

THE CUENCA DISPATCH

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ETAPA begins critical view of projects in its 2020 budget

The Telecommunications, Drinking Water and Sewerage Company (ETAPA), is reviewing its budget for 2020 to examine what services it will continue and which one it may cut. The hope is that with changes, it can resolve the economic crisis that is currently going through.

The company—the largest of the Municipality of Cuenca's eight companies—says that among the projects it plans to continue for next year is to improve its drinking water service.

The coverage for this service in Cuenca is 97.31 percent. In the urban area ETAPA provides water to 97.82 percent of homes; in the rural area it reaches 94.89 percent. Two water-related projects remain in ETAPA's annual operating plan.

The first is to complete the entire Saymirin-Tixan water pipeline project, "Which unfortunately was inaugurated at the beginning of 2019, but was not completed," said Jorge Espinoza, manager of the ETAPA company.

Espinoza said that when this project was "inaugurated," it in fact was only 60 percent complete. It is currently 75 percent complete and ETAPA hopes to finish the project by February 2020.

Using the full capacity of the Tixán plant, which has an extension, will



allow for greater water reserves and a better response in terms of the amount of the liquid in case of emergencies.

The other water related ETAPA project refers to the start of pre-feasibility studies for Master Plans III. "That is how we project the water supply for the next 50 years," said Espinoza.

This project looks at how Cuenca will discontinue relying on water from the nearby mountains—from the

cont. page 4.

Early release eliminated by National Assembly for serious crimes



On Tuesday, December 17, 2019, the Plenary Session of the National Assembly approved one of the main reforms to the Organic Integral Criminal Code. This change will take effect in the next few days, after being published in the Official Register.

People who have been sentenced for rape, murder or for another 17 crimes considered serious, can no longer benefit from pre-release (parole). They will have to serve the full sentence in jail.

Currently, detainees can request the benefit of the so-called "semi-open" or "open" programs. The semi-open program is

cont. page 4.

Climate change threatens the frogs of the Ecuadorian Chocó



Climate change, one of the main environmental problems today, places the amphibians of the Ecuadorian Chocó, especially frogs, even more vulnerable, according to a statement from the Jocotoco Foundation.

Amphibians, being ectotherms (they depend on the heat of the environment instead of producing it internally), can be greatly affected by varying weather conditions.

A scientific study revealed that climate change has caused strong consequences for amphibians in the Americas and Australia, especially spreading even more deadly amphibian disease caused by warmer temperatures.

cont. page 4.



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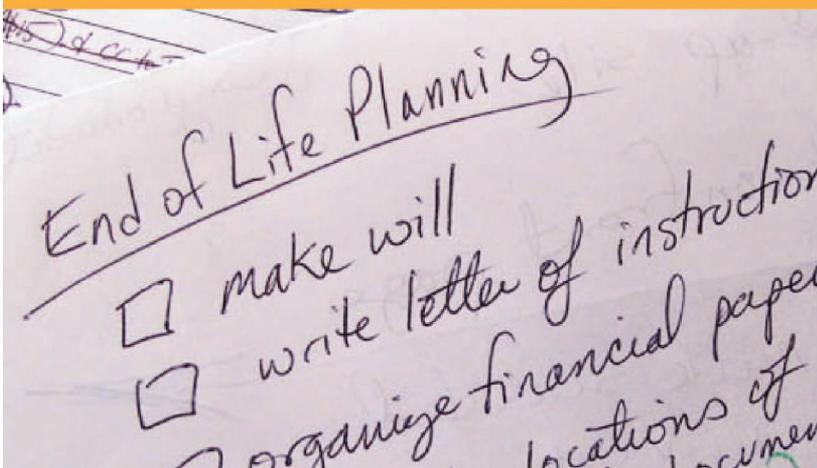
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I'M JUST SAYIN'

By Michael Soares

Take a hike

Last week we published a story about the Municipality's new "GuíacaminANTES," or "Walkers Guide," that lays out in detail, 16 different hikes—ranging from low difficulty to high difficulty—that one can take around the Cuenca area.

This new guide offers a chance to see Cuenca in a different way. El Tiempo columnist Pablo Osorio Guerrero wrote about these trails this week in a column we found worth repeating. Here it is (please forgive our translation if it is not 100 percent perfect):

The end of the year is a good time to define personal commitments for the new year.

Many want to know the Galapagos; others simply want to have more free time. Some are getting married and there are those who want their own business.

Let me make a recommendation, what if in 2020 we know Cuenca? I mean to know Cuenca completely, reaching beyond the everyday and our comfort zone.

We already know the Cathedral and the historic center, now we are going to walk around the surroundings of Cuenca that are not common to visit: we can go to the last remnants of humid forest around Cuenca. Let's move along the irrigation canals that have allowed us to keep alive a cultural tradition of centuries like the chakra. Let's dare to reach those two legendary hills that guard Cuenca.

The Walkers guide that has just been presented by the Municipality of Cuenca, and that can be downloaded at www.caminantescuenca.org, integrates an effort that has already been made by athletes and hikers a long time ago. It now offers us an unmissable opportunity for the ordinary person who has no plans for the weekend. We can know that Cuenca that many times we ignore and turn our backs on.

The guide invites you to visit the parishes of Cuenca in the best possible way: walking, sharing with its inhabitants, buying their products and recognizing that the growth of Cuenca generates tensions that we must resolve at this time.

