

# THE CUENCA DISPATCH

Ecuador's Original English-Language Newspaper

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## Understanding the bribery trial against former Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa and 20 others

The Bribes case involving 21 people, among them former public officials and businessmen, is a complex plot. Rafael Correa, Jorge Glas, Alexis Mera, María de los Ángeles Duarte and 17 others are accused in this case for the alleged offense of accepting bribes.

According to the Prosecutor's Office, each suspect had a role and understood the actions they took between 2012 and 2016. Essentially these individuals were complicit in creating fake invoices and having them paid directly to the Alianza PAIS political party, or for having actual invoices for services provided by one company, paid (as bribes) by other companies that provided no services to Alianza PAIS.



The Prosecutor's Office claims that both foreign and local businesses made cash payments to Alianza PAIS in exchange for lucrative public works contracts. cont. page 4.

## Iranian couple on their way to Spain arrested at Guayaquil airport with fake passports



Two Iranians have been caught using fake Israeli passports as they attempted to leave Ecuador to fly to Spain.

The two, a man and a woman in their 20s who are natives of the city of Ahvaz, the capital of the province of Juzestán in western Iran, were caught by Ecuador's passport control in Guayaquil with the forged travel documents.

The forged passports used personal information of two Israelis—an 11-year-old girl still in possession of her own passport and an adult male who recently reported his passport as stolen.

cont. page. 11

### BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT

## DentastiQ – Expert and modern dental care at affordable prices

One of the most important reasons expats move to Cuenca is for the availability of excellent health care at reasonable rates. And that includes dental care.

Because dental care in the U.S. is more expensive than any other developed country in the world, millions of people, especially seniors and children go without much needed dental care simply because they cannot afford the excessive costs.

Therefore, it's reassuring to know that Cuenca is a destination for visitors seeking first-rate dental care at affordable prices, in modern facilities.



cont. page. 8



Ecuador achieves four agreements after meeting at the White House see page >> 5



Section of Padre Aguirre becomes pedestrian use only and merchants march in protest see page >> 5



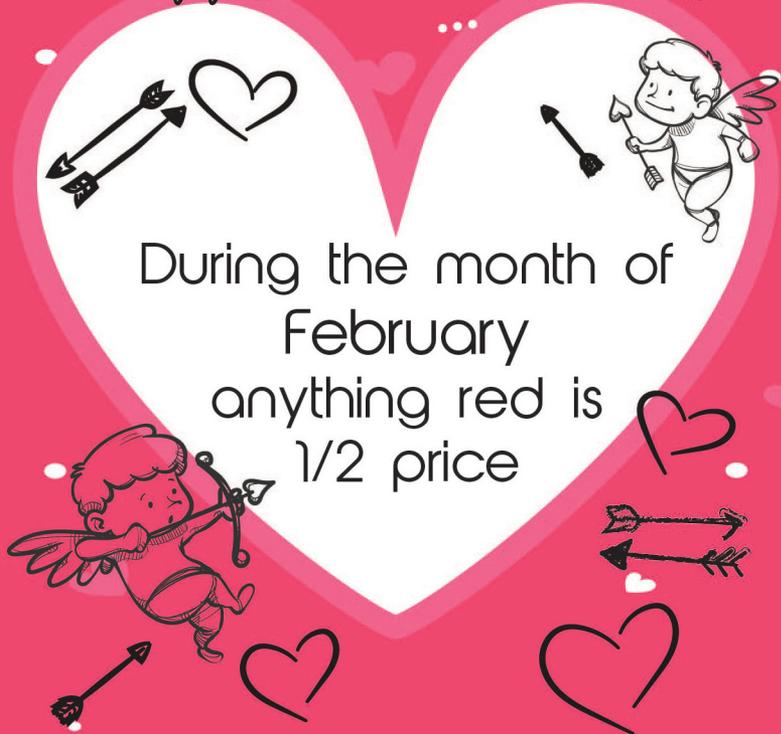
Symphony of Cuenca brings together two great composers in the Beethoven-Salgado cycle see page >> 6



Study determines the need for \$35 million in repairs at the Challuabamba Fuel Terminal see page >> 9

**CUENCA** consignments

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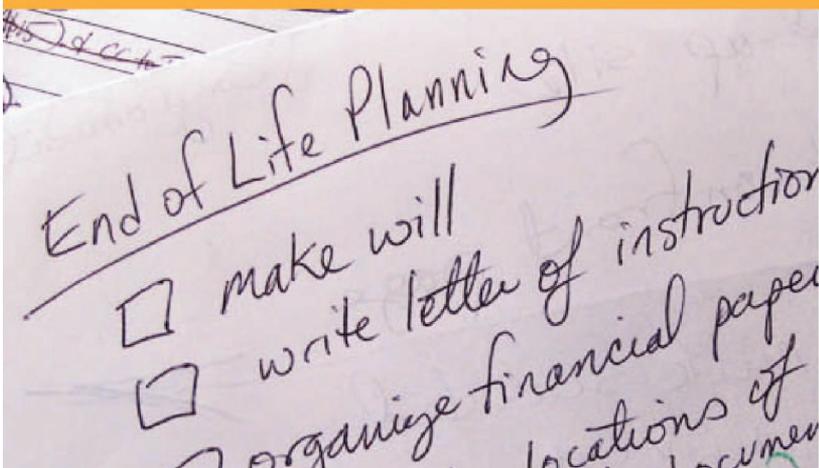
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*Naturally it's hard to think about,  
but perhaps your next step (for your family)  
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# I'M JUST SAYIN'

By Michael Soares

## How big do they make bark collars?

Sometimes, when I sit down to write this column, I've got a whole lot of pent up thoughts that I'm just waiting to pour out onto the page. Sometimes, just one simple word is stuck in my head and that makes me build an entire column around it.

