

# maltatoday



Beating Anorexia

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## Nationalist mayor reports brothers to MEPA

JAMES DEBONO

IN a definite break with the nepotism and omertà characterising Gozitan politics, Nationalist mayor Chris Said reported an illegality committed by Said Constructions—a company owned by his brothers Peter Paul and Josef Said to the Malta Environment and Planning Authority.

In an interview with MaltaToday, Chris Said reveals that he had lodged his report to MEPA on 29 August 2005, two full years before MEPA finally removed the illegality which consisted of a yard used to park construction vehicles.

“In the farms next to the Kenuna garden, material is being deposited continuously,” Said warned the authority in an email sent to MEPA’s senior enforcement officer Mark Cini two years ago. “It is important to take action. It seems that this material is being deposited by Said Construction.”

The illegality was located on the cliff’s edge, overlooking breathtaking scenes of Gozo, Comino and northern Malta, making the adjacent public garden one of the most visited spots for tourists visiting Gozo.

In his email Said claimed that he was making this report after “making the usual drive around

Nadur during the weekend.”

In his reply, Cini informed the mayor that the site was already covered by an enforcement order and that MEPA was regularly inspecting the site.

The illegality committed by Said Constructions was only reported on Maltastar last February, a few days before last March’s local elections.

When MEPA enforcement officers finally intervened to remove the illegality in August this year, the police had to protect MEPA officials from being physically assaulted by Said’s younger brothers, who were clearly infuri-



Chris Said: Whistleblows on his family

ated by the authorities enforcing the law.

But when contacted by Labour Party newspaper KullHadd, Nadur mayor Chris Said immediately condemned his brothers’ illegalities on the Ta’Kenuna site.

“I agree with MEPA’s enforcement action. I have never protected anyone and whoever broke the law should pay for his actions,” Said told Kullhadd last August.

Interview pages 12-13

## MEPA Chairman refusing to stay on

JAMES DEBONO

ENVIRONMENT Minister George Pullicino is looking for a new Chairman for the Malta Environment and Planning Authority as Andrew Calleja’s second term in office expires in a month’s time.

MaltaToday is informed that



Andrew Calleja: After stripping the MEPA audit office of its investigator and with his term of office up, he just wants to leave

efforts are still being made to persuade the present Chairman to remain in office for another year but so far Andrew Calleja has adamantly refused the offer.

The Development Planning Act states that MEPA board members, including the chairman are appointed for a period of “not less than three years”. But the same law also states that board members can serve for up to “seven consecutive years.”

Andrew Calleja has already served as MEPA Chairman for the past six years.

Contacted on his possible re-appointment for another year, MEPA Chairman Andrew Calleja said that he

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## One-third of Maltese not coping with expenses

ONE-THIRD of the Maltese say they are not earning enough money to cope by the end of the month according to the findings of the latest MaltaToday survey.

A good 41 per cent of respondents say they earn just enough to make ends meet throughout the month, while only 26 per cent claim to have enough cash saved for their future.

### maltatoday Survey Highlights:

32% not earning enough to cope

21% eat in a restaurant every week

21% take their summer holiday abroad

28% think that economic situation is improving

39% think that economic situation is deteriorating

The survey shows that not everyone is passing through a hard time. There are 21 per cent who can afford to eat out in a hotel or restaurant more than once a week, and another 21 per cent who can afford to take their summer holiday abroad.

These mixed signs come in the wake of the latest figures issued by the National Statistics Office showing the Maltese economy growing by nearly 4 per cent. The MaltaToday survey shows that only 28 per cent believe that the economic situation is actually improving and that 32 per cent do not make ends meet by the end of the month.

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## Gonzi to push party financing debate in Cabinet tomorrow

KARL SCHEMBRI

THE Prime Minister will be pushing the debate on party financing at tomorrow’s Cabinet meeting following weeks of claims and counter-claims on politicians’ close and obscure ties to businessmen.

The debate will be held against the backdrop of a widespread discussion triggered by Labour’s intensive campaign targeting PN secretary general Joe Saliba’s ties to construction magnate Zaren Vassallo, with whom he recently spent a week aboard his luxury cabin cruiser Princess Charlene on a holiday in the Mediterranean.

The Labour onslaught eventually backfired, as sister paper Illum revealed that Vassallo was also a generous donor to the opposition party while another construction giant, Charles Poli-

dano, also claimed to have built the Super One building’s roof as well as helping the PN build its new headquarters in Pieta’.

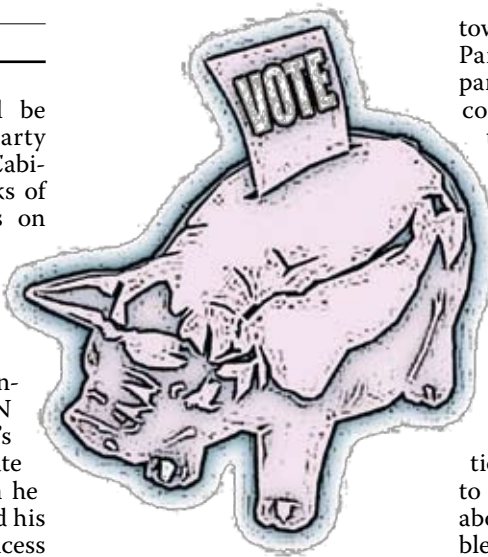
Tomorrow’s Cabinet discussion is meant to be the first step

towards a full-fledged debate in Parliament in a bid to introduce party financing laws, as public concern about the parties’ ties to big businesses and lack of transparency in hefty donations have already marked the direction the election campaign in its early stages.

The debate comes 12 years after the PN’s intransigence on the so-called Galdes Commission led to an aborted reform, when it resisted capping party donations at Lm10,000 and having to declare every contribution above Lm5,000, wanting to double both ceilings.

At that time, Lawrence Gonzi was still speaker of the House but now he finds himself steering the debate unwittingly stirred up by Saliba.

More on party financing on pages 6 and 7



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Nhar ta' Tnejn 8:30pm

fuq Smash TV mill-24 ta' Settembru

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