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Ecuador closes a complicated year and enters an “uncertain” 2020

Ecuador closes a complicated 2019 due to financial issues and will enter a “complex” and “uncertain” 2020 due to economic needs, and the impact that the electoral process will have on the country to replace the head of state, Lenin Moreno, who will finish his functions in 2021, according to analysts.

Economic analyst Alberto Acosta Burneo, says 2020 will be “an even more complicated year because we will be at the gates of the elections and that will make the populist

politicians we have in Ecuador offer the gold and the Moor.”

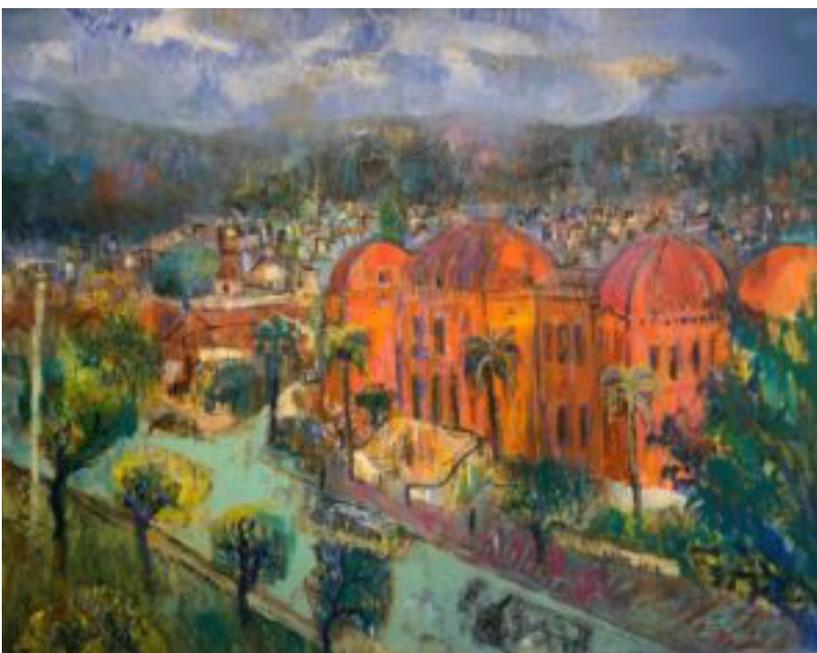
“We are approaching some very complex moments in Ecuador, where political uncertainty will be a constant, social dissatisfaction the rule, and that, most likely, will lead us to have many years of economic stagnation at the hands of an adjustment that cannot be made due to lack of political will and popular support,” said Acosta Burneo.

“HUGE REVERSE” OF THE GOVERNMENT

Analyst Santiago Basabe believes that Moreno's government belatedly tried to turn the economic model and suffered a “huge setback” in early October when social protests broke out against the elimination of the fuel subsidy.

He described the communication strategy for the elimination of the subsidy as “bad,” a measure that Moreno was forced to repeal, driven by growing social protests - some of them from unusual violence cont. page 4.

Famous artist's work stolen from the House of Culture in brazen daytime robbery



In the center of the back room of the Hall of the People of the House of Culture, sits a hollow wooden frame, with sharp cuts to it, especially in the lower corners.

Around 12:30 on Tuesday, December 31st, a man entered the museum where an artistic exhibition of the Argentine painter cont. page 4.

Ecuador added 24 new amphibian species in 2019

During the past year, 24 new species of amphibians were identified in Ecuador, the highest figure in 40 years according to the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador (PUCE).

The figure was published on December 14, highlighting that Ecuador contributed almost a fifth of the new species described in the world (134 species), with less than 1% of the global area.

The number of amphibian species in the world reached 8,019 this year; 624 of those are found in Ecuador.

This year's number of new amphibians is the highest since 1980, when 45 new species were described. The PUCE publication also highlighted that all descriptions were led by Ecuadorian scientists cont. page 5.



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I'M JUST SAYIN'

By Michael Soares

The Entenmann's is for company!

The strangest thing happened to us this morning. We were quietly relaxing after a big breakfast on the first day of the new year when all of a sudden, our 7 dogs (yes, 7) started barking wildly.

Codie jumped up first and said that there was a car at our front gate. She couldn't tell who it was so we both cautiously walked down the hill to see who had just shown up unannounced.

Mind you, we live pretty much "in the sticks" out here in Yunguilla, so to have someone show up just like that is simply not heard of.

Lo and behold, it was our neighbors from the bottom of our road (we live on a dead-end road that only has two other houses on it) who came by with a friend of theirs to wish us a Happy New Year and to talk about neighborhood things.

Imagine that, our Ecuadorian neighbors just showed up to say "hola!"

So, I made coffee and brought out some bagels, cream cheese and jam and proceeded to watch my neighbors enjoy the company and "brunch" (Codie and I were too stuffed to eat but had to have a cup of coffee with our guests!).

