



Take one  
FREE

# CATALONIA TODAY

BARCELONA, THE BUSINESS & LEISURE CAPITAL OF SOUTHERN EUROPE

N. 49 / FREE

FRIDAY, AUGUST 20, 2004

EDITED IN BARCELONA



**FIVE WEIGHTLIFTERS  
THROWN OUT IN NEW  
DRUG SCANDAL**  
SPORT, 12



**SPAIN POPULATION  
EXPECTED TO RISE TO  
50m BY 2025**  
NEWS, 4

**INSIDE**

NEWS .....	2
OPINION .....	6
CULTURE .....	7
BUSINESS.....	8
SPORT .....	12
WHAT'S ON.....	13

## Catalan tourism goes up 7% despite heavy competition

*Figures contradict fears that visitors are defecting to cheaper destinations*

[www.barcelonahotels.es](http://www.barcelonahotels.es)

**OPINION, 6**

*Issue of drunken  
tourists is  
nothing new*

**EDITORIAL**

### ENO invited to perform at next year's Festival de Peralada

The Festival Castell de Peralada has unveiled its programme for next year after wrapping up this year's successful event which attracted 30,000 spectators to the grounds of the castle in the Alt Empordà. Among those invited to perform next year are the English National Ballet. The organisers said they would also like to stage a performance of the opera *Tosca*. The sell-out show this year was Woody Allen's New Orleans jazz concert, with performances by Paco de Lucia and Bebo Valdés not far behind.

### Spanish banks report net profits up 28% to 4.1bn euros

Spanish banks registered net profits of 4.1 billion euros for the first half of the year, which represents an increase of 28.4 per cent over the same period in 2003. The positive results are due to mainly to an increase in investment credit, cost control and a fall in demand for insolvency resources. The results were also boosted by the weakness of the dollar and Latin American currencies relative to the euro. Profits by the two Spanish giants BBAA and Grupo Santander, represented 79 per cent of the industry total./ Full story page 9



Supporters of the cleric Moqtada al-Sadr take to the streets of Najaf yesterday amid scenes of heavy fighting. / REUTERS

## “We’ll accept anyone who can stop this destruction - even Sharon”

*An eyewitness in Najaf describes the holy city’s descent into hell*

**NEWS, 4**

*Bernstein,  
Hollywood  
composer, dies*



**OBITUARY**

**VOXPOP, 4**

*“The weather is  
a change from  
rainy Leeds”*



**RICHARD MCCRANN**

## Barcelona food fair to open doors to public with tasting samples

*Alimentaria Exhibitions is to launch a trade show at the Fira offering workshops and degustació*

### ALEXLEFF

"Look but don't touch" is often the law of the land in trade shows, limiting visitors to the bounds of negotiation, which can be boring for anyone not directly involved in the sector. But when it comes to food fairs, if stands refuse, or are not allowed, to offer tasting samples, hungry participants are left with frustration and grumbling stomachs. The food fair group Alimentaria Exhibitions plans to keep show-goers in Barcelona content with the launch of a new fair that will be open to the public, and open to tasting as well.

"There is a world of interest in the food industry and Alimentaria management cannot ignore that," Alimentaria Exhibitions general manager Francisco Carrió told reporters yesterday. The organisers of the food company, a conglomerate of Reed Exhibitions Iberia and Fira Barcelona, intend to present a trade show on food with a portion dedicated to products, available to the delight of the public.

There will also be a more entertaining side of the fair, including talks on cooking, getting to know ethnic cuisine produce and kitchen workshops. The show is meant to be a type of urban forum, according to Carrió, aiming to approach the cit-



Alimentaria organised a food fair in the Fira de Barcelona from 8 to 12 March 2004 generating an estimated 2bn euros / O. DURAN

izens more closely, a model that Alimentaria hopes to export to other cities in Spain and around the world. "A fair like the one we want to put together hasn't been done anywhere

before," he says.

Organisers expect to open doors by the end of next year in the Montjuïc 1 expo centre. Alimentaria 2004 put on a trade show in Barce-

lona on 8-12 March, occupying an area of 106,000 square metres, 30 per cent larger than previous fairs. Some 144,000 people visited to look, and talk, but could not taste.

## Kidnap victim freed by police after a four-day ordeal at the hands of two men in a Girona flat

### AGENCIES/RICHARD MCCRANN

Two men who had kidnapped a young American man and held him hostage had demanded 100,000 euros for his release, according to the police. The man was kidnapped last week and held in a flat for four days in Girona before being rescued by the police. The police confirmed that during the man's ordeal, the two kidnapers had demanded money from the father of the boy, a businessman living in Madrid, who owns Tecnologías Inc. After the boy was released he was taken to the Josep Trueta hospital in Girona suffering from cuts and bruises and a wound to his hands where the kidnapers had placed chains.

The police confirmed that the kidnapers had worked previously in a factory belonging to the father of the kidnapped boy. The police said the two Moroccan kidnapers, one aged 49, who lived in Lleida,



The young man was tied by chains to a radiator in a flat in Girona / EFE

Catalonia and the other aged 28, who lived in San Pedro de Alcántara, near Malaga. The police said the boy went missing in Lleida last week af-

ter he went sightseeing in the town. "In the city he made contact with one of the kidnapers who gave him some type of sleeping pill. From that

moment on he cannot remember anything until he was in the flat in Girona," said the police. They confirmed that the young boy had then spoken to his father by telephone saying he had been kidnapped and that the father had to pay 100,000 euros for his release within seven days. The parents of the young man then informed the police about the kidnapping. The police said they tracked down the victim after they spotted the young man's car in Girona train station. "We observed two men open the car and then we arrested them," said the police. One of the men had keys to a flat in Girona, where he had lived for two years. The police entered the flat and discovered the victim tied by his feet to a radiator by chains. He also had his hands tied behind his back. The police confirmed that they also recovered the young man's car, his credit card and mobile telephone.

### LEGIONNAIRES

#### Four cooling towers at Barcelona clinic marked as possible source

Four cooling towers at the Delfos Clinic in Barcelona, that were not previously identified, have been targeted as the most likely root to the outbreak of Legionnaires' that has already affected 27 people in the neighbourhood of Vallcarca, a public health authority reported yesterday. According to Joan Guix, director of the Barcelona Public Health Agency, by testing water samples collected from cooling towers, scientists found that four of them were contaminated with the bacteria that causes Legionnaires' disease.

### MOUNTAINEER DEAD

#### Catalan climber falls to death

They were known as the best team on K2, and so the mountain had to keep one of them. Manel de la Matta did not survive the Magic Line climb. K2 Magic Line 2004 expedition confirmed the death of Manel de la Matta yesterday morning in Camp 1. His climbing mates sent the following report, published on MountEverest.net: "Today, August 19th 2004, we have to report the sad news of team member Manel de la Matta passing away this morning in Camp 1, on Negrotto Col (6400m). He was on his way back down from K2. Manel has been the main supporting-force in the team, and we dedicate our success to him, for ever and ever."

### RUBBISH

#### Levels of garbage unchanged

The amount of rubbish generated by the residents of Barcelona did not decrease in 2003 compared to the previous year. Figures show that each person in the city was responsible for producing 1.44 kilos of rubbish each day in 2003, which was the same amount in 2002. The city accumulated 1,661,481 tons of waste in 2003 which was an increase of 3.16 per cent compared to the year before. On the other hand, the efforts by Barcelona town hall to improve separating different types of rubbish has shown an improvement by 33 per cent compared to 2002.

