

# Iranians want peaceful reform not revolution says Shirin Ebadi

*Famous human rights activist says East and West are not destined to clash*

## REBECCA WARDEN

The Iranian people are hungry for change, but are clear they do not wish it to be violent, according to Nobel Peace prize winner Shirin Ebadi. "People are desperately looking for another reform, which is peaceful and causes no bloodshed, not a revolution," said the Iranian human rights activist and lawyer in Barcelona yesterday. Ebadi is taking part closing ceremony of the *East-West Dialogue* at the Universal Forum of Cultures today.

Shirin Ebadi has always been a forceful advocate of free speech, and her comments at a press conference yesterday were no exception. "If freedom of expression is not respected in my country, there is no point in holding a dialogue," she said. Ebadi reminded reporters that 90 newspapers and magazines have been closed down in Iran during the last two years and countless journalists imprisoned.

Ebadi believes there are two things which must be done "if we wish to achieve a just globalisation." Custody of some of the natural resources of the planet should be given to the United Nations so that this organisation can "manage them and offer a real helping hand to the poorer nations." The other priority is the creation of an international military force, as Ebadi is convinced that only this way can we avoid more conflicts like the War in Iraq. However before progress towards these ideals is possible, the UN itself must be democratised. Ebadi believes it is unjust that only five countries - the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain - have the right to veto the proposals of all the others.



The 2003 Nobel Peace prize winner Shirin Ebadi is taking part in the East West dialogue at the Forum today

A moderate Muslim, Shirin Ebadi is no fan of Samuel Huntington's theory on the inevitability of the conflict of civilisations which gained so much currency in the days following the 9/11. "There is no conflict between East and West," she said, "the people and countries which spread these kind of ideas are the ones who benefit enormously from war. They sell arms and promote their industries, they seek solutions to all their economic problems through war and they have no sympathy for the people who get caught up in their wars," she said.

Ebadi is a great believer in finding a common language, and for her this is that of universal human rights.

## Dalai Lama cancels visit to Forum's world religion event

The exiled Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama will not participate in the Parliament of World Religions to be held at the Barcelona Forum from 7-13 July. Forum organisers said the Dalai Lama, considered to be the world's foremost authority on Buddhism, had to cancel his trip to Barcelona for health reasons.

He was scheduled to arrive on 4 July to participate in a gathering of religious leaders at Montserrat, three days before the inauguration of the

Forum event. Forum organisers said there would be a press conference to further clarify the circumstances behind such an important cancellation.

The Dalai Lama has been exiled in the Indian town of Dharamsala since 1959. In 1989 he won the Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent political activities to help Tibetans achieve more autonomy. He frequently travels around the world to attend religious events and conferences. In October he is scheduled to travel to Mexico.

# Prestigious project to boost Catalonia as a centre of innovation for high-tech products

## RICHARD MCCRANN

Catalonia has been chosen by a prestigious IT company as a location for the setting-up of a "cluster" of firms that will develop and export information technology and products of telecommunications. The announcement by T-Systems, which is a division of the huge Deutsche Telekom group, is aimed at promoting Catalonia as the centre of innovation for producing information technology and communication. The initiative will also

aim to work with the public sector in the country. The Spanish director-general of T-Systems, Ginés Alarcón, said there are a hundred companies that are interested in the project, but at the moment they are in the process of setting it up legally.

The cluster of companies will revolve around four areas of education, electronic administration, software and health. But this initiative still does not have any investment forecast as it depends on the



Ginés Alarcón / ARCHIVE

projects that it generates, according to Alarcón. T-Systems that moved its headquarters from Madrid to Barcelona, was set up in Spain in 1998 after it won a contract to provide information services for the Generalitat, that accounts for half of its turnover. The contract will finish at the end of this year, and Alarcón is not sure how this will affect the company's business "we hope it won't be too dramatic," he said. The new headquarters will open next week in Barcelona.

## TRAFFIC

### British motorcyclist dies

An British citizen died yesterday in Barcelona following a motorcycle accident in Alp (Cerdanya). Michael Omar, 48, was admitted to the hospital with at Vall d'Hebron Hospital with serious internal injuries. The accident occurred around 6 p.m. on the N-152 highway near Alp. The deceased was riding a Kawasaki motorcycle with three other motorcyclists when his motorcycle left the roadway. He was admitted the Puigcerdà hospital with injuries that were not believed to be serious, but upon confirming the severity of his injuries he was transferred to Vall d'Hebron.

## ECOLOGY

### Divers clean up seabed

A group of divers from the *Club d'Immersió Biologia* (CIB) took it upon themselves to clean up rubbish accumulated at the bottom of the sea near Portbou. A car battery, plastic containers, shoes, cans and a cannon ball were among the objects they found. These activities are part of a project sponsored by the Biodiversity Foundation and Environmental Ministry.

## FC BARCELONA

### Club's website in Chinese

The website for the Barcelona Football Club ([www.fcbarcelona](http://www.fcbarcelona)) yesterday began to publish a version in Chinese. The website had previously been available in Catalan, Spanish, English and Japanese. The Chinese and Japanese versions are appearing just before the club's trip to three Asian countries (Japan, China, and South Korea). FC Barcelona will soon offer a version in a sixth language, Portuguese, to attract both Portuguese and Brazilian fans.

## LEISURE

### Role play games held

10,000 thousand players of role play and strategy games as well as collectors of cards and comics, are meeting in Barcelona this weekend for a Gen Con conference in the Palau Sant Jordi. The biggest attraction will be Dungeons & Dragons, the first role play game, which will be celebrating its 30th anniversary.

## MUSEUMS

### Dalí Museum open evenings

The Dalí Museum in Figueras will be open to visitors every evening during the months of July and September in addition to August, the only month when the museum had previously opened. A maximum of 500 visitors will be allowed to visit each evening. In celebration of the deceased artist's 100th birthday, there will also be a special audiovisual presentation about the surrealist painter and cava will be served. The museum, located in the centre of Figueras, was designed by Dalí himself and is thought to be the largest surrealist object in the world.