

THE CUENCA DISPATCH

Ecuador's Original English-Language Newspaper

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As ETAPA faces significant losses, it may be raising the price of water

The Municipal Company for Telecommunications, Water Service and Sewage System (ETAPA) is trying to balance out their fiscal year. According to its General Manager, Jose Luis Espinoza, even the possibility of raising the price of water is being taken into account—but only as a “last resort.”

ETAPA is Cuenca's largest municipal company, which is why it's a main priority for the current administration to improve the company's income and eliminate costs. But that, as to be expected, it's easier said than done.

Originally, for budget purposes, the company estimated \$75 million income for this year; now that number is being lowered to \$71 million. Almost half of that estimated income—\$35 Million—will be spent solely on payroll.

ETAPA has 1,400 employees; 1,350 have indefinite contracts which makes it very expensive for the company to discharge them. It's also a long process to fire people with indefinite contracts. To make matters worse, some of the salaries of these workers are double those for similar roles in the private sector and there are many workers without specific roles in the



company.

“Sadly, many administrators have assigned positions to certain workers for political reasons, thus resulting in half the budget being spent just on payroll,” said Mr. Espinoza. “We're trying our best to not have to increase the price of the water service, but we also have to think of the company's future. Let's hope it doesn't come to that.”

One of the immediate reasons for the budget cont. page 4.

Glovo food and packages courier company grows tremendously in first in Ecuador



Just in their first year of operations, Glovo has become leader in food and courier operations in Ecuador, says its CEO for Ecuador, Daniel Arevalo. Its growth has been running at 50% every month since the beginning of the year. Its areas of operation are primarily Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca.

The Spanish company was founded in Barcelona, in 2015, and it began operations in Ecuador in 2018. In 2019, Glovo bought 100% of the shares of Domicilios.com, allowing them to enter the Azuayan market.

“Our most valuable characteristic is that we have multiple categories of items that we can deliver. We can deliver your house keys, groceries, food, or whatever you need,” said Arevalo. “The current millennial generation turns your deliveries back if you do not respect the

cont. page 5.

MIKTA economic block consider making Ecuador a business partner



MIKTA is an informal economic block of countries comprised by Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey and Australia. This partnership—created in 2013—aims to support the UN agenda for an effective global governance and the fight against climate change. Four ambassadors from MIKTA countries gathered in Quito last week to formally show their interest in adding Ecuador to their economic relations.

The economic group focuses in only engaging with countries that have high democratic values, are interested in strengthening bilateral relations and want to engage in informal but meaningful discussions to promote social development and fairer societies. “We focus on multilateralism and effective cooperation,” said the Turkish ambassador, cont. page 4.



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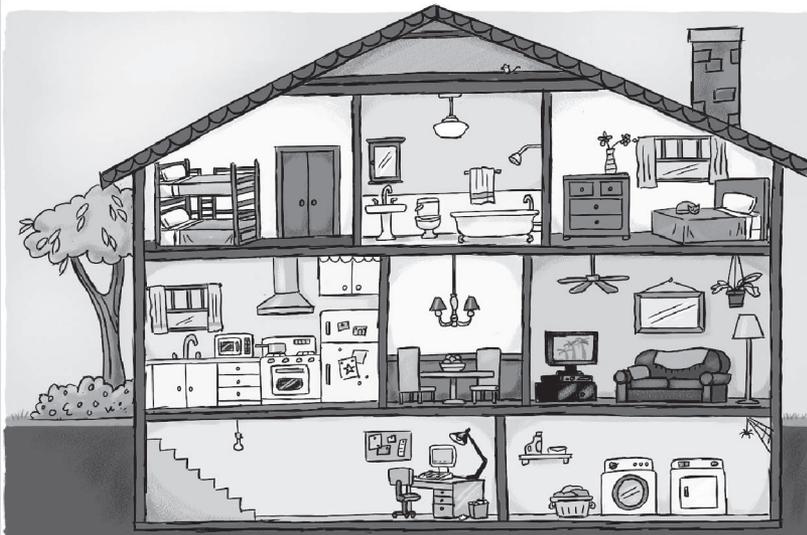
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I'M JUST SAYIN'

By Michael Soares

Think about the people, not the politics of Dorian

It's Tuesday afternoon and I'm sitting here glued to my computer watching footage of the damage Hurricane Dorian is causing in the Bahamas. I'm saddened to see how Mother Nature is destroying the lives of the people who live on this chain of islands.

I've been through one hurricane (Hurricane Hugo in 1989, when I lived in North Carolina) and saw the devastating effects of it (50 miles from the eye of the storm) when a large tree ended up IN my den. The noise of the storm was so loud at the time that I didn't even hear the tree break through the wall of the house. And here is the craziest part of this story: the storm had reduced to a Category 1 hurricane by the time it hit us.

These poor people in the Bahamas are INSIDE a Category 5 storm. They are going through living hell with winds over 150MPH right now and a storm surge (how high the water will rise near the coast) of 23 feet. And they could be inside this storm for over 24 hours. It's really unimaginable.

We can all watch this online or on TV, but there is no way to get any idea of what they are going through unless you've been through one of these storms. And for most of us who have, we will still only have a vague idea at best.

The other reason this storm is holding my attention so strongly is that my mother lives in Port St. Lucie, Florida. For days we have watched in a state of mild panic as the storm barreled straight toward Port St. Lucie, praying that it would take a turn and head northeast and farther out to sea. Right now, it looks like that turn will happen. But maybe not enough to spare Port St. Lucie. The National Hurricane Center is saying that the coast of Port St. Lucie may still face the effect of a Category 4 storm, even as Dorian steers out to sea.

