

EL OBSERVADOR

Latin America Braces for Dengue Fever

Surge expected after outbreak

(AP) -- The deadly hemorrhagic form of dengue fever is increasing dramatically in Mexico, and experts predict a surge throughout Latin America fueled by climate change, migration and faltering mosquito eradication efforts.

Overall dengue cases have increased by more than 600 percent in Mexico since 2001, and worried officials are sending special teams to tourist resorts to spray pesticides and remove garbage and standing water where mosquitoes breed ahead of the peak Easter Week



An anti-dengue brigade, belonging to the municipal health department, walk in the street checking for standing water or other areas where mosquitoes breed in the resort city of Cancun, Mexico.

vacation season.

Even classic dengue — known as "bonebreak fever" — can cause severe flu-like symptoms, excruciating joint pain, high fever, nausea and rashes.

More alarming is that a deadly hemorrhagic form of the disease, which adds internal and external bleeding to the symptoms — is becoming more common. It accounts for one in four cases in Mexico, compared with one in 50 seven years ago, according to Mexico's Public Health Department.

While hemorrhagic dengue is increasing around the developing world, the problem is most dramatic in the Americas, ac-

ording to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Like a poster child for the downside of humanity's impact on the planet, dengue is driven by longer rainy seasons some blame on climate change, as well as disposable plastic packaging and other trash that collects water. Migrants and tourists — carry new strains of the virus across national borders, where mosquitoes can spread the disease.

The CDC says there's no drug to treat hemorrhagic dengue,

but proper treatment, including rest, fluids and pain relief, can reduce death rates to about 1 percent.

Drugs, Gun Imports Fuel Violence

(AP) -- Mexico's attorney general on Wednesday demanded U.S. authorities do more to stop guns and drug money from heading south and fueling the drug violence in Mexico that left more than 2,000 dead last year.

Eduardo Medina Mora told a business forum that the vast majority of arms used by the soldiers of drug cartels, including assault rifles and grenades, are smuggled from the United States.

"It's truly absurd that a person can get together 50 to 100 high powered arms, grenade launchers, fragmentation grenades, and can transport this cargo to our country," Medina Mora said. "It's a task that needs a much more decided and determined effort from the U.S. government, and it's one of the demands we have put on the table." President Felipe Calderon, who took office on Dec. 1, has waged a major offensive against the cartels, sending more than 24,000 troops to regions ravaged by drug-related beheadings and execution-style slayings. He also has extradited several alleged kingpins to the United States, winning the praise of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.

But drug gangs have hit back, killing police officers across the country. Sometimes notes threatening the federal government have been left near the bodies.

Former Miss Bolivia Arrested

(AP) -- A former Miss Bolivia has been arrested on charges of carrying 1.8 pounds of cocaine while boarding a flight to the Brazilian border, Bolivia's second former beauty queen to face legal trouble in less than a week.

Police said that Roxana Arias Becerra, 32, Miss Bolivia 1993, was arrested in the Santa Cruz's El Trompillo Airport as she boarded a plane Tuesday.

The former beauty queen said she had just bought the bag in a local street market and was unaware of the drugs inside, according to the Bolivian newspaper El Deber.

Last week, former Miss Bolivia Sonia Falcone was ordered to leave the United States after pleading guilty to employing four illegal immigrants as household servants at her \$10.5 million mansion in Paradise Valley, Ariz.

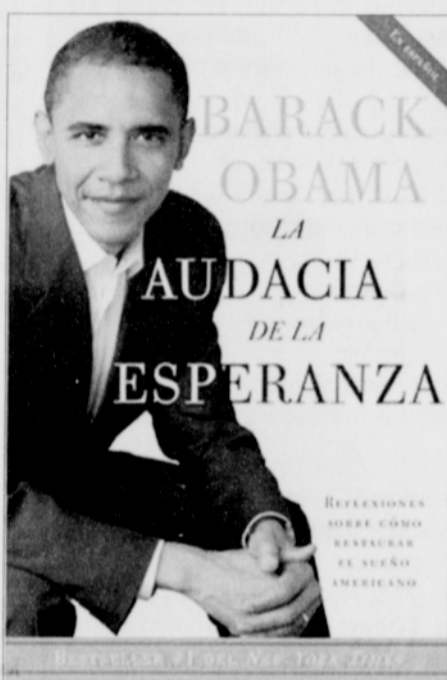
Falcone, crowned Miss Bolivia 1988 under her maiden name of Sonia Montero, had also been indicted on felony charges of lying on a citizenship application and engaging in marriage fraud to obtain immigration paperwork, but the charges were dropped following her plea agreement.

Obama Book Available in Spanish

(AP) -- Sen. Barack Obama "The Audacity of Hope," already a million seller in English, will be coming out in a Spanish-language edition. Vintage Espanol, a paperback imprint of Random House Inc., will publish "La Audacia de la Esperanza" in June with a first printing of 50,000, a high number for a Spanish release.

"It will be our biggest book of the year in Spanish," Vintage spokesman Russell Perreault said Thursday.

"The Audacity of Hope," published last fall, has re-



ceived surprisingly strong reviews for a political policy book and has been credited with helping the presidential hopes of Obama, a Democrat from Illinois.

As Vintage noted in a press release Thursday, the book also includes passages of interest to Spanish-language readers.

"As a young organizer, I often worked with Latino leaders on issues that affected both black and brown residents, from failing schools to illegal dumping to unimmunized children," Obama writes.

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