

SOUTH AMERICA

NEWS IN BRIEF



Gustavo Petro makes history as Colombia's first-ever left-wing president

Ushering in a new era for Colombia, former rebel and long-time senator, Gustavo Petro, won the presidential election back in June, setting the nation on a radically new path. Having pledged to transform the country's economic system and address issues of inclusion and inequality, Petro secured 50.5% of the votes in a second-round run-off against millionaire rival and independent candidate Rodolfo Hernández – who too railed against corruption.

The country's first-ever left-wing president marks a massive departure from the country's conservative establishment and reflects the widespread discontent felt by Colombians faced with a lack of opportunity – something which sent hundreds of thousands of people to demonstrate in the streets last year.

Alongside pledging to increase taxes on unproductive



Gustavo Petro - Daniel Munoz/AFP/Getty Images

land and introduce free university education, President Petro has voiced a desire to change the way Colombia fights the war on drugs – moving tactics away from the security-focused policies of his predecessors. Instead, Pedro hopes to focus on voluntarily convincing farmers to change their products to crops other than cocoa leaf, which is used for cocaine.

Remarkably, he has also

advocated for the introduction of more sustainable practices, pledging to freeze new oil and gas projects, which is a huge deal given that Colombia relies on oil as its main export and primary source of government revenue.

A further first for the nation, Petro's running mate Francia Márquez has become the first black woman to hold the position of vice-president.



Pulsar Imagens

Brazil's GOL and Colombia's Avianca to consolidate under Abra Group with pan-Latin American deal

Low-cost Brazilian airline GOL Linhas Aereas, and Colombia's flag carrier, Avianca, have announced plans to combine their operations to create one of the largest airline groups in Latin America. Coming together under a singular UK-based holding company, Abra Group, the entity will be jointly controlled by GOL's and Avianca's main shareholders. It will also include Viva following Avianca's deal to buy the Colombian ULCC back in April.

While both airlines will continue to operate independently and maintain their respective brands, the partnership will see both parties compete better with the "large legacy carriers and global carriers active in our region", as highlighted by Avianca Board Member Roberto Kriete.

In fact, the Abra-owned airline will roughly be the size of Chile's leading LATAM Airlines Group, offering about 1.4 million weekly seats. Overall, the combined entity will operate a network spanning two dozen countries, connecting 288 airport pairs across Latin America.

StarDome Peru opens offering a once-in-a-lifetime stay in the heart of the Scared Valley

Tucked between the Andean metropolis of Cusco and UNESCO-listed Machu Picchu, the boutique hotel StarDome Peru opened earlier this year, offering the perfect base for exploring the incredible Scared Valley and all its invaluable treasures.

Sat 10,500 feet on top of Abanuca, a local sacred mountain, StarDome Peru comprises an extensive viewing platform providing 360-degree panoramas of the awe-inspiring ever-green scenes below, as well as five mountaintop suites. These features are all enclosed in a jaw-droppingly stunning clear geodesic dome, and there's even a standalone Royal Apu Suite up for grabs for those seeking complete privacy.

Every suite boasts Wi-Fi, heated floors, hot showers, and a 24/7 concierge service. Moreover, included with each booking, is a traditional breakfast at the hotel's signature restaurant Apu – which also hosts private dining experiences that showcase more of Peru's culinary heritage and highlight the talent of local chefs.



StarDome Peru

Network of lost cities in the Bolivian Amazon discovered from air using lidar technology

A team of international researchers, including Professor of Archaeology José Iriarte from the University of Exeter, have uncovered several intricate settlements in the tropical savannah of the Llanos de Mojos. Laid under the thick tree canopies of the Bolivian Amazon for centuries, the lost cities dating back to between 500-1400 AD were found using light-based remote sensing technology (lidar).



Hi-Primers / Dal

From a helicopter some 650 feet in the air, these "lasers in the sky" digitally deforested the wilderness below, producing images of a stronghold of the Casarabe community. Amongst the array of elaborate structures uncovered were five-metre-high terraces covering 22 hectares (the equivalent of 30 football pitches) and 21-metre conical pyramids.

An especially crucial discovery, researchers claim the cities challenge the view of the Amazonia as a historically "pristine" landscape – it was, in fact, home to early urbanism created and managed by indigenous populations for thousands of years.