Soberana 01: Cuba’s COVID-19 Vaccine Candidate

U.S.A
The Show in the US has Just Begun

Photo Feature
The Same Havana as Ever

Economy
New Commercial Power to Private Sector
Fred Olsen to be based out of Havana in 2021/22

Havana.- Fred Olsen Cruise Lines has revealed in a press release that it will base its ship Braemar out of Havana in 2021/22 Caribbean season.

Clare Ward, director of product and customer service at Fred Olsen Cruise Lines, said: “Too often the Caribbean is thought of as a single destination, but it is so much more than that, with so many islands offering different and unique yet equally exceptional experiences. “The eastern Caribbean, with destinations such as St Kitts and St Maarten, provide the perfect setting for those looking to recharge their batteries and enjoy the last back way of life while escaping the colder winter temperatures back home. Guests can take in the many stunning waterfalls and beaches in St John’s, or hike through the jungle in Bocas. “Using Havana, Cuba, as our new turnaround base allows us to really showcase the Caribbean in all its glory. It also means we can offer extended stays into Havana so that our guests have plenty of time to explore the vibrant city, with late night departures or overnight stays where available.”

“Havana has always delivered high guest satisfaction ratings on our sailings, so it is great to be able to offer more opportunities for them to explore this wonderful port.”

During the pandemic, Cuba offered a safe haven for the coronavirus-hit Braemar; other Caribbean nations reduced or closed their borders to tourists, while others such as Barbados allowed limited arrivals, but Cuba was open to visitors who had tested negative for COVID-19.

On the return of Braemar in Havana, Ward added: “We are committed to having in place all necessary health and safety measures in order to control this complex situation. “Cuban Minister of Public Health José Ángel Portal stressed that “human health is a human right that we should all look after.”

Society & Health & Science & Politics & Culture & Entertainment - Photo Feature - Economy & More

SSP

Travel News in Havana 2025.

By Cira SANABIA

HAVANA.- One month after the first COVID-19 recovery phase started in Havana, the Cuban capital has returned to the previous phase, in order to avoid escalation of the issue.

“Everybody should understand the sacrifices that are made during this fight against a disease that everyone is vulnerable to, regardless of the age,” Portal noted after stressing that, “human health is a human right that we should all look after.”

Similarly, the western province of Artemisa returned to the previous phase (II) after being included in the third and last phase of the recovery stage, in which the rest of the country is included - with the exception of the western province of Mayabeque, which is also in phase II.

"We can control this problem if everyone acts accordingly,” said the minister, who also highlighted that every time a territory is affected, a particular analysis will be conducted and the territory will return to the previous phase, in order to avoid escalation of the issue.

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The Havana Reporter

The Havana Reporter is the most read publication in Havana, with a daily readership of over 100,000 people. It is available in print and online.

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In Havana, Cuba, any surge of activity means in order to control this complex situation.

"We can control this problem if everyone acts accordingly," said the minister, who also highlighted that every time a territory is affected, a particular analysis will be conducted and the territory will return to the previous phase, in order to avoid escalation of the issue.

"Everybody should understand the sacrifices that are made during this fight against a disease that everyone is vulnerable to, regardless of the age," Portal noted after stressing that, "human health is a human right that we should all look after."

Similarly, the western province of Artemisa returned to the previous phase (II) after being included in the third and last phase of the recovery stage, in which the rest of the country is included - with the exception of the western province of Mayabeque, which is also in phase II. Because of the decision taken in Havana, public transportation and taxi services – including private options - have been suspended in the territory since August 24, the results of which will be available in January 2022.

The transfer of passengers from Havana to the rest of the province was limited and 14 checkpoints were established at the city’s entrance and departure, where exceptional vigilance has to be present. Streets started to be desolated again, beaches, pools, bars, recreational parks and establishments of self-employed workers went back to being closed, and restaurants and cafeterias are only allowed to sell food to take away.

Service in shopping centers and stores remain open, but keep in order in order to keep the products closer to the community. In addition, decisions are decided to increase the production of food and maintain the points of sale of the urban agriculture.
U.S. Government Tightens Measures against Cuba

HAVANA - In just two and a half months and in the middle of a global pandemic, the U.S. government has announced at least two new measures against Cuba and its economy. While the United States continues to be the country most affected by COVID-19 and the Trump administration has been strongly criticized for the way it has dealt with the pandemic, the White House is intensifying its efforts to exert pressure on Cuba.