Now, what do you think is the strangest thing of all of this? How about this, that it even seemed strange! Come on, don't you remember when you were young? People just showed up at the door to say "hi" all the time. Why should this have seemed strange?

My cousin and I were just talking about this a few weeks ago. When we were kids it was normal to just show up at someone's house. You didn't have to call ahead. You didn't have to make plans to see friends. You just went over their house. Either they were home, or they weren't. No big deal.

There's even a very funny comedian who does a bit about this. He's an East coaster so I got his bit perfectly, especially the part where he said his mother used to go grocery shopping and would always buy an Entenmann's pastry, just in case "company" came by. You couldn't touch that if you feared for your life, because again, it was for "company!"

Anyway, the idea of stopping by to say hello to someone is just so neighborly, and yet it's slowly disappearing. In the US kids have play-dates (old news now) and now they are even using Google calendar to arrange "meet-ups."

Their kids for crying out loud. Why do they have to use a computer or smart phone to arrange time to play kick ball!

I know, I'm sounding like a curmudgeon, but I miss the days when being neighborly was an okay thing. In fact, if someone didn't stop by you wondered how they were, and you called them. It was the right thing to do.

I'll tell you this, their company this morning set Codie and I on a high for the day that hasn't ended. We were so delighted by it and intend to start doing the same thing to our friends.

So, if you hear a knock at the door, or your security intercom buzzes unexpectedly, don't be surprised to see us standing there. I can't promise we'll have Entenmann's, but we'll have something, and we'll expect you to let us in.

But if you're not there, that's okay, because like I said, it's no big deal.

Happy New Year to you all!

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Fun By The Numbers

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Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a Sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the number will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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

See answers on page 11

Ecuador closes a complicated year and enters an "uncertain" 2020 (Cont.)

- that lasted eleven days.

Dean of the Department of Political Studies of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (Flacso), Basabe said that the Government closes the year with a large debt in economic restructuring issues.

The support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been fundamental this year for the Government, which recently achieved a disbursement of \$498.4 million, which served as a momentary "escape valve" in a month of extra economic demands for the payment of the additional salaries of December.

But, beyond the economic, Basabe sees "enormous political support" from the IMF to the Moreno administration because, "on more than one occasion, it has yielded and assumed that the Government will not be able to fulfill everything it offered" and despite this, has disbursed money.

Ecuador kept distance with the IMF in the administration of Rafael Correa, who ruled for a decade.

When Moreno came to power in May 2017, he supported by Correa, who now calls him a "traitor" and has become his staunch political enemy.

"I think that the four years of a good transition were lost and it seems to me that the real transition is going to be a good part of the Government's work of 2021, because President Moreno does not believe that he has time for a real rearrangement, especially of the economy," Basabe said.

PENDING ADJUSTMENTS

If 2019 has already been a complicated year, economic analyst Diego Olmedo fears that the next one will be "more complex," since a package of adjustments to solve the economic issues of the nation is pending.

And he is worried about the difficulties that the Government has shown in explaining to society the reasons why it resumed dialogues with the IMF, one of the targets of harsh criticism by protesters in October.

Olmedo said that the administration of Moreno has to work "very much" to make citizens understand "why they have to cut \$3 billion next year and that measures will come in that direction."

"The IMF asked us to make adjustments and the national government has to make the whole country understand why that adjustment is necessary because we are in a fiscal deficit situation, which by 2020 will be at \$3.4 billion and financing needs are going to be at \$5.2 billion," he calculated.

With that panorama, Olmedo agrees with Basabe and Acosta Burneo that next year will be more difficult than 2019 if the Government does not make the necessary corrections to revive the economy.

But he predicts that there will be no drastic solutions: "I see no signs that anyone wants to adjust to the economy in a radical way," which could transfer the responsibility of reviving the economy to the next government, he says.

Extracted from Diario El Mercurio

Famous artist's work stolen from the House of Culture in brazen daytime robbery (Cont.)

Ariel Dawi is exhibited and asked for the bathroom. He entered the hall, armed with a knife or razor, cut the canvas out of one of the exhibit's most significant works, and left.

It all happened in an instant. One of the museum's visitors told authorities of the attack and soon Ariel Dawi, four policemen and the delegates of the House of Culture arrived, all dismayed.

The work represents the Benigno Malo school with the urban landscape of the city and is also titled "Colegio Benigno Malo", measuring approximately 1 meter 14 centimeters (45 inches), by 1 meter (39 inches).

Dawi wants the public to know of the theft so that if someone tries to market it, or if they see it somewhere, they will know it's a stolen work and can report it to the police.

It took a lot of time and effort to make the painting, said Dawi, about the work that has had received very good comments as part of the show.

He lamented that the Hall of the People lacks surveillance cameras and asked that this bad experience be used to provide a budget for security to the House of Culture.

One of the policemen who responded to the theft, said that in his 18 years on the job, this is the first time he has ever seen a work of art in an exhibition get stolen.

