2009

THE TIMES

Wednesday October 21, 2009 No. 9,624 €1.60

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Holders Barca largest scalp on night of away-day joy

• Sport Page 67

Fewer adults smoking since 2002

• National Page 7

Budget may be postponed

Caroline Muscat

The 2009 budget may be postponed to allow more time for discussion among social partners about the cost-of-living adjustment planned for next year, which employers say will seriously hurt business.

The possibility of an unprecedented postponement from the set date of November 9 was first revealed by the Chamber of Commerce, which yesterday expressed confidence that the government would delay the budget presentation to the end of the month. It follows the chamber's objection of the "unsustainable" package of measures proposed on the grounds that it risked the loss of "hundreds of jobs".

When contacted, Finance Minister Tonio Fenech did not rule out a postponement. He said it was not ideal and that if the date were to be changed the decision would have to be made within the government's logistical constraints. However, he said he would be "looking into" the possibility.

Continued on page 13

Presidential run-off

Afghan President Hamid Karzai (right) speaking to US Senator John Kerry during a news conference in Kabul, yesterday. • Story on page 19

Mintoff was manipulated by PN – Sant

Kurt Sansone

The conclusions of the Labour Party's election report, which blamed the defeat on the failings of the leadership into the general secretary and the party president, were thrown down yesterday by former party leader Alfred Sant.

In his first fully-fledged political interview since resigning from MLP leader, Dr Sant said the report did not give due importance to three important factors: the government's power of incumbency, people who came to vote from abroad and his current problem.

Speaking to TVM's Rosa Bugeja on Dissetti, Dr Sant, now a backbencher, blamed the Nationalist government for using patronage in an "obscene" way before the election.

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Speaking to TVM's Rosa Bugeja on Dissetti, Dr Sant, now a backbencher, blamed the Nationalist government for using patronage in an "obscene" way before the election.

He even linked the death of parliament Matthew Pace during a military training exercise earlier this year to the government's pre-election employment flurry, insisting the young man did not know how to swim and yet he still joined the army's special duties company just before the election. A spokesman for Gasser Pace's family yesterday evening insisted the remark was "totally untrue and utterly inconsiderate" because the young man's mother was currently in hospital recovering from a major operation.

"Matthew joined the army after the election and he was qualified to join in the rank of officer cadet. However, it was his choice to join as a private and took his step up the ranks," the family spokesman said.

Dr Sant's remark prompted the national broadcaster to run a scroll on the pre-recorded interview pointing out that the inquiry into the soldier's death established there was no obligation for soldiers to know how to swim.

During the interview, Dr Sant talked little of the current Labour leadership, limiting himself to a running form of experience.

"Labour under Joseph Muscat is doing well but I want him to be careful and ensure that come the next election there will be a level playing field so that the government would not repeat the same shenanigans it did last year," he said.

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1994

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THE TIMES

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MALTESE COMPANY BREAKING UN SANCTIONS – SANT
page 48

MALTESE-REGISTERED TANKER RUNS AGROUND IN RUSSIA
page 48

TAS-SILG PHOENICIAN SITE TO BE OPENED TO THE PUBLIC
page 24

Brazilian drug trafficker leaves

Airline employees go on strike in protest

James Calvert

Vladimir Brazilian drug trafficker Francisco de Assis Queiroz was flown out yesterday, leaving behind a swell of protest and a Malta International Airport in some chaos after Air Malta workers went on strike and refused to handle his aircraft.

He was taken aboard a scheduled Swissair plane for Zurich in the afternoon after a military style operation which saw him enter the airport through the MFA's gate.

But Air Malta employees, who refused to handle anything connected with the Brazilian, went on strike by removing flight SR809 to Zurich.

And when some union workers joined forces to get the flight off the ground, the General Workers' Union stepped up industrial action to cover all flights.

The strike occurred during what the airport employee described as a "noisy afternoon" which also saw a man arrested during a protest inside the terminal in spite of the Brazilian's parole.

Police reinforcements were called in after demonstrators protesting against the drug trafficker's release started gathering outside the airport's VIP lounge in the early afternoon.

After a short wait they were let into the terminal building and up to the bar and restaurant on the observation floor.