Traveling is not always related to airplanes, suitcases or hotels. Sometimes it has to do with dusting a small backpack, preparing a snack, water, dressing in comfortable clothes, meeting friends and going for a walk. Without expectations to find something fabulous at the end of the road, but to enjoy the effort that each step represents, receiving new impressions of the surroundings of the city, understanding its history, its customs, its people.

Walking along those roads will leave us with impressions that can make us better Cuencanos.

Pablo Osorio-Guerrero is a technical advisor for GIZ Ecuador. GIZ is a service provider in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education work, dedicated to shaping a future worth living around the world.

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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!

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

See answers on page 11

ETAPA begins critical view of projects in its 2020 budget (Cont.)

four traditional water basins—and instead draws it from the Moya River in the Sigsig canton.

Espinozasaid it will begin the pre-feasibility studies with the support of the Development Bank of Latin America, (CAF). And that because of the size of the work, it will take three to four years to complete.

He also said he realizes that the situation of the company is not the best, but "you have to do the work to lift it." The municipal administration aims to exhaust all efforts to avoid a rate revision.

Telecommunications

There are also two ambitious telecommunications projects scheduled for 2020, according to Espinoza.

The first has to do with the migration from copper to fiber optics in its internet business. Two thirds of current ETAP internet clients are on copper wire, a technology that is no longer in use. Only one third of users have fiber optics. "The idea is to repower it and migrate more than 25,000 customers to this network," he said.

The other project is to change the technological platform to one that will support migration and that allow the company to offer other fiber optic Internet-mounted services for residential and corporate sectors. This will cost more than \$10 million and adds to the investments the company has in 2020.

ETAPA's internet service, with just over 65,000 subscribers, is one of its most profitable offerings. However, it has to regularly adapt to changes in technologies.

Data Center

ETAPA's Data Center—in which \$3.8 million were invested in under previous administrations—is a corporate business that does not reach residential (it is used for database hosting). The service is profitable, but ETAPA is currently looking for alliances with other companies that offer similar services in order to increase the profitability of this sector.

Satellite Television

The satellite TV service that ETAPA launched in 2013, has about 4,000 subscribers according to ETAPA Telecommunications Manager of ETAPAFabián Brito. Since launching, this part of ETAPA's business has lost \$7 million. Based on this, ETAPA's Board of Directors has decided to discontinue the service.

"Those millions of dollars could be invested in water and sanitation in the rural sectors that require it most," said Espinoza.

Climate change threatens the frogs of the Ecuadorian Chocó (Cont.)

In addition, amphibians have suffered more extinctions than any other group of vertebrates.

Ecuador is a key point of amphibian biodiversity since there are about 622 species, of which 45% are endemic.

In the Ecuadorian Chocó forest, a concentration point of high biodiversity, more than 130 species of amphibians can be found.

And more and more species are discovered here. An example was the rediscovery of the horned marsupial frog (*Gastrothecacornuta*) in the Canandé reserve of Fundación Jocotoco, which was believed to have disappeared from Ecuador for more than 10 years .

"This shows that the conservation of primary forests is essential to save the species that are in danger of extinction," says the organization.

The endemic frogs of Chocó are fundamental indicators to determine changes in this rich ecosystem. Three of the most emblematic species are: the devil frog (*Oophagasylyvatica*), the chachi frog (*Boanapicturata*), and the white-dotted glass frog (*Sachatamiaalbomaculata*).

The devil frog, which is classified as almost threatened, has declined significantly in Ecuador in the last decade. According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), it is now only in the north of the country.

This species inhabits the humid forest and increases its activity after heavy rains. So, the climate and the quality of the forest are important factors in their reproduction and survival.

The chachi frog is named after an indigenous community in northwestern Esmeraldas. This species needs rivers of good ecological quality and medium and low stratum vegetation of primary and secondary forest to survive.

The white-dotted glass frog is a nocturnal species that is found near streams and waterfalls in virgin, humid forests or with little alteration. In Ecuador, it is mainly found in the Chocó forest.

"One of the best ways to combat the biodiversity crisis identified by the United Nations is ecological conservation. By establishing and extending ecological reserves, as Jocotoco Foundation does, species of critical importance of fauna and flora are being protected," says the organization.

Another problem that Ecuadorian Chocó has, located in the northwest, mainly in the province of Esmeraldas, and its species, is deforestation and agricultural expansion.

Approximately 61% of the Chocó forest (1.8 million hectares) in Ecuador has been deforested, according to the report of the Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project (MAAP), an Amazon Conservation initiative.

The low elevation jungle portion is the most affected with a 68% loss. In the 2017-2018 period alone, 4,600 hectares were logged.

Portions of the remnants of this region are part of protected areas such as the Cotacachi-Cayapas Ecological Reserve. This conserves an important section, but most of the forest is at medium and high altitudes, when the greatest loss occurs in the low jungle.

For that reason, the Jocotoco Foundation established the Canandé reserve that covers more than 7,000 hectares. It is in a strategic location to eventually connect it with Cotacachi-Cayapas and prevent deforestation.

Extracted from Diario EL Universo

Early release eliminated by National Assembly for serious crimes (Cont.)

granted to those who have served 60 percent of the sentence and meet other requirements. The "open" program is for those who have served 80 percent of the penalty, more than the requirements.

In both cases, the remainder of the sentence is served outside the jail, but an electronic device is placed and replacement measures are imposed on them.

