



ABELA BACKS OUT

George Abela will not be standing on the Labour ticket for the European parliamentary elections

FORMER Labour deputy leader George Abela will not be on the MLP's European parliamentary candidates' list next June. The former contender for party leadership has decided to back out from the EP elections, as senior Labour officials told MaltaToday that Abela had cited personal reasons for his decision.

He reported his decision not to contest after returning from a family holiday.

Abela's decision effectively robs Labour of one of its more prominent and moderate voices, who was expected to take centre-stage in the upcoming European elections.

Party officials were quick to point out that the party will be fielding some well-known and 'moderate' candidates for the June election.

These may well include former Sea Malta chairman and entrepreneur Marlene Mizzi, as a possible boost to the women candidates in Labour's list.

George Abela made a surprise comeback after 10 years away from Labour, returning with his leadership bid right after Labour's

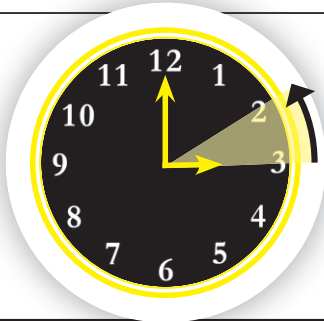


Paul Borg Olivier Interviewed

12-13 ▶▶

Time change

It's Winter Time. Did you remember to turn the hour back?



Asbestos at Gozo hospital

Karl Schembri

THE Gozo General Hospital is home to asbestos ceilings waiting to be removed, MaltaToday has confirmed.

Asbestos false ceilings are found in the hospital corridors, operating theatre, the radiology department and the coronary care unit. Banned from buildings because of their link to cancer, they were installed in the early 1970s, when the hospital was built, to cover pipes suspended from the ceilings.

A spokesperson for the Gozo minister Giovanna Debono has

confirmed the presence of asbestos in hospital.

"The removal of this false asbestos ceiling is being carried out in phases and is linked to the ongoing hospital refurbishment programme since it also involves the changing of underlying services and the installation of a new ceiling," the spokesperson said.

Asbestos has already been removed from other areas in the hospital, including the emergency department, female geriatric ward, maternity and gynaecology ward, doctors' quarters, kitchen and the physiotherapy department.

Earlier this month, the ministry

issued a call for tenders for the removal of asbestos in parts of the hospital, in procedures that are highly complicated because of the health risks involved.

In fact, material made from asbestos can be fatal when it is damaged or disturbed. Drilling, cutting, hitting and handling of asbestos ceilings exposes very fine loose fibres that can be inhaled, leading to lung diseases and cancer.

While the presence of asbestos stirs widespread fears linked to fatal cases of workers exposed unknowingly to this highly toxic mineral, the president of the



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