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NEWSLETTER

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

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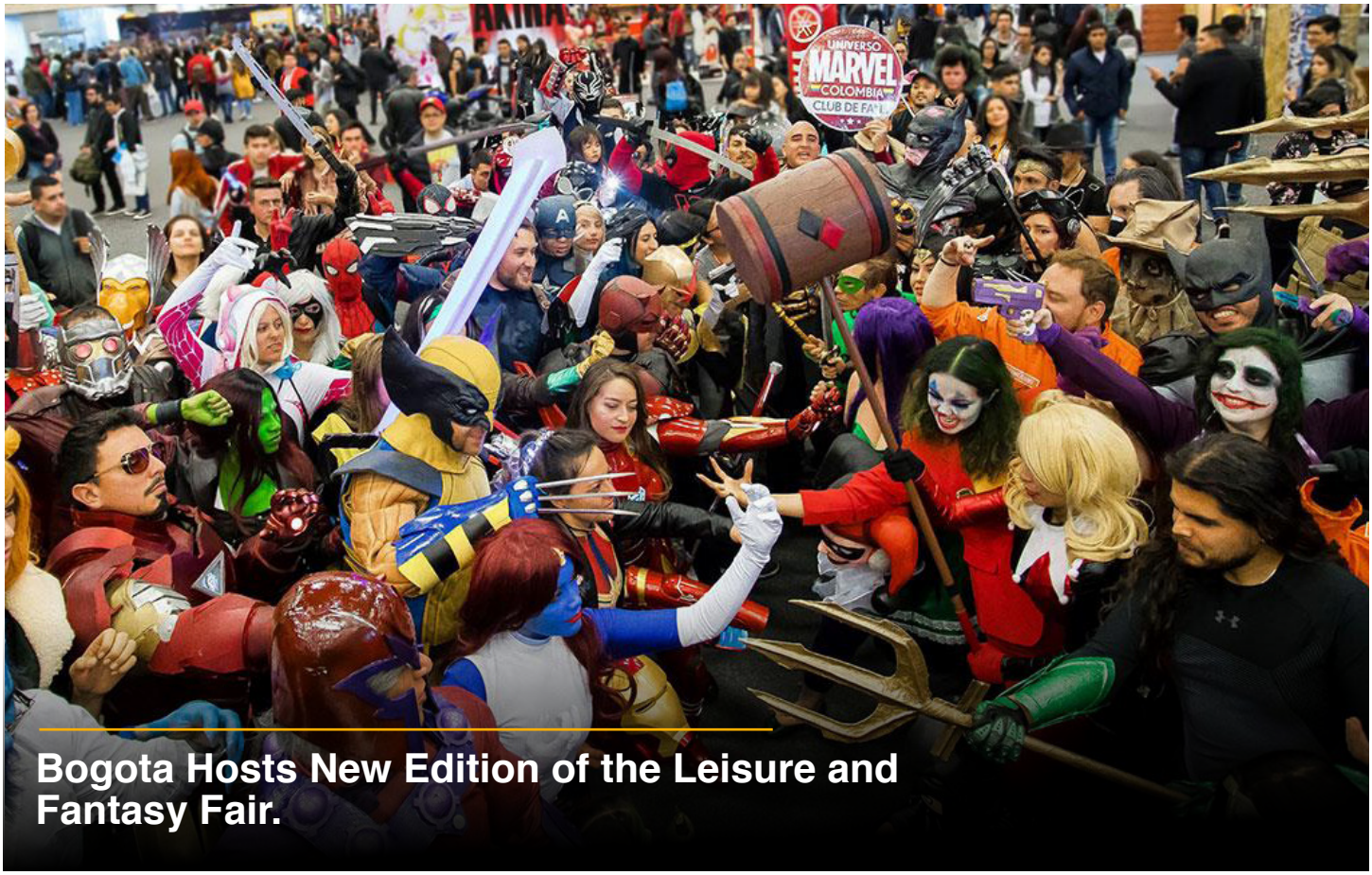
Green Zone Foundation

omayma@gz.foundation

gzflanguage

www.gz.foundation/language

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Bogota Hosts New Edition of the Leisure and Fantasy Fair.

The fair brings together cosplay, anime, video games, urban art, animation, and music.

On Thursday, Bogota began hosting a new edition of the Leisure and Fantasy Fair (SOFA), Colombia's largest geek culture event, with an expected attendance of around 200,000 people over five days.

The fair is held at Corferias and brings together cosplay, video games, urban art, animation, music, and various popular cultures, attracting visitors from all over Latin America.

The event features 23 themed pavilions, where exhibitions, contests, fashion shows, live performances, and activities organized by some 450 exhibitors and hundreds of cultural managers take place.

One of the main attractions is cosplay, a discipline in which participants recreate characters from series, video games, manga, anime, films, and comics through elaborate costumes and performances.

More than 150 communities are participating in this edition, including groups linked to Japanese culture, independent artists, digital creators, and groups dedicated to different expressions of pop culture.