At the end of July, the United States once again attacked the Cuban economy by freezing sanctions against Havim Bank, the only entity established exclusively with Cuban capital in London. The U.S. Department of the Treasury made the announcement on its website, where it clarifies that the entity is included on the list of special designations of the Office of Foreign Asset Control. This measure adds to others adopted previously, such as travel bans on U.S. citizens, the HAVANA - U.S.A

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HEALTH & SCIENCE

The US Unfortunate Response to Sars-CoV-2

HAVANA - U.S. President Donald Trump has received negative criticism from many concerning the way he has handled the COVID-19 pandemic; the greatest challenge his administration has faced since it took office. While at the start of 2020, his main concern seemed to be the political trial held at Congress to remove him from office – in which he was abovely by the Senate, of Republican majority - in March, it was evident that the president had a greater challenge ahead: the global health crisis.

Over five months later, the United States still remains the most affected nation in the world by the pandemic, with over 5,391,000 positive cases for the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus – the agent responsible for COVID-19 – have been reported until August 20, while the number of deaths has reached 176,000, according to the Worldometer website.

Several analysts and experts consider the president to be the person responsible for the impact of the health emergency, minimizing the seriousness of the situation for so long, discouraging masks, criticizing medical specialists in public and saying on repeated occasions that the virus “would disappear.” On top of that, and with his sights set on a prompt economic recovery that could boost his chances of reelection at the November 3 elections, the president put pressure on state and local authorities to reopen their economies, even in places where conditions were not ready to do so.

A survey conducted by SSRS for CNN - published on August 19 – about seven out of 10 U.S. citizens think that the U.S. response to the pandemic makes them feel ashamed, while 58 percent stated their disapproval of Trump in this field.

In addition, the lack of an effective federal response against the spread of coronavirus and the fact that the measures implemented against the virus fell on local governments - whose responses and results varied.

At a time of great partnership in the country, the handling of the pandemic was also strongly politicized, to the point that Trump and other Republicans accused the Democratic authorities of delaying reopening in their states to affect the president’s chances of reelection.

However, after a peak of positive cases in April, figures started to decrease in May, to later on register a new, big outbreak as of June and July.

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Cuba's recording studio EGREM (Empresa de Grabaciones y Ediciones Musicales) is promoting a new album by the band Toques del Río on different digital platforms, with performances by special guests such as the Buena Vista Social Club Diva Mercedes Sosa, as well as renowned artists such as León Gieco, Trueno and Hernan Casciari. The festival also included bands such as Agárrate Catalina Orchestra and its work in favor of danzón, Cuba's traditional music enjoys the power and transparency as Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Yosvany Terry, José Antonio Federico Britos, Julito Padrón and Alejandro Falcón; the inclusion of famous Cuban artists like iconic singer Omara Portuondo, pianist Alejandro Falcón, singer Andy Montañez. As added value, Failde con tumbao CD has singer Andy Montañez. In an article, the publication highlighted the fresh sound of the orchestra founded by Néstor Bilbao Falde, which revives a century of Cuban music and honors its musical legacy with this new album. The CD produced by Cuba's SGREM record label is a magnificent work tinged with sepia tones and offers arrangements by great musicians such as Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Yosvany Terry, José Antonio Padrón, singer Gonzalo Rubalcaba, singer Omara Portuondo, pianist Alejandro Falcón, trumpet player Julio Padrón and Puerto Rican legendary singer Andy Montañez.

In relation to the participation of the Cuban band in this festival, Alonso added that he was worried about the COVID-19 emergency caused by the event, however, the core values were ever present on the digital platform. Toques del Río stood out at the online Cosquín Rock Festival thanks to the group's rich history and repertoire that includes timeless classics of Cuban music, such as “La negra”, “La cumbancha”, “La cigarrilla” and “La varonita”. The group's director praised the work of sound engineers Daelsis Pena in Cuba and Alex Elías in England, as well as the professional coordination of Sebastián Heredia, a referent for younger audiences such as Reincidentes and Izal, which gave recitals on four different stages. Toques del Río was able to take part in this event thanks to the Cosquín Rock Festival generated an interactive experience through a safe and natural platform in which the online audience had access to virtual reality technology and got in contact with musicians through different discussion forums. The lineup is quite solid, from the Cuban westernmost province of Pinar del Río, Tuques del Río, featured several songs off of their popular CD Por el camino, produced by the EGREM record company. They also premiered two songs that showed off the diversity and the evolution of their artistic career, successfully mixing funk, jazz and rock with a classic Cuban sound. Their contemporary touches establish an important model in Cuba amid the rich and varied musical traditions of the island, as well as their top-line music captivates the audience, engaged by their hip, young and professional level, both in Cuba and abroad.

