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National

Lawyer blames client's partner for heroin possession charge

Waylon Johnston

A defence lawyer insisted yesterday that her client was accused of heroin possession on the basis of what his partner told the police following an argument a few days earlier.

Joseph Camilleri, 44, from Għargħur, a former drug addict, was allegedly caught in possession of heroin sachets on Wednesday. The police say the sachets were ready to be sold.

Lawyer Giannella Caruana Curran said the drugs were found in the bedroom he shared with his partner of 16 years who was a drug addict and was on bail pending other cases. Just three days before the police raided the house in Għargħur, the couple had an argument and she decided to pin the blame on him when officers searched the pace and wanted to know to whom did the drugs belong to, the lawyer added.

The woman, Dr Caruana Curran informed the court, was also involved in another serious case that involved well-known criminals such as Charles Muscat, *Il-Pips*, and Alfred Bugeja, *Il-Porporina*. Everything pointed towards the woman's intention to harm her partner, the motivation being the argument they had just days before, the lawyer said.

Dr Caruana Curran noted that her client had a clean police record, three children to look after and would risk losing his job if denied bail when his partner was on bail pending such serious cases.

Police Inspector Johann Fenech told Magistrate Miriam Hayman the partner of the accused was the main witness and granting him bail would be putting her testimony at risk.

Mr Camilleri was remanded in custody.

Violent estranged husband gets suspended sentence

Waylon Johnston

A man who chased his former wife to the local police station and then violently resisted two officers who tried to arrest him was yesterday given a suspended jail term.

Joseph Bianchi, 39, from Vittoriosa admitted to the charges brought against him including seriously injuring one of the officers who needed five sutures to his right arm. The incident happened on August 7 at about 6.30 p.m. in Cospicua.

Magistrate Neville Camilleri said Mr Bianchi's ex-wife had forgiven him and that he had a clean police record besides having fully cooperated with the police. The court took these mitigating factors into consideration when considering judgement. Mr Bianchi was given a one-year jail term suspended for two years and placed on probation for one year.

Police Inspector Jesmond Borg prosecuted.

Lawyer Franco Debono appeared for Mr Bianchi.

Sta Venera bank branch reopens after fire

The HSBC branch in Sta Venera has reopened for business offering full banking services after it was closed for almost two weeks following a fire.

The branch had been temporarily closed and the staff was relocated to Ħamrun after a small fire caused by an electrical fault in a section of the branch on September 7. No one was injured and no assets were damaged. A survey was carried out and the electrical fault was identified and rectified, the bank said.

HSBC regretted any inconvenience the closure could have caused to customers and thanked all personnel involved for their support.

Get on your bike and ride on car-free day

Inspire, the Foundation for Inclusion, will be organising a Cycling For A Cleaner Future event today as part of Car Free Day being marked tomorrow.

Over 150 cyclists will leave from two locations – the National Park at Ta' Qali and Inspire Marsascala – making their way along a predetermined route before meeting at Manoel Island for some quick refreshments and cycling collectively to finish at Piazza Tigné.

The event kicks off at 9 a.m.

The aim of the activity is to raise funds for Inspire through a participation donation while raising awareness about the environment.

Record breaker's belongings up for auction

Items found in the house of former Gżira mayor and water treading world record holder, Albert Rizzo, will be auctioned later this month.

Mr Rizzo passed away at the age of 60 in 2008, the same week he planned to contest the election as a Nationalist Party candidate. His daughter, Liz Rizzo, said her father died soon after the promotional election flyers had been printed.

He was an auctioneer by profession and was known for his water treading world record of 72 hours and three minutes. In 1980, he won the Sportsman of the Year award.

Among Mr Rizzo's various career collectables there are paintings, silver, fine porcelain, chandeliers and his personal gold Rolex watch, will feature in the auction.

The auction, by Obelisk Auctions, will be held at Casa Rizzo in Gżira on September 24.