The organizers highlighted the growing influence of South Korean culture and K-pop in Colombia, a trend that has dedicated spaces within this year's program.

Among the featured participants are the Mexican duo Banana Cospboys and voice actor Oscar Flores, known for voicing the Ice King in the Latin American version of the animated series Adventure Time.



Bolivians Pay Tribute to the Cueca Dance.

In 2015, the cueca was declared an intangible cultural heritage of the country.

On Sunday, hundreds of people paid tribute to the cueca, the dance that expresses Bolivian cultural diversity through the variety of styles, costumes, and rhythms with which it is performed in each region.

Celebrations marked the 'National Bolivian Cueca Day' in cities such as Cochabamba, where events were held at the regional government headquarters and at the Mayor's office in Plaza 14 de Septiembre, the city's main square.

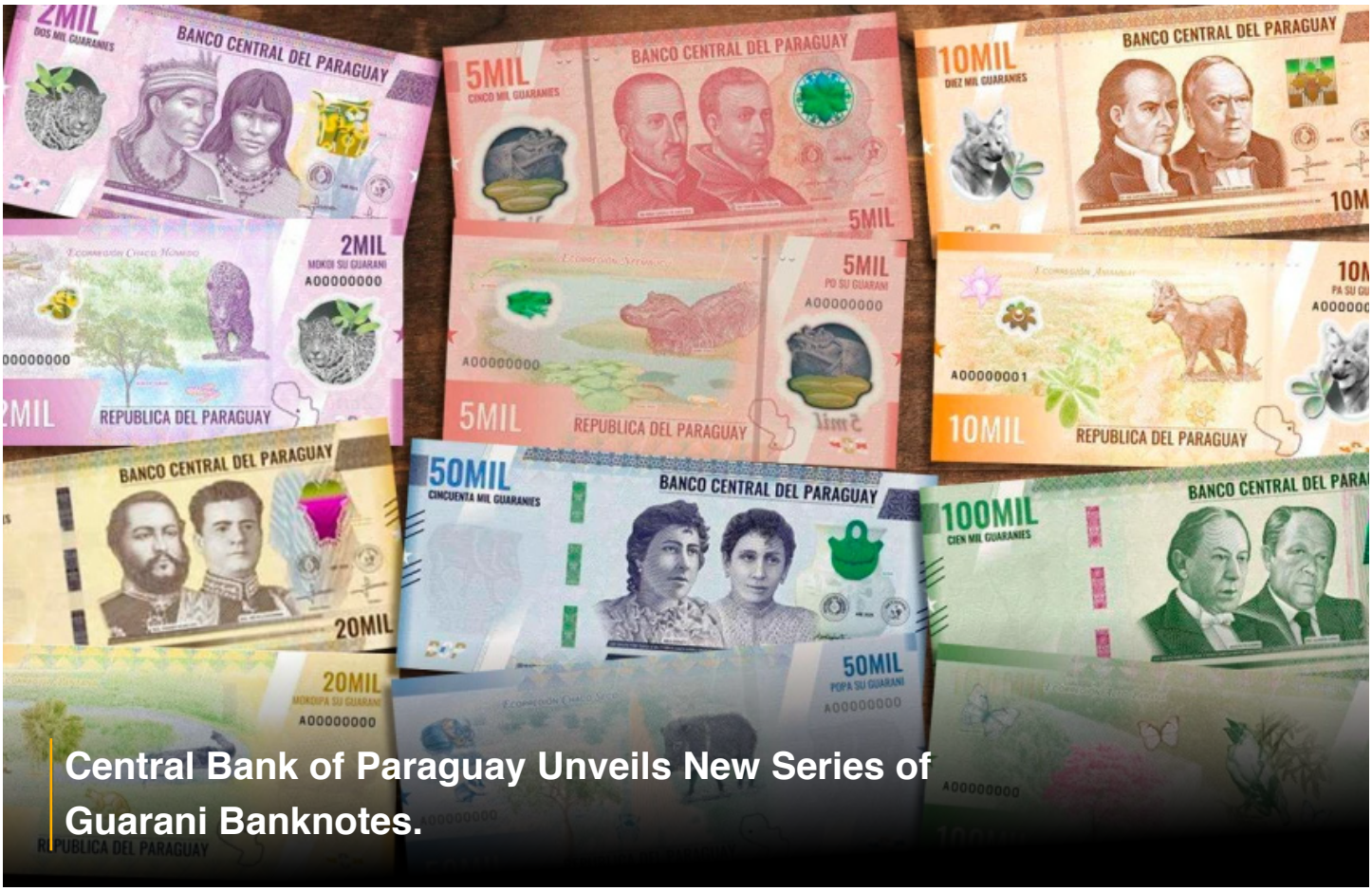
The cueca is a partner dance in which the dancers carry a white handkerchief in their right hand and alternate circular movements with flourishes and a final footwork step.

Bolivian regions such as La Paz, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Tarija, and Potosi, as well as the Chaco region, have their own versions of this dance, which represents the allegory of a man's courtship of a woman.

