



The Voice of the Maltese

Issue
270

(We are for the Greater Malta)

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A fortnightly print
and digital magazine

Decision Day as Malta goes to the polls on March 26

*Robert Abela
leader of the
Labour Party*

*Bernard Grech
Leader of the
Nationalist Party*

*Malta's
Parliament*

One Hundred years of elections in Malta



Godfrey A. PIROTTA

Professor of Government and Policy Studies and Chairperson Mediterranean Diplomatic Academy University of Malta

On March 26th Malta will go to the polls to elect a new government for the 23th time. It was in 1921 that Britain conceded Malta a system of government that allowed political parties to compete for political power.

The electoral system foisted on Malta was the Single Transferable Vote system that the British hoped would produce weak governments and fragmented parties.

Between 1921 and 1955 most of the governments that Malta had were either coalition governments or minority governments. From 1955 onwards the trend was towards a consolidation of a two-party system. Perhaps the reason for this was that after WWII it was the Malta Labour Party and the Nationalist Party that seemed able to drive towards new horizons for Malta.

The 1955 election was fought on the MLP's platform of Integration with Britain or Independence. The 1962 election campaign was wholly focused on the PN's and MLP's demand for Independence. The 1971 election was driven by the MLP's call to end, once and for all, Malta's status as a British and NATO client state while that of 1976 on the MLP's push to establish Malta as a neutral and non-aligned state.

The four elections that followed the 1987 election, i.e., those of 1992, 1996, 1998 and 2003, were dominated by the PN's drive to see Malta join the European Union.

With these – Independence, Freedom Day and EU membership – massive issues out of the way subsequent elections began to revolve mainly about corruption, social rights and good governance.

The PN's failure to support the introduction of divorce and to impose exorbitant energy costs on consumers and businesses and corruption scandals surrounding energy supplies procurement and the Mater Dei hospital project dominated the 2013 election. Also Labour's support for an extension of social rights to members of the LGBTIQ community and women was another dominant theme.

Following the accusations made by Daphne Caruana Galizia claiming that the PM's wife and members of the family had received substantial funds from Azerbaijan, popularly known as the Egrant Affair, was not merely the main theme of the 2017 election but what provoked it.

Currently, in 2022, the election campaign has been more of a Presidential type election in a way that none of the others have been. The main theme seems to be who do you trust most to keep Malta moving forward, the incumbent Prime Minister Robert Abela or Bernard Grech Leader of the Opposition?

Throughout all this the electoral system remained unchanged. Nonetheless, other changes have occurred. In 1921 the franchise was restricted to male persons with a certain income while women were completely excluded. In 1947 voting was extended to all persons, male or female, over 21 years of age, in

1976 to all 18-year olds and in 2017 to 16-year olds in 2017.

While 16-year olds can vote in all elections so far they are excluded from standing as candidates for election.

Until 1932 priests were not only permitted to contest elections but if elected could serve as ministers, but in 1947 priests were barred from standing as candidates.

The 1981 election result gave rise to a Constitutional crisis of the worst kind. The Malta Labour Party won a majority of seats but not a majority of votes. The Nationalist Party refused to accept the result arguing that under a system of proportional representation the party winning the absolute majority of first count votes should form the government.

The crisis was resolved in 1987 when a new Constitutional amendment was approved by Parliament. Henceforth, the party that won an absolute majority of first count votes cast in a general election would form the government, receiving sufficient extra seats guaranteeing it a majority in Parliament.

This procedure was first adopted in 1987 when the PN won an absolute majority of votes but fell four seats short of a Parliamentary majority. It was brought back to play in 1996 when it was the Labour Party that won an absolute majority of votes but not seats commiserate with that majority.

In 1996, preoccupied by the possibility that no party would gain an absolute majority of votes Parliament approved another amendment to the electoral system by which the party winning a relative majority of first count votes but not a majority seats would again receive extra seats to give it a majority in Parliament, provided that only two parties won seats in Parliament.

In the 2008 election the PN benefited from this change having won a relative majority of votes but fell three seats short of a Parliamentary majority.

In the 2017 election a new development took place when the Constitutional Court awarded the PN two extra seats claiming that the proportion of seats to votes.

In the coming election a new mechanism will come into play which is mainly intended, at this stage, to extend the majority of women in the House by bringing it up to 40%. Thanks to this mechanism up to 12 female candidates may find a route to Parliament bringing the number of MPs above 70.



Central Bank says that in 2022 Malta's (GDP) to grow by 6.0%

In its outlook for the Maltese Economy 2021-2024, the Central Bank of Malta expects Malta's gross domestic product (GDP) to grow by 6.0% in 2022, by 5.3% in 2023 and by 3.8% in 2024.

Compared to the Bank's earlier projections, the level of Malta's GDP is being revised upwards due to an estimated 1.2 percentage point higher growth in 2021.

Pre-pandemic economic activity levels would thus have been attained earlier than projected in the Bank's previous projections exercise. Consequently, the GDP growth rate for 2022 is being revised down by 0.5 percentage points. No substantial revisions have been made to the subsequent two years.

According to the Central Bank Malta's domestic demand is expected to be the main driver of growth, reflecting strong growth in private and government consumption.

In addition, net exports are projected to also contribute strongly as exports accelerate, while imports are projected to grow at a slower pace.

It says that the slowdown in imports in turn mirrors the expected drop in invest-

ment in 2022, following exceptional outlays in certain sectors in 2021.

In the following years, domestic demand is envisaged to continue leading the expansion in economic activity, reflecting especially a foreseen strong contribution from private consumption.

Employment growth to accelerate

At the same time, the contribution of net exports is projected to remain positive, reflecting the gradual normalisation of tourism activity and continued growth in foreign demand generally.

When it comes to employment growth, this is set to accelerate to 2.6% in 2022 in view of the continued growth in economic activity.

The unemployment rate is set to stand at 3.5% by 2022 before returning to 3.6% in 2023 and 2024.

In 2022 the annual inflation based on the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices is set to rise to 2.7%, up from 0.7% in 2021, largely reflecting the impact of import price pressures on all subcomponents of inflation except energy.

Import price pressures are then envisaged

to ease somewhat and hence, inflation is set to decelerate to 1.8% by 2024.

The general government deficit is expected to narrow substantially over the remainder of the forecast horizon as COVID-19 measures unwind and macro-economic conditions improve further. Then by 2024, it is forecast to narrow to 3.3% of GDP. On its part the general government debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to stand at 60.9% of GDP in 2024.

On balance, risks to economic activity over the medium term are judged to be balanced, with some downside risks in the short-term, when the pandemic could further weaken tourism exports more than anticipated in the baseline.

The Central Bank points out that risks to public finances mainly affect 2022 and are deemed to be deficit-increasing. In particular, they relate to the likelihood of additional COVID-related support and the impact of Air Malta's restructuring on the likelihood of State aid to the airline.


Outlook for Maltese Economy at a glance

Year:	2022	2023	2024
GDP growth (% yoy)	6.0	5.3	3.8

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Woolloomooloo Wharf

Maltese community a century ago



Dr Barry York

A few years ago, I was approached by the producers of the popular SBS TV series, *Who Do You Think You Are?* to appear in an episode about one of Australia's leading entertainers, Adam Hills. I was surprised to learn that Hills had a Maltese great grandfather who migrated to Woolloomooloo, Sydney, in 1912.

My oral history work over many years had focused on Maltese migrants and someone from the production company asked if I knew anything about the Maltese community in Woolloomooloo back then. Immediately, my mind turned to a collection of oral histories I had recorded in the 1980s on cassettes that were carefully stored in shoeboxes in a cupboard at home.

I had written books on the larger question of Maltese migration to Australia and had an understanding of the context for the Woolloomooloo community. I also knew of print sources that

would provide factual information.

But what oral history could provide went to a different, deeper, level entirely. In my cassette collection were interviews with two women who migrated from Malta to Woolloomooloo with their mothers in 1913 and 1914.

Both had grown up there, as part of the wharf community. I recorded Christina Couch (nee Farrugia) and Jean Barrett (nee Rizzo) in Sydney in 1984 when they were aged in their 70s. As I located the cassettes and dusted them off, it suddenly struck me: the two interviews represent voices of migration a hundred years ago! The subjective accounts of daily life in Woolloomooloo, in the rectangle of streets pushing 500 metres back from the bay, is unique and priceless.

Had the recordings not been made, the individual memories would have been lost; though I wish to point out that my friend and fellow historian, Mark Caruana, had interviewed both women before me, and it was through him that my own op-

The Maltese in Woolloomooloo pioneers of urban migration

portunity arose.

Woolloomooloo today is highly sought after real estate, with a largely gentrified population. The Finger Wharf is a heritage site, with up-market apartments and posh restaurants around it. In 1912, it was a tough working-class community with many migrants.

Back then, the wharves were booming, employing hundreds of labourers, sometimes running three shifts per day. The houses were gas lit but comfortable and, in some ways, similar to those in Malta: double-storeyed, bedrooms upstairs, dining area downstairs, no front yard, steps leading to the pavement.

As in Malta, this allowed individuals to sit out the front after work and chat with passers-by.

Jean Rizzo and Christina Farrugia both hailed from dock towns



Christina Couch

in Malta's Grand Harbour. Jean's father, Joseph, was a dockyard worker while Christina's was a deep-sea diver. It is likely that Christina's father had worked on the construction of Malta's Breakwater – a major project lasting from 1903 to 1909 – and his skills

were in demand in Sydney when the huge wharf was being built at Woolloomooloo from 1911 to 1915.

Christina recalls him later working on the pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge when it was being built. The 'pull' of Australia was its reputation as '*l-art tal-futur*' (the Land of the Future), where hard work was rewarded with good wages. Malta was a British colony and migration within the Empire was seen as offering a better future than migration to traditional destinations along the north African coast.

Australia at this time was developing rapidly, expanding its trade with Europe. There was abundant work in quarries, factories, road and rail construction, and on the wharves. The Maltese who settled in Woolloomooloo were pioneers of urban migration.

There are patterns in history, but within the patterns are multitudes of individual stories. The fathers of both women made the voyage to Australia on their own, with a view to testing the conditions and bringing out their families later on.

John Farrugia made the move in 1911 and did well as a diver on the wharf project. When he sent for his family two years later, he had ready for them a rented house in Plunkett Street, a few minutes' walk from the wharves.

**Continued on page 5*



A young Jean Barrett

A high level of class solidarity with 'foreigners'

**Continued from page 4*

Jean's father, Joseph, obtained a 'working passage' on a boat in 1912 and initially laboured on road construction around Mount Lyell, Tasmania, before moving to Woolloomooloo, where he worked on the wharves and arranged passage for his wife and two-year-old Jean in 1914.

A few hundred Maltese worked at Mount Lyell when he was there but many gradually headed north, in part because the wet, cold conditions on Tasmania's north-west coast were so different to the Mediterranean climate.

When Jean and her mother disembarked at Sydney, Joe took them straight to the house he was renting in Nicholson Street, in the heart of the wharf community. Prior to that, he had boarded at the Farrugias' place with a dozen or so other Maltese wharf workers.

The Farrugias' house attracted many new arrivals. As Christina recalled: *"Any new people who came to Australia, friends would bring them to our place, and they were always made welcome. They'd bring their mandolins and we'd have real good old sing-song ... and they'd talk about home and different ones would ask my mother to write a letter home because some of them couldn't read or write"*.

The Maltese language was spoken and Maltese cuisine prepared. In the absence of refrigeration, rabbits and chooks were slaughtered fresh. One can imagine the streets of this quarter filled with the scent of baked macaroni and 'stuffat tal-fenek' (rabbit stew) and, in the evening, the sound of a mandolin or guitar being played by a Maltese wharf labourer, sitting on his doorstep.

There would also have been a strong scent of horses, as there were 'hundreds of them', with some carriages drawn by eight horses.

And of course, on a warm breezy night, there was the saline scent from the bay. Sometimes migrants suffer homesickness but, according to Jean, her parents were very satisfied at Woolloomooloo.

Jean's mother, Katarina, had been a seamstress, sewing clothes for the Royal Navy in Malta. Her mother told her that life was very hard in Malta. Neither parent had any desire to return, and they never did.