According to the Criminal Code, robbery with violence against material property is punishable by imprisonment for three to five years. The law also sanctions, with imprisonment of six months to two years, whoever sells, buys, hides, stores goods knowing that they are stolen.

Extracted from Diario El Mercurio

Cuenca starts collecting property taxes with discounts for early payment



This week, the Municipality of Cuenca, announced that municipal tax payments will be received at 80 collection points during the uninterrupted hours from 08:00 to 19:00.

The statement states that taxpayers can go to cancel their obligations at the premises of ETAPA, FARMASOL, EMOV and Land Registry of Cuenca, as well as at Banco del Austro, Banco de Guayaquil, Banco Bolivariano and JEP, CAJA, ERCO, La Merced and Provida cooperatives. Payments can also be made through the website of the Municipality of Cuenca: www.cuenca.gob.ec.

Patricio Abad, Financial Director of the Municipality of Cuenca, explained that these are taxes on the urban property, rustic property, urban firefighters, rustic firefighters, citizen security rate, special contribution of improvements-works of general benefit.

For the specific case of the urban property tax, a table of discounts for early payment will be applied, which includes a 10% discount if it is canceled in the first half of January, a percentage that is decreasing biweekly until June, when the discount will be only 1%.

The discount for early payment on rustic property is 10% if it is canceled within the first 45 days of the process, that is, between January 1st and February 15, 2020.

The calculation of payments due is made based on the new appraisal, in accordance with article 139 of the Organic Code of Territorial Organization Autonomy and Decentralization (COOTAD) which mandates: "It is the obligation of (municipal) governments to update property registries every two years and the valuation of urban and rural property."

For urban and rustic property tax, the Municipal Corporation raised a total of \$5,300,000 in 2019. In 2020 it expects to raise \$4,381,040 for the urban property tax and \$1,199,586 for rural property tax.

On January 1, 2020, collection titles will also be issued for works of general benefit, which reach \$11,003,760.43, of which \$548,273.79 correspond to the Municipal Cleaning Company of Cuenca (EMAC EP) for the redevelopment and recovery of three parks: Jupiter, Bilbao and Navegante.

The difference \$10,455,486.64 represents securities payable for another 21 works, including the Megapark of the Light (Wanacauri); the Tarqui-Guuzho park and the Icto Cruz park, in addition to work carried out on

surplus roads.

It should be noted that in 2019 for works of general benefit, securities were issued for \$9,886,122.52, of which \$6,346,236.3 has been collected with a cut-off as of October 2019.

Ecuador added 24 new amphibian species in 2019 (Cont.)

and institutions: PUCE, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, INABIO, Centro Jambatu, UTPL, Fundación Ecominga, among others.

Among the new species is the "glass frog," or "Nymphargus manduriacu," discovered in Eco Minga's Manduriacu Reserve, in the Imbabura province northwest of Quito.

Glass frogs are famous for their transparent belly skin; from below, depending on the species, you can often see structures such as their bones, the contours of their intestines, and even their hearts pumping. Of the roughly 150 species of glass frogs in the New World tropics, the genus Nymphargus has about 36 known species.

The 24 new species are distributed in the following categories:

- 1 Near Threatened
- 1 Minor Concern
- 3 Critical Hazard
- 5 Endangered
- 3 Not Evaluated
- 11 Insufficient Data

The end of 2019 brought the first same sex marriage in Cuenca



Friday, December 27, 2019, was a special day for the LGBTI community in Cuenca. The city's first same sex marriage was held at the offices of the Civil Registry of Azuay, when for Abraham Barbecho and Carlos Tenemaza, formalized their union.

The couple has been in a relationship for nine years and for some time now they've been thinking of formalizing their status. So, they decided to do it before the end of the year.

Although their union caused some curiosity among the people present in the Civil Registry, they said that at all times there was respect from the observers.

The couple says that means a lot, since it is a sign that society is changing and is beginning to understand that with marriage, what is important is happiness.

The Civil Registry recorded 62 same-sex marriages in Ecuador between June and November of this year. Guayas province recorded the most with 27, followed by Pichincha with 21. In total, 33 of the unions were between men and 29 were between women.

The right to join in a same sex marriage in Ecuador became legal in June when the Constitutional Court (CC), gave way to so-called "equal marriage," which allows same-sex couples to contract civil marriage in the country. The constitutional judges resolved two cases of "consultation of norm" presented by the Provincial Court of Pichincha concerning the couples Efraín Soria-Xavier Benalcázar and Rubén Salazar-Carlos Verdesoto.

Soria and her partner got married on August 31st after 13 years of being

together. For Soria, who chairs the Equity Foundation, an organization that works for the LGBTI community and the prevention of HIV-AIDS, this is a process that is going to be gradually taking place, because Ecuadorian society is still conservative.

"It is very important to continue promoting the issue that people have this right, use it and can access all the guarantees that come with this right: social security, medical care, recognition of families and, above all, work socially."

