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NATIVITY VILLAGE

Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi yesterday inaugurated Bethlehem Ġħajnsielem, an animated nativity village with live actors spread on 20 tumoli of land. A unique attraction in Gozo, it was set up as an initiative by the locality of Ġħajnsielem in an area of wasteland in the heart of the village. The nativity village has representations of both nativity scenes and skills and crafts for which Ġħajnsielem is renowned, thus bringing together the two themes in the title of the expo Bethlehem Ġħajnsielem. Photo DOI – Lorne Cremona

‘Sue me’, Muscat tells PN

BERNARD BUSUTTIL

Labour Party leader Joseph Muscat challenged the Nationalist Party to sue him after he published an email which he said “the Nationalist Party graciously sent to the PL”.

PN secretary general Paul Borg Olivier had threatened to sue Dr Muscat for publishing an email which he erroneously sent to his PL counterpart Jason Micallef in which the PL alleged that Dr Borg Olivier encouraged data sharing between the government and the party.

Dr Muscat said the PN should have had the decency to admit wrongdoing not threaten to sue him just because he published a document which was not intended to be viewed by the opposition.

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PM says local council terms should be longer

BERNARD BUSUTTIL

Local councils (LCs) should have a longer term than their current three years in office, said Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi yesterday as he closed the celebrations marking the 15th anniversary of the setting up of LCs.

Speaking at Castille before a hall jam packed with mayors, councillors, executive secretaries and politicians who were responsible for LCs at some point in their career, Dr Gonzi said he was of the opinion that three years were too short for LCs to implement their programmes and the government was committed to extend LCs' term.

The prime minister outlined how the celebrations were backed by a six-month consultation process which will lead to a reform in the sector, “renewal more than reform”, he pointed out.

What 15 years ago was an experiment, said Dr Gonzi, “today is a positive experience that has been of benefit for the country.” The Prime Minister said the great number of projects carried out by LCs bear testimony to how they improved localities and the lives of the people.

Dr Gonzi said he did not want the anniversary to be all about celebrating past successes but to “write a new chapter in a book that does not need to be written afresh.” He explained how the government announced the LCs' reform entitled *Kunsilli Lokali 2015* in May, which he entrusted to Parliamentary Secretary Chris Said and whom he thanked for his work. During the consultation period the government conferred with all stakeholders in the field, said Dr Gonzi.

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