Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

24 April 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

South America on High Alert for Dengue Fever Outbreak

Dengue is generally associated with warm climates, where the rainy season increases the plague of the aedes aegypti, the vector that transmits the disease.

According to data provided by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay account for 89 percent of the people affected by dengue in Latin America. This figure represents a total of 1.7 million infected since the beginning of the year.



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What alarms the authorities most is that infection rates are not decreasing despite government policy in some countries in the region to control the disease.This is the case of the Brazilian government, which has launched major campaigns to contain the disease, fumigating neighborhoods, vaccinating the sick and providing them with primary care to prevent them from dying at home.

Over the last two decades, the incidence of dengue fever worldwide has risen sharply and has become a serious public health problem. Last year, Latin America was already the region hardest hit by the infection. However, this season the number of cases is higher than in the previous period.

The epidemic is affecting the entire region in general, but the greatest impact is in the Southern Cone. Mexico and Central American countries have registered more than 78,000 cases; Bolivia, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador have reported more than 122,000 caseswhile Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay account for 1,780,929 cases.

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The scientific community is alarmed that the proliferation of this disease in regions where it was not common is due to climate change altering natural cycles. Now winters tend to be very cold but short and summers are very hot and long.

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Rainy seasons are extended, providing a natural habitat for the mosquito, which has adapted to the new conditions. One of the countries that has been surprised by this disease is Uruguay, which generally enjoyed cold temperatures but in the last two decades has been affected by great storms or terrible droughts. One of the major climatic alterations in this region is the well-known El Niño phenomenon, that goes through periods of drought or rain, becoming more aggressive each year.

Another of the major problems that the authorities are facing in dealing with the disease is the issue of insalubrity. It turns out that the highest rates of infection are found among the most disadvantaged population, in neighborhoods with a precarious public health system that do not have sewage systems.

This makes it difficult to keep track of the number of infected people and to stop the spread of the disease. As a result, the disease often worsens and becomes fatal, which is clinically known as severe dengue, dengue hemorrhagic fever or dengue shock syndrome, resulting in death.

We see that the combination of climatic phenomena generated by man-made disturbances in nature has caused a prolongation of the rainy season. Thus, the mosquitoes that transmit the disease find in this region favorable conditions for their propagation. This factor, together with the high levels of poverty and marginalization in which a large number of people live, has opened the way for the epidemic to become relentless.

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FILBO2024: Culture, Love for the Planet and Literature

In this edition, Brazil is the country honored under the motto 'Read nature', in a call to protect the Amazon rainforest from the stories of biodiversity, ancestry and territory shared with Colombia.

On the morning of last Wednesday, the 36th edition of the International Book Fair of Bogota (Filbo 2024) began in the Colombian capital, Bogota.



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During the meeting, more than 250 guests from 25 countries are expected to participate, in addition to the realization of 2,300 activities in different pavilions. Among the guests are the Spanish Irene Vallejo and Rosa Montero and the Argentines Eduardo Sacheri and Andrés Oppenheimer, or the Japanese Satoshi Kitamura.

The event will be attended by Brazilian authors Luciany Aparecida, Ailton Krenak, Rita Carelli, Amicar Bettega and Bernardo Carvalho, along with the shelves of the pavilion will be accessible the literary works of Clarice Lispector, Jorge Amado, Rubem Fonseca and Joaquim Machado de Assis.

The program will feature the oral narrator, teacher Karen Vieira Costa and contemporary visual artist Isabel Cristina Morales, you can also enjoy Portuguese classes with the Instituto de Cultura Brasil Colombia (Ibraco), capoeira with Petty Officer Andrés Orjela; and samba with the Brazilian choreographer Eleonora Souza.

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For Colombia, personalities such as Brigitte Baptiste, Andrea Cote, Santiago Espinosa, Horacio Benavides and Iliana Hernández will be present, as well as guests such as the Spanish anthropologist and philosopher Santiago Beruete or the sociologist, activist and Aymara historian, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui.

Also coming from Argentina will be the writers Clara Obligado and Agustina Bazterrica; the first, from the universe of micro-dramas and the essay on nature 'Everything that grows'; while the second has written novels like 'Exquisite corpse' and 'The indignas'.

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El Salvador on Track for Peaceful Nuclear Energy.

The new project already has the approval of the IAEA and apparently the government has the financing to start the construction of the first nuclear power plant in a Central American country.

According to reports in national and international media, El Salvador recently delivered to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) the legal instruments that would allow the country to have a vote in the agency and obtain support for nuclear energy projects.



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In their official accounts of the social network X the ministers the general director of Energy, Hydrocarbons and Mines, Daniel Álvarez and the vice-chancellor Adriana Mira have ratified the information. They stated that the objective is to decarbonize the country's energy matrix and promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy. If this project becomes a reality, the Central American country would be one of the few in the region to have nuclear reactors to generate electricity.

The initiative is part of the government plan of current President Nayib Bukele (whose father was an influential leader of the Muslim community in El Salvador) that seeks to move the country away from the use of hydrocarbons and move to having 100% of energy production from renewable sources. Since March 2023, the country had already been in contact with Thorium Energy Alliance, a non-governmental organization based in the United States that promotes the use of thorium. This chemical element can be used as nuclear fuel to generate electricity in nuclear reactors.

Out of that agreement came the signing of a memorandum of understanding as part of the "El Salvador Energy Bridge Plan." This way, Thorium Energy Alliance and the General Directorate of Energy, Hydrocarbons and Mines (DGEHM) would develop a global and strategic plan to implement, in an advanced and safe way, the generation of electric energy by means of thorium engine reactors and thermal energy storage systems.

