

# THE CUENCA DISPATCH

Ecuador's Original English-Language Newspaper

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## Moreno stands behind actions in October protests

Ecuador President Lenin Moreno does not regret his response to the protests that shook his country last October and believes he did the right thing by trying to eliminate a "perverse" subsidy to fuels that, in his opinion, benefits the "wealthiest," narcos and traffickers."

In a meeting with a small group of media in Madrid last week, where he participated in the climate summit (COP25), Moreno said that in a "hard confrontation" like the one lived in those protests, in which a dozen people died and more than 1,300 were injured, it is "difficult to avoid excesses."

"With 5,000 or 10,000 police on the street, with 20,000 or 30,000 protesters on the street too, it is very difficult that there are no excesses, but we are investigating them," said Moreno, who added that "the use of progressive force" was applied correctly during the almost two weeks of riots, looting and roadblocks.

The UN Office for Human Rights, which sent a team of experts to Ecuador from October 21st to November 8th, received complaints about at least nine dead, 1,507 injured (including 435 members of the security forces) and 1,382 people detained.

Reflection on protests

The demonstrations in Ecuador took place between October 3rd and



13th, after Moreno announced economic adjustments that included the withdrawal of the fuel subsidy.

Pressured by the protests, which led the indigenous movement, the Moreno government repealed the decree that eliminated this subsidy and with which it intended to raise about \$1.4 billion a year.

"There is always the possibility of doing things better ... But the purpose was the best," said the president in reference to his decree to end "a perverse subsidy that for 40 years nobody had dared to eliminate."

"We acted correctly," he insisted when asked if he cont. page 5.

## Lawmakers spend a day experiencing how unfriendly Ecuador is to the disabled



Last Tuesday, a group of Ecuadorian Legislators mimicked the problems a person with disabilities faces daily in order to experience for themselves what those struggles entail. And perhaps to a legislate with greater sensitivity towards the disabled.

The sensitization exercise was carried out when the International Day of Persons with Disabilities was commemorated on December 3 and involved legislators without ideological distinction.

The legislators Raúl Tello, Mauricio Proaño and Patricio Donoso, entered the legislative session blindfolded through the main door of the Parliament, in what became

a moving experience that aroused in them a greater empathy towards people with disabilities.

"One loses the notion of the location, of everything that is around, the only thing that is heard are voices," Tello said before noting that although they traveled about 50 meters blindfolded, it seemed like five hundred due to the insecurity he felt.

A legislator for two and a half years, Tello stressed that all the legislators should think to support people with disabilities daily cont. page 5.

## BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT

### Light & Touch Therapy



"If you do something unnatural, then you should expect an unnatural result." Those were some of the first words that Martyn Luberti said to me when we met to talk about his business, Light & Touch Therapy.

And another central theme—that supporting the body to heal itself is the most effective way, and the least invasive—ran through our entire conversation for two hours.

But let's back up a second and talk about Martyn and what he is doing for his patients here in Cuenca. Light & Touch Therapy is a unique alternative treatment option for people to obtain relief from their symptoms. Studies are showing that this kind of therapy is highly cont. page 4.



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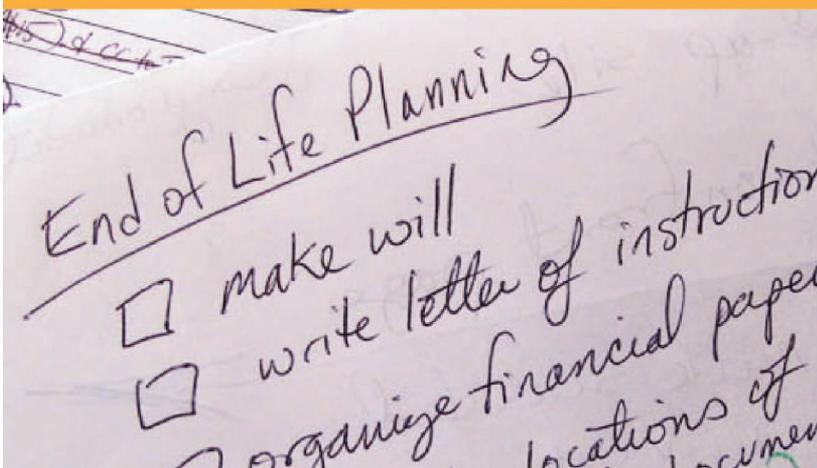
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# I'M JUST SAYIN'

By Michael Soares

## The care is kind if good, well maybe

I think I'm passing a kidney stone. Maybe, maybe not. I have a lot of back pain in the area that would indicate that I do. I know because I've had them before. Several of them. They suck. They pop up at the least opportune times and can screw up your life for several days.

If you know anything about kidney stones, you've probably heard people say, "Well, for a man, that is the closest they will ever come to feeling the pain of delivering a baby."

I don't know, because obviously, I've never had a baby. But I'll tell you this, women keep having babies and there is no way I would ever choose to have another kidney stone. I'm just saying.

Now, I question whether what I am feeling now is a kidney stone or a back issue. Because back pain is a chronic problem for me. My sacroiliac (SI) joint goes out a lot. It's a problem I've had for 20 plus years. In the past some surgeons have even suggested fusing it. Which I have no intention of doing.

My back has been bothering me for a few days and I know that pain is from a slipped SI joint. I felt it go. So, I can be sure of it. However, maybe it's both back pain AND a kidney stone.

But, maybe it's just psychosomatic because I just read an article in El Tiempo announcing that a local hospital is now doing lithotripsy for kidney stones. And they are doing a lot of this procedure. So, it seems like with respect to kidney stones, Cuenca has now caught up with the US for treatment (I had lithotripsy for a kidney stone about 15 years ago in Denver).

Like most medical problems, Cuenca has caught up enough to take it into the 21st century. But is the care good? That really is the question. When people ask me, I relate some anecdotes about good treatment and just assume that it is good.

But lately I've really begun to question whether healthcare here is good enough to tell incoming expats that they don't need to worry about it. Why? Well, a lot of reasons but mainly because of so many horror stories I have heard over the last year, culminating with yet another one this week.