Today is more of the later. I have one word stuck in my head and that is the word "restraint."

It came to me because as you know, we have a lot of dogs out here in Yunguilla. For the most part they are well behaved and don't bother us or the neighbors too much with their barking.

However, we have two small dogs (part poodle we think) who can't help but bark for no reason at all—or for something they think is important like a bird on a branch. Most mornings, the first thing they do is start barking when they are let out of their cage. We do not enjoy it, to say the least.

So, we use bark collars on the two of them at least three or four days a week. We don't set them to shock, only to vibrate—which still scares the hell out of them and shuts them up.

If we don't do this, they bark like crazy and it gets all the other dogs going and we have a difficult time trying to calm them all down. Hence, the need to put "restraints" on the two little ones. We have no choice but to do something to make them stop acting like idiots.

The really sad thing is that this changes their entire personalities while they have the collars on. They literally slink around the yard. Their heads hang down and they look like they are as sad as can possibly be. And, they are wondering why they have to wear the collars and no one else does.

If they could only restrain themselves, they wouldn't have to walk around like this all morning. But they can't help themselves. They have to bark to be happy.

Because of that, we tend to take the collars off them after lunch. By then we are ready to deal with the fits of barking. When we do "set them free," they go crazy! They jump all around, they bark, they run, they act like they have just been taken off of death row and released into the general population (of dogs).

Sadly, having the bark collar on them only makes them show restraint for the time it's around their necks. They don't learn anything from it, other than that while it's on they shouldn't bark, or they will have to face the repercussions.

Humans can show the same traits as these two idiot dogs. Some humans tend to bark all day at everyone and everything. They bark about stuff that makes no sense. They bark just to get all the other people riled up. There is no reasonable purpose behind their bark, but it is an effective tool for them to get other people to do something stupid as well.

And even if someone tries to restrain them, they tend to think about the restraint as being unfair and it makes them feel like they are being persecuted for no reason.

Then, when the restraints are taken off them, they bark even more and jump around and act like a crazy idiot. They don't learn from being restrained. In fact, they feel vindicated when the restraints are lifted.

And that's simply a shame. Because for some people, those restraints are necessary tools to learn from. Now, I'm not talking about violating someone's human rights. I'm talking about putting boundaries around someone and saying, "Hey, think before you bark." Nothing more, nothing less.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of people like this in the world. And some of them rise to high power. They are the worst type to have this "restraint" issue. Because they feel persecuted when they are asked to restrain themselves, so they lash out when they have their restraints lifted. And they are meaner and nastier than ever.

It just shows that it's foolish to think that when you restrain a dog, or a person, and then let them free, that they will have learned a lot from their experience and will take a different approach to how they act. They won't. They're barkers. And they're idiots. Simple as that.

I'm just sayin'.

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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!

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

See answers on page 11

## Understanding the bribery trial against former Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa and 20 others (Cont.)

But how does the average person assess the validity of these charges? Simply put, it comes down to these ten questions:

1. Is there evidence?

There are more than 300 exhibits of evidence (an exhibit may contain more than one piece of evidence) that are divided into testimonials, expertise and documents.

2. What are the most important exhibits?

Those exhibits that have "triple checking" are considered to be the most damning evidence in the case. Meaning, what a person says is confirmed because there are documents proving the testimony, and this is corroborated because another person offers similar testimony, or they have more documents that prove that the information is real.

For example: A first exhibit would be what Pamela Martínez, former assistant to former President Rafael Correa said, that the then president asked her to receive money from contractors and to double-count the contributions for the Alianza PAIS campaigns.

The first check of this information was what investigators found in the computer of Laura Terán, Martínez's former assistant—documents on double accounting. The second check of this information such as dates, amounts and invoice numbers were cross referenced with the original invoices and copies. And the third check on her testimony is that the companies involved delivered their versions of the invoices to the Prosecutor's Office or said they provided services to Alianza País but received money from entrepreneurs.

3. Were there illegal payments of money?

Geraldo Pereira de Souza, former financial director of Odebrecht, says the construction company paid Alianza País directly. Pedro Verduga, owner of Equitesa, says that his construction company also gave contributions for that movement, under pressure from Pamela Martínez. The other contractors deny everything.

4. So, were there financial contributions (bribes) given to Alianza País?

What Pamela Martínez has said (yes, there were bribes taken) has been confirmed with the testimony of Laura Terán, and also with Excel documents found by investigators.

5. What do the documents say?

They are archives showing the amounts delivered by the businessmen (to Pamela Martínez for Alianza País) recorded in detail. In some cases, codes were used: "a stick" was a million dollars. Passwords were also used: SP = Mr President. JG or L1: Jorge Glas or Leader 1.

In these documents there are dates, amounts and numbers of invoices, for different services such as sound, food, T-shirt making, pennants, uniforms, gigantographies (large posters such as for political campaigns) and public opinion studies.

6. How was it verified that the files were not forged, or written in 2019 when the case broke out?

The invoices are real because they were registered with the SRI and, in other cases, the companies that invoiced themselves delivered the certified copies to the Prosecutor's Office.

Here are some examples: HIDALGO & HIDALGO SA paid the invoice No. 2222 of Vertigo, dated January 16, 2013, for institutional video filming, for the amount of \$300,000.

FOPECA paid the invoice No. 41513 of Creacional SA, dated December 13, 2013, for professional advertising marketing fees, in the amount of \$60,480.

