

2009

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**Birkirkara hold
Hibs, Dingli
gain first win**

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**Archbishop
back among
his flock**

» National Page 3

PM hints at rise in tariffs

Juan Antonio

The Prime Minister yesterday strongly hinted that the country should expect an increase in the price of electricity as oil prices continue to rise.

Although he stopped short of confirming that the news to be revised tariffs would go up, Lawrence Gonzi said: "I'm very worried because oil has reached \$75 a barrel. The tariffs are revised every six months."

They were last revised downward by 30 per cent in May. However, the Prime Minister pointed out that the tariffs were reduced only because oil fell out around \$40 a barrel.

"The world is still recovering from a recession and the price of oil will go up - we have to understand this," he said during a political meeting in Żebbuġ.

The highly controversial tariffs were made official in December but were introduced retroactively from October 1, not without some last-minute wrangling after dissenting arguments by the unions and employers.

Earlier this year, Infrastructure Minister Antonio Vassallo admitted that the government had miscalculated their assumptions.

However, the Labour Party yesterday criticised Dr Gonzi's "irresponsible statement" that might lead people to believe that their bills would be higher. These statements led to a surreptitious, widespread job and damaged the economy, it said.

The Labour Party reiterated its stance that the government should in the next budget announce a moratorium on tariffs, which would help families and businesses plan ahead.

During yesterday's meeting, Dr Gonzi looked out at Labour leader Joseph Muscat's "so-called" apology for the violent events that took place 30 years ago on Black Monday.

He accused the Labour leader of pushing to everyone: "You can't please everyone but must take a position," he said, reacting to the fact that Dr Muscat had denounced what happened on Black Monday but at the same time said the PM should apologise for its role in the Church's attack on Labour and its supporters.

Describing it as the most hypocritical apology he had ever heard, Dr Gonzi said it would have been better had Dr Muscat kept quiet.

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On top of the world



Lewis Hamilton celebrates his victory at the 2009 Formula One World Championship at the Yas Viceroy Hotel in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, yesterday. Photo: Reuters (3) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35) (36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42) (43) (44) (45) (46) (47) (48) (49) (50) (51) (52) (53) (54) (55) (56) (57) (58) (59) (60) (61) (62) (63) (64) (65) (66) (67) (68) (69) (70) (71) (72) (73) (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79) (80) (81) (82) (83) (84) (85) (86) (87) (88) (89) (90) (91) (92) (93) (94) (95) (96) (97) (98) (99) (100)

Cost-of-living

**€6.06
rise 'will
put jobs
at risk'**

Juan Antonio

A cost-of-living allowance of €6.06 a week would put jobs at risk unless the government intervenes to ease part of the burden that it would place on businesses, according to the president of the Malta Employers' Association.

Joe Farrugia noted that such a cost-of-living allowance (COLA) would be the highest given in 15 years - a figure that joined with the fact that the country was going through a recession.

"It's simply not the right time for the COLA," he said.

The figure of €6.06, which will be announced in three weeks' time during the budget speech, was revealed by The Sunday Times yesterday.

Mr Farrugia warned that it was still too early to say that the economy was over; the country was still feeling its pain.

"Many companies are waiting on a week-and-a-half basis because they prefer keeping their employees on a five-day week, for example, instead of furling them, hoping that the economy will improve."

Continued on page 4

FLORA

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THE CREAM
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**RISE IN FRAUD
IN MALTA
PREDICTED**
page 29

**US AMBASSADOR
ON US-MALTA
DIRECT FLIGHTS**
page 56

**FOUR JAILED
FOR VIOLENT,
INDECENT ASSAULT**
page 58

GWU turns down mediation attempt on VAT issue

The General Workers' Union yesterday refused to go to a meeting called by the mediator in the value added tax dispute it has with the government, whom the union has accused of not accepting the true conditions that had made for talks to start.

General secretary Angela Fenech told a news conference the union had made its conditions as a basis for discussions on VAT. The union is holding a one-day strike on Monday, provided by a demonstration the previous day.

The conditions were: to stop the VAT introduction date by these months, and award cost of living increases to compensate for VAT in the next budget.

The government's reply was not what the union had wanted. Mr Fenech said: "Prison had been set for an alternative route since the VAT law had been enacted and the union wanted compensation for this."

Ms Fenech said the conditions for talks did not mean the union had changed its principles, as many had believed.

"We just wanted to offer a basis for very difficult discussions," he said.

