

THE CUENCA DISPATCH

Ecuador's Original English-Language Newspaper

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After 71 days Pabón's preventive detention revoked

This past Tuesday, a court in Quito decided to revoke the preventive detention against the prefect of the province of Pichincha, Paola Pabón, who had been detained for 71 days for her alleged rebellion during the protests that rocked the country at the beginning of last October.

The State Prosecutor's Office confirmed that judge Patlova Guerra accepted the request for revocation of the preventive detention of Pabón and changed her situation to a requirement of periodic presentations before the court.

"Despite the argument of the Prosecutor's Office, the president of the Provincial Court of Justice of Pichincha, Patlova Guerra, accepted revocation of preventive detention" for Pabón, as well as for former ex-legator Virgilio Hernández and activist Christian González, against whom "he issued periodic presentations," said the Public Ministry on its social network account.

Dozens of supporters of prefect Pabón and the other defendants celebrated the court ruling around the Pichincha Court and said they could now defend themselves in freedom.

In addition, they assured that Pabón will resume her functions as



prefect of Pichincha.

One of Pabón's lawyers indicated that his client must carry an electronic location device (ankle bracelet), another of the measures set by Judge Guerra.

Pabón's defense had requested her immediate release on December 6, after the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) issued certain precautionary measures in favor of her and the other two detainees.

Pabón and González had been arrested after the protests in early October against economic adjustments announced by cont. page 4.

Ecuador grants 9,001 temporary visas to Venezuelans



Ecuador has granted 9,001 "Temporary Residency Exception Visas for Humanitarian Reasons" to Venezuelan citizens as part of the three months old regularization process.

President Lenin Moreno signed decree 826 allowing this type of visa through the end of March, 2020. This document established the requirements for foreigners to take advantage of the measure that, in addition, exempted those who exceeded 180 days of legal stay in the country from fines. Since the decree was signed, there were those who received the visa and a large group of people who were refused a visa on humanitarian grounds.

The main cause for those who were refused the cont. page 4.

Dog and cat sales halted at Feria Libre under new ordinance



During an operation carried out at the Feria Libre this week, 10 dogs and 14 cats were rescued from people who were engaged in the pet business, but who failed to comply with the ordinance that protects pets.

The small animals were found in sacks and in improvised outdoor cages, without any protection to prevent them from suffocating due to the strong sun that can be seen daily this time of year.

The animals were taken to the offices of the Citizen Guard where they were evaluated by veterinarians and delivered for adoption. The adoption of the animals is made after the signing of a document on which the personal data of the person taking the pet is recorded. cont. page 4.



Happy holidays from
CUENCA consignments

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 should be more than just a note on your "To-do" list...*

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I'M JUST SAYIN'

By
Michael
Soares

Giving

We got a late start today and I suspect many of you did as well! It's the day after Christmas and we had a party with a group of 12 people yesterday. Fun was had by all, but not in the usual way. Few gifts were passed between friends, because we did something different this year.

You see, we have a neighbor in Yunguilla who is very poor. He and his wife have three kids and though he is an extremely hard worker, he doesn't get full-time work from anyone.

Codie hires him a lot, especially when he has little money in his pockets. We watch out for him and his family and make sure they always have food on the table. I'm not looking for accolades about that, just trying to make it clear that a lot of people out here in the country barely scrape by and not from any fault of their own.

This man works so hard for us. He is the manual labor behind all of the landscaping we have done here over the last three years. As you know, I can't do that kind of work, so without him our property would be somewhat barren.

Anyway, I digress. What I was saying is that yesterday was a different kind of Christmas for us, because we made it all about him and his children. We had a luncheon with them as the guests of honor and they showed up dressed in their nicest clothes. Their little 8-year-old girl was so excited to be able to wear her prettiest shirt that someone bought for her. And their 4-year-old son was in a suit!

So, we had the luncheon and they all ate like it was the best meal they had ever had. It was nothing fancy, just simply more food than they ever see on their plates.

When they were finally stuffed, Codie told the children a story about Papa Noel looking for their house on Christmas Eve, but not finding them because they were at church. So, he stopped here and left presents he had for them. Of course, the 14-year-old boy knew better, but the two young ones were enthralled by the idea!

In addition to the "canasta box" that we gave their mom and dad, the kids each got special gifts that were chosen just for them. The 4-year-old got a big excavator truck that he can push around in the dirt in his yard. The little girl got a very, very fancy doll. And the oldest boy got the best soccer ball we could find.

When they opened their gifts, the looks on their faces gave me the most heart-warming feeling I have had in many years. It was the look of surprise and pure excitement. They couldn't believe they were getting these things. And for the cherry on top, we prepared a big box of candies and cookies that weighed about 5 kg. Those kids are going to be bouncing off the walls for a month!

Our friends took in the scene and were as happy as we were to see the joy from the children and also the looks on their parents faces. They were so happy for their kids and for having us as friends.

As the day went on, we found out that one of the couples we are friends with actually gave out toys to a big group of kids in one of the small villages earlier in the week. They bought and gave out over one hundred toys! Imagine making that many children as happy as could be for that day!