The family felt 'comfortable', especially with extra income earned when Katarina started a sewing business from home. The community was a tight-knit one and Jean



Malta's Marsamxett Harbour, part of the Grand Harbour in 1910 where the Maltese used to sail from on their way to Australia and eventually to their final destination, Woolloomooloo

At the time in Woolloomooloo Maltese was always the common language

Marsamxett and Christina recalled at least four other Maltese families among their neighbours – the Carabotts, Cassars, Vassallos and Zahras. *"We went to [St Mary's Cathedral] school with their children and we all grew up together."*

There were also many single Maltese men who had to wait until after the War to bring out their families. Jean Barrett recalled: *("The Maltese) always used to stick together. You know what I mean? Go on picnics together"*.

Down in Woolloomooloo there'd be no radio or television then so after ten, the men would go and sit out on a step or in the gutter and just talk there, and the women, when they had finished their tea business, they'd go out too but mostly you'd find all the men out there talking ... it was always in Maltese!

There appears to have been a high level of class solidarity with 'foreigners' permitted to join the Wharf Labourers Union. The community was ethnically diverse: Maltese wharfies lived alongside the Australian-born, English migrants and Italian fishermen. Neither woman felt they were ever discriminated against while growing up in Woolloomooloo. On the contrary, both speak highly of their Australian neighbours.

According to Jean: *"We had no trouble with them at all, the Australians. My mother mixed up well with them. My father did too, with the men on the wharf. And I did at work too. But I will say there were some people who used to complain. Both*

women married Maltese men in Sydney".

In 1927, Jean married a Maltese by the name of Harry Barrett from her hometown, Senglea, and Christina married Charles Cauchi from Sliema in 1930. Christina's husband changed his surname from Cauchi (pronounced 'Cow-key') to Couch in order to avoid discrimination in employment. Her brothers in Sydney also changed their surnames: from Farrugia to Ferguson.

The practice of changing Maltese surnames to English or Scottish ones interests me because in 1947 my Maltese father, Loreto, changed his surname from Meilak (pronounced 'May-lak') to York for similar assimilationist reasons.

The interviews capture some of the Maltese culture of that era. As a small island with a few dozen common surnames, nicknames developed as a way of differentiating people with the same names.

Christina recalled her father's nickname was 'Ganni l-Bugħaddas', which means 'Johnny the deep sea diver'. Thus her dad could be distinguished from any other John Farrugia by reference to his occupation. Both women sound very Australian and Christina self-identified as Australian. Jean regarded herself as Maltese but added *"I've been here a long time"*. She still spoke Maltese at the local club where she liked to play bingo with other Maltese women.

The Library has digitised the two interviews and they are now online and people anywhere in the world with access to the Internet are able to experience this particular aspect of history, of century-old migration to Australia, through listening to the individual voices of those who lived it.

**DR BARRY YORK is a historian at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House. He began recording oral history interviews for the Library in 1988 and was a Harold White Fellow in 1997. This article was originally published in the National Library of Australia Magazine March 2016.*

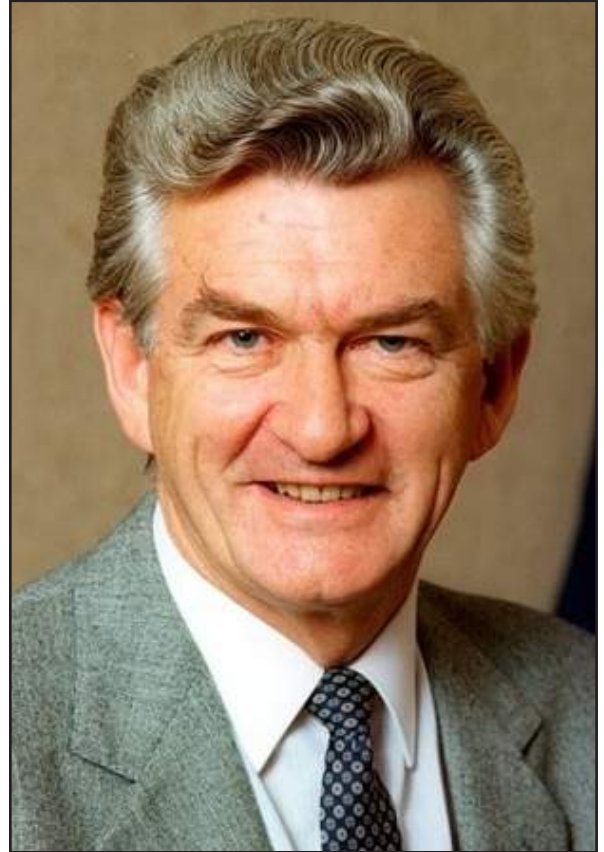
The 23rd Australian Prime Minister: Robert James Lee Hawke

(From March 11 1983 to December 20 1991)

All Prime Ministers need a modicum of luck to achieve office, to survive and to succeed. Bob Hawke was perhaps the luckiest. He did not serve the usually long and arduous parliamentary apprenticeship. It lasted less than three years. He was the opposition leader for little over a month; the day he became the opposition leader was also the day that the election that was to install him as the Prime Minister of Australia was called.

Bob Hawke the Iarrikin PM

Researched
by RonBORG



Bob Hawke in 1983 when he was elected unopposed to replace Bill Hayden as leader of the Labor Party

The 23rd Prime Minister of Australia was born on December 9 1929, in Bordertown, South Australia, the second child to Clem Hawke, a Congregational Minister, and his wife Ellie, a schoolteacher. His seven years older brother Neil died at the age of 17 from meningitis.

Such was the strong belief of Ellie in her son that Bob's self-confidence throughout his career even led him to boast to his friends that he would one day be Prime Minister of Australia! At the age of 17 Bob had a near-death accident on his motorbike, but this spurred him on to make the most of his abilities. At age 18 he joined the Labour Party.

Hawke was educated in Perth, Western Australia, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and Law and then went on to Oxford UK to do a Bachelor of Letters.

Besides his scholastic achievements, Bob set a new world record for 'beer drinking'. He managed to guzzle two and a half pints (A Yard of Ale) in 11 seconds!

In 1956 Bob Hawke undertook a scholarship in Arbitration Law at the Aus-

tralian National University in Canberra, but later on, abandoned it to join the Australian Council of Trades Union. (ACTU).

He married Hazel Master-son in 1956. They had three children, Susan (born 1957), Stephen (born 1959), and Roslyn (born 1960) and a fourth child, Robert Jr. who died in his early infancy in 1963. The family moved to Melbourne because of Bob's new position in the ACTU in 1958.

With his successful achievements, Hawke rose through the ranks of the ACTU and became its President from 1970 to 1980. He also became a very effective councillor at resolving national industrial disputes.

Not long after Hawke began work at the ACTU, he became responsible for the presentation of its annual case for higher wages to the national wages tribunal, the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

In 1979, he was awarded the medal for the "Companion of the Order of Australia", for services to trade unionism and industrial relations. In 1980 he ran successfully for Parliament and enjoyed enormous popularity, causing him to become the leader of the Labour Party in February 1983, leading them into an overwhelming victory over the Liberal Party in the following month and becoming Prime Minister of Australia.

◀ **Bob Hawke and wife Hazel at the Red Square in Moscow during their 1987 visit to the Soviet Union.**



In his role as Prime Minister, Hawke attained more harmony among the Labour unions, and brought about great reforms that are still in place to this present day. He established universal health care in Australia with the creation of Medicare.

He doubled the quantity of subsidised Childcare places introduced Occupational Superannuation, increased school retention rates, and created the Family Income Supplement and Subsidised Homecare Services.

In 1984 Bob Hawke also installed the Sex Discrimination Act, which removed discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of a person's gender. Then five years later, in 1989, much to the delight of University students, he created the HECS (Higher Education Contributions Scheme) whereby a \$1,800 fee was charged to all University students and the Commonwealth paid the balance. Added to this, a student could defer the HECS payment through the tax system when the students' income became sufficient.

Bob Hawke is also the only prime minister to be born in South Australia and the only one raised and educated in Western Australia. He holds the highest ever approval rating for an Australian prime minister, reaching 75% approval in 1984.

**Continued on page 5*

Hawke *the people's person*

Prime Minister Bob Hawke celebrating Australia's victory in the American Cup yacht race

**Continued from page 4*

Historians have generally praised the reforms implemented by the Hawke Government, and his government is often credited for the modernisation of Australia's economy. He is frequently ranked within the upper-tier of Australian prime ministers.

Hawke was "a people's person"! On September 26, 1983, the yacht Australia II completed an improbable comeback over US boat, Liberty, winning race seven at Newport, Rhode Island, for a 4-3 victory overall in the Americas Cup. Back in Australia, a champagne-soaked prime minister in Perth led a nation's celebration.

After a night of watching the drama on television, he effectively declared the following day, a national public holiday, saying: "Any boss who sacks anyone for not turning up today is a bum."

The Labor Party maintained its electoral majority in the 1987 elections, but because of a worsening economy, his

parliamentary majority was considerably reduced in the 1990 election, and he resigned in December 1991. In 1995 Bob divorced his wife Hazel, for the writer Blanche d'Alpuget to live in Northbridge, a suburb of North Shore of Sydney.

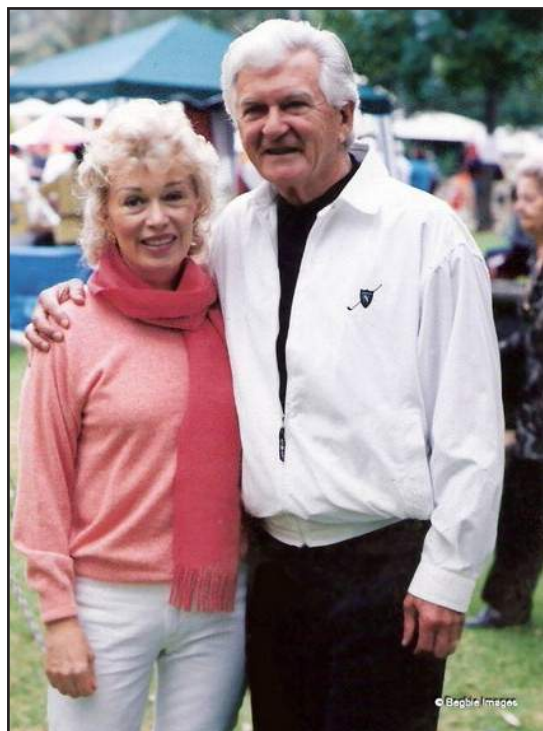
Although the divorce estranged Bob from his family, they reconciled by the 2010s. In December 2018, while predicting a Paul Keating Labour win in the coming 2019 Federal elections, he stated that he may not witness this

success due to his "terrible health".

On May 16 2019, two days before the election, after his short illness Bob Hawke died at his home at Northbridge at the age of 89. A private cremation was held at Macquarie Park Cemetery, and a state memorial was held at the Sydney Opera House on June 14



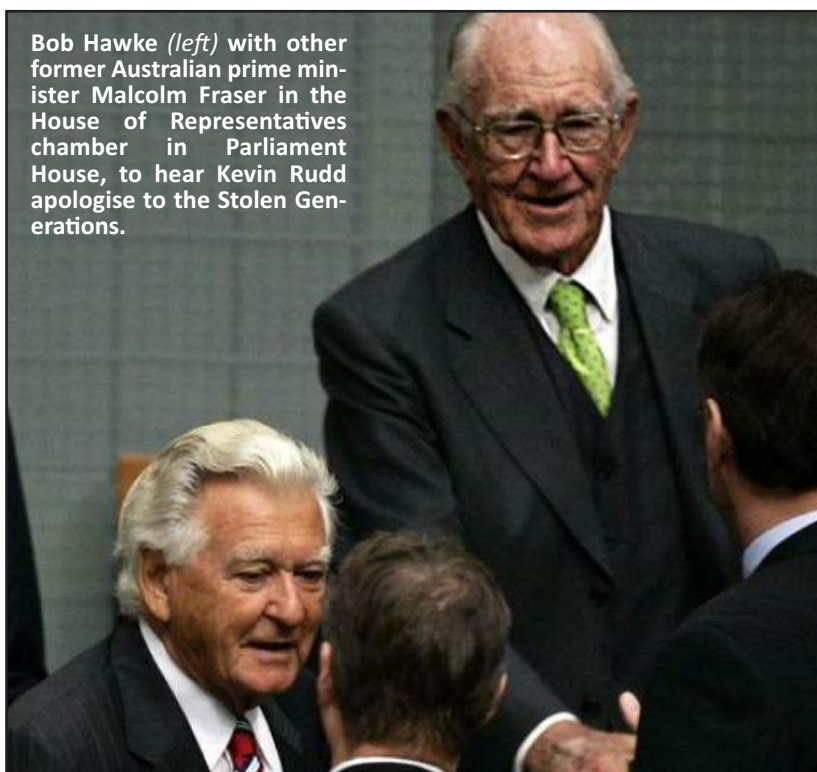
**In the next issue: Paul Keating, Australia's 24th PM (1991 to 1996). He used eight years as Treasurer and four years as Prime Minister to introduce radical changes that would allow Australia to meet the new economic challenges of the 1980s and 1990s. In doing so, he embraced many of the policies of his conservative opponents and overturned long-held Labor beliefs.*



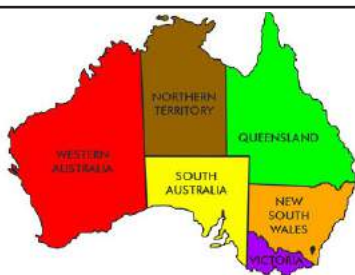
In 1955 Bob Hawke with the writer Blanche d'Alpuget after divorcing his wife Hazel

On 13th February 2008 Bob Hawke was at Parliament House in Canberra along with many Stolen Generations members to hear then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd make the apology he committed himself to make in his first year in office following his election win in 2007 to Stolen Generations.