### BLACK MARKET

#### Police crack down on illegal CD and DVD sales in Barcelona

The Barcelona city police have confiscated some 213,000 CDs and 35,972 DVDs in the last six months in an effort to crack down on pirating and black market sales. On the trail of illegal film and music dealers, Guàrdia Urbana police have picked a total close to four thousand people selling in Barcelona. The number of DVDs found is a significant leap from last year's figure, which did not reach the hundreds. In 2003, around 2,225 people were stopped on the street for selling CDs on the black market, and 146,466 discs were confiscated. This year the police have made over 14 arrests for illegal sales.

# A modest homage to the highs and lows of an historic biking path

*The green trail now used for bicycling and walking was once a little railway that has been forgotten since its demise under the dictatorship*

## JOSEF BOSCH

Precious as human life is, sometimes a monument is even more valuable and can have far greater historical significance. Its destruction is even more regrettable.

I was pondering this recently while watching the reconstructed ancient bridge over the river Neretva in Mostar, in Bosnia Herzegovina, originally built in 1566. For centuries the bridge linked two different ethnic communities, the Croats and the Muslims of that former Yugoslav republic.

Its savage destruction in 1993 by the Croat army during the war was a symbol of hatred because it wanted to deny the possibility of harmony and unity between those two communities. On the other hand, the recently finished reconstruction, undertaken by the international community, through UNESCO and the World Bank, and celebrated by Croats and Muslims alike, was an important milestone in reconciliation in that part of the world.

The bridge was not only a major example of technological advance at the time of its construction, it made trade flourish, it united people, it was beautiful. It took many people many years to build. It took a single tank shell to finally destroy it. When it fell the world lost part of its heritage. But now people can cross it again.

Do I care more about a bridge than about thousands of people who died during that war? My point is that a bridge, its construction, its use, means more than one person. It represents many people, several generations, in fact.

## THE BUDDHAS OF BAMIAN

I also thought of the Buddhas of Bamian, the 1700-year-old carved sculptures in Central Afghanistan which were dynamited by the fanatic Taliban regime in March 2001 because they were considered idolatrous sculptures which offended Muslims.

Also in this case, the world did not care more about the destroyed monument than about the suffering people of Afghanistan as somebody said. But that monument had a special significance, and was painstakingly built over many years. Pilgrims went there to pray, it symbolised a culture, a religion, it was as though thousands of lives converged at that sacred space.

Its destruction, another example of fanatical hatred for symbols of other people's religion and culture was the beginning of the end of the

Taliban regime. Fortunately there is now a plan to rebuild what was recklessly destroyed.

## PEDALLING ALONG THE CARRILET

I had all this on my mind while leisurely pedalling the other day along the biking path which once was a small railway line spanning 40 kilometres from Girona to Sant Feliu de Guixols, in Central Costa Brava, a favourite biking and jogging trail for locals and tourists alike.

The railway line, "El Carrilet" (The little rail) as people used to call it, was built in 1892. At the time, it was a gigantic leap into the future, it took a lot of effort and meant a lot to people in the region. Families used the little train to visit friends, to go on excursions and occasionally to the beach in those days when this was an oddity. Significantly, merchandise was moving briskly in the new trade lines open from the coast to the interior, industries flourished, the economy was moving along.

The Carrilet became an impor-

**Townspeople came from all over with tears and flowers to bid farewell to the last train to ever leave a station on the Carrilet line**

tant part in the life of the community. When the railway line opened, the newspapers saluted the heroes of the day, the visionaries who made it possible and invested their money, their lives and in some cases their health in the project. Long live progress was the headline in the newspapers.

Then, years later, when a dictatorial regime took hold of Spain and the political and economic decisions were taken in the capital, far away, with little regard for local concerns and sensitivities, the little Carrilet, the railway line which once was a sign of progress and almost devotion by the local community, started its decline, unable and prevented from competing with more modern means of transportation. There were unheeded plans to modernise: What about investing some money and building a fast line from Girona to Sant Feliu to free up traffic on the roads? How about modernising its infrastructure and links? Why not bring in electricity? No way.

The Carrilet died one cold evening in 1969, victim to the apathy and deafness of bureaucrats faraway if not as a punishment for unknown sins of people not so enthusiastic for the prevailing regime.

The last day, thousands of people from towns all along the line went to bid their final farewell to the Carrilet, some crying, some with their children, others with flowers. The little train was an old puffing machine which had earned the love of the people.

I remember the station master of one of the stations the last day picking up the telephone and telling the following station with a chilling matter-of-fact routine for the last time: El tren ha sortit (The train has departed).

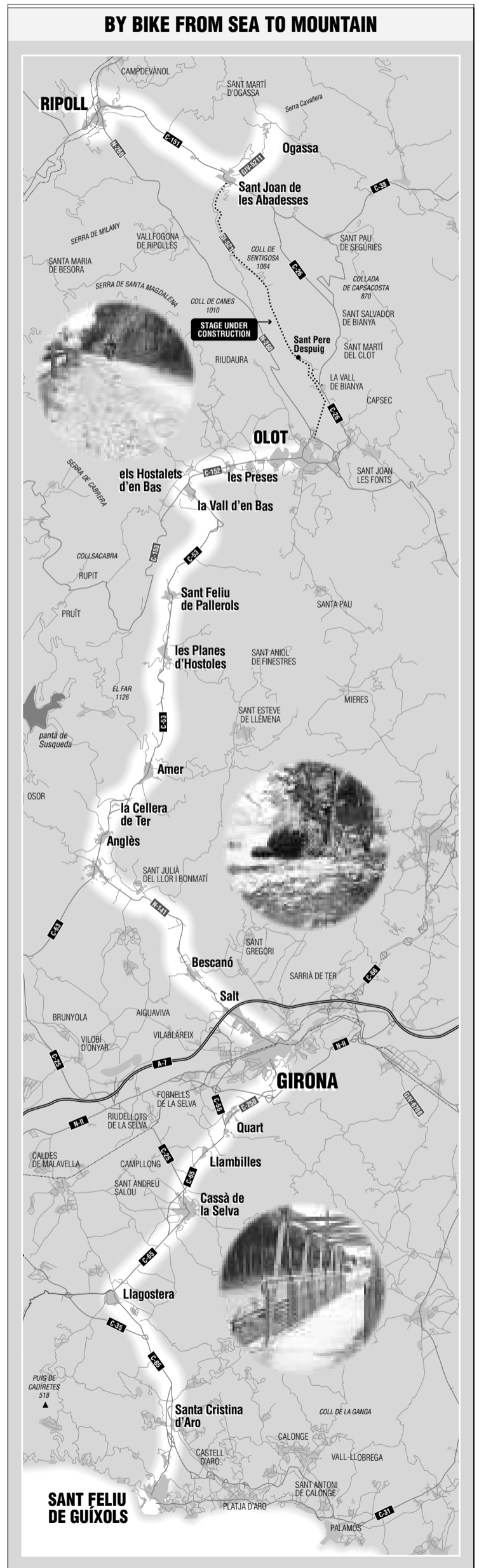
The following day the censored newspapers didn't even carry the news of El Carrilet's demise. The dictatorial authorities were too embarrassed to even consider a justification for the crime. There was none.