For Pamela Troya, a LGBTI activist and spokeswoman for the Equal Civil Marriage campaign in Ecuador, the main objective was to achieve justice, equality, recognition, law and dignity. In the short term, Troya hopes it generates a cultural change about the prejudices around homosexuality.

Carlos Larco, who presented legal actions personally and representing the Christian and evangelical collective Vida y Familia, prefers not to comment on the way of life of people, but hopes that it is not intended to reach the educational system "selling the idea that this is absolutely usual, normal and as valid as the marriage of their parents."

Condor killed by shotgun in the Amazon



A 10-month-old condor died after being shot with a shotgun in the Amazon region, said Diego Medina, Director of the Planeta Vida Veterinary Hospital in Latacunga, where the condor was transferred.

Villagers found the injured condor in the town of Archidona, in the province of Napo, and reported it to the Cónдор Group, who contacted the Ministry of Environment, after which the condor was transferred to the clinic.

According to the Medina, the condor arrived at the hospital on December 17th and after performing x-rays, they detected that the pellets were apparently in the chest, which led them to suspend the study until the bird was stabilized.

Once stabilized, a tomography study determined the existence of five pellets in the body and a problem in the lungs, that was later determined to be a blood clot.

The bird, between nine and 10 kilos died on December 24th due to lung damage and septicemia, and with it "a whole generation of condors was lost," said Medina.

Once an autopsy is finished, the veterinarians will withdraw the pellets that are in the bird's body for analysis because they are usually made in an artisanal way and they could provide some information on those responsible for the attack.

Medina said that a 2018 census determined the existence of 150 condors in Ecuador, so he stressed that this month's loss is "significant."

Extracted from Diario El Tiempo

Government decides basic salary in Ecuador will rise \$6 in 2020

The Unified Basic Salary (SBU) for 2020 will be \$400, which means an increase of only \$6 compared to 2019. The increase is equivalent to 1.52%. In view of the fact that there was no agreement within the National Labor and Wages Council, the National Government made the decision, just like the previous year.

The Minister of Labor, Andrés Madero, indicated that the \$6 salary increase takes into account the projected inflation for 2020 that stands at 0.84 and the estimated economic growth at 0.6%. With these two macroeconomic assumptions, the General State Budget for the next year was also structured. The analysis also considered economic losses due to the October demonstrations amounting to \$800 million, the Minister added.

In the previous meetings of the Council, workers unions proposed an increase of \$15 to the salary, while employer groups did not support any type of increase.

Rodrigo Gómez de la Torre, spokesperson for the employers, said he hoped that the decision of the



Government "is a responsible decision strictly attached to law, which is the projected inflation for next year."

For his part, the President of the Confederation of Workers of Ecuador (CTE), Edgar Sarango, expressed his hope that the Government "in its sensitivity" will "side with the workers."

In 2019 the SUB increase was \$8 when it went from \$386 to \$394.

Ecuador has numerous challenges with international relations in 2020



The Ecuadorian government of Lenin Moreno has numerous aspirations in the international field to achieve this year, both in the region and with countries in North America and Europe.

In the region, the entry to the Pacific Alliance, the exit of the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) and the formation of the Forum for Progress in South America (Prosur) are pending.

The Pacific Alliance is a trade integration initiative that includes Mexico and three countries in South America: Colombia, Peru and Chile.

The Colombian president, Iván Duque, who in 2020 will be in charge of the pro tempore presidency of the agency, ratified his support for the entry of Ecuador as a full member, in the binational cabinet.

The departure of Ecuador from Unasur will take place next May. From there, the internal legal conflict for the land donated by the Pichincha Prefecture and the construction of around \$45 million, built by the government of Rafael Correa, is pending.

Since January and in the decline of Unasur, several Latin American presidents promoted the creation of Prosur, a regional integration organization that, among other objectives, seeks to "defend democracy and boost the market economy with a social sense."

President Lenin Moreno, along with the leaders of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Brazil and Paraguay, signed the Santiago Declaration for the Renewal and Strengthening of South America, on March 22nd of this year.

Ecuador was awaiting the approval of the short-term visa exemption in the Schengen Area by the European Union (EU). However, Foreign Minister José Valencia announced in November that it would not happen in the immediate future.

The decision could be made in mid-2020 and depends on the 27 countries that make up the EU, after more than two years have passed since the signing of the multipart agreement.

For former ambassador Mauricio Gándara, Ecuador was delayed in obtaining the European visa because former president Rafael Correa did not want alliances and ended up making the trade agreement late. Peru and Colombia did it before and they have the visa.

Meanwhile, Ecuador has already advanced the process of implementing the Biometric Passport, one of the requirements to circulate in the Schengen Area. It is scheduled to be issued beginning this March.

Finally, there are trade relations with the United States.

Vice President Otto Sonnenholzner reported that Ecuador managed to resume the trade relationship, which in December developed the trade and investment table, a preliminary step to resolve "small differences" before moving forward on other trade issues. Progress is expected in 2020.

Regarding the region, Gándara points out that the Venezuelan crisis is a central problem and Ecuador should join the Lima Group.

