

Majorca Daily Bulletin

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Port of Alcudia cruising ahead

THE Port of Alcudia is slowly entering the international cruise ship market thanks to its new terminal and this week, Thomson Holidays, announced that the cruise ship, *Thomson Majesty*, would be visiting the port four times in 2016, providing the local tourist trade with a new important source of revenue. For next summer an increase in cruise ships is already on the horizon with the *Silver Wind* making six visits and the *Saga Pearl II*, one visit. The future looks bright and soon Majorca will have two major cruise ship ports.

Spain's PM Rajoy appeals for dialogue after Catalan vote

London.—Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy yesterday called for renewed dialogue and a “return to sanity” in Catalonia as the region prepares to hold a symbolic vote on independence that is strongly opposed by the central government.

Catalonia will stage an informal referendum today to try to gauge backing for a breakaway from Spain. Volunteers and campaigners set up polling stations in anticipation of a high turnout from pro-independence supporters.

The staging of the vote has been fiercely criticised by Madrid, though it is not expected to intervene. Regional police are unlikely to stand in the way of voters, government sources said.

“What we need is a return to sanity from next Monday, and let’s talk within the realm of the constitution and the law,” Rajoy said in a speech to

members of his centre-right Partido Popular (PP). He dismissed Sunday’s vote, saying it carried no weight and would have no impact.

“It’s not a referendum or a consultation or anything that resembles that,” Rajoy said.

But the symbolic vote comes as support for a long-standing independence campaign has been swelled by Spain’s deep recession. Officials from Catalonia’s two main political parties say a strong turnout would send a powerful signal to Madrid that Catalonia means business.

A formal but equally non-binding referendum originally proposed by Catalan leader Artur Mas for 9 Nov. was blocked by Spain’s High Court

While he is not known to have met with Mas since July, Rajoy has made recent overtures about reforms in Catalonia, which has a population of about

7.5 million and accounts for one fifth of Spain’s economic output.

He recently said that a new “chapter of dialogue” was open with Catalonia, and the government has also opened the door to reviewing next year the way Spanish regions are financed.

In a wide-ranging speech to his PP supporters, Rajoy also said he would appear in parliament later this month to announce further measures to combat corruption.

A series of graft scandals in the country, involving politicians of various leanings, bankers and even the sister of the king of Spain, have eroded support for mainstream parties, and helped the rise of newcomer party Podemos (“We Can”).

Alongside the Catalan secession drive, it is adding to headaches for the PP as it heads into an election year in 2015.



WHAT A CHARITY PARTY: PAGE 4

London.—U.S. citizens Kenneth Bae and Matthew Todd Miller have been freed from detention by the North Korean government and are returning to the United States, the U.S. government said yesterday.

Bae and Miller were being accompanied home by James Clapper, the director of national intelligence, his office said yesterday.

Two Americans freed by North Korea, returning home



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