



The Voice of the Maltese

Issue
266

(We are for the Greater Malta)
January 18, 2022

**A fortnightly print
and digital magazine**

Vale Lino Vella
1936-2022
(see page 7)



***A tribute to Australia on the
234th Anniversary of the
country's National Day***

(See also main feature on page 2)

Australia Day 2022

– a time to reconnect

We are all part of the story



Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, on Wednesday January 26th, each State and Territory in Australia will commemorate the 234th Anniversary of the country's National Day, marking the day in 1788 of the arrival of the First Fleet of British Ships at Port Jackson, New South Wales.

It also marks the first day of the raising of the flag of Great Britain by Captain Arthur Phillip who eventually became the first Governor of the colony of New South Wales and the fledgling colony.

In present-day Australia, celebrations aim to reflect the diverse society and landscape of the nation and are marked by community and family events, reflections on Australian history, official community awards and citizenship ceremonies welcoming new members of the Australian community.

Australia Day is an opportunity for the inhabitants to celebrate their cultural diversity and rich migrant heritage, which is very much part of the unique Australian identity that has helped shape a nation proud of its strong and successful multiculturalism.

This Australia Day, the community is encouraged to Reflect, Respect and Celebrate the nation and its people – especially its strong sense of community as Australians work towards reconnecting. It is also a time to recognise the resilience of all Australians and to focus on what they can achieve when they move forward as a community and a unified nation.

However, Australia Day means different things to different people and everyone is encouraged to acknowledge it in a way that is meaningful to them.

It is important that one acknowledges the significant contribution that everyone makes to the nation, from the first people who have lived there for 65,000 years to the newest citizens who call Australia home.

Regardless of their origins or their past, the 26th of Jan-

H.E. Ms Jenny Cartmill

High Commissioner for Australia in Malta

Warm greetings from us all at the Australian High Commission on Australia Day 2022!

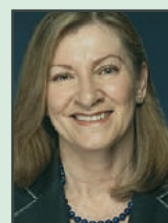
It's a day to reflect on what it means to be Australian, to celebrate contemporary Australia and to acknowledge our long history.

Indigenous Australians, as the traditional custodians of the land, have a fundamental role in our 60,000-year-old story. At the same time, we weave in the newer stories of generations of people from across the world, including many from Malta.

As a nation of 25 million people now, we're continuing the story together of building a peaceful, prosperous and multicultural society.

We aren't able to celebrate with a large event due to the ongoing pandemic, but I will be hosting a smaller official lunch honoured by the presence of the President, HE Dr George Vella and Mrs Vella. We'll toast both Australia and Malta and hope for a better year for all.

Best wishes for a wonderful day on the 26th



uary is a day for Australians from all backgrounds and communities to come together to share stories, embrace their diversity, celebrate their unity and to contribute to the nation's story and achievements.

On this day, which is a public holiday, local councils normally host their own activities with invited Australia Day Ambassadors, and especially across NSW, taking part in local events and festivities.

However, for the second year running, the COVID-19 pandemic will keep celebrations down and activities muted.

In fact, events already listed by Local Councils weeks ahead, and others by private entities may be subject to change. It is the organisers themselves who are responsible for adhering to any relevant public health orders, as well as preparing and implementing a COVID Safety Plan

Among the most sought after activities on this occasion is the Australia Day Live concert at the Sydney Opera House with unforgettable musical performances by top Aussie talent choreographed with a spectacular fireworks display, a flotilla of yachts and jet-skis.

However, final details are expected closer to the day.

➡ **Capt. Arthur Phillip raising the British flag at Sydney Cove, 26 January 1788. Oil sketch by Algernon Talmage, 1937 at State Library of New South Wales**



Q. I am 69 and my wife is 68. We have just sold our residential home and have each invested \$300,000 into superannuation using the downsizing strategy. Our aunt passed away and we have just inherited \$250,000. We wish to invest this in superannuation also. Are we able to do this?

A. As you are both over 67 years of age, if you are both retired from the workforce, then you cannot invest these funds into superannuation. For you to invest in superannuation you need to work 40 hours over a 30-day period and the amount is limited to \$110,000.

However you have other options to consider where you could invest your money, such as managed funds that do similar work to superannuation funds but their earnings are taxable.

Q. I am single and 28 years old. I am in the process of purchasing my own home and will be borrowing around \$420,000. I am on very good income so repayments on this mortgage are of no big concern. However, I was advised to take some life insurance to ensure that if I fell sick or met with an accident, my home and I will be protected. What do you think of this?

A. I believe that taking up life insurance cover is a very wise move. Life insurance cover would ensure if you passed away, the mortgage would be paid off and your beneficiaries will receive a debt free home.

Total and Permanent Disability (TPD) would ensure that if you met with an accident and could no longer work, then you would receive money to pay off your

mortgage. This will at least remove that stress from you. Income Protection insurance will provide you with up to 70% of your income if you were unable to work for a certain period of time.

I believe visiting an insurance broker should be your first move who would look at your situation and provide you with needs analysis. This will show you what your requirements are and what premium you are able to afford. At your age of 28, premiums would be quite low.

Q. I am planning to retire soon and have two superannuation funds. Once I am no longer working do I need to commence account based pensions from both of these funds? Or can I leave one of these superannuation funds in accumulation as I don't need all the income?

A. If you do not need all the income, leaving one of the super funds in accumulation could be ideal. You need to be aware

This is a monthly service offered by The Voice of the Maltese in which Marie Louise Muscat from the Fiducian Financial Services helps our readers understand the complexities associated with financial planning. If you need more advice send an email to Marie Louise via: maltesevoice@gmail.com.



that when in accumulation, any earnings within the superannuation fund will be paying 15% tax on earnings and 10% tax on any capital gains made. These will be paid by the superannuation fund itself. You will still have access to all the funds if or when you need them.

Q. I am 76 years old and finished working around six months ago. I have been asked to go back to work two days a week. I am planning to accept this offer but I need to know if I will still be entitled to the employer superannuation contribution, as I am now over 75?

A. Although you are over 75 years of age, you are still entitled to the employer superannuation guaranteed contribution of 10% of your salary. You are however, not entitled to make any other concessional or non-concessional contributions into superannuation.

Q. My wife is 64, and I am 66 and we are self-funded retirees. We have just sold an investment property and have a capital gain of around \$350,000. We have been told we will be paying a large capital gains tax. Is there anything we can do to reduce the capital gains tax?

A. As you are both under the age of 67 you are able to make a concessional contribution into super of \$27,500 each. A contributions tax of 15% will need to be paid on this amount, but this will reduce your capital gains tax, which will be more than 15% on the capital gain. Ask your accountant to calculate this for you and he/she should be able to provide you with the amount of tax you would be saving if you made this concessional contribution.

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The 200-year old townhouse in Gwardamanga

After all, it is the only building outside the United Kingdom known to have served as a residence for the Royal Family. Indeed, Villa Gwardamangia, on the left side to St Luke's Hospital, is being fully restored to its former glory.

When Queen Elizabeth II lived in Malta

Just before Christmas, hundreds of persons took the opportunity to enter the villa premises for the first time, a villa renowned as the Queen's Villa because Queen Elizabeth II, then Duchess of Edinburgh, and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, inhabited the villa between 1949 and 1955 when Prince Philip was stationed in Malta as a naval officer on HMS Magpie that was moored at Senglea.

The history of Villa Guardamangia (Italian for look and eat) stretches back 200 years, before being the Royal Couple's residence. It is the first time it has been opened for public viewing since the Government of Malta purchased it. The public enthusiastically attended as evidenced by the long queues waiting to gain entry, some for nostalgic reasons and others out of curiosity.

Situated near the top of Gwardamanga Hill, the villa is today managed by Heritage Malta, the Maltese national agency for museums, conservation practice and cultural heritage, which has asked the public to tender memories of the time when the Royal Family inhabited it for these to be documented. Many now living in Australia and elsewhere may even have worked there.

Heritage Malta Curator, Kenneth Gambin said that photographs as well as letters and notes are already being received that would then be used to document the villa's historical value.

The curator further explained that Heritage Malta's plan is for the lower floor to represent the time spent there by the Royal Couple and the links between Malta and the British Royalty, while the upper floor would reflect the historic house approach, meaning it would be restored and furnished as it was in the early fifties when it was occupied by the Royals.

Restoration works will continue during this year. However, preliminary works have revealed the history of the villa before being inhabited by the royal couple.

The Curator said the owners have always been noble or important families and as was the custom then, the walls of the upper floor were always decorated with wall paintings.

Unfortunately, during the latter part of the 20th Century these paintings were covered over but are carefully being revealed and eventually restored and to form an integral

part of the villa's lengthy history.

Villa Guardamangia was originally built in the middle of the 18th Century. It covers an area of 1,500 square metres and includes 18 rooms, stables, a large garden, water wells, and a shelter. Today it is situated in an urban zone but it is a typical example of a leisure residence built by the Maltese and the Knights to take a break from the built-up areas while still remaining near their home locality.

A national treasure

Villa Guardamangia was formerly known as Casa Medina and was sometimes referred to as Casa Guardamangia. It is considered as a national treasure in its own right and a blue-chip player in British Colonial Malta; Villa Guardamangia is a classic Baroque example of a summer palace.

Due to its architectural, cultural and historical value, the Planning Authority has scheduled the building that is located in Tal-Pietà, at Grade 2.

Another illustrious tenant of Villa Guardamangia, was Lord Louis Mountbatten, the uncle of Prince Philip, who rented the property from the Bartolo Family in the 1920's, and in all likelihood introduced it to the royal couple.

Mountbatten was Commander-in-Chief of the British Mediterranean Fleet (based at Fort St Angelo) from 1952 to 1954.

In 1949, ownership of the villa changed hands when Guze' Schembri (*tal-Għagin*), purchased it from the Bartolos, owners of *The Daily Malta Chronicle*, an English-language daily newspaper in Malta, first issued on 14 November 1884, that ran until June 1940.

Schembri, who was a member of parliament with the Malta Labour Party, was also one of the foremost businessmen on the island at the time. Both families were strongly pro-British.



The dilapidated state of the façade of Villa Guardamangia before starting the restorations process

Following a campaign for the building to be restored and opened to the public, on 5th June 2020 the Government of Malta purchased the villa from the descendants of the Schembri family and entrusted it to Heritage Malta.

In around 1814, during the start of the British colonisation of Malta, the property belonged to a Catholic priest. Later, in the 20th century, it belonged to several prominent Maltese families.

In around 1929, the villa was first leased to Louis Mountbatten, who had an interest in it because of its proximity to Marsa, which has a horse racing track and a golf course that suited his lavish lifestyle.

The villa was in a bad state and divided into apartments, leading the Mountbattens to reside in two rooms at the Hotel Phoenicia in Floriana while the house was being renovated.

**Continued on page 5*

Villa Guardamangia and the British Queen

**Continued from page 5*

Lord Louis Mountbatten bought Villa Guardamangia after some time and frequented it while stationed in Malta as Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet in the 1950s.

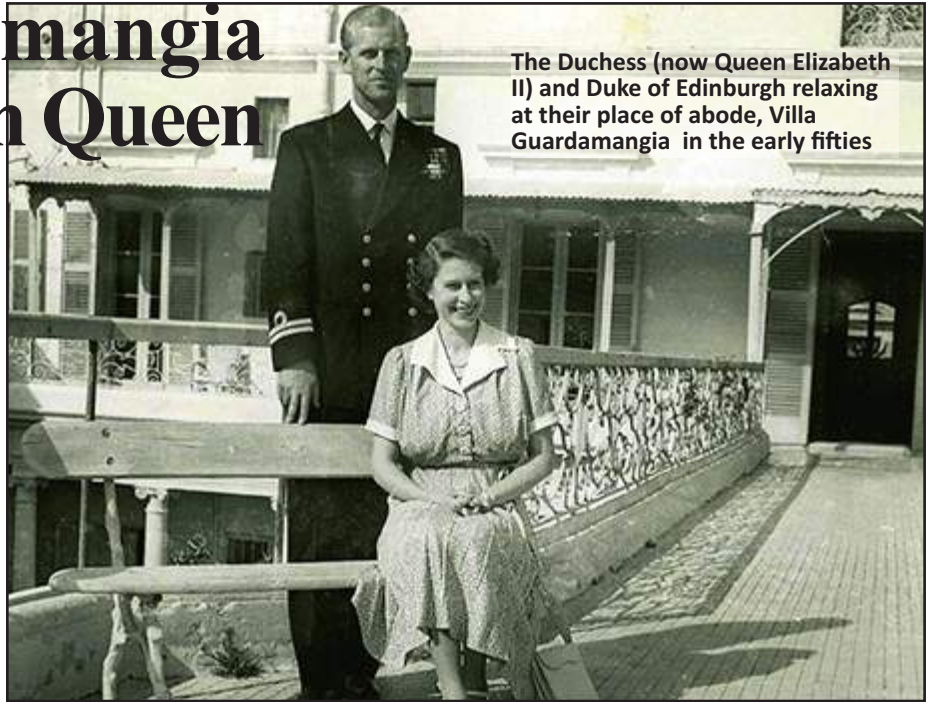
When the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh came to Malta they first lodged at San Anton Palace, where they were hosted by Gerald Strickland and his wife.

