



Tonio Borg still silent despite latest fireworks tragedy

JAMES DEBONO

THE government has chosen to remain tight-lipped on the safety of Malta's fireworks factories despite the latest explosion which took the life of another person just months after an explosion in Gharghur claimed five lives.

Following requests for comment, deputy prime minister and minister for home affairs and justice Tonio Borg is still refusing to divulge how many safety inspections were carried out in the past year on fireworks factories.

MaltaToday also asked Borg what steps government will be

taking to increase safety in this sector following last week's tragedy in Zurrieq.

But in a crisp one-sentence reply, the ministry only chose to reply to MaltaToday's question on whether the government is implementing recommendations made by the Pyrotechnics Commission, an ad hoc com-

mission set up to prepare recommendations on safety in the factories.

"The ministry is still awaiting the Pyrotechnics Commission's report. The Commission informed us that the said report will be ready in the next few weeks," a spokesperson told MaltaToday.

But the Commission has already recommended to Borg that two factories, the San Mikiel factory in Lija, the minister's home constituency, and the Sant Andrija factory in Luqa be closed down because of the danger they pose to nearby residents and property since they are not sufficiently distant

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Fava reveals: price freeze was not discussed at Chamber

Reiterates that medicine costs will explode after agreement ends

REGINALD Fava, the medicines importer and former president of the Chamber of Commerce, has told MaltaToday the crucial price-freezing agreement over medicinals had never been discussed in the council of the Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise – an important plank on which government has secured stabled prices ahead of the general elections.

Fava, who is the president emeritus of the Chamber and also a council member of the same Chamber, told MaltaTo-

day: "May I assure the public in general as an elected council member of this institution, that this most important matter was at no point discussed at council level, let alone agreed to."

Fava has already declared in a televised interview during the PBS programme Reporter that the prices of medicines would definitely rise after the freeze is lifted in March 2008.

The Chamber of Commerce later issued a statement disassociating itself from the comments of the former president. "Mr

Reginald Fava certainly spoke in his own capacity... it is simply the choice of companies to sign up to or not and the reason for signing up can be varied. It could be the company's commitment to a smooth euro changeover and it could also be part of the company's business strategy."

But Fava has categorically stated his opposition to the agreement. "I certainly do not expect the Chamber's president Victor A. Galea to agree with me when he happened to be one of the signatories to

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Man dies after ambulance delayed by Mater Dei migration

JULIA FARRUGIA

A man who complained of a severe chest pain ended up losing his life after the ambulance took some 40 minutes to arrive, allegedly delayed by the ongoing migration process at Mater Dei.

The incident took place last week at the Bank of Valletta's head office St Venera, where Ray

Debattista, a messenger, was taken ill suffering from a sharp pain in the chest. Immediately his colleagues called St Luke's hospital to dispatch an ambulance to the scene.

As time wore on and the ambulance still had not reached the offices, someone even called the Mosta Health Centre to ask for help, but to no avail, people close to Bank of Valletta employees

told MaltaToday.

At one point the messenger's colleagues were allegedly informed that all ambulances were busily involved in the Mater Dei migration process, and that was the main reason why the ambulance took so long to reach destination.

Sources close to the bank confirmed that the ambulance reached

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ROYAL VISIT - Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip yesterday arrived in Malta where she met Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi at the Upper Barakka. See pages 18 and 19

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