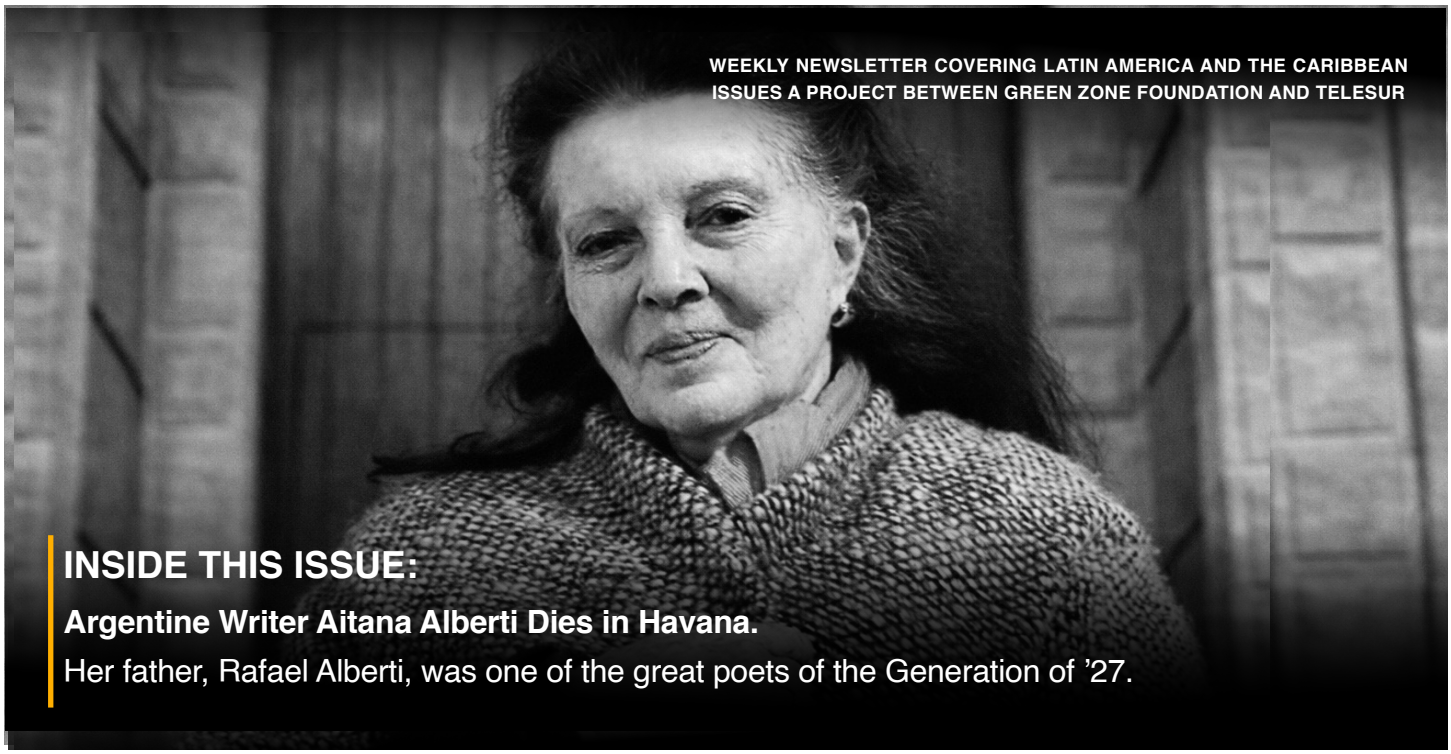
VOLUME 68
6 JULY 2026

NEWSLETTER

A VISION OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER COVERING LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN ISSUES A PROJECT BETWEEN GREEN ZONE FOUNDATION AND TELESUR

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On Wednesday, writer Aitana Alberti, daughter of the Spanish poet Rafael Alberti and the writer Maria Teresa Leon, died at age 84 in Havana, where she had resided since 1984.

Born in Argentina in 1941, during her parents' exile due to the Spanish Civil War, Aitana dedicated her life to poetry and cultural promotion, forging close ties with literary institutions.

She presided over the Rafael Alberti Chair at the University of Havana and worked for more than fifteen years at the Dulce Maria Loynaz Cultural Center, where she directed the program "Faith of Life: Image and Word," which focused on the Generation of '27.
She was also a member of the World Poets Movement and presided in Cuba over the Southern Cultural Project, which brings together cities in Europe and the Americas, in addition to actively participating in the Havana International Poetry Festival.