MercantilTécnicaCórdova (Metco) paid bill No. 1142 issued by Carlos Xavier Rabascall Salazar, dated December 27, 2013, for the concept of professional advisory fees in strategic communication in the amount of \$7,840.

7. Did the invoices request payment for work for the various construction companies and not for Alianza País?

Those who issued the invoices—and who delivered their versions to the Prosecutor's Office—said they were for professional communication,

advertising, show and other services that were given to Alianza País.

For example, one witness, Santiago Enrique Carrera, gave testimony that, "In December 2013, through the advertising agency Uma Creativa, a work quote was made for the Alianza País movement, which consisted of preparing electoral publicity with a view to the mayoral elections containing the photographs of all the candidates of the party in 2014, said price was for \$17,584, and all this with the respective invoice No. 249.

For the delivery of the work it was requested that the invoice be issued in the name of HIDALGO & HIDALGO, so [through] Uma Creativa, I charged the agency commission service for creative services."

Another witness, Carlos Xavier Rabascall Salazar, said that in 2013, he delivered an invoice in the name of MercantilTécnicaCórdova for the amount of \$7,800, for "Strategic Communications and Media Training." The service was requested by Mr. Cristián Viteri and was paid by the Mercantile Technical Company Córdova.

8. Could Pamela Martínez have acted alone?

Pedro Verduga, owner of the Ecuadorian construction company Equitesa, says he paid bribe money to Martínez, because she threatened to use her power and contacts in the Ministry of Transportation, to withdraw the payments owed to Equitesa for work it had done. According to the Prosecutor's Office, from 2010 to 2016, Equitesa had 31 contracts with the government.

The second point to consider, is that if Pamela Martínez had acted "alone," she would have done so with all of the former managers of the Electric Corporation of Ecuador (Celec)—something prosecutors do not believe—because for 15 months, Celec paid for the lease of the office where Martínez received the bribe money.

9. Why did the Electoral Council (CNE) find nothing strange in the audit of the Alianza País accounting?

Because there were two sets of accounting books. One version was presented to the CNE that had nothing in it to give rise to questions, and a second version that was kept in an office outside the Presidency, and which was used from April 2013 to November 2016.

10. What is in Pamela Martínez's notebook?

Actually, there are 11 notebooks that were found in the chimney of Martínez's house. There contain Martínez's annotations about the visitors she received and the amounts of bribe money they delivered.

Martínez recorded some dates in her notebooks that do not match the information found in some of the other pieces of evidence (this exhibit is just one of more than 300 other collections of evidence).

But the data recorded in the Excel files she maintained—the invoice numbers, the amounts and the testimonies of the people who provided services to Alianza País—do coincide with other evidence.

Extracted from Diario El Comercio



## Ecuador achieves four agreements after meeting at the White House



The Secretary General of the Presidential Cabinet, Juan Sebastián Roldán, announced on Wednesday that the four points raised in the meeting between the Cabinets of Ecuador and the United States were accepted in the official visit between the President of the United States, Donald Trump, and President Lenin Moreno of Ecuador. The meeting was the first official visit in the White House between the Presidents of the two countries in 17 years.

Moreno described his dialogue with Trump as historic and highlighted the good relationship between both governments, in contrast to his predecessor, Rafael Correa, who cut several ties with the United States.

Roldán stated that the most important immediate achievement so far is that Ecuador will be part of the "América Crece" initiative, which is a regional initiative of the United States that channels large investors in infrastructure and energy, ports and airports to member countries. With this, the Moreno government expects employment to be generated.

Early in the day, the Minister of Economy, Richard Martínez, and the United States Ambassador to Ecuador, Michael J. Fitzpatrick, signed a memorandum of understanding for Ecuador to be part of the "América Crece," joining Argentina, Chile, Jamaica, and Panama and the first Latin American countries to do so.

At the start of the day the Minister of Finance also made the request for the inclusion of flowers, tuna in case, artichokes and broccoli, in the General System of Tariff Preferences (GSP).

"The meeting has been a success. Ecuador achieved all that has been raised," said Roldán, before listing the four points detailed in the meeting: employment, security, education, the fight against corruption.

Regarding security, it was reported that there will be training for Ecuador's police in the fight against drugs. In addition, there will be the creation of a Criminal Intelligence Center, technology cooperation and training in cybersecurity issues.

In education, Roldán said that Ecuador expects the number of American English teachers who train Ecuadorian teachers to increase to about one thousand; there are currently two hundred US teachers in the program.

Regarding Anti-Corruption, the creation of the Special Anti-Corruption and Money Laundering Unit was agreed to, in which the United States will work with the Prosecutor's Office and the Government of Ecuador in the effort to stop corruption both in Ecuador and throughout Latin America.

Regarding Venezuela, Roldán pointed out that the two presidents understand that all efforts must be made to bring Venezuela back to peace, recognizing Juan Guaidó as the President of that country.

Roldán announced that the next meeting of the Trade and Investment Council between Ecuador and the United States (TIC) will be in April, in Ecuador, with the top officials of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

## Section of Padre Aguirre becomes pedestrian use only and merchants march in protest

The stretch of Calle Padre Aguirre between Presidente Córdova and Mariscal Sucre, once again has become exclusively for the use of pedestrians.

This happened after a provision of the Mobility Management Directorate (DGM), of the Municipality of Cuenca, was approved that seeks "to provide greater spaces and security for the movement of passersby."

Pablo Osorio, an expert in sustainable mobility, explained that the change in the city is geared towards achieving spaces closer to people by limiting the use of private vehicles. "More vehicles will be unfeasible in the Historic Center and will not allow us to enjoy it," he said.