The journey to a national apology to the Stolen Generations began in 1995, with an inquiry into the forced separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families by past governments.



Have your say/Xi trid tghid?



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 ...

The Voice: tal-Maltin li nghixu barra

Tony Cassar minn St Albans jikteb:

Jien wiehed minn dawk li kif nirċevi l-magaziġn *The Voice* ikolli herqa kbira biex naqrah u niflieh. Ma nitlaqx minn fuq il-kompjuter qabel inkun qrajtu b'attenzjoni minn qoxra sa qoxra.

Mhemmxix pagna li nħalli barra, għax anke l-isports jinteressani, l-aktar il-futbol f' Malta (għalkemm it-tim tiegħi tal-Valletta sejjer hażin) għall-mod kif jirnexxielkom iżżommuna nfurmati b'dak li jkun qed isehh. Imma fuq kollox, joġġbuni l-kitbiet bil-Malti, l-aktar minhabba l-Malti li jiġi wżat.

Kemm ilni l-Awstralja, u wara li spiċċat il-Maltese Herald, ma sibte l-ebda pubblikazzjoni oħra fl-Awstralja li tilhaq l-aspettativa ta' xi hadd bħali li mhux biss bqajt inhoċb lil art twelidi Malta, imma wkoll il-lingwa Maltja.

Very useful links on the Internet

Ron Borg from Pooraka, S. Australia writes:

I am a presenter on the Adelaide Maltese Radio programmes on 5EBI Fm, and recently I embarked on a mission to inform our existing audience and potential listeners, on how to easily listen to the programmes “On Demand”.

I was overwhelmed by the response and consequently found out that we now have new listeners from all over the world, including Malta enjoying these programmes at their leisure.

I wonder if the readers of *The Voice of the Maltese* realise that they too can do something similar by logging on to a search engine like *google* and the link issuu.com on the net where they can select any of the past editions of this splendid journal to browse at their leisure!

I have enjoyed looking through a few of the past 269 editions in the past!

Grazzi ghall-*Voice* bhal sib t l-isfog tieghi għax dan il-magazine mhux biss ikollu artikli interessanti u studjati, imma wkoll jispikka bil-mod kif jipprezenta l-artikli bil-Malti. Mhux ta' b'xejn li hafna jqisuh bhala l-pubblikazzjoni li tipprezenta l-interessi tagħna l-Maltin li ngħixu barra art tweekna.

Malta and the UK

Ray Micallef from Sutton, UK writes:

I have been following very closely the buildup to the general election in Malta. I have been living in the UK for close to 50 years, however, my heart is still in Malta and considering the nearness of the two countries, and the fact that I still have relatives on the island, I rarely miss a trip to there every year except.

I keep abreast of all that is happening in Malta, and sometimes regret not living there. When the time for me to retire comes along, that will be my home once again.

The past three years have been hellish, here. The politicians with Johnson at the helm have lost the plot. In comparison, in spite of its smallness, Malta has become the envy of Europe, socially an economically.

Energy prices in the UK have become so expensive and almost unaffordable. Recently I was shocked to discover the price of petrol having been asked over £stg2 for one litre of petrol. Whereas in Malta the government has taken it upon itself to carry the burden of the international rise in energy and prices of the commodities.

Superior Citizenship

J. Cauchi from Sunshine Victoria writes:

It was a short letter (VOM March 1 p 8) regarding Maltese citizens living in EU being assisted to travel to Malta to vote.

But it was spot on. Yes they get €90 for the privilege. They are indeed the first class citizens of Malta. It appears that we have those kinds of citizens. There are many others that are not assisted financially to travel to Malta to vote.

This is gross discrimination, and I venture to say unlawful, as citizenship is equal to all irrespective of where they live. You cannot treat some better than others.

This privilege was started by the Nationalists and continued under the Labour administration. If there is assistance to travel, it must be available to all.



Dr Hugh McDermott MP
State Member for Prospect

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Q. My mother is in the process of reviewing her Will. She has a term deposit of around \$250,000 and a managed fund of a similar amount. I am married and retired. My sister is married but she is still working as she has a large mortgage on their home. My mother asked whether she should indicate in her Will to leave the term deposit to my sister and the managed fund to myself. Is this reasonable?

A. Your mother is able to do as she wishes but when one indicates specific items in their Will this could create problems. She may decide not to renew her term deposit or she may decide to cash in the managed fund in the meantime.

I believe she should discuss this with her solicitor who would indicate the problems that could come out of this. Her best option would probably be to leave everything to be divided equally between yourselves and then you can come to an agreement at the time the estate is being wound up.

Q. My mother has just suffered a stroke. She has some direct shares and wishes to gift these shares to my brother and me now, whilst she is capable of doing so. She wishes to do this for us not to have to pay capital gains tax in the future. Is this a good idea?

A. Your mother can gift you whatever she wants to while she still has the capacity to do so. Just be aware that even though she will be transferring these shares to you and not actually selling them, she will be liable for any capital gains tax herself.

Transferring shares from one name to another triggers capital gains or capital losses at the time of transfer. If you inherited the shares, then capital gains will not be triggered until such time as you or your

brother sold the shares.

Q. My son and his wife are in the process of purchasing a larger home as with three children their home is now too small for them. They need to take out a very large mortgage to be able to do this. I currently have funds in a term deposit earning very little. I am thinking of giving them this money in order for them to borrow less. I do not need these funds and he is my only son. I was wondering whether I should gift them the sum or loan it to them. Can you advise me on this?

A. Helping your children is something to be commended. However you should probably tell them that you would loan them the money without interest and if a time came when you needed these funds, they would need to pay you the amount back. Hopefully this will never be the case but you are leaving this option open. You would be wise to make this in writing with all of you signing this document.

Q. I am a pensioner and I have decided to commence a reverse mortgage on my

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.



home as I am struggling to make ends meet. I have been offered up to \$200,000 from the institution that I am doing this with. Should I take the full amount as a lump sum and invest it in my bank account. I actually need around \$2000 per month to live comfortably in retirement?

A. You should not withdraw the full amount at once, as interest will start building up on the full amount from day one. If you know that you need \$2000 per month then withdrawing say \$10,000 at a time when you need to top up your bank account would be a better option. Also withdrawing the full \$200,000 at once could have an effect on your age pension entitlement, as the sum withdrawn would be deemed as earning income by the Centrelink Income test.

Q. I am 77 years of age, my wife is 76 and our house is on a very large block of land. We have just been given permission to subdivide this block. I was thinking of investing some of the proceeds into superannuation using the downsizing strategy. Is this permissible?

A. Unfortunately you are not allowed to invest the proceeds from the sale of the block of land into superannuation. If you were to sell the house you are living in then yes, and building a house for yourself on the block, as the house would have been your residential home.

The block once subdivided would fall under a different title and you would not have been living on the block. For one to use the downsizing strategy one would need to have owned the property for more than 10 years and would have lived in it as his/her residential home for part of that time.

This document contains factual information only and is not intended to provide any recommendation or opinion in relation to the topic/s discussed.

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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**



L-ingurji mill-attività fizika fil-kbar

Huwa magħruf li hemm ħafna benefiċċji tal-attività fizika f'persuni ta' kull età, sakemm ma jkunx hemm kontro-indikazzjonijiet għaliha minhabba xi kundizzjoni medika li jista' jkolllok.

Dawn il-benefiċċji jinkludu t-tnaqqis tad-demenzja, tip ta' dijabete, id-dipressjoni, l-ansjetà u l-ghejja kostanti (*fatigue*), u xi mard tal-qalb.

Hemm ukoll effetti pożittivi globali fuq il-ġisem li jiffunzjona aħjar, u r-rata ta' degradazzjoni fizika u mentali mażmien tonqos.

Dawn l-effetti huma proporzjonalment ikbar aktar mal-per-suna tkun kbira.

Min-naħa l-oħra, hemm ukoll ir-riskji tal-eżerċizzju fiziku. Bniedem attiv fizikament, speċjalment atleta kompetittiv għandu iktar ċans li jkollu xi ingurja mill-attività tiegħu jew tagħha meta mqabbel ma' min mhux attiv, għalkemm il-benefiċċji tas-saħħa huma generalment bil-wisq ikbar mir-riskji.

Kont sorpriż naqra li madankollu, atleta kbir fl-età mhux iktar suxxettibbli li jwegġa' s-sistema muskolo-skeletali bl-attività tiegħu minn atleta iżgħar li jkun qed jittrenja u jikkompeti f'livell komparabbli.¹

L-interess tiegħi f'dan is-suġġett ġie minn esperjenza qarsa personali, wara li għadni kif sofret qatugħ fl-għerq ta' Achilles (*Achilles tendon*) waqt li kont qed nilgħab it-tennis. Din hija ingurja li tista' tfiq minnha, b'intervent kirurgiku jew billi jithalla jfiq waħdu filwaqt li l-għarqub ma jithallix jiċċaqlaq bi stivali apposta għal madwar tliet xhur, segwit b'diversi xhur mal-fizjoterapista.

Fil-każ tiegħi, ma nistax inwahaal fl-attività li kont qed nagħmel, imma fija nnifsi għax kont qed nipprova nerga' nidhol f'dan l-isport li huwa tant għal qalbi wara xi sentejn jew tlieta wieqaf kompletament, għaġġilt wisq u ma bnejtx is-saħħa, il-flessibilità u n-nifs tiegħi bil-galbu qabel ma qbadt ir-rakketta tat-tennis b'idejja.

Nispera li meta u jekk jgħaddi kollox, nerga' nibda b'kemmxejn iktar galbu.

Statistikament, 75% tal-ingurji f'atleti kbar fl-età jsiru fl-es-tremitajiet il-baxxi tal-ġisem, bl-iktar komuni jkun l-irkoppa, imbagħad il-pala tas-sieq u l-ghaksa. Generalment li jiġri jkun li l-atleta jizloq jew jaqa', u dan ikun ukoll affettwat mis-sistema tal-bilanċ.

Sibt għadd ta' pariri għal persuni kbar fl-età biex jippruvaw inaqqsu ċ-ċans li jwegġgħu fl-attività fizika tagħhom,² u dan li



qed nikteb jgħodd għaliha wkoll:

- aghmel *check up* mediku tajjeb;
- tkunx dipendenti fuq tip wiehed ta' eżerċizzju jew sport;
- ishon bil-mod (*warmup*) qabel u iksa bil-mod (*cool down*) wara l-attività;
- l-attività trid tkun regolari (nota speċjali għaliha);
- hu lezzjonijiet jekk hemm bżonn;
- gib it-tagħmir (*equipment*) kollu li jkolllok bżonn u ara li jkun f'kundizzjoni tajba;
- iżzidx il-livell ta' eżerċizzju b'iktar minn 10% f'daqqa;
- iżzidx ħafna attività f'salt;
- agħti każ ta' x'qed jgħidlek ġismek;
- jekk tieqaf, erga' ibda gradwalment (aħjar qrajtha qabel din!);
- jekk twegġa', fittex għajnuna professjonali.

