

YAK-42 AIR CRASH**Families praise commission**

Relatives of the soldiers who died in the Yakovlev-42 accident have told reporters that at the government commission to investigate the crash, they had been pleased by the fact that "people were starting to talk clearly" about what happened on that day in May 2003 and since then. Ana Ochoa, the partner of one of the soldiers who died, and José Antonio Gracia, whose brother died in the crash, have agreed with Defence ministers José Bono's proposal that all the officers involved in what has become known as the Yak-42 affair should resign immediately, adding that this was the "very least" that they could do. They also consider that the declarations made by the minister are in accord with their own opinions concerning the "dreadful" way in which the families were informed about the accident, not to mention the mess that the government made of identifying the bodies. The families reiterated their wish that ex-minister of defence Trillo should step down from his seat in government, and that the "full weight of the law should be brought against him".

ENVIRONMENT**Tivissa dump plans postponed**

The minister for the environment, Salvador Milà, announced yesterday that the project to create a giant rubbish dump at Tivissa, which was to have opened next 1 August, has been postponed until a consensus can be achieved by all the persons and organisations concerned over how it will be operated. Milà, who was speaking in Tarragona yesterday, declared that for the present the current dump would continue to operate, though it had been forecast that it should be closed down on 31 July, or otherwise that an alternative option should be employed, such as using the dump at l'Aldea. All concerned have agreed that the giant dump at Tivissa, which has been built by Gestió i Recuperació de Terrenys SA, will be brought into operation sooner or later, though first of all efforts must be made to ensure that the dump meets the criteria of the Catalonia Waste Materials Plan, which include aspects such as the environment and management. Milà is, however, optimistic about the future of the scheme, and said "Tivissa will be an example of a new type of waste management. Let's not talk about giant dumps, but rather about controlled deposits of inert materials."

CRIME**Church robbers arrested**

The Catalan police the Mossos d'Esquadra have arrested three men who have been accused of robbing seven romanese capitals from the hermitage of Sant Llorenç de les Arenes de Foixà. The three men, who are all from the town of Flaçà, stole the seven capitals (each worth a million euros) on 3 June from the old church in the Baix Empordà region. Eight days later, on 11 June, the Mossos found two of the pieces on a farm in Flaçà, though the whereabouts of the other five is still unknown.



Six Tibetan monks have designed the work using millions of pieces of sand and measures four metres in diameter

Tibetan peace gift dedicated to the Dalai Lama snubbed by Forum

Monks create a Tibetan peace mandala but Forum ignores it

NEIL STOKES

Tenzin Choesang, Tenzin Nyima, Yeshe Monlam, Ngawang Sopa, Tenzin Choephel and Lobsang Dakpa are the exotic names of six Tibetan monks who have spent the last few days crafting an offering to their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who was 69 on Tuesday. Under a suffocating awning on the rambla Santa Monica, the monks have created a mandala with the painstaking care required to fill in elaborately designed circles with millions of grains of coloured sand. Mandalas, or cosmograms, have been produced in Tibet since the middle ages and apart from sand are full of meaning. The Barcelona mandala is called Kalachakra (Wheel of Time), its three concentric circles symbolising, "a complete cosmologic vision of the universe, a detailed description of human nature and the path of wisdom and compassion needed to find universal peace through reflection." And that's not all as the mandala also celebrates as

many 722 divinities and a depiction of the aerial palace where the god Kalachakra resides. Not surprisingly with all of this packed into a four metre diameter, it makes the Barcelona mandala the largest in the world.

After putting the finishing touches by mid-morning on Tuesday, the monks were joined by seven more companions to sing hymns while sitting in the lotus position in their famous mustard coloured robes. By midday they were finished and the president of the House of Tibet in Barcelona, the monk Huan Cheng, was able to open the exhibit to the public who can visit until 15th July. To symbolize the impermanence of all that exists, mandalas are traditionally swept up and poured into a nearby river so that the water can carry its healing energies throughout the world. In the absence of any clear streams, the Barcelona mandala will have to settle for the port when on that Thursday the sand is piled up and thrown into

the sea. In the meantime, the mandala lies in all its glory beneath its awning as part of the Parliament of Religions that opened yesterday in the Fòrum.