In reviewing friends' experiences over the last year or so, the most tragic is that of Michel Blanchard who I wrote about in a previous issue of The Cuenca Dispatch. Michel was a friend, a wonderful man, and someone taken much too soon. He died, in my opinion, because of poor medical care. He went into the hospital for an open bleeding wound. He had it repaired and was sent home on blood thinners. He then bled out in his bed and died. He was a Canadian and the question begs to be asked, would that have happened to him in Canada?

Another less tragic occurrence that I know of was a screwed-up hip replacement for a friend. The doctor "forgot" to insert a couple of screws and this led to the hip popping out twice before the problem was realized. She then underwent a second hip surgery (at her cost) with a different doctor. She is doing well now.

Now today, we heard from a friend who has had a ridiculous outcome of a simple broken foot. She broke it a short time ago and had it set and casted at a local hospital. She then suffered some pain for a while and then notice a large blister developing just at the edge of the cast near her toes. She went to her doctor to ask, "Is this normal?" Well, of course it was not. And what it led to was destruction of the tissue under the blister. She had a wound develop that could have caused her serious long-term damage and who knows what else.

Fortunately, she caught it, had it looked at and then a surgical repair was done to save the affected area. It was a bad situation and the likely cause was, you guessed it, the cast was put on too tight.

Now, in fairness to the medical system here, I will say I had a very positive experience when I had an infection in an incision on my ankle. The infectious disease specialist I saw here was amazingly thorough and quick to move on something that could have caused me serious problems. He chose the right antibiotic early on, before cultures were available. He monitored me a few times a week and he made sure with an MRI scan that there was no underlying destruction. The care was as good as I ever would have expected in the US.

I know other expats who have had great results here with their healthcare. So, perhaps it is good. Or maybe "good enough."

Nonetheless, what seems to be lacking is a good study among the expat population to get the question answered, "How good is the medical care in Cuenca?" I mean a study with real clinical observations and records. Something we could hold up and say, "Take a look at this!"

Short of that, I am now going to simply answer that question with, "I don't know, I've heard good and bad." Because healthcare is a very important issue for expats and anyone who thinks they know the definitive answer on it, is probably not putting a lot of thought into the question.

However, if we can ever get a good study on the topic, it would be worth comparing the results to the care in the US and Canada. It would help expats decide to keep their healthcare plans back home or discard them and jump right in here in Cuenca. Until then, all we are going to get is anecdotal stories like the ones I've written here.

And simply put, they're not worth the paper this is printed on. I'm just sayin.'

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# 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!

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

See answers on page 11

## Light & Touch Therapy (Cont.)

effective, and it is rapidly becoming accepted by mainstream medicine as a pain and inflammation protocol.

Martyn looks at the treatment for his patients differently. He approaches his clients with a "body-healing" model, not an interventionist model. "We do not treat just the symptoms but focus on whole body healing and rejuvenation," said Martyn. "This results in an improvement in the underlying problem with no side effects."

Hence, Martyn's business, Light & Touch Therapy, focuses on the patient. On the underlying issues. And it goes after those issues with natural methods, not with surgery, or heavy drug therapy, or even psychiatric treatment.

Martyn uses Red & Near Infrared Light Therapy on all of his patients. It's something he himself discovered when he had shoulder problems and his usual massage and acupuncture was not helping him.

"They were not helping the problem so I started to do my own research," said Martyn. "I had had some previous success treating a leg problem with laser treatment and had a passing knowledge of Light Therapy or photobiomodulation as it is now scientifically known. The volume of scientific studies confirming the efficacy of Light Treatment on a wide variety of conditions astounded me."



Photobiomodulation (PBM) is a non-invasive, non-thermal therapy which stimulates cells to generate more energy and undergo self-repair through the use of red and near infrared light (NIR). Also known as low-level red (or laser) therapy, PBM has no side effects. NASA discovered that LED's were just as effective in the correct wavelengths as lasers, while being cheaper and safer.

Now, many people have heard about laser therapy and maybe even the term infrared therapy, but most don't understand that the best outcomes for light therapy are found with red light and near infrared, at wavelengths that will penetrate the skin to about 8mm.

"The science behind red light therapy is fairly well known and accepted. In fact, there are over 5,000 studies that give scientific backing to the positive results of red light therapy," said Martyn. "Red light therapy works by light absorption in the mitochondrial chromophores at the skin level."

This light energy then works at multiple levels in the body, including by increasing adenosine triphosphate (ATP) production. ATP is the root of all organism energetics. It provides the energy for all muscle movement, heart beats, nerve signals and chemical reactions in the body.

"Look, I know all of this seems too simple to be true, but once we started here in Cuenca, we were achieving results with our clients that confirmed the scientific studies. Light therapy is not only accepted, it's something more and more healthcare professionals are moving to themselves."

Martyn has been a professional massage therapist since 1994 and an EFT Therapist for 25 years. His response to red light therapy encouraged him to offer this service here in Cuenca. Red Light Therapy fit into his philosophy of supporting healing naturally. "The human body is capable of healing and repairing itself given the right support," said Martyn.

New studies are revealing just how important getting proper sunlight is to our health. Our diets and lifestyles have strayed from natural ways of living and we are not getting the energy from the sun we need. Martyn believes that red light therapy offers a unique and beneficial approach to doing just that. Red light therapy actually makes the body healthier by mimicking the best sunlight of the day, what our bodies absorb the first thing in the morning and then again as dusk. Red light therapy is set at the most beneficial frequencies as confirmed by years of studies.

Red light therapy has been proven to help with a wide range of medical problems, from retinal health to back, neck and knee pain. Other patients report seeing improvement in conditions such as

- Accelerated wound healing
- Arthritis
- Dental pain
- Painful knees
- Stroke Recovery
- Skin conditions
- Spinal disc pain
- Peripheral Neuropathy

There are even reports that red light therapy can stimulate hair growth, skin rejuvenation and an increase in collagen. But more than anything, it's most effective with soft tissue pain.

