

malta today



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Sunday, 05 August 2007 – issue 404

www.maltatoday.com.mt

pgs. 12-13

EXCLUSIVE

'SOMEONE FROM THE MINISTRY WILL COVER UP FOR US'

KARL SCHEMBRI

A Malta Maritime Authority (MMA) official facing corruption charges in the mariners' licences bribery scandal has alleged that his superior, who is also indicted in the case, had reassured him that

a ministry official would cover up for their frauds.

In his interrogation at the police depot the day after his arrest on 13 June, MMA clerk Ivan Muscat told investigators that his manager, John Farrugia, had admitted there were fake navigators' course certificates presented for the issu-

ing of licences, but told him not to worry as "someone in the ministry" would cover them.

In his statement, Muscat, 30, recounted how between two and three years ago he had realised there were suspicious certificates that were supposedly issued by MCAST. When he had ap-

proached his manager about it, Farrugia had at first told Muscat there was nothing wrong.

"I remained sceptical," Muscat told the police, until Farrugia, 60, approached him later admitting they were not genuine certificates, asking him "to close an eye" and promising that "the story would

stop there".

"But it didn't stop there," Muscat added. "I started receiving much more of them (forged certificates) and I started feeling afraid because I was visible, there was my signature."

It was at this point that Muscat alleged

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GIVE ME A 1,000 BONDIS TO ONE PEPPI - JASON MICALLEF see pg7

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Sarko's nuclear deal sparks fears over Malta's safety

MATTHEW VELLA

THE Maltese government is trying not to upset diplomatic and commercial ties with Libya, balking at the prospect of a nuclear reactor which French president Nicolas Sarkozy will

provide to the country ruled by the dictator once dubbed by Ronald Reagan as the 'Mad Dog' of the Middle East.

MaltaToday can reveal that the Maltese government is actively following up reports of the civil nuclear technology deal Sarkozy signed with Libya – although it has not yet expressed public concern over the move, which is being actively criticised in France and Germany.

In Malta, the Green Party has lambasted the French decision, but the Labour party said Libya had won international respect for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The Maltese government is in contact with its ambassador in Paris, Vicki Ann Cremona, over the matter and two reports have already been compiled over the situation. But details of the deal remain unclear to the embassy as much of the French bureaucracy is now on holiday.

Foreign Minister Michael

Frendo yesterday told MaltaToday the government will be monitoring the situation through the European Union.

But his cautious note was to say Libya had renounced its weapons of mass destruction programme back in 2004, referring to Muammar Ghaddafi's crucial step to come in from the cold after years of

sponsoring international terrorism.

"This energy proposal is for desalination purposes and not linked with weapons," Frendo said. He added that the nuclear energy proposal would be coming from a European Union member state and have to work within international safety procedures. ▶ page 3



Ghaddafi and Sarkozy

Chinese human traffickers used Malta as base

KARL SCHEMBRI

MALTA has served as a logistical base and launching pad for at least two Chinese underground gangs, illegally trafficking hundreds of co-nationals to Sicily by powerboats on trips that have

proved fatal in stormy seas.

The evidence emerges in the wake of the arrest of five Chinese traffickers in Italy, one in Spain, and the naming of two wanted suspects currently serving sentences in the Maltese prison after being found guilty in other cases of human trafficking. ▶ page 6



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