Princess Elizabeth (later Queen Elizabeth II) and her then-fiancé, Philip Mountbatten first stayed at Villa Guardamangia in 1946.

The couple returned a number of times between then and 1952, while Philip served in Malta as a Royal Navy officer while Elizabeth worked with the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen Families Association (SSAFA) at Auberge de Castile.

It has been suggested that their eldest child, Prince Charles, was conceived at the villa. The Queen has described her stay on Malta as one of the best periods of her life, as it was the only time she was able to live "normally".

Queen Elizabeth II visited Villa Guardamangia during her state visit to Malta in 1992 and, in 2007 she and the Duke of Edinburgh celebrated their 60th anniversary there.



The Duchess (now Queen Elizabeth II) and Duke of Edinburgh relaxing at their place of abode, Villa Guardamangia in the early fifties

In 2013 Maltese High Commissioner in UK, Norman Hamilton presented a painting of Villa Guardamangia to the Queen.

When the Queen visited Malta for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2015 she asked to see the villa, but was reportedly refused by its owners, the family of Gużè Schembri, as it was in a poor state of repair and subject of a dispute between its owners and the government.

Former President of Malta Marie Louise

Coleiro Preca also presented the Queen with another painting of the villa's façade.

The building was put up for sale in 2019 with an asking price at €5,900,000. Much of the building's contents, including furniture, artwork and antiques, were sold at auction in September 2019.

Following a campaign for the building to be restored and opened to the public, the Government of Malta purchased it and entrusted it to Heritage Malta.

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Difficult beginning to a fully productive life

It was not pleasant living in Malta during the war years when your mother was Italian. You were considered "the enemy". However, our personality for the first month of the New Year talks mainly about her happy childhood, her Maltese father, and a mum so resilient that she learned Maltese and was finally accepted by the Maltese during such difficult times.

Nathalie Gatt

Nathalie Gatt nee Pellicano was born in Birzebbuga Malta. Her parents were Maria nee Croce and Walter who was a shipwright dockyard worker. He also served as an anti-dockyard aircraft gunner manning the Bofors Anti-aircraft gun. As a volunteer shipwright during the war, Walter went to Egypt, converting cargo ships to troop carriers.

While on duty he met Maria, an Italian girl whose parents were both born in Italy. Her father was an engineer who worked on the running of the Suez Canal. After a short courtship, Walter and Maria got married and in 1944 returned to Malta on a night flight onboard a British RAF troop carrier plane to avoid detection by the enemy fighters.

Her mum recalled that it was very cold on the plane and a British soldier gave her his jacket to keep her warm.

Maria found it hard to be accepted by the Maltese as she was considered as the enemy. But she was very resilient. She quickly learned Maltese and was accepted.

Nathalie had a very memorable childhood spending summers at St Thomas Bay, swimming and canoeing across the bay, and fishing with her father on his boat.

Nathalie was educated at Maria Regina Grammar School in Blata l-Bajda and excelled in the Italian subject. Her first job was as a clerk typist at the Water Works Dept and the Department of Information at Prime Minister's Office in Auberge de Castille, in Malta's capital, Valletta. She had a keen interest in



PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH OF THE MONTH

table tennis and was selected to train with the Maltese National Table Tennis Team in preparation for a friendly international match against the Chinese National Team.

She married Lawrence Gatt who was born in Vittoriosa, and within a month of their marriage, in April 1975 they

emigrated on a flight to Sydney. At first Nathalie found it hard to settle as she missed her family and Malta. She had to be accustomed to the vastness and isolation in Australia.

Nathalie has two sons, David and Patrick, both University graduates who she is very proud of. David has his own Accountancy Firm, and Patrick is a Pharmaceutical NSW Regional Sales Manager. She has been blessed with four grandchildren.

Nathalie started her working life in Australia for HCF head office in Sydney as a claims officer, RTA as a Customer Service Officer, and Administration Officer in accountancy firms. She also worked as Secretary at the Bank of Valletta Office in Sydney.

She always wanted to give back to the community and so started on a long commitment to volunteering working at St Gabriel's Special Education Children School at Castle Hill and at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children at North Rocks for many years.

Through her son Patrick playing soccer for Melita Eagles soccer club, she connected with the Maltese Community in NSW and became Secretary of the Committee for The Inaugural Cultural Soccer Tour of Malta in 1998. This most successful tour consisted of a group of Under 20 years players born of Maltese descent.

Both Nathalie and her husband Lawrence accompanied the squad to Malta and worked hard to raise the necessary funds.

She then joined The Maltese Welfare Association NSW in 1999 and has held various positions on the Executive Committee.

**Continued on page 7*

Nathalie Gatt during her radio programme on Community Radio Station-Coast FM 963



Vale Lino Vella 1936-2022

Farewell Lino Vella AM, MQR

Lino Vella, the editor of *The Maltese Herald*, top footballer, exemplary community leader and family man loved by those that crossed his path. Lino lost his battle with cancer on Saturday 15th January 2022 at his home in Blacktown NSW at age 85.

He left the Maltese community *The Maltese Herald*, a lasting legacy that chronicled the life of our community for 52 continuous years. He was the owner/editor for 42 long years, perhaps the longest journalist to have held such a position.

Lino was born at Raħal Ġdid in Malta the eldest of five sons and three daughters but lived most of his life at St Julian's and emigrated to Australia in November 1954 at the age of 18.

His English wife Barbara died in July 2003. They have a son Paul and a daughter Annette.

In January 1999 the Federal Government of Australia awarded Lino the Australian



Medal (AM) and in 2011 the Malta Government awarded him Gieħ ir-Repubblika.

The Voice of the Maltese will have more to say about

this icon of our community and a close colleague of our co-editor in the next issue.

Lino Vella will be sorely missed.

Personality of the Month: Nathalie Gatt

**Continued from page 6*

Nathalie is currently the President of this well-established and accomplished Association that was formed in October 1977. For many years she was also a member of the choir of the Maltese Cultural Association.

In 2007 her husband Lawrence retired as Planning and Resource Manager at Westinghouse Electric Villawood and they decided to move to the Central Coast. They now live on St Huberts Island.

Nathalie's passion for helping people with low vision resulted in volunteering with her husband for Vision Australia in Gosford as Recreational Activities Co-ordinators, establishing new and innovative programmes to help people who are blind or low vision to participate in many activities including walking groups, painting, cricket, archery, craft and outings.

During this time, she also volunteered for

PCYC -Police Community Youth Clubs in administration and was a presenter in Traffic Offenders Intervention Programme. She furthered her skills by attending a TAFE course in Tutoring English for adults, as she felt this was important to help adults who did not have the opportunity to learn English.

Having had previous experience in radio broadcasting with the Maltese radio station 2GLF in Sydney, and as there were no such programmes for the Maltese living on the Central Coast, Nathalie approached the local Community Radio Station-Coast FM 963 and for six years produced/presented a programme called *VIVA Malta*, showcasing music by Australians with a Maltese background, music from Malta, and interviews with people who made a difference in the community.

Nathalie is very passionate and proud of her Maltese heritage, as it has shaped her to be the person she is today.

*World War II diary:
18 January 1941:*

Luftwaffe Blitz Malta Airfields

Eighty-one years to the day, on January 18, 1941, during World War II, the German Luftwaffe launched another series of heavy bombing raids on Malta targeting the island's airfields.

The blitz was conducted by 80 German Fliegerkorps X, that lasted over 90 minutes pumelled Hal Far and Luqa in turn, dropping over a hundred high explosive bombs, most of them 500kg.

Hangars, accommodation and aircraft were badly hit, and power and communication lines cut on both airfields. Runways were badly cratered: Luqa was put out of action, while only one landing strip at Hal Far was still serviceable.

Malta fighters and ground defences fought back bravely and five enemy aircraft are confirmed destroyed, while at least another ten were damaged, for the loss of two Fulmars.

Dramatic solo rescue

One of the Fulmars was destroyed in a dogfight with an enemy raider. The pilot ditched the aircraft in the sea about 40 metres from the shore at Kalafrana.

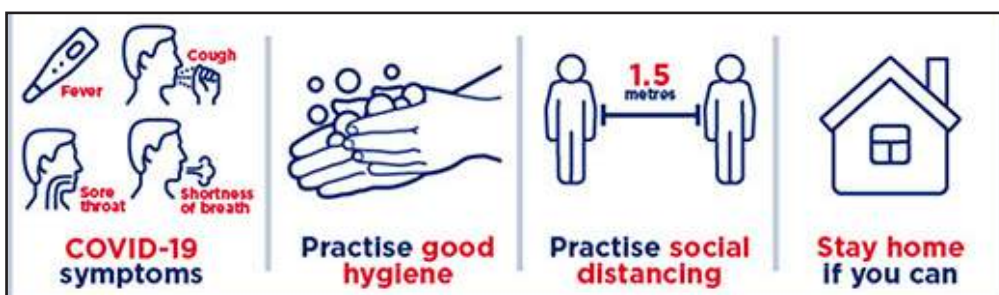
Ignoring the rough weather, Sapper Spiro Zammit from the Royal Engineers immediately dived into the water and swam out to the aircraft. He managed to reach the Fulmar's struggling crewman, named as A S Rush and held him up until the high-speed launch arrived to rescue them.

Zammit was warmly praised by military commanders for his actions and later awarded the British Empire Medal for bravery for the rescue.

Twelve rescued from rubble after 48 hours

On the same day, twelve people were rescued from a family air raid shelter under 91 Two Gates Street; Senglea almost 48 hours after masses of fallen masonry entombed them underground.

They had taken shelter after the alert that heralded the heavy raid on illustrious two days earlier. Senglea, Vittoriosa and Cospicua had taken the brunt of the attack. Many were killed and hundreds trapped under the rubble.



Have your say/Xi trid tgħid?



The Voice of the Maltese

Print & Digital magazine

This is a bi-lingual (in English and Maltese) fortnightly magazine that specifically targets all Maltese living abroad with emphasis on the Australian and Maltese scenes.

The magazine can be read in flip-book or PDF format online. A pdf copy is sent via email on request.

Hard copy subscription is also available at a cost.

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Letters for publication in *The Voice* magazine, either in Maltese or English should include name, e-mail address and residence of the writer, and be e-mailed to: maltesevoice@gmail.com.



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Your letters/ L-ittri tagħkom ...

Thanking Malta's Prime Minister ...

Extending God's kingdom of love

Fr. Leonard M. Testa OFM Conv. writes:

The Voice of the Maltese fulfils a multifunctional functional role in the life of the Maltese who make up the Greater Malta.

I would like to offer my prayerful gratitude to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta for his kind thoughts in his Christmas message where he expressed his gratitude towards those Maltese men and women who are working among our people as missionaries.

In reality as baptised Christians we are all commissioned to extend God's kingdom of love. As the Apostle Paul who fathered us

in Christ, would say to us Maltese in Australia.... you are my letter to the Australians. The celebration of the Nativity of Jesus makes it out clearly.

Christmas is and always will be an entirely Christian feast. We must remember that we do not simply celebrate the day, but the event. It is immaterial which day Christmas is celebrated (Christ's Nativity, the Event) is celebrated.

As you rightly reported, the Mass on TV is transmitted through the initiative of the Diocese of Wollongong. The person behind is a Maltese diocesan priest, Fr. Mark De-Battista.

Fr. Mark, who is the Parish Priest of St Patrick's parish, Port Kembla is assisted by the Maltese Franciscan Sisters. He is also the Catholic chaplain at the University of Wollongong.

Mela l-ewwel kellna l-corona u d-delta, u issa wasal l-omicron

Tony Borg minn Port Melbourne jikteb:

Tassew hawwattuni wahda sew! L-ewwel kellna l-corona, imbgħad id-delta u issa omicron. Meta kellna f'it m'ijiet ta' infezzjonijiet tgħidx kemm kien ikun hemm ristriczjonijiet horox u lockdowns, b'ahna f' Melbourne ikollna r-rekord tal-lockdowns.