So, if you're thinking Red light therapy might be for you, but you're just not 100% convinced yet, consider this:

- Red light therapy is a natural process. You are using nature's own wavelengths of light to treat your health problem.
  - The treatment is drug-free.
  - Red light therapy is chemical-free.
  - There is no discomfort with red light therapy. No itching, no burning, no pain or stinging feeling.
  - There are no short-term or long-term negative effects.
  - Red light therapy is non-invasive
  - And finally..
- Over 5,000 studies have proven the efficacy AND safety of red light therapy!

Red light therapy is not just for those people who have failed at conventional treatment options. It's also for anyone who wants to try natural treatments for natural results. And it's for those people who believe that the human body was meant to be perfect and can be convinced to help heal itself again.

For an appointment with Martyn and Light & Touch Therapy call 096-728-9194 today. Or email Martyn at mluberti@yahoo.com for a free consultation. Sessions are only \$20 and last about an hour. New patients get their first session for only \$10.



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## Moreno stands behind actions in October protests (Cont.)

regrets how he managed the protests.

Moreno acknowledged that it is true that the aforementioned subsidy "at the time it is withdrawn does affect the transport used by the popular sectors, in this case the indigenous."

But he stressed that not eliminating it benefits "the wealthiest people who have their companies," the fuel dealers who sell it later in other countries and "narcotics producers in laboratories strategically placed in southern Colombia."

On the other hand, the Ecuadorian president reiterated his complaint that the demonstrations of the indigenous people were "prostituted by the intervention of wage-earning groups that had another purpose" and that "they were directed from Venezuela" and related to his predecessor in office, Rafael Correa.

"Criminals were bought to cause excesses and give a sense of instability, of chaos, which is one of the reasons why an Assembly, a Congress, can dismiss a ruler," said Moreno.

Following the repeal of the decree that eliminated the fuel subsidy, the Ecuadorian National Assembly (Parliament) rejected and filed an economic reform plan presented by the Moreno Executive.

Now, Parliament is studying a reform, less ambitious, in tax matters and whose approval Moreno trusts because "it has been agreed upon."

Asked about whether he plans to advance the elections planned for 2021 if that reform does not go ahead, Moreno replied that "nobody has raised" that possibility. "I don't know why I should do it," he added.

### Regional discount

As for the social unrest that is generating protests in several countries of the region such as Chile or Colombia, Moreno said that Latin America is a continent "where the lack of equalization of opportunities" and "inequalities" have been dragging for some time.

"Then there are reactions and that's fine because people have the right to demonstrate," he said.

However, the president warned that there are "sectors" that "are interested in destabilizing the region" and explicitly mentioned the Venezuelan government of the "authoritarian" president Nicolás Maduro.

Regarding what happened in Bolivia, where the military forced the resignation of President Evo Morales, Moreno asks himself the following question: "Is it a coup d'etat to make a fraud in the elections or is it a coup to take power?"

"Without a doubt, we are very encouraged by the fact that president (interim president of Bolivia, Jeanine) Áñez, is calling elections as soon as possible with wide observation of international organizations," said Moreno.

"That strongly encourages the new democratic course that Bolivia is taking," he concluded.

Extracted from Diario El Mercurio

## Lawmakers spend a day experiencing how unfriendly Ecuador is to the disabled (Cont.)

because the issue of inclusion must overcome words and get to action.

"Inclusion and accessibility have to be state policies. I think that in the Constitution and the Law of Disabilities, we find in each space the words inclusion, accessibility, but already in the practical matter, unfortunately I think that it is very far from a reality," he said.

On his side, the legislator Proaño was annoyed with himself because "sometimes we do not put ourselves in the shoes of others when we make the legislation."

"Here (in the Assembly) we don't have people with disabilities. If a person with disabilities wants to come here, that have any number of physical obstacles to deal with," he added before pointing out that there are regulations for construction in the country, but that are not always met.

Legislators eyes opened a little bit

The sensitization experience was carried out without interruptions to the normal working day in the Assembly, so many were surprised to see colleagues blindfolded and with a cane trying to enter the plenary.

"People do not help. You have a problem and the logical thing would be for someone to come and help you, (but) what many people did is to pass quickly as I gave people time," explained Proaño, stressing that if there is no sensitivity, "we always go to have an unfair society."

And he confessed that when he opened his eyes after the sensitization experience, he realized "that there were more obstacles than one thinks when he enters normally."

The insecurity at the time of taking the steps with the blindfold was also evident in Donoso that, despite advancing with his hand on the shoulder of a guide, he incessantly moved the cane from one side to another, sometimes without bumping the floor, in the search for some spatial reference.

Legislator Gloria Astudillo joined the exercise by entering the Assembly in a wheelchair. She came to her seat nearly in tears. "Doing this exercise is strong," she said in a broken voice when she declared herself moved by what people with disabilities should live daily.

Astudillo was glad that the country has made progress in accessible infrastructure issues but stressed the need for further studies when determining the sites and mechanisms used to facilitate access for people with disabilities.

"It is unfortunate that many of the solutions that are being given now, rather they are traps because they are not technical solutions," says Sandra Esparza, an architect with a specialty in accessibility and universal design.

She spoke, for example, of pedo-tactile bands that have been placed in the city bordering planters or garbage dumps, "that is to say that the cane user will end up dizzy and without getting anywhere."

Esparza hopes that the exercise carried out on Tuesday in the Assembly can sensitize the actions of the Legislature when preparing its laws, as well as of society in general.

In 2007, she herself sat in a wheelchair to analyze the needs of people with disabilities before designing an inclusive park in Ecuador, considered an example of accessibility in the country.

