

## Perseverance prevailed.



### Language English

All the tensions had been accumulating, both among those who urgently needed to travel, and among those of us who have the responsibility of ensuring that this is possible. For days, passenger transportation between Nueva Gerona and Batabanó had been suspended, and that is easy to say, but behind those words, there are many people who depend on its recovery. We have already mentioned this before, from those who need to continue their trips to more distant places outside of Cuba, to others who are going to receive essential medical treatment to treat an illness.

Everything became more complex after the difficulties of the Perseverance ferry to dock at Surgidero de Batabanó due to the movement of sediment in the entrance channel generated by Hurricane Rafael, which was added to the sediment that had been accumulating naturally in this port, which requires new dredging, which is being carried out as quickly as possible, as it is the real solution.

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To undertake this project, a dredger will be transferred from La Coloma to this mission, and the preliminary studies have already been carried out by Geocuba, with the participation of several Cuban institutions. It is vital to gain depth in the entrance channel of this port so that operations with this ferry can be carried out without difficulties. While this happens, today we are acting with Perseverance so that somehow the ferry can dock in Batabanó.

A plan was designed that had never been executed before in these circumstances and that depended on certain meteorological conditions that were not favorable in its execution. The operation planned a transfer in the entrance channel of the port of Batabanó from the ferry to another vessel, in this case a tourist vessel, based on instructions from the president and prime minister aimed at contributing to the solution of this issue. It was planned that all passengers and their luggage would be safely transferred in several trips to the dock that catamarans usually use. In turn, and in the same way, the passengers traveling in the opposite direction, from Batabanó to the Isla de la Juventud, would also be transferred. But the wind prevented the two vessels from joining together to make the safe transfer and, in the meantime, the realization of this plan. Many measures had been taken to make this operation possible, with the participation of numerous institutions; it was able to begin, but it was not possible to carry it out as planned. In these circumstances and with the expertise of the captains of the ferry and the tug Polar 11, with its engines off and great care, the ferry managed to dock yesterday. 62 people traveled on it for medical care, 15 vulnerable people with special care, 71 with continuing trips, and other priorities that included passengers with reservations for the days 5-7-9-11-13/11 and 5 passengers for the day 15/11, in addition to late passengers from the days 1-3/11; All of these trips were suspended by Hurricane Rafael and the subsequent difficulties in docking at Surgidero de Batabanó.

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So far, 430 passengers have arrived at their destinations on the outbound trip and 361 on the return trip, although it was later than planned by them and not in the traditional way, after days of great uncertainty. To them and to those who have not been able to travel yet, we extend our apologies. We have lived through days of great tension with this matter. Not having the necessary resources in time for the repair of the two catamarans that contribute to this

transportation on a regular basis, has caused the ferry to be the only vessel that currently assumes the transportation of passengers between Batabanó and the Isla de la Juventud. Alternatives are being sought to change this reality and we will achieve it.

I cannot help but comment that I have also perceived a lot of sensitivity and responsibility in officials and specialists related to this matter in recent days. They have also experienced days of great tension, including all the crews involved in finding a viable alternative and the authorities of the Isle of Youth. This story is not over for the passengers who have not yet travelled, nor for us. We will continue to push so that the ferry can dock normally, and rest assured that in this endeavour, we will never, ever lack Perseverance.

**Fecha:**

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

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