Foreign service

The embassies of Nigeria, Algeria, Ethiopia, Belarus have been closed, the consulates of Vienna in Austria, of Alicante in Spain and others were joined to the respective embassies. Consulates generate almost a third of the Foreign Ministry's budget, said Foreign Minister José Valencia. At the moment, the ministry has 1400 officials and they will continue with the reductions, he said.

Extracted from Diario El Universo



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One person dies and 13 are injured after landslide in Napo damages bus



A landslide and rocks that smashed into an interprovincial transport bus in the area of Baeza-Cuyuja, Napo province, caused the death of one person and inflicted injuries on thirteen other passengers during the incident.

The emergency was attended to by ambulances from the National Police with Dinased personnel and a patrolman, the Archidona Fire Department with a rescue unit and the Ministry of Transportation and Public Works with machinery to clean the roadway.

Several of the injured were assessed at the accident site with a picture of polytrauma and superficial injuries.

These people were transferred to the José María Velasco Ibarra de Tena Hospital. Subsequently, the wrecked vehicle was removed and taken to the retention yards in El Chaco. At the moment, the road is open.

Ecuador's oil production to increase in 2020 after \$717M investment



About \$717 million in private investment for oil drilling, reconditioning of wells and facilities construction was achieved in 20 fields operated by the public company Petroamazonas.

As reported by the Ministry of Energy and Non-Renewable Natural Resources and Petroamazonas EP, around 715 local jobs were generated in the provinces of Orellana and Sucumbios.

Of the \$717 million, \$573 million were allocated for drilling and reconditioning activities. A total of 88 wells were drilled and 105 more underwent reconditioning work in order to increase the production of the fields located in Orellana and Sucumbios.

Meanwhile, there was an investment of around \$144 million in new oil facilities (43).

According to the Government, the investments made in 2019 were foreseen in the service provision contracts with financing from the contracting firms, which were signed for the rounds of the Campos Maduros (2014), Campo Auca (2015), Campos Menores (2018), Oil & Gas (2018) as well as the renegotiation of the Shushufindi and Libertador fields (2018).

The contractors for 2020 are: Kamana, Igapo, Pañaturi, Ecuaservoil, Consepetro, CCDC, Cuyabenopetro, Triboilgas, Wayra Energy, SSFD Consortium, Pardalisservices S, A., Shaya.

By the end of 2020, drilling and reconditioning of fields will be carried out with the objective of achieving an estimated business production target of 437,000 barrels per day. Currently, an average of 423,224 barrels are produced per day.

Extracted from Diario El Universo

2020 holiday calendar in Ecuador



There will be eleven public and private sector holidays in 2020.

The draft law regulating national and local holidays in the country, was approved in December 2016. According to the law, holidays that fall on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday or Sunday will be celebrated on Friday, and holidays that fall on Sunday or Tuesday will be recognized on Monday.

In 2020, the first holiday was January 1st, which fell on a Wednesday. Next will be Carnival, which will be recognized on February 22nd, 23rd, 24th and 25th.

Carnival is followed by the Easter holiday, that will have 3 days recognized: Friday April 10th, Saturday April 11th and Sunday April 12th.

Labor Day holiday is on Friday May 1st, which will include Saturday, May 2nd and Sunday, May 3rd.

The holiday for the Battle of Pichincha, will move from Sunday, May 24th to Monday, May 25th.

On Monday, August 10th, the holiday for the First Independence Day is maintained. Likewise, that of October 9th, for the Independence of Guayaquil, is maintained on Friday, October 9th and includes Saturday, October 10th and Sunday, October 11th.

Monday, November 2nd is the holiday for the Day of the Dead and Tuesday, November 3rd, is a holiday for the Independence of Cuenca.

The last holidays of the year are Friday, December 25th for Christmas and Thursday, December 31st, 2020 for the end of the year.

For the sectors that cannot stop their activities, the alternatives of rotating shifts or the payment of those days worked are established.

In addition, the law empowers the President of the Republic to decree: holiday bridges or suspension of working hours on days that are not mandatory rest.

2020 Ecuadorian Holidays

New Year's Day	January 1st
Carnival	February 22nd, 23rd, 24th and 25th
Easter	April 10th, 11th and 12th
Labor Day	May 1st, 2nd and 3rd
Battle of Pichincha	May 25th
First Independence Day	August 10th
Independence of Guayaquil	October 9th, 10th and 11th
Day of the Dead	November 2nd
Independence of Cuenca	November 3rd
Christmas	December 25th
New Year's Eve	December 31st

About 11 thousand humanitarian visas given to Venezuelans by Ecuador



A total of almost 11,000 "Exception Visas for Humanitarian Reasons," were given to Venezuelan citizens by Ecuador since August 2019, reports the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility.

In an official statement released on Saturday, December 28, 2019, the Foreign Ministry explained that between August 19th and December 26, 2019, it issued a total of 25,780 visas in favor of Venezuelan citizens.

