

Mallorca Bulletin

Friday Jan. 19 / Thursday Jan. 25 2024: PRICE: 2€

Founded 1962 · N.17377 · The weekly print edition of www.majorcadailybulletin.com

One million residents, 31 million passengers

The number of passengers passing through Palma airport last year reached an all-time record, 31 million (arriving and departing), an increase of eight per cent. It underlines the fact that Palma airport is one of the busiest in Europe during the peak summer months. The success of the tourist industry is clearly evident because the island has a population of just under one million. The chairman and CEO of the Spanish Airports Authority (AENA), Maurici Lucena, stressed that "these record figures in air transport are fundamental for the economic and social development of Spain".

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POST OFFICE HERO COULD BE CRUISING INTO PALMA THIS SUMMER

Palma.—Alan Bates, the former subpostmaster who brought the Post Office to its knees, could be cruising into Palma this summer after he was offered a free Mediterranean cruise by Virgin boss, Sir Richard Branson.

Sir Richard, who now owns a luxury hotel on the island in Banyalbufar, wrote: "Dear Alan, I did get a chance to read your moving interview in *The Times* and we'd love to offer you and Suzanne a well-earned holiday on Necker Island. I can't think of anyone who deserves a break more." Bates had tears in his eyes after he was told that they

were also being gifted upper class return tickets to the holiday destination on behalf of Virgin Atlantic as well as a Mediterranean cruise from Virgin Voyages. Virgin cruise ships are regular visitors to both Palma and Ibiza during the summer months.

In 1999, hundreds of subpostmasters and subpostmistresses were accused of theft, fraud, and false accounting after the Post Office's IT system (Horizon, developed by Fujitsu) incorrectly reported cash shortfalls across branches in the country.



British Vote for Life but not all agree

London.—British citizens living abroad are now eligible to register to vote in UK general elections, regardless of how long they've been living outside Britain. A new law has removed the previous 15-year time limit. Supporting the awareness-raising campaign of the UK's Electoral Commission, the British Embassy in Madrid is calling on British residents living in Spain to check if they are eligible. The Com-

mission is the independent and impartial organisation that oversees elections in the UK. Those who have previously lived in or been registered to vote in the UK now have the right to vote in UK Parliament elections. They can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote and will need to confirm their personal information every three years.

Even though it is a clear victory for British

residents abroad and in Spain, not everyone agrees with expats having the vote for life.

According to a survey on our website (www.majorcadailybulletin.com), a majority of people are opposed to the move on the grounds that if you don't live in the UK you should have no vote. At the time of writing, 56 per cent of all those polled were opposed to the move.



Party time in Mallorca

See What's On Guide

Factories halt production as a result of Red Sea

Four factories in Spain owned by French tyre maker Michelin are planning to halt output again on the weekend of January 20-21 due to delays in the delivery of raw materials caused by the crisis in the Red Sea, the Spanish subsidiary says.

The United States and Britain launched a series of strikes on Yemen last week aimed at the Iran-backed Houthi militia, whose attacks on international shipping have disrupted one of the world's most important routes since December.