However, on Tuesday there was not a Fòrum representative to be seen. In fact, on the same day, the director of the House of Tibet, Thubten Wangchen, claimed that the Chinese government, who have occupied Tibet since 1959, had pressed for the exiled Dalai Lama's followers to be kept far away from the Fòrum site and, presumably, the culture, dialogue and peace that the mandala in common with the Fòrum is supposed to represent. It seems the organisers have much more interest in the Xian warriors, which has proved the success story of the Fòrum and which the Chinese government could take away if it were to get upset. The Tibetans, the mandala and the Dalai Lama, reportedly unable to attend the Parliament due to ill health, have been doubly exiled these days in Barcelona.

Scientists make genetic discovery to boost survival of organisms

RICHARD MCCRANN

Catalan scientists have discovered a new mechanism in the process of genetic evolution. The team from the Barcelona's Autònoma University claim that small parts of DNA called transposones, which were regarded as irrelevant, do in fact cause positive genetic changes for the survival of an organism. The team from the department of genetics and microbiology at the university found that transposones, which are genetic elements which can move from one

side to another between genomes, can put genes they find out of action, by means of the induction of a molecule called RNA antisentido. For many years scientists at the university classed transposones as "DNA rubbish".

But investigations showed that by inserting one part of this material into a fly "drosophila", which is commonly used in genetic studies, it stopped a gene found by its side from functioning. This finding was seen a very significant as the affected

gene plays a part in helping DNA set up a pattern for the creation of a RNA messenger molecule, that serves in creating protein.

According to the scientists, the transposon led to the synthesis of a molecule that actually complements the normal RNA messenger molecule, which the scientists have called RNA antisentido. They claim that the transposones are found in 45% of the human genetic material and could produce the same type of effect in producing new protein.

TECHNOLOGY**web site for art works**

Barcelona city council in partnership with the University of Barcelona have set up a public art web site, so works such as sculptures and other artistic ornamental works that are found in the city's public spaces can be archived. This on-line project will archive 1,012 works with 3,150 photographs and commentary from art experts from universities across the globe. The works will correspond to the major periods of the city's development from medieval period to the birth of democracy. Each work on the site will include technical data and details about its history and expert commentary. Also, for users of the site photographic details will be made available about each piece of work as well as the author. A map of the city will highlight where people can find individual works of art in colour and its historical period.

PROPERTY**900 new homes for young**

Barcelona city council has signed various agreements that will see them handover land so that 900 properties can be constructed for young people around the city. The total area of land that the council will give free is 13,737 metres squared, according to Ferran Mascarell, a spokesman for the council. The land will come from the environment and housing departments of the Generalitat and will be given to metropolitan urban society and the municipal patronato of housing. The new flats will be built in Sants-Montjuic, Hota-Guinardó, Nou Barris y Sant Martí.

ACCIDENT**Three die after train tragedies**

Two youngsters were killed by a Renfe train in district of Els Alamús of Catalonia, according to the police. The accident happened at a level crossing but the identity and age of the youngsters are still unknown. The judge in Lleida has given permission for the removal of the bodies. The circumstances of the accident are not known. In Salou a woman was killed after been hit by a train at a level crossing situated in the centre of the town, according to the firebrigade. The causes are unknown which took place at Guillem de Clarumunt street in the town.

SPORT**Work on sports centre starts**

Work has started on the construction of the municipal sports centre in Pau Gasol de Sant Boi, according to local sources. The work will include the installation of covered centre which will have a capacity to serve 3,000 people and is forecast to come into service in 2006. It is planned to upgrade the football pitch with dressing rooms, a bar and to build a new swimming complex. It will include two swimming pools, two mini tennis courts and a solarium. The swimming pool will have solar panel heating. At the entrance to the new complex will be a memorial dedicated the town's famous basketball Pau Gasol from the NBA league.