Extracted from Diario El Mercurio



## Cuenca Medical Resources

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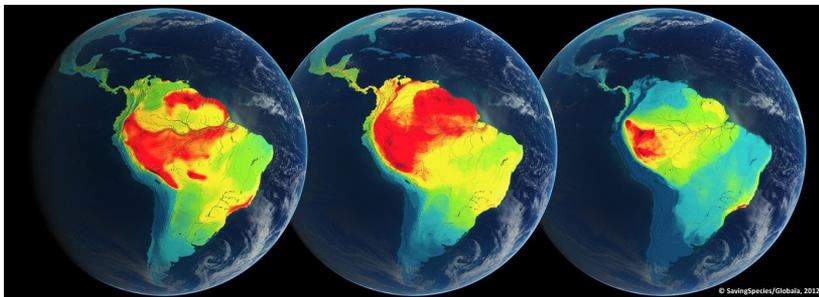
## The Palora Pastaza Bio-Corridor Project

By Irene Gardner

In July 2019, an article entitled "The Achuar and Preserving the Amazon" appeared in The Cuenca Dispatch, which described the efforts of the Achuar, supported by the Friends of Ikiam here in Cuenca, to preserve the traditional rainforest territory of the Achuar indigenous people of Ecuador.

This article, follow-on to the story about the Achuar, describes, the "Palora Pastaza Bio-Corridor Project" a globally significant conservation effort. This important project, currently under development, has two focus areas: rainforest conservation and stimulating Ecuador's economy.

Although larger portions of the rainforest are spread over several South American countries, Ecuador, with only 2% of the continent's rainforest within its borders, is unique. Ecuador is home to the most abundantly bio-diverse region in the world. (As an example of its bio-diversity, in Ecuador's rainforest, more species of trees grow in an area the size of a regulation football (soccer) field than currently grow on the entire North American continent.)



While the density of the bio-diversity in South America, represented by the red areas of the graphic above, shows that of birds (on the left), mammals (in the center) and amphibians (on the right), the amphibians are more plentiful in Ecuador, the country that hosts the highest bio-diversity in the world.

However, the fast pace of development in the Ecuadorian Amazon is creating a mass extinction right now. At the current rate, it will only take 20 to 30 years until the remaining rainforest fragments are too small to function well enough to maintain the countries amazing bio-diversity. Significant additional protected areas are needed now to prevent these losses. Such losses would also have a huge negative impact on Ecuador's economy and quality of life.

Conservation International, which has programs in 29 countries, has requested that Adam Gebb, a Bio-Corridor expert currently living in Cuenca, collaborate with them on the Palora Pastaza Bio-Corridor Project.



Adam Gebb, Co-Founder of Andes Amazon Conservancy, and Bio-Corridor Expert for the "Palora Pastaza Bio-Corridor Project"

Gebb, a native of New York, directed bio-corridor research for 10 years in the State of Vermont. Gebb now resides in Cuenca with his family.

Based on this and two other related projects, Gebb recently co-founded "Andes Amazon Conservancy". He is researching bio-corridor options, educating Ecuadorians about the immense value of maintaining bio-diversity, and developing designs for "roadless economies". The people need sources of income,

but roads inevitably lead to resource extraction. The largest and most significant environmental challenge of our era is how to create vibrant economies without roads.

Per Gebb, the success of the Palora Pastaza Bio-Corridor Project is in the hands of the indigenous peoples and the local government of the Palora Pastaza region. Currently, there is strong support from the local communities. Sharing the science behind bio-corridor viability with locals is key because they have to decide on many of the details.

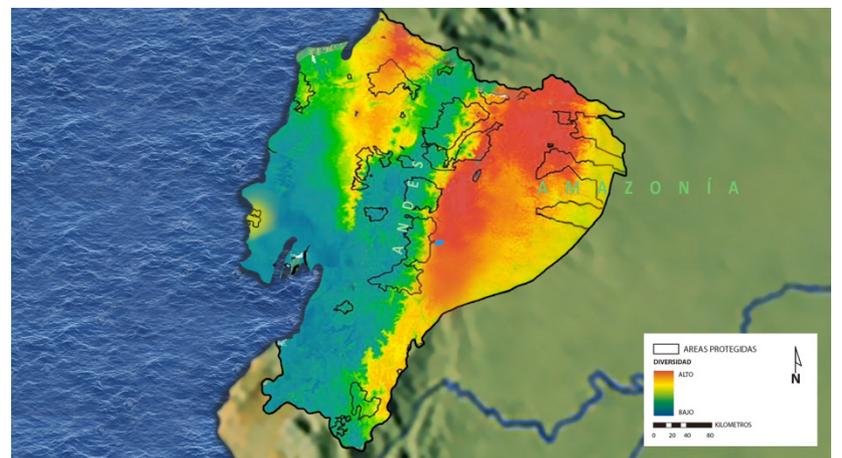
A "Bio-Corridor" is defined as a geographically defined area that provides connectivity between landscapes, ecosystems and natural habitats and ensures the maintenance of bio-diversity and ecological and evolutionary processes.

According to Gebb, the large U-shaped valleys around Cuenca were shaped by glaciers. Earth's climate cycles between ice ages and warmer periods which cause migrations of wildlife to either warmer or cooler climate regions in an effort to survive. Such necessary migrations are hindered or stopped completely by the intrusion of roads, buildings, pasture and/or other man-made obstacles, thereby causing the current wave of mass extinctions. Conservation of these migratory paths/ bio-corridors, will help to ensure the survival of Ecuador's bio-diversity.

A major challenge is a 3,000-kilometer-long development area shown in white below that stretches along the base of the Andes from Peru to the Caribbean. It is a major blockade to wildlife migration. The red arrow below shows where the Palora Pastaza bio-corridor of Ecuador is being planned due to a small hole in this development corridor.



The proposed Palora Pastaza Bio-Corridor Project will be driven by a mixture of scientific concepts and the desires and designs of the people who live in Pablo Sexto, Huamboya, Palora and Taisha in the Canton of Morona Santiago.



Current protected national parks and other conserved areas are outlined by black lines. However, the areas shaded in red have the highest level of bio-diversity.

If the Palora Pastaza Bio-Corridor Project is not successful, it is projected that Sangay National Park and the Ecuadorian Amazon will lose a large part of their bio-diversity because the area is already heavily fragmented. Further fragmentation will go far beyond the "tipping point", creating an extinction cascade.



*Sangay National Park, photo by Adam Gebb*

The Ecuadorian Amazon's small (but growing) eco-tourism opportunities are one of the sustainable ways in which Ecuador will be able to move toward greater financial benefits from increased conservation.