Years later, when democracy came back and politicians were nearer to the concerns of the people and wanted to do things for them as opposed to trying only to perpetuate a hated regime, it was too late to rebuild the disappeared railway line. Instead, local governments along the line gathered together and decided to join efforts to use the path left by it to make a green route for bikers and joggers. This time the new democratic authorities in Madrid were also ready to chip in. And they did.

Now the old Carrilet line is a celebrated and busy path where people of all nationalities and ages enjoy a beautiful and gentle cycling ride or a promenade. It undergoes regular and reasonable maintenance and after almost ten years of use there are even improvements in some areas, more so at both ends than in the middle. Traffic safety remains to be a primary issue. Around Cassà de la Selva a little effort should be made to keep the path steady and properly signalled. Still, a major improvement would be to give the path absolute right of way except for few major road crossings.

Now it's like the Carrilet lives again, its path, now without sleepers, without the puffing and weaselling of the old cracking steam engines and shaking cars, it's again for people to enjoy. And as in the old Carrilet, strangers greet each other.

It would be a real shame if its level of maintenance and care, by both its users and by the authorities concerned, were not always at its best.



## The Magnificent Seven and Far From Heaven amongst hit scores

14-times Oscar nominated Hollywood composer Elmer Bernstein dies

### REUTERS

Elmer Bernstein, whose eclectic film music ranged from the rousing theme of *The Magnificent Seven* to the lighthearted *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, for which he won an Oscar, died on Wednesday, aged 82, at his home in California. Bernstein wrote more than 200 major film and television scores in a career that began in the 1950s. His last major score, a lush evocation of '50s melodrama, for Todd Hayne's *Far From Heaven* (2002) secured the last of his 14 Oscar nominations. His indelible theme for 1960's *The Magnificent Seven* is quoted in Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* and inevitably evokes a laugh of recognition from audiences. His last project was a documentary on Cecil B. DeMille in which he revisited his *Ten Commandments*' style and adapted some early silent film scores.

Bernstein's enormous range took him from the jazz-influenced *The Man With the Golden Arm* (1954), through sweeping epics like *The Ten Commandments* (1956), with all its biblical sound and fury, to intimate Americana like 1962's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. His Western fare included John Wayne's last seven films, among them: *True Grit* and



Bernstein wrote more than 200 film and TV scores during his career

*The Shootist*. In the '70s and '80s, he was frequently sought out by a new generation of filmmakers including John Landis and Ivan Reitman who had been raised on his films and who invited him to score comedies like *National Lampoon's Animal House*, *Airplane!*, *Stripes* and *Ghostbusters*.

Projects with Martin Scorsese included *Cape Fear*, *The Age of Innocence* and *Bringing Out the Dead*.

Bernstein, who won a piano scholarship aged 12, was a respected concert pianist before starting out in Hollywood with the 1951 sports drama *Saturday's Hero* (1951).

## Spanish population set to top the 50 million mark in next 25 years

### MADELEINE SHEAHAN

Spain's population will exceed 50 million by 2025 and reach 53m by 2050. Projections by the National Institute of Statistics show a steady growth until after midway through the century, after which a process of decline will begin.

The Institute says the fundamental cause of Spain's demographic growth is immigration, which is also boosting the birth rate and is described as the "overwhelming feature" of population change. The Institute says that the relative youth of the immigrant population will go some way towards slowing the trend of an ageing population, but will not stop it. In fact, in coming decades, the proportion of over-65s will almost double, relative to the total population, from 16.8 per cent to 30.85% by 2050. Conversely the percentage of 0-15-year-olds will reduce from 15.6 in 2005 to 13.9 in 2070 and the percentage of 16 to 64-year-olds will drop from 67.6 to 57.8 in the same period.

The results show that, as the century advances, life expectancy will increase by four years for men and three for women and the birth rate will increase from 1.2 to 1.5 children

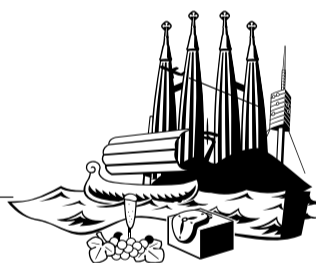
per woman. Life expectancy for men, 77 years in 2002, will reach 81 in 2030, while for women it will rise from 83 to 87 years.

### Sex Habits

The Institute has carried out a separate survey which shows that less than half of all Catalan women, and under a fifth of the men, have had only one sexual partner in their lives. At the other end of the scale, 26 per cent of men, but only six per cent of women, claim to have had ten or more partners.

The survey on "Health and Sexual Habits" reveals a near equality between the sexes among those Catalans who have had three or four sexual partners, as is the case with 22 per cent of men and 20 per cent of women. For residents of the Balearics, this group shows no gender difference at all, with 16 per cent across the board falling into the category. They are also the most promiscuous population in Spain, with 39 per cent of men and eight per cent of women laying claim to ten or more sexual partners, against a national average of 21 and four, respectively.

The Institute questioned 18 to 49 year olds for the survey.



## Vox Pop

By Richard McCrann

David and Judith Engineer and teacher from England

## City woos couple from Yorkshire

"When I saw the Sagrada Família it was stunning, it was like the wow factor, I was bowled over," said Judith. She and her husband had come to Barcelona for a four day break. Judith admitted that they did not want to spend too much time away from their two teenage sons back in Leeds. "Visiting Barcelona was a cheap practical option for us. It gave us time to have a really pleasant break in a lovely city without having to spend too much time away from home," said Judith. It was their first holiday in Barcelona and neither were disappointed with the city. "It really did live up to our expectations. The weather was perfect, such a change from rainy Leeds, and the food and culture was very good," they said. The Maritime museum topped their list of favourite places in the city, followed by the Sagrada

Família, the stunning view of the city from Montjuic and a bus tour. However, David was very disappointed that he was unable to find a cafe that sold a decent cup of tea! They also had a bad experience with a street thief. "I nearly had my bag stolen outside the Sagrada Família. I was very lucky as I chased the thief down the street but he dropped the bag going into a metro station. I was so relieved as it contained our passports and money," said Judith. They found the many markets in the city a delight and spent several afternoons buying a selection of goods. "We thought the variety in the markets was amazing and we bought garlic, nuts and peaches," said David. They said they would recommend Barcelona to their friends in Leeds but were not sure if they would return in the future.



David and Judith enjoyed their cheap holiday

## They love the outdoors

David and Judith Kirwin are from Leeds, England. David, 58, is a refrigeration engineer and Judith, 53, is a school teacher. They have two teenage boys. They both enjoy travelling and sampling other cultures and places. They take several holidays each year. Their best memories are from the West Indies, Hong Kong and India. It was their first visit to Barcelona where they spent four days (10-13 August) indulging themselves in the culture. Back in Yorkshire they love the outdoors and their hobbies include walking, cycling and hunting.