Illum l-infezzjonijiet laħqu l-eluf, donnu laqtina xi splużjoni atomika, b'danakollu l-awtoritajiet tas-saħħa qed johorgu b'hafna skużi u hdejn qabel ir-ristriczjonijiet f'it li xejn huma horox.

Fil-fehma tiegħi x-xjentisti għad ma sabux is-soluzzjoni u l-Covid-19 sa jibqa' magħna bħall-influenza, il-kanċer u l-mard l-iehor li għalih irridu nitlaqqmu kull tant żmien. Allura huwa importanti hafna li kollha kemm ahna, mhux biss għalina nfusna imma wkoll għal niesna u għal dawk kollha li niltaqghu magħhom, inkella nibqghu fejn ahna.

Adding value to this publication

Paul Zammit from St Kilda, Victoria writes:

Isincerely think that congratulations are in order to the production team of *The Voice* of the Maltese for the Christmas Special and the last issue of 2021. The various features about Christmas in that issue made very interesting reading, not only for myself, but also for my grandchildren who spent quality time during the festive season with nanna and myself and enjoyed me reading to them the special feature about the Christmas traditions in Malta.

Aside of that, it has also given me great pleasure, and I must commend you for managing to get so many important personalities, Maltese and Australian, to accept to deliver their messages to the Maltese living abroad through this publication.

To have the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, and the Prime Minister and Minister for Immigration of Australia all on the same wavelength on this important occasion, on a magazine that has become a household name with the Maltese who, though living so far away from their homeland still treasure their roots, is much appreciated.

Their acceptance means they recognise the aims of this medium and further adds value to *The Voice*. The same can be said of the Australian politicians and the important Maltese entrepreneurs who chose the magazine to deliver their special Christmas and New Year messages.

Good on you all!



Dr Hugh McDermott MP State Member for Prospect

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HC meets Gov. officials, and Maltese community in Victoria

In order to keep the Maltese communities and organisations connected to the Maltese Islands, in the latter half of last month, the High Commissioner of Malta for Australia, His Excellency Mario Farrugia Borg visited the State of Victoria where he met with Australian Government officials, the Maltese associations, the Maltese communities, and other private organisation.

In a courtesy call to the Governor of Victoria, H.E. the Hon Linda Dessau AC, accompanied by the Consul General of the State, Chirelle Ellul Sciberras, the Maltese HC discussed bilateral relations between Malta and Australia and the strong ties borne by people-to-people connections.

The HC and the CG also held meetings with prominent members of the Federal and State Parliament, as well as with Councillor of Brimbank Dr. Victoria Borg, Ms Kellie O'Callaghan, Mayor of Latrobe City, the Member for St. Albans, Ms. Natalie Suleyman MP, Hon Melina Bath MP Member of Easter Victoria, and the Hon Darren Chester, Member for Gippsland in the Federal Parliament.

He thanked them all for their continued interest and support of the Maltese community in Victoria and their initiatives towards a cohesive multicultural community in the state.

In other commitments HC Mario Farrugia Borg and the GC Chirelle Ellul Sciberras participated in a number of Maltese community events in Melbourne and Morwell that included a Christmas reception by the MCC

of Victoria in Albion, and the Maltese Community in Latrobe Valley.

During these activities the HC thanked the Presidents of the respective associations, Chev. Peter Paul Portelli, Marlene Ebejer and Mario Sammut, for their tireless work to maintain the Maltese connection alive and well, and also greeted the local Maltese communities. He briefed them about the progress in Malta in various fields, and recalled the importance of holding dear Maltese values and being proud of having Maltese roots.

He also held a meeting meet with representatives of the St George Preca Society in Melbourne (M.U.S.E.U.M.) where he expressed his appreciation for their work in nurturing young minds with virtues essential



High Commissioner Mr. Mario Farrugia Borg with the Governor of Victoria HE the Hon Linda Dessau AC



The HC (second left) and Consul General Chirelle Ellul Sciberras (third right) with Mario Sammut, the President of the Maltese Community Centre Latrobe Valley (far left)



Mr Mario Farrugia Borg and the Consul General with the Australian Maltese Chamber of Commerce Victoria Branch

in leading a holy life.

In Morwell, H.E. Mr Farrugia Borg revisited the Maltese Museum in Latrobe Valley, which is a unique

project that showcases Maltese history, art and

culture in Australia, and the Migrant Monument at the Gippsland Immigration Park.

In other business and investment-oriented meetings, the HC and the GC convened with the Victoria Branch of the Australian Maltese Chamber of Commerce, Inc. and discussed plans for future business delegations to Malta for businesses seeking to invest in or expand operations to the Maltese Islands.

Another meeting was Mr Marc Cini, the founder of Hallmarc real estate developers in Melbourne, with a view to explore opportunities for him to invest in the real estate sector in the Maltese Islands.



◀ The HC (centre) with Chev Peter Paul Portelli, the President, and members of the Maltese Cultural Association of Victoria, and (above): with the Preca Society in Melbourne and Councillor Victoria Borg, from the Council of Brimbank

Perspettiva

A version of this series in English may be found in the author's blog at:
<https://ivancauchi.blogspot.com>

kitba ta'
**IVAN
 CAUCHI**



Ir-rebus u 'Novax' Djokovic

Kif nista' ma nikkummentax fuq is-saga li bhalissa għaddejja fuq iċ-ċampjin dinji tat-tennis Novak Djokovic?

Dan it-tennista Serb wasal f'tit jiem ilu Melbourne biex jiehu sehem f'wahda mill-erba' kompetizzjonijiet importanti tat-tennis fid-dinja, wahda mill-hekk imsejha *Grand Slam*, li Djokovic rebah digħa għoxrin minnhom (disgħa minnhom fl-Awstralja), rekord li qed jaqşam mal-kbar Roger Federer u Rafael Nadal.

Il-problema oriġinali hija li bhalissa hemm il-pandemija tal-COVID u jidher li nqabad fil-konfużjoni ta' ligijiet u regolamenti dwar x'tista' u ma tistax tagħmel f'dawn iż-żminijiet.

Bhalissa l-Awstralja għandha regola li nies ma jithallewx jidhlu fil-pajjiż jekk ma jkollhomx żewġ dozi ta' tilqima approvata, jew ikollhom eżenzjoni medika.

Min-naħa tiegħu, Djokovic qatt ma ddikjara jekk it-tilqima kontra l-COVID kienet, imma kien stqarr diversi drabi li kien kontriha. Madankollu, iddikjara waqt l-intervista li kellu mal-uffiċjali tal-burdura li ma kienx haħha.

L-organizzazzjoni li torganizza l-kompetizzjoni, Tennis Australia, u l-gvern ta' Victoria, approvaw li Djokovic ikollu eżenzjoni medika, proċess li inkluda bordijiet ta' esperti mediċi. Ir-raġuni għalfejn din l-eżenzjoni ngħatat kienet li Djokovic kien gie infettat mill-COVID fis-16 ta' Diċembru.¹

Il-problema hija din - il-gvern federali ma jaċċettax infezzjoni tal-COVID bħala aċċettabbli bħala raġuni għal eżenzjoni!

Allura l-mistoqsijiet mallewwel iqumu:

a) għaliex il-gvern statali ta' Victoria u Tennis Australia użaw kriterji għal eżenzjoni medika mit-tilqim, meta kienu jafu li dawn mhux aċċettabbli għal min geġ minn barra, meta l-biċċa l-kbira tal-partecipanti tal-*Australian Open* ikunu barranin?

b) fuq liema bażi nharġitlu l-viża fit-18 ta' Novembru mid-Dipartiment tal-Immigrazzjoni, xahar qabel ma kellu l-infezzjoni tal-COVID, u lanqas kellu t-tilqima?

Ftit wara li Djoković kien wasal Melbourne, kien qam furur żul minn hemm, bit-tema tkun xi haġa hekk: 'Dan kif hemm eluf ta' Awstraljani ma jistgħux jiġu lura, fost l-oħrajn minhabba nuqqas ta' tilqima, u dan il-persuna jithalla jidhul għax huwa famuż u għandu hafna flus', jew 'Dan kif jien ma stajttx immur nara l-ommi qed tmut minn frontiera ta' stat għall-iehor minhabba



r-restrizzjonijiet, u dan jingħata preferenzi'?

B'elezzjoni federali qiegħda toqrob, bla dubju Morrison huwa sensitiv hafna għal kritika bħal din.

Bhal ma nafu, l-viża oriġinali ta' Djokovic giet meħuda lura mill-forzi tal-burdura malli wasal, deċiżjoni li t-tennista appella u fil-fatt giet imxejna mill-Imħallef Kelly. Ir-raġuni? Il-proċess bażwi li bih giet annullata l-viża.

Li ġara kien li meta f'nofs ta' lejl l-forzi tal-burdura infurmaw lil Djokovic li kien se jannullaw l-viża, Djokovic talabhom jistennaw sat-tmienja ta' filgħodu biex jikkonsulta mal-avukati tiegħu u ma' Tennis Australia.

Fil-bidu qablu miegħu. Imbagħad xi siegħa biss minn dak il-hin, reġa' bdielhom u qabdu u hassru l-viża hesrem.

L-Imħallef Kelly qatagħha li dak il-proċess kien żbaljat, u fuq dak il-punt proċedurali, u dak biss, xejjen id-deċiżjoni tal-forzi tal-burdura, u llibera lil Djokovic.

Wara f'tit jiem ta' 'normalità', fejn Djokovic beda wkoll ihejji ruħu għal-

logħob tal-*Australian Open*, il-Ministru tal-Immigrazzjoni Alex Hawke reġa kkanċella l-viża ta' Djokovic, erbat ijiem biss mill-bidu tal-logħob uffiċjali, fuq bażi li dak kien fl-interess pubbliku, deċiżjoni li inevitabilment giet appellata b'urgenza. Jidher ċar is-sensitività estrema tal-gvern għall-opinjoni pubblika. Issa nafu li l-Qorti Federali kkonfermat id-deċiżjoni tal-Ministru.

Jien personalment ma tantx għandi simpatija ma' Djokovic. Qatt ma ffasjajtu bħala persuna anke meta napprezza t-talent u l-hila tiegħu fil-logħba tat-tennis, imma tgħidli xejn huwa taċ-ċajt għall-aħhar li persuna jingħata l-impressjoni li se jithalla jidhul u jilgħab, jitla' fuq ajruplan mal-kontingent tiegħu u jtir min-naħa tal-globu għall-oħra, biex imbagħad jinżamm bl-intenzjoni ċara li jintbagħat lura.

Din l-istorja lanqas kienet isseħħ kieku d-Dipartiment tal-Immigrazzjoni mexxa konsistentement fuq il-politika tal-COVID tiegħu meta rċieva l-applikazzjoni oriġinali ta' Djokovic għall-viża!

Hadd mhu rebbieħ f'din l-istorja!

Referenzi

1. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-01-14/novak-djokovic-visa-cancellation-decision-immigration-minister/100748386>, retrieved 14/1/2021



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Historic milestone for *Skola Maltija Sydney* Maltese student in the top 5

In what can be called another historic milestone for *Skola Maltija Sydney*, Year 6 student Claire Schretzmeyer was one of the top five students in the Junior Section to be awarded the prestigious Minister's Award for outstanding achievement in the study of Maltese. She was selected from a group of 236 nominated students representing 28 different community languages.

The award not only recognises Claire's accomplishment in language proficiency, but her appreciation of cultural background and demonstration of intercultural understanding, contribution to the school community and leadership in the community.

She displays a genuine drive and desire to preserve her Maltese identity and culture, which is remarkable given that her father is Dutch and only her grandmother speaks Maltese.

Over the past five years, Claire, a student at the Ringrose (Greystanes) campus, has embraced the opportunity to learn Maltese with passion and positivity. She takes inspiration from her family, with her younger sister, mother and auntie also studying Maltese.

Claire was due to be presented with this prestigious award by the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC.

Regrettably, the acclaimed award ceremony was unable to take place in September at the University of NSW due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Claire was to act as one of the Co-Masters of Ceremony and had been preparing an address in Maltese, to introduce the Australian National Anthem.

The awards are categorised into junior (Kindergarten to Year 6) and senior (Years 7 – 12) with five students from each cate-

2021 Minister's Awards for Excellence in Student Achievement



Claire Schretzmeyer with her 2021 Minister's Award for Excellence

gory being considered for the esteemed Minister's Awards. Following this, are Highly Commended, Commended and Merit awards.

