

operation between Malta and Libya. ... will have a meeting with Libyan Foreign ... al-Shohoumi, who will be in Malta this ... expected to have a meeting with Foreign ... man Jason Azzopardi. ... al-Shohoumi are expected to pick up ... t off when Dr Frendo paid a visit to Libya

Ministry in the coming days, since both the wardens and the police force fall under this ministry's responsibilities. Minister Borg was involved in the discussions

announced that along with the introduction of some 300-350 bring-in sites, there will also be three or four civic amenity sites introduced to cater for bulky refuse.

in the last few years, sources told TMID. More details about the actual revisions to the act and the enforcement system to be implemented should be made public in the coming days.

Fig 2

'Malta could play big role'

Continued from page 1

Footage taped at various ship-breaking sites presented during the press conference showed how the ships are steered onto beaches and basically torn down over some four to five months by hundreds of workers in appalling conditions. The ships, most of which contain toxic waste or oil reservoirs, are left to spill in the sea. Rubbers from the ships' cables are burnt on site releasing large quantities of dioxins.

Furthermore, given the fact that many of these ships were built decades ago, a lot of them contain large quantities of highly carcinogenic asbestos, which the workers dismantle with their bare hands and without any facial or respiratory protection.

The export of these ships to Asia, where regulated ship-breaking facilities are practically non-existent, escalated after the Maltese-flagged oil tanker *Erika* broke in two and sank in 1999, leaking over 10,000 tons of heavy oil, polluting 400 kilometres of France's Brittany coast. The International Maritime Organisation decided to phase out single-hull oil tankers like *Erika* by 2010. The process was further hurried up after the single-hull oil tanker *Prestige* sank in 2002, polluting 4,000 kilometres of Spanish and French coast.

To this effect a report prepared for the European Commission shows that by 2010 there will be 2,200 single-hull ships to be scrapped, which means a five- or six-fold increase in the ships to be scrapped. This is an expansion that could spell an irreparable environmental and human catastrophe, Ms Harjono stressed.

Greenpeace's report shows that an estimated 34 ships flying a Maltese flag were sent for scrapping in Asia in 2003. So far this year the figure stands at 15. None of the ship owners had taken any steps to clean the ships before they were to be scrapped.

Besides the environmental damage caused by the unregulated way in which these ships are being scrapped, the sites are among the most hazardous workplaces in the world, Ms Harjono said. The fact that the ships to be scrapped still contain oil and other flammable materials means that there are frequent explosions on site.

The exact number of deaths occurring on these sites cannot be estimated as records are not kept and many of the workers do not have permits. The footage shown included scenes of countless children, completely unprotected, pulling at cables a few metres away from open fires.

Ship-breaking is big business, she added. On average, a scrap ship is worth some \$1.9 million and therefore many of the Asian developing companies competing for the market cannot afford to make demands on ship owners fearing that this can scare them off to another ship-breaking bay, campaigner Martin Besieux said.

"Many of these countries are willing to implement some changes, if not for the environment to safeguard their workers," he said. "But they cannot because if



they do make certain demands they will lose their market share, which is often an indispensable lifeline to large communities."

Last year India tried to implement measures to restrict the ships entering Indian shores to those which have already been cleaned of flammable fuel, but found that many ship owners were looking elsewhere.

The Greenpeace contingent is expected to ask the government to take immediate action ensuring that ships flying a Maltese flag are disposed of properly, in line with the Basel convention, of which Malta is a signatory. More importantly, Mr Besieux explained, Malta could play a major role in lobbying with other EU members and the rest of the international community. After all Malta is the fourth largest maritime register in the world, he stressed.

"Not only can Malta salvage its image as a responsible maritime nation but it can also spearhead a very profitable new business for its shipyards. In fact, the Maltese drydocks have been earmarked in the Greenpeace report as a possible green ship-breaking site. Ship-breaking is a lucrative business with a market that is only expected to expand in the foreseeable future."