So, I'm worried. My mother has been through three major hurricanes before, but this is the first one she will face down without my father by her side. She is being stoic about the entire thing, but I know she is worried. She has lots of friends where she lives. I know they will help her as much as they can. Still, I wish I was there. Unfortunately, that isn't going to happen.

I had a flight booked to fly into Miami today. It just so happened that I had this trip planned for weeks; it had nothing to do with the storm. But Dorian obviously changed those plans. My flight has been cancelled and I've been rescheduled to get there on Friday. When it became clear that the storm was headed to the US, I had hoped to change to an earlier flight to get there before it hit. But last week it looked like the storm would hit much sooner, so getting an earlier flight turned out to be impossible as well.

That means I have no choice but to sit, and wait, and hope that the storm spares Port St. Lucie. That it goes somewhere else. But I can't wish this storm on anyone after seeing what is happening in the Bahamas. I can only pray that it goes back out to sea and leaves everyone alone now. Obviously, that is not realistic. It WILL hit somewhere and someone's family in the US will have to deal with the consequences.

By the time this goes to print, we will all know how this turned out. We will have seen the devastation that Mother Nature caused. There will be lots of explanations about the damage and the storm itself. How and why it formed. Where it originally came from. How it compares to other storms in the past.

And of course, there will be the chorus of people blaming it all on global warming. And that may be the case. But aside from praying that my mother comes out of this safe and without any damage to her home, and that the people of the Bahamas survive and that the East Coast of the US has no death or damage, I have to hope that this storm

does not become a part of someone's political agenda.

Because if it does, then all the people who are hurt or killed will quickly be forgotten. The focus will be put on Congress and the White House and what they are doing about climate change. When the focus should be on the people this storm affects. A lot of people will die. A lot of people will lose everything they have. Most (if not all) of them will not even be from the US.

They need to be the focus. Not a political circus that will not serve anyone or anything in the near term. This storm may well be the bellwether that is being sent to us about climate change. But don't let it take our eyes off of the problem at hand today. These people, no matter what country they are from, need the world to get together and help them. They don't need to have all of the online commentators and TV pundits going on and on about the politics of it all.

They won't have TVs. They won't have internet. And frankly, they won't care about anything except where their clean water will come from and how they will find something to eat and where they will sleep. That's what this storm is really going to be about. The rest of it won't mean anything.

I'm just sayin'.

SUDOKU

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love Sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your Sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9X9 grid, broken down into nine 3X3 boxes. To solve a Sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the number will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

8			1	5			6	9
5			6					
		9	3	7		2		
9		3						
		5	9	3	4	7		
						5		3
		2		8	5	9		
					3			2
4	5			9	1			7

See answers on page 11

As ETAPA faces significant losses, it may be raising the price of water (Cont.)

reassessment is that demand for the new portfolio that the company opened for the digital television market has been a lot lower than expected. The company expected to have 10,000 users for this year—so far, only 4,500 clients have signed up for the service. Phone service users have also decreased.

According to Mr. Espinoza, water service is currently being provided at a loss, meaning it is being subsidized by the company. ETAPA estimates that it loses 30 cents per every cubic centimeter of water provided throughout the municipality. One of the reasons for this is that the expansion of the water installations to rural areas has been slow. Also, only 50% of overdue payments for the service—which amount to \$20 million—are expected to be recovered (in the best-case scenario).

ETAPA is looking to strengthen its internet service, which is the only sector providing positive cashflow at the moment. They will also consider the possibility of monetizing commercial WiFi and they will try to boost digital TV for one more year.

Extracted from Diario El Tiempo

MIKTA economic block consider making Ecuador a business partner (Cont.)

Hatice Oya Tinga.

Of critical importance to Ecuador at this moment is that this alliance has several member countries who have vast experience in irregular migration. They can provide relevant information to Ecuador on how to handle such situations.

"There are many reasons that draw us close to Ecuador, including commercial exchange. Ecuador is very focused towards the United States and Europe, but it would be good for them to open their doors to us. We can certainly be their cooperative partners," explained Young-keun Lee, ambassador from South Korea.

Extracted from El Telegrafo

El Turi lookout and tourist venue will have security cameras



The Autonomous Decentralized Government (GAD) of the Tarqui Parish has signed a binding document with the Integrated Security Service ECU 911 in order to have security cameras for the small tourist venue El Turi.

The GAD has signed the commitment to acquire the equipment, software and provide logistics for maintenance, while the ECU 911 will monitor all the emergencies and have units deployed when needed. ECU 911 will send units through both 911 calls as well as required by the real-time video monitoring.

Extracted from Diario El Tiempo

Bamboo straws are making their way into Cuenca restaurants

For the last year, the Noble Gauda Association has been distributing bamboo straws throughout Ecuador. Their association (located in the Olon community in the province of Santa Elena) began this project in response to the growing concern of plastic use in Ecuador and its impact on the environment. They are now supplying restaurants around Cuenca, Guayaquil and Quito. These reusable straws are made from the 'bambusa vulgaris' bamboo strain, which is found abundantly in Ecuador.



"We were already making bamboo furniture. We saw that this was a need for the market and the environment, and we thought: why not make reusable straws?" said Byron Yagual, president of the association. There were already some cooperatives and companies that made straws from particular leaves or cardboard, but they are not reusable.

