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Doors open to London's latest vegan venture fish and chips: P11

CHUCK CHEQUERS, SAYS BORIS

● While Johnson's Brexit message was greeted with the greatest rapture, his attack on the opposition Labour Party and calls for the Conservatives return to its traditional values of low tax and strong policing were also enthusiastically received. See Page 20



Catalan parliament refuses to suspend pro-split politicians



Barcelona.—The Catalan parliament voted yesterday to reject a Spanish Supreme Court ruling that suspended former Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont and five other pro-independence politicians from public office, marking a new stand-off with Madrid.

The assembly also backed a motion allowing all six parliament members, who have either fled Spain or are in jail, to delegate their voting rights to a party member, a spokesman for the Catalan parliament said.

In July, Spain's Supreme Court effectively stripped Puigdemont and the other separatist politicians of their public duties due to their role in organising an independence referendum on 1 Oct, 2017.

Yesterday's moves by the Catalan assembly came a day after riot police charged in to break up a demonstration in front of the parliament building after thousands marched in Barcelona to mark the first anniversary of the referendum.

Madrid imposed direct rule on Catalonia after the referendum,

which it branded as unconstitutional. It then called fresh regional elections in December in a bid to curb the independence movement, but the plan backfired and the secessionists retained a slim majority in the Catalan assembly.

Opinion polls in Catalonia show a relatively even split between those who favour remaining in Spain and those wanting to secede.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has said he favours dialogue on Catalonia's future but has ruled out any moves towards independence.

Six men jailed in Britain over "predatory" solar energy panel scam

Six fraudsters were jailed in Britain yesterday for orchestrating a 17 million pound (\$22 million) scam to sell and install solar energy panels, often targeting vulnerable people. The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) said it had brought the men to trial after the ringleaders - two brothers and former directors of Solar Energy Savings Limited - were caught during a routine police traffic stop after seven months on the run. The men manipulated their victims with deceitful sales techniques, lies and false guarantees of reimbursement to misrepresent their deals and maximise sales. Around 1,500 victims lost up to 20,000 pounds each, the SFO said. The men paid themselves almost two million pounds and drove Lamborghini and Porsche sports cars, had cosmetic surgery and took private flights to Switzerland and Italy. They offered their victims a cashback scheme that falsely guaranteed that their costs would be invested and returned in a number of years. But in reality, the cash was transferred between a string of businesses in a scam so crude that investigators said the names of companies had been manually crossed out on certificates.