Not surprisingly, the international conservation community has voiced a strong interest in the research done by Adam Gebb. Gebb's research provides historical data from similar projects that show the potential positive economic impact that can be realized from protecting such an environmentally sensitive and bio-diverse part of the Amazon basin. It is also expected that the economies of communities near the conservation zones will be positively enhanced.

More will be written in subsequent weeks to provide an overview of the expected financial benefits to be produced by the bio-corridor project, as well as updates on the development of the bio-corridor and its related projects.

To learn more about the Palora Pastaza Bio-Corridor Project directly from Adam Gebb, a public presentation describing the project and its progress will be held on Thursday, 12 December 2019, from 5:00-7:00pm at the International Christian Community Church, located at Nicanor Aguilar y Solano, Cuenca, Ecuador.

To follow the proposed bio-corridor's progress and to learn more about the Andes Amazon Conservancy, please visit the website,

[www.aaconserve.org](http://www.aaconserve.org).

## Cantonal Council approves taxes to Cuenca homeowners of \$11 million



Starting in January next year, Cuencanos will have to pay over \$11 million in taxes for works of "general benefit," many that have already been completed. This tax was approved this week by the Cantonal Council.

One of the projects that will be charged to taxpayers is the construction of the Parque de la Libertad, for an amount of \$2.3 million, according to the report of the Financial Directorate of the local government.

During the Council Session, the councilors analyzed the proposal of Works of General Benefit and the amounts to be collected. According to Roque Ordonez, councilor of Cuenca, there were some approaches that

included 21 works; some that are leftover 2016, 2017 and 2018. The total value to be recovered was \$14 million.

However, according to Ordonez, it was considered that according to the behavior of recent years and the economic situation in the country, in addition to some complementary contracts that should not necessarily be stipulated as works of general benefit, it was agreed that the amount to be collected will be of \$11,003,760 as compared to the \$9,854,550 that was collected in 2019.

Minor parks, the repair of the Diez de Agosto market cover, the construction of the Central Parking on San Juanito Street, the reconstruction, construction of the Quinta Chica platform cover, among others, are included in the report.

## Campaign on preventing teenage pregnancy launched in Cuenca



The Sexual and Reproductive Health Network (RED SEX) and the Municipal GAD of Cuenca, presented a campaign to students last week to prevent teenage pregnancy.

The program was attended by students from different Cuenca schools, who learned about the activities that will be carried out throughout the campaign. As part of the event, the young people received different methods of protection and were told of help they can receive to prevent an unwanted pregnancy.

Mery Cabrera, director of the Sendas Foundation, explained that actions in favor of preventing teenage pregnancy mean contributing directly to the social development of women.

"Preventing a teenage pregnancy costs the State \$100, attending to a pregnancy cost the State \$600. Of this last value, 20% are medical expenses and 80% is the social cost; that is, the years of schooling lost, future economic income lost and the reduction of maternal death," she said.

Pedro Palacios, mayor of Cuenca, highlighted the commitment he has to contribute to reducing the number of pregnant adolescents through access to information free of prejudices and taboos.

According to data from the Ministry of Public Health, in Cuenca and Azuay the rates of early maternity are still worrying. The Ministry said that 67.7% of adolescents and young people between 15 and 24 years old, did not use a contraceptive method in their first sexual relationship.

In addition, it emphasizes that the main reasons for not using a method is the ignorance of the different contraceptives and the failure to access them. The ministry also reported that 7.5% of pregnancies in children under 15 years end in abortions, and 44.3% of young women (15 to 24 years old) who became pregnant interrupted their studies and did not return to school.

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## More than 250 people plant 3,500 trees on the Mishquiyacu hill



The Ministry of the Environment, through the Provincial Directorate of Azuay, National Reforestation Program and Environmental and Social Reparation Program, with the support of private companies and public institutions developed a reforestation day in the Mishquiyacu hill, as part of the "Plant your tree, sow life" campaign.

This activity was attended by more than 250 people including students of educational units of Paute, Catholic University of Cuenca, Salesian Polytechnic University, Autonomous Decentralized Municipal Government of Paute, Political Headquarters of the canton, Political Tenure of San Cristóbal and EL Cabo, Body of Firefighters, Armed Forces and delegates of public and private institutions. The group

planted 3,500 native trees including alder, walnut, cedar, pumamaqui, and guagual, among other species.

Sindel Vinueza, Undersecretary of Natural Heritage of this State portfolio, mentioned that as a public policy and interest of the National Government, they initiated the campaign 'Plant your tree, sow life' in order to take action against climate change.

"Through next year we aspire to plant 1 million native trees nationwide to recover the impact that the planet has, and reduce greenhouse gases," he said.

During the next three years, the trees that were planted will be monitored to provide the necessary maintenance: irrigation, fertilizer and care.

there were 355 victims of femicide in the country.

Despite this, Jervez says that First Reception Room is the only one in the province that has a technical standard developed between the State Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Public Health, where they handle forensic protocols of legal medicine for cases of sexual crimes.

Its application guarantees the protection of the evidence of the crime. The Prosecutor's Office also trained the doctors responsible for expert reports and this allows for coordination in the care of the victims and their access to justice.

"We have a doctor, a psychologist, we give therapy and help them manage their problems. If it is a flagrant crime, they are given access to HIV prophylaxis and given medication to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Toxicological tests are done and the relevant authorities are notified," says Jervez.

But the work in the Room does not end here. The doctors have a duty to follow up on each case and, if the victim is at risk in their home, they are sent to shelter. Jervez points out that the Room was designed to serve all citizens, regardless of age or gender, but most victims are women.

During this year, 305 medical and 870 psychological exams have been made in the ward and 75 home visits to parishes have been made. The majority of care, 280, has been to women; there were 50 consultations with men.

Psychological attention was given to 600 women and 182 to men. "Although there are more women, it does not focus only on them," Jervez said.

For 2018, 1,487 exams were made: 486 medical, 966 psychological and 97 home visits.