Dawn huma pariri siewja, biex wiehed jevita li jagħmel iktar ħsara milli ġid lilu nnifsu.

Miktub minn min għandu xogħfa!

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Roundup of News About Malta



Malta goes to the polls March 26 – the politicians have had their say

It's all down to CREDIBILITY

While still recovering from two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, Malta finds itself going into the March 26 General Election. Almost surprisingly, compared to previous such occasions, the period of the build-up to the 2022 election, is very quiet politically. We have not witnessed the usual euphoria leading to the big event.

Despite the political propaganda by the politicians of the two big ones – the Labour and the Nationalist Party – that normally accompanies such an event leading to decision day that determines the country's destiny in the next five years, the people have something else important on their mind. They are also talking a great deal about the war in Ukraine.

Daily, sometimes twice daily press conferences and political rallies by the big two have been the order of the day. Then on Sundays they organise even bigger rallies that due to the pandemic restrictions, have replaced the usual mass meetings.

Proposals from the main parties we've had a lot, a few somewhat similar in content followed or accompanied by promises and pledges of showers of money to the voters if they elect the right party. Some of the promises are built on what we already have.

The environment has been at the forefront of both parties. The ideas put forward are very interesting. Youths, pensioners, IVF, and the improvement of salaries for educators, have also been high on their agenda. Money does not seem to be a problem!

It is now up to the voters to weigh things up; to decide who can truly deliver and which leader is the better suited and the more trusted to lead the country for the coming five years.

The party leaders (both lawyers by profession) are seeking

their first mandate at the helm of their respective party. The incumbent Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Party, 45-year-old Robert Abela has been occupying the position for two years.

He won the subsequent leadership of his party election in January 2020, following the resignation of Joseph Muscat. He was already a member of his party's 2017 winning team.

Bernard Grech, 50, became the leader of the Nationalist Party, and subsequently leader of the Opposition in October 2020. He became his party's third leader in 2017 after Simon Busuttil and then Adrian Delia who was forced to resign from the leadership after three years having lost his party's confidence vote after a lot of controversies and internal conflict.

This will be the first general election in which 16-year-olds can vote. They have already done so in local council elections.

Polls run by different media in the last few years and leading to decision day keep giving Robert Abela and the Labour Party a "runaway" victory. However, both parties also keep advising their supporters to avoid complacency, as what matters is the vote on the day.

Before casting their vote, the people would be asking themselves some very important and pertinent questions.

In the end, it will all be down to credibility.

Many would be figuring out whom they believe could deliver and which leader is best suited for the role of Prime Minister



FACT 1: Malta's economy is back

According to the National Statistics Office, NSO, Malta's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021 grew by 9.4%, amounting to €14.5 billion, the best GDP level ever to be recorded in the island's history.

It also means that it was not only the best rate of growth since 2017 but also that in just one year it overturned the 8.3% decline registered in 2020.

Most economic forecasts had earlier been predicting that Malta would only reach its pre-pandemic GDP level by the middle of this year.

The year 2021's growth even exceeds by far the prediction made by the European Commission of a 5.9% growth, and also the Central Bank of Malta's more optimistic projection of 7.2%. Growth was about one and a half times what these two institutions had been predicting.

Last year, the EU's economy is estimated to have grown by around 5.3%, therefore Malta's economy has grown at twice that rate.

Investment last year is estimated to have reached around €3.2 billion, that is, 21% higher than the previous year, and even 13% higher than in 2019.

Employees last year earned €6.5 billion in compensation, or 9% more than in 2019. At the same time, the gross operating surplus of businesses and the self-employed rose to €7.1 billion, or 7% higher than in 2019.

The performance of the Maltese economy in 2021 suggests that the recent European Commission forecasts that Malta would be the fastest-growing economy this year are very likely to materialise.

*See also page 3: Central Bank says in 2022 Malta's (GDP) to grow by 6.0%

FACT 2: lowest number in history registering for work

At the end of January this year Malta had the lowest number of people registering for work in history. The National Statistics Office indicated that in the first month of this year only 1,117 people were registering for employment.

Compared to the same month last year, it shows that the number of the jobless, which at the time was 1,558, fell by almost two-thirds.

The biggest decline in job seekers was of those aged over the age of 45 (630). There was also a sharp decline among 30 to 45-year-olds, with 552, and 376 decrease among those under 30.

FACT 3: Malta with second-largest increase in economic growth in EU

The EU's statistics office, Eurostat, confirmed that during the last three months of 2021, Malta had the second-largest increase in economic growth among the EU countries and the Eurozone.

Eurostat figures show that Malta's Gross Domestic Product increased by 2.3% to reach 10% between October and December when compared with the same period the previous year.

Slovenia was the only country with a better rate than Malta with an increase of 5.4 % in the GDP which rose to 10.5%.

One hopes that whoever gets the people's mandate to administer Malta for the next five years, keeps building on these achievements



Roundup of News About Malta



FATF: Malta completes action plan - on-site visit will follow

The decision by the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF) to conduct an on-site visit to Malta in a relatively short period after the greylisting is indeed most welcome news.

The decision, that came through a statement by the FATF is a confirmation that Malta has substantially completed its action plan and that an on-site visit will be held 'at the earliest possible date'.

Financial intelligence expert Yehuda Shaffer described it as an achievement for the Maltese Government 'and quite an impressive result'.

He was reported saying that although the process is not over yet, news of an on-site visit was a positive sign. He said: "We've seen political commitment. We've seen resources allocated. We've seen excellent leadership of the process by the National Coordinating Committee and the FIAU. Most importantly, the FATF was presented with actual result."

The FATF still wants to make sure that what has been achieved is sustainable, which is what its on-site visit to Malta will be all about. Malta could then get delisted in FATF before June

Indian company makes €22 million investment

Indian pharmaceutical company, Torrent Pharmaceuticals has announced a €22 million investment in Malta that would create 120 new jobs.

Inaugurating the new investment, Prime Minister Robert Abela said he was proud that this international company that produces pharmaceuticals with a presence in various countries worldwide and employs 800 scientists, has chosen Malta as its base in Europe.

He expressed his thanks for the efforts by Malta Enterprise in facilitating the process for this investment and said that this company, that has made its investment during the worst period of the pandemic, is creating new and quality jobs.

Dr Abela said that according to the European Commission, Malta will have the strongest economy in Europe.



Prime Minister Robert Abela (second right) and Minister Mirian Dalli at the SR Technics

SR Technics expands presence in Malta with new €42m. investment

Prime Minister Robert Abela recently inaugurated a €42 million new investment in Malta by SR Technics, a world-leading MRO service provider consisting of a new six-bay hangar that includes significant back-shop facilities for its centre of excellence (CoE) for aircraft maintenance in Malta.

This project with a new hangar, stretching up to 40,000 metres will enable SR Technics to continuously provide high-quality aircraft maintenance and cabin modification services, now for up to six narrow-body aircraft of the B737 & A320 families simultaneously.

Besides offering new opportunities to customers located within the EMEA region in a very central hub for the aviation industry, SR Technics Malta will eventually also employ around 500 highly trained professionals.

In a speech for the occasion the Prime Minister said that this new facility was unquestionably one of the most technologically advanced facilities in Europe - both in terms of innovation, as well as stunning design. "It is also a story of national pride as the largest steel structure ever manufactured and built in Malta," he said.

He added he was very satisfied that these facilities are being built as they push Malta forward and at the forefront in Europe in the maintenance sector and industry.

He said, "We want only the highest stan-

dards for this country and that is what you have created here," and added this inauguration was a celebration of the collective effort by the country, which worked tirelessly to attract the investment as well as taking care of the investors.

Minister for Energy Enterprise and Sustainable Development Miriam Dalli said that thanks to the persistence and determination of SR Technics, the Government, Malta Enterprise and the members of the consortium, this vision was made reality. "SR Technics is truly setting itself to the fore as a maintenance, repair, and overhaul service provider and we are proud of the trust shown in Malta for the continued investment," she said.

Jean-Marc Lenz, Chief Executive Officer at SR Technics, shared the update about the recent achievements and plans for the facility and said he was glad they were celebrating together this opening.

"With this hangar, our excellent and highly motivated workforce will be able to produce excellent service and product quality and redeliver the aircraft on time to customers," he said.

Also present for the ceremony were, Monika Schmutz Kirgöz, Ambassador of Switzerland, Ian Borg, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure, and Capital Projects, and Silvio Schembri, Minister for the Economy, Investment and Small Business.



Roundup of News About Malta



Malta praised by WHO for its commitment to the pandemic

During a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health Dr Chris Fearne, the World Health Organisation's Regional Director, Hans Kluge, praised Malta's commitment during the Covid-19 pandemic. He singled out Malta for its vaccine donations to under-developed countries.

Malta and WHO signed a Coordination Agreement. During it, Kluge said that as a result of this Malta remains in the forefront of health governance throughout the European region as well as on a world-wide basis.

He also mentioned other matters, including the joint purchase of medicines, screening, cancer-related services and the overall benefits of primary care health as well as Malta's mental health care services.

Dr Fearne said that Malta has always collaborated on a European level as well as WHO initiatives. He added that the agreement will strengthen joint measures. He pointed out that Europe successfully managed to restrict the pandemic while continuing to offer health services.

Malta Government providing official aid for humanitarian needs of the people of Ukraine

The Government of Malta is committed to providing official aid to address the humanitarian needs of the people of Ukraine so as to help alleviate the suffering as a result of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

To address their immediate needs, through a coordinated national effort between the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement, the Government of Malta has sent six large containers valued at over €1.15 million in medicines and medical equipment (pictured).

Their equipment and medicine have been provided by the Ministry for Health, the Malta Chamber of Pharmacists and St. Thomas Hospital. Efforts were being coordinated by the Civil Protection Department.

In addition, a financial contribution has been made to the Official Development Assistance fund dedicated to the current crisis in Ukraine, and a bank account adminis-

Women's role in General Elections

In the fifteen general elections since the granting of universal suffrage in Malta, only 73 women have contested these elections. In comparison, the number of men has exceeded 1000.

However, over the years the number of women contesting general elections has increased. But the success rates of the first and third elections won by female candidates have never been matched up. In 1947 it reached 50 percent while in 1951 it was 57.1 percent.

The rate slowly rose to 42.9 percent in 1976, but this momentum was lost and success fell to 20 percent in 1981. It rose to just 28.6 percent in 2003.

The 2003 election gave the same results as that of 1998, with six women parliamentarians, three each for the two main political parties.

Since the granting of the right to vote, the Labour Party (MLP) has consistently fielded women in all general elections, and except during the 1992-96 legislature it had at least one female member of parliament overall years.

Only nine of Malta's current 67 members of parliament are women, which is just 15 percent of the seats in Malta's parliament, the second-lowest percentage in the EU.

Ostensibly to remedy this deficit, in January 2021, the Maltese Parliament



amended the constitution and approved on second reading, reforms as well as the law on elections that seek to enhance women's representation in parliament and the

Electoral Commission.

As a result, Parliament will allocate 12 additional seats for women if they do not gain a 40% share in the coming election.

The constitutional reforms would expire after 20 years unless renewed before expiry – the idea is that the target of the least-represented gender having 40 percent representation would be achieved within 20 years.

Forty-two 42 women have registered to contest the upcoming general election from a total of 177 candidates, 69 on the Labour Party ticket, and 70 on the Nationalist's. Between them they have cast 304 nominations to contest the 13 districts. Some of the candidates would be contesting two districts.

The rest of the candidates have been presented by the representatives of ADPD, the ABBA Party, the Popular Party and the Volt Party. Four other independent candidates have also submitted a nomination.



tered by the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs has been opened for anyone wishing to provide a financial contribution for aid from Malta to Ukraine.

The Government of Malta said it will remain committed to providing humanitarian aid according to the needs and priorities of the Ukrainian people as communicated through the formal channels.

