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MIDDLESEA RACE

Facing uncertain weather the 28th edition of the race begins

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BATTLE STATIONS

The 9th and 10th district. Who's who and what are the chances

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VASSALLO PROMISES 'GREEN HOUSE' EFFECT

The Green leader said yesterday that AD would be represented in parliament next year

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UNEQUAL MEASURES

Budget 2008 gives the Darmanin family an extra Lm715, but Mrs Axisa only gets Lm146.

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Judge slams NET for unfair political slant

MATTHEW VELLA

THE two members of the judiciary "outed" by the Commission for the Administration of Justice for being in breach of their code of ethics are vowing they will not step down from their positions as presidents of sporting associations.

Judge Carmelo Farrugia Sacco and Magistrate Antonio Mizzi, presidents of the Malta Olympic Committee (MOC) and Malta Basketball Association (MBA) respectively, have told MaltaToday they will stay on in their roles, affirming they are not breaking the law.

The two members were notified of their possible conflict of interest by the Commission back in August – but the notice was only made public by the Commission earlier this week, two and a half months later.

Speaking to MaltaToday, Farrugia Sacco also described a news report by the Nationalist TV station NET as "deplorable" for its use of continuous footage of the judge alongside Labour leader Alfred Sant, in what ap-



Farrugia Sacco and Mizzi won't 'bow down to pressure'

peared to be a deliberate political slant to the report.

"It is deplorable. They know they have footage of me with the Prime Minister, the Archbishop, or in my role as a sports official. The footage used was not fair," Farrugia Sacco said.

He told MaltaToday he will "not bow down to any pressure" to relinquish his post as MOC president.

Yesterday, Magistrate Antonio Mizzi also said he was not breaking any law and that

he was fulfilling his duties in Court to the full. "The Code of Civil Procedure already contemplates cases in which a conflict of interest might arise. Judges and magistrates certainly know whether and when they have to abstain or not in cases."

Farrugia Sacco said he believes the Commission's stand is related to statements made by Education Minister Louis Grech back in 2005 over the MOC's criticism of sporting legislation, and issues related to the MOC's au-

tonomy and allocation of funding to sporting associations.

Back then, Galea had pointed out he could "not fail to bring to attention the conflict for a Judge or Magistrate who, wearing the cap of MOC president or media director, takes a position against an act of parliament in public circumstances outside the judicial process" – referring to Farrugia Sacco and Mizzi (Mizzi was both an MOC director and MBA president).

Galea had said the Chief Justice had already asked the two members of the judiciary to conform to the code of ethics, which prohibits the judiciary from "behaviour that endangers their impartiality or independence". "The government cannot ignore the Chief Justice's admonishment," Galea had warned.

"I think it is related to that," Farrugia Sacco told MaltaToday. "I'm not saying this is linked to the minister. What I am saying is that government had never commented about previous members of the judiciary occupying other posts in sporting associations before this incident."

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Malta's doctors leaving to UK

MATTHEW VELLA

AT least 35 new doctors just graduated from the University of Malta will be applying for placements abroad, probably in the British national health service, to leave the island for better training opportunities and better salaries.

Health Minister Louis Deguara yesterday said the government was taking steps to stem the drain

of new medical graduates with new specialist training accreditation to be launched next year.

"The people invest their money in new doctors and risk losing them," Deguara said, acknowledging that the 35 graduates will be entering serious competition for postgraduate study placements in the UK.

"We will introduce specialist training courses next year. But there is no way we can match UK

salaries. If someone proposed that, we would only be kidding ourselves."

Last year, doctors' basic wages in the UK ranged from around GBP22,000 (Lm14,000) for a first year postgraduate, to around GBP90,000 (Lm59,000) at consultant level. With on-call work, a doctor's salary can be doubled. In Malta, a consultant earns Lm11,342, a senior registrar Lm10,033 and a house officer Lm7,623.

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Bondi ordered to keep hands off budget

KARL SCHEMBRI

LOU Bondi has yet again been stopped from holding a programme on the budget on TVM, after changing the topic for tomorrow's programme at the eleventh hour.

This will be the second consecutive week that Bondiplus is being ordered to keep its distance from the budget, after

the station instructed the PBS newsroom to produce the budget analysis last week instead of Bondi's programme.

According to a Broadcasting Authority ruling handed yesterday, Bondi will also have to steer clear of the budget tomorrow and stick to a programme about Azzjoni Nazzjonali, as originally planned.

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