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SKATING ON THIN ICE AS THE UK CONTINUES TO FREEZE: SEE PAGE 19



MAJORCA GETS ON ITS BIKE IN 2018

● Island forecast to be Europe's top cycle tourism destination next year.

Palma.—Majorca is currently home to many of the world's leading professional cycling teams, no less Team Sky, as they host their winter training camps here before the season slowing gets under way with the Tour of Majorca next month.

However, according the Balearic Tourism Agency and Mallorca 312, there is going to be a huge surge in the number of cyclists coming on holiday to the island from across Europe next year.

The latest figures point a 44 percent increase on this

year's data and that translates into an investment of around 300 million euros.

There are now some 200 hotels across the island which have adapted themselves to cater for cyclists with professional workshops, gyms, special menus and rental facilities etc.

The season begins in earnest next month and will continue until June, six months when the conditions and climate are ideal for cycling.

The main centres are Alcúdia, the Playa de Palma, Artá, Muro and Cala Serena.



Team Sky is currently training on the island.

Spanish PM calls for Catalan parliament to be formed on 17 January



Madrid.—Spain's prime minister said yesterday that the new Catalan parliament should hold its maiden session on 17 January, the first step in reinstating local government after Madrid fired the old regional administration for illegally declaring independence.

Once the parliament is formed, potential leaders of the regional government will put themselves forward for a vote of confidence, although it could take months for a new government to emerge.

"I hope that as soon as possible we will be able to have a Catalan government that is open to dialogue and able to relate to all Catalans, not just half of them," prime minister Mariano Rajoy said in an

end-of-year address to the nation.

His comments follow a 21 December regional election that he hoped would quash the Catalan independence movement and so help resolve Spain's worst political crisis in decades.

Parties favoring a split with Spain instead gained a slim majority, but they may struggle to form a government, as one leader, Oriol Junqueras, is in custody in Madrid and the other, Carles Puigdemont, in self-imposed exile in Brussels.

Both were fired by Rajoy after they declared independence following a banned 1 October referendum on secession from Spain.

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