### DAVID AND JUDITH'S RATING FROM ZERO TO TEN

Cleanliness of city	7
Value for money of services	8
Noise levels	7
Public safety	5
Information	7
Treatment of tourists	6
Friendliness of local people	9



US forces have intensified their tough stance against Sadr's rebel militias as hopes for peace evaporate / AP

## “Look at this hell” Najaf

Residents desperate for “any leader who can stop this destruction”

### MICHAEL GEORGY in Najaf, Iraq

Residents of the bloodied city of Najaf want peace so badly that some will take any leader who can stabilise Iraq - even one hated across the Arab world.

“Give us anyone who can stop this destruction. We don't care who it is or where he comes from. We will even accept an Israeli, even (Prime Minister) Ariel Sharon,” said Abdullah Sultan, an unemployed 50-year-old resident of Najaf. “We are caught right in the middle of the fighting. Look at my neighbour's house. A mortar landed here. It must stop.” Talk of Sharon leading Iraqis could get someone lynched in this fiercely anti-Israeli country. It shows just how desperate some have become. After two weeks of fighting between militiamen loyal to firebrand Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and U.S. marines, Najaf's people were doubtful that signs of a possible end to battles would silence menacing guns and mortars.

The conference which chose a national assembly said Sadr had agreed to government terms to end the crisis but both sides soon set conditions and U.S. officials talked of tough measures to stamp out Sadr's rebellion. In Baghdad, U.S. forces overran on Thursday the city's mainly Shi'ite suburb of Sadr City, a powerbase for the radical cleric, witnesses said.

In Najaf, fighting had continued overnight after the possible breakthrough was announced and snipers and artillery gunners began firing again on Thursday morning as a few Iraqis ventured out to the streets to test the mood.

### FAITH IN LEADERS LOST

Most were sceptical, especially peo-



Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr demanded US truce before dismantling army / REUTERS

ple like Talib Moussa, a 35-year-old labourer pointing to a large shell hole in a house. “What peace? I don't believe it. Look at this hell,” he said. When interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi began heading Iraq's interim government in late June, Iraqis thought his background as a member of Saddam Hussein's toppled Baath Party would enable him to crush insurgents and criminals shaking the country. Aside from suicide bombings and kidnappings, he has yet to end Sadr's stubborn rebellion that is posing the biggest challenge yet to his government.

Confidence in Allawi was not felt along the battered alleyways of Najaf, a city that is sacred to millions of Shi'ites around the world and crucial for Iraq's stability as the centre of power for the country's majority sect.

A few Iraqis trickled to the small section of a market while keeping an eye on American tanks down the

street as snipers in Sadr's Mehdi Army militia sporadically squeezed the trigger.

Khayriyya Moulid, a tired elderly woman in a black veil, sat on a street littered with brick fragments hoping to sell a few cups of milk. Nobody was buying. “If God is willing he will help us,” she said, pointing to the sky.

As a tense Najaf waited to see if Sadr's militiamen would give in to demands to leave the Imam Ali shrine they are holed up in, some Iraqis took refuge in humour to cope with the uncertainty. “I have a satellite dish. When I see European countries I feel so sad for Iraq,” said labourer Jassim Abboud, 47. “At least I have those channels now. In the old days we only had access to news coverage of Saddam and his family. They informed us when he was going to the bathroom.”

His neighbours laughed, something rare in Najaf.

## Leukaemia risk grows 400% near gas stations

### REUTERS

Living near a petrol station can quadruple the risk of acute leukaemia in children according to research published yesterday.

A study by French scientists, published in the Occupational and Environmental Magazine, found that a child whose home was near a petrol station or vehicle repair garage was four times as likely to develop leukaemia as a child whose home was further away. And the longer the child lived near the station, the high-

er the risk seemed to be.

Few clear risk factors have been identified in the childhood variant, but exposure to benzene in the workplace has been identified as a possible factor in leukaemia in adults, say the authors of the study.

The risk seemed to be even greater for acute non-lymphoblastic leukaemia (cancer of a particular type of bone marrow cell), which was seven times more common among children living close to a petrol station or garage, the research showed.

## A-levels up again but “no fall in standards”

A-level results are up again in the UK and show that boys are starting to catch up with higher-achieving girls. The pass rate has crept up to 96 percent with 22.4 per cent of entrants receiving an A grade. Examiners, head teachers and education ministers were yesterday unanimous in rejecting claims that the 22nd consecutive improvement was the result of easier exams.

“Don't let anyone tell you that standards have dropped because

more of you have done well. This is simply a myth,” Schools Standards minister, David Milliband, told BBC Radio 4's Today Programme. Milliband criticised the “national disease” of cynicism about improved exam results.

Better grades are forcing universities to look at new ways of distinguishing between the best. One idea is to get students to write an extended essay; another is to make individual scores available.

**Free entrance with CATALONIA TODAY**

We have free tickets for the first 10 emails received at [contact@cataloniatoday.info](mailto:contact@cataloniatoday.info)

ART I UTOPIA

L'acció restringida

3 juny - 12 setembre 2004

**MAC BA**

Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

Plaça dels Àngels, 1  
08001 Barcelona  
Tel. 93 412 08 10  
Fax. 93 412 06 02  
www.macba.es

**Forum BARCELONA 2004**

EPSON

el Periódico

33

BnF

## EDITORIAL

*Lloret's summer demons*

**S**tatements by the minister of the interior, Montserrat Tura, declaring that Lloret de Mar's problems were not about policing but due to "drunken tourism" have caused quite a stir and for the last two days has set the whole of the tourist sector on the warpath. It does seem at first glance that the minister's opinions are not only tough but also brave, especially as she has expressed them in the middle of high season and just when the sector is supposed to be rethinking its approach and getting its act together. Yet let's not kid ourselves, the minister is hardly saying anything new, and let's face it, finding a solution has been a priority for a while now for the local authorities and the Catalan government. For more than ten years the Lloret town council - trapped between an excessive supply of hotel accommodation and its dependence on the big travel companies - has been trying to work out a different tourist model for the seaside resort. It seems that the most likely solution is to be found in quiet, behind-the-scenes work along with the consensus of all concerned and not through dramatic and theatrical public declarations of the type we've been hearing from all sides this week. The unfortunate spectacle of fighting in the media spotlight does little more than once more awaken the very same demons that appear every summer and that are never fully exorcised.

Lloret is not the only point on the Catalan coast where this type of tourism can be found, and it is just not true that there's nothing to be done. Current legislation allows the closing, albeit temporarily, of those establishments that do not fulfil the law. What's more, the local authority is also allowed some limited leeway in setting up its own control on the growth of tourism. What does not help the situation is the farce of the government blaming the hoteliers, the hoteliers blaming the agencies, and the agencies shrugging it off as the law of supply and demand. This is not to say it should be considered a taboo subject that cannot be discussed (although over the years it's quite possibly been talked about too much), simply that we should try to stop harping on without doing anything and act quickly (and on certain levels something is already being done). However, you can't help thinking that next summer the same subject will raise its ugly head once more.

*The most likely solution is to be found in quiet, behind the scenes work*

## THE STING BY JAP



Published by Catalonia Today SL. Tàpies, 2. Barcelona 08001. Tel +34 932 276 620 / Fax +34 932 276 621. email: contact@cataloniatoday.info.

