

# Majorca Daily Bulletin

Friday, December 21 2018

1.20€ · Founded 1962 · N.16778 · Passeig de Mallorca 9 A,  
Palma 07011

## Jailed Catalans urge peaceful protest for rare visit by Spain's PM

*Madrid.*—Nine Catalan separatists jailed over their region's push for independence called yesterday for large but peaceful protests to mark a rare visit by Spain's cabinet.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez will chair his weekly cabinet meeting in the Catalan capital Barcelona today, part of efforts to resolve a political conflict that has festered since the northeastern region unilaterally declared independence in October 2017.

That declaration prompted Madrid to take control of the region - which has 7.5 million people and accounts for about a fifth of Spain's economy - and arrest secessionist lead-

ers. Spain's constitution prohibits regions from breaking away and the independence drive, backed by around half of Catalans, has caused the country's worst political crisis in decades. Hundreds of national police will be deployed in Barcelona to guard the cabinet meeting amid fears extreme elements of the independence movement could foment violence.

"(Sanchez's government)... will want to provoke us, they will be angry, they would like us to be violent, and they will not succeed," the nine prisoners said in a letter released by their political parties.

# NIGHTMARE



● Drones flying near London's Gatwick airport grounded flights for at least 15 hours, causing chaos for tens of thousands of Christmas travellers in

what authorities said was a reckless attempt to cripple Britain's second busiest airport.

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