The association's straws are 7 to 8 inches long. Their diameter varies because they are a completely natural product; they cut the top of the plant and work with it to make a full straw. The craftsmen make the cuts, then wash the straws by boiling them in vinegar. Then they are dried in an oven and finally, polished. Each straw can be used between 40 and 50 times, but they must be washed carefully.

The association sells each straw for about 60 cents; clients can have a business name—or any message—engraved on the straws for an additional 25 cents apiece.

On a related subject, the Business Observatory of the Universidad de Azuay has completed a study that found that the consumer behavior in Cuenca is shifting to more environmentally responsible choices. This shifting reality should help support the business strategies implemented to protect the environment or reduce environmental impact.

Extracted from Diario El Tiempo

Caretakers of handicapped individuals receive training by the MIES

The Ministry of Social and Economic Inclusion (MIES) and the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) are collaborating to bring special training and assistance to the beneficiaries (or relatives of the beneficiaries) of the Joaquin Gallegos Lara grant program. This program provides a cash grant to the caretaker or family of an individual who has disabilities or is currently in a terminal illness condition.



"I have been part of the club created by these entities, where I have learned about first aid, palliative care, nutrition, hygiene, health, sexual and reproductive health, among other things," said Ximena Siguenza, a caretaker for a relative who is receiving the grant.

These caretakers gather once a month in the different health centers to the north of Cuenca (where most of these grantees are located). They receive information over how to control the patient, how to aid the patient to socialize, and they also receive psychological assistance.

"Our goal is to strengthen the bond between the caretaker and the patient. Most of the time these caretakers are relatives," said Carmen Barrera, head of the caretaker's club in the Sinincay Health Center.

Extracted from Diario El Tiempo

Glovo food and packages courier company grows tremendously in first in Ecuador (Cont.)

timing, which is why we focus on providing deliveries within 45 minutes," he continued.

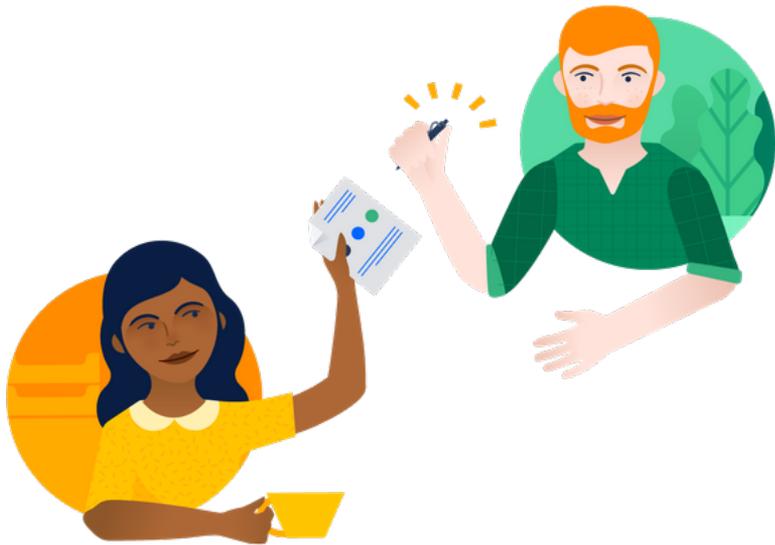
Mr. Arevalo sees Ecuador as a promising country for transnational companies and tech startups. Additionally, these types of 'collaborative economy' companies create a great connection between individuals who lack time and those that have spare time. "Creating the right formula is key to assure client satisfaction, timely payments, and right time-schedule for the couriers," he finished.

Extracted from El Telegrafo

A tale of two... Facilitators

by Felicia Brings

The introduction of so many non-Spanish speaking North American people to Cuenca has led some forward thinking and ambitious Ecuadorians to develop an entirely new career option - becoming a facilitator in order to help many of these gringos to access the social security health system (IESS), make doctor/dentist appointments, accompany people to their appointments and translate necessary information, open bank accounts, get surgery when needed, and many other basic things like taking people to Supermaxi or Coral and back. We expats are grateful for them. Many of Cuenca's 'facilitators' enjoy being a private taxi service for people who can afford it. It's nice to have a chauffeured option to take you everywhere you want to go. Many north American transplants are thus privileged in Cuenca and there's no shortage of facilitators who can indulge them.



As is true in every other profession, some facilitators are better than others, as I have personally discovered over the past year. I spent a good eight months with a facilitator trying to get the sinus surgery I needed to improve my breathing as well as a comprehensive eye exam. I am part of the IESS system so I hired a particular facilitator because someone I knew had used them and was happy with the service. In fact, this facilitator was quite well known, had a very good reputation and a lot of clients.

Over this period of time I had numerous appointments with primary doctors, specialists, surgeons, and, of course, the requisite tests preceding surgery - all in preparation for getting the sinus surgery, which was scheduled and then postponed several times and then finally cancelled altogether. I also had numerous appointments to see an eye doctor but every single one of them was cancelled for some reason so I never got the eye exam at all. I was, of course, continuing to pay the facilitator for taking me to all of these doctor appointments, though they never led to my getting anything I actually needed. I started talking to other expats - those who were, unlike me, getting their needs met - and I learned something. Everyone agreed: with IESS if you don't fight, you don't get. Obviously I wasn't getting. A friend suggested I use a different facilitator and she recommended someone she'd used before.



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So, to make a long story shorter, I got a new facilitator and within weeks - NOT MONTHS - I got an eye exam as well as my first cataract surgery. I'm already scheduled for my sinus surgery and am being scheduled for the second cataract surgery. IESS has a policy of not treating an individual for more than one issue at a time. My new facilitator went to them and insisted that their screwups had caused my sinus surgery to be cancelled and now I have to start from scratch to get it and that I could become blind if I had to wait. My new facilitator fought for me and I started - very quickly - to get my needs met.