Diposit Number GI-322-2004

ADVERTISING: +34 932 276 620. advertising@cataloniatoday.info SUBSCRIPTION: +34 932 276 620. subscription@cataloniatoday.info

Managing Editor: Carles Puigdemont. Editor: Stephen Burgen. Sub Editor: Michael Bunn. Editorial Staff: Alex Leff, Richard McCrann, Robert Kimpton, Marcela Topor. Editorial Consultant: Miquel Berga. Printed by IMPRINTSA

## COMMENTARY

STEPHEN BURGEN

*Is this Barça the new dream team?*

**W**ith less than a fortnight to go before the minor distraction of the Olympics ends and the football season begins, there is an air of expectation in Barcelona that has been difficult to detect in recent seasons. Of course, there is always expectation - Barça *always* expects - but it was based more on faith than any belief that they were going to win anything. Four seasons without a trophy, not even a Copa de Catalunya, things could not go on like this.

Suddenly everything looks brighter, thanks largely to the election last year of Joan Laporta as club president. Laporta is a fan and a lawyer, Joan Gaspart, his predecessor was a fan and a businessman, and yet the two could hardly be more different. Gaspart was a disaster, a show-off and a spendthrift. He blew the millions he got from selling Luis Figo on a succession of overpriced under-achievers, most of whom Laporta has now disposed of and whose legacy lives on only in the form of enormous debt.

While Gaspart desperately wanted to be the man who discovered the next Maradona, Laporta - aided by his deputy Sandro Rossell - has been more circumspect. Yes he has bought Brazilians, but only ones that have a proven record in Europe and not some kid being talked up by



Laporta presidential style is discreet compared to his recent predecessors. / EFE

an agent from Rio.

It started with Ronaldinho, who singlehandedly brought joy to the fans with the beauty and audacity of his play. After a second dose of the grey pragmatism of Louis van Gaal, watching Ronaldinho was like

dreaming in colour. Now with Deco and Samuel Eto'o on the books (both obligingly scored on their debut) and Barça back in the Champions League, maybe Barça's unfulfilled dreams are at last about to come true.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A suggestion

I am a Swedish citizen who has lived in Barcelona for only a few years. I work in an international company that has its offices in Catalonia and for the last few weeks I've been reading your newspaper. I find it interesting and very useful for people like myself. For this reason, I would like to make a suggestion that could improve your publication and help it to connect better with the readers. Why don't you carry out a number of votes to find out the opinions of foreigners who live here on the level of integration or the treatment we receive from the public authorities as well as from the natives? Speaking for myself, I would like to be able to

express my opinion in a way that is easier and quicker than a letter to the editor. In any case, congratulations and keep it up! **Simon Waldner** (Barcelona)

Barcelona waiters have to improve!

I share the opinions of tourists published in your newspaper about the attitude of Barcelona waiters towards foreign visitors. It would not be fair to generalise, as admittedly there are waiters who are perfectly professional. However, the truth is that the wonderful days I spent in your city were spoilt not a little by rude, unprofessional waiters who rarely spoke much English. I believe

that Barcelona waiters need to change their attitudes towards foreign visitors. **Albert Egerton** (Lancaster)

## Fed up with the Games

What are the Olympics? A festival of money that is forced on us who don't like sport and who don't get even a euro out of the spectacle. It seems that all countries agree that the Games are necessary and useful for promoting peace(?). That's fine. But why do we have to come across the Games every five minutes on the TV, in the newspapers, on the radio and on the internet. Is nothing else interesting happening in the world? **Laura Pujol** (Barcelona)

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:** Letters to the editor must not be longer than 30 lines long and must include your name and telephone number. We can only accept letters written in English and delivered by email. Catalonia Today reserves the right to publish and edit readers' letters. Catalonia Today, C/Tàpies, 2, 08001 Barcelona. Email: letters@cataloniatoday.info



Scenes from Manuel de Falla's *The Three-Cornered Hat* which concluded this year's Festival de Peralada. The event has been hailed as a success after attracting 30,000 spectators. / EDUALD PICAS

# Peralada 2004 hailed a success

*On the back of this season's record ticket sales, English National Ballet are to be given star-billing at next year's festival*

## LAURA PORTAL/NEIL STOKES

The English National Ballet are set to bring their version of Puccini's *Tosca* to the Peralada festival next year according to its director, José Luis López de la Madrid. He was expressing his satisfaction at the success of this year's festival which over the last two months has attracted 30,000 spectators. The Festival Castell de Peralada near Girona, which has been running since 1987, this year sold out 60% of the performan-

ces which included orchestras, operas and dance.

On the back of this year's success, the organisers are eager to bring in more top international acts such as the English National Ballet company: "We are keen to do *Tosca*. We'd really like bring over great singers and do this opera," said López de la Madrid. He also committed the festival to the challenge of continuing to mount their own productions after the success of the likes of *Dalid-*

*ance* this season.

In fact dance productions proved highly popular this summer, especially *The Three Cornered Hat* and *El café de Chinitas* which finished off the festival. According to López de la Madrid this last was, "the biggest show this year," and included backdrops and costumes by Dalí never before seen in Europe.

Among the musical acts, by far the biggest seller was Woody Allen and his New Orleans Jazz Band at

the beginning of August, which saw tickets sell out almost immediately. Nevertheless, in terms of seats sold, the Cuban Bebo Valdés, Flamenco star Paco de Lucía and Joan Manel Serrat were not far behind. The festival also delivered in its commitment to staging operas with four major productions: *Madame Butterfly*, Janáček's *The Makropulos Case*, a departure with the National Opera House of Beijing's production *The Goddess of Luo River*, and

the contemporary *1714-Món de guerres*.

The Peralada festival takes place in the well-preserved village of the same name with its castle and renaissance palace. The festival dating from 1987 holds events in the open air auditorium seating 1,550 or the gothic church that can accommodate 400 spectators. Member of the European Festival Association since 1992, the festival's main aim is to give support to Spanish performers.

## Schubert festival pays tribute to victims of 11 March atrocity

### AGENCIES/NEIL STOKES

The 12th Schubert festival in Vilabertrán near Figueres opens next Friday with the world premiere of *Madrid, 11 de marzo. Elegía para cuerdas* from the composer Jordi Cervelló. This work is Cervelló's tribute to the victims of the Madrid terrorist tragedy and will be performed by the Czech Orchestra Virtuosi di Praga in the Romanic church of Santa Maria. Catalan composer Cervelló began the piece the day after the attacks and took only two days to complete it.

The Schubert festival, which has

seven concerts scheduled, opens today with the Czech ensemble and closes on 10 September. The closing concert will feature the soprano Juliane Banse after a two year absence. Also the baritone, Christian Gerhager will be offering a variety of German "Lied" songs. This focus on the traditional German form accompanies the customary course organised by professor Wolfram Rieger.

Vilabertrán is the summer home of this festival held twice a year. More information can be found on the web site: [www.girona.intercom..es/ccf/schubert](http://www.girona.intercom..es/ccf/schubert).