He pointed out that cities worldwide have to run experiments and studies [on this issue] and based on them, make decisions regarding mobility and improve the conditions of interrelation between different ways of moving within urban areas.

Guilherme Chalhoub, municipal director of Mobility Management (DGM), explained that "in an investigation carried out by the Lactalab research group of the University of Cuenca it was determined that in 7 hours, more than 2,000 vehicles circulate [on Padre Aguirre] a day, while in the same period 25,000 pedestrians do."

Chalhoub added that during the weeks that the vehicular flow was opened in this section, they determined that there was greater congestion on Mariscal Sucre Street during peak hours.

"Another important fact the study determined was that 60% of citizens go walking to do their shopping in shops near the road," he said.

### Merchant Protest

The closure of Padre Aguirre to cars caused nearby merchants and neighbors to turn to the streets of the Historic Center earlier this month to take part in a march against the plan to pedestrianize the streets in EL Centro.

Catalina Palacios, representative of the merchants, requested that the studies carried out by the University of Cuenca be given to them and explained that this decision to close vehicular traffic harms them in their economic activities.

"We want them to give us the studies and socialization they have done. We have been harmed by the works carried out by the tram project. They should try to reactivate the trade and not make these decisions that harm us," she said.

Nicolas Aguirre, another merchant, said that the Municipality does not have the technical support to determine the need to pedestrianize these streets.

Chalhoub clarified that the socialization to publicize the resolution was carried out with the merchants and locals, not only in a meeting but through door-to-door dialogues.

During their march, citizens covered the signs placed as an announcement to the vehicular closure and allowed cars that were driving along Presidente Córdova Street to enter through Padre Aguirre.

### History

In November 2019, at the request of the merchants of the Plaza San Francisco and its surroundings, the Directorate of Management and Mobility of the Municipality of Cuenca decided to open Padre Aguirre to the vehicular traffic. The section that was opened served as a passage to connect the Plaza de las Flores, Parque Calderón and the Diez de Agosto market, forming a circuit. The original plan was to leave the road open until December 31, 2019.

The Municipality of Cuenca announced that during that time a study would be done to determine the feasibility of leaving the road open to traffic. However, after the study by the University of Cuenca's research group was released, the city decided to permanently close the road to vehicular traffic.



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## Symphony of Cuenca brings together two great composers in the Beethoven-Salgado cycle



Ludwig Van Beethoven and Luis Humberto Salgado are separated by two centuries. One was German, the other Ecuadorian. The two were innovators of their times and created great musical works. One is the most interpreted composer in the world, the other is the "Ecuadorian Beethoven."

Michael Meissner, conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Cuenca, is a researcher and admirer of both Beethoven's and Salgado's works. He is in charge of the interpretation of the symphonies that the two musicians composed—coincidentally each composer has nine symphonies to his name.

These parallels explain why the Symphony Orchestra of Cuenca decided to join their works in the "Beethoven-Salgado" cycle, that will take place the first half of the year. It is also a tribute to the European musician, who is being celebrated after 250 years of his birth with a series of activities worldwide.

In Cuenca, there will be nine concerts, one for each symphony. This past Friday corresponds to the third.

The third symphonies of Beethoven and Salgado have a similar peculiarity: they are two great experiments of their authors in their respective times and they ended up breaking the traditional schemes in terms of composition.

Beethoven's third work is known as "Heroic." Here, Beethoven began by breaking with the usual duration of the symphonies. It was the first that lasted such an extensive time (minimum 45 minutes). It also introduced a funeral march in the second movement; something that no other composer had done.

This symphony is "very fast," totally unusual for the time, explains the conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Cuenca. "With his experiments, Beethoven broke many schemes and to do so he had to work many years before capturing the concepts in the symphony. But he was convinced of his work," he adds.

Salgado's third symphony was also an experiment. In this work, the Ecuadorian resumed the Rococo style, from the time of Mozart, but put his own stamp on it. The work is written for a very large orchestra, nonexistent in those times, including the section of complete metals, several percussions, harpsichord, harp, celestial bells and bells, which causes the sensation of a style exported to other times.

The conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Cuenca says that "the delicious thing about this symphony is when Salgado breaks the expectation and transforms Rococo music into music of the twentieth century, due to the majesty of the orchestration."

The Salgado style

Although in this symphony the composer from Cádiz ignored the fusion of Andean elements with modernism, as he did in other works, Salgado's seal was the combination of national elements with modernist techniques of the twentieth century. From traditional Ecuadorian music, he extracted melodic motifs, rhythms and harmonies to incorporate them into his work.

"He did not want to remain as a regional composer, he wanted to make the world known to Ecuador, through its rhythms, and at the same time create works of great global value," says Meissner. Despite that, Salgado could barely hear five percent of his compositions and a vast catalog remains almost unknown to date.

Luis Humberto Salgado was born in Cayambe, in 1903, and died in Quito in 1977. He is the son of the musician Francisco Salgado. He composed four operas, an opera-ballet, an operetta, five ballets, eight concerts, chamber music, piano works, songs and choirs, apart from many pieces of Ecuadorian popular music. His symphonies are dated between 1949 and 1975.

Beethoven's ideals

With his music, Beethoven wanted to reach the masses and convey his ideals, which were those of the French revolution and democracy. "People listened to their music in those terms; he spoke of a modern, futuristic world, where the old schemes of blind obedience to the church and the aristocracy are over," says Meissner.

In that context, Beethoven's third symphony had a particular history: he initially dedicated it to Napoleon Bonaparte, but when he declared himself emperor, the musician felt a betrayal of the ideals of the revolution and, enraged, crossed out the name of the dedication, leaving only the phrase: "Composed to celebrate the memory of a great hero."