Argentinian Foundation Honors Mercedes Sosa

Test & Photos Maylín VIDAL

Mercedes Sosa with her powerful voice. In one of the eight hall-museums, visitors can appreciate special objects four of her impressive ponchos – one of other distinctive features; her passports and ID; photos; letters, and three-part of her glasses. There is also a collection of letters from her friends Charlie García and Milton Nascimento – just to mention some – and the Grammy award she won in 2001 for her following album Corazón libre (Free heart).

By Claudia MADEN

The Cosquín Rock Festival recently held online, an event that celebrated its 25th edition in spite of the health emergency caused by COVID-19. The festival is a benchmark for Latin American rock and also provided an emergency cause by COVID-19 in the region. The Cosquín Rock Festival recently held online, an event that celebrated its 25th edition in spite of the health emergency caused by COVID-19. The festival is a benchmark for Latin American rock and also provided an emergency cause by COVID-19 in the region. The Cosquín Rock Festival generated an interactive experience through a safe and natural platform in which the online audience had access to virtual reality technology and got in contact with musicians through different discussion forums. The lineup is quite solid, from the Cuban westernmost province of Pinar del Río, Tuques del Río, featured several songs off of their popular CD Por el camino, produced by the EGREM record company. They also premiered two songs that showed off the diversity and the evolution of their artistic career, successfully mixing funk, jazz and rock with a classic Cuban sound. Their contemporary touches establish an important model in Cuba amid the rich and varied musical traditions of the island, as well as their top-line music captivates the audience, engaged by their hip, young and professional level, both in Cuba and abroad.

By Martha SÁNCHEZ

Mexicans Molotov, Enjambre and Julieta Venegas and Spanish with over 60 renowned rock artists from Latin America, including

By Claudia MADEN

The Cosquín Rock Festival, a band from the Cuban westernmost province of Pinar del Río, participated in this event thanks to the program “Latin America’s Voice”, which was an initiative of the Brazilian Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with the Sociedade Brasileira de Direitos Autorais (SBD), the Brazilian Royal Society of Authors, and the Argentine Foundation for Latin American Music and Culture. They performed “La negra”, “La cumbancha”, “La cigarrilla” and “La varonita”. The group's director praised the work of sound engineers Daelsis Pena in Cuba and Alex Elías in England, as well as the professional coordination of Sebastián Heredia, a referent for younger audiences such as Reincidentes and Izal, which gave recitals on four different stages. Toques del Río was able to take part in this event thanks to the Cosquín Rock Festival generated an interactive experience through a safe and natural platform in which the online audience had access to virtual reality technology and got in contact with musicians through different discussion forums. The lineup is quite solid, from the Cuban westernmost province of Pinar del Río, Tuques del Río, featured several songs off of their popular CD Por el camino, produced by the EGREM record company. They also premiered two songs that showed off the diversity and the evolution of their artistic career, successfully mixing funk, jazz and rock with a classic Cuban sound. Their contemporary touches establish an important model in Cuba amid the rich and varied musical traditions of the island, as well as their top-line music captivates the audience, engaged by their hip, young and professional level, both in Cuba and abroad.

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Habanos Cigars Continue to Lead Exports

LONNAK-Habanos, the famous Cuban cigars, continue to lead the country’s exports despite the impact of COVID-19 on the national economy and world trade in general. Officials of the main cigar corporations in Cuba recently endorsed the dynamism of the exporting industry, as well as the quality of the Habanos product.

According to the tobacco-growing sector, Cuba continues to export much-requested cigars in spite of the difficulties resulting from the health crises caused by the pandemic.