This benefit was eliminated on Tuesday, December 17, 2019 by the Plenary of the National Assembly for those sentenced for: murder, femicide, murder for hire, crimes against integrity and personal freedom resulting in death. In addition, to those convicted of robbery resulting in death, crimes against sexual and reproductive integrity, trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, crimes of violence against women or family members. Likewise, for those sentenced for terrorism, organized crime, abuse resulting in deaths and serious violations of human rights and crimes against international humanitarian law.

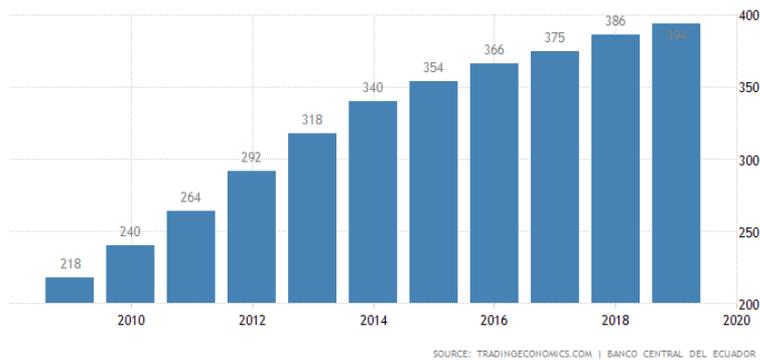
It was also eliminated for the lesser crimes of bribery, fraud, illicit enrichment, money laundering, unjustified private enrichment, high and large-scale drug trafficking.

This is just one of the reforms to the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code (COIP) approved by the Legislative Plenary session on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, in which it resolved the Executive's partial veto on the project approved by the Legislature on September 27.

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Labor board and unions disagree on appropriate wage increase for 2020



Tuesday morning, the National Labor and Wages Council met to try to reach an agreement on the basic salary for 2020.

Before joining the meeting at the Ministry of Labor, Richard Gomez, Vice President of the Unitary Central of Workers (CUT), indicated that his organization proposes an increase of \$15 to the current value of the Unified Basic Salary (SBU), which is \$394.00 a month.

Speaking as the union's representative, Gomez said that it is a "prudent" value that considers the economic situation of the country in terms of inflation, productivity and the value of the basic basket. He expressed his opposition to the proposal to increase the basic salary by only one dollar as has been reported.

Cristóbal Buendía, a lawyer for the workers, explained that this increase, determined by a study by Deloitte, only considers the level of inflation, so they disagree with Gomez's assessment.

For his part, Edgar Sarango, of the Confederation of Workers, came to the meeting with a proposal of between \$15 and \$20 of salary increase, although he believes that workers and employers will not easily reach an agreement, and that it will be the Government that decides as has happened in recent years.

At a press conference earlier in the week, the Unitary Front of Workers (FUT), which does not participate in the Council meeting, asked for a 25 percent rise in the current basic salary, or \$98.50. The union maintains that the purchasing power of workers has decreased by 50 percent and that the public sector has not increased wages.

Cuenca to build three more market areas under 2020 budget plan

Decongesting and reorganizing the increase in informal sales in the city in a planned manner, is the main objective of the construction of three markets in Cuenca where more than 1,000 autonomous merchants will be relocated.

These spaces are included in the planning and budget of the Municipality of Cuenca for 2020, according to Patricio Abad financial director. So, for these and other works, an amount of \$100 million of investment has been allocated by the city.

Under the plan, a wholesaler market will be located in an area of 30 hectares on the Panamericana Norte, at the sector entrance to the parish Llaqueo. A second supply center will be located in the Mutualista Azuay sector of El Cebollar, and feasibility studies will be carried out for a market in the southwest area.

Investment

The market first will be built on land that was intended for the removal of aggregates and stone on the North Pan American Highway.

It was chosen because it is far from the urban area and because it has a direct access route from the cantons and neighboring provinces that provide Cuenca with agricultural products. A total of \$13 million will be invested for this market.

The second market will be located where there is also a Community Police Unit and the El Cebollar Cultural Center, which will supply the nearby parishes of the place: \$# million has been allocated for its construction.

Finally, the third market will be in the Naranca area and will provide

the population of the southwest area; \$110,000 is being budgeted for this location.

Josué Vega, municipal planning director, explained that the retail and wholesale markets construction program is part of the Retail and Market program.

He added that the El Arenal Market has worked for years as a wholesaler and a retailer. Now, the wholesale function will leave Feria Libre and will operate out of the market at the entrance to Llaqueo.

Vega said that the provision of food and goods for Cuenca will reach this location and from there they will be distributed to the markets that make up the network of neighborhoods, parishes and various sectors supply markets.

This work is funded from the efforts made with the Andean Development Corporation, CAF.

The space where this wholesale market will be located is in a declaration of public utility that is still in private hands, "but there are important advances and there is no complexity," Vega said. The other spaces are already owned by the Municipality.

The Mutualista Azuay market is going to be retail and will provide products to the rural area such as Sinincay, Racar, Sayausi parishes, among others.

Luis Vásquez, a resident of El Cebollar said that the work would be advantageous for all the inhabitants of the sector, as there would be more movement in the economy.

In the Naranca area, expansion arrangements will be made to regulate a greater number of traders at a formal situation.

Census

The objective of these market moves is to organize the city and in a matter of sales, to get the informal sellers off the city streets. The sellers say now that there is no other way for them to work.