Ludwig Van Beethoven was born in Bonn, Archbishopric of Cologne, December 16, 1770 and died in Vienna, March 26, 1827. His musical legacy covers, chronologically, from Classicism to the beginnings of Romanticism. Its production includes the piano, chamber, concert, sacral, lieder, incidental and orchestral genres. His most popular work is his ninth symphony. His symphonies were composed between 1795 and 1812.

The fourth concert of the Beethoven-Salgado cycle will be this Friday, at the Pumapungo Theater, at 8PM. Entry is free.



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## Rabies vaccination campaign for pets



Through March 15, the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) will carry out a rabies vaccination campaign in the canton of Cuenca.

Vaccination brigades are now mobilized in the neighborhoods and communities of the canton in search of dogs and cats to immunize them. The vaccine is free and is applied every year.

Also, the vaccine is applied to pets in health facilities from 08:00 to 17:00, including weekends, according to the schedule of each unit.

At the level of the Cuenca canton, the Zonal 6 health division distributed a total of 6,276 doses that here then disseminated to each health facility for use through the vaccination campaign.

## Rehabilitation services offered at Vicente Corral Moscoso Hospital

Physical medicine and rehabilitation are aimed at facilitating, maintaining or returning the greatest degree of functional capacity and independence of the patient to return to their daily activities," said Yolanda Neira, head of the rehabilitation service at the Vicente Corral Moscoso Hospital (HVCM).

During 2019, the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service of the HVCM provided 145,000 appointments for services in the areas of electrotherapy, hydrotherapy, language therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy and physical therapy.

One patient who has received therapy at HVCM is Juan Quituisaca. Due to a broken femur, he is now part of a rehabilitation process that will last around 15 days. He is one of 51,497 patients who have benefited from this health service.

Depending on the type of pathology, a patient may receive care in one or all areas of rehabilitation. For example, a person who has had a stroke or head trauma may receive three types of therapies: physical, language and occupational.



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## DentastiQ – Expert and modern dental care at affordable prices



Cuenca has a number of accredited and well-known universities with academic programs leading to licensure in dentistry, and also postgraduate dental programs.

The Catholic University, or Universidad Católica de Cuenca, is one such accredited and well-regarded institution.

Dr. Byron Quito is passionate about his patients and profession, having committed to dentistry after 10 years as a successful entrepreneur, owning businesses in Cuenca. But after observing his sister Dra. Erica Quito Vallejo in her oral rehabilitation practice, Dr. Quito began to realize that he wanted to learn more — and as he did, he wondered — could he do this? What a challenge, to become a dentist.

After all, he hadn't been a student for a while. But, he spoke with his wife, and with her encouragement, successfully applied to the Universidad Católica de Cuenca. He was accepted to the University's Dental program and after graduating and licensure, Dr. Quito also completed his advanced certificate degree in orthodontia.

As many know, one of the many benefits of returning to school after having successful career is the on-the-job experience you've amassed, which often translates into a uniquely successful academic career. Your focus is much more intense than the typical 20-year-old student — you're quite sure of what you want and are committed to the dedication it takes to be the best in your field.



There is nothing like a doctor that has people skills and clinical skills too. Most people have had that experience with the non-communicative doctor — you almost feel like you're wasting his or her time. But, Dr. Quito's passion is obvious — passion for the science of dentistry plus his desire to work with people, and to make their experience as pleasant and satisfying as he can. It's obvious when you meet him that his focus is on you, and how he can help create your healthy mouth, and get you the results you seek.

### DentastiQ: The most modern and up-to-date dental care at affordable prices

Are you, or have you met an expat in Cuenca who traveled here in order to obtain dental care? And do you know someone who makes multiple trips, for crowns, implants, or orthodontia? Many have neglected dental care — sometimes for many years — or perhaps you're just seeking the right dental office, with a bilingual staff that will treat you with respect and patience.

DentastiQ is the perfect place to perfect that smile. The office is modern, bright, and comfortable — each of the three treatment rooms spacious and well equipped. Unlike some practices that require patients to go to different offices for advanced treatments, at DentastiQ, Dr. Quito will coordinate with the most competent specialists for treatment for periodontal issues (gum disease); endodontics (implants), and Dr. Quito performs orthodontia, all treatments performed onsite.

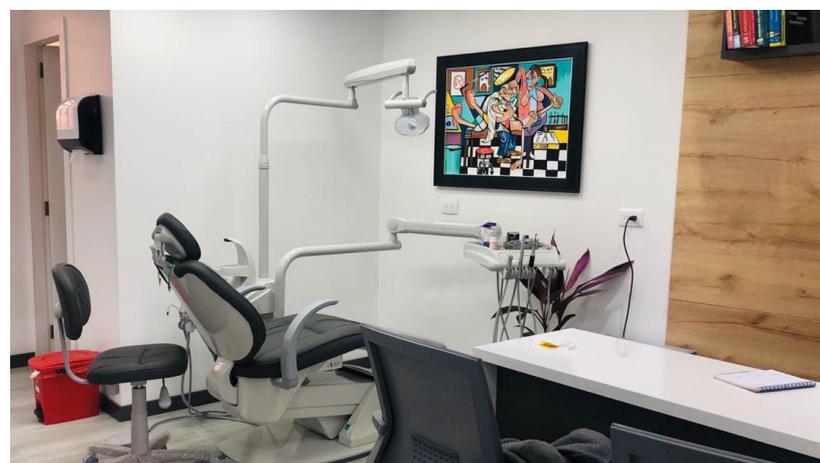
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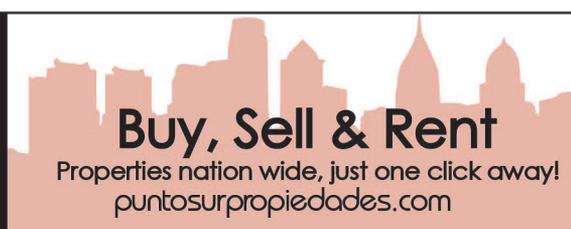
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## Study determines the need for \$35 million in repairs at the Challuabamba Fuel Terminal

