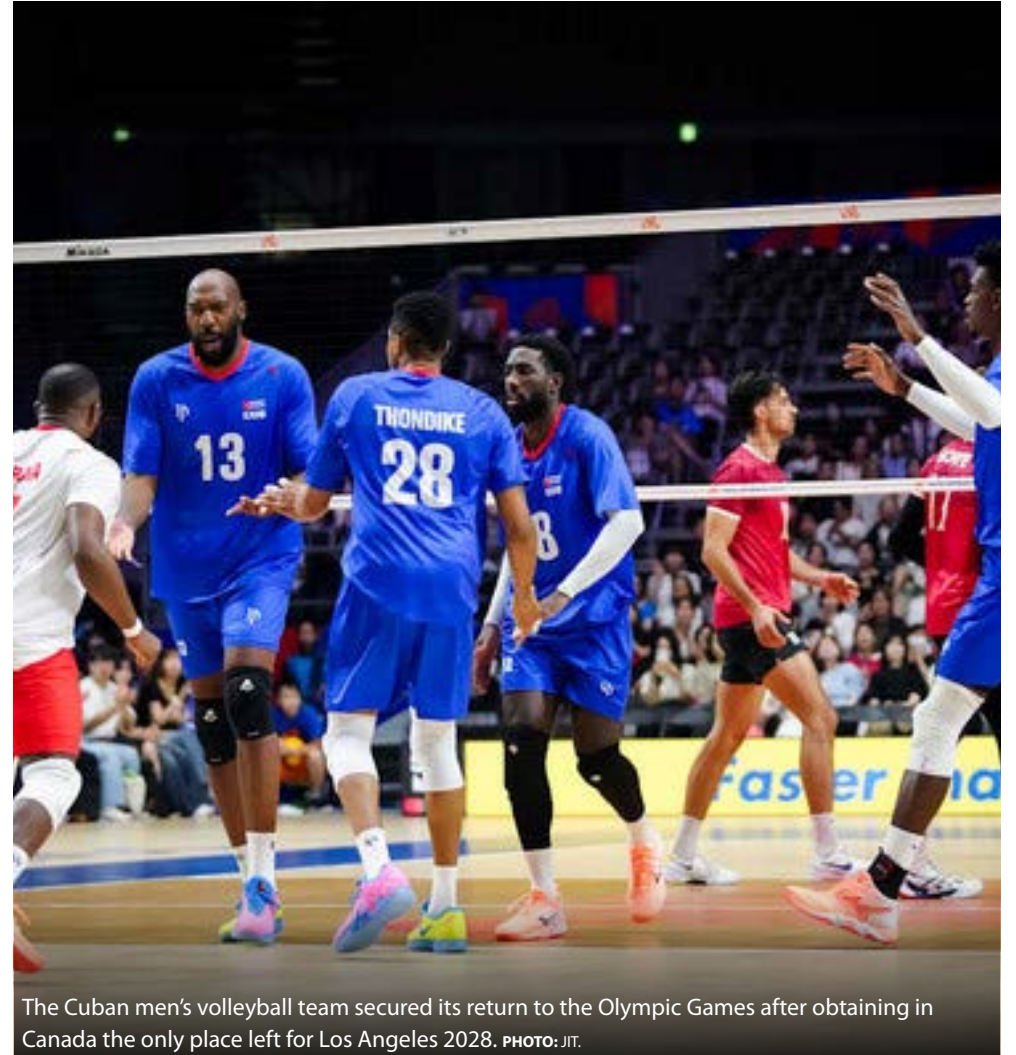
For Canada, Stephen Maar (22 points) and Eric Loeppky (14 points) stood out, though their efforts were not enough to stop the Cubans, who had arrived on Canadian soil with the sole objective of returning to the Olympic stage.

The opponent was no pushover; Cuba had defeated Canada to qualify for Rio 2016 but later missed out on a spot for Tokyo 2020, with the most recent setback in the semifinals of the NORCECA Continental Championship.

The Cubans subsequently got back on track by securing their World Championship qualification against the Dominican Republic, a team they had also beaten in the pre-Olympic tournament.

With this achievement, the island's men volleyball squad closes the season ranked 12th in the world, having retained its spot in the Nations League and won bronze at the Santo Domingo 2026 Central American and Caribbean Games—a result that falls well short of the team's true potential.

There are still more than two years until Los Angeles 2028, and the immediate goals are the Lima Pan-American Games and the World Championship in Poland, both taking place in the upcoming season.



The Cuban men's volleyball team secured its return to the Olympic Games after obtaining in Canada the only place left for Los Angeles 2028. PHOTO: JTT.

The Ball Keeps Rolling

By Boris Luis **CABRERA**

HAVANA.—The 65th National Baseball Series, which began rolling on October 4, will feature fewer games and more questions; yet, it is driven by the determination of those who understand that some traditions simply cannot be put on hold.

The new season revives the group format, with Western and Eastern Zones, each split into four divisions of four teams.

Each squad will play just 44 games in the qualifying round: 24 against their own division rivals and 20 against opponents from the other division within their zone.

The top four teams from each region will advance to a postseason using the Page playoff system, culminating in a best-of-seven national final between the Western and Eastern champions.

The new map of Cuban baseball has a far more down-to-earth explanation: covering less distance means using less fuel in a country where every liter counts.

The tournament's quality has lost some of the luster of bygone years. Many talented players are building their careers far from the island, and material hardships are too visible to be masked by triumphalist rhetoric.