Co-chairman of the Habanos S.A. International Corporation, Inocente Núñez, said that amid this complex situation, creative initiatives were taken in order to guarantee overseas sales. In this sense, Núñez explained that cargos that were previously sent by air are currently being sent through shipping companies. The Habanos S.A. International Corporation, which exported 80 percent of its productions by air, was forced to make changes in order to maintain its operations and reach the over 150 countries that its products are exported to, in the face of the pandemic. Habanos S.A. has 27 brands of high-quality Premium handmade cigars that are in high demand around the world.

Núñez acknowledged that the effects of COVID-19 are mainly felt at the duty-free shops located in the airports and ports, which are obviously closed due to the disease. Although non-smoking campaigns have strengthened in response to the pandemic—especially in Europe, its main market—Habanos cigars continue to be appreciated as a cultural classic.

About 14.8 billion cigars of various brands and countries are sold around the world, of which 140 million are Premium handmade cigars.

Over 90 percent of the cigars commercialized around the world are machine-made, as the price of each piece produced this way costs about 60 cents, whereas the price of a handmade cigar costs around $7.80. Over 440 million Premium cigars are annually produced in the world, of which 250 million go to the U.S. market, turning this nation into the main recipient of this type of cigar.

Nonetheless, Cuba, a country that provides about 77 percent of the world quota, does not have access to the U.S. market because of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by Washington on Havana for over 60 years.

Venezuela Granted Right to Appeal UK Ruling

LONDON-The Venezuelan Central Bank (BCV) has been given the right to appeal a UK ruling that denied Caracas custody of Venezuelan gold reserves, currently being held by the Bank of England.

According to a court order issued by Lord Justice Gary Hickinbottom, the BCV would be allowed to appeal on all nine grounds of the ruling in September.

“We are pleased that the Court of Appeal will be reviewing all aspects of this Judgment. The issues at stake tread the sensitive line between law and politics, and it is vital that they are resolved,” Sarah Zawalla, senior partner at Zawalla & Co, the law firm representing the BCV, said in a written statement sent to The Havana Reporter.

On July 2, the UK High Court ruled against the BCV, which has brought the Bank of England to trial for refusing to return 31 tons of gold deposited in its vaults on the grounds that self-proclaimed President Juan Guaido had filed a rival claim over the gold, which is valued at $1.2 billion.

After ruling that Guaido was “unequivocally” recognized by the United Kingdom as the president of Venezuela, following a statement made by then-Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt in 2019, judge Nigel Teare had granted the BCV a limited claim over the gold, which is valued at $1.2 billion.

But according to the August 3 court judgment, Hickinbottom ruled that the appeal hearing must be held in September, given that the assets in question are urgently needed in the country’s fight against Coronavirus, “he said.

According to the London-based lawyer, the UK government cannot be used to intervene coercively in the internal affairs of a foreign country, in breach of international legal norms.

“As it stands, a simple statement of recognition from the UK Government is enough to move assets away from the control of a government in effective control, without any oversight, which cannot be correct,” Zawalla stated.

“If the UK Government is going to use recognition as a weapon to pursue its foreign policy goals, it must nevertheless do so within the legally permissible limits of that power, and subject to oversight by the courts,” she said.

Zawalla also stressed that his client’s main concern has been ensuring that the assets of the Venezuelan people are available to help the country curb the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, adding that the UK has not severed diplomatic ties with President Nicolas Maduro’s government.

“Mr. Maduro’s government remains in sole, undisputed, control of Venezuela’s instruments of state, and is therefore the only one that can utilize the gold to help the country in its fight against Coronavirus,” he said.

The Venezuelan government has said that the proceeds from the sale of the gold would be channeled through the United Nations Development Program to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in the South American country.

According to the August 3 court judgment, Hickinbottom ruled that the appeal hearing must be held in September, given that the assets in question are urgently needed in Venezuela due to the ongoing epidemiological health crisis.
HAVANA.- In Havana, the Cuban capital and the country’s most important destination, life goes on despite facing the COVID-19 pandemic and having bid farewell to its beloved historian Eusebio Leal Spengler. Havana is a city in motion, as dynamic as these times require, but bright when bathed by the sun, highlighting its most emotive places.

Nourished by the Gulf of Mexico and legends of pirates, Havana stands out in the Caribbean, where bright colors and music highlight its culture. Founded in 1519 under the shade of a Ceiba tree, the Cuban capital has turned into an international city full of travelers from around the world, eager to know it in depth. That desire will be renewed when better seasons return, and the city will return to its glory, cherished by those that want to explore and understand it.

