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WAITING TO EXPLODE



Gonzi yesterday ordered "a full review of the situation" upon learning of MaltaToday's questions, but the AFM Commander (right) says all is above board at the Gozo store

For a whole decade, government sat on an illegal high explosives warehouse less than 270 metres from public roads despite warnings of catastrophe

George Abela: Down but not out - page 10
MoviesToday with Eric German - page 27

Nicholas Azzopardi: No evidence of injured officer in police records

CLAIMS that a police officer was injured trying "to save Nicholas Azzopardi from jumping off a wall" remain shrouded in mystery as MaltaToday is reliably informed that nowhere is this documented on official police records. Sources close to the Vice Squad say the internal police register makes no reference to the allegation carried on The Times' front page on 1 May that a policeman was injured as he tried holding Azzopardi, carried under the headline "Policeman 'tried to save' Nicholas Azzopardi". Nor is there any mention of the alleged treatment the same policeman is supposed to have been given in hospital for "scratches on his forearms and



The scene of Azzopardi's mysterious fall

chest injuries". The news shifts the onus back onto the police force to explain the suspicious claim made a full nine days after the death of Azzopardi after he was interrogated by Police Sergeant 656 Adrian Lia and Police Constable 1359 Reuben Zammit.

See also: *Proven liar promoted* – page 9 **pg 9 >**

KARL SCHEMBRI

TONS of high explosives are stored in an illegal depot near manned Armed Forces facilities, public roads, cultivated land and residences on the outskirts of Nadur, Gozo, despite a clear warning of impending catastrophe a decade ago. MaltaToday can reveal that up to five tons of quarry explosives and impounded illegal fireworks are being stored in Qortin, close to the bay of San Blas, in a garage belonging

to the army that was never designed for explosives. The precariousness of the situation was described in alarming terms in official correspondence as far back as 10 years ago between the Office of the Prime Minister and the AFM, with the possibility of a catastrophe outlined in no uncertain terms. The revelation comes at a time when government and the police are stepping up measures to crack down on the illegal storage of explosives and fireworks, some of which

has taken place in the midst of residential areas, occasionally with fatal consequences. Yesterday night, the prime minister's press secretary said "a full review" was ordered soon after MaltaToday's questions reached OPM. "The Prime Minister instructed the Defence Matters Directorate and the AFM to, immediately, conduct a full review of the situation and to submit their recommendations," Gordon Pisani said yesterday. **pg 8 >**

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