Repairing the cracks in the road and slopes, the fissures in the concrete and stopping the many landslides at the Challuabamba Terminal of the Pascuales-Cuenca Polduct, is going to cost at least \$35 million according to a study recently released by the Public Company of the National Polytechnic School (EP-EPN). EP-EPN was hired to do the study of the problems at the terminal in 2018 at a cost of \$400,000.

The terminal project—built by the Brazilian company Odebrecht—which was supposed to be completed at a cost of \$250 million and inaugurated in September 2015, was finally delivered in December 2016 at a final cost of \$623 million, with a cost overrun of \$373 million.

The terminal was built to facilitate the transport of fuels and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) for the provinces of Azuay, Cañar, El Oro, Loja, Morona Santiago and Zamora Chinchipe, directly from the province of Guayas.

Rodrigo Pareja, head of the Infrastructure Management of the EP-EPN—who was in charge of the diagnosis for the repair—says that they completed a series of in-depth analysis to determine stop the destabilization of the slopes of the land, the main cause behind the damages. They made geophysical assessments and drilled wells to test soil characterizations and water levels, they designed a hydrogeological model and they presented the alternatives to repair the site and gave engineering recommendations.

Pareja said that they discovered a great difference in the strata or layers of the soil and also found that there is a creek running on the side of the project that is allowing water to seep into the layers of the ground.

The most convenient solution proposed by the EP-EPN is the placement of piles in rows, which will allow the consistency of the soil to be varied to ensure that it is confined and thus prevent the plates from moving. He also proposed the construction of drains to properly capture and conduct water and also suggested the implementation of anchoring walls in the upper parts of the site. These interventions would take about six months to complete.

Terminal only fulfills half its purpose

According to Pablo Flores, general manager of EP Petroecuador, this terminal "is in a truly critical situation, however it is still in operation."

"We have very serious problems with the soils, they are completely unstable, we have a very bad compaction, we have a sandy soil, under which a river really runs, and there is a very bad drainage," he said.

He indicated that the section where the two large deposits, called spheres, store 6,238 cubic meters (m<sup>3</sup>) of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) each—a total of 12,476,000 liters—is now disabled because of structural failures.

LPG storage and delivery from the terminal was suspended in December 2018 because of the problems. Prior to the suspension, the terminal shipped 200 metric tons of LPG per day. The terminal does continue to distribute 650,000 gallons of other gasoline and diesel fuel products per day.

Sandra Idrovo, head of the Challuabamba Terminal, said they have spent about \$600,000 so far on temporary fixes, which are done almost every day. She added that this is the only reason that they are able to keep the terminal in operation for gasoline and diesel distribution.

EP Petroecuador declared the unilateral termination of the contract with Odebrecht because contractual problems were detected. The construction company appealed this decision. Subsequently, it was confirmed that Odebrecht paid a little more than \$2 million in bribes to win the bid to make the Challuabamba Terminal.



## 19-year-old Ecuadorian dies in roll-over crash at El Paso, TX border



A deadly rollover crash, just outside of downtown El Paso, Texas (USA), involved a drunk driver, border patrol and migrants from Ecuador.

One migrant, 19-year-old Dennys Coronel Quezada, from Santa Isabel, lost his life on Monday night in the accident on the border between the United States and Mexico.

Police say Border Patrol agents spotted a man loading four people into a van. As those agents approached, they say the van sped off, but lost control on a curve and crashed.

Four other people—also undocumented migrants from Ecuador—were injured in the accident and remain hospitalized.

Daniel Humberto Castillo-Nunez, 35, of El Chaparral, Texas, who Border Patrol says was drunk, was charged with "Intoxication Manslaughter," and "Accident Involving Death" following the deadly crash.

Castillo-Nunez took off running but was caught by nearby railroad tracks, police say.

## Diesel fuel will not be target of fuel cuts in 2020 says Vice President Otto Sonnenholzner



The subsidy for diesel fuel will not be targeted this year. This according to Vice President Otto Sonnenholzner who made the assertion during a radio interview in Quito on Wednesday.

"I understand that, this year the decision of the president (Lenin Moreno) has been clear, diesel will not be touched," he said.

Sonnenholzner did say that the Government continues to work on targeting the subsidy for extra (Ecopais) gasoline. But he said it will take the necessary time to incorporate any changes to it. He did not cite precise dates of when a removal or change of the subsidy would apply.

"The decisions in the measures have impacts, those impacts must be analyzed," he said.

The vice president acknowledged that they have problems in accessing information related to the sales of gasoline in the country. For example, he said that the Government is interested in knowing the names and surnames of those who receive the subsidies, since their estimates are that 70% of the subsidized gasoline "reaches" people who do not need it.

He added that the data they do have shows that border provinces have more than double the per capita consumption of fuel compared to the others. The vice president added that the government believes that fuel is being smuggled out of the country to be used for drug production and drug trafficking on the northern border.

## CRIME REPORT AND ACCIDENT REPORT

### Cuenca and National Criminal Activity

(Cuenca) A citizen was arrested Sunday afternoon for the possession of illegal substances in the vicinity of El Arenal.

