



CHILENEWS

No. 16 – June 25, 2001

Did You Know?

Each year, with the arrival of winter, on June 21st, many indigenous peoples celebrate the coming of a new year. We Tripantu – new year in Mapudungun – the language of the Mapuche, has also been National Indigenous People's Day since 1998.

Jesuit priest Juan Ignacio Molina (1740-1820) is considered the first Chilean scientist. He described 172 species of flora and fauna. Today, a ship bearing his name – specially designed for marine research – travels along the Chilean coastline to assess the status of the country's ichthyologic resources.

Robinson Crusoe, the main island in the Juan Fernández archipelago, has 120 unique species. The scent of abundant flora floats in the air, while its nearly 600 inhabitants make their living trapping huge local lobsters.

Over **90%** of Chileans have drinking water and sewerage services.

Lights for Life

On Tuesday the 19th, the Roman Coliseum lit up to celebrate the abolition of the death penalty in Chile. The ceremony, organized by the City of Rome, has been held since 1999 whenever a country repeals capital punishment. The initiative is promoted by the lay community of San Egidio, Amnesty International and the NGO Hands for Cain.

Justice Minister José Antonio Gómez, present on behalf of the Government of Chile, underscored that the elimination of the death penalty, ratified by Congress, means “returning to the path of a nation that is once again finding its history and its fundamental values” and is “a crucial step on a topic that involves the essence and dignity of all democratic societies: human rights.”

On the same day, Pope John Paul II received the new Chilean Ambassador to the Holy See, Máximo Pacheco. In addition to praising the repeal, the Pope highlighted Chile's democratic tradition and underscored the country's will for peace as demonstrated, he said, in the agreements attained with Argentina and Peru.

Better Homes for Latin America

A special session of the U.N. was held in New York in June: “Istanbul + 5” on human settlement. At the gathering, Chilean Minister of Housing, Urbanism and State Property Jaime Ravinet reported on the progress made by the countries of Latin American and the Caribbean in their struggle to reduce poverty, improve social indicators and target resources on the neediest.

He noted that the inequity in many countries continues to be pervasive and commented that the region is the world's most densely populated in urban areas, with 380 million people living in its cities.

Minister Ravinet also stressed the housing and development policies of the Lagos administration: targeting subsidies on the

Facts

Chile and Peru signed an agreement that eliminates double taxation in the two countries. The accord is expected to bolster cross-border investments and services.

Santiago was selected as the location for the permanent headquarters of the Association of Banking Supervisors of the Americas (ABSA). The 34 members of the ABSA include most of the countries in Latin America, the U.S. and Canada.

Don Francisco, a well-known television host, became the first Chilean and the only South American to have his own star on Hollywood's mythical Walk of Fame.

The Spanish chain NH invested 12 million dollars in a new 5-star hotel in Santiago, the chain's 173rd in the world.

Oracle chose Chile to develop the Spanish language version of the limited access web site Think.com which allows teachers and students in the different countries that make up the network (U.S., U.K. and now Chile) to use unique communications and collaboration tools.

most needy, restoring homes located in historic neighborhoods, and transferring to the private sector functions currently provided by the State, such as funding mortgages.

During the special session, the Secretary of Housing of the United States, Mel Martínez, pointed to Chile's housing experience as "a success" and "model" for combining government subsidies, applicant savings with construction in the hands of the private sector.

More Medical Treatment

AIDS sufferers have received good news. Following three years of negotiations, the National AIDS Council (Conasida) and representatives of four multinational pharmaceutical companies have reached an agreement that will almost double the supply of free treatment in Chile.

Thanks to a discount of 50 to 70% off the regular price for the medication supplied by the laboratories, the number of HIV carriers the public health service will be able to serve will rise to 81%, that is, 2,600 patients. Health Minister Michelle Bachelet noted that this treatment comes in addition to the free care given to pregnant women and children who carry the virus.

Chile is the first Latin American country and the 11th in the world to sign this type of agreement (the previous 10 are in Africa). The United Nations, which supported the negotiations through its specialized agency for AIDS, considers the accord to be historic and hopes that it will serve as an example to other countries in the region.

Naval Exercises off the Coast of Chile

Between June 24 and July 11, the Chilean coast from Antofagasta, to the north, to the port of Valparaíso, in the central region, is the theater for Operation Team Work South 2001.

The operation is a series of naval and air power exercises conducted by the navies of Chile, the United States and United Kingdom and the air forces of Chile and Canada.

The maneuvers include surface, anti-submarine and aerial training. Three thousand men, 14 vessels and 32 aircraft operate for a total of 230 hours in exercises designed to test

Quotes from President Lagos

“The armed forces belong to the entire nation, not to a group or individual sector. If they did, they wouldn’t be in a position to defend the country.”