Of these, 10,976 were "Exception Visas for Humanitarian Reasons" (VERHU), issued in the framework of the process of regularization of Venezuelan citizens established by an Executive Decree of July 26, 2019.

As of October 26 of this year, when the regularization process began, 2,824 visas have been granted for humanitarian reasons through the consulates of Caracas (Venezuela), Bogotá (Colombia) and Lima (Peru).

The rest corresponds to VERHU granted through the zonal coordination and the Center for the Issuance of Exception Visas (CEVE).

Applications rejected

In its statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that there are visa applications that have been rejected for various reasons, among the most recurrent are the erroneous registration of names or surnames, dates of birth, or problems when uploading the documents scanned to the Virtual Consulate platform.

The process of issuing the exception visa for humanitarian reasons, in accordance with the regulations, will conclude on March 31, 2020.

Therefore, the Foreign Ministry invited Venezuelan citizens to carry out the corresponding procedures in advance of that date so that they can access a safe, orderly and regular migration.

Access to the platform

The process can be accessed through the website www.consuladovirtual.gob.ec and in relation to the registration or immigration census, this process corresponds exclusively to the Ministry of Government, through the portal <https://registro.migracion.gob.ec> detailed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the brief.

As a result of the economic and political situation in Venezuela, according to the UN more than 4.5 million of its inhabitants have had to leave their country since 2015.

Ecuador, according to figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has welcomed 263,000 Venezuelans.

Extracted from Diario EL Tiempo

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Public Health did well in the battle for 2019 funding



A total of \$362,748,192.62 was allocated to the purchase of medicines in 2019 under the IESS system. Among these are 64 for the battle against cancer and the attention of rare and catastrophic diseases.

The maxim is that "no one will be left out of the national health system," said President Lenin Moreno in August, when presenting the national medicines table.

The President said that this list would include 454 medications, contained in 641 pharmaceutical forms, which would cover 98% of the most common diseases registered in the country.

In the presentation of the national medicine table, the minister of the sector, Catalina Andramuño, said that the acquisition of four vaccines, immunoglobulin for hepatitis B and three medicines for hepatitis C were added. HIV treatment schemes would also be completed. Also on the list are pediatric medications, new insulins and analogues especially for children and adults suffering from type I diabetes. Four new antibiotics and five drugs for hematological diseases were also added.

The Public Health sector has been one of the most empowered in the past year. Hospitals and health centers nationwide were upgraded and improved at a cost of \$143.9 million, along 116 first level health centers for outpatient care for 2.3 million beneficiaries.

Seven basic, second level hospitals were also renovated, which will cover over 5 million people.

Extracted from Diario EL Tiempo

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Eight world heritage sites are in Ecuador's borders



Ecuador is one of the most biodiverse countries worldwide. Its historical architecture has been distinguished several times. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared eight patrimonies of humanity in the country, three of them shared with other nations.

UNESCO explains that its 1972 convention for the "Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," states that certain places on Earth with an "exceptional universal value," belong to the common heritage of humanity. There are currently 1,121 sites in 167 states declared in this way.

"The convention is an effective tool that allows facing contemporary challenges related to climate change, uncontrolled urbanization, mass tourism, sustainable socio-economic development and natural disasters," says UNESCO.

These are the places or things established as World Heritage assets in Ecuador:

Quito

The capital of Ecuadorians entered this list in 1978. For its inclusion, two aspects were taken into account: the influence of the Quito School was recognized for its art, architecture, sculpture and painting in the cities of the audience and which forms a harmonious "sui generis" where the actions of man and nature converge.

Galapagos Islands

The insular region entered the list in 1978, the same year as Quito. These islands are considered as an exceptional "living museum and showcase of evolution," in particular for its extraordinary animal life, which inspired the theory of "evolution by natural selection" of Charles Darwin after his visit to the islands in 1835.



Sangay National Park

It was declared as heritage site in 1983. It is one of the most complete ecological systems in the world. The national park includes three volcanoes: Tungurahua, Sangay and Altar. The natural vegetation covers

about 84% of the forest.

Historic Center of Cuenca

This declaration was given in 1999. The city illustrates the implementation of urban planning in the Renaissance in the Americas, the merger of different societies and cultures of Latin America is also highlighted.

QhapaqÑan (Inca Trail, in Quichua)

The trail was declared a heritage site in 2014 and is guarded by Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia and Ecuador. It is the oldest road network in America: it traveled longitudinally throughout the empire (Tahuantinsuyo), which allowed it to be controlled along the Andes Mountains. The main road is about 6,000 km from south to north.

Marimba music

This declaration was given in 2015 as an "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity." The music, songs and traditional dances are cataloged as musical expressions that are an integral part of the social fabric - family and community - of the descendant population of Africans settled in the Colombian region of the South Pacific, as well as in the Ecuadorian province of Esmeraldas.