According to the police report, the arrest was carried out by the personnel of the Group of Motorized Operations, during a preventive patrol for the sector.

A woman who noticed the police presence began acting "nervous and elusive" according to the report. After searching the woman, police found cash and plastic bags filled with cocaine and marijuana (34.4 grams of marijuana and 31 grams of cocaine).

The citizen, identified as Monica Patricia PB, 27, was placed under arrest and transferred to jail.

(Cuenca) Early Sunday morning, February 9th, a man was arrested for drug possession by the National Police.

The arrest was made at 00:30 in a car registration operation that took place on Huayna Cápac Avenue and Núñez de Bonilla Street.

When police personnel stopped the car they found the driver in possession of a plastic case with 13.7 grams of cocaine and \$150 in cash.

The citizen identified as Pablo Mauricio AS, 23, was arrested and taken to jail.

(Cuenca) National Police personnel recovered three vehicles and two motorcycles reported as stolen in Cuenca. As part of an anti-crime initiative, agents found that the paperwork for the motor vehicles presented anomalies.

During their review, the automotive owners presented "inconsistency and manipulation in the serial numbering of the chassis and the engine," said a report issued by the Azuay National Police.

The motor vehicles were seized; owners must prove the legality and ownership of the vehicles.

(El Valle) Hugo Patricio Ch. V., 32, and Luisa Ana GG, also 32, were arrested for their alleged involvement in the assault on the driver of a mixed transport van, which occurred on Thursday morning at the entrance to Rayoloma.

The National Police of Azuay, reported that at 2:00PM on Friday, February 7th, in the sector known as San Judas Tadeo, of the parish El Valle, two citizens were apprehended after being identified by the driver of the mixed transport van who was shot in the middle of an attempted robbery.

According to the version of the injured driver, it was easy to recognize the two suspects because a few years ago they had worked for him.

The alleged perpetrators of the incident, according to the police report, stated "freely and voluntarily to have participated in the robbery with four more citizens."

The two suspects were placed under arrest while Judicial Police personnel carried out the investigation to find the whereabouts of the other two alleged participants of the wrongful act.

(Cañar) The National Police, through personnel from the Motor Operations Group (GOM), arrested three citizens who were allegedly involved in the crime of unlawful association. A vehicle was recovered during the arrest.

The operation was completed after receiving the alert of the Integrated System ECU-911 where it was reported that in the Chabay Bajo sector, Av. April 16, there was a black Jeep-type vehicle without license plates driving in a suspicious manner.

Police located the car with three occupants inside driving at high speed in the direction of Av. José Peralta. Police were able to stop the vehicle at Av. 24 de Mayo and Ernesto Che Guevara.

During the registration and verification of the occupants, police learned that one of the individuals, Juan Daniel AF had an arrest warrant for the crime of theft. He was arrested and taken to jail.

The two other occupants of the car, Cristhian Alberto P. and Jhonson Andrés V., were arrested for adulteration of the VINs numbers on the chassis and engine. The vehicle had been reported stolen in Quito.

(Milagro) On Friday, February 7, 2020, the National Police recovered the sum of \$100,000 in false US one-hundred-dollar bills and arrested a Venezuelan citizen who intended to introduce the illicit currency into the financial system.

The Police said that through intelligence work and confidential informants, they managed to find the suspect who was searched; in his suitcase they found a black case with fake \$100 bills, in the total amount of \$1100,000.

The counterfeit money was placed under the chain of custody. The detainee will be prosecuted for illicit trafficking of counterfeit currency.

(Miraflora) Inhabitants of the El Tablón sector, in Miraflora, apprehended two citizens suspected of theft. The subjects were handed over to the National Police personnel so that due process could be followed.

Official information from the Police indicates that on Saturday night the two subjects were riding a motorcycle through the streets of El Tablón, when inhabitants recognized them as the perpetrators of robberies that occurred days before.

The community joined together and held them for several minutes. They also set the suspects motorcycle on "in order to prevent more criminals from attempting to commit crimes in the area."

The suspects Boris Jonnathan S. Ch., 23 years old and Byron Fernando ER, 29 years old, were handed over to the police and were arrested and sent to jail. Boris Jonnathan S. Ch. has two criminal records for theft and had an outstanding warrant for his arrest.

### Cuenca Area Traffic Accidents

(Cuenca) Three traffic accidents were recorded Tuesday in a span of 11 minutes, according to an ECU 911 report. Two of them involved motorcyclists.

In the sector known as Visorrey, the first accident took place in which two vehicles, for unknown reasons, collided.

Civil agents of the Mobility Company, EMOV, and health care personnel arrived at the scene and found that no injuries were reported. This happened at 07:07.

The second incident occurred at the intersection of Julio Vinueza Street and Camino Viejo a Baños, where a crash between a private vehicle and a motorcycle caused material damage.

Paramedics arrived from different hospitals and treated people with minor injuries. This took place at 07:09.

Finally, the third road accident took place in the Castilla Cruz sector, on the road to El Valle where a car and a motorcycle collided. According to ECU 911, there were no injuries from the accident. The incident occurred at 07:18.

(Cuenca) An EMOV patrol car crashed Tuesday when it was on its way to a traffic accident between a motorcycle and a vehicle, in the sector of the University of Azuay.

The incident occurred around 13:00 when the patrol was circulating on Avenida Diez de Agosto, at the intersection with Avenida Doce de Octubre.