Meanwhile, in a meeting with Foreign Minister and European Affairs Evarist Bartolo, representatives of the Ukrainian community in Malta have expressed their appreciation for the massive support of the Maltese Government and citizens alike to the Ukrainian people in these difficult times,

S&P agency gives Malta highest rating for decade

S&P Global Ratings agency gave Malta its best rating in the last decade by confirming Malta's A-rating with a stable outlook.

The agency's experts gave Malta this rating because according to them there was "effective policymaking at the national and European level" which led to the preservation of Malta's productive capacity, and which allowed a moderate national debt burden.

The report indicates that economic growth in Malta has been very strong, noting that investment has increased by 19%. They also mention Malta's vaccination programme, as well as the government's strong fiscal assistance.

S&P also predicts that in the coming years the recovery and Malta's resilience plan could lead to a growth of 0.8% in our country's GDP.

When it comes to FATF, the international experts said that the Maltese authorities' significant progress on the FATF's recommendations may lead to Malta's removal from the list in the short term".

Mix-xena tal-ħajja Maltija

minn Ġużè Camilleri

Lejlet l-elezzjoni

Qed nikteb, biex ngħid hekk, lejlet l-elezzjoni għax din hija l-aħħar hargħa tal-magazine qabel il-poplu Malti u Għawdxi jgħid jivvota biex jahtar Gvern li jgħid li l-Għejjer Maltin għall-hames snin li għejjin.

Għalhekk ma jistax jonqos li llum ma niddedikax parti sostanzjali mill-kontribut tiegħi għal dak li qed jiġri fil-qasam politiku fil-għirja għall-voti għal jum l-elezzjoni. Sintendi mhux se nidhol f'dak li qed jingħad mill-partiti politiċi u l-kandidati li se jikkontestaw, imma aktar niddedika l-isparju tiegħi għal kummenti generali

Min se jikkontesta

M'hemmx xi ngħidu, fuq quddiem hemm il-Partit Laburista u dak Nazzjonalista li għal għexieren ta' snin iddominaw ix-xena politika lokali u għal hafna snin nistgħu ngħidu li kienu l-unici partiti rappreżentati fil-Gvern.

Attwalment, wara l-elezzjoni tal-1962, fl-eqel tal-kwestjoni politika reliġjuża, fil-Parlament, mal-PN u l-MLP kellna wkoll il-partit tal-Haddiema Nsara, u l-Partit Demokratiku Nazzjonalista. Għalkemm fl-aħħar elezzjoni kellna wkoll żewġ kandidati tal-Partit Demokratiku li dahlu fil-Parlament, għalkemm ikkontestaw taht l-arma tal-Partit Nazzjonalista.

Din id-darba l-Partit Demokratiku ngħaqad

mal-Alternattiva Demokratika, li ilhom jikkontestaw imma qatt dahlu fil-Parlament, taht l-isem ta' ADPD.

Magħhom hemm il-Partit ABBA, il-Partit Popolari, u Volt

Ivan Grech Mintoff tal-ABBA Malta, flimkien ma' erba' kandidati indipendenti, fosthom Arnold Cassola li qabel kien jikkontesta mal-Alternattiva Demokratika, li mbagħad telaq minn dak il-Partit.



Ivan Grech Mintoff tal-ABBA

173 kandidat – 42 minnhom nisa

B'kollox, għat-13-il distrett li se jkunu jikkontestati fl-Elezzjoni Ġenerali, il-Kummissjoni Elettorali rċeviet 304 nominazzjoni ta' kandidati. B'kollox bħala kandidati individwi se jkun hemm 173. Minn dawn, 70 huma tal-Partit Nazzjonalista, filwaqt li l-Partit Laburista se jkunu 69. Mit-total ta' 173, 42 minnhom huma kandidati nisa.

Bħala nominazzjonijiet, f'isem il-Partit Laburista hemm 122 nominazzjoni u f'isem il-Partit Nazzjonalista 108. Dan l-għadd huwa minhabba li kandidati miż-żewġ naħat se jkunu qed jikkontestaw fuq żewġ distretti.

It-tmien u l-għaxar distrett għandhom l-akbar ammont ta' kandidati, b'total ta' 28 kull wieħed. L-anqas ammont ta' kandidati huwa fit-13-distrett elettorali b'total ta' 17-il nominazzjoni. Hemm imbagħad 34 kandidat mill-partiti l-oħra u indipendenti li whud minnhom ukoll se jikkontestaw fuq żewġ distretti.

Jidher li l-hidma tal-partiti biex iħajru aktar nisa jikkontestaw l-elezzjonijiet, kif ukoll il-ligi li għaddiet dan l-aħħar bl-iskop li jħajjar aktar kandidati nisa, ma tanx kelli-hom suċċess għax l-għadd ta' kandidati

nisa mhux wisq impressjonanti meta tqis kollox

B'kollox hemm 42 mara, b'16 minnhom f'isem il-Partit Laburista. Hemm ukoll 17 f'isem il-Partit Nazzjonalista. Id-disa' nisa l-oħra huma tal-partiti l-oħra, waħda minnhom indipendenti.

Hemm ukoll kandidati transgender, u l-kandidati tal-Popolari huma kollha rġiel.



Paul Salamone tal-Popolari

Stharriġ ...

Kull stharriġ s'issa jindika li għal darb'ohra se jirbaħ il-Partit Laburista b'maġġoranza tajba, għalkemm forsi mhux b'dik kbira li kien qed jiġi mbassar xi xhur ilu. L-aħħar tbassir hu maġġoranza ta' 27,000 – 37,000.

L-iżgħar maġġoranza qed tiġi mbassra mill-istharriġ tal-Malta today, minhabba li qed issostni li minhabba li l-għadd ta' dawk

Hemm ukoll l-ABBA ta' Ivan Grech Mintoff, b'idejat konservattivi Kristjani, dak li bl-Ingliš isejjhalhom right wing *Christian Conservatives*. Hafna mill-kandidati tiegħu għejjin mill-komunità ewanġelika "*River of Love*".

Il-Volt Malta huwa ferġha tal-Volt progressiv Ewropew Volt Europa li qed jipproponi li l-abortion jiġi dikriminalizzat u li jiżgura li jsiru l-operazzjonijiet meħtieġa f'kazijiet li jkunu eċċezzjonali, fosthom meta l-mara tkun se tiflef hajjitha. Irid idahhal ukoll ligijiet dwar l-ewtanazja u l-prostituzzjoni.

Il-Partit Popolari jsostni li hu l-partit konservattiv ewlieni f'Malta.

li mhux se jivvutaw se jkun ferm akbar minn tas-soltu, u dan se jeffettwa sewwa d-differenza ta' voti bejn il-partiti, anke jekk id-differenza bħala perċentwal tista' tkun qrib dik li kien hemm fl-elezzjoni tal-2017.

Għaliex jiġri dan. Nagħti eżempju: jekk ikun hemm 200 vot u partit A jgħib 55% tal-voti u l-iehor 45 %, il-voti attwali jkun: A-110 u B-90, differenza ta' 20. Imma jekk il-voti jkunu 500, bl-istess perċentwal u A jgħib 275 u B jgħib 225, id-differenza titla' għal 50 vot.

Biss kull stharriġ dejjem jibqa' stharriġ fuq għadd limitat ta' persuni. Barra minhekk, il-fatt li hemm persentaġġ qawwi ta' nies li għadhom ma ddecidewx lil min se jivvutaw jew li mhux se jivvutaw, dan jista' jkollu effett fuq ir-riżultat aħhari.

Iż-żewġ Partiti huma konxji ta' dan l-għadd. Tant li waqt ir-rallies tagħhom, kemm il-mexxej Laburista kif ukoll il-kap Nazzjonalista, qed jagħmlu enfasi fuq il-ħtieġa li kulhadd jiġbor il-vot tiegħu u jmur jivvota.

Tibqa' wkoll il-mistoqsija ta' kemm minn dawk li se jivvutaw ser jixhtu l-vot tagħhom vojt jew imħassar, għax billi fis-sistema Maltija l-partiti politiċi jkunu jafu eżattament min invota jew le, ikun hemm min imur jivvota biex ma juri li ma vvutax.

CHRIS BOWEN MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MCMAHON

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Mix-xena tal-ħajja Maltija

minn Ġużè Camilleri

Il-Kampanja Elettorali 2022

Skont il-midja lokali, minkejja d-diversi fl-attivitajiet li qed jagħmlu l-partiti politiċi, il-kampanja elettorali mxebbha ma kampanji elettorali oħra ta' snin mgħod-

dija hi xi ftit k a j m a n a . Jidher li ma hemmx l-istess heġġa li kien ikun hemm qabel.

Hekk Albert Gauci

Cunningham, l-editur tal-gazzetta *illum* jikteb: "M'għandhiex x'taqsam mal-2017! Bidu kwiet għall-kampanja... Imma għaliex?"

Fost ir-raġunijiet li jagħti hemm li din id-darba m'hemmx it-tensjoni tal-2017 meta fost l-oħrajn kien hemm l-akkuża – li wara nkjesta nstab li kienet infondata – kontra l-eks-Prim Ministru dwar l-Egrant.

Fost raġunijiet oħra li jagħti dan il-ġurnal-ist, hemm, li l-Partit Nazzjonalista hu inqas militanti u inqas kumpatt; li l-Labour ukoll qed ibati minn apatija fost sezzjoni ta' votanti tiegħu; li l-apatija fil-PN mhix inqas;

u wara kollox il-pandemija Covid-19.

Nahseb li ma dan wieħed irid iżid il-gwerra u l-effett tal-invażjoni Russa fuq l-Ukranja, kif ukoll għax donnu li kulhadd qed jaċċetta li l-elezzjoni se tintrebaħ mill-Partit Laburista.

Dan il-hsieb ta' kampanja kajmana tispikka wkoll f'ġurnali oħra fosthom l-*Independent* bl-editur jikteb: 'TMID Editorial: A largely muted election campaign (so far).'

Saħansitra, minn 5,093 qarrej li wiegħbu f'sontaġġ inniedi minn *The Times*, għall-mistoqsija "Are you following the Malta election campaign?" 15% qalu iva, 65% le u 20% ftit li xejn.

Dan ma jfissirx li l-kampanja elettorali tixbaħ lil dik ta' xi pajjiżi barranin, fejn bilkemm tintebaħ li waslet elezzjoni. Dan għax il-partiti u l-kandidati ndividwali xorta għaddejjin b'organizzazzjonijiet ta' rallies (ma għandniex il-mass meetings tas-soltu minhabba li l-pandemija Covid-19 għad ma ntemmitx għal kollox), konferenzi stampa, dibattiti fuq it-televiżjoni, *billboards* eċċ.

Għalkemm iva, anke l-attivitajiet li qed isiru mill-partiti huma ferm inqas minn daww tal-elezzjonijiet ta' qabel, l-aktar u l-aktar tal-aħħar tnejn meta dakinhar l-attivitajiet kienu jibqgħu għaddejjin il-ġurnata kollha sa tard bil-lejl.

Dan ġej mill-fatt li matul il-jum l-attivitajiet huma l-aktar koncentri madwar il-mexxejja tal-partiti b'xi konferenza stampa filgħodu, imbagħad rally taħt it-tinda fil-għaxija, u wara b'rallies kbar fi tmiem il-ġimgħa.

Izda ma nafx eżatt jekk dan jinbidlax fl-aħħar ġimgħatejn tal-kampanja elettorali.

(għal aktar dwar l-elezzjoni ara paġni 2,11-13)



Fondi miġbura mill-partiti

Sintendi, dawn l-attivitajiet kollha, ir-reklami, posters, billboards, strixxi avvizi fuq l-Internet, eċċ, iqumu l-flus u l-partiti jinhtiegi fondi kbar biex imexxu kampanja bħal din.

Biex jagħmel tajjeb għal dan, il-partiti jduru fuq daww li jappoġġjawhom u fuq ċerti negozji, li x'aktarx jikontribwixxu għaž-żewġ partiti, biex jiksbu daww il-fondi li tant jehtiegu.

Attwalment waqt il-kampanja elettorali kemm il-Partit Laburista kif ukoll dak Nazzjonalista hasbu biex jiġbru l-fondi permezz ta' l-hekk msejja maratona ta' ġbir ta' fondi... li generalment tkun ta' jum meta ssir attività għal diversi siegħat biex isir il-ġbir.