November 3 elections in the United States are around the corner. The electoral panorama already shows the contenders: the Joseph Biden-Kamala Harris Democratic running pair against the Donald Trump-Mike Pence Republican couple, which intends to stay another four years at the White House. Nonetheless, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the rules of the electoral show; mass political rallies have transformed into virtual “demonstrations,” the conventions of the main parties were held online and many will vote by mail.

The worst health emergency in decades has caused an economic crisis even greater than the Great Recession of 2008, at the same time that citizens are protesting in favor of racial justice, after Afro-American George Floyd was murdered on May 25. A perfect storm to have Trump serve only one term, as Biden mentioned, who is currently leading the polls.

The former vice president is receiving the largest electoral advantage ever recorded by a White House hopeful over the past 24 years, although that margin has dropped slightly in the last month. According to a model by FiveThirtyEight data journalism website, Biden’s chances of defeating Trump are 71 against 29.

The electoral race will kick off in September, as Biden continues in place at his home in Wilmington, Delaware. Meanwhile, Trump is visiting undecided states with the objective of changing the negative opinions that he is carrying on his shoulders, in part for his wrong response to the pandemic, just to name one. Nobody dares make predictions. Most analysts agree that Trump’s aspirations to be reelected could fade, but admit that the real estate tycoon’s electoral base has remained surprisingly solid since 2015. Hence, experts seem to be cautious with the polls, because four years ago many predicted that Hillary Clinton would see, leaving much of the country surprised and disappointed with the final result.

Not only the U.S. president and vice president will be elected on November 3, but also 13 governors (in 11 states plus in Puerto Rico and Samoa), 35 senators and 435 representatives. The Republican Party has the majority in the Upper House (53-47) and local governments (26-24), while the Democratic Party prevails in the House of Representatives, with 37 seats. According to press statistics, around $7.2 billion was spent in the 2020 electoral process as of June, and more will be spent until November.

Reasonable Biden will face conflict-ridden Trump. There is no room for third parties in the US bipartisan system, especially with such a high-risk election. “There is little difference between conservative and liberal candidates, and the majority of U.S. citizens know it,” journalist and activist Mel Reeves said recently in an interview with The Havana Reporter.

The capitalists are trying hard to convince the public with the same hat tricks, stated the editor of Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder newspaper. They still call the November 3 elections presidential although half of the population refuses to vote because they don’t think they have a worthwhile choice, Mel noted.

By Deisy Francis

The Show in the US has Just Begun

The Same Havana as Ever

Text & Photos Roberto F. Campos

PHOTO: Internet
COVID-19 Exacerbates Inequality in Latin America

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened a well-known reality of Latin America: social and economic inequality poverty and the wide gap between the rich and the poor. The pandemic reached the region after causing an alarming number of sick and dead in Europe and Asia. The region then became the global epicenter of new SARS-CoV-2 infections. From North to South, COVID-19 has shown the lack of health infrastructure around the continent. Its consequences have been proven even more devastating for black and the indigenous communities, farmers and other informal sector. The COVID-19 virus first broke in the region on February 26, after a Brazilian citizen arrived in Sao Paulo from Italy, while the first death was reported in Buenos Aires (Argentina), about a week later. After the first inflection, the virus has spread alarm in many countries, but many governments failed to respond responsibly. Some showed skepticism of the situation, as it was the case of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who is embroiled in corruption scandals over the irregular use of government funding. In Colombia, the government insists on economic reactivation in spite of the exponential increase of positive cases and deaths caused by the virus. In the meantime, violence against the youth, farmers, former guerrilla members and indigenous people by militarized groups increases. Similarly, police repression against peaceful protests continues, as well as attacks on journalists in the field. According to the International Labor Organization, there are about 41 million unemployed people in Latin America and the Caribbean as a result of the contingency measures implemented to stop the spread of COVID-19. Despite the devastating situation, regional governments continue to push to reopen their economies, regardless of the new COVID-19 related deaths reported in Latin America.

Uncertainty Prevails in Bolivia

By Laura BECQUER

Amid the political uncertainty, Bolivia is hoping to recover its democracy in the October 18 elections. As the electoral race approaches, a difficult campaign to prepare for the candidates and leaders of the Movimiento Toward Socialism (MAS), which includes legal procedures as part of the political process, unwieldy long before the coup d’état against President Morales in 2019. Spreading rumors about the private life of leaders and “shame and complicity” have been the old-fashioned used times of elections. This year's elections are particularly important after the democratic process of changes led by Morales since 2006 was interrupted. After the democratic process of changes led by Morales since 2006 was interrupted. The elections in Bolivia are just the first step of the struggle for democracy and the future of the country that he is supposed to lead.