Another couple did something similar; they bought all different kinds of candy and gave it out in bags to children at a church. Again, wide-eyed wonderment was what they got back in return.

Such simple gestures this week made hundreds of children (and their parents) happy. And the give back was worth so much

more than what any of us spent.

We gave out 4 more of those canasta boxes to people that live nearby. One man took the box from Codie's hands and said to her, "You remembered the poor people." She nearly broke down in tears.

Again, just the simplest of things changed people's lives for a short time.

But with all that said, this also reminded of us of how fortunate we are and how unfortunate so many others can be.

So, as the time of year rolls around when people start to make resolutions, we've decided that we are going to continue the giving throughout the year. Every week we are going to randomly give out food and treats to the families around us. Not on a regular basis so they feel dependent on us, but randomly so they never know when their surprise is coming. And we aren't going to worry what it costs us, because in the end it's so little compared to how we live.

That's really my message this week. We are all so lucky and we really need to pass it on. I'm ashamed that we haven't done more of this. I'm ashamed that it took a holiday for us to think about how much our neighbors suffer. But this year is going to be different. Because nothing we have comes close to being worth as much as the look on the faces of the people we made happy this week.

Happy New Year everyone!

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!

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

See answers on page 11

After 71 days Pabón's preventive detention revoked (Cont.)

the Government, especially the elimination of a subsidy on the price of gasoline attached to a credit agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The demonstrations, led by the indigenous movement that took place between October 3 and 13, concluded after Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno backed down on his decree on the elimination of the fuel subsidy.

However, Moreno interpreted the violent acts of the demonstrations as an attempted coup d'etat and blamed the situation on former President Rafael Correa, and his followers Pabón, Hernández, González and others.

After the protests, which left a dozen dead, more than 1,300 injured and a thousand people detained, the IACHR visited the country to verify the human rights situation in the face of allegations of violent acts caused by the protesters, as well as excessive use of the force by the Police and the Armed Forces.

The IACHR considered that "the requirements of gravity, urgency and irreparability" were met, and therefore requested the Ecuadorian State to adopt "necessary measures to protect the rights to life and integrity" of the three defendants.

Ecuador grants 9,001 temporary visas to Venezuelans (Cont.)

visa was their failure to comply with two of the main requirements: having entered the country after July 26, 2019, the day on which the Decree was issued and having legally entered Ecuador.

Shamahais Miquilina, from Falcón, Venezuela was one of those people who is stuck in limbo under these requirements. Her five-year-old son was refused the visa because two years ago he entered the country without being registered at the immigration counter at the Rumichaca border crossing.

"We could not seal the Andean card because the child does not have a passport," said the 33-year-old woman.

Miquilina, who lives in the south west of Guayaquil, said the child cannot study because he does not have his documents in order. She lives with her husband and they have another seven-month-old son, who was born in the city of Buenos Aires.

In a different situation, Miguel Hernández, from the state of Aragua, obtained the visa. He arrived at the Main Port with his wife and one-year old daughter. He currently is engaged in informal commerce, but now, with legal status, he hopes to apply for a formal job.

Juan Francisco Loaiza, Undersecretary of Migration of the Ministry of Government, commented that 173,671 people have been recorded under the decree process. This is the procedure that is carried out on the virtual consulate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs .

The system then verifies that the applicant does not have immigration fines. If they do have any pending payment, within the framework of the amnesty that also contemplates the regularization, they must wait between 24 and 48 hours until the fine is lifted.

Then the Ministry of Foreign Affairs validates the main requirement, which is the passport of Venezuelan citizens. The Government accepts expired passports, for up to five years. For this step, migrants must go in person to the Ministry so that the Ecuadorian authorities can corroborate the information entered in the platform.

According to Loaiza, there are 61,475 Venezuelans who have already visited the Foreign Ministry offices in the country.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Ministry said that thru December 19, the consulates of Ecuador in Bogotá, Lima and Caracas have issued 2,973 visas for Venezuelan citizens to enter the country.

That number includes Temporary Residence Exception for Humanitarian Reasons (Verhu) and other types of visas for various immigration categories.

Data from the Ministry of Government shows that 358,500 Venezuelan citizens in the country have not yet registered. However, some NGOs estimate that the number exceeds 400,000.

"The migration has not stopped, it is less, but people continue to enter through the 26 irregular steps between Ecuador and Colombia," said

Ronald Borges, director of the shelter Un Techo para el Camino, Hogar de Cristo. The place welcomes new migrants. Several arrive accompanied by their family.

So far this year, the site has hosted more than 12,000 foreigners. In the beginning the guests were passing travelers and their destinations were Peru, Chile, Bolivia or Argentina. Now, 90% of those who arrive at the House intend to reside in Guayas.

Borges said that every day they shelter about 30 or 40 people on average. Of those, 95% entered Ecuador through irregular steps and many have no passport or criminal record. One of them is Carlos Vargas, a native of Vargas.

He arrived in the country almost three weeks ago with his wife and three minor children. "We know that we cannot qualify for the humanitarian visa, but we will opt for some other type of visa to be able to find employment," he said.