So I've learned a few things about facilitators and I'd like to share them with you:

1. There are many different types of facilitators and they all have different skills and abilities. There are facilitators that offer tour guide services, shuttle service, handyman services, and help with a wide variety of basic needs. If you live in Cuenca you've probably had to hire someone just to come over and hang your pictures because hammering a nail into a wall is not exactly do-able. Some facilitators will stay with your pets when you're away. Whatever you need, you'll find a facilitator who can help you.

*The only actual qualification required to work as a facilitator is the ability to speak both Spanish and English. If you need a facilitator to take you somewhere you need to make sure they have a car. I know I'm stating the obvious but gringo culture is different than Cuencano culture and it's really important to spell things out clearly in order to avoid misunderstandings.

Facilitators can get you into the IESS system; some can help with things like visa/cedula applications, getting your IVA money back through SRI, finding an apartment or house, and of course the all important shopping tasks. Not just taking people grocery shopping, but also for furniture, dish washers, washer dryers, refrigerators, etc. etc. Getting started in a new country when you don't speak the language can be daunting. Many people need all the help they can get!

2 - If you're choosing a facilitator because that person gets lots of recommendations, you might want to rethink that. Most service providers in Cuenca are not at all shy about asking for recommendations and most expats are happy to comply. And the fact that someone gets a lot of recommendations usually means that they have a lot of clients and that can be a BIG PROBLEM.

Think about this:

What if you have medical issues and you hire a facilitator who has lots of shopping clients, clients they've been working with for a long time, clients who pay well and regularly? Suppose, for example, that IESS calls your facilitator to say that your medical appointment is on the 3rd of the month. But suppose your facilitator has an appointment on the 3rd with one of their regular shopping clients? Suppose they say to IESS that no, you can't come in on the 3rd, please give you a different date. Suppose IESS then says ok, the next available appointment is on the 29th. What just happened? Instead of getting your medical appointment on the 3rd



(quickly) you now have to wait more than three weeks for that appointment because the earlier date wasn't convenient for your popular and busy facilitator.

Don't look for a facilitator who is popular and gets many recommendations!

3 -There's a significant difference between dealing with people who have serious medical needs and those who need someone to go shopping with them. I'm repeating myself because it's such an important point; it requires that your facilitator understands that they must prioritize your medical needs. IT'S UP TO YOU TO MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND THIS BEFORE YOU HIRE THEM!

Carefully interview a potential facilitator. Especially if your needs are medical rather than shopping related you have to make sure your facilitator understands the difference. Anyone who claims to be a medical facilitator should have experience accessing the IESS system, which changes how it operates frequently, and they should have significant experience with expats who've had serious medical issues. Simply put, they should be smart enough to know how the system works and also willing to manipulate the system on your behalf.



4 - Use your common sense. You know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior - don't feel intimidated into accepting what you know is not right. You are paying for the service. You are, at the most basic level, paying your facilitator to pick you up and bring you home. I had a medical appointment one day when it was raining buckets, just non stop pouring rain. My first facilitator called to say they were running late and could I meet them at a location 3 blocks away (I'm the patient!) Another time we drove out to hospital for an appointment and when it was done my facilitator informed me they had another appointment at the hospital and I'd have to take a bus home. Don't accept this kind of behavior. It's unprofessional at best. I tolerated it because I didn't want to rock the boat. I gave my power away because I don't speak Spanish, which made me vulnerable and needy. I suspect I'm not alone in feeling like this. If you get inklings that your facilitator is working for themselves more than they are working for you get a different facilitator!

As someone whose Spanish skills are not great I very much appreciate that we have facilitators to help us transition to a new country, new culture, new language, but it's really up to us to make sure that we choose someone we can trust and have confidence in. The going rate for facilitators these days is \$12 an hour. All of us have at some point in our life dealt with people who have made us think, 'this person only cares about the money.' We've also experienced dealing with people who we intuitively knew cared about helping us. Pay attention to those vibes when hiring a facilitator - and if you feel that something isn't quite right don't hire them or if they're already working for you -fire them and find someone else. Check out GringoPost, where many facilitators advertise their services. Check every day. And talk to other expats, especially those that have used facilitators to help them deal with medical issues.. What have their experiences been like?

Interview, ask specific questions, pay attention to how you feel around them, and don't think that you're stuck with someone just because you've hired them. Be your facilitator's boss, not their victim!

EMAC reminds people of their 'ecologic exchange'



The EMAC (Municipal Company for Waste Management) wants to remind people of their "BioEmac House." This place exchanges organic compost or organic waste for organic fertilizer.

The BioEmac house is located across from the Garaicoa School, on Avenida Veinticuatro de Mayo. You can bring your organic waste to the current BioEmac House in a proper container or bag and receive a specific amount of organic fertilizer in exchange.

This organic waste should be solely made up of vegetable and fruit remains. "It's difficult to say how much of the compost could have been usable food, but most of them should be of rotten vegetables and fruit, or their peels and unusable parts," said Ligia Carrion, composting technician of the EMAC.

"We have about 20 to 30 people a day leave their compost. It's a high number in terms of our projection for this year, but we plan on increasing the number of collection centers to motivate the citizens to classify their waste and bring it to one of our centers," she continued.

All of the waste is processed to be turned into usable fertilizer at the EMAC compost plant located in the former El Valle sanitary landfill. The waste material is deposited in several containers, then crushed and mixed with microorganisms that accelerate the decomposition process and reduce the odors.

