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NEVER AGAIN, SAYS JAPAN

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● Italy and the USA are in second and third place, according to ATOL report.

SPAIN TOP AGAIN

● Research from the Air Travel Organisers' Licensing (ATOL) says that Spain is on course to be the top holiday

destination for Britons again in 2017 with the Balearics proving to be exceptionally popular. See Page 3

Madrid to cut traffic volumes in half as pollution rises

MADRID said yesterday all privately-owned cars with even-numbered registration plates will be banned from the Spanish capital's roads today to curb rising air pollution.

The move follows a dry, sunny stretch of weather which sent levels of nitrogen oxide, a poisonous gas which can cause respiratory problems such as asthma, soaring above European-Union-set limits.

The restriction could alternate between odd and even number plates for as long as high levels of contamination persist, the city government said. Applicable restrictions for tomorrow will be announced by midday today.

Madrid has been later than other European cities in applying anti-pollution measures. London introduced a congestion charge more than 10 years ago while Paris has taken steps to pedestrianise some of its central roads.

"Every day, the city pumps out a great deal of emissions in to the atmosphere, but it blows away...the current thermal pressure is impeding that ventilation," environment head for the city council, Paz Valiente, said.

Temporary ban

Yesterday, the city placed a temporary ban on parking in the centre by non-resident car owners and restricted speed limits on the Madrid's main circular road to 70 kmh (43 mph) from 90 kmh to reduce exhaust emissions.

The region of Madrid, which includes the capital and surrounding neighbourhoods, has almost 4 million cars, or one for every two people, plus about a million trucks, vans and motorcycles.

The restrictions will be in place between 06.30 and 21.00 and drivers caught flouting them will face fines of up to 90 euros.