Extracted from Diario EL COMERCIO

Dog and cat sales halted at Feria Libre under new ordinance (Cont.)

Ordinance

The operation was carried out by officials of the Commission for Environmental Management, Market Management with the support of animalists and the Police and Citizen Guard.

José Rivas, market inspector, explained that three months ago the socialization stage of the ordinance began to motivate people who sell pets to carry out other activities because the regulations prohibit abuse, overcrowding and commercialization of pets if you do not have a suitable place for the purpose.

The official stressed that the Feria Libre does not have spaces for these purposes, therefore, the sale of dogs and cats is no longer allowed.

During another operation completed on Wednesday the 18th, 40 dogs and 10 cats were also rescued and delivered for adoption.

The Municipality of Cuenca in its Twitter account said that according to the current ordinance the abuse, overcrowding and marketing of dogs and cats is sanctioned with a fine of \$98.50. In addition, the abandonment of pets in public or private spaces is sanctioned with a \$198.00 fine.

Soldiers -Yanuncay Hydroelectric Project on hold while resident concerns are addressed



Approximately \$8 million is in the budget of the Electro Generating Company of Austro, Elecaustro, to begin with the construction of the Soldiers -Yanuncay Hydroelectric Project.

In spite of this, the works will not begin until next year while the reasons for opposition of some residents of the Soldiers and Barabón areas are clarified.

Although Antonio Borrero, company manager, explained that they have prefeasibility studies, rights and licenses to start the project, people confuse that they are involved with mining.

The construction, as announced, will take about four years; the socialization of the project was carried out through 65 events.

Borrero said the project will take advantage of the water of the Yanuncay River and will have a dam 42 meters high for 21,000,000 cubic meters of stored water.

Ecuador and Chile sign conservation cooperation agreement



Ecuador and Chile are preparing to begin the exchange of experiences in the field of sustainable development and ecosystem conservation.

The initiative was formalized through a cooperation agreement signed between the Governing Council of the Special Regime of Galapagos and the Mayor's Office of the Municipality of Juan Fernández, in neighboring Chile.

The pact also includes evaluation of public policies, demographic control and legislative experiences.

The signing of the agreement was chaired by the Ecuadorian ambassador to Chile, Homero Arellano, who signed on behalf of the Galápagos government and the mayor of Juan Fernández, Leopoldo González.

The parties plan to develop a joint work on issues of mutual interest such as planning and territorial planning, territorial transport, population control and ecotourism, among other aspects.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, the agreement highlights the fact that in the last 60 years the Galapagos Islands promoted a management model conducive to the sustainable development of the island population and the conservation of maritime and terrestrial ecosystems.

These aspects may be references for the Chilean archipelago, located in the Pacific Ocean, 600 kilometers from the continental coast and where about a thousand people live.

Extracted from Diario EL TELÉGRAFO

Cuenca receives accreditation from International Biennial Association



The Cuenca Biennial Foundation received the physical documents of its accreditation as part of the International Biennial Association (IBA), based in the United Arab Emirates. IBA is a reference that brings together artists, researchers and others interested in contemporary art.

With the accreditation, the Foundation has access to spaces and exclusive events of the members of the International Biennial Association. This situation will allow the group to exchange ideas and maintain contact with the global biennial community.

For its access, the Biennial was rated for its level of quality in the samples proposed in recent editions and for its 33-year history.

The director of the Municipal Biennial Foundation of Cuenca, Katya Cazar, explained that there are two ways to show the world of contemporary art.

The first is through fairs that emphasize the market, private and public collecting. The second way is with the biennials and being part of this association, which strengthens the idea of this project and to maintain it.

The Biennial of Cuenca is positioned as one of the most relevant worldwide, in this way we can capitalize and expand the network of contacts, continue with the work of articulation and the efforts of the Biennial.

"The biennials in their relationship are enhanced, highlighting the theoretical and academic reflection that the biennials generate," said the Director.

Damage from sunken Galápagos barge quickly contained



After the sinking of a cargo barge—called the Orca—in the San Cristóbal canton, in the Galapagos archipelago, on Sunday, December 22, 2019, the Ministry of Environment of Ecuador stated that the risk of the environmental impact of the diesel spill "has decreased considerably."

Likewise, the State Portfolio confirmed through an official document that the disaster has not limited the tourist flow to the area.

On Monday, December 23, 2019, Norman Wray, Chairman of the Galápagos Governing Council, and Raúl Ledesma, Minister of Environment, took a tour of the San Cristóbal quay to evaluate the measures applied to reduce the possible impacts.

According to the Ministry of Environment, the first step was to specify the amount of gallons that the barge carried.

In total, the barge carried 200 gallons, according to the testimony of Captain Carlos Peñaherrera, owner of the boat. He estimates that of the 600 gallons of capacity the barge had, he had consumed about 400 during the journey before the boat sank.

Since the spill, the Galapagos Emergency Operations Committee has been active and overseeing the situation. The Directorate of the Galapagos National Park also applied a contingency plan that consisted of the primary evaluation of the spill and the control of the presence of surface diesel.