Women's attire includes skirts, hats, shawls, and blouses, although the materials and lengths of the skirts vary by region. They are longer and warmer in the Andean region and shorter and lighter in the valleys; some wear boots or closed shoes, while others wear sandals.

Edson Ontiveros, Cochabamba's Director of Culture, mentioned that there are "very luxurious, ostentatious costumes" like those worn in the Chuquisaca cueca, and others that are simpler, like those from Tarija.

In 2015, a law was enacted declaring the Bolivian cueca an intangible cultural heritage of the country, "due to the diversity of its musical, poetic, choreographic, and sartorial expressions, for the safeguarding of the cultural, traditional, and popular values that give it national identity."



Central Bank of Paraguay Unveils New Series of Guarani Banknotes.

The new banknotes will be introduced gradually and will circulate alongside the existing denominations.

On Monday, the Central Bank of Paraguay (BCP) unveiled a new series of guarani banknotes to refresh the image of the national currency and reinforce the country's historical and cultura identity.

During the presentation, BCP President Carlos Carvallo explained that each banknote represents a part of the nation's history and that the series as a whole aims to construct a narrative that reflects Paraguayan values, heritage, and cultural richness.

The new series will retain the denominations currently in circulation: 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 50,000, and 100,000 guaranies. The new banknotes will be introduced gradually and will circulate alongside the existing denominations.

Carvallo emphasized that the entire series had not been comprehensively updated in over six decades. For this reason, the Central Bank undertook a broad renewal process over the past five years with the support of specialists from various disciplines.

The project involved historians, biologists, cultural experts, technicians, and designers who worked to ensure that the new banknotes combined high security and accessibility standards.

Among the figures honored are the sisters Celsa and Adela Speratti, educators recognized for their contribution to the reconstruction of the Paraguayan education system after the War of the Triple Alliance.

In addition to historical figures, the designs incorporate expressions of national culture such as tereré, a traditional beverage prepared with yerba mate, and nanduti, a characteristic Paraguayan lace, along with references to the country's main geographical regions.



Peru Recovers 342 Pieces of Cultural Heritage From Abroad.

The recovered items will be portrayed in a special exhibition open to the public.

On Wednesday, the Ministry of Culture received 342 pieces of national cultural heritage recovered in Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, the United States, and the United Kingdom, as part of a joint effort to protect the country's historical legacy.

The recovered artifacts were officially handed over to Minister of Culture Alberto Beingolea during a ceremony led by Peruvian Foreign Minister Carlos Espa, who emphasized the importance of these actions for the preservation of Peruvian cultural memory.

During the ceremony, Espa explained that the repatriation of these pieces allows for the safeguarding of valuable testimonies of the societies, knowledge, and cultural expressions that have contributed to the formation of Peru's identity.

The Foreign Minister also acknowledged the collaboration of foreign citizens who voluntarily returned the artifacts, as well as support provided by international institutions such as the U.S. State Department and the FBI, in addition to agencies in Argentina, Belgium, and Germany.

Among the recovered objects, the painting "The Passing of Saint Joseph" is considered of great historical and artistic significance, as well as the manuscript "Ancient Peruvian Art," a documentary work containing watercolors of high academic value.

Espa noted that defending cultural heritage is a "priority of Peruvian foreign policy" and announced the strengthening of international cooperation mechanisms to prevent the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

Beingolea indicated that the protection of heritage is an ongoing task that includes monitoring digital platforms and social networks. He also announced that the recovered items will soon be portrayed in a special exhibition open to the public.



UNESCO Supports Recovery of Colombian Cultural Heritage.

The August earthquake damaged 40 heritage sites located in seven departments.

On Monday, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) approved US$60,000 in financial assistance to support the recovery of Colombian cultural heritage affected by the 7.4-magnitude earthquake that struck on August 10.

Minister of Culture Paola Holguin explained that the funds come from the Emergency Fund for Heritage and will be used for protection and safeguarding measures.

The earthquake, whose epicenter was in San Jose del Palmar, in the department of Choco, has been classified as the strongest recorded in Colombia so far this century. According to official figures, the earthquake left 335 dead, 4,516 injured, 6,047 buildings damaged, and 758 collapsed structures.

The Ministry of Culture identified damage to 40 cultural heritage sites located in seven departments. Among the most affected buildings is the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary in Manizales, where one of its towers was left leaning over the central nave after the earthquake.

Minister Holguin highlighted that the approval of international aid was the result of coordination between the Ministry of Culture, the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and UNESCO.

As part of the process, Enrique Lopez Hurtado, a specialist from the UNESCO Regional Office, is conducting a technical mission in Bogota to identify the priority needs for heritage recovery.

The funds will be disbursed between October and December, with actions focused on damage assessment, emergency protection, and the conservation of cultural assets affected by the earthquake.


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teleSUR
www.gz.foundation/language
GREEN ZONE FOUNDATION
GZ Language
Green Zone Foundation
omayma@gz.foundation
gzflanguage