EMAC doesn't have any statistics on how much compostable waste is lost in the typical garbage service because many people do not correctly separate their waste.

Extracted from Diario El Tiempo

Cuenca bus terminal will have an A-type health center



The EMOV (Municipal Company of Mobility) and the Ministry of Public Health have signed an agreement to build a new health center in the bus terminal in Cuenca. It will be a two-story building that will be used exclusively for health services.

"A-type" health centers provide health prevention, health promotion and health recovery services. It will also have a palliative care unit, general medical attention, dentist's office, nurse's office and spaces for community activities.

"This will be an important space due to the influx of citizens through this terminal," said Juan Carlos Aguirre, Manager of EMOV. "Around 15,000 travelers go through this terminal per day. We expect that this health center will provide attention to these people, as well as those who live in the vicinity.

Also, this new installation will provide a boost in the vaccination capabilities and range of the Cuenca Municipality, which is known for its comprehensive immunization practices. This health center will be provided with full vaccination supplies including the two newly added vaccines to the Municipal list: BCH and HB (tuberculosis and Hepatitis B).

This agreement will be valid for four years and can be renewed.

Extracted from Diario El Tiempo



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Ecuador wants to regulate short-stay housing options

The "Regulation of Accommodation in Real Estate for Tourist Use in Ecuador, except in Galapagos," developed by the Ministry of Tourism, generates concern for several groups, including a temporary accommodation association.



In the regulation, the ministry intends to regulate accommodations and provide a series of "obligations and rights for both hosts and users" of accommodations booked through online platforms such as AirBnB.

In response to the proposed regulation, AirBnB has expressed concern to the Ministry and described the regulation as a 'prohibitive' measure that could prevent Ecuadorian hosts from opening their doors to receive guests. "This being a prohibitive measure that has no history in Latin America," wrote AirBnB's representative.

Gabriel Guzmán, President of the "Temporary Accommodation Community" in Quito, said this regulation would affect 10,000 temporary accommodation units of rooms and houses and apartments registered on Airbnb.

He added that his group is in favor of regulations, but said they oppose several points that limit and harm their activity such as the regulation of accommodation for land use, the approval of the condominium assembly to allow a host to accommodate through digital platforms and the payment of the tax of \$1 per \$1,000.

Even politician Guillermo Lasso stressed that these platforms have opened opportunities for income and new options of different quality for users. He considered that this regulation seeks to "charge new taxes" and "more bureaucratic obstacles" to property owners.

Meanwhile, analyst Pablo Lucio Paredes said that one should work with free contracts, just like any rental of housing, for rooms or all. "Two points: they must pay taxes like the others and obviously condominiums can decide internally whether they allow it or not," he said.

Like Guzmán, Luis Ordóñez, administrator of a guest house in downtown Guayaquil, believes that temporary accommodation products are different because they serve tourist markets different from those of large hotels. He said that his members and the online platforms should have a say in the process of developing these regulations.

The Minister of Tourism, Rosi Prado de Holguín, clarified that they analyze suggestions and said they do not oppose these platforms. "We want the platforms to see Ecuador as a safe destination where they send their tourists, their customers, to be well, because they will be in a place that is absolutely registered and controlled by the ministry and regulated," she said.

Important points of the regulation

According to the Ministry, the Regulation:

Requires operators of temporary accommodation units to register with the Ministry of Tourism and to obtain an annual operating license.

Requires operators of temporary accommodation units to abide by the internal rules of co-ownership (as defined by the "Horizontal property rules") and must have the respective permits.

Forbids operators of temporary accommodation units to carry out activities of intermediation, tourist operation, tourist land transport, tourist guidance, directly or through partners.

Forbids temporary accommodation units in the Galapagos.

Centrosur to start work to run important electric line underground



The Centrosur Electrical company will begin work this week to place a high voltage (22,000 volt) transmission line underground. This line runs from the electric substation in Luis Cordero and Muñoz Vernaza, to the Visorrey station, close to the Driver's Syndicate gas station (on Las Americas, close to the entrance to the Industrial Park).

The estimated cost for the project is \$1.02 million.

The works will extend for 2 miles and will follow a path from Muñoz Vernaza street to Antonio Borrero. It will then make its way to Heroes de Verdeloma, near Manuel J. Calle school and move over to Avenida las Americas, where it will pass through Barrial Blanco and then finally arrive near the gas station. Streets and sidewalks along the route will be torn up, but traffic flow in the area should not be obstructed. The work is expected to continue through the end of March 2020.

The current electrical line through these areas is overhead and was run many years ago when these zones were not highly populated. The current line is oversaturated and with users and represents a possible hazard.

Extracted from Diario El Mercurio

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Cuenca Mayor signs 19 new contracts for city work



The Mayor of Cuenca, Pedro Palacios, signed 19 contracts to carry out works in the urban parishes of Cuenca for a little more than \$2.4 million.

These works involve rigid paving, telephone channeling, electrical channeling, walls, sidewalks, curbs, signaling and mitigation of environmental impacts, which will be carried out in the parishes Monay, Yanuncay, Machángara, Brother Miguel and El Vecino.

In these parishes, a total of 2.86 km of paving will be executed. Víctor Rodas, leader of the Tomebamba citadel, says that "these works have been expected by the residents for some time now and that they will improve the quality of life of citizens, avoiding diseases and

inconveniences due to the mud and dust involved in the roads in poor condition."