Some walk to sell their products while others settle on sidewalks to earn a living. By distance, by necessity or for other reasons, they cling to work on the streets.

The Market Management group is working on a census of the autonomous sales population. Marcelo Álvarez, who is in charge of this municipal agency, said they are working on the census to ensure that autonomous workers are not only registered, but also to be able to give them a space within the new markets.



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Ecuador to import 3.36 million barrels of premium diesel from Singapore



Petroecuador will import 3.36 million barrels of premium diesel from the Singapore-based firm Trafigura Pte. Ltd. Trafigura was the winner of an international

competition that Petroecuador says involved 45 companies.

This was reported yesterday in a statement by the public oil company of Ecuador, that said that with this import, it will be able to meet Ecuador's demand for this fuel through May 2020.

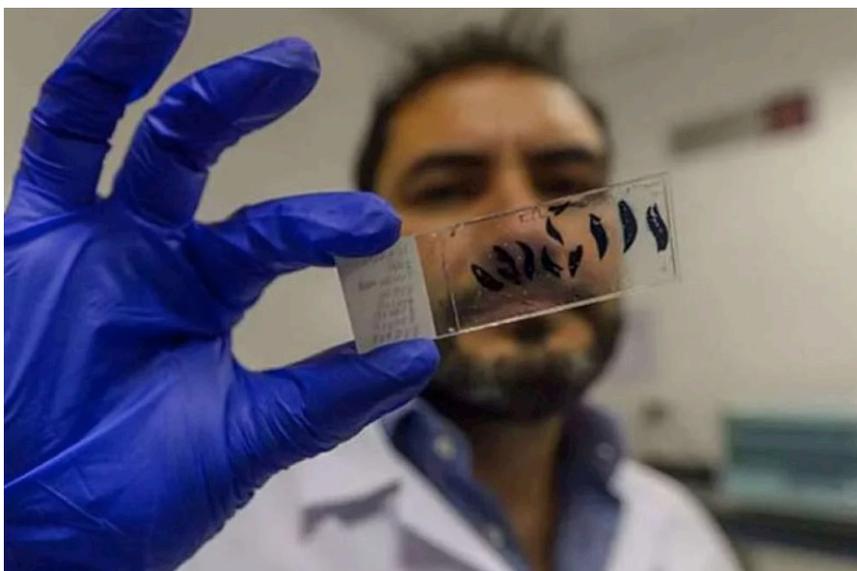
The hydrocarbons company awarded Trafigura Pte. Ltd. the import of more than three million barrels of the premium diesel type, after the company offered a differential of \$4.76 per

barrel.

Of the 45 companies invited to the international competition, eight valid offers were received from different companies and the marker used for the tender was the Platts ULSD, Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel, Prompt Pipeline, from the Gulf Coast of the United States.

The agreed volume will reach the country in 14 shipments of 280,000 barrels each. The first of the fourteen shipments is scheduled to arrive between December 22nd and 24th.

Ecuadorian scientist part of team making advances in cancer



Twelve years ago, Iván Moya won a scholarship to study at the Catholic University of Belgium (VIB-KULeuven), where he earned his PhD in Biomedical Sciences. Subsequently, he joined a team of researchers led by Dr. Georg Halder who has just published the result of a scientific investigation that constitutes a contribution in the fight against the so-called 21st century pandemic: cancer.

In particular they have focused on primary liver cancer, cholangio carcinoma, the most lethal of all that affect this organ, and hepatocellular carcinoma.

"When studying liver tumors and their interaction with normal tissue, we find that normal cells around the tumor already mount an antitumor defense response, which is quite similar to the tissue regeneration program," says Moya, now a researcher at the University of Las Américas (UDLA), in Quito. This could change the therapeutic strategies against liver cancer, which kills 788,000 people each year globally, according to the UN.

"We did experiments where we took metastases from melanoma of the skin that grew in the liver and we could also eliminate them, which indicates that this mechanism is not specific for primary liver tumors, but also for metastatic tumors derived from other organs," he describes.

Moya detected that healthy cells around the tumor

were stopping their growth. This was the first description of this phenomenon recorded, and it was published by Science Magazine, on November 22, 2019. "When we artificially over activate the genes that control this antitumor response in the liver, tumors not only stop growing, but are eliminated after two weeks. We are still investigating whether this antitumor mechanism works in tumors growing in other organs," he explains.

The team discovered that around the tumors the YAP and TAZ-like proteins showed an unusual activation, since they are not normally present in that organ. "It was already known that these proteins were important for the formation of tumors, but it was not known that they fulfilled an antitumor function in normal cells around the tumors," he said.

The first finding was that, by inactivating the YAP and TAP genes in normal cells near the tumor, they grew out of control. "This implied that the liver naturally restricted tumor growth, but obviously as they are cancer cells they eventually grow and win the battle against the normal organ," he described.

In this first phase, they concluded that the liver has a natural mechanism to fight cancer and that it can be hyperactivated to induce the elimination of liver tumors. Now they are investigating whether this occurs in other organs. These genes were thought to be important for tumor growth only. "The discovery shows that by inhibiting the activity of these genes, not only does it kill the tumor, but it can enhance more aggressive growth. The suggested strategy is to stimulate the activity of YAP and TAZ to cause its elimination."

The future of this research is the promise to set aside invasive therapies and replace them.