Traditional fabric of the Ecuadorian straw hat

This technique entered the list in 2012. The technique that is used with a fiber of a palm tree that grows on the coasts of the country stands out. "The techniques and knowledge encompass a complex and dynamic social plot that includes, among other elements, the traditional techniques of cultivation and production, various forms of social organization and the use of the hat as part of everyday and festive clothing," he said.

The oral heritage and cultural manifestations of the Zápara people

Their declaration was made in 2008. "In the heart of the Amazon, they have developed an oral culture particularly rich in knowledge of their natural environment, as evidenced by the abundance of their terminology on flora and fauna and their knowledge of medicinal plants of the jungle," says UNESCO.

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CRIME REPORT AND ACCIDENT REPORT

Cuenca and National Criminal Activity

(Cuenca) Three citizens were apprehended for causing damage to a vehicle in Monay.

Police information indicates that around 10:50 on Saturday, December 28th, during a preventive patrolling on Asunción and Popayán streets, in Monay, police were alerted by a citizen who had been assaulted by several individuals, who also caused damage to the victim's vehicle.

With details from the victim, police began their search and located the suspects in the streets of OAS and Pasto, in the company of more people who accused the alleged injured party of being the one who first wounded them.

The agents proceeded to arrest the three people for causing damage to the property of others and for assault.

(Cuenca) The Criminal Guarantees Court of Azuay applied the maximum penalty against three subjects who charged \$300 for killing the citizen Juan Erreyes Yupanqui, 45.

The Azuay Prosecutor's Office reported that Rosa C. and José T. were sentenced to 34 years and eight months of deprivation of liberty as perpetrators of the crime of hiring.

Also, Jorge P. was sentenced to seven years and four months in jail. He received a lowered sentence for cooperating with the police and providing information used to convict Rosa C. and José T.

The report details that the judges also ordered the three to pay \$86,000 as reparation to the victim's relatives.

The investigation determined that the victim's wife, Rosa C., planned the incident and asked her brother, Jorge P., to find a person to kill her partner. With this purpose Jorge P. contacted José T., with whom the crime was negotiated for \$ 300.

On the morning of July 13, 2018, Rosa C. left her home located in Manaus and Guatemala streets, west of Cuenca, and handed the keys of the house to Jorge P., who let José T. into the house. José T., then stabbed the disabled victim 32 times.

(Cuenca) The driver of an inter-parroquial bus that covered the Victoria del Portete-Cuenca route was sentenced to 60 days in prison for drunk driving.

Geovany Godoy, a transit agent, said that while he was doing his job on Avenida de las Américas and Ricardo Durán, at 8:38 a.m. on the morning of Thursday, December 26th, he realized that a bus was moving in a zig-zag way, so he stopped the driver and made him take a breathalyzer test which showed that he was over the legal limit for alcohol.

According to article 385 of the Organic Comprehensive Criminal Code, for drivers of light or heavy public transport vehicles, the maximum allowed alcohol level in the blood is 0.1 grams of liquor per liter of blood. If this limit is exceeded, drivers are penalized with the loss of 30 points on their driver license and imprisonment for up to 90 days.

(Cuenca) A citizen was arrested on Saturday, December 28th by agents of the National Police on Saturday, around 10:50 a.m., near Canton El Pan Street and Primero de Mayo.

There, 31-year-old John Paul PY was captured after a citizen complaint accusing him of robbery of a workshop.

The police report details how his arrest occurred thanks to the collaboration of the local residents who witnessed the suspect stealing tools from a welding shop.

Additionally, the police report indicates that the detainee has previously had three arrests for theft.

(Cuenca) Two individuals were arrested and accused of theft of persons according to a report by the National Police. The report says that 19-year-old Jackson David QG and 24-year-old Cristhian Fernando AM were arrested for being involved in the alleged crime of theft of people.

According to the National Police, at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, December 27th, they apprehended the two suspects for intimidating a woman and taking her mobile phone.

The victim reported the robbery of the police officers of the Machángara Circuit, who searched the area and found them hiding among the bushes.

In their possession police found two cell phones one which was identified by the victim as hers. The victim also identified the suspects as the perpetrators of the theft.

(Cuenca) In early hours of Friday, December 27, 2019, two criminals stabbed a driver of an urban service bus in the Feria Libre sector.

When the victim was walking to remove the bus from a garage in the area, two subjects who were on a motorcycle stabbed him.

Part of a statement from the Cuenca Chamber of Transportation states that "we express our solidarity with our fellow driver. We will accompany you throughout this process for your recovery. We ask the authorities that this fact be investigated."

The driver received knife wounds to his body, legs and head. He is stable in condition at a local hospital.

National Police have not arrested any suspects in the crime.

Cuenca Area Traffic Accidents

* In the first minutes of this new year, on January 1, 2020, in the Las Lomas community, 2 km from the center of Sigsig, there was a fatal accident that left five people dead. Four minors and one adult died in the disaster.

At a press conference from the Municipality of Sigsig, authorities said that the incident was caused by the collapse of a retaining wall, 30 meters long and four meters high, on four vehicles where the victims rested.

