

# Spanish prosecutor to seek tougher rape case verdict

**MADRID.** Spanish prosecutors will appeal a court ruling which found five men who assaulted a 14-year-old girl guilty of sexual abuse rather than the graver crime of rape, a source at the prosecutor's office said yesterday. The ruling, which has sparked days of protests by women activists, has revived memories of the so-called Wolfpack case which led to mass rallies across Spain last year over chau-

vinism and sexual abuse. Last Thursday, Barcelona's High Court sentenced the five men to 10-12 years in prison. It ruled that their 2016 assault was not rape because the victim, who was drunk and unconscious, could neither "agree to (nor) oppose the sexual relations". In its appeal, the Barcelona prosecutor's office said it wanted the men instead to be charged with rape, which carries prison sentences of

15 to 20 years. Women activists have branded last week's verdict a "disgrace" and have demanded that the government reform the penal code to allow for a broader definition of rape and tougher sentences. Spanish law currently does not legally recognise rape unless physical violence or intimidation is employed. The Socialist government has appointed a panel to review relevant parts of the penal code.

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**ANOTHER COLD SNAP AND FIRST SNOW OF THE WINTER TO HIT THE BALEARICS**

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# Let's get Brexit done or face "horror show" of Corbyn



● Boris Johnson yesterday urged voters to back his Conservatives in the general election or face the "horror show" of two referendums next year if Labour's Jeremy Corbyn was elected. **SEE PAGE 20**

## Madrid floods Catalonia with extra police ahead of election

● A "significant number" of security forces will be sent to Catalonia ahead of Sunday's parliamentary elections to make sure that protests that have rocked the Spanish region do not disrupt the vote, acting Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said yesterday.

Catalan separatism, and the weeks of protests that erupted in the regional capital Barcelona following the sentencing of nine independence leaders to jail mid-October, have been thrust into the spotlight again as Spain gears up for its fourth election in four years.

Authorities have been bracing for pro-independence protests on the eve of the vote that could potentially turn violent, government and Socialist party sources had told Reuters last week.

"Logically, we have deployed a significant number of state security forces to ensure normality on a day in which citizens and their vote must be the protagonists," Sanchez said.

A spokesman for the national police in Barcelona said anti-riot police had been deployed to Catalonia in order to "reinforce in the event of potential unrest, such as blocking polling stations" but added that regional police will be tasked with keeping order on the day, with the national police prepared only to step in if asked.