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400,000 Venezuelan's living in Ecuador along with almost 69,000 other refugees



Ecuador is the largest recipient of recognized refugees in Latin America and the Caribbean. This was announced by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador, José Valencia, on Tuesday at the plenary session of the First World Forum on Refugees, held in Geneva, Switzerland.

According to Valencia, 68,708 people are in the country as refugees, of which 97% are of Colombian nationality and the remaining 3% corresponds to more than 80 nationalities. "The challenge that lies ahead is to find strategic partners that support the Ecuadorian State in its commitments to promote lasting solutions in terms of integration, determination of refugee status, registration of people in need of international protection, and implementation of the plans for contingency," said Valencia.

During his speech, the diplomat explained that Ecuador has also welcomed the exodus of migrants and refugees from Venezuela. Of the 4.8 million Venezuelan citizens who have left their country, some 400,000 have stayed to live in Ecuador.

"Currently, 80% of the requests for refuge that Ecuador receives correspond to citizens of that nationality," he added.

He also reported that "the number of Venezuelan citizens who have been granted refugee status between January and November 2019, is 28 times higher than in 2018.

Ecuador has also granted regularization visas to almost 120,000 Venezuelan migrants and is in the process of regularizing many more through the humanitarian visa, established by the National Government last August.

Valencia said that no country can handle a situation of refugees of this magnitude, so he called for joining regional and global efforts to consolidate more effective alliances.

He explained that Ecuador works to ensure full respect for the rights of refugees, who benefit from universal access to health and education; their right to work and to undertake any legal economic activity is recognized, which allows them to integrate locally as productive members of their host communities.

The Minister also expressed his desire that the first World Forum focus on alleviating

the efforts of the host countries.

"For Ecuador, this means the fair recognition that there is a disproportionate burden for countries that have decided to provide protection and assistance to a large number of refugees, for years or even decades, despite their own significant socio-economic and development challenges," he said.

Extracted from Diario El Telegrafo

Iberia brings back direct flights between Guayaquil and Madrid

An Iberia flight from Madrid—with 264 passengers—arrived in Guayaquil last Tuesday, representing the second destination in Ecuador for the Spanish airline.

These flights will be operated on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays with A330-200 aircraft, with a capacity for 288 passengers. This represents around 100,000 annual seats.

According to Iberia Sales Director Spain, Guillermo González Vallina, Iberia's new direct flights between Madrid and Guayaquil "will be an important channel" to publicize this Ecuadorian city throughout Europe and around the world.

In Guayaquil, the Ministry of Tourism received the passengers and gave them information about the tourist destinations, and in addition they received a sample of Ecuadorian chocolate.

The consul general of Spain, Jorge Friend, stressed the importance of Iberia returning to Guayaquil and mentioned that it is the result of the strategic commitment that the company is making in Ecuador and Latin America.

The Minister of Tourism, Rosi Prado De Holguín, welcomed Iberia from the Government and mentioned that its arrival is the result of the promotion strategies that are being developed and that are showing positive results.

"More Spanish tourists will arrive in Guayaquil through the new flights, to enjoy all its tourist attractions and from there move to various tourist destinations in Ecuador," Prado said.

Prado explained that 2019 has been the year of connectivity for Ecuador. She said that during 2018 about 103,000 Spanish tourists arrived in the country; between January and November 2019, 105,000 thousand arrived.

Extracted from Diario El Telegrafo

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Ecuadorians travel habits bring some unexpected surprises



A study on the tourism industry in Latin America and Ecuador conducted by the flight and hotel meta search engine Viajala, analyzed the trend destinations of the year, the variation in the prices of the main routes (with respect to 2018) and the characteristics of Ecuadorians as travelers.

In addition to Ecuador, the countries analyzed included Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Chile, Argentina and Brazil.

The Viajala 2019 barometer rated the Galapagos Islands-Baltra Islands as the EcuadorNational destination of the year, with a 16% increase in searches and a 9% decrease in the price of round-trip tickets. It was followed by the Galapagos Islands-San Cristóbal and Puerto Francisco de Orellana destinations. Ecuadorian tourists to the Galapagos came mainly from Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenca, Manta and Machala

As for the topInternational destination for Ecuadorians, Mexico City was the winner with an increase of 145% in searches and a decrease in the average price of round-trip tickets of 11%. Second place went to Cancun, also in Mexico. Third place was New York (USA).

Ecuadorians from Guayaquil, Quito and Cuenca arrive mainly in Mexico City. Josian Chevallier, Vice President of Sales and co-founder of Viajala, explained that the preference of Ecuadorian travelers for Mexico City and Cancun has pushed airlines such as Interjet, to open direct routes from Quito and Guayaquil, despite the departure of Aeromexico.

Price variation

In general, round-trip tickets of the top 10 national routes decreased in price, except the route between the two most important cities Quito-Guayaquil-Quito. For example, for the destination Quito-Galapagos Islands (Baltra) in 2018, the average price was \$325, while in 2019 it was \$282, a decrease of 13%.

On the other hand, of the top 10 of international routes, the ones that decreased their price year over year were Guayaquil-Orlando (-20%), Quito-Mexico City (-14%) and Guayaquil -Miami (-14%). The Guayaquil-New York destination went from \$658 on average in 2018 to \$590 in 2019, a variation of -10%.

Chevallier stressed that "Ecuador is the only country in the region that prefers international destinations over locals." According to the Viajala barometer, the top 10 of the most sought-after destinations, 7 are outside the national territory.