The union only wanted the VAT date postponed because it had such a difficult agenda for discussions that talks would take longer than two months.

A postponement of VAT would have given the union more time for discussions, making an agreement more possible.

With the government turning down the union's conditions, it was difficult for talks to start and the union had already turned down a request by the mediator, former President Czesław Tabea yesterday morning.

Mr Fenech said the union had always made it clear the general

UHM members to ignore strike

Told not to act as strike breakers

James Calvert

The Union Haddemba Magħqudin yesterday refused its members not to take part in Monday's anti-VAT strike called by the General Workers' Union.

But general secretary Maurice Agius, speaking at a meeting for shop stewards and group committees, said that not UHM members should act as strike breakers by doing work normally done by GWU members.

Speaking to a packed hall at the UHM's headquarters in Floriana, Mr Agius said everyone had the right to strike but everyone also had the right to work.

"It was being responsible as it could have taken more serious action, other than the strike, which would have had greater national consequences."

In a bid to combat any tensions

Torrential rains flood Malta

**More than October's
average rainfall recorded
in five hours**

By a Staff Reporter

A slow-moving storm hit the Maltese islands early yesterday morning, starting originally with blinding flashes of lightning and deafening thunder, then flooding roads, houses and shops as the heavens opened wide.

Cars were brought to a standstill by violent torrents of water and there were several fatalities, but fortunately no injuries were reported.

A statement issued by the Meteorological Office said an anticyclone which had persisted over central and eastern Europe for several days brought cold, unstable air into the central Mediterranean where it met warmer air from North Africa.

This created heavy showers which fell on Malta during the night and the early hours of yesterday morning.

The total rainfall recorded at Sliema between 2 and 7 a.m. - when rainfall was at its most intense - was 105mm (four inches), which is more than the

average rainfall for the whole month of October.

Police received countrywide flooding reports, especially in the Mtarfa, Attard, Birkirkara and Sliema areas.

A spokesman said a stationary car in Valley Road, Birkirkara was dragged along the valley by the raging floodwaters.

The Kankia fire brigade went out to assist in 20 calls, the Floriana brigade dealt with 20, and the Għajnsielem fire brigade dealt with 14 calls.

The fire brigade also had to deal with several calls to pump out water from flooded homes.

The environment department also tried to clear roads of debris carried by the floods but were hampered by the wet weather. However today, if conditions improve, they are expected to start a major clean-up.

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Flooded out... in Malta was forced out of his home by floodwaters, makes the best of the circumstances.

The Sunday Times of Malta

Awarded by To Malta
George VI April, 1942
No. 2,328 OCTOBER 19, 1969 8d.

U.S. BANS 'CYCLAMATE'

Sweetener caused cancer in rats

Dr. Robert Service
THE Government will order the removal from the market, from next January 1, of a wide range of beverages, food and drugs containing an artificial sweetener that has been found to cause cancer in laboratory rats, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, Mr. Robert H. Frosch, announced today.

The sweetener called cyclamate is contained in an estimated 10 per cent of products ranging from soft drinks to margarine, jam and other foodstuffs.

Dr. Frosch said, however, that the Government had no intention of banning the sweetener unless it could be proved to be a health hazard. The products are to be removed from the market only if they contain more than 10 per cent of cyclamate.

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THE MALTA ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION members, who left yesterday for the Atlantic Treaty Association's assembly meeting in Washington.

Malta delegates to Atlantic Association meeting in Washington

THIRTY-FIVE members of the Malta Atlantic Association left for Washington today for the Atlantic Treaty Association's assembly meeting in Washington.

The delegation will be led by Mr. William F. Hayes, U.S. Secretary of State, tomorrow morning, by Mr. Maurice Muscat, Secretary General of S.A.T.O., on Tuesday, and by Mr. Paul-André Zappalà, President of the Association, who will deliver the closing speech on Friday morning.

Members of the Maltese Association will attend discussions on the Atlantic Treaty Association's role in the Department of Defense, the Atlantic Council of the United States, the National Gallery, on Tuesday, and a reception given at the White House on Wednesday.

Dr. Mario Fenech, leader, and the delegation will be addressed by Mr. William F. Hayes, U.S. Secretary of State, tomorrow morning, by Mr. Maurice Muscat, Secretary General of S.A.T.O., on Tuesday, and by Mr. Paul-André Zappalà, President of the Association, who will deliver the closing speech on Friday morning.

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