This was executed by placing absorbent material—cloths and barriers—to prevent the dispersion of the hydrocarbon from the vessel that was 95% submerged.

The positive result of this effort, decreased stain and filtration of fluids of the barge, was confirmed by Minister Raúl Ledesma.

The Navy of Ecuador also plays an active role, as it performed contingency operations to absorb hydrocarbons with the support of 15 park rangers from the Galapagos National Park and the Regional Directorate of Aquatic Spaces and Island Coast Guard.

The Ministry of Environment also reported that at 12:00 on Monday, December 23, a plane loaded with absorption material delivered by Petroecuador arrived in the area to strengthen assimilation work.

The sinking of the barge, investigated by the Prosecutor General of Ecuador, has not stopped the tourist activities of San Cristóbal Island that includes tourist attractions such as Laguna El Junco, Lobería, Puerto Chino, León Dormido, among others.

Extracted from Diario EL COMERCIO

Cuenca-Azogues highway reopens after landslide



After three weeks of work, the staff and machinery of the Ministry of Transportation and Public Works was able to stabilize a slope and remove the material that closed one of the lanes of the Cuenca-Azogues highway from December 1st thru Saturday, December 21, 2019.

Through its Twitter account, the Zonal Directorate of the Ministry indicated: "A road sweeper completed the cleaning tasks to enable this afternoon, at 14:00 the circulation through the Cuenca-Azogues, after completing the stabilization of the slope of km 1.8."

Patricio Ortega, user of the road, said he is confident that another landslide will not occur, since this road is vital, especially a few days after the Christmas holiday.

Concern

This opinion was shared by Paúl Pañi, president of the GAD of Turi, who expressed the concern that exists due to the diversion of heavy vehicles by the Turi Viewpoint while the works were being executed.

"The road to Turi does not present the necessary conditions to withstand high traffic and heavy vehicles, at the moment there are already damages on the road that connects Turi to the city," said Pañi.

Similarly, on Monday the Ministry indicated that a new inspection of the place will be carried out and after which it will be determined if it is necessary to carry out more work or if with those carried out it were sufficient to keep this road operational.

IESS sustainability projected to last until 2058



The disability, old-age and death insurance reserve of the Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security, IESS, will be positive until 2058 if the State complies with its contribution of 40 percent. Otherwise, the positive reserve will be maintained only until 2023.

This is stated in the actuarial evaluation report that was made to the IESS. The results were publicly socialized last Friday. This study analyzed the financial situation of the institution in 2018. It also proposes a projection horizon for 40 years.

The document describes the annual behavior of the financial situation of the fund, the evolution of income and expenses and the behavior of the reserve. It also provides for the duration of the fund. David Ruales, Deputy Director General of the IESS, explained the

reality of the fund as of December 31, 2018 on which the study was conducted.

He explained that in 2015, two decisions were made that affected the institution. One was the elimination of the contribution of 40 percent of the Ecuadorian State to the pension fund.

The other was resolution 501, that changed the way of distribution of income that comes from the contributions of affiliates.

More resources were granted to the health fund but subtracted from the pension fund.

This forced the IESS between 2016 and 2018 to divest on average \$1.7 billion each year. "If we continued with this trend, in April 2019 we would have already had a crisis generated by the non-payment of retirement pensions," explained Ruales.

According to the study, if this contribution from the State is maintained, together with the return on investments of the IESS Bank, which must be a minimum of 6.25 percent and the monthly contributions of the taxpayers, the fund will have a positive reserve until 2058

"The sustainability of social security is going to happen as long as this scenario is met. That all the actors that are part of social security commit ourselves to it to seek those medium and long term solutions," said Ruales.

He also stressed the importance of continuing with the National Agreement for Social Security to arrive precisely at these solutions, as the situation of IESS members will be different over the years.



Daniela Cordero, Health Insurance

Daniela Cordero is the agent I talked to – her role includes finding us the best doctors in Ecuador who also speak English. She is very focused on that. She also actually knows doctors who do house calls.

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Home voting to expand to include disabled citizens over 50



Ecuador's "Home Voting" process is going to be expanded to include people with disabilities aged 50 or older. In the last sectional elections, Home Voting was only available to seniors over the age of 65.

José Cabrera, National Electoral Councilor, emphasizes that the measure will be applied for the next elections of the year 2021.

"In this way we guarantee that more Ecuadorians have access to their right to vote. No one can be left behind!" the election official said.

In the past elections, 120 routes were simultaneously followed in visiting homes with people with disabilities, reduced mobility or senior citizens so that they could exercise their right to vote.

In total, 784 Ecuadorian citizens benefited from this service across the 24 provinces of the country. This electoral assistance program began seven years ago.

Reduction in plastic bag use being targeted through taxes beginning in 2020

Carolina Molina does the grocery shopping in her family, but for her it's difficult to carry a reusable bag to load them, because she leaves her job and goes directly to the store.

She is part of the over 79% percent of the Ecuadorian population that still prefers disposable plastic bags, according to the study 'Environmental information in homes 2016', developed by the National Institute of Statistics and Census, INEC. The study also points out that a little over 19% use cloth bags or reusable material.

