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Labouring for their clients: Justyn Caruana, Anglu Farrugia, Joseph Sammut, Chris Cardona, José Herrera and Gavin Gulia have all confirmed they have requested Presidential Pardons for their clients

Guess who is doing the asking for Presidential pardons?

SIX Labour MPs have admitted they have asked for presidential pardons for their clients, in their roles as criminal lawyers – news that will come as sweet music for the Nationalist spin machine. Of eight criminal lawyers serving as Labour MPs, only one denied ever asking for a presidential pardon, while another

lawyer could not be contacted. The list includes Labour's own shadow minister for home affairs Gavin Gulia, shadow minister for justice Anglu Farrugia, and MPs Chris Cardona, José Herrera, Justyn Caruana and Joseph Sammut, who confirmed they had all asked for presidential pardons.

Gozitan MP Anton Refalo could not be contacted yesterday, while Joe Brincat said he had never asked for presidential pardons for any of his clients. Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi would not be drawn into mentioning any of Labour's members whom he said, while addressing parliament during the motion

of no-confidence against Roads Minister Jesmond Mugliett advanced by the Opposition, had also requested presidential pardons for their convicted clients. A spokesperson for Gonzi said the prime minister felt he had to "respect the confidentiality" of the MPs who had written to him by electronic mail.

The reply contrasts with Gonzi's outburst in parliament, where he accused Labour of hypocrisy in its attack over the request for a presidential pardon for indicted ADT officials, by lawyer Jason Azzopardi, a Nationalist MP. Gonzi claimed he had received **▶ page 16**

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Cacopardo does not exclude standing for election

THE former Nationalist candidate at the heart of MEPA's opposition to reinstate him in its own audit office is not excluding standing for election. Asked by MaltaToday if he would be running in the next general elections, Carmal Cacopardo, also a former PN official, said: "Not at the moment." But he did not exclude the possibility. Cacopardo was until recently an investigating officer with MEPA's auditor Joe Falzon, before falling out of favour with the PN, despite having held the post of information secretary. His posting, a three-year tenure as investigator for Joe Falzon, has not been renewed by MEPA, which claims Cacopardo is incompatible with the post, noting his letters in the press on MEPA, and his participation in an Alternativa Demokratika debate on MEPA reform. Cacopardo hit back on Friday when his lawyer Toni Abela lodged a judicial protest against MEPA, its chairman, and Environment Minister George Pullicino, claiming discrimination.

Cacopardo against Lorry Sant, see page 5

MP wouldn't divulge names after corruption allegations

LABOUR'S shadow minister for roads has admitted not having passed on detailed information to the chairman of the planning authority, on people he accused of having paid a MEPA official. Charles Buhagiar had alleged a case of abuse in parliament concerning a MEPA employee, but when confronted by chairman Andrew Calleja to provide him with the relevant documentation, he refused citing client confidentiality. Talking to MaltaToday, Buhagiar yesterday said he had presented all documentation,

albeit with names blacked out, on the table of the House. But he also said it was when police later intervened, at the behest of Andrew Calleja's request, that he decided to pass all information in full for investigation. He told MaltaToday he had laid copies of cheques paid to the MEPA officer, with the names erased, on the table of the House. Last Wednesday, the Labour opposition lambasted the Nationalist government with accusations that a suspended official at MEPA was on full

pay – referring to the official who was suspended from the authority following the revelations by Buhagiar. However, MEPA chairman Andrew Calleja told MaltaToday: "Yes, he is out on full pay, but that is what the collective agreement says and I cannot break the rules." On the Buhagiar allegation, he said, "When years ago, Buhagiar mentioned a case of corruption in parliament, I invited him to this office where he showed me certain documents pertaining to the case. I then urged him to pass on the in-

formation so that I could take action but unfortunately, citing professional ethics to protect his client's interest, he chose to retain the documents. "However I initiated an internal investigation which resulted in a request to the police to pursue the matter. They did and he was arraigned in court." The annoying novelty of this case is that the employee is still on full pay, despite being suspended, pending a court sentence. *Andrew Calleja interviewed – page 7*

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