Due to the 2020 lockdown period that forced community language schools to move to remote teaching and learning for the first time, the NSW Community Languages Schools Programme (NSW Depart-

ment of Education) had to cancel nominations.

Maltese schools in NSW have been part of the community education landscape since 1999. This is the second time that a Maltese student has been selected to receive a prestigious

Minister's Award.

In 2017, *Skola Maltija Sydney* Year 6 student, Noah Muscat, achieved the milestone of being the first student of Maltese to be awarded the Award.

The youngster successfully continued his studies in Maltese by attending The Secondary College of Languages (previously the Saturday School of Community Languages).

The teachers of the Maltese language confided in *The Voice of the Maltese* that they are extremely proud of their Maltese-Australian students who enthusiastically attend classes outside of school hours, and that it is a pleasure for them to work with their parents who support not only their children but also their school.

Skola Maltija Sydney is run by a team of dedicated volunteer educators who are passionate about passing on the knowledge of Maltese language, literacy and culture to younger generations.

"*Il-Malti* (Maltese) is what makes us unique and knowing our language, history and heritage strengthens our identity and capacity to not only be better Australians, but better ambassadors of Greater Malta," they said.

For more information about *Skola Maltija Sydney*'s primary and adult classes that resume this coming February 5, one should contact the Relieving Principal, Mrs Cynthia Villar on 0419 239 193, email skola-maltijasynedny@yahoo.com.au or follow www.facebook.com/skolamaltijasynedny.

Maltese community leader in Canada Richard Cumbo meets Minister Evarist Bartolo

Richard Cumbo, the curator of Toronto's Maltese-Canadian Museum and one of the leading community leaders in Canada, was on a visit to Malta. It is the first time in 70 years that he visited the island during the festive season.

Richard, who emigrated to Canada in 1951 when he was nearly four years old, was very impressed by the nativity scenes across all parts of the island.

While in Malta, he had a private meeting with Hon Evarist Bartolo the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs during which they discussed issues relating to the Maltese community in Canada.

The photo (right with the Minister on left) was taken at Palazzo Parisio in Valletta in the very room where Napoleon Bonaparte stayed for one week in 1798. The British erected the bust to mark that occasion.





Roundup of News About Malta



PM promises to SMEs: COVID wage supplement to stay as long as needed

Prime Minister Robert Abela has promised the business community and the self-employed that in the coming months the Government would continue to be a shoulder for them and remain central to the country's recovery and economic growth.

During a meeting (right) that was held in Castile two years to the day that he became Prime Minister, Robert Abela told the Chamber of Small and Medium Businesses, SMEs that since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic his government had cut through bureaucracy and forked out more than €680 million on business assistance.

He said that as the business community continues to battle on with the economic fallout resulting from the pandemic, the government would continue to pay the wage supplement.

He promised that it would be retained for as long as it is needed, and that it would remain as it is. Not only that, but if needed it would even be extended to March and April.

He explained that 17,500 businesses, most of them small and medium-sized businesses and self-employed have been given assistance.

During the meeting other challenges facing businesses were discussed, including the energy prices and freight transport. Abela said his government was committed to maintaining stable prices and as it has done in challenging times, it would keep working hand in hand with the Chamber in a spirit of dialogue in order to move forward.

The President of the Chamber of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Paul Abela thanked the Prime Minister for taking important decisions and urged further discussion to find timely solutions in the interest of businesses.



Malta, China relations based on mutual respect

In a telephone conversation on the occasion of the 50th anniversary since the establishment of diplomatic relations China and Malta, President George Vella and the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping agreed that relations between the two countries are exemplary and based on mutual respect and dialogue.

They welcomed the tangible results and extensive cooperation that have materialised along these five decades, and observed that the relations are based on a sound juridical framework that covers health

and medicine, energy, water, education, culture and youth.

The Presidents reiterated their shared commitment to even take relations to the international level, especially with regards to the United Nations, as well as through the strengthened relations between China and the European Union.

President George Vella welcomed an invitation by President Xi Jinping to visit China and said that such a visit would provide an excellent opportunity to celebrate the landmark anniversary of relations between the two countries.

Clifton Grima replaces Justyn Caruana as new Education Minister

Since the last issue in December, there have been three changes in Parliament, two on the government side and another in the Opposition after resignations. Clifton Grima, formerly parliamentary secretary in charge of sports youth and voluntary organisations has been promoted to Minister of Education (replacing Minister Justyn Caruana who resigned), and Sports.

Justyn Caruana resigned before Christmas after the Standards Commissioner adjudged her as having breached ethics.

Dr Caruana has retained her seat in Parliament and has meanwhile filed court proceedings to challenge the validity of the Commissioner's investigation.

Labour back bench MP Silvio Grixti also resigned following his interrogation by the police, presumably linked to the fraudulent signing of sick certificates.

Dr Andy Ellul was co-opted to replace him.

The third resignation was the PN's David Thake who resigned in the wake of a VAT scandal for failing to pay around €820,000 in arrears.

Graziella Galea has been co-opted to replace



Minister Dr. Clifton Grima

Thake.

Justyn Caruana, Silvio Grixti, David Thake and now also NP's MP Herman Schiavone announced they would not contest the next General Election due in the next few months.

Publication about the LGBTIQ community

The second volume of the research publication 'Mapping the Rainbow', outlining the diversity of colours in the LGBTIQ community, involving 16 presentations by students at the undergraduate, post-graduate diploma and Masters level, doctoral candidates as well as academics has just been launched.

The project is collaboration between the University of Malta's Department of Gender Studies and Sexualities, the Europe Direct Information Centre, the Human Rights Directorate and the Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement.

Minister for Equality, Research and Innovation Owen Bonnici, who presided over this presentation, said that this work would continue to shed light on various aspects of the experiences of LGBTIQ people in various sectors and spheres of life.



Roundup of News About Malta



Minister Evarist Bartolo: 'EU should promote realistic and sober role in the world'

The Minister for Foreign and European Affairs, Evarist Bartolo told EU Foreign Ministers at the Informal Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the European Union in Brest, France (Gymnich) that the EU should have a realistic and sober role in the world, promoting its values and interests through comprehensive and aligned policies, ranging from the economy, technology and climate action to democracy and human rights.

At the meeting chaired by the High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep Borrell, Minister Bartolo pointed out that efforts need to continue to at least find a minimum common ground on which to agree on together, instead of having more confrontation and escalation, which can only bring catastrophe.

The meeting started off with a joint session with EU ministers of defence on the EU's strategic compass, in which discussions focused mainly on key political issues such as cyber security and hybrid threats,

Malta has banned single-use plastics

As of this year, Malta has become one of the first countries to ban the sale, distribution and use of certain single-use plastic products made from oxo-degradable plastic.

It means Malta will conform to the EU plastics directive aimed at reducing certain plastic products from ending up in the environment, both on land and at sea.

Unless they are re-useable or biodegradable, plastic bags cannot be offered for shopping. The same goes for single-use plastic or Styrofoam (jablo) containers.

The enforcement required will be carried by the Environment and Resources Authority as well as Customs. No more single-use plastic will be allowed to enter the country.

Malta had been consuming 40 million tons of plastic. Now, persons engaged in commercial activities must not distribute, consume or use the prohibited items.

All plastic plates and cutlery shall be banned, so too single-use paper or cardboard-based plates with a plastic coating.

The prohibition also includes plastic cups and food containers used for fast food or other meal ready for immediate consumption. However, food that still requires further preparation may still be sold in jablo containers at the point of sale.



Minister Evarist Bartolo

as well as to give guidance on further work within the council to tackle the ongoing global threats and challenges to the EU.

The Foreign ministers discussed the current security situation in Eastern Europe and how the EU and its member states can work together, with strategic partners like the US and organisations such as the OSCE.

Evarist Bartolo maintained that they must work hard to have a European security architecture that will take in consideration the interests of all European countries to live together and to not threaten each other while retaining their sovereignty.

The Ministers also had a session on EU-China relations to co-ordinate responses to the country's role in multilateral fora and its relations with EU member states.

Later, at a bilateral meeting with EU Commissioner for the Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi, Minister Bartolo discussed the ongoing situation in the Mediterranean, particularly in Libya, as well as the migrant situation in the Central Mediterranean.

Over €8m. collected in 2 telethons for charity

Well over €8 milion were raised in the two fund raising telethons for charity in the last six days of last year that, in the words of the President of Malta George Vella, it has shown that when it comes to solidarity with those who are facing serious health issues the Maltese people put all prejudice aside and give all they can.

In the first telephone televised live on all local TV stations, the 26th edition of the annual 'L-Istrina' organised by The Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation on December 26, over €5,845,000 were collected from donations, €345,000 more than the

Govt, Air Malta unveil plan to save airline

Air Malta executive chairman David Curmi and Finance Minister Clyde Caruana have unveiled a restructuring plan for the island's national airline intended to save the company that has been registering losses since 2005, and that up to two years ago amounted to €340 million.

It has emerged that the company's major losses have resulted from the salary payments to its 900 workers. As such, while the government awaits the European Commission's permission to provide state aid to make the airline financially viable, its restructuring plan will go ahead irrespective of the amount to be approved by the commission.

Referring to meetings he had with EC Commissioner Margrethe Vestager, Minister Clyde Caruana said the Commissioner had suggested that the Maltese carrier should close its doors and instead establish a new air line company similar to the Alitalia case.

Part of the restructuring plan would be to halve the workforce (around 460 jobs) by the middle of next summer. The job cuts include withdrawal from ground and baggage handling operations and a change in livery to save on costs.

Curmi said that since 2005 the airline has made operational losses in every year with losses amounting to €258 million between 2005 and 2020. The COVID years (2020 and 2021) made things even worse.

He said that Air Malta made losses on almost every route it operated on and in February 2021 took the decision to cut the routes from 42 to around 20.

The plan now is that Air Malta will fly to European airports and will not be based only in Malta. Air Malta will only operate routes if they make money, fly between European airports, which requires company to set up bases in other countries, and has scrapped long-haul flights.

previous year.

President George Vella who spent the activity in quarantine with his wife, expressed his heartfelt thanks and the hope that the unity shown on this day is maintained throughout the rest of the year.

A week later a record sum of €2,531,540 was raised during the 12-hour marathon *Festa ta' Ġenerożità*, in aid of Dar tal-Providenza, the home for people with disabilities in Siggiewi.

The sum total of the telethons that for the second year running were held during the pandemic, was €8376540.

Mix-xena tal-ħajja Maltija

minn Ġuzè Camilleri

Il-qassis reġa' għamilha

Mhux darba jew tnejn li ktibt dwar il-qassis Dun David Muscat dwar ċerti stqarrijiet u attivitajiet li għamel, u li xejn ma kienu mistennija minn membru tal-kleru.

Jidher li minkejja li dawn l-istqarrijiet u attivitajiet ġabu l-istemmerija ta' ħafna u anke kritika minn membri oħra tal-kleru, u li saħansitra ġie mwiss mill-Arċisqof, donnu ftit effettwa lil Dun Muscat, tant li dan l-aħħar reġa' qajjem polemika shiħa bil-kummenti li għamel wara l-qtil ta' tfajla Polakka, allegatament minn ġuvni Malti li għadu kif ġie mixli bil-qtil tagħha.

F'kumment li għamel fuq Facebook, is-sacerdot qal li jekk dan il-ġuvni huwa LGBTIQ huwa aghar milli mxajtan. Il-qassis kiteb hekk:

"Jekk is-suspettat kellu xi gaygħni jew bisesswalità allura din diżordni oħra miżjuda fuq l-iskizofrenija u l-effett malefiku... l-anqas gravi l-possessjoni... il-gaygħni aghar".

L-istqarrija għet stmerrija u reazzjoni qawwija minn diversi nies, u waqt omelija l-istess Arċisqof stqarr li kien ixxukjat b'dak li qal u kiteb Muscat (għalkemm ma semmihx b'ismu). Fl-istess hin f'isem il-Knisja għamel apologija lil dawk kollha li ġew mwegġa' b'dawn il-kummenti.

"Il-kelma helwa ta' Ġesù taf twiddeb u twissi, imma qatt mhi nieqsa mill-imħabba. F'dawn l-aħħar sigħat ħafna kkuntattjawni biex juru d-dispjaċir u r-rabja tagħhom għal kliem li ntqal minn sacerdot minn tagħna fuq ħutna l-gays. Ixxukjajt ruhi nisma' u naqra li dan qal x'aktarx li tkun gay huwa aghar milli tkun imxajtan."

