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Spain's COVID-19 death toll tops 50,000, infection rate drops

Madrid.— Spain's death toll from the coronavirus crossed the 50,000 mark on Monday, while the number of infections per 100,000 people fell for the first time in nearly three weeks, health ministry data showed.

A total of 24,462 new cases were logged since Thursday, bringing the total to nearly 1.88 million. The death toll rose by 298 to 50,122, showed the first set of nationwide data released since Sunday's start of vaccination against the virus.

The incidence of the virus measured over

the past 14 days slipped to 246 cases per 100,000 people from 263 cases on Thursday after climbing steadily from a low of 189 cases on Dec. 10.

Health Emergency Chief Fernando Simon told a news conference the figures showed a «stabilisation» in the level of contagion and a reduction in the number of deaths.

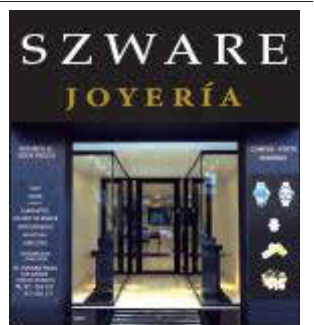
Still, he warned the data could be revised in the coming days, as the Christmas holidays likely caused some disruption to the statistics submitted by regional authorities.

SHOPPING CENTRES THROW IN THE TOWEL

● Major shopping centres plan to furlough staff as Balearic government introduces tough new restrictions which will mean that they will have to close at the weekends. See Inside.



Calm
after
the
storm:
Inside



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Main hurdle in UK-Spain talks over Gibraltar is cross-border traffic

London.— The main hurdle in talks between Spain and Britain over Gibraltar's post-Brexit status is keeping cross-border traffic fluid, Spanish Foreign Minister Arancha Gonzalez Laya said yesterday.

Madrid and London are negotiating how to police the land bor-

der between Spain and Gibraltar, a British Overseas Territory on the southern tip of the Iberian peninsula, as it was excluded from the last-minute exit deal reached between Britain and the European Union last week.

Spain has secured an exemption for about 8,500 cross-border

workers from border controls even if no agreement on free movement is reached, Gonzalez Laya said in an interview with RNE radio station.

She added her government seeks to keep traffic between Gibraltar and Spain fluid and avoid long lines of cars and trucks.