Trends

According to the study, women lead the search for flights and hotels throughout the region, with Ecuador and Brazil being the countries where men search the least. Adults between the ages of 25 and 44 perform 50% of searches on Viajala.

Those who consult the least are those over 65 years old (7%). January and February are the months where the most searches for flights and hotels are registered from Ecuador. The average duration of a national trip for Ecuadorians is 3 days; their average stay on an international trip is 11 days. These data are very similar to those in the rest of the region.

In the region, Ecuadorians are the ones who least anticipate trips: 19 days for national trips and 45 days for international trips.

Ministry of Public Health rolls out vaccination plan for flu season

Given the cold weather conditions that occur in the environment as part of the winter season, the Ministry of Public Health began with the vaccination program against seasonal influenza in Zone 6. It is called 'seasonal'

because it appears between October to February.

Andrés Guncay, a zonal epidemiologist responsible for public health surveillance, said that influenza is present on a daily basis, so care must be taken that in people with other health problems, influenza doesn't trigger more serious respiratory problems.

That is why the campaign is aimed at priority groups: children over six months and under five, pregnant women, older adults and the chronically ill. The vaccine protects against influenza, a contagious disease that attacks the airways and that can be complicated in these groups.

The Ministry has among its priorities to the decrease in the incidence of respiratory infections due to influenza and to avoid complications from this disease in the highest risk groups.

The Ministry has also implemented strategies for the coverage of priority groups such as vaccination brigades aimed at the Integral Development Centers, CNH Units and Children's Centers of Good Living, and other priority groups.

Guncay explained that 228,000 doses will be distributed in Azuay in health centers, hospitals and vaccination brigades.

For the province of Cañar there are 83,900 doses and for Morona Santiago the number of doses is 56,390. The campaign will run thru February.



Turi begins project to write up its history

Turi is one of the 21 parishes of the Cuenca canton. However, there are no major details in records or history books that document how it began. The story behind the construction of the different buildings of the famous viewpoint and its surroundings remains unknown. That's why the GAD Parroquial has formed a team of professionals to investigate and write the history of this important sector.

The president of the GAD Parish of Turi, Paúl Pañi, said that the current administration has begun work to build and recover the history of this parish. He added that Turi has great tourist potential and of significant importance for the Cuenca canton. Pañi says that most of the tourists who arrive in the province visit the Turi viewpoint.

"To generate new projects in favor of the parish, we need to know where we come from and where we are going. Based on this, we have



put together a multidisciplinary team that is made up of historians such as José Luis Espinoza, Diego Arteaga and Silvio Durán. [They] will launch a symposium this week and invite anthropologists, writers and other individuals who have knowledge of the history of the parish," explained Pañi.

The experts are hoping to recover details such as the construction of the church and all existing public spaces, the type of materials used, who participated in the construction and more elements of history. Work is expected to continue until February 2020, after which it is hoped that some a real document on the history of Turi can be shared with the canton.

Yolanda Lojano, a member of the GAD, indicated that several projects are planned to boost tourism in the parish, but it is imperative to know more about its history. "There are many versions about the origin of Turi, from its name to its first settlements, so we need the collaboration of professionals to consolidate a strong idea and determine exactly our origins and contribution to the city," said Lojano.

Vice President Sonnenholzner visits Qatar to discuss supplying Ecuador products to World Cup 2022

During their recent visit to Qatar, Ecuadorian Vice President, Otto Sonnenholzner and the Minister of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries, Iván Ontaneda, met with Hassan Al Thawadi, Secretary General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (SC), the organization responsible for coordinating amongst public and private entities to ensure that infrastructure and development projects are delivered in readiness for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.



Their goal was to share with Al Thawadi that Ecuador has interest in supplying products to the Qatari market during the 2022 World Cup.

The Secretary General said that one of the foods that has been previously sold out, in the framework of major sporting events, is bananas. Sonnenholzner said that Ecuador can ensure that World Cup attendees "can enjoy our products during this popular tournament."

At the meeting Sonnenholzner and Ontaneda also delivered the catalog of the Ecuador's exportable products to Al Thawadi, with the request that a technical meeting be held to detail the procedures that ensure the entry of Ecuadorian products into Qatar well in advance. Al Thawadi expressed his commitment to provide facilities for these products for entry through expedited procedures.

In Qatar, the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy is the entity responsible not only for the construction of the stadiums and the necessary infrastructure for the World Cup, but for ensuring most of the logistic aspects for the event. Part of these aspects includes the provision of food to the teams, their committees, technicians, journalists and fans who will attend the event.

For this contest, Qatar not only provides for an infrastructure that covers 8 stadiums (2 ready and 6 under construction), it is also planned that World Cup attendance will double the Qatari population during the last months of 2022, on the dates next to the championship.

During their trip to Qatar, Sonnenholzner and Ontaneda also met

with Khalid Al Sulaiti, Nasr Hasanain and Mehdi Triki, of the Ports and Food Control Section of the Ministry of Health of Qatar, to learn about the procedures for importing food and the establishment of sanitary requirements.

In these meetings it was acknowledged that the procedure of sanitary authorization in Qatar is quite simple, because it has no production of virtually any of the products exported by Ecuador, which reduces the possibility of sanitary or commercial barriers being applied.