The Sestetto di Roma, who will be among the featured performers at the 12th Schubert festival at Vilabertrán

# Number of tourists goes up despite doubts about Costa Brava tourism

*Catalonia has already received 7.2 million tourists in 2004, a 7.2% increase*

## AGENCIES

Despite the war declared on the so-called booze tourism and the worries about the touristic model in Catalonia and Spain, the number of visitors has increased in the first seven months of 2004. Catalonia has had 7.2 million visitors until the end of July, a 7.2% increase in comparison to last year's figures. The average increase in Spain for the same period has been 4.1%, totalling 47.6 million visitors, according to the results of a survey on border touristic flow. Following Catalonia, the Spanish region with the highest visitor turnout was the Canary Islands, with 5.7 million people. However, in this case that figure represents a 5.7% decrease compared to the same period in 2003. In contrast, Madrid is the region with the most significant advance, with a 15.5% increase.

Of the total number of incoming people, 63% are tourists (i.e. people who spend at least one night in the country), Pedro Mejía, Spanish Junior Minister of Tourism and Commerce told a press conference. This figure represents a 1.9% increase in respect to the number of tourists that visited Spain between January and July in 2003. As for the revenues, "according to the last data released by Banco de España -Spain's central bank-, the turnover has gone up by 1.4% during the first five months of 2004, reaching 12.95 billion euros," stated Mejía. This data lead to the conclusion that



Tourists gather in Castell beach, Palamós, in search of what they always want: sun and sea / ALBERT VILAR

"there is no downturn in tourism in Spain, but a time of doubt. There is definitely no crisis in the industry," he added.

As for the means of transportation used by the international tourists, 21.9 million arrived by plane, going up by 3.3%, mainly due to the traffic increase of low-fare airlines, which have experienced a 31.5% increment compared to 2003.

## The golden eggs may be lost

The Spanish secretary of Tourism and Commerce Martínez Fraile criticised Catalan Interior Minister Montserrat's insinuation that some Spanish tourist resorts promote booze tourism, and that people come to Spain only to drink themselves into a stupor.

He said such statements were "exaggerated" and could harm the tourism sector. "Those kinds of statements could end up killing the goose that laid the golden egg—they could be fatal for the tourism industry", he said during a press conference yesterday.

# Google shares rise by eighteen per cent in first minutes on stock market in anticipated debut

## REUTERS, NEWYORK

Shares of Google Inc. rose 18 per cent to \$100.51 in the first minutes of their Nasdaq stock market debut yesterday, priced far below initial estimates after the year's most anticipated initial public offering. Google executives, guarded tightly by security, were at the stock market's broadcasting facility in Manhattan to mark the start of the trading session.

After ending its unconventional auction to price and sell the shares on Wednesday, Google priced the shares at \$85, the bottom of a lowered pricing range. The IPO, which raised \$1.67 billion, was hit by a string of missteps and lackluster

market conditions. A few minutes before the shares officially opened for trading, the market saw a false start when the shares appeared to debut at \$136. But a Nasdaq official said this was the result of two trades that "should not have gone through." Nasdaq declined to comment further.

On Wednesday, Google slashed the expected price range on the shares to between \$85 and \$95, down from a previous range of \$108 to \$135. It also cut the number of shares offered to 19.6 million from 25.7 million. One fund manager said this might invigorate investor interest, and that he might buy Google shares in the next few days.



The Nasdaq MarketSite screen announces Google's public offering / REUTERS

## OIL PRICES

### New Irak violence spurs oil prices to new record high

Oil prices hit a fresh record yesterday, spurred higher by renewed violence in Iraq and fresh evidence that strong demand growth in China and India has not been slowed yet by higher energy costs. US light crude rose 53 cents to \$47.80 a barrel, a new record, and London Brent gained 51 cents to \$43.54 a barrel. US prices have set record peaks in all but one of the past 15 trading sessions and are up more than \$10.50 a barrel, 28 percent, since the end of June. Attacks by Iraqi rebels saw mortars kill five at a Najaf police station and a domestic oil pipeline in the north blown up. Mortars also hit the Green Zone compound in Baghdad housing Iraq's interim government. Rising world oil demand has left little slack in the system to cope with outages in Iraq where Shi'ite militia have said they will target oil infrastructure if US forces do not leave the holy city of Najaf. Iraq's main southern pipeline from the Basra oilfields has been shut since a sabotage attack on Aug. 9, curbing export flows to about a million barrel daily, half normal rates, through a secondary line. "The situation in Basra is still deemed too dangerous to operate the line, although head-quarter employees returned to work today and events in Najaf are encouraging," a South Oil Company official yesterday. Demand growth in emerging economies China and India has shaken up the oil market this year, intensifying competition for supply with established consuming giants such as the United States.

## HOUSING

### UK prices fall 2 per cent

House asking prices fell a non-seasonally adjusted 2 per cent in the five weeks to mid-August, property website Rightmove says, supporting a growing view that the market may now be cooling. Interest rates, which have risen 1.25 per cent since November, were blamed for pushing average asking prices down to 192,335 pounds on August 14 from 196,198 pounds on July 10. The residential property market is a key economic indicator in a country where two-thirds of people own their home. "The Bank of England can't raise the cost of borrowing five times in nine months without something happening," Rightmove commercial director Miles Shipside said yesterday. "While it took much longer than people expected, it's now hitting the housing market at the sharp end—and asking prices have been declining in each of the last five weeks." The Bank of England, which in recent months had expressed concern about runaway house price inflation, last week said there were tentative signs of a slowdown, after a number of surveys pointed to this.



# Spanish banking industry's first half profits increase by 28.4%

Giants BBVA and Grupo Santander account for bulk of positive results

**EFE**  
Spanish banks registered net profits of 4.1 billion euros for the first half of the year, which represents an increase of 28.4 per cent over the same period in 2003, according to figures released yesterday by the Banking Association of Spain.

The positive results are due mostly to an increase in investment credit, cost control and a lessened need for resources for insolvency and amortisations. The industry's results were also bolstered by the weakness of the dollar and Latin American currencies relative to the euro, although less than in previous periods. Profits earned by the two Spanish giants BBVA and Grupo Santander, who earned a total of 3.3 billion euros, represented 79 per cent of the industry total.

The extraordinarily high 48 per cent growth in profits obtained by Santander most strongly affected the industry result. Intermediary profits were at 10.5 billion euros from January to June, an increase of 7.1 per cent over the first semester of 2003.

The strength of the industry is



BBVA and Grupo Santander earned a combined total profit of 3.3 billion euros in the first half of this year / ARCHIVES

also reflected in an increase in income from commissions of 8.2 per cent, reaching a total of 5 billion euros. On the downside, the results for financial and foreign exchange operations decreased by 25.9 per cent.

The combination of these two figures produced ordinary profits of 16.3 billion euros, 5 per cent higher than the 15.5 billion euros earned in the same period last year.

Spanish banks were able to con-

trol their expenses in the first half of the year. Administration costs, including payroll and other expenses related to office operation, only increased by 2.1 per cent for a total of 7.7 billion euros.

## Banco Atlántico records loss after Banc Sabadell merger

**EFE**  
Banco Atlántico has lost 115 million euros in the first half of 2004 because of expenses related to its merger with Banc Sabadell. The Catalan bank bought Atlántico for 1.5 billion euros at the beginning of the year.

The losses are largely due to extraordinary expenses of 222 million euros that were spent to create a merger fund, which is to be used for redundancy payouts resulting from staff reductions. About 400-500 job losses are expected, according to sources in the financial sector.