In Ecuador, according to data from the website of the Ministry of Environment, each person uses around 130 plastic bags annually.

Molina says that the largest number of bags she gets is for the purchases she makes in supermarkets. "I carry about seven bags or more each time I buy, the quantity depends, and those bags are useful for other things, and even for collecting garbage," she said.

Study

According to a study by Andrés Martínez and Zaira Vicuña, graduates of the University of Azuay (UDA), in Cuenca about 3.2 million plastic bags are used per month, an average of 5.3 per inhabitant.

"Plastic bags are used for almost every activity that involves carrying something at hand: the purchase of the market or supermarket, the bakery or bookstore, the tailor's order or the offerings for the church," the study mentors detail.

In a universe of 10 stores of the same class identified for this study, the researchers determined that three plastic bags per inhabitant per month are obtained in supermarkets, eleven bags come from bakeries, in pharmacies and hardware stores one is received per month, while in the markets six bags per inhabitant per month are taken.

Martínez explained that the only places where consumers brought

reusable bags were in municipal markets.

The sum of the average results indicates that an inhabitant consumes 22 plastic bags per month in the different shops they visit.

In the city of Cuenca, 3,203,618 plastic bags are consumed per month or 38, 443,416 annually.

Legislation

A new tax set by the Government to reduce the use of plastics will go into effect in 2020.

This is the application of the excise tax, (ICE), to each plastic bag that people use to transport purchases made in various commercial premises.

This tax is contained in the Law on Tax Simplification and Progressivity that the National Assembly approved on Tuesday night.

Under the bill, the plastic bags will cost \$ 0.04 in 2020. By 2021, the cost will rise to \$ 0.06; in 2022 it will go up to \$ 0.08 and in 2023 it will rise to \$ 0.10 each.

Another of the initiatives to counteract the contamination of the use of plastic was the unanimous approval within the Provincial Council of Azuay, of the ordinance for the elimination of single-use plastics.

Marcelo Quizpe Director of Environmental Management of the Prefecture explained that it proposes to organize and regulate the production, marketing, distribution and use of single-use plastic items. In 2020, the sale of high-density polyethylene covers will be prohibited.



The company of Aseo de Cuenca, (EMAC), also proposes an ordinance which includes 'Mechanisms of reduction of plastic bags and covers in the city' and aims to replace the marketing or free delivery and use of plastic bags or bags.



Cuenca Medical Resources

A web-based directory of English speaking healthcare professionals and services in the Cuenca area.

German Morocho, bilingual taxi driver available to take you across town for a quick trip or shopping for the day, to your medical appointments or in case of emergency to your nearest hospital.

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Social media is connecting migrants with family members around the world



Katiusca Bolívar receives a video call by WhatsApp and touches the green button on the screen of her cell phone to "accept," and immediately the image is divided into four. In one box is her brother who lives in Miami, in the other her mother from Venezuela, in the third is a cousin who lives in Spain and the last in herself, who has been living in Cuenca for seven months.

Her eyes are flooded with tears. The distance of her loved ones has her in deep sadness, but she thanks God that the technology exists because otherwise "I don't think we can stand it," she says.

For her, social networks are the only way to be close to her family. Almost three weeks ago, a nephew died in her country and through Facebook Live, she and the rest of the family that lives in other parts of the world, were able to see every detail of the wake, including the deceased.

"It was a sad moment, but that belonged to us as a family and thanks to the networks we could live it and say goodbye to my nephew," she says, and her face becomes red and her tears come out again.

Jackeline Macías lives in Cuenca, but her father and two older brothers are in New York. They planned to make dinner at Christmas and connect the cell phone to a Smart TV for dinner together.

"It is an impersonal way of doing it. We don't have the smells and we can't hug each other, but we can hear and see each other and that's enough," Macías says happily.

Especially at this time of year, when families spend their days together, migrants miss their loved ones more. In the 60s and 1999, two dates in which many Ecuadorians emigrated to other countries, there were no networks.

Pablo Montesinos who returned to the country after being in Spain for 10 years, remembers that he would call his mother to a landline and adds that at that time there were also compatriots who sent postcards and letters.

"Emails were not seen in those years either. Yes, there was, but we did not know and the text messages did not arrive," he says while laughing.

Resources

The coordinator of the Casa del Migrante, Édgar Orellana, explained that this is a space of Social Development of the Municipality, and that it has been operating for more than 12 years.

"We have the info center that is free of charge, we have eight machines and we receive around 800 people during the month who come to communicate with their loved ones," he explains. He also added that users are asked to limit their time to one hour per person daily, so that everyone can communicate with their family members.

EMOV adds more traffic control vehicles in Cuenca

A new fleet of vehicles for traffic control were acquired by the Municipal Mobility Company, (EMOV), to strengthen patrols in various parts of the city.

There is a total of 13 new units that have all the technological equipment, according to Juan Carlos Aguirre, EMOV manager.

This purchase brought the total of new vehicles added in Cuenca to 26; the first 13 were acquired in 2016. The cost for the vehicles came in at about a half a million dollars.

