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Spanish medical staff protest cuts, struggling to cope with COVID

Dancing and banging drums in the street, doctors and nurses protested in Madrid on Sunday against cuts which they say have left them struggling to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Singing "less flags and more nurses", about 4,000 protesters marched through the Spanish capital, the region hit hardest by the coronavirus. "They are segregating (health). In the private health companies it is a business. In the public, everyone comes. If you don't have money, you don't get," said Lucia Tielvez, 65, an auxiliary health worker.

Madrid's conservative regional govern-

ment has denied cutting health services. Photographs published in Spanish media on Sunday showing cities packed with Christmas shoppers sparked fears of a spike in infections.

"In Madrid we are very aware of COVID," tweeted Antonio R. Ajeno ironically, above a picture of crowds in Madrid.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez urged Spaniards to avoid large family gatherings this Christmas to avoid a rise in COVID-19 cases. "The next few months will be decisive. Experts predict that we will attend a critical stage of the pandemic, coinciding with the first mass vaccines," he told party supporters on Saturday.

Three Kings coming to Palma but you won't be able to see them

● There will be no crowds lining the route and the whole parade will be live on local TV station IB3. See Page Four Inside.

Some EU members are growing impatient on Brexit, says Merkel



Brexit countdown underway,

WITH time running very short to reach a deal on Britain's future relationship with the European Union, some member states are growing impatient, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said, adding that failure to reach a deal would send a bad signal.

She named governance, a competitive level playing field, Britain's desire for access to the EU energy market and the EU's desire for continued access to fishing grounds as key sticking points. While the EU does not want a deal at any price, a deal would be in everyone's interests, she said. Failure to achieve a goal would not send a good signal to the world.



Little joy on the High Street over the weekend: Inside

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