

# Majorca Daily Bulletin

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## NATO pledges to speed evacuations from Afghanistan as criticism mounts

London.— More than 18,000 people have been flown out of Kabul since the Taliban took over Afghanistan's capital, a NATO official said yesterday, pledging to redouble evacuation efforts as criticism of the West's handling of the crisis intensified.

Thousands of people, desperate to flee the country, were still thronging the airport, the official, who declined to be identified, told Reuters, even though the Taliban have urged people without legal travel documents to go home.

The speed with which the Islamist militant

Taliban conquered Afghanistan as U.S. and other foreign troops were completing their withdrawal surprised even their own leaders and has left power vacuums in many places.

The Taliban called for unity ahead of Friday prayers, the first since they seized power, calling on imams to persuade people not to leave Afghanistan amid the chaos at the airport, protests and reports of violence.

Residents in Kabul and four other major cities said prayers appeared to have passed off with incident, though attendance was low.



Rafa, calls time on the season.

# RAFA NADAL BOWS OUT

**M**ajorcan Rafa Nadal said yesterday that he will end his 2021 season early due to a left foot issue that has been troubling him for a year, ruling him out of this month's U.S. Open.

The world number four suffered a shock exit in Washington this month, where he kicked off his lead-up to the final Grand Slam of the year, and pulled out of the Cincinnati Masters and the Canadian Open.

"I wanted to inform you that unfortunately I have to end the 2021 season," Nadal tweeted yesterday.

The recurring issue flared up at the French Open, where he fell to eventual champion Novak Djokovic in the semi-finals.

"Honestly, I have been suffering much more than I should with my foot for a year and I need to take some time... to find a solution to this

problem or at least improve it in order to continue to have options for the next few years," Nadal said.

"I'm with the maximum enthusiasm and predisposition to do whatever it takes to recover the best possible shape to keep competing for the things that really motivate me.

"I'm convinced that with the recovery of the foot and obviously a very important daily effort... this can be achieved. I will work as hard as I can to make it happen."

Nadal's great rival and fellow 20-times Grand Slam winner Roger Federer is also out of the U.S. Open and will be sidelined for many months because he needs knee surgery.

It is the second straight year in which the duo will be out of the hardcourt major, with Nadal missing the previous edition due to COVID-19 concerns and Federer opting out due to surgery.

## Anti-pollution protests in Spain after thousands of dead fish wash up on lagoon

**S**ome 20 tonnes of dead fish have washed up on the shores of one of Europe's largest saltwater lagoons in Spain, sparking protests against deteriorating environmental conditions while local prosecutors opened an investigation.

Once a magnet for tourism and a sanctuary for marine life, the Mar Menor in Murcia, on Spain's southeastern Mediterranean coast, has seen fish stocks plummet in recent years, with similar mass die-offs occurring in 2016 and 2019.

Residents began seeing dead fish and crustaceans on Monday. "They are still washing up today. We calculate that some 20 tonnes have died to date," said Jose Luis Garcia, director of the World Wildlife Fund's marine programmes in Spain. While the regional government blamed the deaths on recent high temperatures, ecologists have warned for years that runoff from nearby agricultural facilities and pollution from urban development has severely degraded the water quality.

"People call it the green soup," explained Ra-

mon Pagan of the Pact for the Mar Menor pressure group. "It's caused by an excess of fertilisers in the water...particularly from intensive agriculture."

High levels of phosphates and nitrates in the water cause huge blooms of algae to flourish. These block out sunlight from penetrating the water and reduce oxygen levels below the surface, eventually suffocating the marine life.

Scores of protesters wearing 'SOS Mar Menor' t-shirts gathered on the shore and chanted "We want solutions."

### PROTESTS

#### London police warn of two weeks of disruption

● London's police warned yesterday that protests by environmental activists planned for the next two weeks will cause disruption across the capital and will distract officers from dealing with crime.