The vehicles are equipped with all the inputs such as: alarms, sirens, lights, radio frequencies, computer system, and everything that patrollers have; they are also friendly to the environment.

EMOV also has 32 motorcycles and bicycles for its agents to mobilize.

Cuenca Mayor Pedro Palacios said that the commitment to citizens is to maintain a safe city and that this is one of the steps to do that.



Tourism sector expects to fill places on New Year's holiday

The tourism sector on the coast and in the mountains have strong expectations for the end of 2019.

As an example, just two days before Christmas, the Chamber of Tourism of Santa Elena posted a 70% reservation achievement in hotels in the province. The union expects full hotel occupancy by the end of the year.

However, during the Christmas holiday this was between 30 and 40%. Although the businessmen agreed that the arrival of tourists was well above that of the Christmas festivities of other years.

"We expect about 300,000 people to come, which was the number of visitors last year," said Luis Tenenpaguay, president of the Santa Elena Chamber of Tourism. The peninsula has about 12,000 official hotel beds. In the area, tourists will start the New Year with pyrotechnic games and burning of stick figures. And the main

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road, attached to the Malecon, will become pedestrian.

Many of the hotels will organize parties and dinners at the end of the year. The Blue Bay Hotel will offer its customers a buffet and dance party package at \$45 per person, said Giomar Manosalvas, Director of Sales and Marketing. "We have reserved 97% of the rooms for the end of the year."

In Montañita, the Nativa Bambú, Lost Beach, Caña Grill and Coco Loco discos are preparing electronic music parties, with national and international guests.

Over in Manabí, the tourist offerings for this last holiday of the year are varied. The guilds tourist and municipalities have organized concerts, contests and theatrical performances.

According to the Provincial Chamber of Tourism, it is expected that at least 100,000 tourists will visit Manabí during the five days of holiday. As of now, 80% of the hotel capacity of 16,000 beds is reserved, said the president of the guild, Esteban Fiallos.

One of the offers that is attracting tourists are discounts of up to 20% on accommodations for large families or business groups. Tours are also organized on yachts, visits to ecological reserves such as Pacoche (Manta) or Isla Corazon, in San Vicente.

In Bahía de Caráquez, in the Sucre canton, the 32 hotels in the city are nearly full for New Year's Eve. That's mainly because the festive program will begin on December 29 with the concert of the Chilean singer Américo. On December 31st a festival of lights and dummy contests will be happening.

At the Crucita spa in Portoviejo, hoteliers cleaned the beach a week before Christmas. They hope to attract tourists with a garbage-free spa, paragliding flights, live music and seafood dishes.

In Tungurahua, the city of Baños de Agua Santa will have contests of giant old years, the best-lit neighborhood and the festival of retro music. To this the parties will be added New Year's Eve that are promoted with offers in hotels and hostels.

Martha Albán, part of the administration of Hotel Sangay, points out that in this establishment there will be a midnight toast, burning of effigies, and a dance. She said 95% of their 64 rooms are reserved.

Also, in Hostería Monte Selva, 95% of their cabins and rooms have been reserved, said salesperson Salomé Ulloa. The party on the Mambo, at the end of the year, is one of the attractions.

Imbabura, likewise, sets up its offer to attract tourists for the next holiday. One of the hooks is the Popular Feast of Innocents and New Year's Eve, which is the intangible cultural heritage of the country. The central number is the parade of troupes that takes place on the afternoon of December 31st.



Carlos Andrés Orozco, president of the Hotel Association of Imbabura, estimates that last year there was 70% occupancy in the 6,423 hotel beds in Imbabura. For this year, they hope to exceed that achievement.

Otavalo, the city with the second largest population of Imbabura, is promoting its cultural and natural attractions. Several hotels have designed programs, says Marcelo Lema, director of Economic

Development and Tourism.

Extracted from Diario EL Comercio

Telefónica Movistar sells off towers in Ecuador and Colombia

Last Monday, Telefónica Movistar announced the sale of 1,408 towers in Ecuador and 621 in Colombia, to the Phoenix Tower International (PTI) company for about \$321 million. The sale of the towers in Ecuador amounts to \$224 million and those of Colombia, \$96.5 million.

Through a statement from Madrid, the company said that these operations are part of the strategy to value the infrastructure of the group, reinforced with the recent creation of Telefónica Infra.

Telefónica thus advances its plans to "accelerate the monetization of its portfolio of mobile telecommunications sites (radiobases)." During 2019, Telefónica has sold more than 6,000 locations.

Telefónica still owns, directly or through different subsidiaries, some 66,000 locations. Of these, some 20,000 are owned by Telxius and the remaining 46,000 from other subsidiaries of the Telefónica Group. More than 60% of these are in four key markets (Spain, Brazil, United Kingdom and Germany)

Several weeks ago, Telefónica announced the creation of Telefónica Hispam, which will handle the Latin American market, except Brazil.

The president of Telefónica, José María Álvarez Pallete, said: "We are launching the review of our portfolio of assets in Latin America with the double objective of modulating our exposure to the region, while creating the conditions to maximize its value, both via growth and consolidation and possible corporate operations".