Beda il-Partit Nazzjonalista li rnexxielu jiġbor 'il fuq min-nofs miljun ewro.. somma sabiha. Imma b'sorpriza għal hafna, fil-

maratona tiegħu l-Partit Laburista gābar 'l fuq minn miljun u 23 elf ewro, somma li qatt ma ngābret minn ebda partit politiku qabel.

Minbarra l-għajnuna tal-fondi, hafna drabi l-partiti jagħmlu wkoll hafna attivitajiet bl-għajnuna tal-voluntiera li jiddedikaw hafna mill-hin tagħhom f'hidma favur il-partiti rispettivi.

Interessanti l-fatt, li minkejja li l-Partit Nazzjonalista kultant jilmenta li m'għandux il-fondi li għandu l-Partit Laburista biex jorganizza l-kampanja elettorali tiegħu, kien dan il-Partit u l-mexxej tiegħu li nefqu l-aktar flus fuq midja soċjali fosthom il-Facebook.

Fil-fatt matul Frar il-Partit Nazzjonalista nefaq €19,800, u Bernard Grech €16,600. Il-Partit Laburista u Robert Abela, bejn wieħed u iehor nefqu, € 4,500 kull wieħed.

Biss dawn il-figuri huma porzjon żgħir minn dak li mistenni li jkun intefaq sal-elezzjoni miż-żewġ partiti politiċi u l-kandidati ndividwali.

In Memoriam

Vale Joseph Tabone 1946-2022

Joseph Tabone, born in Zabbar, Malta on 25th June 1946 died in Sydney on 6th March 2022.

The details of the Celebration of his life are as follows: Thursday 17th March at 12 p.m. at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, 54 Leopold Street, Ashbury NSW 2193

Cortege then moves to Rockwood Cemetery, St Maorun Section

The Celebration of Life will be held at Strathfield Golf Club.



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A quick glimpse at Australia

In the grip of a flooding catastrophe

The deluge dumped on southeast Queensland and northern New South Wales in the past weeks has been catastrophic. They were once in a generation rain bomb. The PM has declared a national emergency in flood-hit NSW regions.

At the time of writing, 24 deaths, 59 homes were destroyed, 5200 homes flooded and 40,000+ people evacuated. The majority of deaths were around Singleton and Maitland, but most other river systems in the state were also in flood.

Floodwaters peaked at around 14.4 metres high in Lismore - two metres higher than the city's previous record.

These aren't the highest daily totals ever recorded in the city, but the first time three days of such intense falls have been documented, in data that go back to 1841.

The east coast is commonplace for heavy rainfall and flooding. The Yugara and Yugarabul people have traditional stories about great floods in the Brisbane river region long before European colonisation, and sediments from floodplains indicate floods as severe as those in 2010–2011 have occurred at least seven times in the past 1,000 years.

Instrumental records and documentary accounts show severe floods have inundated southern Queensland's cities and towns in the 1820s, early 1840s and 1890s, 1931, 1974 and, of course, in



2010–2011. Each of these events has been devastating and record-breaking, depending on which records you're interested in.

The floods in 1841 and 1893 are considered the highest in terms of water levels recorded in Brisbane city, reaching over 8m. Australia's wettest day on record was also recorded in 1893, when Cromahurst in the Glasshouse Mountains measured 907 millimetres in one day.

The early cost of the floods in Qld and NSW is estimated at 2.6 billion. The Insurance Council of Australia warned the industry expected the cost would be similar to that of the Black Summer bushfires two years ago. Floods have claimed lives in NSW others in Queensland.

The Voice of the Maltese has received a number of calls from concerned relatives in Malta. It is not easy to understand the vastness of this country. Most of our Maltese community live in urban areas; therefore when inquiring, the exact location is vital to be indicated.

State election for South Australia

As South Australians prepare for a state election, Adelaide Archbishop Patrick O'Regan (*right*) said it was important to resist the temptation to look at how the outcome of the March 19 state election would affect people as individuals but rather to consider the common good.



"By putting the common good first, we help to create a more just and equitable society can help to reverse the trend of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, which sadly during the COVID pandemic has grown even wider.

"By putting the common good first, we actually express our Catholic faith on many of the aspects of important life issues."

Nuclear-powered subs for Australia

With an election looming in May, the PM is lifting his narrative about war/defence as he announced that Australian and visiting nuclear-powered submarines multibillion-dollar base will be setting up at Brisbane, Newcastle or Port Kembla.

Fleet Base West in Western Australia will remain home to the current Collins class and future nuclear-powered submarines, given its strategic importance on the Indian Ocean.

"Establishing a second submarine base on our east coast will enhance our strategic deterrent capability, with significant advantages in operational, training, personnel, and industrial terms," Mr Morrison said.

With initial work to be completed by the end of 2023, the massive project comes as Australia faces what Mr Morrison describes as its most "difficult and dangerous security environment in 80 years". The nuke sub-

marines could be completed by 2035.

The government is lifting defence spending to almost 2.1 per cent of GDP this year, with \$578 billion planned to be spent over the next decade. It appears that the Liberal strategy for the May 2022 Federal election is to be "fortress Australia".



Australia adding nuclear-powered submarines to its fleet



A quick glimpse at Australia



War in Ukraine

Do not go to Ukraine

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has urged Australians against going to Ukraine to take up arms after a plea from the country's president for support in the fight against Russia's invasion.

"I would counsel against that purely for the safety of Australians that they would not travel to Ukraine," Mr Morrison told reporters. "I can understand absolutely the strong feelings and the motivations for people to go and do that."

"But I would say at this time the

legality of such actions are uncertain under Australian law. Under Australian law, people cannot engage in hostile activities overseas unless serving in the armed forces of a foreign country."

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called for citizens of the world to join these efforts. "Anyone who wants to join the defence of Ukraine, Europe and the world can come and fight side by side with the Ukrainians against the Russian war criminals," he said.

Coronavirus and poverty

Research headed by the University of NSW reveals the coronavirus supplement and the JobKeeper program were key factors in pushing the proportion of Australians living in poverty below 10 per cent. It had been 11.8 per cent in 2019.

But the end of JobKeeper and the supplement, despite a \$25-a-week increase in the base JobSeeker payment, has seen the proportion of Australians living in poverty rise to 14 per cent, or more than 3.8 million people.

Charities and social welfare organisations noted a sharp fall in financial pressures early in the COVID recession as the Morrison Government put in place the \$1500-a-fortnight JobKeeper wage subsidy and the coronavirus supplement, which was worth \$550 a fortnight to people on welfare payments including JobSeeker.

The UNSW and Australian Council of Social Service research found that without the various COVID-19 income support programs, the number of people in poverty would have soared to almost 6 million, or nearly a quarter of all Australians. Instead, the total number fell to 2.6 million.

Poverty among households reliant on JobSeeker payments fell from 76% in 2019 to just 15% in mid-2020. The proportion of people relying on emergency relief dropped to 9% from 14%, with a similar fall in the proportion of households having trouble paying bills.

But once the support measures were wound back or stopped, poverty started increasing. Poverty levels in households reliant on JobSeeker rose to 48 per cent by early 2021, while among sole parent families, it increased to 31 per cent from 19 per cent.

Wars bring more refugees to Australia

The Australian federal government has fast-tracked the approval of 1,700 temporary visas - including tourist options - to Ukrainians since the invasion by Russian troops.

It's also stressed it is not "stepping back" from its humanitarian program for people from Afghanistan who are seeking permanent resettlement in Australia.

But more than six months since the fall of Kabul, people who worked with Australian troops still in Afghanistan continue to fear for their safety because of the ruling Taliban regime.

They are also becoming increasingly dismayed by a lack of communication on when they could see their visas processed. Since the evacuation mission to Kabul last August, more than 4,300 Afghan evacuees have been brought to Australia for resettlement. Australia has committed to taking in 10,000 refugees from Afghanistan over the next four years within the humanitarian program. It's also committed to another 5,000 places in the family visa programme.

End of 'Neighbours'

Long-running Australian soap opera Neighbours will end production in June after losing its key UK broadcaster partner and failing to find alternative funding. The daytime drama has been shown on UK television for more than 30 years.

It helped launch the careers of many stars, including that of Kylie Minogue (right), when she



joined in 1986 to play the role of Charlene Robinson. The show's Twitter account said they were sorry that after nearly 37 years and almost 9,000 episodes they had to confirm that Neighbours would cease production in June.

They said: "To our amazing, loyal fans, we know this is a huge disappointment, as it is to all of us on the team." They thanked the fans for their messages and support and promised to end the show on an incredible high.



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World War II diary:
March 1942:

15 Spitfires arrive doubling Malta's Air Force

We could not find any specific issues worth recording in the siege on Malta during the World War II diary for the date of March 15, however, during that particular month Malta was kept very busy defending itself against the enemy. But also received a boost with the arrival of 15 Spitfires that doubled Malta's Air Force.

Before that, for 33 hours, between of March 5 and 7 in 1942, Malta was under alert and according to *malta70*, also under indiscriminate bombing as 70,000 kg of high explosive bombs and 4000kg of incendiaries were dropped over the island.

Civilians were trapped under collapsed houses, and a German pilot was taken prisoner.

Malta had been under attack by 43 enemy aircraft – ME 109 fighters and at least sixteen JU 88 bombers – that also

attacked the submarine base, dropping 20 1000kg, ten 250kg, and fifty 50kg high explosive bombs.

The March 5–7 attacks damaged the Tigne Barracks but the submarine base escaped serious damage. *Five houses were destroyed,*



Spitfires over Malta

two civilians were killed. A second attack targeted Luqa, dropping bombs on Ta Karach ridge, the Tal Liebru area, and the road between Luqa and Gudja. Later, four JU 88s and three ME 109s headed for Ta Qali where they dropped eight 50kg bombs targeting the aerodrome. One JU 88 was damaged by Light Ack-Ack.

Six Hurricanes of the 605 Squadron intercepted the enemy aircraft. Eight miles to the west of Filfla an ME 109 was attacked and reportedly destroyed.

Then in the late afternoon, four ME 109s dropped sixteen HE bombs on the Ta Qali area, two of them landing on the aerodrome. However, in a heavy response, Ack-Ack gunners shot down one ME 109 over Mosta. The pilot bailed out and was taken prisoner.

Attacks on Malta continued late evening and early morning when 15 enemy aircraft including JU 88s and two Italian BR 20 bombers approach Malta in relays. For ten hours they dropped bombs 'indiscriminately' over Gozo, St Paul's Bay, the Grand Harbour, Ta Qali, Rabat, Hamrun, Zejtun, Ta Inghra, Luqa, Mqabba, Gudja, and Hal Far. *Heavy Ack-Ack and search-lights were active.* There were nine casualties, four military, and the other five civilians. A fighter pilot was shot down.

Then on March 7, Malta received the 15 spitfires. The sound of the approaching aircraft without the usual air raid warning caused some alarm along the flight path to Ta Qali, that is, until the first planes were identified as familiar Hurricanes and Blenheims – and then among them the long-awaited Spitfires.

The aircraft credited with winning the Battle of Britain was seen as essential to Malta's survival against the Luftwaffe.

Malta-Australia people-to-people relations

The Maltese community in NSW met H.E Jenny Cartmill, the Australian High Commissioner for Malta, at the TFAF Conference Room in Sydney to discuss issues that could affect people-to-people relations.

The delegation from the Maltese Community Council of NSW, talked about the travelling restriction after Covid-19, Australia Hall, the Anzac Monument at Argotti Gardens, SBS TV and the Child Migration Monument at the Waterfront in Valletta.

The High Commissioner also had another meeting with the Australian-Maltese Chamber of Commerce and was scheduled to visit Canberra and other states in Australia.

Malta and Australia are friends of long-standing, inextricably linked in particular by the large number of Maltese people who migrated to Australia after the World War II.

Today, very few people in Malta don't have relatives or friends in Australia. As a result, the two countries have a unique relationship based principally on people-to-people links and friendship rather than on security or economic concerns.

Australia and Malta have had full diplomatic mission since March 1967. Prior to that, during the 1950s and the 1960s Australia had an immigration presence. Malta established a permanent diplomatic mission in Canberra immediately after the attainment of independence in September 1964.