The deceased are: Angelita Morocho, 57; Jaime Fabián Placencia, 13; Jhonatan Javier Placencia Sánchez, 14; Mayra Placiencia Sánchez, 7; and Christopher Alexander Mendoza Placencia, 11 years old.

In addition, two minors (one 4-year-old and another 2-year-old) were rescued with injuries and transferred to the San Sebastián hospital. The Sigsig Fire Department reports that they are now listed as out of danger.

* A violent motorcycle crash took the life of a young man at 1:35 p.m. Tuesday afternoon, December 31, 2019, in the Lacao sector.

The road was restricted to vehicular traffic for several minutes until the corresponding investigations were carried out and the motorcycle was removed from the road.

The causes of the accident are investigated and the identity of the driver is still to be verified.

* On the afternoon of January 1, 2020, there was a multiple car crash involving three cars and a taxi. Two people were injured in the accident.

The incident occurred at 5:30 p.m. on Avenida 24 de Mayo and Hernán Malo, Universidad del Azuay sector.

As a result, a 5-year-old boy and a 45-year-old adult were slightly injured and treated at the scene of the accident. The cause of the collision is unknown.

Investigations will continue to determine the responsibility of the case.

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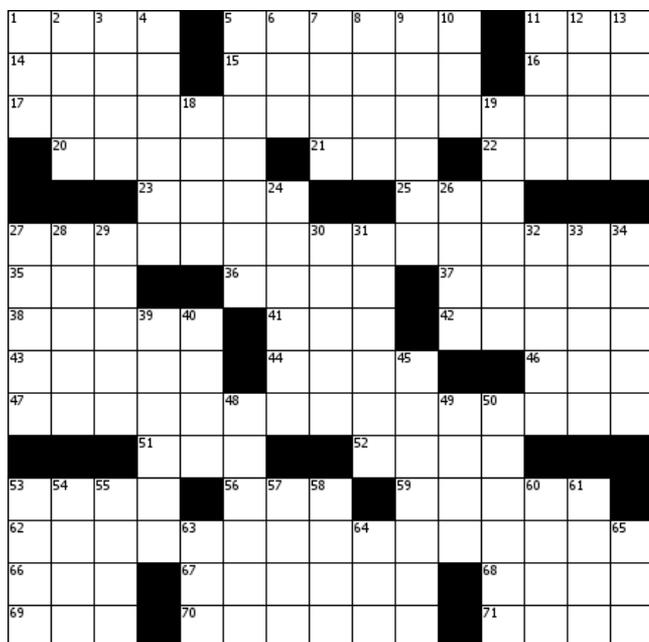
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WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND TOWN AND BEYOND....

"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. English-horn kin
5. On fire, in restaurant lingo
11. Some Spanish replies
14. Terrarium plant, perhaps
15. Surgical beams
16. Word with many moons
17. Four words with paper
20. WWI French common soldier
21. Piece of the whole (Abbr.)
22. Subjective surrounding
23. Grandma, affectionately
25. Adm. or capt.'s org., perhaps
27. Three words with paper
35. Stimp's TV pal
36. Sans assistance
37. "___ De' Pastori Dal Monte"
38. Church official
41. Though, poetically
42. Distinguishing attribute
43. River by the Louvre
44. It inhibits impartial judgement
46. Sault ___ Marie
47. Three words with paper
51. Income provided by the U.S. govt.
52. "... ___ saw Elba"
53. Unofficially off-base
56. Country music org.
59. Ball cohort
62. Three words with paper
66. Winner's take
67. Water mover on a house
68. End in ___ (require overtime)
69. Use Miss Clairol, e.g.
70. Shells out
71. Digs of twigs

Down

1. Inaccurate
2. Road Runner's sound
3. Dessert item since 1912
4. Termination
5. Exhibits shamelessly
6. Varnish ingredient
7. Quizzes
8. Member of an Iranian people
9. Irish accent
10. Subj. for immigrants, perhaps
11. "Elephant Boy" boy
12. "Young Frankenstein" character
13. Kind of bean
18. Lethargic feeling
19. Armed cavalry soldier
24. One-celled organism
26. Pt. of CBS
27. Usurp forcefully
28. Moray trapper
29. "Gunga Din" setting
30. Fat liquid
31. Youthful period
32. Pit bull controller
33. Last Supper question
34. Eucharist plate
39. Isolate
40. Aunts and uncles, e.g. (Abbr.)
45. Waiters, e.g.
48. Spasm sound
49. Service entrance, sometimes
50. "The Wizard of Oz" character
53. Just ___ (not much)
54. Guileful
55. Give the glad eye
57. Remote control button
58. Letter abbreviation
60. Mention as proof
61. "___ Coming" (Three Dog Night hit)
63. Certain NFL linemen
64. Lou Grant's anchorman
65. Disappoint (with "down")

Classifieds and Events

Classifieds

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Solution to Sudoku puzzle on page 3

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

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

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