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CRIME REPORT AND ACCIDENT REPORT

Cuenca and National Criminal Activity

(Azuay) On December 23rd and 24th, the National Police Zone 6 executed operations to detain citizens involved in different crimes in the province of Azuay.

At a press conference the Governor of Azuay Xavier Martinez reported on the capture of an organization dedicated to the theft of vehicle accessories in different sectors of the city. The National Police also captured people involved in the assault in the CENTROSUR Regional Electric Company sector.

"We are with permanent security in the province of Azuay. We will continue working and that the citizens have full confidence that we will not rest and maintain our Zero Impunity actions."

For his part, General Fausto Olivo, Commander of Zone 6 of the Azuay Police gave details about the capture of the suspects involved in an armed robbery in a commercial premises in the Monay Chico sector. Investigative units found Freddy Giovanni PQ's whereabouts, who was part of this assault in which they robbed \$830, two technological equipment and garments. The owner of the business was also shot during the robbery.

The 26 years old Ecuadorian citizen of was placed under the orders of the competent authorities.

Olivo announced that one of the victims of the assault recognized the citizen involved in this crime. The National Police investigating to find the rest of the gang involved in this criminal act.

"Today we proceeded to arrest an organization that was dedicated to the theft of vehicle accessories. The two detainees record previous arrests for the same crime. After several days of investigation and in coordination with the Prosecutor's Office of Azuay, the suspects were captured and placed at the orders of the competent authorities.

This organization was dedicated to the theft of accessories in different sectors of the city, especially in the early morning hours,"said Colonel Mario Castro, Police Commander of the Azuay Subzone No. 1.

(Cuenca) On the afternoon of December 19, 2019, a hearing for charges was held against Joseline B., Jordy P. and Patricio H. (Jordy and Patricio were active duty police officers) for their alleged involvement in the crime of theft resulting in death, committed against Juan Jerónimo Y.

The Judge of the Criminal Judicial Unit of Cuenca issued an order of preventive detention, considering that the prosecutor of the Citizen Heritage Unit, Geovany Lema, presented sufficient elements of conviction against the defendants.

Among the main indications are the certificate of removal of the body, report of the medical-legal autopsy and the search of the home of one of the defendants.

According to the first investigations, on the night of December 16, the 76-year-old victim was at home, located in the Cristo del Consuelo sector. Joseline B. and two other citizens who were arrested today in Guayaquil, had tied the hands and feet of the victim and attacked him with their fists and kicks, which resulted in his death.

The active police officers Jordy P. and Patricio H., who were outside the home, also participated in this event, waiting for the others involved to enter the home to take away two-thousand dollars.

This Wednesday, December 18, Joseline B. was captured and she provided information and narrated in detail what happened. This allowed the apprehension of the other two defendants.

This case is prosecuted in accordance with the provisions of article 18g, subsection 6, of the Organic Integral Criminal Code (COIP).

(Cuenca) Theft of vehicle accessories and armed robberies were the main crimes that were recorded during Christmas in Cuenca.

Among the robberies committed, criminals stole accessories from a vehicle around 9:00 on Christmas day on Avenida Diez de Agosto and Agustín Landívar.

The affected person reported that he left his Chevrolet Grand Vitara vehicle in

the parking lot in front of a hospital.

When he returned 15 minutes later, he found that someone had stolen the controls of the electric windows and some documents. He pointed out that they could not take the vehicle computer thanks to the fact that it had a metallic protection in place. The vehicle was immobilized and had to be towed.

Another theft of vehicle accessories was committed at 8 p.m. on Monday near the Terrestrial Terminal. The Government of Azuay informed through its Twitter account that Jorge R., and Marco I., who record judicial records for similar crimes committed in Cuenca, were captured.

(Gualaceo) Juan Carlos VA, 41, was arrested on Monday in Gualaceo for the crime of trafficking in substances subject to control.

The police report that agents captured this subject during the operation 'Cold Night' that took place on Gran Colombia and Fidel Piedra, in the Gualaceo canton.

The report says that 97.6 grams of cocaine, equivalent to 1,000 doses, valued at \$5,000 were found in the hands of the alleged micro-trafficker.

Police investigations indicate that Juan Carlos VA, distributed the drug on the streets adjacent to the land terminal, central park and in places close to educational units.

Mario Castro, head of the Azuay Police sub-zone, said the investigations are continuing to find the rest of the members of a micro-trafficking network.

Cuenca Area Traffic Accidents

A seven-year-old boy was injured after being hit by a Chevrolet Vitara jeep, on the road to San Miguel de Putushi and Ordóñez Lasso Avenue, Sayausí sector.

The accident happened at 11:40 a.m. on Christmas day. The emergency was attended to by paramedics of the Fire Department; once stabilized the boy was transferred to a local hospital.

The driver was arrested depending on the severity of the boy's condition, will face the corresponding legal procedures.

Transit agent, Pablo Chica, explained that the driver was moving along Ordóñez Lasso Avenue and when he turned to enter the street that leads to San Miguel de Putushi, he hit the child.