One of the patients is Helena (a protected name). A 35-year-old woman who receives psychological attention in the First Reception Hall. She goes with her one-year-old and an eight-month that suffers from epilepsy.

She confesses that her boyfriend was unfaithful and after being verbally abused she decided to end her relationship with him. "Here they have helped me, the social worker has even given me financial help," says Helena while playing with her little girl.

Maria José Machado, an activist for women's rights, says that violence against women is a structural phenomenon that mainly affects them. Nearly 80 percent of women who report abuse, suffer from their husbands or partners.

"This shows that the house is the most insecure place for women," reflects Machado and says that we must work on socio-cultural patterns that naturalize violence against women.

## Victims of abuse are feeling more empowered to report violence



Victims of abuse are starting to break the silence in which they have been submerged for several years. The director of the Cuenca-Sur District, Maria Fernanda Jervez, says that the First Reception Room that works at the Carlos Elizalde Maternal and Child Hospital, registered an increase in complaints of violence this year, compared to last year.

Though 2019 is not over yet, 182 notifications of abuse have already been counted in the Prosecutor's Office and in the Cantonal Board for the Protection of Rights; all of last year 189 complaints were registered.

For Jervez, this reflects that the victims of violence, be they women, children or older adults, are being empowered more and the fear of notifying authorities when they are violated is ending.

Despite these efforts and results that are "positive," according to data from the Attorney General's Office, seven out of 10 women have suffered some kind of violence in Azuay and during 2019, three women have been killed in the province.

This institution also disclosed that from January 1, 2014 to November 18, 2019,

## HIV prevention openly discussed in Cuenca campaign

Last Friday, November 29, the HIV Prevention Campaign was launched as part of the commemoration of World AIDS Day.

The act was carried out in the Mayor's Office of Cuenca and was promoted together with the Sexual and Reproductive Health Network (RED SEX).

The launch was attended by members of civil society and students from different educational establishments, who learned about this campaign and were informed about the different methods of protection and help they can receive to prevent the infection.

Pedro Palacios, mayor of Cuenca, highlighted the commitment the current administration has to contributing to reducing the number of new infections and improving the health and well-being of people who have tested positive with the virus.

Natasha Peralta, representative of the Zonal 6 of Health, reported that between January and November 2019, 232 new cases of HIV have been registered in Azuay and that at across Ecuador there are more than 50,000 cases.

The Municipality of Cuenca explained that according to records of the Ministry of Public Health, Azuay records about 317 identified cases and 58% of those infected know their status; 88% of those have access to treatment and 50% take drugs to suppress the virus.

The coordinator of the Municipal Program of Sexual and Reproductive Health, Juan Salamea, explained that they have worked together with the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Cuenca to create the strategy called 'Ponso Violeta' that will be executed in different areas of the city.

"We will be present in nightlife centers, in educational centers and in other spaces with messages about HIV, sexual and reproductive health rights and other issues," he explained.

## CRIME REPORT AND ACCIDENT REPORT

### Cuenca and National Criminal Activity

(Cuenca) Joseph Yanzaguano Morocho, 17, who disappeared on Sunday October 13, in the Paute canton was found dead last Tuesday in the Paute river.

Yanzaguano's aunt, María Juanacio said that the family learned that he was last seen in the Guachapala canton drinking beer, in the company of a woman.

The family believes that Yanzaguano's death is suspicious and has asked the Prosecutor to investigate the circumstances of the death.

The autopsy was fulfilled yesterday and then the body was transferred to Zhumir Alto, from the Paute canton for viewing.

(Cuenca) The Judicial Police (PJ) of Azuay arrested two alleged assailants who stole \$1,950 in an armed robbery. The victim was stopped last Monday when he was transferring money from his business, near El Arenal, south of Cuenca.

After the crime, the perpetrators escaped in a van. After an investigation, the National Police searched two buildings and captured two alleged assailants.

During the procedure, the Police seized three cell phones that are now part of the evidence.

(Cuenca) Juan Andrés V., alias 'Mangajo', is facing a second criminal trial as the alleged perpetrator of the rape against a teenager.

According to the investigation conducted by the Prosecutor's Office of Azuay, on April 19, 2018, when the victim was 14 years old, Juan Andrés V. took the teenager and a friend from an educational center to his home located in the Puertas del Sol citadel.

When they were in the room, he allegedly gave them alcoholic beverages that made them lose consciousness and that was when he had committed sexual assault on one of them.

If convicted, he could be sentenced from 19 to 22 years in prison, as established in article 171 of the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code. If the judges consider the aggravating factors he could be sentenced to 29 years and seven months of imprisonment.

#### Other Cases

Juan Andrés V. was arrested on July 26, 2018 for an alleged sexual abuse and since that day, nine cases of different sexual crimes have been filed against him.

For a first case of rape he was sentenced to 29 years and seven months in prison.

(Cuenca) The timely intervention of the residents of the Huayna Cápac neighborhood succeeded in arresting an alleged criminal who had entered a home in the sector and stole personal property and money.

Jaime Ruales, head of the southern district of the National Police, said that police personnel were alerted to the presence of the alleged criminal through ECU 911. As reported by witnesses, it was the neighbors who apprehended the subject.

The official explained that when entering the personal data of the detainee into the police system, they found he had 20 arrests, since 1994. The reasons included robbery, drug possession, attempted murder and aggravated robbery.

What caught Ruales' attention is that only four days ago the subject

was released from prison after serving a four-month sentence in the Machala prison.

(Cuenca) Forty-four-year-old Kléver FQ was arrested Friday afternoon at Eugenio Espejo and Pedro de León streets, by uniformed members of the National Police who found a firearm in his possession.

According to officer Juan León, they observed the suspect walking through the sector with a suspicious attitude. The subject then took off on foot and tried to break into a car. Police officers intercepted him and during a struggle, one of the agents saw that the subject was hiding a 38-caliber revolver under his shirt.

Minutes after the arrest, a citizen who had been the victim of the subject reported theft. The citizen was arrested and placed in jail.

(Gualaceo) Police investigations into the robbery at an ATM of the Banco del Pacifico, in the Gualaceo canton, led to authorities locating the vehicle used by the criminals.