From left: Marisa Previtera, Tony Pace Fer-aud, Alfred Carabott, Nathalie and Lawrence Gatt, Michael Zammit and HE Jenny Cartmill. Lawrence and Marlene Dimech, and Miriam Friggieri took part through a virtual link





Paul Scicluna, Chairman tal-GTA waqt id-diskors tiegħu

Mill-Gżira Għawdxija

Charles Spiteri



Il-Kamra tal-Kummerċ

Il-Kamra tal-Kummerċ għal Għawdex iddedikat il-bidu tal-laqgħa ġenerali tagħha fakkret lil Marlene Muscat, il-manigier tal-uffiċċju tal-EUROPE DIRECT u s-schem kbir tagħha biex tinbena l-istruttura tal-uffiċċju fi hdan il-Kamra li mietet f'Novembru li għadda.

Il-Kap Eżekuttiv Daniel Borg ippreżenta r-rapport amministrattiv li fih semma li l-Kamra se tkompli tagħti l-appoġġ tagħha lill-aġenda l-hadra u d-digitalizzazzjoni biex tiġi diversifikata l-ekonomija Għawdxija, u s-setturi tradizzjonali jimxu 'l quddiem.

Hu semma bħala eżempju t-turizmu, iffoka fuq il-hidma dwar id-digitalizzazzjoni u l-ekonomija l-hadra, kemm fuq livell nazzjonali u wkoll internazzjonali.

Qal li lejlet elezzjoni ġenerali il-komunità kummerċjali għandha tifhem li r-regolamentazzjoni trid issehh f'kull settur. Zied jgħid li f'dan il-kuntest tidhol "ir-responsabilità" tas-settur kummerċjali li jara li l-qligħ tiegħu ikun wiehed sostenibbli u ġust, imma wkoll tal-politiku li jilleġiżla mhux għal terminu elettorali imma għall-gejjieni fit-tul.

Fil-laqgħa saru wkoll interventi minn mistednin tal-Kamra, fosthom il-Kurunell Mark Said, il-Ministru għal Għawdex Clint Camilleri, il-kelliem tal-Oppożizzjoni Chris Said, u Ronald Sultana, Direttur għat-Turizmu u Żvilupp Ekonomiku.

Il-laqgħa ntemmet bid-diskors tal-president tagħha, Joseph Borg li sahaq dwar l-importanza li nipproteġu l-ambjent, u semma kif il-Kamra se tkompli taħdem fuq żvilupp sostenibbli għal gżira Għawdxija.

Il-GTA sodisfatta bli wettqet

Il-Gozo Tourism Association (GTA) kellha t-23 laqgħa ġenerali annwali li biha tat bidu għal sena oħra hidma li tirrappreżenta lil diversi operaturi fis-settur turistikku fil-gżira ta' Għawdex.

Wara li nqraw il-minuti tal-aħħar laqgħa ġenerali annwali u r-rapport finanzjarju, fir-rapport amministrattiv wara li elenka l-hidma bla heda tal-GTA f'diversi oqsma u tenna kif din il-hidma kienet influwenzata mill-pandemija tal-Covid il-kap eżekuttiv Joe Muscat esprima s-sodisfazzjoni tal-GTA għall-hidma mwettqa matul is-sena mill-kunsill.

Tkellem ukoll Paul Scicluna, Chairman tal-Gozo Tourism Association, li għamel aċċenn għall-effetti tal-covid fuq is-settur turistikku

Għawdx. Izda kompli li diġà hemm sinjali pożittivi ta' rkupru mill-pandemija. Anke jekk reġa beda jberraq fit-tramunata tal-Ewropa bis-sitwazzjoni fl-Ukraina li wkoll tista' thalli effetti negattivi fuq it-turizmu.

Indirizzaw ukoll il-laqgħa l-kap eżekuttiv tal-Gozo Regional Development Authority Mario Borg, li fisser ir-rwol ta' din l-Awtorità għidida għal Għawdex, u l-Avukat Chris Said kelliem tal-oppożizzjoni għal Għawdex.

Għalaq il-laqgħa Ronald Sultana, id-Direttur fid-Direttorat għat-turizmu u żvilupp ekonomiku fi hdan il-Ministeru għal Għawdex li ta' hajr lill-GTA għal hidma tagħha u tal-koperazzjoni bejn iż-żewġ entitajiet matul l-aħħar sena.

Gie wkoll mahtur il-bord għall-2022.



Wara zmien twil ta' stennija, il-Gozo Spirit Combat (Int.) Club ha schem f'sessjoni ta' gradings f'Malta. L-istudenti, kollha seniors marru tajjeb u kisbu dawn il-gradji: Ricky Bugeja (Red belt II tab), u Samantha Muscat u Jane (Orange belt).

Il-klabb qed iħares il-quddiem biex jekk ic-ċirkustanzi tas-saħħa pubblika jippermettu jerga' jibda s-sessjonijiet tat-taħriġ fi klassi sħiħa u fuq bażi regolari.

FUQ: Mix-xellug: Jane Mercieca (Victoria); Master Mario Saliba (Għarb); Ricky Bugeja (Santa Luċija) u Samantha Muscat (Għarb).



The Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Society Inc. Celebrating the 45th Anniversary



The Maltese Own Band is this year celebrating its 45th anniversary. It was established in 1977 by the late Mr. Joe Muscat at the request of the late Fr. George Xerri at the time the Provincial of the Missionary Society of St. Paul (MSSP in Victoria, to form a Maltese band to celebrate the feast of Our Lady Queen of Victories (il-Bambina) in Melbourne. Joe Muscat then sought the help of his friends, the late Mr. John B. Portelli and Mr. George Aquilina.

They chose the name as it would be a band for all the Maltese Community. They quickly came together with requests for members on Joe Muscat's local Maltese Radio programme. It started rehearsing for its first performance for the feast on the 11th September 1977.

The response was really surprising, the number of its members quickly grew, and at one stage there were 160 members.

Over its 45-year history the Maltese Own Band had, and still does, have the privilege to represent and promote Maltese culture and traditions through its music. These include the local Maltese organised *festas* and with invitations to other "National" *Festas*.

The band performed in various localities. Major Maltese concerts started at Festival Hall, The Melbourne Town Hall, and The Dallas Brooks Hall. In the late 1970's, the band also formed part of the memorable Fr. David Azzopardi Concerts.

It was also invited to celebrate feasts in South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland, as well as regional Victoria.

The members of the band have also recorded their work on CD, and today in its library, one can find an extensive recorded history of the last 45 years.

The band has had various musical direc-



The late Fr George Xerri MSSP, Joe Muscat and friends celebrating the formation of the band

tors and one must pay tribute to them. Currently the band is under the baton of Mro. Mario Cassar who is guiding the band into an exciting future, while keeping the traditional Maltese marches as well as introducing new work pieces to reflect the "modern" times.

While celebrating the 45th Anniversary, the Maltese Own Band is still going strong. It is proud to still be promoting Maltese culture and traditions through its music not only to the Maltese Community, but also to the wider public in general.

The Maltese Own Band is proud of its Maltese Heritage as shown in its name and proud emblem.

A formal occasion is being planned for September this year to close various celebrations that started with a social dinner held at the Maltese Cultural Centre on 26th February. This will be followed by a



Mro Joe Muscat, the founder of the Malta Own Band in 1977

Ladies Social evening on the 14th May at the Maltese Cultural Centre Albion.

EmmanuelBRINCAT

From Maleth to Melite to Mdina , the Silent City

Marina (left), a fortified medieval city perched at the top of a hill that you enter via grand gates served as the Malta's capital from antiquity to the medieval period. It adopted its present name, which derives from the Arabic word *medina*, during the middle Ages.

The city was founded as Maleth in around the 8th century BC by Phoenician settlers, and was later renamed Melite by the Romans. Ancient Melite was larger than present-day Mdina, and it was reduced to its present size during the Byzantine or Arab occupation of

Malta, when the city adopted its present name.

The city is still confined within its walls, and once inside them, one would be forgiven for feeling as though he has stepped back in time with the charming architecture, the palaces that adorn the place, and its narrow passageways.

Mdina, which is in the Northern Region of Malta, is also known as Malta's 'Silent City', a name that it derives from the tranquillity found within its walls, and *Città Notabile* ("Notable City"), it is contiguous with the town of Rabat, which takes its name from the Arabic word for suburb.





Maltese Bishop in Darwin Charles Gauci

The evils of war

RonBORG

One fine morning recently, as I woke up to read about the continuing distress that is troubling our world at the moment, including the Covid 19 pandemic that still has a hold on us throughout the world, the enormous floods in Australia, that have devastated and submerged cities in the states of Queens-

land and New South Wales, causing loss of lives, properties and hardships, and worst of all the ongoing war in Ukraine, with an exodus of people fleeing their beloved homeland, and leaving their loved ones behind to offer resistance to the invading Russians! It is certainly donned on me what a glum picture this is!

Then on Facebook, I came across the 'Daily Reflection' by our Maltese Bishop in Darwin, Bishop Charles Gauci. He wrote:

"I was born seven years after the end of World War 2. There were still a lot of ruined buildings being rebuilt after the heavy bombings. No place on earth was bombed more than Malta per sq mile in the world in that war!"

I grew up with stories from my parents who were teenagers and young adults in the war. I knew how the deprivations of war-affected my mother's health leading to her premature death.

Dictators in that war unleashed so much death and mayhem! It is now happening again in Ukraine!

The Ego of human beings has once again unleashed death and destruction! Innocent human beings are again suffering and dying! Lives are being changed forever.

The euphoria after the collapse of the Soviet Union has changed to disappointment and the sad recognition of history repeating

itself. So much waste of talent and energy could otherwise be used for the benefit of the common good.

In the midst of all this, we need reminders of Hope. We need to be reminders of love and hope for each other!

The death and crucifixion of Jesus is a paradoxical sign of hope."

Yes, I think that perhaps Bishop Charles illustrated a picture of what was going through my mind. It has been quoted in the media that even people living in Russia have openly expressed that they do not wish for this war to go on. So, is this genocide purely one man's egotistical whim! Why is it that one solitary man can cause such chaos and destruction?

People and countries from all over the world are in Solidarity with Ukraine, voicing their abhorrence of this aggression by Putin's army causing this atrocity. Even countries as tiny as our own Malta have offered their support.

Malta is sending medical assistance and has offered the use of

the Sir Anthony Mamo Hospital to those Ukrainians that cannot continue their treatment in their homeland.

How can this war be allowed to go on? I thought that in this day and age, especially having endured the Second World War, the world has learned that the havoc and destruction of war leave no winners!

I don't know how to put an end to this. Worldwide, many countries keep applying harsh sanctions on Russia, and displaying their disapproval of Russia's actions, while many Russian athletes have



There were multiple comparisons between Vladimir Putin and Adolf Hitler in protests across the globe. Putin has been depicted as the new Hitler



Widespread damage by Russians to an apartment building in the Ukraine capital, Kiev

been banned from international competitions. Russian tennis players are not allowed to play in international tournaments, FIFA have suspended their national football team from competing in the World Cup qualifiers, and UEFA has banned Russian clubs from the European club competitions.

National football teams from all over are also refusing to compete with them as well, while the World Cup Skiing event and next September's Formula One Grand Prix in Russia have been cancelled.

Russian ambassadors are being sent home from overseas, Europe is closing its air space to Russian flights, International banks have banned economic transactions with Russia, and Putin's country has been banned from the Eurovision Song Contest.

Even private shops and businesses are refusing to trade Russian merchandise. (our local liquor shop has taken Russian Vodka off its shelves!!!)

I only hope to God that these restrictions are enough to make this "marauder" put a halt to this destructive path!

Harmony Dinner and the Maltese community



From left: Frances Montesin, Lisa Bright, Hon. Victor M. Dominello (*Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government*), George Bartolo, Antoine Mangion and Miriam Friggieri. The Maltese participants were representing the Maltese Community Council of NSW at the Harmony Gala Dinner at Darling Harbour Sydney.

The NSW Government, through Multicultural NSW during March, organises Harmony week, Seniors week, and other occasions to celebrate the NSW Government's commitment to a cohesive and inclusive society in which cultures, languages, and religions of all citizens are accepted and celebrated.

This year's Premier's Gala Harmony Dinner was held at the Convention Centre in Darling Harbour Sydney, where various awards such as the Premier's Multicultural Community Medals, Premier's Multicultural Communication Awards, and the Premier's Multicultural Honour Rolls were distributed.

