



CATALONIA TODAY

BARCELONA, THE BUSINESS & LEISURE CAPITAL OF SOUTHERN EUROPE

N. 12 / FREE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 2004

EDITED IN BARCELONA



Portuguese leader chosen as new EU president

NEWS, 5



Saddam Hussein to be handed over to Iraqis today

NEWS, 5

INSIDE

NEWS	2
OPINION	6
BUSINESS.....	7
CULTURE	11
WHAT'S ON.....	13

Record mortgage debt rise

Fears that bubble will burst as homeowners' debts soar to half a billion euros

Homeowners' mortgage debt across the country has risen to half a billion euros, an increase of over 100 million euros over last year, the Spanish Mortgage Association reports. The April rise was the highest in five years. The news fuelled fears that the housing bubble must soon burst, as pre-

dicted last year by the Bank of Spain and the International Monetary Fund, who are aware of precedents in Britain in the late 1980s and in Japan when demand could no longer keep up with prices. The situation is particularly acute in Catalonia where the growth in the building sector out-

stripped general economic growth by 13 per cent, according to a study by the Caixa Catalunya. After Greece, Spain has the highest rate of home ownership in Europe and the younger generation are increasingly inclined to buy, when they can afford to, rather than rent.

Bargain hunters get set - the summer sales start tomorrow

The sales start tomorrow and will continue until the end of August, the legal limit for summer sales, by when goods may be discounted by as much as 50 per cent. Strict rules govern sales, among other things insisting that goods be of normal condition and are not on sale because they are damaged.



More than 5,500 people and 680 vehicles will be on standby in a bid to avoid the disastrous fires of last summer

UN peace officers feared dead in Sierra Leone crash

All 24 people aboard a United Nations helicopter were feared dead last night after it crashed in eastern Sierra Leone. The Russian-built aircraft was transporting members of the UN peacekeeping mission from the capital, Freemantle, when the accident occurred.

Generalitat readies 5,000-strong force to fight summer fires

The Generalitat has approved the Summer Plan 2004 with a priority given to fire prevention. During the unusually hot summer of 2003 thousands of acres were destroyed

by fire, especially in the north of Catalonia, leaving hundreds homeless. Eighty-five look-out posts will be manned and the more than 4,000 members of the emergency services

will be supported by 1,400 volunteers. The government also announced plans to deploy 370 extra members of the medical services over the summer.

CULTURE, 12

Underwater tour of ancient Empúries port



OPINION, 6

Lies and deceit are no substitute for peace

ANTONI SEGURA i MAS

CULTURE, 11

Exhibition displays the universal art of the everyday



Teatre Novedades Grup Balaña

BALLET FLAMENCO OF MADRID

CARMEN De G. Bizet

28 ARTISTS ON STAGE UNTIL JULY 4th

PERFORMANCE EVERY DAY EXCEPT MONDAYS

10% DISCOUNT IF YOU SHOW THIS ADVERTISEMENT

869536/593441B