Palacios added that \$168,786 has been earmarked for "supervision," to guarantee the quality of the work on the roads Joya de los Sachas, Cantón la Maná, El Progreso, El Republicano, Cebrian de Moreta, Francisco Morales, Andrés Banegas, Cabo Milton Jácome, Luis Pablo Alvarado, Luis Machuca and Antonio Alvarado.

Palacios stressed that the execution of these contracts generates direct jobs for 48 professionals, 133 laborers, and the acquisition of raw material in the local economy.

Extracted from Diario El Tiempo

"Informal vendors" overwhelm city's options to relocate them

About 8,000 informal vendors are in Cuenca, and to relocate them, according to the Municipality of Cuenca, would require building 13 more markets like those on 12 de Abril or the 10 de Augusto, which have about 650 stalls each.

These itinerant merchants have asked the municipality to assign them a fixed space to work—they say they are more than willing to leave the informality and disorder of the streets.

Their presence, in addition to generating disorder in public spaces, has also caused discomfort among the merchants of the markets and owners of commercial premises who feel these informal merchants are behind the decrease in their sales.

Pedro Palacios, Mayor of Cuenca, explained that according to a survey made in 2016, there were 420 people identified as informal merchants who sold different types of products on the streets in the historic center. Now there are 1,169.



Palacios acknowledged that it won't be possible to offer everyone of these merchants a place to work; though he did announce that the city council is in a process to identify areas that can be destined for trade.

For example, one option is the parks, that according to Palacios must have a self-management model to generate resources for their maintenance. Another alternative is the construction of the four new markets that Palacios offered in his campaign, that would have approximately 6,000 jobs all together. This is a long-term project.

Another option is the implementation of the two new bus terminals, in the north and south, that were also an electoral offer of Palacios. These new terminals would also have places for trade, although the quantity is not yet determined.

"The solutions, no matter how much they want, will not be overnight and they will not be for everyone and there we will enter a process that someone will be excluded (...)," said the Mayor.

Jaqueline Muñoz, legal representative of the Federation of Autonomous Workers of the Province of Azuay (Fetrapaz), explained that they have 956 members, distributed in 13 associations.

Muñoz said that there is the will on the part of the members of this organization to regularize and continue with their work. She asked that there be a joint management among all municipal agencies.

She also requested that the Citizen Guard of Cuenca (GCC) not make seizures, because the merchants are not in a position to pay the fines. On average they earn no more than five dollars per day.

Extracted from Diario El Tiempo

World Bank sets goals for Ecuador investment package

The World Bank is currently engaged in a \$2 billion investment with Ecuador. This investment includes assessment for social and work policies.

Back in 2014, Ecuador had not had any relationship with the World Bank for 8 years. But since then, when Alberto Rodríguez, World Bank Director for Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru took office, the institution has engaged in a long-term financing plan with Ecuador.

"Back in those days, commodities were at a high price, allowing Ecuador to finance most of their projects. They decided to disregard our council. But, this all changed when commodities plunged," he said. He stated that other countries did not take such extreme paths, and remained in cooperation with the World Bank, including Bolivia.

Ecuador found itself in economic trouble early in 2014 and that was the main factor for the decision to approach the World Bank. "Countries that rely in commodities should work counter-cyclical, meaning that during years of high commodity prices there should be accounts for reserves for periods of low market prices," said Mr. Rodríguez.

Right now, World Bank has \$1.7 billion already destined to finance Ecuador. A first \$500 million account is at the disposition of the Ecuadorian state. Another \$350 million will be given in installments according to milestones reached by Ecuador in the social protection field. The last piece of financing is for projects that have been scheduled since 2014. They will also be funded based on their progress against plan.



The main things World Bank will be keeping an eye on are that Ecuador cooperates in legislative changes to encourage more international investments (e.g., the Productive Promotion Law) and the results of

important indicators like the Doing Business report. Also, the World Bank is requesting a clear and clean Social Registry, so that it is easy to ensure that the people that most need the funds for social protection get access to them.

In 2018, Ecuador and the World Bank agreed on a strategic plan that focused on 3 pillars:

- Economic- how Ecuador is doing on achieving fiscal and economic stability to attract foreign investment;
- Human capital – how Ecuador is protecting the most vulnerable sectors of society and guaranteeing jobs and good education, specifically focused in new market and technologic needs;
- Climate change- how Ecuador ensures sustainability and prevention for economic shocks.

With regards to the labor situation in Ecuador, the World Bank is interested in seeing that the Ecuadorian state creates a clear reform that enables economic growth without sacrificing good remuneration for workers and that is coherent with the economic fluctuations.

"Social protection is also, needed, so that when somebody loses a job, they can have a transition period that allows them to live without pressure and prepare themselves for their next employment," said Mr. Rodriguez. "This is what our economic package is about," he finished.

Extracted from Diario El Telegrafo

CRIME REPORT AND ACCIDENT REPORT

Cuenca Area Traffic Accidents

*Two traffic accidents left five people injured in the Santa Mariana parish in the Girón canton of Azuay, on Tuesday, September 3, 2019.

The first accident occurred at 12:00 in the Santa Marianita sector, where two vehicles collided; two men and two women were injured. After being helped by paramedics from the Fire Department and personnel from the Ministry of Health, they were taken to the Aida León hospital in Girón.

The second accident came at 1:35 p.m. at kilometer 51, Rircay sector, where a car hit the roadside curb. One person was injured and taken to a local hospital

The causes of both accidents are under investigation.

* A child died on Sunday after being accidentally hit by a car driven by his father. The unfortunate event occurred in Serrag, in the canton of Sigsig.