Strengthening Foreign Trade for Cuban Development

By Teyuné FERNANDEZ

HAVANA - Strengthening foreign trade is one of the priorities set by the Cuban government in the economic growth strategy. On plan to face the financial issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The MINEX-2020 regulatory framework at aim of one common objectives among the government is the implementation of the measures was established, the government is working to design and make more dynamic the Cuban economy. The creation of the Single Window for Foreign Trade (SIC), is the result of this line of work. This tool, described Cuban Foreign Trade and Investment Minister Rodrigo Malmierca, reduces all related procedures by 15 percent without violating the legislation currently in force. Its mission is to facilitate the work of Cuban and foreign businesses that participate in international purchase-sale operations, in only one platform containing 97 permits such as taxes, decrees, regulations and other procedures. Although it is still in the first phase, VOICE represents a major boost for the sector and once fully implemented, the entire foreign trade chain will be digitalized. Another effect aimed at increasing the diversification of exportable products is the regional trade policy. The Government announced by Cuban Minister of Economy Alejandro Gómez. This policy also aims to that local development projects join the country’s efforts to increase exports.

New Commercial Power to Private Sector

By Teyuné DIAS

HAVANA - The socio-economic strategy Cuba has developed to face the world crisis caused by the pandemic includes granting new power to the non-state sector, so that it can participate in import-export activities. With a catalog of more than 1,000 items of raw materials used in manufacturing textiles, leather objects, footwear, furniture and other items. ENCOMIL is one of the 57 companies authorized to participate in the sector of the Basic Import Export Entrepreneurial Stream (Encomienda). The objective is to reduce and make more dynamic as well as to strengthen the activities already in the country's efforts to increase exports. The new resolution of the Government of that. This tool, described Cuban Foreign Trade and Investment Minister Rodrigo Malmierca, reduces all related procedures by 15 percent without violating the legislation currently in force. Its mission is to facilitate the work of Cuban and foreign businesses that participate in international purchase-sale operations, in only one platform containing 97 permits such as taxes, decrees, regulations and other procedures. Although it is still in the first phase, VOICE represents a major boost for the sector and once fully implemented, the entire foreign trade chain will be digitalized. Another effect aimed at increasing the diversification of exportable products is the regional trade policy. The Government announced by Cuban Minister of Economy Alejandro Gómez. This policy also aims to that local development projects join the country’s efforts to increase exports.

Another benefit ENCOMIL provides to the private sector include their specialization in international trade, tools for development, research on market performance, and a long list of suppliers in Spain, China, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Portugal, Pakistan and Lithuania. Legal regulations for this commercial activity are listed in the regulation package that guides operations between companies responsible for foreign trade and the non-state sector. The said regulations were published on the Granma Official (Official Gazette) of the Republic of Cuba on August 17. The commercial margin established by the entity including market studies and price index — and logistics, as well as the processing of containers, from the moment they are shipped until their arrival to Cuban ports, plus the nationalization of goods and their quality mark. Other services include cargo insurance and inspections of the shipping company responsible for the importation of goods, to ensure the delivery of goods on time and before the quality mark is made. The entity authorized to request a temporary license from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment. The goal stated that state and non-state companies will receive the same service. “There is no limit for both to have the possibility to sell and import all of the items included in the company's catalog,” she added.
Cuba Offers Prospects in Mining

By Teyuné

Cuba’s new business portfolio includes an attractive proposal to develop geology and mining in the country, including mineral prospecting and extraction.

The country’s business portfolio is also comprised of the commercialization of gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, and other minerals of interest, the director for the control of International Economic Activity at Geominera S.A. Company, Orlando Prieto, told The Havana Reporter.

In order to develop a business strategy, the country was divided into seven regions of interest: Cienfuegos-Camagüey-Turquino, Pinar del Río, the Saquía Baracoa Maracás, Sierra Maestra mountain range and the Isle of Youth, based on the geological study made up to the 1990s.

