

'Business in Merchants Street flourishes after pedestrianisation'

Kurt Sansone



Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi (centre) took time to exchange taunts with football enthusiasts exchanging stickers outside the Anastasi outlet in Merchants Street, Valletta, yesterday.
Photo: Jason Borg

Over 20 shops opened in Merchants Street, Valletta since its re-paving and pedestrianisation two years ago, according to shop owners.

Accompanying Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi on a stroll down the busy street yesterday, Tonio Camilleri, president of the Merchants Street Business Association, said business was boosted by pedestrianisation and the government's project to improve the street encouraged businessmen to upgrade their shops.

Dr Gonzi was invited to visit the shops by the association.

Mr Camilleri expressed concern over the loss of parking in various parts of Valletta and suggested that the park-and-ride system should be extended. He also urged the authorities to ensure proper traffic management when Renzo Piano's Valletta entrance regeneration materialises because the main street over City Gate would be removed.

Dr Gonzi said the success achieved in Merchants Street was a pointer of how such projects generated economic activity. He hit out at the doomsayers who criticised the Piano project and insisted regeneration led to more jobs.


During his tour, the Prime Minister briefly chatted with a number of shop owners, including the Labour Party's candidate for the European Parliament elections, Marlene Mizzi.

Tourists were also amused to have the Prime Minister stop and speak to them.

The highlight was a friendly exchange of taunts between Dr Gonzi and a number of enthusiasts gathered outside the Anastasi outlet exchanging football stickers. The group of men knew that Dr Gonzi's favourite team was Inter.

On a more serious note one of them criticised the Prime Minister for the hefty water and electricity bills. "We come here to forget our troubles," he lamented.

Comments

Phil Humphries(1 week, 3 days ago) 

"Dr. Gonzi hit out at the doomsayers who criticised the Piano project ?" - Who told him people were criticising the Piano project? He couldn't have heard the criticism himself because his ears were firmly closed ! Perhaps his Ministers told him ? (Yeah, as if !).

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"Tourists were also amused to have the Prime Minister stop and speak to them". - Amused is an understatement - They couldn't stop laughing when he told them about his plans for a roofless theatre and gateless gate !

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"The group of men knew that Dr Gonzi's favourite team was Inter" - And suddenly it all made sense !

Joe Grech(1 week, 3 days ago) 

...And TROUBLE our Prime Minister - and his administration - have a-plenty!
As also irresponsible mismanagement and loss of credibility.