Her poetry collections include Poems by Aitana Alberti (1955), Pupil to the Wind (1998), And to Be Born Again (1999), and Amazon in the Spark (2016). Her narrative works include Tenants of Solitude (2006) and Persian Tales (2018).

The Granma newspaper noted that Aitana leaves "an immense void in Cuban culture" and will be remembered as a tireless defender of poetry, memory, peace, and dialogue between peoples.

Her father, Rafael Alberti, was one of the great poets of the Generation of '27, author of works such as Sailor Ashore (National Literature Prize, 1925) and About the Angels (1929). Exiled after the war, he lived in Argentina and Italy before returning to Spain in 1977.



Animalia Exhibition in Paris Highlights Pre-Columbian Art.

Among the highlights are Moche ornaments from Peru, Mayan masks from Mexico, and Tolima pendants from Colombia.

On Wednesday, the Animalia exhibition opened at the Hôtel de la Marine in Paris, featuring more than 120 pieces from the Al Thani Collection, owned by the Qatari royal family.

The exhibition offers a cross-disciplinary perspective on how animals were symbols of power, the sacred, and spiritual transformation in cultures such as pre-Columbian civilizations, Pharaonic Egypt, and ancient China.

Among the highlights are Moche ornaments from Peru, Mayan masks from Mexico, and Tolima pendants from Colombia, all linked to the jaguar as an emblem of power and spirituality.
According to Helene de Givry, scientific director of the Al Thani Collection, a serpentine sculpture depicting a shaman transforming into a jaguar conveys political power and spiritual metamorphosis

This cultural dialogue is reflected in the room dedicated to power, where a Moche jaguar, a ceremonial vessel belonging to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II with a lion motif, and a Chinese buckle in the shape of a tiger are displayed side by side.

Another outstanding American piece is a Mochica capuchin monkey head, transformed into a necklace bead, crafted in gold and copper with chrysocolla and sodalite inlays, displaying great artistic expression.

The exhibition also includes Egyptian baboons, imperial horses, Mesopotamian lions, Chinese tigers, 17th-century naturalistic birds, and African sculptures, showcasing the diversity of animal representations in different cultures.



Cuba Marks 40th Anniversary of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center.

The CIGB is a beacon of technological sovereignty and innovation, President Diaz-Canel pointed out.

On Wednesday, Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel congratulated the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB) on its 40th anniversary and scientific achievements.

"Founded by Commander Fidel Castro, the CIGB is a beacon of technological sovereignty and innovation. Its vaccines and biopharmaceuticals save lives. In the Year of Fidel's Centennial, we honor his legacy." he said.

"Cuba needs you. It needs your intelligence, your dedication, and your commitment," President Diaz Canel said addressing the CIGB members.

On July 1, 1986, Fidel Castro inaugurated the CIGB, bringing to fruition a project that had been conceived and developed amid the severe restrictions caused by the U.S. blockade in place since the 1960s.

"For a country under blockade and with limited resources, the inauguration was an extraordinary event: venturing into that promising discipline was a privilege almost exclusively reserved for highly developed nations," journalist Orfilio Pelaez recalled in an article published by Granma.

Among the milestones leading to the creation of the CIGB were trips by Cuban researchers to scientific facilities in other countries to study the applications of interferon, a substance with potential antiviral and antitumor effects.

In 1981, six young Cuban scientists traveled to Finland to learn interferon production: Manuel Limonta, Angel Aguilera, Eduardo Penton, Victoria Ramirez, Silvio Barcelona, and Pedro Lopez.

After returning to their homeland, they succeeded in producing the first Cuban interferon from white blood cells, laying the foundation for the country's modern biotechnology industry.

In 1982, Cuba inaugurated the Center for Biological Research, which later became the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology in 1986.

"After becoming a thriving scientific and production complex, the CIGB was granted 'High-Technology Enterprise' status in 2020. It has 1,370 employees…

Fifty-six percent of them hold university degrees. Sixty-one percent have scientific and technologi

cal credentials, including 83 Doctors of Science, 233 master's degree holders, 46 senior researchers and 104 Level I technologists," Pelaez noted.

"The CIGB's patent portfolio includes more than 65 inventions, with more than 700 patent applications and patents in Cuba and abroad… Currently, 55% of its patents are in developed countries, 25.5% are in the BRICS countries and Argentina, South Korea and South Africa, and 20% are in other nations. More than 80% of its R&D projects are protected by patents, and 50% of its inventions are part of signed business agreements," he added.