The accident was observed by a citizen who tried to attack the driver and set fire to the vehicle involved in the accident.

Multiple traffic accidents were recorded between 4:48 a.m. and midnight on Christmas day, in different sectors of the city, left 13 people injured.

According to ECU 911 records, the first emergency occurred 4:48 a.m. on the road to El Valle, El Coco sector, where a van crashed into a streetlight post and fell into a ravine.

Transit agent, Ostin Peñafiel, said the first responders helped six occupants of the vehicle, including three minors.

The second emergency occurred around 6:00 a.m. at the intersection of Primero de Mayo and Loja avenues, where a Chevrolet Spark car collided with a Toyota Yaris car.

Agent Pablo Chica said that the driver of the Toyota car was injured and the driver of the other vehicle left the scene of the accident.

A third mishap occurred at 6:48 a.m. in the San Joaquin parish.

Agents indicated that a Kia vehicle, after leaving the road, turned into an orchard. The driver was transferred to a clinic.

Another emergency left three motorcyclists injured. The mishap occurred on Don Bosco Avenue and Doce de Octubre.

ECU 911 reported another accident at 12:05 p.m. in the turnaround in the Toctepamba sector of the Santa Ana parish. IESS paramedics reported that two teenagers, 15 and 16 years old, suffered multiple trauma were transferred to local hospitals.

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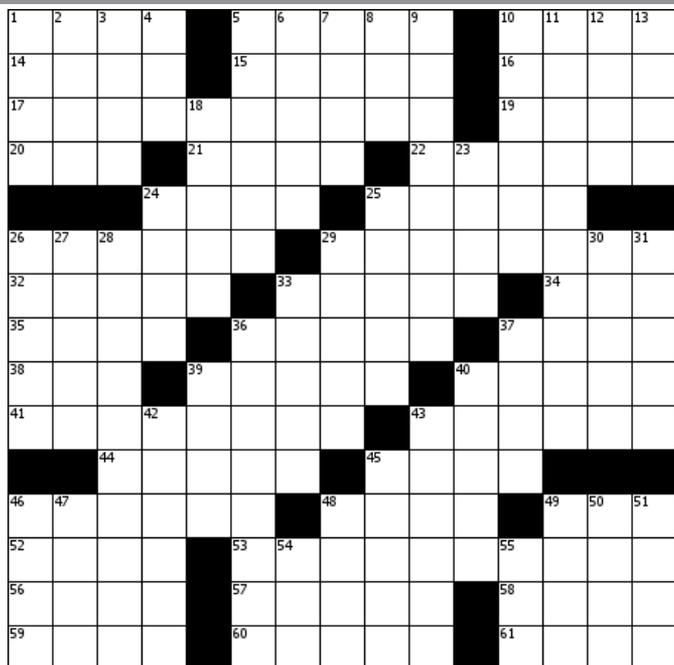
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WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND TOWN AND BEYOND....

"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.



See answers on page 11

Across

1. Slam
5. Save up
10. Maybe yes, maybe no
14. Take a coat off
15. Restorative
16. Word on a sign on the lawn, perhaps
17. Short break for the breadwinner
19. Offshore
20. Monogram of Dr. Jekyll's creator
21. Repose
22. Puck's worker
24. Talk of the Gaelic
25. Bird with brilliant colors
26. Consummate
29. Window or wall opening
32. Some game
33. Loren's husband
34. Displayed fear
35. Venomous snakes
36. Faint from surprise
37. Cargo platform
38. Year in St. Evaristus' papacy
39. Kind of paper
40. Coeur d'____, Idaho
41. Firedogs
43. Refrained from punishing
44. Rifles
45. Sportscaster Gowdy
46. Raid site
48. Singer Tennille
49. Curative waters
52. Rajah's consort
53. Reason to slow down
56. Temptation location
57. Silent star, Bara
58. Chrysler Building style
59. Ovid's existence
60. Oscar winner Spacek

61. Pull a switch

Down

1. Inscription of Caesar's time
2. Burglar's take
3. Author of "Topaz"
4. Sleuth in pulp fiction
5. Finally
6. Pad type
7. One of the Windsors
8. Oft-bracketed word
9. Composer of "Godspell"
10. Prophetic OT book
11. Productive one, to the boss
12. Take a powder
13. Kind of book
18. Typeface extensions
23. Start of a play
24. They may be ringing
25. Billing period
26. Ropemaking fiber
27. Bow application
28. Express trains
29. Tires (with "out")
30. "I Believe" singer
31. Wrapped up
33. Schemata
36. Public demonstrations
37. Bedframe crosspiece
39. Pirate potable
40. Showery time
42. Bottle in a first aid kit
43. Blue law subject
45. Many college students
46. Emancipate
47. Dangerous dosages
48. Ball-bearing items
49. Merganser's kin
50. Variety of type
51. Surmounting
54. Key letter
55. Some cards and tags

Classifieds and Events

Classifieds

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Contact number: US5308704584

Email address: 4gooddeeds@gmail.com

Solution to Sudoku puzzle on page 3

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

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

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