"Dan mhux kliem ta' mħabba. Dan huwa ġebel mitfuġh b'qalb li għandha bżonn titgħalliem thobb iżjed u kif iħobb Ġesù."

Żied itenni: *"Lil kull min huwa mwegġa' minħabba kliem iebes li sema', lill-ommijiet*

u missirijiet ta' persuni gay li llum iħossuhom mhux biss imwegġġhin imma traduti mill-knisja li tant iħobbu ... jiena nitlobkom mahfra u niehu l-passi biex dawn l-af-farijiet ma jergġhux isiru."

Aktar tard l-Arċisqof ordna lil Muscat ma jibqax jagħmel kummenti li jinsultaw u jwegġġu fil-fora pubbliċi, inkella jwaqqfu milli jeżerċità l-ministeru sacerdotali fil-pubbliku. L-Arċisqof ordna wkoll inehhi l-post imsemmi minn fuq Facebook, li fil-fatt tneħħa qabel ordnalu l-Arċisqof, mhux minnu imma minn min imexxi l-Facebook wara rapporti tal-pubbliku.

Dan il-kumment qajjem reazzjoni qawwija mill-politiċi fosthom l-MEP Josianne Cutajar, id-Deputati Claudette Buttigieg u Rosianne Cutajar, u l-Ministri Owen Bonnici u Julia Farrugia Portelli, li saħansitra kitbet lill-Kummissarju tal-Pulizija biex tfakkru li l-lingwaġġ ta' Muscat jammonta għal reat ta' tixrid ta' mibegħda.

Sadaniant il-pulizija interrogat lill-qassis, li ġie rappurtat li se jittressaq il-Qorti mixli b'tixrid ta' kummenti ta' mibegħda.

Ħafna apprezzaw il-fatt li l-Arċisqof immedjatament wissa lil Dun Muscat. Mādankollu xi ġurnali sostnew li l-Arċisqof mexa "bl-ingwanti tal-bellus" ma' Muscat li sentejn ilu kien diġà mwiss, għalhekk stennew li l-Arċisqof seta' jkun aktar iebes miegħu fuq l-aħħar kummenti u li kellu jitwaqqaf milli jkompli jeżerċità l-ministeru sacerdotali għax qed jagħmel ħsara kbira lill-Knisja.

Il-gazzetta *The Independent* saħansitra sostniet li l-Arċisqof kien qed jimxi b'kejl differenti għaliex fil-każ ta' Patri Mark



Dun David Muscat ... imwissi mill-Arċisqof u se jittressaq il-Qorti

Montebello, kien żammju milli jikteb fil-gazzetti wara li kritika l-pożizzjoni tal-Knisja fuq l-IVF.

Kien anke ġie rappurtat li seta' kien hemm pressjoni mill-Kurja tal-Arċisqof fuq il-Provinċjal tal-Ordni Dumnikana biex Patri Mark Montebello jlaqqatha b'mod iebes u saħansitra ġie mhedded li jitnezza' minn Patri.

Kummenti bla ħsieb

Il-midja soċjali fethet opportunitajiet kbar għal dawk li jixtiequ juru l-fehma tagħhom u li ftit setgħu jagħmlu dan qabel. Iżda fl-istess hin, minħabba li kontra dak li jsir fil-midja, fejn il-kummenti b'xi mod jiġu kkontrollati, f'dik soċjali donnu kulhadd jikteb li jrid bla ma hadd jeditja dak li jinkiteb, b'riżultat li ġieli ċerti kummenti ma jkunx xieraq li jittferxu mal-irjeh.

Hekk sehħ fil-każ ta' emigrant li kien irrapurtat nieqes mal-pulizija, u li aktar tard instab li fil-fatt kien emigrant li ftit jiem qabel kien miet wara incident f'fabbrica. Meta dan iddahhal l-Isptar ma kellu l-ebda identifikazzjoni u baqa' mhux magħruf sakemm miet.

Sintendi, kif isir is-soltu meta xi hadd jiġi rappurtat nieqes, il-pulizija harġet ritratt tal-persuna titlob l-għajnuna tal-pubbliku biex dan jinstab. Iżda bilkemm lahaq hareġ dan l-avviż tal-pulizija li ma bdewx jidhru kummenti dispregjattivi fuq il-midja soċjali. Dawn il-kummenti ġabu reazzjoni qawwija fosthom mill-Ministru għall-Inkluzjoni Julia Farrugia Portelli li sostniet li dawn il-kummenti dispregjattivi ma jirriflettux il-valuri veri tal-magħżoranza tal-Maltin.

"Tal-misthija li għad għandna mibgheda razzjali fostna. U tal-misthija li nkomplu ninhew wara keyboard biex infajru bl-ad-doċ kummenti li qegħdin biċ-ċar iwettqu reat", saħqet il-Ministru.

Naqbel perfettament mal-Ministru Owen Bonnici, li meta kkummenta dwar dan il-każ qal li "Hemm linji li ma jistgħux jin-qabzu..."



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Mix-xena tal-hajja Maltija

minn Ġużè Camilleri



Kontra kull mistenni, matul il-pandemija, minflok naqas, żdied il-bejgħ u xiri ta' propjetà, b'xahar wara l-iehor jigi rrappurtat rekord ta' bejgħ.

Li forsi ma tantx inkiteb dwaru, iżda li gibed l-attenzjoni fuqu, kien rapport li deher f'wahda mill-gazzetti, dwar artijiet, fosthom art agrikola, li ma kienetx offruta għall-bejgħ jew kera biex tiġi żviluppata, probabbilment għax din ma jistax isir bini fuqha, imma għal skop ta' rekreazzjoni u divertiment.

Fost l-avviżi msemija fir-rapport tal-

Il-Pandemija

Sfortunatament fil-qasam tas-Saħha temmejna s-sena 2021 u bdejna dik tal-2022 fuq nota xejn tajba billi fil-waqt li sa Novembru kien qed jidher li seta' jkollna l-festi tal-Milied u s-Sena Ġdida hafna ahjar minn ta' qabel, f'daqqa wahda l-każijiet tal-Covid-19 sparaw 'il fuq.

Fl-ahhar jiemi, l-għad tal-każi reġa' beda jonqos imma l-għadd tal-infettati qabeż sewwa dak tal-istess perijodu tas-sena l-oħra. Fortunatament iż-żieda ta' każi ma kienetx riflessa fl-għadd ta' każijiet l-isptar li nistgħu nġid li dejjem baqa' stabbli u allura ma holoqx stress fuq is-sistema tas-saħha.

Attwalment, dak li laqgħat sewwa t-thadim tas-sistema tas-saħha kien l-għadd ta' staff li spiċċa kwarantana.

Sadanittant, sa magħruf li fil-maġġoranza tagħhom, il-pazienti pożittivi għall-Covid-

Nefqa nefqun!

Il-pandemija tal-Covid-19 qed tfinser nefqa kbira lill-Gvern, mhux biss biex jipprovdi servizzi tas-saħha adegwati u jagħti tilqim lill-poplu kollu, imma wkoll biex jgħin lil min jimpjega l-haddiema. Dan billi jipprovdihom il-wage supplement halli b'hekk ikunu jistgħu jżommu lill-haddiema fl-impjieg.

Gie żvelat li minn meta faqqgħet il-pandemija f'pajjiżna f'Marzu 2020, il-Gvern se jkun investa madwar €653 miljun f'wage supplement biex għen lil 17,000 negozju u iktar minn 105,000 haddiem.

Il-wage supplement ma kienx l-unika skema f'għajna tal-Gvern lin-negozji fl-ahhar xhur iżda għew amministrati diversi skemi oħrajn, fosthom tat-teleworking li bbenefika madwar 4,000 impjegat. Hawn l-għajna mogħtija qabżet il-€1 miljun.

Kien hemm ukoll l-iskema tar-rifużjoni tal-kirjiet lil 5,000 negozju li bejniethom ingħataw madwar €13-il miljun.

Skema oħra kienet ta' rifużjonijiet tal-kon-tijiet tad-dawl fejn il-Malta Enterprise irċeviet madwar 6,000 applikazzjoni. Dawn bejniethom issarrfu f'madwar €7 miljun f'assistenza.

Skema oħra li għadha fis-seħh hi dik tal-leave tal-kwarantana li kien hemm 16,000

Moda ġdida

gazzetta ta' nhar ta' Hadd **illum** kien hemm:

"Art agrikola fil-Bidnija, nofs tomna, 500 metru, ideali għal harġa mal-hbieb jew il-familja. Ideali wkoll jekk għandek it-tfal jew l-annimali għax imdawra sew b'ċint. Din tista' tkun tiegħek għal €250 fix-xahar. Ma naċċettawx kaċċaturi u nassaba."

Oħra: "Inti min-nofsinar ta' Malta u l-Bidnija wisq 'l bogħod għalik? Ma jimpur-tax! Għalqa f'Birzebbuga, mhux kbira

imma għandek kamra bil-permess, tajba għall-camping jew BBQ mal-hbieb: €280 fix-xahar biss! Ukoll: Ridit xi haġa irhas? Fhimtek, għandi oħra imma għaġ-ġel jekk tridha għax id-domanda għalihom dawn l-artijiet hija kbira. €85 fix-xahar u tkun tiegħek. Għalqa, 300 metru, bil-veduta tal-wied, imma bla kamra."

Imma filwaqt li dan il-kwalita' ta' bejgħ u kiri ta' propjetà qed jaqdi lil ċerti nies li ji-filhu jhallsu, u jumla' bwiet is-sidien, qed ifisser ukoll tbatija għal nies oħrajn ...fos-thom il-bdiewa.

Dan minhabba li hafna minn din l-art kienet għand il-bdiewa bi qbiela u issa qed tittiehed lura mill-propjetarji tal-art billi dawn hafna drabi jitolbu kirijiet esagerati lill-bdiewa li ma jkunux jifilhu jhallsu kir-jiet daqshekk għolja.

Ifiġġ xaqq ta' dawl

Dan qed isir, wara li xi propjetarji ressqu talbiet fil-qrati fejn sostnew li ma setgħux igawdu l-propjetà li hi tagħhom billi la setgħu jehduha f'idejhom u lanqas kienu qed jingħataw hlas xieraq tagħha ...u l-Qorti qabliet mas-sidien.

Huwa minnu li ċertu qbiela u kirjiet huma tassew baxxi... imma l-kirjiet li qed jitolbu s-sidien issa huma tant għolja li l-bdiewa ma jifilhu jhallsuhom, u diġà kien hemm min qata' qalbu u ċeda l-art. Għalhekk intefgħet fis-suq li semmejna.

Dan l-ahhar feġġ xaqq ta' dawl għall-bdiewa meta f'kawża partikolari, l-Imħallef iddeċieda differenti u sostna li l-biedja hija mportanti għall-pajjiż u għalhekk din id-darba s-sentenza nqatet favur il-bidwi.

Biss dan xorta ma solviex is-sitwazzjoni u l-bdiewa u l-biedja Maltija tinsab f'periklu li tiehu daqqa ta' harta jekk is-sidien jibqgħu jiehdu minn idejn il-bdiewa biex tintuża b'mod ieħor.

Jidher li l-Gvern qed jara x'jista' jagħmel biex isalva s-sitwazzjoni billi jagħmel proposti li permezz tagħhom jissodisfa l-htigi-jiet kemm tal-bdiewa kif ukoll tas-sidien.

applikazzjoni u li swiet lill-Gvern f'għaj-nuna li laħqet id-€9 miljun.

TILQIM: Skont statistika mahruġa mill-Università ta' Oxford fl-Ingilterra, u li għet ippubblikata fuq is-sit 'Our Word in Data', f'Malta hawn l-ogħla rata ta' persuni mlaq-qmin bil-booster. Hawn ukoll l-inqas rata ta' nies fl-isptarijiet bil-Covid-19 minn fost il-pajjiżi fl-Ewropa.





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A quick glimpse at Australia

Look back, Year 2021 in Australian politics

From a cultural reckoning about the treatment of women in politics, to a delay-plagued COVID-19 vaccine rollout and continued uncertainty around variants, it's been a difficult year for Australian Scott Morrison's government.

Morrison apologises for vaccine delay

Public support towards the government's success in containing the COVID-19 pandemic was tested in 2021, amid delays in the vaccine rollout. On 22 July, Mr Morrison would admit he was sorry for the slow progress of the programme, saying he took responsibility for the challenges it faced.

These included the impact of a change in medical advice around the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine as well as delays in the delivery of Pfizer supplies from overseas. But with Australia's vaccination rates now among the highest in the world, it remains to be seen whether he has been forgiven for the delay by voters.