A Story Full of Successes

CIGB Director Marta Ayala told Granma that the center is working on 22 innovative projects related to the CIGB-300, an anticancer peptide; PCB, a small molecule derived from the alga Spirulina platensis for cerebral ischemia; Jusvinza, an immunomodulatory drug that regulates inflammation without causing immunosuppression; HeberSaVax, an active immunotherapy vaccine against vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF); and the development of a tetravalent dengue vaccine.

"The greatest challenge for CIGB workers is to continue creating innovative, high-value-added products and successfully introduce them into the international market," Ayala said, referring to the intensification of the U.S. blockade.

In a summary of the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology's principal achievements over the past four decades, Granma highlighted the following:

* Heberprot-P, for the treatment of diabetic foot ulcers and complex wounds, is the flagship product of Cuban biotechnology.
* Heberbiovac-HB, a prophylactic vaccine against hepatitis B, immunizes the entire population under the age of 25, is administered at birth, and no pediatric cases have been reported.
* Recombinant human alpha interferon, including Heberon Alfa R and Nasalferon nasal spray, has been used against COVID-19 to enhance mucosal immunity.
* Abdala, a vaccine effective against multiple SARS-CoV-2 variants with a high level of protection.
* Gavac vaccine, the only vaccine on the international market for controlling cattle ticks, registered in 10 Latin American countries.
* Porvac vaccine, against the classical swine fever virus, the principal threat to pigs in Cuba, with high efficacy and a worldwide patent.
* Development of genetically modified soybeans and corn with higher yields, greater resistance to pests and diseases, and improved adaptation to climate change.



Mexico Inaugurates Sterile Fly Production Plant.

The USDA financed the plant with an investment of US$83.8 million.

On Saturday, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum inaugurated a sterile fly production plant in Chiapas, alongside U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins, to fight the screwworm infestation in the region.

The event took place in the municipality of Metapa de Dominguez and was also attended by U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Ronald Douglas Johnson, within the context of bilateral and regional cooperation.

Sheinbaum recalled that the relationship with the United States must be based on mutual respect, dialogue, and sovereignty, underscoring that scientific cooperation is more powerful than confrontation in protecting the well-being of nations.

The United States financed the plant with an investment of US$83.8 million, and it will produce up to 100 million sterile flies per week, which will be added to those produced at the Pacora plant in Panama, reinforcing the regional strategy for controlling and eradicating the parasite.

Currently, Latin America and the Caribbean is the The international agri-food coordinator, Julio Berdegue, compared the technique to COVID-19 vaccines: the sterile flies allow for breaking the screwworm's reproductive cycle and eradicating the pest at its root.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER) reported that 5.3 million head of cattle have been inspected, 84,000 shipments verified, and nearly 7 billion sterile flies released in the region.

Since November 2024, Chiapas has become the epicenter of the pest with more than 7,000 accumulated cases, leading the United States to impose restrictions on Mexican cattle and generating trade tensions.



Spanish Museum to Inaugurate Colombian Archaeological Exhibition.

It brings together 291 archaeological objects, including 157 gold pieces.

On Monday, the Archaeological Museum of Alicante (MARQ) inaugurates the international exhibition "Gold and the Universe: Indigenous Knowledge of Colombia," which features pieces from the Gold Museum of Bogota.

It will remain open until May 2027, while the President of the Alicante Provincial Council, Toni Perez, and the Colombian Ambassador to Spain, Eduardo Avila Navarrete will host the opening.

The exhibition brings together 291 archaeological objects, including 157 gold pieces, as well as creations from contemporary indigenous communities. All were selected to showcase the material and spiritual richness of the Colombian peoples.

Among the highlights are masks, pendants, pectorals, and hybrid figures such as human-bat hybrids and shamans in flight, reflecting the role these objects had in "preserving" the world.

Ceramic and stone creations are also on display, featuring a variety of plant and animal figures, some currently threatened by the destruction of their ecosystems.

Martinon-Torres noted that the exhibition invites us to reconsider certainties and understand that the well-being of the universe depends on our actions, integrating science, anthropology, and archaeology with current Indigenous knowledge.

The curator added that the exhibition will overwhelm the senses with colors, shapes, sounds, plants, and animals from diverse regions of Colombia, a country recognized for having the highest biodiversity index in the world.


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