The police report notes that the robbery was committed at 03:30 on Friday, November 29, at an ATM installed at a gas station located in Carmen de Bullcay. It was known that the criminals cut open the metal compartment of ATM and took \$50,000.

Once the Judicial Police agents collected the evidence, a mechanic intervened in Alfonso Malo and Manuel Vega streets, in Cuenca, where they found a Hyundai Terracan vehicle, reported stolen on November 6 in Guayaquil.

Inside the car they found an oxygen cylinder, cables, balaclavas and gloves, allegedly used to commit theft.

### Cuenca Area Traffic Accidents

\*Two people were injured as the result of a traffic accident that occurred on Wednesday morning, on the El Valle-Santa Ana highway.

The incident occurred at 05:45, in the Auquilla sector, when an inter-parroquial bus of the Cooperativa Progreso and an urban service bus lost control and drove into each other.

Rescue personnel and agents of the Mobility, Transit and Transportation Company, EMOV EP arrived at the scene and provided first aid to two people.

Traffic agents collect information to determine the true causes of the accident.

\*On Monday afternoon, December 2, 2019, a traffic accident on Ricardo Durán Avenue and Juan de Senierges Street, in the south of Cuenca left five people injured.

The accident was a frontal crash between a Hyundai Tucson car and a double cab van. According to early versions of witnesses, the Tucson in an attempt to pass an urban transport unit, invaded the opposite lane when the truck was hit.

As a result of the impact, five people were injured and transferred to Vicente Corral Moscoso Hospital.

The driver of the Hyundai Tucson was arrested and had a positive breathalyzer test.



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## Drivers complain about aggressive street corner window washers



The people who dedicate themselves to asking for money in exchange for cleaning windshields of the cars on the streets and avenues of the city, are causing drivers discomfort because of their aggressive attitudes.

These "squeegee men" can often be found on Avenida de las Américas and Tinajillas, Remigio Crespo Avenue, Larga Street, Doce de Abril Avenue and Huayna Cápac and around the Alejandro Serrano Aguilar Stadium.

But it's not just the squeegee men causing problems. Drivers are also complaining about the overabundance of people asking for charity and selling and fruits and who become insistent that people buy their products, according to the allegations.

### Control

Among the problems raised in recent days is the one that happened this week on Solano Avenue and Florencia Astudillo, where three individuals were reluctant to leave the streets when asked by the Citizen guard, on the grounds that they have the right to work.

One of them used crutches even though he didn't need technical aids to walk. "It is a ruse to cause pity and to be given money," said a guard who was involved in the operation.

With the support of the National Police, the individuals withdrew to Remigio Crespo Avenue where they continued with their activities.

The same individual on the crutches was removed last Tuesday from Avenida de las Américas. In a video that spread through social networks, it was observed that he walked without difficulty when he was removed from the location where he was asking for money.

A statement from the Citizen Guard notes that the citizen with alleged disability, along with other windshield wipers, intimidate passers-by and drivers to give them money.

## IESS hospital preforms first minimally invasive heart procedure

The cost of this intervention in the private health system is around \$20,000. However, in the hospital it is done for free.

Teófilo Ríos, 70, is the first patient of the José Carrasco Arteaga hospital to receive ministernotomy surgery (a minimally invasive surgery) to change an aortic valve.

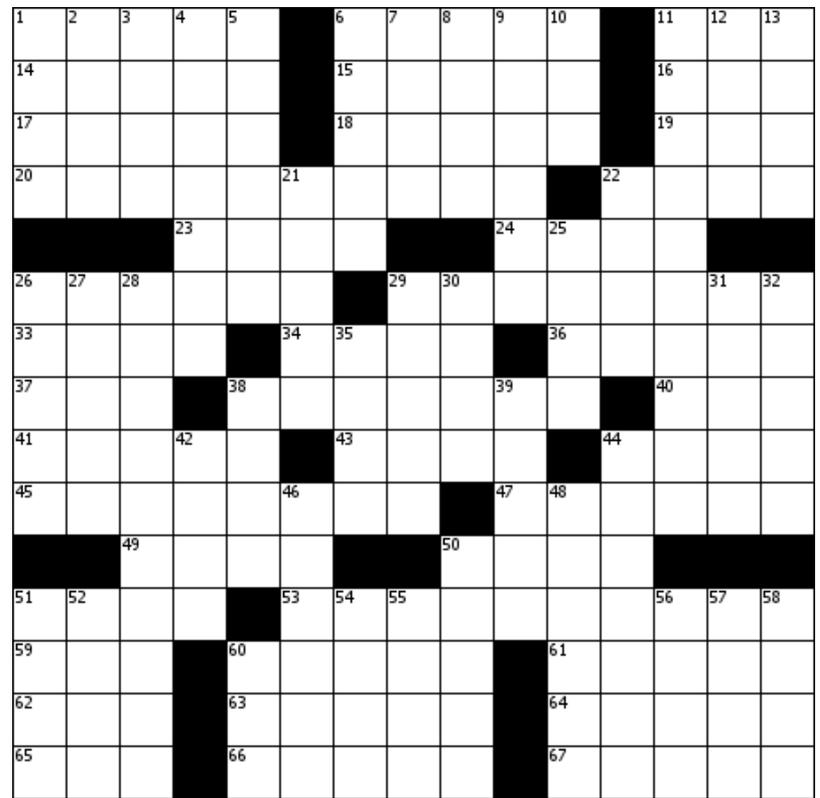
Javier López, head of Cardiac Surgery, commented that heart surgeries have been performed for five years at the hospital and have been improved with the minimally invasive technique.

"We are the first public hospital that performs this type of surgery, with a small incision for rapid recovery and reducing surgical trauma," López said.

Juan Flores, a cardiovascular surgeon, explained that the intervention takes about three hours, and that it consists of a small incision of 5 cm. on the sternum.

"In conventional surgery, the opening is of the entire sternum, while with the minimum invasive technique, it is a small opening that, with a cannulation through the groin, the valve change is concluded. The operative field is smaller and recovery is fast," said Flores.