Climate commitments revealed

Year 2021 also set the stage for a return to the "climate wars" of Australian politics as both the Coalition and Labor backed new policy pledges.

In October, after intense anticipation, Mr Morrison finally unveiled his government's commitment to reach the target of net zero emissions by 2050 - widely adopted by the international community.

But despite global pressure to deliver more immediate goals, the government has remained committed to its official goal of cutting emissions 26-28 per cent on 2005 levels by 2030. This was even after forecasts that emissions are expected to

reduce by 30-35 per cent during this period.

Then in December 3, Labor unveiled its own plan to reduce carbon emissions by 43 per cent by 2030 if elected - the policy forming part of Mr Albanese's gradual rollout of an election platform.

Australia withdraws from Afghanistan

Australia's historic withdrawal from Afghanistan - ending a 20-year mission in the country - was marred by the chaotic final days of evacuations in late August as allied forces assisted tens of thousands of Afghans seeking to flee Kabul.



Barnaby Joyce bounces back

Barnaby Joyce (above) resurrected his political career by reclaiming the Nationals leadership from Michael McCormack. He returned to the helm as the nation's deputy prime minister June 21 after three years on the backbench.

Separately, former Attorney-General Christian Porter announced he would retire from politics at the next election. In March, Mr. Porter publicly outed himself as the cabinet minister at the centre of a historical rape allegation - vigorously rejecting the accusation.

Tame and Higgins call out Canberra

Sexual assault survivor Grace Tame being catapulted onto the national stage as Australian of the Year in January was a powerful moment in itself, but few had an understanding of how it would mark the start of a cultural reckoning that reached the highest levels of government.

It was a month later, on February 15, when former Liberal staffer Brittany Higgins alleged she had been raped inside the office of a cabinet minister at Parliament House in 2016, citing Ms Tame as an inspiration for coming forward.

On September 16, Mr. Morrison announced

a new defence pact known as AUKUS with the US and the UK to secure Australia access to nuclear submarine technology. The decision was made against the backdrop of increasingly strained relations with China.

But the scuttling of a previous \$90 billion submarine deal with France also prompted a furious

France's fury over subs

response, with the country temporarily withdrawing its ambassador from Australia.

The diplomatic tensions reignited at the G20 summit in Rome in November, where French President Emmanuel Macron claimed he had been lied to by Mr. Morrison over the abandoned deal. More broadly,

the Coalition's management of foreign policy - usually a bipartisan area - has also become a source of political division.

Labor's foreign affairs spokesperson Penny Wong in November accused Minister of Defence Peter Dutton of "amping up" the threat of war with China through his rhetoric to boost their election chances.

Calls for the government to implement a national integrity commission have remained unanswered in 2021 with Labor pointing out it has now been more than three years since the Coalition promised to implement one.

Concerns around pork barrelling were once again revived during the year after an auditor general's scathing report into the government's \$660 million national commuter car

Last-minute legislation

park fund was handed down in June.

Mr Morrison also finally delivered on his personal commitment to introduce legislation around a religious discrimination bill to parliament in the final sitting fortnight - the fate of which remains to be decided.

The year ended with Treasurer Josh Frydenberg handing down a mid-year eco-

nomics update with the government banking on forecast wages growth and a strong jobs outlook to bolster its election prospects.

But with uncertainty over the Omicron COVID-19 variant still hovering over Australia's recovery - the scene is set for an election contest on who can best deliver certainty for the people of Australia moving forward.



A quick glimpse at Australia



Japan and Australia in a historic security pact

Australia and Japan have officially inked a landmark security treaty in a virtual ceremony, formalising a new defence pact between the two nations. It means their forces will be able to seamlessly train in both countries, at each other's facilities and during humanitarian missions, completely interoperable between what they can do and how they deploy together.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison solemnised the "historic" reciprocal access agreement from the cabinet room in Parliament House while his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida joined via video link. Mr Morrison said the security treaty, being Japan's only reciprocal agreement, underscored its significance and

highlighted the trust between the two countries.

He recalled standing with former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe at a war memorial in Darwin, saying it was one of the most important moments of his prime ministership.

The treaty follows China's criticism of the Quad partnership formed between Australia, Japan, India and the US, as well as the AUKUS pact, under which Australia is exploring the purchase of nuclear-powered submarines.

When asked about the treaty at a daily news briefing in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said bilateral treaties should promote regional trust, peace, and stability.

John Howard ... from the 2001 Cabinet papers

John Howard, now 82 years, was Prime Minister when the 9/11 attacks took place in New York in 2001 and committed Australia to the United Nations' push to invade Afghanistan.

He said, "At the very end, of course, the withdrawal from Afghanistan was chaotic, and that was because of decisions taken by two American administrations, by both the Trump administration and the Biden administration."

Regarding the Tampa affair and the Pacific solution "I don't think it was a bad call. I think in the long run it prevented deaths because it deterred people from undertaking hazardous journeys," Mr Howard said.

Mr Howard also said he didn't regret the so-called "children overboard" affair in which then immigration minister Philip Ruddock and other ministers said asylum seekers on the SIEV X had thrown their children overboard as part of a ploy to be rescued.

"Well, I don't regret, because the information I had, at the time I made that statement, supported that belief," Mr Howard said.

"And after a lot of investigation, a different view was established, but I accepted that". When asked if he was misled, Mr Howard replied: "The information turned out to be wrong".

Australia and PNG end offshore asylum processing deal

The decision to end the agreement with Papua New Guinea comes after the Australian-run detention centre on Manus Island was found to be illegal and ordered shut by the PNG supreme court in 2016.

As a result, Australia was forced to pay \$70 million in compensation to those unlawfully detained.

The Department of Home Affairs said "the full transition of arrangements to PNG's independent management is a long-held shared objective of PNG Prime Minister James Marape and Prime Minister Scott Morrison".

The agreement, signed by both countries on 19 July 2013, authorised regional processing in PNG of people who attempted to travel to Australia by boat.

"From 1 January 2022, the PNG Government will assume full and independent management of individuals under regional processing arrangements in PNG," the spokesperson said.

Serious concern over Coronavirus pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic in Australia is causing serious concern, mostly in the main states of Victoria and NSW. The infections are spreading with health authorities concerned about the abilities of hospitals to cope with admissions.

As we went to press, there were 1703174 confirmed cases with 2,666 deaths in Australia. The State of Victoria (Melbourne) has 1694, NSW (Sydney) 727.

The rest is spread around the other States and Territories. The situation is so fluid that these figures are bound to change from day today.



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‘Karamellu’: Ktieb dwar it-tfulija f’Malta fl-imghoddi

Għadu kif ġie mitbugħ (ippublikat) f’Malta “Karamellu tar-Raħal t’Isfel – l-Ewwel Ktieb” b’għaxar stejjer imżewwqa b’mod viżiv u kkulurit li jirrakkontaw it-tfulija ta’ tifel imtella’ f’ambjent ta’ raħal Malti li kien għadu priv mill-invenzjonijiet li ffaċilitaw hajjet il-poplu, fosthom il-magni tal-ħasil, it-tele-viżjoni, il-kompjuter, l-Internet u t-telefon ċellulari. F’dan il-ktieb, l-awtur tiegħu Charles Buttigieg, li twieled fiż-Żejtun, magħruf ukoll bħala r-Raħal t’Isfel, jiehu x-xejra tan-Nannu tat-tifel.

Karamellu, il-protagonist ewlieni tal-ktieb ta’ 100 paġna, huwa tifel imwieled u mrobbi f’familja ta’ haddiema fiż-Żejtun wara t-Tieni Gwerra Dinjija. Il-ktieb ġie mitbugħ bil-ghajnuna tan-National Literacy Agency u mniedi fl-Iskola Primarja taż-Żejtun – l-istess iskola li l-awtur innifsu kien jattendi fi ċkunitu – fil-preżenza tas-Sindku taż-Żejtun, Maria Dolores Abela, u l-Kap Eżekuttiv tan-National Literacy Agency, David Muscat.

Uhud mill-istejjer ta’ Karamellu ġew ispirati mill-esperjenzi personali tal-awtur stess, filwaqt li oħrajn jintroduċu lill-qarrejja ma’ kif kienu jgħixu ċerti nies u karattri fi żmien it-trobija u tal-awtur f’dan ir-raħal.

B’mod ġenerali l-ġrajjet joffru idea ta’ kif kienu jgħixu t-tfal u l-familji tagħhom snin twal ilu, flimkien mal-hajja kwieta u ambjent seren fejn kulhadd kien jaf lil xulxin u fejn lanqas ma kienu jonqsu l-praspar l-mumentanti eċċitanti li sawwru t-tfulija u n-nies tar-raħal.

L-ghan ewlieni wara l-istejjer ta’ Karamellu hu li joffri lill-ġenerazzjonijiet li tiela’ qari mexxej u aned-doti li jgħinu lill-qarrejja jsiru jafu u jifhmu ahjar it-trobija u l-ambjent li fih kienu jgħixu t-tfal fis-snin mghoddija. Fl-istess waqt joffru wkoll qari nostalgiku lill-kbar, l-aktar u l-aktar lil dawk li jhobbu jaqraw u jirrakkontaw stejjer lil uliedhom dwar iż-żmien meta huma stess kien għadhom tfal.

L-idea wara li l-istejjer ta’ Karamellu jiġu miġbura fi ktieb nibtet mill-appoġġ impressjonanti li bih intlagħu l-istejjer meta ġew imqiegħda fuq il-Facebook fi żmien meta n-nies f’it kienu joħorġu minn djarhom minħabba l-pandemija tal-Covid-19. Kienu hafna l-qarrejja li heġġew lill-awtur li jippubblika dawn il-ġrajjet fi ktieb. S’issa kien hemm 68 ġrajja ta’ Karamellu li ġew imqiegħda fuq il-Facebook.

Permezz ta’ dawn l-istejjer wiehed faċilment jista’ jidentifika ruħu ma’ hafna mill-valuri dwar kif it-tfal jistgħu jkunu kuntenti b’dak li għandhom, filwaqt li fl-istess hin jistgħu jibqu jistudjaw biex jaslu li jkollhom ġejjieni ahjar.

Eżempji oħra huma l-hena li wiehed jesperjenza meta jipprova jifhem, jirrispetta u jgħin lil haddiehor, l-aktar li dawk li jgħixu madwaru, il-benefiċċji kbar tal-komunikazzjoni personali, u kemm wiehed jagħmel tajjeb li dejjem jibqa’ lest jaċċetta

l-bidliet li minn żmien għal żmien il-progress jiġġenera.

Dan hu ktieb li jista’ jgħin mhux f’it lill-ġenituri – forsi l-aktar lil dawk li hallew Malta snin twal ilu biex ifittxu ġejjieni ahjar għal familjethom f’pajjiżi mbegħda – li mhux biss ikunu jixtiequ jispjegaw dwar tfulithom fl-irhula Maltin fejn trabbew, imma wkoll li jagħtu lil uliedhom jew lil ulied uliedhom qari li jgħinhom isiru midhla tal-ilsien Malti miktub.

Id-disinji u l-ippjanar tal-ktieb kien f’idejn CN Creative Designs.



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Xinhi tassew il-ħaffiefa?

Il-ħaffiefa, kif hafna l-aktar li jafuha, tintuża l-aktar biex tnaddaf u tobrox b’mod hafif l-impuritajiet mill-ġilda tal-bniedem, l-aktar fuq l-għekiesi, biex imur l-għakar li ma jmurx malajr bil-ħasil normali. Tintuża wkoll biex tneħhi l-ġilda niexfa mill-qiegh tas-saqajn, bħall-kallijiet.

Dari l-ħaffiefa kienet tintuża wkoll min-nisa biex twaqqa’ s-suf li jikber mar-riġlejn.

Il-ħaffiefa hija speċi ta’ ġebba vulkanika hafifa hafna li minnha tittiehed biċċa żgħira halli tintuża b’diversi modi biex tobrox hafif. Il-materjal li minnu magħmul dan il-blatt jiġi jiffirma mil-lava li ttir mill-vulkan fl-ajru u tiffirma ġebba li 70 fil-mija minnha tkun pori bl-arja. Il-ħaffiefa tant hi hafifa li żżomm f’wiċċ l-ilma.

Il-kulur tal-ħaffiefa hu ġeneralment iswed jew griż skur, imma l-kulur ġieli wkoll ivarja xi f’it fl-isfar jew il-kannella u griż sa iswed. Gieli din tkun anke qisha sponża.