Banc Sabadell sources said that the transaction has generated a commercial fund of 830 million euros after Banco Atlántico made a provision for the total costs of the merger.



eu  
european university  
CENTER FOR MANAGEMENT STUDIES

**BBA - MBA Programs**

Ganduxer, 70 - 08021 Barcelona  
info.bcn@euruni.edu - Tel. 932018171  
WWW.EURUNI.EDU

871018/593710B



ADMINISTRACIÓN  
GENERAL DEL ESTADO

Generalitat  
de Catalunya

Ajuntament  
de Barcelona

# Discover the new Barcelona!

Don't miss **your chance** to get involved in the first edition of a **unique event**.

**May 9 to September 26**

© Forum Barcelona 2004 - M. Costa

Barcelona is host to a major international gathering: **Forum Barcelona 2004**, an event based on an extensive program of **large-scale performances**, extraordinary **exhibitions** and a wide array of activities in a **unique setting**.

[www.barcelona2004.org](http://www.barcelona2004.org)

**Come Now!**

**Forum  
BARCELONA  
2004**

870579/603012P



STOCK MARKET

INVESTMENT FUNDS

Table of investment funds with columns: Fund, NAV, M.Yld%, YTD%. Includes sections for AHORRO CORPORACIÓN, BANCO POPULAR, BANCO SABADELL, BANKINTER, BANKPYME, BBVA, CAIXA CATALUNYA, and CAIXA GIRONA.

Table of investment funds with columns: Fund, NAV, M.Yld%, YTD%. Includes sections for CAIXA LAIETANA, CAIXA PENEDÉS, CAIXA TARRAGONA, CAIXA TERRASA, CAJA MADRID, CAJA MANRESA, CAM (CAJA DEL MEDITERRANEO), DEUTSCHE BANK, GAESCO, and IBERCAJA.

Table of investment funds with columns: Fund, NAV, M.Yld%, YTD%. Includes sections for FONCAIXA, MAPFRE, MORGAN STANLEY, and SCH.

EURO STOXX 50 Close: 2.630,71 Chg: 0,13%

Table of Euro Stoxx 50 components with columns: Stock, Euros, Chg.%, Stock, Euros, Chg.%. Lists companies like Abn Amro, Aegon, Air Liquide, Alcatel Altshom, Allianz AG, etc.

CURRENCIES AND INTEREST RATES

Table of currencies and interest rates. Includes sections for Currency per Euro, MORTGAGE INTEREST RATE (with 2004 Avg Rate), and MIBOR (with Termini, Mitjà, Màxim, Mínim).

SPANISH STOCKS IN THE WORLD

Table of Spanish stocks in the world with columns: Stock, Last, Min. Year, Max. Year, Prev. Close. Includes sections for New York, Paris, and Frankfurt.

METALS

Table of metals prices with columns: Basic Metals \$/Tm., Market, Price. Includes sections for Basic Metals, Precious Metals \$/ounce, and Crude Oil (euros).

Source: Morgan Stanley. Tel.: 901 11 64 31



Now Relax

At Morgan Stanley we keep on working for your peace of mind

Delegació a Girona: Av. Sant Francesc, 19, 2º. 17001 Girona. Tel. 972 41 61 50. www.morganstanley.es

1680075974421

ΑΘΗΝΑ  2004 

## Doping again casts shadow over Olympics

*Five weightlifters have been banned from competition after failing drugs tests*

Five weightlifters were banned from the Olympics after failing drugs tests, officials said yesterday, as doping scandals continued to dominate the first week of the Games. Host nation Greece has already suffered a black eye over the antics of its two top sprinters who withdrew from the Games on Wednesday following a furor over missed dope tests.

Weightlifters from Morocco, Moldova, Hungary, India and Turkey tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs and were expelled, distracting attention from arenas where exciting new standards were

being set in swimming and gymnastics.

No issue has generated as much heat at the Athens Games as drug use, especially after Greek sprinters Costas Kenteris and Katerina Thanou withdrew from the Games Wednesday amidst a controversy involving a missed drugs test.

Their withdrawal spared the International Olympic Committee (IOC) the duty of expelling them and further embarrassing the host nation, the land where the Olympic Games began 2,700 years ago and where they were revived in 1896.



Olympic spectators are cooled off from scorching temperatures with water sprayed during a beach volleyball competition



### Spain advances to playoffs

Undefeated Spain became the first country to get an Olympic basketball playoff berth after coming from behind to defeat Italy 71-63. Spain (3-0) looked sluggish in the first half, but Catalan Pau Gasol (photo) and forward Jorge Garbajosa sparked a second-half run to overcome an eight-point deficit. Also, the US beat Australia 89-79 and New Zealand beat Serbia and Montenegro 90-87.



### Badminton results

Ning Zhan of China won a gold medal victory in the women's badminton competition (individual) yesterday over silver medallist Mia Audina of the Netherlands. No less pleased was Mi Zhou (photo), who won the bronze for China. In men's doubles, reigning Chinese champions Zhang Jun and Gao Ling beat Britons Nathan Robertson and Gail Emms for the gold medal.



### Japan wins judo gold

Japan's gold medallist Noriko Anno celebrates her victory in the women's judo half heavy (under 78 kg) Olympic final yesterday. Anno defeated China's silver medallist Xai Liu. Anno managed to floor the 25-year-old Chinese competitor with 22 seconds to go. Japan has won six gold medals in judo so far, with one each for Belarus, China, Georgia, Germany, Greece and South Korea.

## Beckham looks forward to reunion with England team mate Owen

### REUTERS

David Beckham is relishing the prospect of linking up with his England team mate Michael Owen at Real Madrid. "I have enjoyed playing with Michael at an international level with England and now I am looking forward to having the chance of playing with him at a club level as well," Beckham told reporters after Wednesday's 3-0 win over Ukraine.

"I think that it will be very interesting. As I've said before, Michael could play in any league in the world with his pace and I don't think he'll

have a problem in Spain. "On a personal level, I am very pleased with my fitness levels and my fitness has been good throughout the pre-season with Real and I have really been enjoying it," the England captain added. Beckham enjoyed a return to form during the Ukraine match, scoring his first goal for England in open play in almost two years and setting up Owen for another. Manchester City's Shaun Wright-Phillips completed the scoring on his England debut.

Beckham said that the win had

boosted the morale of the team following their quarter-final defeat on penalties to Portugal in Euro 2004. "I have always loved playing football but scoring goals always helps you," the midfielder said. "The win had to be a confidence booster for us because we were all very disappointed after the European Championships and we produced a good all round performance.

"But also the manager (Sven-Goran Eriksson) has said that he feels he has got together the best squad possible and that gives the players lots of confidence as well. "We needed this performance, the manager needed it, the players needed it and most of all the fans needed to see something like that."