Marcela Albán, a relative of the patient, said the recovery was immediate, and now her father-in-law gets up on his own and fulfills his normal activities at home.



See answers on page 11

### Across

1. Adduces
6. Post-rodeo chow, perhaps
11. It may be full of iron
14. Horror star Peter
15. Optimistic expectations
16. Ontario's 21st premier
17. Coalition
18. Cathartic salts
19. Life imitator
20. After-school pig-out?
22. Some rentals
23. Refreshing rapper?
24. Noncommittal words
26. Pago Pago native
29. Some Girl Scouts
33. Kinship group
34. Locker room powder
36. "Taxi" character
37. Princeton's League
38. Lancelot's son
40. "Le Cage \_\_\_ Folles"
41. Shrek's sweetheart
43. Work without \_\_\_ (risk injury)
44. Not naughty
45. Arriving, as planes
47. Cap lifter
49. Friable soil
50. Plow share?
51. French composer Satie
53. Turkey type
59. Frenchman's wine
60. Angry outburst
61. Oscar winner Marisa
62. Cantab rival
63. Great Plains orange
64. Galsworthy heroine
65. VCR-button letters
66. City ordinance, e.g.
67. Peace Nobel of 2001

### Down

1. \_\_\_-Napoca, Romania
2. Island near Mull
3. Wasp-waisted, e.g.
4. Reason for disappearing beaches
5. One of New York's Finger Lakes
6. A man may beat his
7. Pueblo-dwelling tribe
8. \_\_\_ facto
9. Nikita successor
10. Real suffix
11. Easy money
12. Toddler's containment
13. Some ballplayers
21. Berger of "Major Dundee"
22. Facts and figures, e.g.
25. Convalesce
26. Asimov's genre
27. One of the Chipmunks
28. Minnesota institution
29. Word in "The Trolley Song"
30. Persistent pain
31. Figure out
32. Bobby-\_\_\_
35. Loretta's "M\*A\*S\*H" co-star
38. Vasco de \_\_\_
39. Square things?
42. Romantic corner
44. Recent arrival
46. Tactful turndown
48. Bassanio's love
50. Toss about, as petals
51. Word in a Grimm ending?
52. Provoke
54. Range separating two continents
55. Roman garb
56. Last word of the Bible
57. Hyena from Dogpatch
58. Legal claim
60. Watch chain

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND TOWN AND BEYOND....

"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) for consideration.

### Classifieds and Events

#### Classifieds

#### Andes Amazon Conservancy Presentation: Amazon Biocorridor Protection

Learn about establishing biocorridors, supporting indigenous planning, and building an Eco-hut Network.  
Thursday, December 12th, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM.  
Where: ICC, Nicanor Aquilar y Solano, near Hospital Mt Sinai

#### Altísimo Chocolate is Closing - Everything must go.

We would like to thank all our supporters but we are sad to say Altísimo Chocolate & Bistro is closing. Everything in the restaurant is for sale. Please come visit.

#### A Smile with Solidarity: a Christmas initiative to benefit migrant families at Fundación Crea Tu Espacio

This Christmas season, along with International Christian Community and some Marketing and Trade students from American College, Fundación Crea Tu Espacio is organizing a fundraiser to help migrant families in need. We will be constructing baskets for families to give during the holiday season. We are seeking donations of candies, cookies, rice, oil, salt, flour, tuna, canned goods, pasta or noodles, coffee, and dry lentils, beans, or peas. For more information, you can reach out to Fundación Crea Tu Espacio on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) or by phone number at 099-898-8904 To get in contact with Caroline Wilkerson, a main organizer of the project, email [carolinewilkerson1@gmail.com](mailto:carolinewilkerson1@gmail.com) or call/WhatsApp at 099-487-5402.

#### Handmade Christmas Ornaments Starting From \$15

Reasonable Handmade Christmas Ornaments for Sale. We have several options for you. Sizes from 30cm to 60cm. Prices starting from \$15.  
Contact: Monica V. Phone: 0995821318

#### Events

#### December 15th - Cuenca Christmas Run 5k

The Cuenca Christmas Run is a family event, featuring a holiday fair, live music, prizes, and several options to run or walk. The 5k starts at 8am at Parque de la Madre and loops around town with an option of doing half of the course. After the 5k, there will be a race around the track at Parque de la Madre for small children. Then, stick around for live music and browse the fair.

Racers will receive an official t-shirt, Santa hat, bag, drink, fruit, and number. The registration fee is \$15 for adults and \$7 for children and seniors.

Participants are encouraged to bring their pets. There will be prizes for best costume for racers and pets. Come as Santa, an elf, a reindeer or anything else you can think of.

Registrations are available at:

Directv (near Millenium Plaza)  
Movistar Batan Shopping  
Cuenca-Gimnasio Master Force (Hermano Miguel y Sangurima local 12-45)

You can also request bank transfer information by email or WhatsApp.

Contact: Omar Caamano Phone: 0992528245  
email: [Christmasrun5k@gmail.com](mailto:Christmasrun5k@gmail.com)

#### December 12th - The Nutcracker

The ballet "The Nutcracker" by Piotr Tchaikovsky is a fairy tale

structured in two acts. It premiered in 1892 at the Mariinski Theater in St. Petersburg and remains one of the most represented ballet works worldwide. The play is an adaptation of the story by Alejandro Dumas (father) "The Nutcracker and the King of Mice" and the story of Clara, a girl who receives a very special gift during Christmas Eve, through which You will discover a world full of magic and splendor. More than 300 artists on stage accompanied by the Symphony Orchestra of Cuenca, will make "The Nutcracker" the best gift to enjoy this Christmas family as a family.

Ticket value: USD. 10

Address: Carlos Cueva Tamariz Theater - Av 12 De Abril Y Agustín Cueva.

B	A	L	M		L	A	R	V	A		S	T	A	T
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A	R	S	O	N		S	A	U	L		S	S	T	
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Solution to Crossword puzzle on page 10

Solution to Sudoku puzzle on page 3

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

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jtoral8@hotmail.com



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