

Toilet paper shortage ends in Venezuela

May 24th, 2013



Venezuela's government has come up with a plan to end the country's shortage of toilet paper. There was a danger that shops would have no toilet paper to sell.

Even though Venezuela is rich in oil, it has difficulty in paying for things from other countries. This is because of controls on the Venezuelan currency. The government has decided to spend \$79 million on buying 39 million rolls of toilet paper to make sure people do not run out. The money will also be used to buy toothpaste and soap. People around the country have to wait in long lines at supermarkets and pharmacies to buy basic things, sometimes for days. They then buy all they can, which means stores run out quickly.

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro said the shortage of toilet paper was because of rich people and those who are unhappy with the government. He did not say why these people meant the country almost ran out of basic supplies. Economists say the way the government runs the economy led to the shortages. The government keeps prices low for many goods, which means Venezuelan companies find it hard to produce things and make a profit. The price controls also push up inflation because when there is a shortage of something, people will pay a higher price to get it. Venezuela has the highest rate of inflation in Latin America. The current rate is about 25 per cent.

Sources: BBC / Latino Fox News / Huffington Post

Writing

Toilet paper is one of the most important things in life. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

Venezuela / plan / danger / shortages / currency / run out of things / toothpaste / president / unhappy / basic supplies / economy / companies / profit / Latin America

True / False

- Venezuela has found a way to make sure people have toilet paper. T / F
- Most of the shops in Venezuela had no toilet paper to sell. T / F
- Venezuela's government bought 79 million toilet rolls. T / F
- Sometimes people had to wait in line for days to buy toilet paper. T / F
- Venezuela's leader said rich people caused the shortage of toilet paper. T / F
- Economists agreed that rich people's actions led to the shortage. T / F
- It is difficult for many Venezuelan companies to make a profit. T / F
- Venezuela has one of Latin America's lowest rates of inflation. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. come up with | a. use up |
| 2. danger | b. stocks |
| 3. difficulty | c. simple |
| 4. run out of | d. make |
| 5. basic | e. thought of |
| 6. rich | f. present |
| 7. supplies | g. increase |
| 8. produce | h. risk |
| 9. push up | i. wealthy |
| 10. current | j. problems |

Discussion – Student A

- What would you think of your government if there was no toilet paper?
- Is the word "toilet paper" a good word or is there a better word?
- Which is better - white, coloured or patterned toilet paper?
- What's the maximum you would pay for a roll of toilet paper?
- Have you ever had a bad "toilet paper experience"?
- What are the good and bad things about toilet paper?
- What kind of toilet paper might we use in 100 years from now?
- What questions would you like to ask the boss of a toilet paper maker?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. come up | a. in paying for things |
| 2. end the country's | b. runs the economy |
| 3. it has difficulty | c. all they can |
| 4. wait in | d. up inflation |
| 5. They then buy | e. shortage of toilet paper |
| 6. ran out | f. low for many goods |
| 7. the way the government | g. with a plan |
| 8. The government keeps prices | h. about 25 per cent |
| 9. push | i. of basic supplies |
| 10. The current rate is | j. long lines |

Discussion – Student B

- What springs to mind when you hear the word 'toilet paper'?
- How important is toilet paper in our life?
- What do you think of an oil-rich country running low on toilet paper?
- Which is more important, toilet paper or a newspaper?
- Do you think 39 million rolls of toilet paper is enough?
- How long would you wait in line for toilet paper?
- What would you do if you ran out of toilet paper?
- What is the best toilet paper in the world?

Spelling

- Venezuela's geneorvmtn
- it has ifdityfluc in paying for things
- controls on the Venezuelan urcnryce
- decided to spend \$79 nimliol
- thatptoseo and soap
- supermarkets and erasimpcha
- ran out of basic pesulpsi
- sostoecmni say...
- hard to edoucpr things
- make a porfti
- rate of fnnilaoti
- the ruetrnc rate

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. j	4. a	5. c
6. i	7. b	8. d	9. g	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Toilet paper

You think toilet paper is the most essential thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least essential of these (and why): toothbrushes, soap or deodorant.

Role B – Toothbrush

You think toothbrushes are the most essential things. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least essential of these (and why): toilet paper, soap or deodorant.

Role C – Soap

You think soap is the most essential thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least essential of these (and why): toothbrushes, toilet paper or deodorant.

Role D – Deodorant

You think deodorant is the most essential thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least essential of these (and why): toothbrushes, soap or toilet paper.

Speaking - Essentials

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the things you need most at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| • toilet paper | • chocolate |
| • mobile phone | • Internet |
| • toothpaste | • deodorant |
| • bicycle | • music |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.