

# Majorca Daily Bulletin

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## Beware of the eye in sky: See PAGE 3

### Newspapers hit by protests

**T**he distribution of several British newspapers was disrupted yesterday after Extinction Rebellion climate change activists blockaded printing presses used by Rupert Murdoch's News UK, the publisher of *The Times* and *The Sun*.

The group said late on Friday that nearly 80 people had blocked roads leading to two printworks, at Broxbourne in Hertfordshire, north east of London, and at Knowsley, near Liverpool.

# Spain's property portals see record usage despite real estate slump

**S**PAIN'S property portals are betting historically low interest rates and incoming European aid will boost real estate, but data show sales diving, household debt rising and prices flatlining even after Spain's lockdown ended in June.

Fotocasa and Idealista, two of Spain's largest property portals, saw record user activity in the past three months.

Fotocasa communications director Anaïs Lopez highlighted a 40% year-on-year jump in traffic in June.

"All the real estate agencies we work

with say they're seeing unprecedented interest in changing homes," Lopez said, adding that Fotocasa's page visits and contact rates were well above pre-pandemic summer averages.

Idealista spokesman Benat del Coso said online mortgage brokerage requests over the summer were 20% higher than normal. But Bank of Spain data show house sales in freefall, despite intensified interest from Spaniards who dread spending a second confinement in the same residence and prefer spacious homes with gardens

and balconies. Nationwide, house sales plunged 43% to 75,00 in the second quarter, the Bank of Spain said last week, with transactions in traditionally red-hot markets like Madrid and Barcelona falling 20.2% and 17.3% respectively.

Property prices tightened over the same period, said Spain's College of Registrars, with the average quarterly growth rate at 0.44% - a substantial slowdown on past quarters - and some of the Registrars' methodologies even yielding small decreases.

Idealista noted prices dropping 0.1% in Madrid and 1.1% in Barcelona in August. Second-quarter rental prices sagged 0.2% before falling 0.8% in July, Fotocasa registered. With financing hard to come by and mortgage indebtedness rising as cash-strapped homeowners seek liquidity, Spaniards are reluctant to sell property at "pandemic prices", while prospective buyers struggle to meet tougher lending requirements. Tourism- and hospitality-dependent Spain saw unemployment rise by 0.8% in August.

## SPAIN CLOSE TO HALF A MILLION CORONAVIRUS CASES

**S**pain came close to clocking half a million coronavirus cases on Friday after authorities registered 4,503 new infections, bringing the total to 498,989 - the most in Western Europe.

A new wave of contagion has been less deadly than early in the pandemic, however, and infections appear to have

slowed from a daily peak of more than 10,000 a week ago. The tally could be revised, as Spain updates its statistics retroactively.

The death rate remains well below the March-April peak when fatalities routinely exceeded 800 per day. The Health Ministry reported 19 deaths on Friday, bringing the total up to 29,148.

With schools due to restart next week and many adults returning to work, the latest surge in coronavirus cases has sparked concern and some confusion.

"In Madrid everybody wears a face mask, we maintain social distance, there are no night clubs, so I don't know what the problem is," teacher Maribel Cimas told Reuters.