During the ceremony to inaugurate the new senior command of the Navy. June 13

“The transition will end with a new Constitution, one we all agree on.”

Interview in the newspaper *El Mercurio*. June 3

“In the economic sphere, we will go from less to more. In the fourth quarter the country will grow more than in the first. Overall, more than double the average growth of the worldwide economy.”

June 20

“I want to practice foreign policy grounded in Latin America. That is where I belong, that is my history, my language and my culture. Mercosur is the beginning of that.”

June 9

Chile “has been capable of fighting for truth and justice. We have not passed a “punto final” law, we have not pardoned human rights violators, nor have we forgotten the crimes that were committed.”

José Antonio Gómez,
Minister of Justice.
Rome, June 19

their mettle as a multinational force in which the naval and air crews of the four countries operate in a joint, simultaneous fashion.

Award for the Anti-Poet

The irreverence, irony and sarcasm, as well as constant references to mundane affairs of Chilean poet Nicanor Parra were acknowledged by the Queen Sofia Ibero-American Poetry Award this year, given by the University of Salamanca and the National Heritage Office of Spain.

The award, granted from among 86 candidates, was well deserved, says Gregorio Salvador, Deputy Director of the Real Academia de la Lengua and member of the jury: “Parra is a great poet in our language. He represents a type of rebellious poetry: the jury had no doubts about his selection.”

Parra is the creator of anti-poetry, a movement that has been described as a literary revolution that introduces the language of daily life into traditional poetry in an explosive, challenging fashion.

Ski Season Opens

In mid June, when the Northern hemisphere welcomes the warm winds of summer, the ski season officially begins in Chile. For four months, the 15 ski resorts sprinkled throughout the central and southern regions of the country open their doors to thousands of local and foreign visitors.

Getting there is easy. Since Chile is so narrow, all of the resorts are located close to a city or airport. Ski enthusiasts can make the round trip to the Andean slopes for the day. Just over an hour from Santiago lie the country’s four leading ski facilities: [Portillo](#), Farellones/El Colorado, La Parva and [Valle Nevado](#). Farther south, an additional three are located on the Chillán, Villarrica and Osorno volcanoes.

Equipped with all the modern conveniences, most have slopes for different skill levels as well as facilities for other snow sports, such snowboarding, monoski, heliski, and sledding as well as world class hotels and restaurants.

Overheard

“Chileans are a resilient people, who seek paths that lead to reconciliation, even though to attain that goal they may have to endure rocky terrain.”

Pope John Paul II.
June 19

“Your economy is the leader in this part of the world. And if Chile is interested in finding new markets, it may be a good option to start with the emerging markets of central, south-east and Mediterranean Europe. I am here to show you the advantages of Croatia.”

Tonino Picula, Minister of
Foreign Affairs of Croatia.
Santiago, June 18

“The challenges for governments of countries such as Chile and the U.S. is how to ensure small companies access to technology.”

Michelle O’Neill, Deputy
Secretary for the Information
and Technology Industry of the
United States. Santiago, June 9

Q&A

Central Bank of Chile

What are its objectives and powers?

The Central Bank is an autonomous institution, tasked with ensuring that Chile’s economy develops in an orderly, progressive way. The Bank oversees monetary stability, so that the currency does not depreciate due to inflation. It sets monetary, credit, capital market, foreign exchange, foreign trade and savings policies.

The Bank is also responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of domestic and external payments, to avoid a crisis in the balance of payments that could interfere with trading. This is of vital importance in an economy as open to international trade as Chile’s.

What does being autonomous mean?

That the Bank can enter into agreements and make technical decisions. It has its own budget and is not subject to oversight by the office of the Comptroller General nor the Superintendency of Banks and Financial Institutions. It is governed exclusively by the special legislation that created the Bank and by specific regulations contained in the General Banking Law. The Bank is empowered to interpret administratively its own agreements, regulations, orders and instructions.

How are Bank officials selected?

The maximum authority in the Central Bank lies with the Council. The latter is composed of five members, selected by the President of Chile and ratified by the Senate. Council members have a term of ten years; one is replaced every two years and may be elected to additional terms.

The Chairman is appointed to a five-year term by the President of Chile from among the members of the Council and may be reelected. The position of council member is full-time and is incompatible with any other service provided in the public or private sector, except teaching and academia.

Agenda

📅 June 21-23: Latin American Summit on Internet, E-Commerce and Telecommunications. Santiago.

📅 June 26: Foreign Minister Soledad Alvear participates in the Meeting of the Joint Chile-EU Council. Luxemburg.

📅 July 4-7: Visit to Chile of the President of Slovakia, Rudolf Schuster.

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