F’Malta ġieli ntuzat ukoll fil-bini għax hi materja poruż jew speċi ta’ rmied li meta titfarrak tista’ tintuża bħal speċi ta’ siment.

Il-kelma tista’ tingħad ukoll bħala “ħuffiefa” u ġieli wkoll tintuża biex wiehed jiddeskrivi bniedem li ma jkunx kapaċi jżomm wisq ħsibijiet f’mohħu, allura ngħidulu: “rasu ħuffiefa” (jiġifieri mohħu jkun mimli bil-pori tal-arja bħal ħuffiefa).



Sena impenjattiva għal ta' Ghajnsielem

Mill-Gżira
Għawdxija

Charles Spiteri



Għall-Għaqda Hbieb tal-Presepu Għawdex, il-Fergha t'Ghajnsielem immexxija minn Paul Stellini bħala president, is-sena li għaddiet, l-2021, kienet mhux biss wahda diffiċli hafna minhabba l-pandemija, imma wkoll impenjattiva għall-ahhar.

Bejn Lulju u Ottubru l-Għaqda wetqet 13 il-kors, sebgha minnhom prattiċi u l-oħrajn dimostrattivi dwar il-bini tal-presepu, tnejn minnhom f'Malta. Dan barra l-bini ta' presepu għall-knisja l-għdida ta' Ghajnsielem.

F'Novembru saret hidma biex jittellgħu żewg wirjiet, wahda bi presepu miġjub minn Bergamo l-Italja, mill-fergha ta' Ponte San Pietro mmexxija mill-imghallem Claudio Mattei li fl-2016 kien mexxa kors f' Għawdex dwar il-bini tal-presepu.

Grupp ta' 10 persuni Għawdxin tela' wkoll Bergamo u għal wirja tal-presepu u saret laqgħa ma' Mattei peress li f'Diċembru tal-2022 se tittella' wirja ta' Presepi Maltin. Fl-istess laqgħa Mattei gie pprezentat b'pasturi maħduma mill-artist Għawdxin, is-Sindku tar-raħal tax-Xewkija, Hubert Saliba.



FUQ: l-grupp ta' Ghajnsielem f'Bergamo ma' Claudio Mattei (tielet mix-xellug); TAHT (xellug): Hubert Saliba flimkien ma' Claudio Mattei (fuq i-lemin)



Dawl mill-Grotta ta' Betlehem

Restawr ta' żewġ niċeċ fid-dahla taċ-Ċittadella

Żewġ niċeċ, wahda ta' Sant'Anna u l-oħra tal-Madonna tas-Solitudni għadhom kif ġew restawrati mill-ħaddiema tar-Restoration Unit u taċ-Ċittadella b'konsultazzjoni kontinwa mas-Sovrintendenza tal-Patrimonju Kulturali fi hdan id-Direttorat għall-Wirt Kulturali (Ministeru għal Għawdex).

In-niċeċ kien jinhtigilhom xogħlijiet ta' restawr biex jiġu mħarsa minn iktar detterjorazzjoni u l-madwar tagħhom jingħata dehra aħjar.

Sar restawr ukoll tal-frejms tal-injam kif ukoll tal-gebel fuq is-saqaf tan-niċċa tal-Madonna tas-Solitudni.

In-niċeċ, fost l-eqdem f'Għawdex, jirriflettu kult ta' devozzjoni mifrux mill-Aragonizi matul is-seklu 13 u 14.

LEMİN: In-Niċċa ta' Sant'Anna li tinsab taht wahda miż-żewġ mini antiki li hemm fid-dahla taċ-Ċittadella



Fis-Santwarju Ta' Pinu f'Diċembru waslet il-lampa mid-dawl mixgħula mill-Grotta ta' Betlehem, inizjattiva ilha ssir għal dawn l-ahhar 35 sena u li dawl id-dinja biex tfakkar li d-Dawl tad-dinja li jkeċċi d-dlamijiet huwa l-Mulej Gesù. Dad-dawl se jibqa' jixgħel fis-Santwarju sat-2 ta' Frar.

Kienu hafna l-familji li hadu fanal halli jehdu d-dawl li tpoġġa quddiem ix-xbieha tat-Tarbija ta' Betlehem. Ir-rettur tas-Santwarju Fr Gerard Buhagiar qal lil The Voice, li dan id-dawl hu "Gest simboliku li bih qed nuru x-xewqa tagħna li Kristu jkun id-dawl li jdawwal il-familji tagħna u li jifhilna għajnejna għall-htigijiet ta' hutna."



The Voice Exclusive
From the next issue ...

The 30 Prime Ministers of Australia

In 46 general elections up to 2019, Australia has had 30 prime ministers who have served 36 separate terms of office. Each of them stamped has left an indelible mark in the history of the country.

A new series exclusively researched for *The Voice of the Maltese* will bring to life the 29 men and one woman that have reached Australia's highest public office and the forces that have shaped them; Larrikins, socialists, silvertails, or politicians.

The series that commences in the next issue (No. 267) dated February 1 will focus on Gough Whitlam (1972-75).



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

High Commission & Consulates of Malta in Australia

High Commission of Malta - Canberra

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High Commissioner for Malta to Australia
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Il-mużika Maltija u l-poplu Maltin jibku t-telfa ta' gentlom Tislima lill-kantant Malti Enzo Gusman



Kien ta' dispaċir kbir tisma' l-aħbar fit-18 ta' Diċembru li għadda tal-mewt fil-Kanada tal-kantant popolari Malti u preżentatur maħbub Enzo Gusman, fl-età ta' 74 sena.

Enzo kien bniedem ta' talent li l-ewwel li gharaf bil-hiliet tiegħu kien il-mibki attur komiku f'Malta Johnnie Navarro li kien stiednu jkun il-kantant residenti fuq programm imsejjaħ TIC TAC li kien jiġi mxandar fuq is-sistema tal-cable radio ta' Malta li dak iż-żmien kien magħruf bhala r-Rediffusion.

Minn hemm Enzo baqa' fuq quddiem fix-xena Maltija u rnexxielu jirbah għal hames darbiet il-kuntest tal-kant prestigġjuż, il-Malta Song Festival.

Fl-1965 Enzo mexa għal karriera ta' bankier u anke meta fl-1979 emigra lejn il-Kanada u wara xi snin reġa' lura Malta għal għadd ta' snin, reġa' kompla wkoll bil-karriera ta' kantant u kabbar il-popolarità tiegħu, billi anke ha sehem f'diversi festivals internazzjonali tal-kanzunetti.

Fost dawn kien hemm, il-World Popular Song Festival ta' Tokyo fil-Ġappun; il-Festival Internacional De la Canción, f'Viña del Mar, fiċ-Ċili; l-Olympiad De La Chanson f'Ateni l-Greċja; il-Festival Internazzjonali tal-Kanzunetta f'Liandra fl-Eġittu; il-Castlebar International Song Festival fl-Irlanda, u dak fl-istess pajjiż, il-Cavan International Song Festival. Rebah ukoll l-Istanbul International Song Festival fit-Turkija; il-Festival Menschen f'Rostock fil-Germanja, u l-Festival Golden Orpheus ta' Slanchev Bryag, fil-Bulgarija, mitqiesa fost l-aqwa suċċessi tiegħu.

Fost l-unuri kbar ta' Enzo hemm meta ngħata t-titlu tal-Aqwa Artist Barrani fil-Festival Internazzjonali tal-Kanzunetta ta' Cavan, fl-Irlanda, filwaqt li fil-Festival Internazzjonali tal-Kanzunetta ta' Istanbul kien gie ddikjarat bhala l-Aqwa Interpretu.

Enzo kiteb u sawwar għadd ta' kanzunetti li hu stess imbagħad interpretat hila kbira, u li hafna minnhom għadhom popolari hafna kemm f'Malta u wkoll fid-dijaspora Maltija sal-lum. F'Malta kien ukoll mequs bhala personalità magħrufa sew fix-xandir bil-programmi tiegħu u wkoll fuq it-televiżjoni.

Enzo kien miżżewweġ lil Carmen Schembri, ukoll kantanta brava magħrufa sew fix-xena tal-mużika hafifa Maltija. Huma kellhom żewġt ibniet, Johanna u Greta.

F'Awwiisu 2020 il-kantant kellu incident serju meta waqgħa fid-dar tiegħu fil-Kanada fejn kien reġa' mar jgħix mal-familja. L-incident tant kien serju li malajr xterdu xnigħat li l-incident swielu ħajtu. Tant li l-familja stess kien htigielha tiċhadhom.

Huwa qatta' tmien xhur l-isptar qabel irri-torna d-dar fejn beda jirkupra mill-griċhi li kien ġarrab. Martu Carmen kienet ikkwotata tgħid li l-incident kien farraklu gismu. Madankollu Enzo baqa' jissielet kuljum għax kellu heġġa kbira għall-ħajja

Fix-xena tant għal qalbu tal-mużika, fis-7

ta' Awwiisu tas-sena l-oħra, waqt il-festival l-Għanja tal-Poplu, Enzo ingħata rikonoxximent speċjali għall-kontribut kbir tiegħu fix-xena Maltija tal-mużika, fil-waqt li fil-festival li xxandar fuq it-televiżjoni Maltija Enzo wassal messaġġ qasir bil-video mis-sodda tal-irkupru tiegħu fil-Kanada.

Enzo kien jiġi milqugh

ferm tajjeb f'hafna mill-mawriet tiegħu biex ikanta lill-emigranti Maltin, u speċjalment fl-Awstralja fejn kanta kemm-il darba u kien ferm maħbub f'kull stat. Kien fost l-iktar kantanti Maltin li kien jattira udjenza kbar kull fejn imur. Ta wirjiet ukoll fl-Istati Uniti, l-Ingilterra, u l-Kanada. Il-firxa vokali, il-versatilità, il-personalità u l-karattru ferrieħi tiegħu kienu suġġett favorit mal-kritiċi u l-kollegi tiegħu fix-xena mużikali.

Rikonoxximent Speċjali għall-kontribut lill-mużika Maltija

Ta' min jgħid li minkejja s-suċċessi tiegħu bhala kantant, Enzo qatt ma rrappreżenta lil Malta fil-Eurovision Song Contest, għax kemm meta rebah il-Malta Song Festival tal-1974, bil-kanzunetta Paċi fid-Dinja li hu stess kien kiteb, kif ukoll meta fl-1976 rebah il-Malta Song Festival bil-kanzunetta ta' Ray Agius u Alfred C. Sant (*Sing Your Song Country Boy / Tifkiriet Tagħna it-Tnejn*) Malta ma kinetx hadet sehem fil-Eurovision.

Fl-1995 fit-Teatru fil-miftuh f'Ta' Qali, Enzo, reġa' rebah il-Malta Song Festival bil-kanzunetta miktuba minnu stess, *Din Għalikom il-Ħbieb Tieghi*, li kantaha ma' John Bundy u Tony Camilleri. Aktar rebħ segwi fl-1997 fl-Għanja tal-Poplu bil-kompożizzjoni tiegħu *It-Teatru*.

Fost kanzunetti li hu stess kiteb, u li rrekordja fuq Album, jibqgħu jissemew is-seba' CDs, fil-Pjazza tar-Raħal, *Made in Malta, Simply Brilliant, The Maltese Collection, Maltin u Ghawdxin, u Nirringrazzja Lill-Mulej*, li kollha sabu bejgħ tajjeb, filwaqt li *The Maltese Collection* baqgħet fiċ-ċarts Maltin għal aktar minn sena !!

Minbarra l-kant u l-mużika, Enzo Gusman kellu wkoll karriera bhala xandar! Beda mar-Rediffusion fl-1969, bi programm ta' kull gimgha jippreżenta *The Italian Hit Parade*. Imbagħad lejn tmien fis-sibgħinijiet ingħaqad mal-istazzjon għid Għarbi Libjan f'Malta, Lehen il-Ħbiberija u Solidarjeta' (*Voice of Friendship and Solidarity*), fejn nieda programm tar-radju ta' kuljum intimu u interattiv bl-isem *Bejn il-Ħbieb*, li zied jiksiblu l-popolarità.

Fl-1979 flimkien ma' martu Carmen u

wliedu Johanna u Greta Enzo emigra lejn il-Kanada fejn minbarra li kompla fil-karriera ta' bankier, kien ukoll xandar regolari fuq CHIN Radio Toronto.

Lura Malta, fl-1991, issokta bil-kant u x-xandir bil-programm ta' kuljum ta' *Bejn il-Ħbieb* fuq Radju Malta, Bay Radio, Radio 101 u Calypso Radio.

