

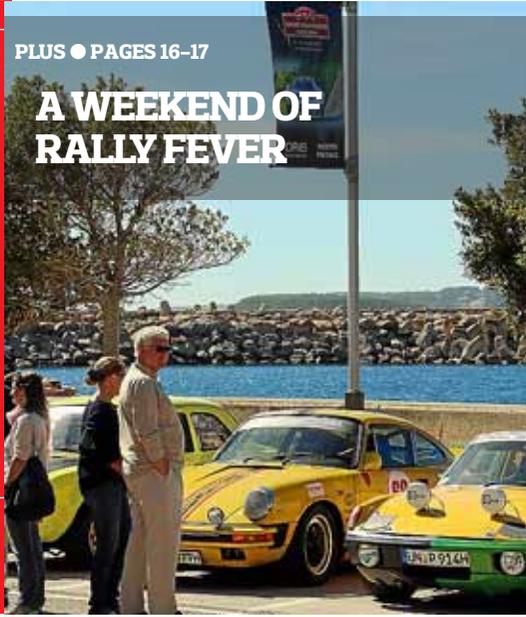
# Majorca Daily Bulletin

Tuesday, March 14 2017

1.10€ · Founded 1962 · N.16225 · Passeig de Mallorca 9 A, Palma 07011

PLUS ● PAGES 16-17

A WEEKEND OF RALLY FEVER



HOME ● PAGES 10-11

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO BIRD WATCHING IN MAJORCA

# MAY COULD TRIGGER ARTICLE 50 TODAY

● If they approved the bill over night it will now be sent to the Queen for symbolic approval.

● Prime minister Theresa May could have cleared the final hurdle standing between her and the start of Brexit negotiations last night when lawmakers thrashed out the final wording of a bill giving her the power to start the EU exit process.

The government called on lawmakers to throw out changes to the bill made by the House of Lords, arguing that May and her ministers need freedom to operate without restriction to get a good deal.

If she was successful, May

could be ready to start a two-year negotiation period, as defined by Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, as early as today.

"Please don't tie the prime minister's hands," Brexit minister David Davis said on Sunday, in a plea to lawmakers in the Conservative Party who have threatened to rebel.

The debate came after the government lost two key votes in parliament's upper chamber in recent weeks, adding conditions into the bill saying May must guarantee the rights of EU na-

tionals living in Britain and give lawmakers more powers to reject the final terms she reaches with the EU.

However, a source with knowledge of cross-party discussions on the legislation played down the likelihood of success for dissenters. "I just don't think the numbers are there ... the prospects of either amendment passing (in the lower chamber) are slim," the source said.

After a two hour debate and at least one vote, the bill was then sent immediately back to the Lords for

debate and approval. May's spokesman echoed Davis's call for lawmakers to approve the bill. "We have been clear that we want the bill to be passed unamended," he told reporters.

"We've also been clear throughout that we are determined parliament will be engaged all the way through the process and afterwards ... What we can't do is have anything which would tie the prime minister's hands as she goes into these negotiations."

See page 18

## Queen starts 2018 Commonwealth Games baton relay



**LONDON.** The Queen yesterday started the countdown to the 2018 Commonwealth Games, by launching the baton relay at Buckingham Palace. She handed the baton to two-time Olympic champion cyclist Anna Meares as it started its journey to host country Australia.

The relay will span 388 days, 71 countries and more than 200,000 miles before reaching the Gold Coast.

## Former Catalan leader banned from office

**SPAIN.** The former head of Spain's Catalonia region was barred from public office for two years yesterday for staging an informal referendum on independence in 2014 at a time when secessionist leaders are trying to drum up support for a fresh ballot.

Artur Mas - who was regional governor in 2014 when pro-independence campaigners held a symbolic referendum in breach of a legal order

- was found guilty of contempt of court, Catalonia's Superior Court of Justice said in a ruling.

"We would do exactly the same thing as we are democrats and we are obliged, as democrats, to listen to the people and obey their mandate at the polls ... We will appeal in Spain and then take the case to European courts, if we need to," Mas said during a conference after the ruling.