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Thorium, a Less Expensive Resource

The world's assured reserves are centered mainly in Brazil, Turkey and India, totaling more than one million tons, while the United States and Norway add a quarter of a million tons. According to experts, thorium is significantly more abundant in the earth's crust than uranium, the main fuel used in nuclear power generation in the world. This makes it much more suitable for long-term energy sustainability.

El Salvador currently generates 64.4% of its energy with renewable sources, mainly hydroelectric plants, photovoltaic parks, a wind farm, as well as biomass, geothermal and liquefied natural gas.

The new project already has the approval of the IAEA and apparently the government has the financing to start the construction of the first nuclear power plant in a Central American country.

Latin America is one of the regions of the planet that has used this type of energy the least. There are currently seven nuclear reactors in operation and only Argentina has two in its territory.

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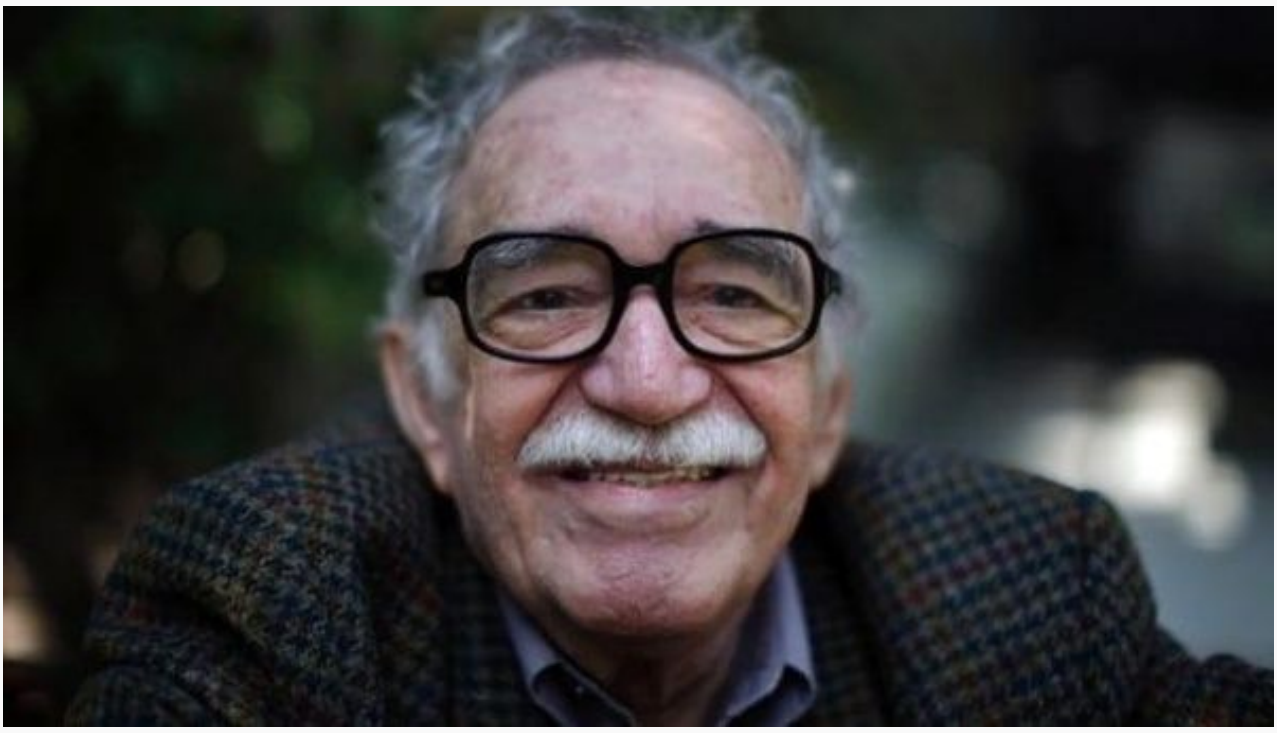
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Three Writers to Know Close Latin American Literature

In next articles there will be more Latin American literature recommendations.

Latin American literature became very succesfuly in Twenieth Century, making that several authors became very well known, and their works were translated into English and even other languages.



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Some of them are the Cuban Alejo Carpentier, which books have been traslated to French and English. For example, the novela The Kingdom of this World, which tales more than 25 years of Haitian historia has many editions.

Carpentier born in Lausana, Swis, but his parents came to Cuba when he just a new born so he cosidered a Cuban his all life. Critics considered him one of the fundamental writers of the 20th century in the Spanish language, and one of the architects of the Latin American literary renewal, particularly through a style that incorporates various dimensions and aspects of the imagination to recreate reality, elements that They contributed to his formation and use of "the wonderful real."

Gabriel García Márquez, Colombian, is perhaps the most famous exponent of magical realism. His landmark work, "One Hundred Years of Solitude," is an epic that tells the story of the Buendía family and the fictional town of Macondo. García Márquez uses the fantastical to explore themes such as the passage of time, loneliness, and Latin American identity.

One hundred years of solitude it is transalted to 45 lenguages, including Arab and Persian. Other recommended novelles it is "The love in times of cholera", and "The Patriarch Outumn".

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On the other hand, Jorge Luis Borges, Argentine, is known for his philosophical prose and his short stories filled with metaphysical labyrinths. His work is marked by the exploration of themes such as infinity, duality, and the nature of reality. Borges constantly challenges narrative conventions and blurs the boundaries between the real and the imaginary.

Although each has their own distinctive style, these three writers share a deep concern for Latin American identity, history, and culture. Their works continue to be read and studied worldwide, and their legacy will endure for generations.

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