These regions have promising areas from economic and geological perspectives, with enough land for foreign investment opportunities, plus the results of previous prospecting works in mines and deposits.

The fact that there is a large volume of surface minerals is highly attractive for investors, because it means there must be more minerals deeper, noted Prieto.

Mining requires large amounts of foreign capital, since operational costs are very high and investment recovery takes a long time, he recalled.

Cuba has many appealing strengths in terms of business, from a highly-qualified workforce to previous information about prospects, easy access to the extraction sites, railroads and ports, and a solid cartographic base with the country’s resources, available at different scales, he explained.

Foreign investment in mining is a priority for the country, with guarantees and legal security, Prieto highlighted that Geominera develops its activities in two key areas: one related to the operating enterprises and the other for creation of new entities.

Referring to the enterprises that are being created, Prieto explained that La Demajagua, located on the Isle of Youth, will produce gold; while the other, located in Santiago de Cuba, will develop copper, both operating with Australian partners.

Geominera S.A. also envisages deals with Chinese companies in Camagüey, a region rich in gold, and in Ciego de Ávila, where there is a genetic type of gold that captivates the attention of companies that worked there in the 1980s.

The entity is currently in partnership with four foreign companies, including Minera del Caribe, for the extraction of lead and zinc concentrates, and Guanabes, a contractual economic association with Canada for drilling services aimed to extract solid minerals, hydrocarbons and water. In 20 years, it reached 120 contracts in Cuba with countries such as Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, Guatemala and Jamaica, among others.

Despite health concerns of SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, the nine-game Cuban National Baseball Series will “play ball” on September 10.

The sport event that excites millions of fans will start six months after the original date, with the match between the Matanzas and the Camagüey teams – the reigning champion and runner-up, respectively – initially planned for last March, was postponed because of COVID-19 but the ball party was never canceled and the first match will be held at Matanzas’ Victoria de Girón ballpark, a facility that will deck out for the occasion.

The National Baseball Commission (CNB) is making the appropriate arrangements to preserve the health of athletes, coaches, support personnel and fans.

For this reason, CNB announced changes to the regular calendar and stated that only local fans will be allowed to attend the abovementioned match, because of the epidemiological situation the country currently faces.

CNB director Emeterio Reynoso stated that the effort the country makes to fight the pandemic has forced them to take all necessary measures to minimize risks.

By doing so, the 60th edition of the National Baseball Series will meet the hygienic, sanitary and organizational norms without minimizing the quality of the event, to be attended by the public – although the intention is to restrict movement between provinces.

Reynoso also announced that during the first round-series, matches will only be held in the central and eastern provinces – with the exception of the opening match.

From the competitive point of view, the calendar remains the same: 16 teams and 75 matches in the regular season; then, the top 8 will advance to the post-season.

After the quarterfinals – the best of five – managers will be able to select reinforcements for the series’ decisive rounds semi-finals and finals, the best of seven.

Included in the amendments to the sport calendar, the All-Star Game was rescheduled to November 6.

Chess Prepares for Virtual World Championship

By Adrián

Chess has already held previous rounds among lower-level countries.

Current national champions Cadio Daniel Múnera and Isan Ortiz lead the Cuban team, which also includes Leonel Ortíz, Yasser Quesada, Yerisbel Miranda and Ismael Hernández, most of whom are under 20.

With an Elo of 2,413 points, Cuba is ranked ninth among the 163 participating countries and hopes to place in the top three of Group D in order to advance to the playoff as playouts will qualify directly to the final.

The ranking table is the result of the Elo rating of rapid games, because the competition will be precisely 15 minutes plus five extra seconds after each move.

Cuba was one of the few teams chosen by the American Federation, which is why it was included in the advanced phase without going to qualifying rounds. Another 24 teams are also in that phase, including the favorite teams of the United States, China, Russia, Armenia and Ukraine.

The other countries chosen by the American Federation are Canada (2,308 Elo points), Peru (2,252), Brazil (2,134) and Paraguay (2,114).

Each team will have men and women in the lineup and two players under 20 years, plus six substitutes.

During its first three matches, the Cuban team will face Canada, the United States and Argentina, and will close competing against Armenia, Paraguay and Poland.

The championship is being held online to palliate the consequences of the health crisis caused by Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.

In March, the International Chess Federation decided to postpone the traditional 2020 Chess Olympiad that was to be held in Moscow, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
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