ING TODAY

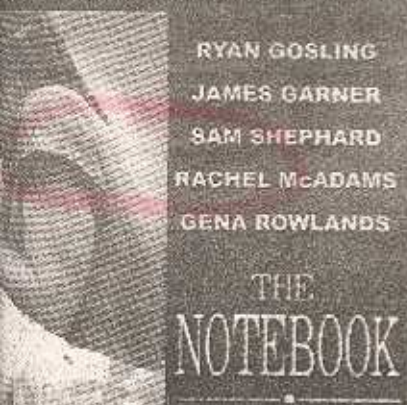
KE ANY OTHER NIGHT.



TOM CRUISE LATERAL

EMBASSY CINEMAWORLD VALLETTA
EDEN CENTURY CINEMAS GALLERIA FGURA

HEAT LOVE IS A GREAT STORY



THE NOTEBOOK

CINEMAS - ST. GEORGES BAY

Ben Stiller
Success didn't go to his head, it went to

City & Guilds
HAIRDRESSING COURSES

9am	Mtarfa
2.15pm	Mdina
5.30pm	Tarxien
7.15pm	Valletta

an aid
orkers
eased

Italian Prime Minister
Berlusconi said yesterday that
aid workers and two
trapped in Baghdad three
had been released.
said all four were hand-
ed to the Red Cross in Iraq.
A 29-year-old woman and
two other women were kidnapped in
Iraq on 7 September. Berlusconi
said his Italian citizens were expected to
be released soon, possibly even
today.
Berlusconi said "a moment of joy."
said, "The two girls are
and will be able to return to
their homes tonight."
The women were working for
the Italian company *Un Ponte Per...* (A
Bridge for...), and were involved in
water projects.
The kidnapping was first reported by the
news network Al-Jazeera.
Gianni Parisi, the father of one of
the girls, said on Al-Jazeera that
he was formed by Berlusconi and
others for the release of the two
girls. He has not spoken to them
yet but is waiting to do so in an
interview, he said.
Berlusconi thanked Al-Jazeera and the
United Arab Emirates, which he said had
a long friendship to the family
during such hard times.
Berlusconi went before Parliament
yesterday to announce the
breaking into applause.
The minister thanked the
agencies of Iraq's neigh-
bouring countries, including Jordan,
which was in Rome yesterday.
Berlusconi said that the Italian secret
service were involved in as many as
seventeen negotiations, without
success.



A ship about to be scrapped at Alang ship-breaking yard, India

Maltese-flagged ships second largest toxic fleet sold for scrap in Asia

MARK MICALLEF

A report compiled by Greenpeace, entitled *Playing Hide and Seek*, shows that Maltese-flagged vessels make up the biggest obsolete, toxic fleet being exported to Asia for ship-breaking, campaigner Marietta Harjono explained yesterday.
Ms Harjono is in Malta to hold meetings with the government on this matter over the next two days, together with her colleagues from Greenpeace International. The meetings will be held with Competitiveness and Communications Minister Censu Galea and Environment and Rural Affairs Minister George Pullicino.

The group gave a press conference yesterday at the Corinthia Palace Hotel in Balzan to create an awareness on the matter. Ms Harjono explained that despite that the Maltese government, together with some 160 other countries, signed the Basel convention – aimed at preventing toxic ship-breaking – 95 per cent of ships destined for wreckage still make their way to the beaches of India, Bangladesh, China, Pakistan and Turkey, among others, where they are scrapped indiscriminately, polluting the environment with hazardous toxins.

Clampdown
on illegal
dumping
'round the
corner

MARK MICALLEF

Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi
yesterday met Resources
Infrastructure Minister
Zammit and Environment
Rural Affairs Minister
Pullicino to iron out the
details of the revised
Littering Act, now said to
be the corner stone of
Independent.
The revisions to the
already been discussed
approved, in principle
Cabinet. They will be
final go-ahead next week
concerned ministries
finishing touches.
The Prime Minister
said that government has
clamped down on illegal
dumping during an interview
with *Malta Independent*
editor Noel Grimshaw
Granaries, as part of the
Party's Independence
celebrations programme, a
week broke the news on 11
September.
The measures, res
infrastructure ministry
Coordinator Melvyn M
said, will include he
on the fines already c
in the act.
The emphasis will be
enforcement.
In fact, while the ac
still being discussed,
most probably be give
over the issue, enable
issue fines on illegal

Continues on page 2

Continues on page 11

Continues