In addition, Ontaneda met with Ali Bin Ahmed Al Kuwari, Minister of Commerce and Industries of Qatar, to whom he formally submitted a request for the shrimp, quinoa, and Ecuadorian granadilla to access the Qatari market, and join the list of other products that are currently approved.

In addition, technical meetings were held with Hassad Food, a subsidiary entity of the Qatar Investment Authority that focuses its operations in the field of agriculture and fisheries. At the meeting, Ecuador suggested the possibility of investing in the country in agricultural and aquaculture projects, in order to combine business with that country with the possibility of providing food sovereignty to the Emirate.

Qatar is a State with a little more than 2 and a half million inhabitants, the same population of Guayaquil. However, its Gross Domestic Product is twice that of Ecuador, resulting in a population with real purchasing power of about \$130,000 per year, per inhabitant.



Agriculture and Livestock unaffected by Sangay ash fall

The Directorate of Risks and Insurance of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), issued a statement this week indicating that no agricultural or livestock losses have been reported after last week's fall of ash in the Austro region of the country.

In Cañar, most of the ash fall was slight—it did not have a considerable impact on the crops in the area or on livestock production

The presence of ash from the Sangay volcano was recorded in the province of Azuay—in Cuenca and in the eastern cantons—and the entire agricultural and livestock technical team of the Directorate was activated.

The Sangay volcano has been active since May 7, 2019.



CRIME REPORT AND ACCIDENT REPORT

Cuenca and National Criminal Activity

(Challuabamba) Police are continuing to investigate the circumstances of the death of an American citizen.

The death of the Nancy T., a foreign citizen, 79, occurred in a private urbanization located in the Challuabamba Hills, east of Cuenca.

Jaime Ruales, subrogant commander of the Azuay Police, reported that the death was reported at 09:30 on Sunday. He indicated that there are indications that it would have occurred in the early hours of the morning.

A Venezuelan suspect was arrested Sunday evening as he was trying to cross the border into Peru. He was found in possession of the victim's cell phone, tablet and computer.

Police believe that the suspect had posed as a gardener—and been turned away by the victim-- and during his time in the home, disarmed the security system so he could enter the premises at a later time.

The victim had been beaten, tied up and had tape placed over her mouth. An autopsy revealed that she died of suffocation.

(Cuenca) The owner of a commercial premises located in González Suárez and Gonzalo Zalumbide, was the victim of crime at 4:20 a.m. on Monday morning. After receiving a notification of an alarm being triggered in his business, the victim called ECU 911 to ask for help from the police.

By the time the police and security company personnel who monitored the alarm system arrived, the criminal had already escaped.

The owner indicated that a laptop, \$2,000 in cash, a cell phone, credit cards, and other objects were taken. In addition, he expressed concern that it is the second time he has been affected by crime, although he reinforced the electronic surveillance system.

Judicial police agents have collected images captured by security cameras and other evidence and are searching for the criminal.

(San Joaquin) On Mondaynight December 16, 2019, a senior citizen was found lifeless in his home located on Carlos Arizaga Avenue, Cristo del Consuelo sector in the San Joaquin Parish, Cuenca.

The victim, who was identified as Juan Y., 76, was spotted in the yard of his home and, according to the first investigations, the assailants beat two young men who were in a gym that worked on the first floor of the property in which the crime occurred.

Police and Prosecutors of Azuay staff arrived at the scene where they confirmed the death of the citizen and then carried out the removal of the body.

Police are continuing to investigate the case.

(Cuenca) Four people were sentenced for the crime of micro-trafficking after an operation executed Friday afternoon in the Plaza del Arte neighborhood.

The two women and two men accepted their responsibility and at the abbreviated procedure hearing, Cristhian Alfredo B. and María Mercedes A. were sentenced to 15 months of jail time, while Rosa Marlene R. and Joshua Isaac J. received 12 months' imprisonment.

The arrests were the result of a police raid on a building located on Sculptor Ayabaca and Sangurima streets, where doses of cocaine and marijuana were seized.

Cuenca Area Traffic Accidents

*A motorcyclist and three occupants of a car were injured as a result of two traffic accidents that occurred on Sunday morning.

At 08:20 on Sunday morning, in the circle of Avenida de las Américas and Calle Independencia, a motorcyclist was injured after crashing into a Hyundai Tucson vehicle.

The transit agent Diego Sánchez indicated that he is investigating to determine who did not respect the Ceda el Paso signal.

The motorcyclist was assisted by IESS paramedics and taken to a hospital because he suffered serious leg injuries. The driver of the car was arrested for investigations.

Another accident occurred at dawn on Avenida de las Américas and Mexico, where three occupants of a Suzuki car were injured after being hit by a Chevrolet truck.

*On Friday, December 13th, ECU 911 received a distress call indicating that a vehicle lost track and fell into a ravine in the sector known as El Pongo Alto, belonging to the Girón canton.

According to the report of the firefighter personnel who arrived on scene around 2:00 p.m., a vehicle landed at the bottom of a ravine, for reasons under investigation.

Rescuers found six minors injured; the body of one child who had died in the accident was recovered by firefighters. MSP paramedics treated two victims at the scene while the rest were taken to hospitals in a private vehicle.

*Five people were injured in an accident involving four vehicles. The incident occurred on the morning of Friday the 13th, at the intersection of Rafael María Arizaga and Juan Montalvo streets. A bus, a truck and two private vehicles were part of the accident.