According to relatives, the father of the child ran over him when he backed up his truck and did not notice the child behind him. It appears that the child died instantly.

Police indicated that the father had been arrested and may face charges after a preliminary hearing.

Cuenca Area Criminal Activity

(Turi)A riot at the TuriCenter of Social Rehabilitation (CRS-Turi) on Sunday left two policemen injured with minor cuts and several inmates with suffering with respiratory problems as a result of the large amount of tear gas that was launched by police to stop the riot.

At 11:00AM, police were forced to gas a crowd of inmates after a group entered the prison kitchen where they grabbed knives and other objects to attack the guards.

Witnesses reported seeing inmates walk through the maximum-security pavilion terrace, jump into the courtyard and climb up the fences of the enclosure with intentions of escape.

The reported cause of the revolt was to prevent the leader of a gang from being transferred to another prison.

At 2:00 pm, police forces resumed control of the detention center. Until the closing of this edition, it was not possible to obtain an official pronouncement of what happened during the mutiny in prison.

(Cuenca) A group of angry taxi drivers wanted to take justice into their own hands to an individual who allegedly shot at one of their colleagues around 10PM on the night of Friday, August 30th.

After a chase and search, the taxi drivers captured the alleged offender, 18-year-old Edison R. Before they could take out their revenge on the subject, police quickly mobilized and took the individual into custody.

Edison R., 18, works at a private security company, which explained how he had a revolver in his possession loaded with four live bullets and the one expelled bullet casing.

(Cuenca) On the morning of Wednesday, August 4, National Police recovered a vehicle that was reported stolen in Cuenca.

According to the victim, at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 3rd, he left his vehicle parked outside his sister's home. When he left her home at 9:00 p.m. his car was gone, and he called the National Police.

The fact was recorded on video by means of a surveillance camera installed in the sector. This helped police to locate the car who then notified the owner.

(Cuenca) Anti-narcotics police officers captured a man and a woman in the La Merced neighborhood who had 5,359 doses of cocaine and 14.8 grams of marijuana in their possession.

A tip led police to the subject's home on Avenida de Las Américas and Del Cebollar, where the couple was engaged in drug micro-trafficking. Onsite, the agents found scales, blenders and other objects that they used to prepare the doses.

The detainees were identified as Jonathan Iván P., 23, and Nurdy Noeli M., 24.



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Venezuelans are facing retaliation in Ecuador based on misconceptions

Recently there have been reports of retaliation against the migrant Venezuelan population. This has been fueled by the belief that there is a rise in the crime rate in Ecuador because of the large influx of Venezuelans over the last two years.

Some statistics, when viewed as a whole may paint another picture. The number of Venezuelans currently detained in the Ecuadorian penitentiary system is 15% (446) of the total number of foreign detainees. They do represent the second largest percentage of that group, after Colombians (1,955). However, the number of foreign inmates in the prison system accounts for less than 10% of the total number of people incarcerated in Ecuador. This means that Venezuelans make up less than 1% of the current prison population; even though there are estimates that say they now make up between 2% and 3% of the Ecuadorian population.

It is also important to remember that not all of these detentions correspond to crimes; they can also be due to traffic violations and in compliance with child support payments.

Regardless of percentages, it's not uncommon for Venezuelans to receive offensive comments in public, demanding that they go back to their country. "I constantly get offensive comments when I go to the supermarket. There's even a lady that drives a white vehicle who every day tells me to return to my country to 'protect my own people,'" said Eduardo Febres, leader of a Venezuelan solidarity group.

Similarly disturbing is that there are now Facebook and WhatsApp groups that focus on disparaging the Venezuelans in the country. In these groups, it's not uncommon for someone to publicize information about a suspect of a crime and without any further knowledge, suggest the person has the characteristics of being from Venezuela. This has also created a snowball effect with all kinds of fake news regarding crimes that have not really happened, in order to frame Venezuelans, or immediately concluding a certain crime has been committed by a person from that nationality, without any confirmation by authorities.

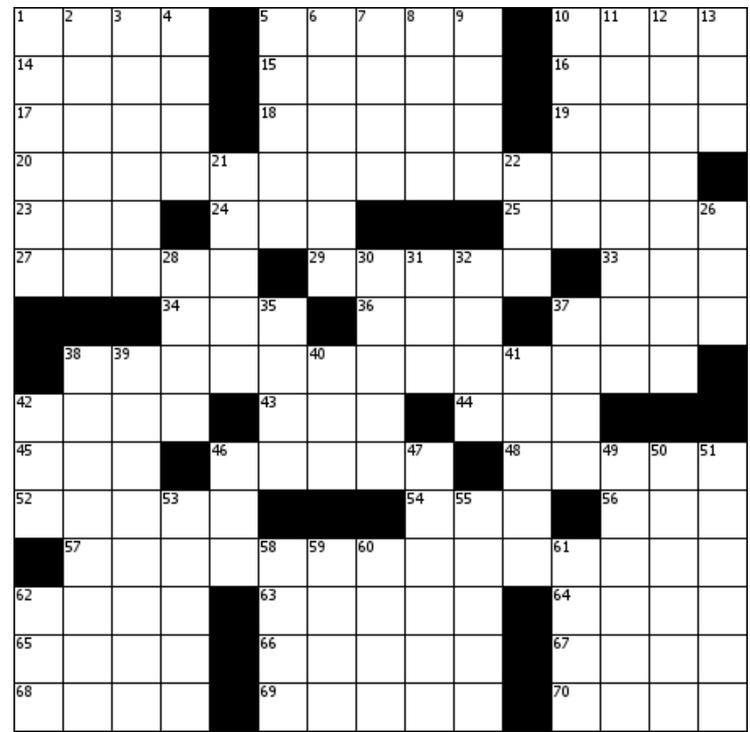
The newspaper EL Telegrafo states that these types of messages and fake news can create dangerous situations like the events occurred in Ibarra in the beginning of 2019. In that town, dozens of Venezuelans were expelled from their rented homes, beaten and expelled from the city due to a homicide committed by one of their fellow countrymen.