According to the version of the civil agent Juan José Moscoso, two civil agents were traveling aboard the patrol car "to deal with the emergency with the lights at an accident site." Moscoso explained that a car that circulated on Ricardo Muñoz Avenue did not notice the patrol and continued its course. This car crashed into the patrol car and subsequently hit another private car parked on Doce de Octubre Avenue.

Two people were transferred to hospitals in the city, including a civil agent; two other people were treated at the scene by paramedics of the Fire Department. The vehicles were retained for investigation.

(Cuenca) One person died on Tuesday in an accident that took place at 08:00 on Huayna Cápac Avenue and Sucre Street. Luis Ángel Loja Loja, 77, got off a bus and for unknown reasons fell and was hit by a passing car.

Data provided by ECU 911 indicate that the Loja was treated at the scene by Red Cross personnel, who gave him first aid and then transferred him to Vicente Corral Moscoso hospital.

Doctors found that he had multiple wounds on the body, including a fracture in the right thigh and a fracture in the left leg. After remaining under observation for an hour, he died due to the severity of the blows.

According to witnesses of the incident, the driver of the urban transport bus fled the scene of the accident.

## New child support requirements announced by MIES



The Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) has determined the child support requirements that will be in force in this 2020. These payments (or "pensions" are calculated based on the number of children, the income of the parent and, also, any degree of disability of the child.

The new annual pension table consists of six levels of income, and the percentage of income that the paying parent must provide for one or more children.

The institution said in a statement released on Friday, January 31, 2020 that the food pension for a child under 2 years old, when the parent earns the Unified Basic Salary (SBU), USD 400, is 28.13 %, or \$112.52 per month. For a child over 3 years, under the same income conditions, the pension would be 29.50%, or \$118 per month.

In cases of a disabled child, supplements ranging between 4.56% and 6.63% of the SBU would be applied, depending on the severity of the physical disqualification. The purpose of these supplements is to cover rehabilitation and technical aids, such as medicines, medical equipment, and any special care that children or adolescents with disabilities should receive.

These figures and percentages are applicable when the parent earns the SBU, but progressively increases according to income and the number of children, according to the scales of the table approved last Tuesday.

For example, the pension for the first child under two years would grow to 34.85% or \$500-1,200 per month if the salary of the parent ranges between 1.25 and 3 basic salaries, and 36.97% for over children over three years of age.

The contribution rate per child under two years reaches the maximum percentage of 42.55%, when the salary is higher than \$3,600; if the child is over three years of age then the rate goes up to 45.14%.

The maximum contribution, 59.86%, would be applied for two or more children over the age of three, and when the contributor earns more than \$3,600. As with any child, there are also supplements in conditions of disability.

The table is a form of guidance for judges. Advocates for the family, children and adolescents can also determine the "minimum reference amount of the food pension," that the can be requested for each child.

On January 20, Iván Granda, Minister of MIES, presented a proposal to the National Assembly to reform the Code of Children and Adolescents. One of the proposed changes was that the child support be delivered for up to 24 years, with the condition of that the recipient of such assistance remains in school.

Currently, according to said Code, children and adolescents from zero to 18 years old have the right to receive the food pension. This obligation can be extended up to 21 years with the condition that the young person is in school and, in cases of disability, this pension may be life.

Similarly, the Code mentioned above indicates that pregnant women are entitled to a pension that "meets the needs of the pregnant mother."

## Iranian couple on their way to Spain arrested at Guayaquil airport with fake passports (Cont)

The two successfully entered Ecuador at the end of January using the fake passports. It is currently unclear why the couple were using Israeli documents or whether they had any ties to Iranian intelligence.

Ecuador border control verified the two passports were forged with the help of Israel's Border Crossings, Population and Immigration Administration.

The couple was arrested shortly afterwards, and their real Iranian passports were discovered in their possession.

Ecuador's Minister of Government, María Paula Romo, in touting the work of the passport control agents, said the case was obviously very serious. "Look at the serious case of last week: two citizens entered with a passport from Iran and intended to travel to Madrid with a passport (forged) from Israel. We have substantially improved our immigration controls, with a direct impact on security."

This is not the first time that Iranians have been caught in South America using fake Israeli passports.

In March 2019, authorities in Buenos Aires apprehended two Iranians with forged Israeli passports that were riddled with spelling mistakes in Hebrew.

According to the reports, the passports were made out to Netanel and Rivka Toledano but the ID numbers on the documents belonged to French-Israeli couple David and Brigitte Assouline.



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

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Solution to Sudoku puzzle on page 3

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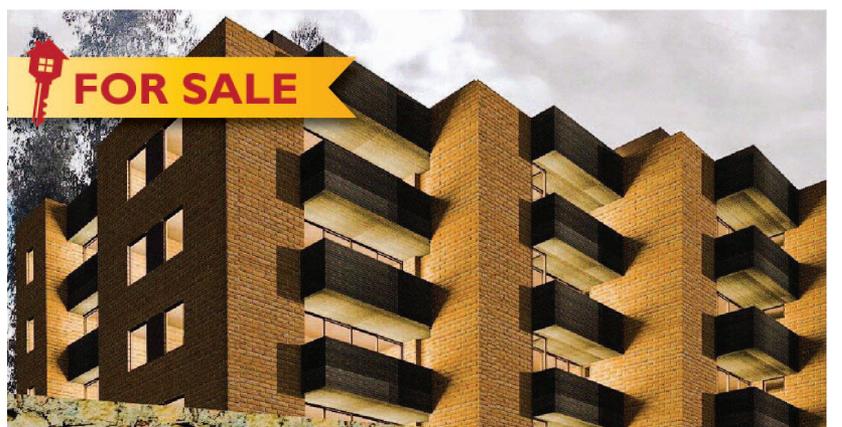


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