As usual, this dinner was well attended with well over one thousand two hundred people with representatives from just about every multicultural organisation in NSW.

This Gala Function has been taking place for quite a few years and on this auspicious occasion, the Maltese Community Council of NSW together with the Maltese Language School of NSW has represented the Maltese community of NSW.

In previous years the council was represented by Lawrence and Marlene Dimech, Tony and Mary Pace Feroud, and Emmanuel Camilleri. Being the senior vice-chair of the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra and on the executive of the Maltese Community Council of NSW, George Bartolo has been attending this occasion since this dinner started years ago.

Those attending this year's Harmony Dinner were the president of the MCC, Miriam Friggieri, the vice president Antoine Mangion, the assistant secretary Frances Montesin, Lisa Bright, the School Administrator, and George Bartolo OAM, the immediate past treasurer.

The MCC's representatives had the opportunity to meet with various ministers and high governmental representatives. It was indeed a very productive evening for the Maltese community.

Maltese Seniors Social Welfare Day Groups

Llandilo Maltese Seniors

Meets on the first Wednesday of each month at the Llandilo Community Hall, 257 Seventh Avenue, Llandilo 11am to 1.00 pm. Group holds regular Information Sessions/Workshops & Bus Trips. Group Leader: Helen Azzopardi

Merrylands Social Maltese Seniors

Meets every second Friday of the month Miller Room, Memorial Avenue Merrylands from 10.30am to 12.30 pm.

Group Leader: Salvina Falzon.

Fairfield Active Maltese Seniors

Meets on the last Tuesday of the Month. Group meets in St Theresa's Parish Hall, cnr of Stella Street & The Boulevard, Fairfield Heights from 10 am to 12 noon.

Group Leader: Dorothy Gatt.

Maltese of Bankstown

Group meets 3rd Wednesday of month in the Bankstown CBD area. Every other 3rd Thursday an outing. Enquiries call: Sam Galea 0410 269 519.

Daceyville Maltese Seniors

Meets the last Wednesday of the month in Meeting Room One, No. 3 General Bridges Crescent, Daceyville.

Note: The Groups also arrange regular Bus Trips. Join us and make new friends. Group Leader: Doris Scicluna.

The Sutherland & St George Maltese Group

Meets First Wednesday of the Month from 10:00am-1:00pm. Meetings/Get Togethers are interesting, informative & entertaining, so come join us and make new friends. For more information contact our Coordinator: Charles Mifsud JP Phone (mb 0421 662 298).

Greystanes Maltese Seniors

Meets on the second Monday of each month at the George Preca Parish Centre Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP) Church, 198 Old Prospect Road, Greystanes from 10 am to 12 noon.

Group holds regular Information Sessions/Workshops & Bus Trips. Group Leader: Frances Montesin.

Men's Group

Meets every last Tuesday of the month at the MCC Centre at 59b Franklin Street Parramatta West (next to the Primary School), from 10 to 12 noon. Discussion, information and renew friendship.

Pastizzi, Kinnie etc. available. Contact Fred or Laurie 9631 9295.

**(All Groups are coordinated by The Maltese Community Council of NSW) with a sponsorship from Multicultural NSW.*

Please contact the MCC Welfare Officer: Marisa Previtera JP on 0414 863 123.

The MCC offices are at 59b Franklin Street (Cnr Young St) Parramatta West NSW (next to West Parramatta Primary School).


Community News



MALTESE VOICES
WITH MARTHESE CARUANA

SUNDAYS AT 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM
AN HOUR OF MUSIC FROM MALTESE ARTISTS

LISTEN FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE
WWW.893FM.COM.AU
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MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF NSW
PROGRAM FOR THE MALTESE

SUNDAYS AT 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
AN HOUR FILLED WITH NEWS AND INFORMATION



MALTESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL OF NSW

A division of the Maltese Community Council of NSW Inc. Established in 1999

Learn Maltese Due to the covid restrictions, we are only conducting lessons online.

Applications are also welcome for paid positions from people to assist in language teaching and/or administration. For more information, call 0419 476 924. Email: malteselanguageschoolnsw@hotmail.com





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We get to the point, provide the right advice and get the work done at a reasonable price.

La Valette Social Centre Inc. 175 Walters Road, Blacktown Tel. 96225847

Saturday and Thursday activities at the La Valette Social Centre at Blacktown are back to normal. It is following the COVID guidelines as indicated by the Government. Next activity: Malta to Memphis by Mark Anthony Tabone as Marku the Maltese

from Gozo and Elvis. One show at 7pm on Sunday 27th March.

Tickets @ \$29 available from Antoine 0405233144 or online at <https://www.trybooking.com/BXMGA>. Bar & restaurant available from 4.30pm.

St Nicholas Festa Committee Plumpton -NSW

Events for 2022

Sunday March 13: Fete
Sunday July 10: Imnarja
Sunday, October 16: Fete
Sat. Nov. 19: Dinner Dance
Sunday December 4: Festa

Tune in to Radio and Television

SBS RADIO: 97.7 FM Tuesdays 12:00pm; Friday 12:00pm. Listen on Digital Radio or Live Streaming on www.sbs.com.au/radio/ or on TV Channel 38.

On Demand and podcasts on www.sbs.com.au/maltese

SBS TV: Channel 32 (Viceland). Sundays 8:00am; Thursdays 8:00am L-AHBARIJET latest news bulletins direct from PBS Malta.

VICTORIA

3ZZZ 92.3FM: Mondays 5-6pm, Fridays 5-6pm and Saturdays 10-11am. Presenters: Paul Vella, Mario Sammut, Liz Phillips. Listen live on www.3zzz.com.au

98.9 North West FM: Mondays 7-8pm and Fridays 6-7pm. Maltese Program. Presenter: Emmanuel Brincat.



Listen live on www.northwestfm.org/ethnic-radio/

97.9 FM Melton: Tuesday 6.00pm to 8.00pm Maltese Program. Presenter: Miriam Vella. Live streaming on www.979fm.com.au

NSW

2GLF FM 89.3 Maltese Voices with Marthese Caruana: Sundays 10:00 am to 11:00am. One hour of Maltese talent, songs from Maltese artists.

2GLF FM 89.3 Maltese Community Council programme: Sundays 11.00am to 12:00pm. News from Malta, music, information, culture, interviews, community notices and topics of interest. Listen live on

www.893fm.com.au or On Demand on www.893fm.com.au/on-demand/
WOW-FM 100.7: Tuesdays 6pm to 9pm. Maltese program with Joe Borg and Michael Mallia. Listen live on www.wowfm1007.com.au

VOX FM 106.9: Mondays 5pm to 6pm. Voice of Valletta – Illawarra Maltese program presented by Louis Parnis. Live streaming on www.voxfm.org.au

QUEENSLAND

4EB FM 98.1: Tuesdays 6:00am to 8:00am; Presenter: Lucy Stewart. Music, news from Malta, topics of interest, song requests, community announcements. Live streaming on www.4eb.org.au or On Demand on www.4eb.org.au/shows/program-bill-multi-global-maltese/

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

5EBI FM 103.1: Maltese Community Radio Program from Adelaide. Sunday: 7.00am; Monday: 8.00am; Monday: 6.00pm. Presenters: Bernadette Buhagiar and Ron Borg. Listen live or On Demand on www.5ebi.com.au



Football: Malta Premier League: End of First Phase: Valletta, Balzan all finish in Play-Out - Final Round

Hibs win direct clash with Floriana to top First Phase

By defeating Floriana 4-1 in the Premier League's top-of-the-table clash, Hibernians not only regained the top spot in the League ladder but also the top position at the end of the First Phase of the Championship.

Hibs were in their best form as they scored three times in the first half, and a fourth on the change-of-ends, while the Greens pulled a goal back. Hibernians will therefore start the Top Six Final Round two points ahead of Floriana with 47 points.

Among their other four companions in final phase of the championship will sur-

George Cross KOed off Australia Cup

In the state of Victoria, for the third successive season, Victoria State League Division 1 club George Cross were knocked out in the first hurdle of the competition for the newly named Australia Cup.

The Cross were defeated 2-1 by fellow Division I club Essendon Royals with all the goals coming in the first half.

Essendon led 2-0 after 12 minutes and though the Cross halved the deficit before half-time, could not find an equaliser.

The best opportunity for the Georgies' to get back on level terms came midway through the second half when they were awarded a penalty. However, Jason Hart failed to convert.

There has been a massive overhaul of players at the club since the last shortened season. Five new players made their debut in this match, and another four were on the substitute's bench.

George Cross visit Yarraville Glory in the first league match on Saturday the 19th of March at 3:00 pm.

Heavy defeat for Parramatta

*Parramatta Melita Eagles opened their campaign in the Mens Football NSW League 3 with a heavy 0-4 defeat away at Newcastle Jets who led 3-0 at the interval..

Fifa, Uefa close their doors on Russia

The most powerful bodies in football, Fifa and Uefa have joined the International Olympic Committee and a number of other international sports organisations, by suspending Russian teams from international football competition closing their doors on Russia following the invasion of Ukraine.

The suspension means that Russia will not be able to face Poland in a World Cup play-off semi-final next month, its women's team will be barred from this summer's European Championship in England and the remaining club side in

prisingly be newly-promoted Gudja United who ended the round on a good note by defeating Mosta. These two, along with Valletta and Sirens were still hoping to finish the round on a high to manage to make it to the top six, but failed.

The season for Valletta, Balzan and Sliema Wanderers who have all known much better days in the Premier League, has thus far been a great disappointment as they now accompany Sirens, Mosta and Sta Lucia in the Play-out Final Round.

The last six will struggle to avoid being one of the two teams to be relegated.

Latest results – Day 22

Hibernians v Floriana	4-1
Birkirkara v Valletta	1-1
Hamrun S v Sliema W	3-1
Gzira U v Sirens	2-1
Gudja U v Mosta	1-0
Sta Lucia v Balzan	1-0

DAY 21

Floriana v Sirens	3-0
Hibernians v Balzan	1-0
Birkirkara v Sliema	1-0
Hamrun S. v Sta Lucia	1-0
Gzira U v Gudja U	2-1
Mosta v Valletta	2-2

FINAL PHASE 1

Teams	P	W	L	Pts
Hibernians	22	13	1	47
Floriana	22	13	3	45
Birkirkara	22	9	4	36
Hamrun S	22	10	7	35
Gzira U	22	9	7	33
Gudja U	22	9	11	29
Sirens	22	7	9	27
Valletta	22	7	10	26
Mosta	22	6	9	25
Balzan	22	7	13	23
Sta Lucia	22	4	8	22
Sliema W	22	2	14	12

*The top six finishers shall now play against each other on a single round basis known as Top Six – Final Round. Those classified from seventh to twelfth shall play against each other on a single round basis in the Play-Out – Final Round.



Jurgen Degabriele (left) scored two goals and Jake Grech another for Hibernians

F1 season back on track in Saudi Arabia Mar 25-27

After weeks of testing, the ten teams making up the Formula 1 circus for season 2022 will face each other in the season's first of the 22 Grands Prix in the Saudi Arabian GP in the weekend of March 25-27.

Sports comprise networks of rivalries, and F1 is no exception, with the ever-shifting

sands of battles between drivers and teams creating new and engaging storylines every season. Expectations are great, as both drivers and teams will give their all to fight it out.

Champion Max Verstappen is raring to go to preserve his title, with Lewis Hamilton most probably being his main challenger. The British driver, feels that he was cheated out of the world Championship in 2021, however, despite rumours that he sit out this year's championship, is determined to regain the title along with his Mercedes team who start the campaign vying to retain the team title.

The ten competing teams are: Mercedes, Red Bull, Ferrari, Alfa Tauri, Alfa Romeo, Aston Martin, Alpine, Williams, McLaren and Haas.

There are a number of new regulations, with F1's Motorsports team confident that they've come up with a set of regulations that can achieve their objective of closer racing, while without preventing creativity.

European competition, Spartak Moscow, will no longer compete in the Europa League.

In a joint statement Fifa and Uefa said that they decided together that until further notice to suspend all Russian teams, whether national representative or club from participation in both the Fifa and Uefa competitions.

Uefa also announced a second highly significant move, confirming that it had cancelled a long-standing and highly lucrative sponsorship deal with the Russian gas company Gazprom.