"These xenophobic acts have revealed the weaknesses of our legal system in pursuit of the defense of human rights," said Francis Romero, university professor and social communicator. "Our country, along with Peru and Colombia, are not used to receiving migration, much less of this scale, but instead are used to being migrators themselves," she continued.

Billy Navarrete, from the Permanent Committee on Human Rights in Ecuador, states that society has an important role in order to defend fundamental human rights, especially if this role is carried out in coordination, from grassroots communitarian organizations.

"Us, as Ecuadorians, are living an unprecedented migratory phenomenon, and one of the biggest in the world. People need to be aware that this exodus is a result of a humanitarian crisis, and not an economic migration, such as the Ecuadorian emigration during the nineties," he said. He emphasized that a sentiment of solidarity should spring from Ecuadorians, as a key factor for the preservation of human rights.

Extracted from EL Telegrafo



See answers on page 11

Across

- 1. Gambling word
- 5. Twangy, as a voice
- 10. Fly trap?
- 14. Croc's home, maybe
- 15. Playground marble
- 16. Nabisco nibble
- 17. Fail to include
- 18. Mortise connection
- 19. Three, in a casino
- 20. Funny dynamic duo
- 23. Football's Parseghian
- 24. Timeworn
- 25. Hindu disciplines
- 27. 1987 U.S. Open tennis champ
- 29. Conscious
- 33. In the past
- 34. Item in a lock
- 36. The Crossed Harpoons, in "Moby Dick"
- 37. Bouillabaisse, e.g.
- 38. Magical dynamic duo
- 42. Highland hillside
- 43. Service charge
- 44. Go a-courting
- 45. For each
- 46. Make recompense
- 48. Shiver-inducing
- 52. Oversentimental
- 54. China's Zhou En-___
- 56. Lonely number
- 57. Smoky dynamic duo
- 62. Kind of putter
- 63. Afghanistan's Karzai
- 64. Dubai VIP
- 65. It's pitched
- 66. Good-night girl of song
- 67. Surrealist painter Magritte
- 68. Mosquitoes, to dragonflies
- 69. Gigli, e.g.
- 70. Beat by a nose

Down

- 1. Without scruples
- 2. Words before Mr. Nice Guy
- 3. Formosa, now
- 4. James of the blues
- 5. Dealing with delivery
- 6. To-do list
- 7. Beach, basically
- 8. It's smashed in a lab
- 9. Songstress Horne
- 10. "All for one and one for all," e.g.
- 11. Hose down
- 12. Adolescent
- 13. Whirligig, e.g.
- 21. Pitcher Ryan
- 22. Corned beef holder, sometimes
- 26. Piglet's mother
- 28. Ready to serve
- 30. Extend
- 31. Aardvark tidbit
- 32. Was familiar with
- 35. Castaway's creation
- 37. Blackthorn fruit
- 38. One familiar with the Gospel
- 39. Walkman part
- 40. Classic prefix
- 41. Reasoning
- 42. Modem speed
- 46. Buccaneer's affirmative
- 47. Climatic phenomenon
- 49. Was imminent
- 50. It consists of a top and a bottom
- 51. Standard accreditation
- 53. Small-minded
- 55. Scotland's only poisonous snake
- 58. Restaurant check
- 59. Meadow denizen
- 60. An ending to grace
- 61. Sondheim's "I'm Still ___"
- 62. Indy 500 logo

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"What's Happening..." is updated weekly with a large variety of events that both ex-pats and Ecuadorians will enjoy. If you have an interesting event you would like to publicize, email [info@thecuencadispatch](mailto:info@thecuencadispatch.com) for consideration.

Classifieds and Events

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A	N	T	E		N	A	S	A	L		M	I	T	T
M	O	A	T		A	G	A	T	E		O	R	E	O
O	M	I	T		T	E	N	O	N		T	R	E	Y
R	O	W	A	N	A	N	D	M	A	R	T	I	N	
A	R	A		O	L	D				Y	O	G	A	S
L	E	N	D	L		A	W	A	K	E		A	G	O
			O	A	R		I	N	N		S	T	E	W
	P	E	N	N	A	N	D	T	E	L	L	E	R	
B	R	A	E		F	E	E		W	O	O			
P	E	R		A	T	O	N	E		G	E	L	I	D
S	A	P	P	Y				L	A	I		O	N	E
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S	H	O	T		H	A	M	I	D		E	M	I	R
T	E	N	T		I	R	E	N	E		R	E	N	E
P	R	E	Y		T	E	N	O	R		E	D	G	E

Solution to Crossword puzzle on page 10

Solution to Sudoku puzzle on page 3

8	3	7	1	5	2	4	6	9
5	2	1	6	4	9	3	7	8
6	4	9	3	7	8	2	1	5
9	8	3	5	1	7	6	2	4
2	6	5	9	3	4	7	8	1
1	7	4	8	2	6	5	9	3
3	1	2	7	8	5	9	4	6
7	9	8	4	6	3	1	5	2
4	5	6	2	9	1	8	3	7



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