There crowded around the windows trying to catch a glimpse of de Assis Queiroz as he was escorted to the aircraft.

But as he was led up the aircraft stairs the crowd started pushing forward and one man hit a table, breaking some mugs.

He was immediately dragged out by police and was later seen being driven away in a police car.

Dr Assis Queiroz had been jailed for 15 years and fined Lm50,000, having been caught with three kilos of cocaine.

But he was given, on humanitarian grounds, a Presidential pardon last month.

The pardon created a controversy and led to a Parliamentary debate. Fears have been expressed that the release would damage the fight against drug trafficking.

On Wednesday night the traffickers, who suffers from the Hepatitis B disease, was transferred to police headquarters from prison before being driven to the airport yesterday to catch the 3.50 p.m. flight to Zurich.

He was taken in through the AFM entrance to the airport's apron in an unmarked car accompanied by plain clothes policemen.

Dr Assis Queiroz, dressed in jeans and a dark top, was led up

(Continued on page 40)

Stairs on the Swissair plane still lowered after a produced drug trafficker's release to from Malta's Zurich yesterday. The departure from the airport into chaos after Air Malta ground staff refused to handle his aircraft.

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Sliema car park given the green light by Planning Authority

Promoters intend to ask for opening hours up to midnight

The Planning Authority yesterday gave the go-ahead to a multi-storey car park in Bisazza Street, Sliema, which residents have fought against.

Seven authority board members voted in favour and five against in a secret vote which attracted Sliema residents attending the meeting.

"I was surprised by the decision," Sliema mayor Robert Arrigo said after the public hearing at the authority's premises in Floriana.

"Shame, shame!" screamed one Sliema resident on being informed of the decision.

Mr Carol Cefaia, the applicant for the six-level, 650-car building, was visibly overjoyed but unavoidable for comment after the meeting.

The controversial project, first proposed two years ago, was returned to the Planning Authority in July after a vote by the Development Control Commission ended in a tie.

The commission chairman did not use his casting vote at the July meeting and referred the case to the authority, whose decision is final.

It also emerged from yesterday's hearing, in Director of Planning Godwin Cassar addressed the board, that the government has approved a pedestrian zone in parts of Bisazza Street, Tower Road and the Strand. This would reduce the space available for parking. Mr Cassar said, and also make access to and from the car park.

The Sliema mayor said he had not heard of this plan before and it was not discussed with the local council.

Nationalist MP and board member Tonio Borg said the fact that the government was proposing a pedestrian zone was not related to the project.

And architect George Pullicino, a consultant for the council, said that although the government signed to proceed with the pedestrian zone in Sliema, the site was not identified.

Mr Cassar also said the car park was necessary to meet the increasing demand for parking spaces as more office space was taken up in the locality.

High Street, he said the authority, did not qualify as an urban conservation area because there were no architectural or historical sites of any importance.

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TIMES OF MALTA

No. 10,028 TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1969 Price 4d.

THIS is the Gin... Gordon's

MAGISTRATE FREES TRAIN ROBBER'S WIFE

(Reuter's Service)

MELBOURNE, Oct. 20.

The wife of Britain's elusive train robber Ronald Biggs said today she did not wish to see her husband imprisoned but was escaping to a future without him.

"It will be a slow death," she told a television interviewer who asked about the possible capture and return to jail of her fugitive husband.

Diane, 30-year-old Mrs. Cassandra Biggs, 30, was speaking to a Melbourne television station after being freed by a magistrate who rejected an Immigration Department request to detain her for a further seven days.

Police believe Biggs is living hidden in Australia at a secret address.

ROUSING WELCOME FOR CZECH LEADERS IN MOSCOW

(Reuter's Service) MOSCOW, Oct. 20.

Czechoslovak leaders flew in here today to a rousing full-scale welcome a month after launching a major purge of liberal-minded supporters of disgraced former party leader Alexander Dubcek.

Dr. Gustav Husak, the man who succeeded Mr. Dubcek in May, heads the 10-member Party and State delegation which will hold important political and economic talks with Kremlin leaders and tour provincial areas.

The delegation also includes President Ludvik Svoboda and Premier Oldrich Cernik.

