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Ryanair boss slams UK aviation regulator after Thomas Cook collapse

Dublin.—Ryanair boss Michael O’Leary slammed Britain’s aviation regulator yesterday, saying its soft licencing rules contributed to the chaos around Thomas Cook’s bankruptcy. O’Leary, whose low-fare model has squeezed less competitive rivals, said the tour operator model was “dead” and Thomas Cook’s collapse last week was no surprise.

He said that some responsibility lay with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for granting Thomas Cook a licence to operate without demanding more proof that they would survive. “How you can license Thomas Cook in April as fit to fly for another 12 months and then it goes bust in September. (It) is some-

thing the CAA needs to address,” O’Leary said at a Reuters Newsmaker event in London. “The CAA should be much more aggressive in requiring the shareholders of those companies to put up much more cash to get through the year, rather than allowing them to continually fail.” The CAA could not immediately be reached for comment.

Thomas Cook’s UK airline immediately folded when the company went into administration, although its German Condor airline is still flying and has been offered a bridging loan by the German government. Thomas Cook’s Scandinavian airline is also still flying.



On anniversary of banned referendum, Catalan separatists keep up their fight



Protesters gathered in Girona yesterday to mark the second anniversary of a banned Catalan independence vote, some hurling eggs at police and toppling garbage bins, amid a hardening political atmosphere around Spain’s most polarising issue.

Tensions between separatists in the region and Madrid have run high in recent days after Spain’s high court sent seven Catalan separatist activists to jail, which was followed by the regional parliament adopting a resolution backing civil disobedience.

The protests will provide a measure of the strength of Catalan separatism, which has posed a major challenge for Spain for years and triggered its biggest political crisis in decades in 2017 when the region briefly declared independence.

The separatist movement has so far been peaceful, but this has been put in question by the arrest last week of the seven activists, alleged to be linked with the grassroots CDR protest movement and accused of preparing violent actions.

BACK ON THE MENU

- Cutting back on red and processed meat brings few if any health benefits, according to a review of studies involving millions of people, a finding that contradicts dietary advice of leading international agencies and raised immediate objections from many health experts.

- See Full Report Inside.