Yet, every province continues to find a sense of identity in its team, and every season keeps the doors open to a massive school where players, coaches, umpires, and specialists are trained.

Perhaps that is the true significance of this championship. Baseball is a family talk, a

debate on a street corner, a voice on the radio during a tough afternoon, and a child who, wielding a makeshift bat, still imagines that the next home run might bear his name.

Passion for baseball should not be used to hide the structural problems the sport faces. But suspending it would mean extinguishing one of the few scenarios where Cubans still gather around a shared emotion.

For that reason, October 4 represents more than just 16 teams, a 32-man roster, and a shortened schedule. A whole country would be turning its eyes toward the diamond, and as long as there is someone willing to pitch the first ball, hit the first throw and run to first base, it will be evident that while the crisis may force Cuban baseball to change course, it has not yet managed to stop it.



Lorca, Latin America and Art History at the Reina Sofía Museum

By Fausto **TRIANA**

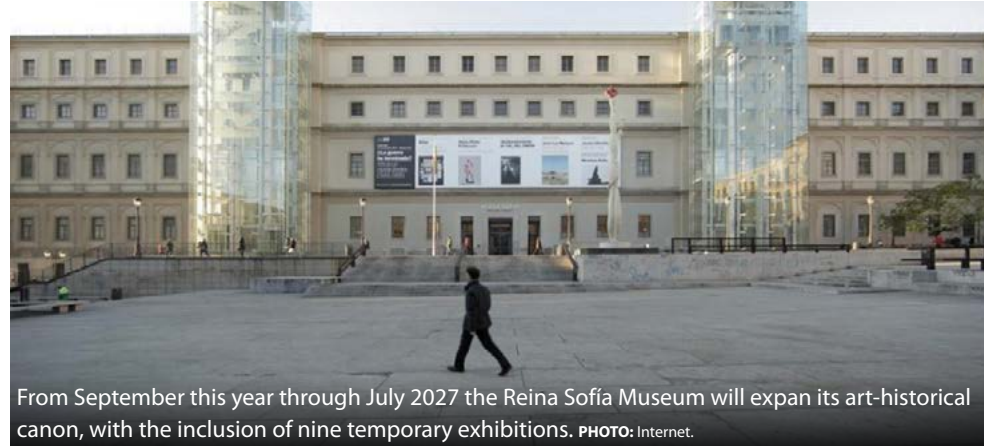
MADRID.- Within the complex of buildings in Madrid, the Reina Sofía Museum aims to fill spaces with an atmosphere that transports visitors back to the 1927 Generation, specifically to Federico García Lorca.

These are among the ideas presented for the 2026/27 season by the museum's director, Manuel Segade, at the facility's modern section —the "Jean Nouvel" wing— which contrasts with the galleries' permanent iconic works such as Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*.

While the institution is home to other treasures —such as Joan Miró's *Caracol*, *Flor*, *Mujer*, *Estrella*; Hermen Anglada Camarasa's *Sonia de Klamery*; Salvador Dalí's *Rostro del Gran Masturbador*, and Ángeles Santos's *Un Mundo*— its portraits are as eclectic as its various venues.

Segade outlined a program running from September this year through July 2027 centered on the significance of the body, visitors' active participation, and efforts to expand the art-historical canon, with the inclusion of nine temporary exhibitions.

A major highlight will be the centenary celebration of the 1927 Generation —a



From September this year through July 2027 the Reina Sofía Museum will expand its art-historical canon, with the inclusion of nine temporary exhibitions. PHOTO: Internet.

group of Spanish writers and poets who defined an era and included figures such as García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, and Vicente Aleixandre, as well as María Zambrano and Maruja Mallo, among many others.

This initiative will entail the reconfiguration of several galleries on the second floor, featuring previously unseen works and highlighting female artists who remain unknown to the general public, Segade explained.

It will also lead to a major exhibition in Granada featuring over 300 works from the Reina Sofía Museum. Spearheaded

by the García Lorca Center, the project —entitled *F. G. L. Flamenco García Lorca* and curated by Pedro G. Romero— will extend to numerous other locations across the city. The program also includes a musical segment designed to engage in dialogue with the museum's work *Colección. Arte Contemporáneo: 1975–presente*, to be open by Spanish punk icon Ana Curra, followed by *Plena Pausa* —the solo project by the J de Los Planetas band— featuring the soundtrack of Iván Zulueta's unreleased short films.

This autumn, two pivotal artists from the Latin American scene will join the exhibition *La Perla peregrina*, by Fernando Sánchez Castillo, currently on display at the Palacio de Velázquez, one of the museum's satellite sub-site.

Such artists include Colombian Miguel Ángel Rojas, known for his pioneering work exploring the aesthetics of drug-trafficking violence, colonial extraction, and ecosystem destruction in his country; and Argentinean Marta Minujín, a pivotal figure in happenings, installation art, and participatory practices.

Artists from other regions will also be represented, such as Iranian Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, whose work—shaped by themes of exile and violence—uses assembled mirror fragments.

South African artist Marlene Dumas, a key figure in recent contemporary art, will show a work depicting the social and political realities of her time with her first retrospective in Spain, to be opened in April. At the Palacio de Velázquez, Philippine Pacita Abad, who combines painting with a revitalized approach to the trapunto textile technique, will allow championing textile art, following the earlier retrospective of Aurèlia Muñoz.



FOREIGN INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CUBAN HEALTH SECTOR