Rescue units from the Cuenca Fire Department and civil transit agents came to the scene. According to the civil agent, Pablo Ramírez, the probable cause of the accident was the disrespect for the traffic signals, in this case, to a PARE disk. However, he said the investigations will determine the true causes.

According to witnesses, the truck driver disrespected the signal and crashed into the bus that ended up hitting two private cars parked on Juan Montalvo. The five injured were taken to local hospitals.

*Fragments of glass and parts of vehicle parts were scattered on the road after a violent crash that occurred Sunday morning on the avenues of Las Américas and Mexico, south of Cuenca. Four people were injured in the accident.

The vehicles involved in the accident were a Ford 150 truck, a taxi and a Suzuki Forsa 2 car. This last car was reduced to scrap by the force of the impact. In addition to the material damage, two enclosures of a house and a private clinic were destroyed.

To respond to the emergency, the Integrated Security Service (SIS) ECU 911 mobilized an ambulance from the José Carrasco Arteaga hospital, the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute (IESS) and the Civil Traffic Agents (ACT), the Mobility Company (EMOV EP).

Paramedics provided prehospital care to four people, three from the Suzuki car and the driver of the Ford 150.

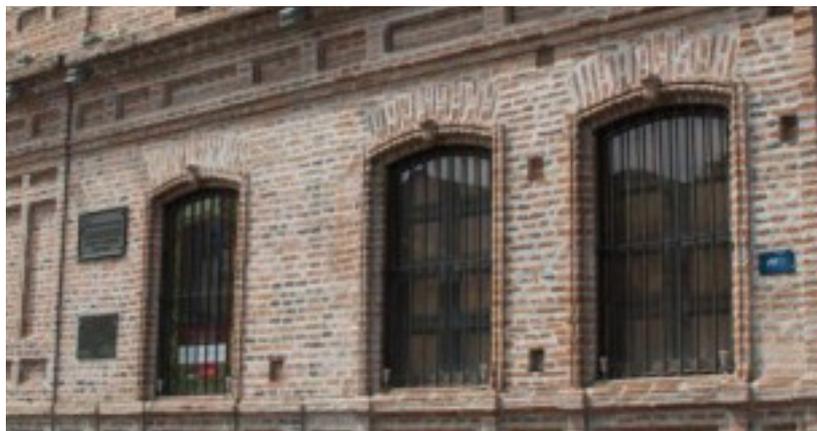
Pablo Chica, a traffic agent, said it was a crash due to range, track loss and crashing. He explained that after the judicial reports, the causes of the traffic accident will be confirmed.

The driver of the truck identified as Adrián Homero AM, an agent of the EMOV EP, refused the breathalyzer test.

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 for consideration.

Museum Remigio Crespo Toral de Cuenca presents "100 Years in Search of a Millenary Past"



A total of 87 archaeological pieces from the reserve of the Municipal Museum Remigio Crespo Toral de Cuenca, were chosen for a sample exhibit called "100 Years in Search of a Millenary Past." The exhibit will be open until March 2020.

They pieces are elaborate objects in ceramics, bone, stone and metal. There are utensils, sculptures, vessels, arrowheads, tools, whistle bottles, plates, spherical containers, among others. Also, there is a space for the Inca Huayna Cápac, who was born in Tomebamba, the current Cuenca.

Archaeologist Jaime Idrovowas the curator of the exhibit and the museography was done by René Cardoso, director of the Museum.

This exhibit, which is part of the celebrations for the 20 years of the declaration of Cuenca as Cultural Heritage of Humanity, is just a small part of the reservation of Archeology of the Museum, Cardoso said. In total there are 16,653 inventoried pieces in this category.

But this is an exhibition that highlights the first archaeological investigations in the city and in the Austro, and that were promoted by Remigio Crespo Toral. At the beginning of the 20th century, he asked his friend Jacinto Jijón y Caamaño for help to start studies in this region.

At the request of the latter, the German Max Uhle arrived in Cuenca, who is considered the father of Andean archeology. "The intention of these investigations was to look for the ancestral roots of Cuenca and from there a series of preliminary works were produced, which are very important and focused on the past Cañari in the Austro."

According to Idrovo, within this perspective the proposal made to the Remigio Crespo Museum was to find the roots of the archeology of the area, within its archaeological reserve, and to enhance this archaeological process that was carried out at the beginning of the 20th century.

As curator, Idrovo said he fundamentally determined which pieces of Cañari and Proto-Cañari origin could be part of the exhibition. This nationality was established from the year 1,000 of our era from the south of Chimborazo to the north of Loja through the provinces of Cañar and Azuay.

In the different spaces of the sample, archaeological pieces that were related to the Cañari settlement of Guapondelig, and what later became the Incan city of Tomebamba, are exhibited.

In examining the exhibit, what happened in the colony over time also stands out. "In this space, there is a very long process, which is over 4,000 years old," said the archaeologist.

At the opening of the exhibition on November 29th, the fourth issue of the Museum Notebooks series was presented. This publication delves into the reasons for the exhibition and addresses issues related to the history of the city and the recognition of regional identity, through the analysis of its first inhabitants and legacy.

Extracted from Diario El Comercio

Classifieds and Events

Classifieds

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Contact name: Steve

Contact number: US5308704584

Email address: 4gooddeeds@gmail.com



Photo courtesy : La Voz del Tomebamba

Solution to Sudoku puzzle on page 3

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

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