Bhala diletant kbir tal-futbol (u ffissat fuq it-tim ta' Sliema Wanderers) Enzo għamel żmien ħabbar fl-Istadju Nazzjonali f'Ta' Qali jaqra l-listi tal-plejers qabel tibda l-logħba u jhabbar l-iskorers. Kien ukoll ikanta l-Innijet Nazzjonali qabel il-logħob tat-tim nazzjonali Malti.

Kull Jannar u fix-xhur tas-Sajf Enzo, nannu ta' erbgha, kien jirnexxielu jżur u jqatta' hin mal-familja, fil-Kanada fejn eventwalment issetilja għal kolloxx.

Fost l-unuri li rċeva, Enzo kien jgħożż hafna dak nazzjonali mogħti lilu f'Diċembru 2011, il-Midalja Għall-Qadi tar-Repubblika, filwaqt li fl-edizzjoni ta' Settembru li għadda ta' L-Għanja tal-Poplu gie onorat b'Gieħ l-Għanja.

Il-mewt ta' Enzo thabbret minn martu stess fil-paġna ta' Facebook tagħha hekk: *"Il-maħbub tagħna halla t-tbatija tiegħu warajh u issa nġhaqad mal-Mulej fejn mhux se jsufri aktar"*.

Deskritt bhala "Malti li jhobb lill-Malta u lill-Maltin", Enzo qatta' snin twal ikanta u jxandar il-mużika f'Malta flimkien ma' martu Carmen. Mhux ta' b'xejn li hafna tawh gieħ għall-kontribut lill-kanzunetta u l-lingwa Maltija, fosthom kantanti li appoġġja fil-karriera mużikali tagħhom.

Fost dawk li esprimew id-dieqa tagħhom għall-mewt ta' Enzo Gusman kien hemm il-President tar-Repubblika George Vella. Li qal: "Imnikket bl-aħbar li Enzo Gusman halla din id-dinja. Il-kontribut tiegħu għall-qasam tal-mużika u x-xandir se jżommu l-memorja tiegħu ħajja fostna. Minn qalbi nagħti l-ghomor lil martu Carmen u lill-għeżieħ kollha tiegħu".

Il-funeral ta' Enzo sar fil-Kanada nhar fit-28 ta' Diċembru li għadda. M'hemmx dubju li se jibqa' miftakar!

Ron Borg

High Commission in Canberra celebrates Malta Republic Day

Back on December 13, the High Commission of Malta celebrated the 47th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Malta in Canberra at the Commonwealth Club in Canberra, recalling the effort and struggle of our ancestors.

Addressing the gathering, the High Commissioner of Malta, H.E. Mr. Mario Farrugia Borg highlighted that the Maltese history spins back 7000 years and that our intangible heritage, identity, values and cuisine have survived multiple waves of foreign colonisation.

He reflected on the fact that the Maltese archipelago punches above its weight in vision, progress and achievements. Furthermore, the country's values are shared and celebrated by hundreds of thousands of Maltese living abroad, the largest community calling Australia home.

He explained that Malta treasures its bilateral relations with like-minded partners, such as Australia and New Zealand whom it works with to achieve their common goals.

The High Commissioner also took the opportunity to thank the Deputy High Commissioner, Ms Denise Demicoli, for her continuous support and dedication, as she completes her tenure and wel-



From left: Mr. Lawrence Buhagiar (*NSW Consul General*), Ms Chirelle Ellul Sciberras (*Consul General, Melbourne*), Ms Gail Demanuele (*Senior Councillor*), Ms Denise Demicoli (*DHC*), Ms Joanne Grima (*HC's partner*) and Mr Mario Farrugia Borg (*HC*)

comed Ms Gail Demanuele, who takes over this role.

The Chief of Protocol Mr. Ian McConville, Heads of Missions, members of the diplomatic corps and Officers of the Maltese Australian Association in Canberra and Queanbeyan, the President of the MCC of NSW, the Consuls General of Malta in Sydney and Melbourne, the former High Commissioner of Malta, Mr. Charles Muscat and spouse, Mrs. Victoria Muscat also attended.

MCC of Victoria in meet and greet at its Parkville Centre

During the festive season, the Maltese Community Council of Victoria welcomed Malta's High Commissioner to Australia, HE Mario Farrugia Borg, and Malta's Consul General

of Victoria, Chirelle Ellul Sciberras at its rejuvenated Parkville Centre.

The evening comprised a meet and greet for the two dignitaries and numerous members of many of the Council's affiliated Maltese Associations. It also welcomed Councillor Victoria Borg who ably represented Brimbank at the event during which the MMG Concert Band of Victoria provided entertainment.

The Centre's renovated library area was on display. The MCC is currently hoping to attract some interested parties to help it finalise the categorisation and recording of the many new books it has now on hand.


All agreed that all in all it a wonderful night was had by all.



Above: Members and guests of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria with the High Commissioner Mario Farrugia Borg and the Consul General of Melbourne (*centre*) at the meet and greet. Right: the President of the MCCV, Marlene Ebejer with the High Commissioner, and (*Below*): the MMG Concert Band of Victoria that provided the entertainment



Community News



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La Valette Social Centre

Inc. 175 Walters Road, Blacktown Tel. 96225847



Saturday and Thursday activities at the La Valette Social Centre at Blacktown are now back to normal, with the centre following the COVID guidelines as indicated by the NSW Government. Therefore all patrons are now being welcomed at the club regardless of vaccination status, with QR-code check-in, masks to be worn inside except when eating or drinking, while the two-square metre rule is applicable indoors.

St Nicholas Festa Committee Plumpton -NSW

Events for 2022

Sunday March 13: Fete
Sunday July 10: Imnarja
Sat. October 13: Fete
Sun. Nov/ 19: Dinner Dance
Sunday December 4: Festa

Tune in to Radio and Television

MELBOURNE: on 3ZZZ 92.3FM or on www.3zzz.com.au. Mondays 5-6 pm, Fridays 5-6 pm and Saturdays 10-11am.

MELBOURNE: on 98.9 North West FM, every Friday 6.00 - 7.00p.m. and Mondays 7.00 to 8.00pm. Presenter: Emmanuel Brincat.

On SBS Radio
Day Time Analogue and Digital Tuesdays and Fridays: 12:00-13:00 97.7fm SBS 2.
(To tune into digital radio you need a receiver or device with a DAB+ chip. Tuning in is by station name not frequency. Digital radio can also be heard via digital TV..)

SYDNEY: listen to the MCC radio programmes on 2GLF FM 89.3. Isma' l-programm tar-radju bil-Malti



mill-Kunsill Malti ta' NSW minn fuq l-is-tazzjon 2GLF 89.3FM. Also On Demand on I-Internet: www.893fm.com.au)
On Demand: Ethnic Maltese Council 11am)
Il-Hadd 11.00 am: l-aħħar aħbarijiet minn Malta, mużika, tagħrif, kultura, avvizi u suġġetti ta' interess.

SBS Radio 2 on Channel 38. Programmes can be accessed online (live/catch up) at: sbs.com.au/maltese (mobile), using the SBS Radio app.

For television news from Malta - **SBS2 TV 32** (Viceland) on Thursdays and Sundays at 8am.

SBS MALTESE NEWS: L-Aħbarijiet are now on SBSTV Viceland HD Chan-

nel 32 every Sunday at 8.00 a.m. and on Thursday at 8.00 a.m.

BRISBANE listen to the Maltese Programme on 4EB on Tuesdays 6.00 - 8.15am; Sundays 4.15pm to 5.15pm.

Maltese Community Radio Adelaide: Maltese Programmes on 5EBI 103.1fm: **Sunday:** 7.30am; **Monday:** 8.00 am; **Monday:** 6.00pm.

Contact: Bernadette Buhagiar: 0420 944 205. Email bernadettebuhagiar@gmail.com Ron Borg: 0418 843 850. Email ronborg@mac.com

97.9 FM Melton Tuesday Maltese Programme: 6.00 To 8.00 pm
Presenter Miriam Vella

Programmes on 89.3 Fm 2GLF
Maltese voices: One hour of Maltese talent, songs from Maltese artists. Sundays @ 10.00 am to 11.00 am. Marthese Caruana: 11.00 a.m.: MCC programme

These programmes are also on Demand for 4 weeks from the website of 2GLF 89.3 FM - follow - Ethnic - Sunday 10.00am and 11.00 am



Djokovic's Australian saga finally over

The World's No. 1 tennis player has been deported

Nine times Australian tennis champion Novak Djokovic lost his last-ditch court bid to stay in Australia where he had hoped to defend his title and bid to become the first player to win 21 Grand Slam titles when the judges rejected his appeal after the government cancelled the unvaccinated player's visa on public health grounds and deported him.

Djokovic said in a statement that he was "extremely disappointed" but respected the ruling, made on the eve of his first match. He said he was co-operating with the relevant authorities in relation to his departure from the country.

The controversy surrounding his entry to for the Australian Open had been strange and wild.

A week ago a judge ruled Djokovic, who tested positive for COVID-19 last month, could remain in the country. But Australia's immigration minister Alex Hawke used his ministerial powers to cancel the Serbian player's visa, arguing that his presence in the country risked fanning anti-vaccine sentiment.

It was the second time Djokovic's visa had been revoked, after a first cancellation over not following Covid entry rules was overturned by a different judge. So Djokovic again launched the case against the decision. His supporters fell silent outside the courtroom as the decision was announced.

At the outset many Australians could not understand why, that although the World's No. 1 tennis player Novak Djokovic broke Canberra's strict rules he was not on the next plane home immediately. "Rules are rules they" they said.

Chief Justice James Allsop said the federal court's ruling on Sunday was based on the lawfulness and legality of the minister's decision, not on the "merits or wisdom of that decision".

Sunday's decision marked the end of a 10-day saga over Djokovic's Australian visa.

Djokovic was replaced on Monday's draw by Italy's Salvatore Caruso, who is ranked 150th in the world, in his match against Serbia's Miomir Kecmanovic.



Novak Djokovic ... he was due to defend his Australian Open Tennis title

Many argued that the incident could have perhaps been down to just a matter of lack of communication, a 'misunderstanding' or just hard-headedness. It was also turning out to be political and escalating into a diplomatic incident between Australia and the player's home country, Serbia.

His deportation means that the 34-year-old would not be able to enter Australia again before three years.

Meanwhile, Djokovic could face a fine or even prison in Serbia after his admission that he broke isolation while he had Covid in December. Serbia's Prime Minister Ana Brnabic admitted that in Serbia the laws are equally applied to all and no-one is allowed to breach the isolation rules. Many are skeptical this would happen.

She said Djokovic would have clearly violated the rules in place if he was aware of the result before he participated in the event. "In this case, it seems as if he was aware of it – then it is a clear violation of the rules and what the sanctions are, it's what the relevant institutions will have to look into," said Brnabic.

Premier League resumes after postponement

Following the postponement of football competitions on a request by Premier League clubs to the Executive Board of the MFA due to Covid, the Premier League resumed Monday 17th January with the Pre-

mier League and throughout the week.

The first matches on Monday: Foriana v Valletta, and Hamrun Spartans v Mosta.

On Tuesday, leaders Hibernians take on Gzira Utd, while on Wednesday Sta Lucia play Gudja Utd and Birkirkara face neighbours Balzan.

All supporters attending matches have to produce a valid vaccine certificate issued by the Maltese Authorities.

The postponement concerned all competitions, organised under the auspices of the Malta FA, the Gozo Football Association and the Futsal Malta Association.

Maurice Walsh dies aged 91

The death has been announced of former Sliema Wanderers footballer, Maurice Walsh at the age of 91.

This affable personality made his senior debut for the Wanderers in an old firm derby match against Floriana on January 15, 1949, when he scored two goals in a 3-2 victory, and played for 13 years for the



Blues until 1962, making 147 appearances, scoring 53 goals.

Maurice Walsh won three League Championships, two FA Trophies, two Cassar Cups and four Scicluna Cups. After wards he was transferred to Senglea Athletic in the Third Division but hung up his boots after only one season.



The fourth edition of the Tipsport Malta Cup international football tournament is taking place this week (Jan 16 to 25) at the National Stadium with the participation of four foreign football teams.

The participants are SK Sigma Olomouc (Czech Republic), FC Spartak Trnava (Slovakia), WSG Tirol Wattens, (Austria) winners of the 2021 Tipsport Malta Cup, and AAB Aalborg FC (Denmark).

Tipsport Malta Cup is organised by MFA Sports Plus backed up by Visitmalta.com.