

HONDURAS THIS WEEK *online*

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NATIONAL NEWS

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Week in Review

The “Devil” falls

Maria Isabel Martinez, otherwise known as “the Devil”, was captured on Tuesday morning in Colonia San Isidro de Comayagüela. The minister of security, Oscar Alvarez orchestrated the vast operation that took place at 3:00 a.m. and involved 250 masked policemen wearing armed with pistols and rifles. She has been wanted since Tuesday February 4, when she shot 52 year old Jose Santos Martinez on a bus in the Comayagüela area of Tegucigalpa. She had just been released for possession of drugs and heavy armory. — La Tribuna

Government to save 700 million lempiras

The Honduran government has decided to freeze the salaries of public employees, and to cancel 50 percent of the current civil service vacancies created as a result of early retirement and the firing of people in government positions. The decision was made after the council of ministers met on Tuesday in order to discuss the propositions made by the IMF (International Monetary Fund). The IMF wants Honduras to decrease expenses, and to increase income in order to lower fiscal deficit. President Maduro has said that his goal is to lower the governments salary from 10.7 to 10.1 percent of the GNP (Gross National Product). — El Heraldo

1.5 million pupils begin the new school year

President Maduro affirmed on Monday that the malnutrition of the young population, especially in the rural areas is still one of the main causes for truancy. However, he assured that one of his most important goals this year is to increase the amount of food received at school in rural areas, aiming to reach 5,000 children this year as opposed to 3,000 last year. Other goals included reducing the number of schools with only one teacher from the present number of 4,000, to 800 in 2005. In an effort to emphasize the importance of the 200-day school year, it was confirmed that teachers who complete this time will be paid more. — La Tribuna

Maduro meets with Bolanos and Flores

In order to discuss the serious problems that Honduras is currently maintaining with it's neighbors; President Maduro met on Tuesday with the presidents of Nicaragua and El Salvador. Relations are currently tense due to the 35 percent tax, which they are applying to Honduran products. El Salvador and Honduras have also reached a stalemate over their border dispute. The National Congress is planning to decree a reprisal against the tax that Nicaragua is imposing. — La Tribuna

"We aren't corrupt"

Members of the legislative chamber refuted the claims that they are corrupt on Wednesday. The principal members of Congress were responding to the accusation made on Tuesday by anti-corruption official, German Espinal. Espinal quoted the study made by Doctor Mitchell Seligson from the University of Pittsburgh stating that 98 percent of the population perceive the congressmen to be easily bribed. The Minister of Transport, Salvador Pineda said that the concept of perception is not demonstrable, and therefore the study is "totally refutable". — El Heraldo