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Maltese adventurers

A group of nine Maltese adventurers participating in the Kilimanjaro charity climb reached the summit of the highest point in Africa in the early hours of Valentine's Day. » Page 5

Mepa rapped again

Planning Authority auditor Joseph Falzon has rapped the authority's own Heritage Advisory Committee for dismissing a detailed heritage report on an 18th-century building in Qormi. » Page 5

€120 million loan

A €120 million loan by the Central Bank to the International Monetary Fund was a none-off credit that formed part of an agreement to help economies facing financial crises. » Page 5

Utility tariffs protest

The Labour Party fully supported the upcoming national protest against the water and electricity tariffs organised by 11 unions and would join in. » Page 6

**Youths for Pope**

Joyous youths emerged from Mosta Rotunda church yesterday, singing praises to God in preparation for the upcoming visit of Pope Benedict XVI. » Page 7

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Contact us

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For general enquiries please call
Allied Newspapers reception on
2559 4100

Fax: 2124 7901

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daily@timesofmalta.com or the
address on the letters page

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International

Russian missiles

Russia sees no reason to stall on the sale of its S-300 anti-aircraft systems to Iran, the Kremlin's powerful Security Council said yesterday. » Page 12

Child abuse scandal

Bishops who will meet Pope Benedict over a paedophilia scandal that has shaken devoutly Catholic Ireland will acknowledge the "enormous injustice and cruelty" inflicted on the victims. » Page 13

Anti-immigration calls

The stabbing death of an Egyptian youth in Milan sparked fresh anti-immigration calls ahead of regional elections in Italy, yesterday. » Page 14

**Clinton's appeal**

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton yesterday urged Muslim leaders to help halt Iran's sensitive nuclear work and detected a possible shift in China towards supporting sanctions against Tehran. » Page 15

Afghan offensive

Twelve Afghan civilians were killed yesterday during a major US-led offensive against Taliban in southern Afghanistan, as commanders said booby traps and snipers were slowing progress. » Page 16

National



Photos: Jason Borg

Mintoff under the hammer

Duncan Barry

A bronze bust of former Prime Minister Dom Mintoff by Vincent Apap will be among items to be auctioned later this month.

The auction, between February 25 and 27, will take place at 1, Aragon Lane, Holy Cross Street, Mdina and will include a collection of 17th- and 18th-century antiques and fine arts from private collections.

Among the items that will go under the hammer will be 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century Old Master paintings including works by the *Bottega* of Mattia Preti and Antoine de Favray, a manuscript of the Privileges granted to Malta by the kings of Aragon and Sicily and the Popes, 1350-1550, 17th- and 18th-century maps of Malta and arms and militaria.

For more information visit www.obeliskauctions.com



Minor attacks policemen while leaving courtroom

A 16-year-old boy injured a police sergeant yesterday after he turned violent as he was being escorted out of a courtroom where he was accused of injuring three people during a fight at City Gate on Friday night.

The Floriana teenager was charged together with Jason Dingli, 18 of Qormi.

They both pleaded not guilty to seriously injuring two men and slightly injuring a third.

They were also accused of taking part in a group of more than 10 with the intent of committing a crime. The minor was also accused of relapsing.

One of the victims suffered a fractured skull and a fractured nose in an argument that broke out on Friday night at City Gate, Police Inspector Pierre Micallef Grimaud told Magistrate Gabriella Vella.

The group the two young accused belong to regularly taunted people at City Gate and

had been previously warned by the police to stop acting in that manner.

Defence lawyer Veronique Dalli said her clients were not actually involved in the fight but were trying to break it up.

The court remanded both of the accused in custody.

As the two were being escorted out of the courtroom, the minor turned violent and it took three policemen to restrain him, one of the officers sustaining injuries.