Ian Ekonomy scores and the nine-day official visit is expected to culminate in the signing of a document in which the Czechoslovak leaders will approve the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion of their country in August last year, which smashed Prague's "spring of liberalism". In return they will be expected to endorse the Soviet aid for their country's troubled economy three years ago.

Dr. Husak and the other Czech leaders headed by now here have frequently spoke May both for private talks and to attend international Communist meetings. Has today's visit is the first formal one of its type since Dr. Husak took over from Mr. Dubcek.

Soviet Party Leader Leonid Brezhnev, Premier Alexei Kosygin, President Nikolai Podgorny and other top political and military personnel leaders were at Moscow's Bag-shering V.I.P. Vnukovo Airport to welcome their Czechoslovak counterparts who visited the Soviet Union in July. They were in Moscow during the talks.

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Soviet cosmonauts on U.S. tour

(Reuter's Service)

MOSCOW, Oct. 20.

Two Soviet cosmonauts left Moscow for an tour New York for a tour of American space facilities.

Air Force Major-General George Beregovoy and Dr. Konstantin P. Feoktistov, a civilian pilot, are going to the headquarters of General Frank Borman, the man who, along with Soviet Union in July. They were in Moscow during the talks.

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The wife of Great Train Robber Ronald Biggs, in her way Melbourne City Court (right) beside Detective Inspector of the extradition squad and (left) Commonwealth Police seeing extradition Biggs. Mrs. Biggs was arrested in the fashionable suburb of Blackburn on Friday evening.

LL.O. awarded Nobel Peace prize

(Reuter's Service)

OSLO, Oct. 20.

The International Labour Organisation, set up 50 years ago to improve conditions of work in many around the world, was today awarded the Nobel Peace prize for 1969.

The Nobel Peace Prize Committee announcing its decision after considering the nominations of about 40 candidates, paid tribute to ILO as an organisation which had worked to "improve stable social relations and thus contributed to safeguard world peace".

E. GERMAN HIJACKERS POSE A PROBLEM

(Reuter's Service)

WEST BERLIN, Oct. 20.

The fate of the two young East German teenagers who yesterday forced a Polish airliner to land here today posed an international legal problem involving at least three countries and the Big Four powers.

Legal experts here said the crunch on the case number of the laws of both West Germany and Poland.

STRIKES IN ITALY

(Reuter's Service)

ROME, Oct. 20.

Italy's postmen went on strike today opening a week of public service stoppages which could bring out four-and-a-half million workers.

Work was hampering in banks and offices as letters and parcels piling up for the second time in a week. The men who were could see the worst in a series of strikes and labour unrest which have plagued the nation for the week.

An estimated 30 million letters and 200 parcels are still in post offices around the country as the result of a two-day postmen's strike last week. One delivery on Saturday did little to relieve the backlog.

The figure could reach nearly 100 million by the time the two-day strike ends on Thursday night. If Italians ignore warnings not to post letters this week.

Several firms were sending out returns by hand and some delivery services — which diverted on the frequent strikes and perpetual slowness of the postal system — were working at full steam.

The strike will be further complicated on Wednesday and Thursday by a full stoppage of post office workers.

This is expected to virtually close down the post offices and telegraph services.

Friday is expected to be the worst day when a nation-wide railway strike from 3.00 on Thursday night to 2.00 on Friday morning will be a nation-wide bus and train stoppage.

Airlines' concern over hijacking

(Reuter's Service)

AMSTERDAM, Oct. 20.

World airline chiefs today expressed concern at aerial hijacking and urged governments to put an end to "this form of modern piracy".

Professor Gerhard Hofde, outgoing president of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), said armed interference with and hijacking of civil transport planes was the most serious problem the industry had ever faced.

Professor Hofde, of the West German airline Lufthansa, was addressing the opening session here of IATA's four-day 25th annual conference.

He said: "This time of modern piracy cannot be tolerated. We must urgently reform the subject of the gangsters of all countries to accelerate their efforts and to combine in the strongest terms these criminal activities."

Dr. G. Van Der Wal, president of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and IATA President for 1968-70, also expressed concern at the growing number of hijackings.

The IATA Director-General, Mr. Knut Hammarskjold, said that safe, reliable and economic air transport were prerequisites for normal operating in areas of political conflict.

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