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daughter Claudia Michelle, for the two healthy boys, Antonio Bento and Vitor Gabriel.

The law in Brazil only allows close relatives to serve as surrogate mothers, and the real mother, 27-year-old daughter Claudia Michelle had no sisters.

So four of Claudia's



embryos, fertilised by her husband, Antonio de Brito were implanted in Mrs Serrao's uterus earlier this year.

Hours before going into labour, Mrs Serrao prayed to the saints for a smooth birth. "Saint Cosme and Damiao are protectors of the twins and everything will go well," she said. Dozens of reporters and photographers had been camped outside the hospital, waiting for the babies to arrive. Doctor Claudio Ribeiro said it was the world's first known case of a woman giving birth to twin grandchildren. He said: "There has never been a case like this in the world, of twins developing inside a grandmother's uterus."

## End to 'Wedgies' in Sight



A long endured Western scholastic custom may be retired if young inventors, Jared and Justin Serovich, from Los Angeles are successful.

The eight-year-old twins have invented the Rip Away 1000, a pair of underpants that come away in the bully's hands if a 'wedgie' is attempted.

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# Government Go Ahead With Refinery Buyout

It has been reported that the government is determined to proceed with buying the shares of the Shell Company in the Dominican Petroleum Refinery, with Treasury Secretary, Vicente Bengoa, making several statements to that effect. This would give the government 100 percent control of the Refinery currently joint owned by the state and the Shell Company.

Bengoa seems adamant that the government will stick to its decision despite differing opinions from various sectors, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stating, 'In this operation, there will be no turning back.'

The IMF representative in the Dominican Republic, Eric Offerdal, stated that he sees no advantage in the government taking full control of the Refinery. Bengoa responded by indicating that Offerdal is no more than a "representative of

the Fund", and "we do not have to ask the IMF for permission to buy these shares from Shell." The Secretary has said that contrary to Offerdal's opinion, having control of the Refinery means the Dominican State will have full access to all 50,000 barrels of oil a day obtained under the Petrocaribe agreement with Venezuela, which includes preferential price and long term financing.

In response to the statements made by the IMF representative, Bengoa has reiterated several



Vicente Bengoa - Treasury Secretary

times that the government does not need the endorsement of the International Monetary Fund, and that the IMF "cannot

prevent us from taking an action of this nature." He added that the current agreements with the IMF were forced by the situation the current government inherited from the previous administration under president Leonel Fernandez, including cessation of payments of external debt and international credit closures. The Treasury Secretary added that they had no alternative but to make an agreement with the IMF in light of the \$304million in arrears. The vast majority of which was in default with agencies such as the World Bank.

Bengoa did however, state that the project will be conducted in a 'transparent manner' and in compliance with the government's agreements with the IMF regarding external debt and imposed ceilings on public spending. Additionally, when questioned by the press whilst accompanying president Fernandez at an expansion opening ceremony at the National Metal Industries company, Bengoa insisted that the government complies with the limits imposed by the IMF, but that the agency 'cannot prevent or challenge' any action the administration chooses to take.

Bengoa recently met with key Shell executives to begin formal negotiations for the purchase of the shares, the cost of which were originally estimated at \$183 million.

## The Big Chill - DR Style

Forecasts indicate a prolonged hurricane season this year. Meteorology expert, Antonio Cocco warned that this year the end of the hurricane season does not mean the country will not continue to feel one or two tropical storms of some intensity. He also predicted that due to the La Nina phenomenon that occurs in the Equatorial Pacific, this winter will feel a lot colder than last year. Cocco reported that as we are in a period known as the North Atlantic Oscillation it is expected that next year's hurricane season will also be very active.

Interestingly, the expert went on to explain, 'The frontal season begins in November and ends on

April

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30th. The first half of November is the transitional period between the tropical summer and winter, while the latter half of April is the transition from winter into the warmer months of May and June.'

Cocco explained that this year the La Nina effect, cold water in the Equatorial Pacific, is linked to the cool fresh winter in the country and rain in the northern part. He added, 'We

expect further lower fronts bringing more rain and temperature decreases, as well as possible stormy weather along the north and northwest coast, some very intense.'

The former director of the National Bureau of Meteorology noted that since the temperature dropped a week or so ago, it has begun to feel quite cold. So spread the word to pack those hats and scarves guys, or at the very least, some waders!

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