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Security fears plague electoral office

Building targeted by thieves and vandals

KARL SCHEMBRI

SECURITY at the electoral commission's office is vulnerable to serious flaws just as the country is gearing up for a general election, as the building has become the target of persistent thefts and acts of vandalism over the last months.

MaltaToday can reveal that a

spate of criminal acts have remained unsolved over the past months. Although they are admittedly petty crimes, they expose worrying implications of the glaring lack of security surrounding the centre that will be coordinating this year's election.

Situated in the Evans Building in Valletta, this newspaper has confirmed that until last week,

a spat of robberies and acts of vandalism have taken place as the situation is seriously worrying staff working there, who are continuously ending up as suspects in inquiries that are being kept an internal affair.

The latest act to plague the widely visited building undetected and unreported to the police was the smashing of the frame with the official photo of Presi-

dent Eddie Fenech Adami that is found in all government departments. The frame was found smashed over the last weekend.

The most recent theft happened on Thursday 27 December when a female employee found her purse missing from her handbag which she left in her office while she went smoking in the designated room.

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MARIO P. AZZOPARDI



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PAMELA HANSEN

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Hunters: what's the big deal?

CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL INFORMATION ON SANT PURPOSELY LEAKED TO PRESS

ALFRED Sant's closest lieutenants are livid that private medical information related to the Opposition leader's serious condition was leaked to individuals in the press.

Labour sources told MaltaToday they were confronted with precise and confidential information related to the Labour leader's state of health by a journalist. The sources told MaltaToday that they have strong suspicions of who from inside Mater Dei was behind the leak, but that it would be close to impossible to confirm.

"When I was faced with this confidential and personal information by a journalist, I could only think of how someone could stoop so low."

A very senior Labour source confirmed that the information was not as yet published but he would not be too surprised if it was.

When it was pointed out that such information

could be relevant considering the status of the person in question – Sant – the same source said: "This is Malta and you cannot simply ignore the privacy and the sentiments of his family. And since when have we started discussing the state of health of public people in the local press?"

Last Sunday, the Sunday Times chose to part with tradition and enter into the details of Sant's operation. The Sunday newspaper went as far as to declare the growth that was removed from Sant as having been malignant, and therefore cancerous.

Later this week, surgeon Prof. Anthony Zammit who operated on Dr Sant stated that the Labour chief would be in a position to address the party conference planned for the end of January.

The Sunday Times' revelation pushed close family members of Alfred Sant into a panic and a fury. "The same yardstick was not used when Fenech Adami was operated on two separate occasions, but then what do you expect? Take a look at the press statements of the day," MaltaToday was told.

On Friday, Alfred Sant was discharged from hospital. He is expected to spend weeks convalescing at home. But Labour insiders are still expecting him to address the MLP general conference in three weeks' time.

Gonzi proves Jeremiahs wrong

IT was a gamble that paid dividends. Lawrence Gonzi's decision to have the ambitious euro changeover set for January 1, 2008 had been strongly discouraged by some Cabinet ministers, MaltaToday has learnt.

Ironically, in his regular article written in The Times last Wednesday by Alfred Sant, probably penned prior to his medical operation at Mater Dei, the Opposition leader continued to question the timing for the introduction of the euro.

However, Gonzi chose to ignore his ministers' doomsday talk to instead get on with the introduction of the euro.

Today Malta is one of 13 European nations to have the euro as their national currency.

And apart from the glitch that saw the Prime Minister himself being refused euros from an ATM on the night of the changeover in full glare of the press, the euro changeover has been unusually smooth.

Most shops were trading in euros, and many seem to have taken the change in currency – the second in four decades – in their stride. Customers were seen patiently queuing outside banks to



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