David Beckham after scoring a goal in England's recent match against Ukraine







# CT BACK

## WEATHER

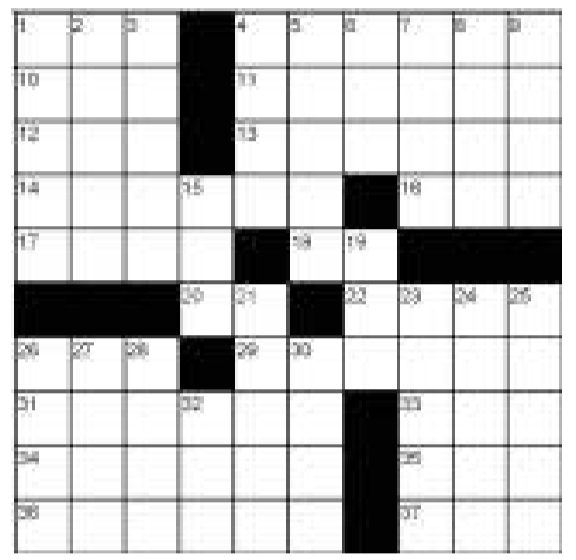
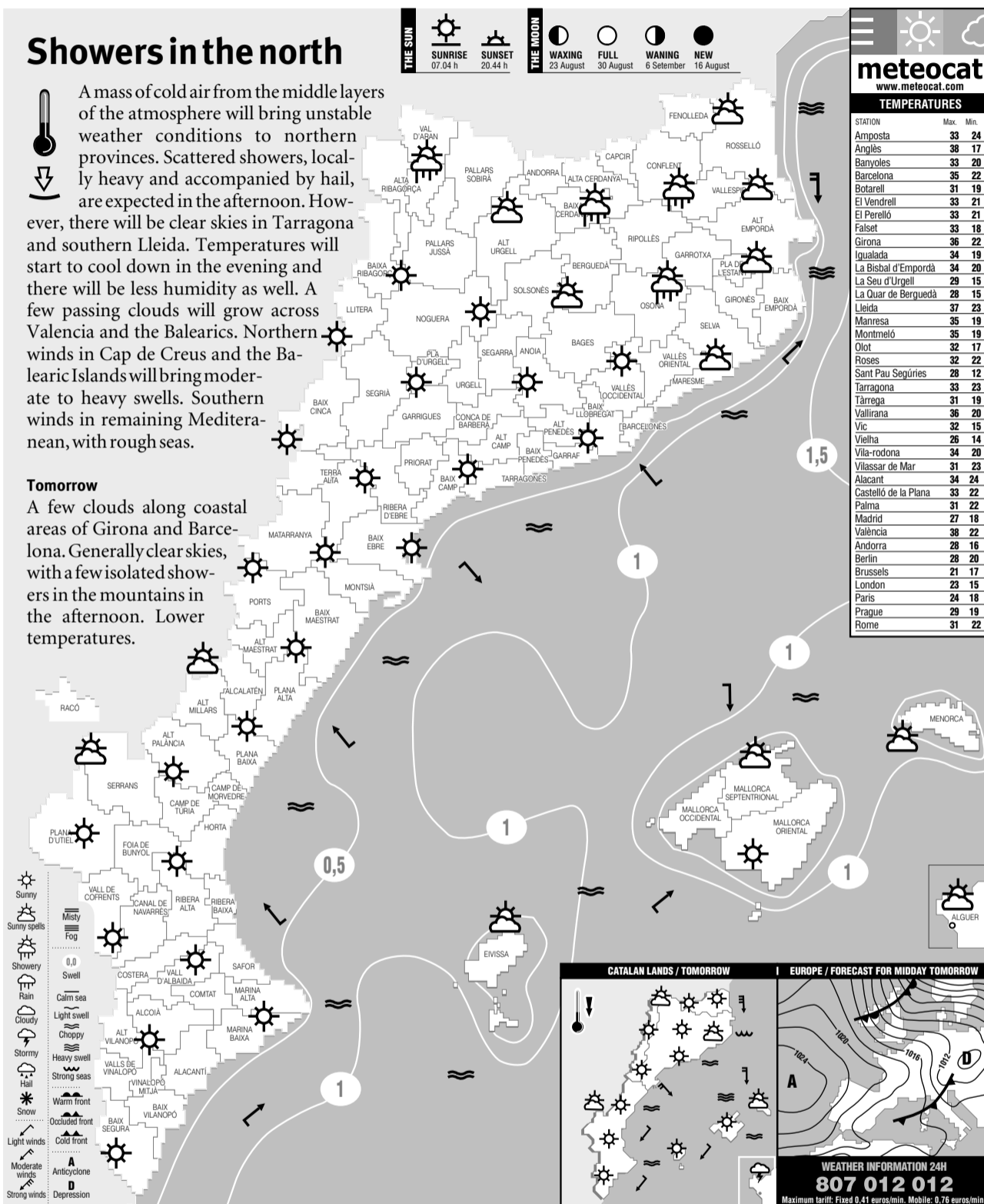
## CROSSWORD

### Showers in the north

A mass of cold air from the middle layers of the atmosphere will bring unstable weather conditions to northern provinces. Scattered showers, locally heavy and accompanied by hail, are expected in the afternoon. However, there will be clear skies in Tarragona and southern Lleida. Temperatures will start to cool down in the evening and there will be less humidity as well. A few passing clouds will grow across Valencia and the Balearics. Northern winds in Cap de Creus and the Balearic Islands will bring moderate to heavy swells. Southern winds in remaining Mediterranean, with rough seas.

### Tomorrow

A few clouds along coastal areas of Girona and Barcelona. Generally clear skies, with a few isolated showers in the mountains in the afternoon. Lower temperatures.



### ACROSS

1.American Cancer Society (abbr.). 4.Soak up. 10.Surface to air missile. 11.Fret. 12.Killed in action. 13.Fur. 14.Something to run. 16.Peculiar. 17.Reserve Oddicers Training Corps. 18.Book of Samuel, abbr. 20.Roman six. 22.Dice. 26.Computer part. 29.Two houses in one. 31.Jackets parts. 33.What a nurse gives. 34.Provoked. 35.Fish eggs. 36.Classification. 37.Hole punching tool.

### DOWN

1.Questioner. 2.Egyptian capital. 3.Hurt. 4.A cozy room (2 words). 5.Winged animals. 6.Short-term memory. 7.Buckeye State. 8.Rive. 9.Ill \_\_\_\_\_. 15.Air Cushion Vehicle (abbr.). 19.American College of Physicians (abbr.). 21.Loafers. 23.Extreme. 24.Nether. 25.Exceed. 26.Gadfly. 27.Coat. 28.On top. 30.US Department of Agriculture. 32.Stretch to make do.

### ANSWERS

### ACROSS

1.ACS. 4.Absorb. 10.SAM. 11.Dither. 12.KIA. 13.Ermine. 14.Errand. 16.Odd. 17.ROTC. 18.Sa. 20.VI. 22.Cube. 26.CPU. 29.Duplex. 31.Lapels. 33.TLC. 34.Evoked. 35.Roe. 36.Genera. 37.Awl.

### DOWN

1.Asker. 2.Cairo. 3.Smart. 4.Aden. 5.Birds. 6.STM. 7.Ohio. 8.Rend. 9.Bred. 15.AC.V. 19.ACP. 21.Idler. 23.Ultra. 24.Below. 25.Excel. 26.Cleg. 27.Pave. 28.Upon. 30.USDA. 32.Eke.

**CATALONIA TODAY.** The first Catalan newspaper in english  
Available from Tuesday to Saturday at main news stands. And it's free



**Advertising**  
93 227 66 00 / 93 227 66 20  
[advertising@cataloniatoday.info]

**Classifieds**  
902 02 10 10

**Letters to Editor**  
[letters@cataloniatoday.info]