May 19, 2020

Thank you

Robert Abela
(Prime Minister)

Chris Fearne
(Deputy PM and Minister of Health)

Prof Charmaine Gauci
(Superintendent of Public Health)

Malta’s frontline heroes in the fight against COVID-19
How to spot fake news

The last few years have been newsworthy, to say the least. But mixed in with all the fair, factual, and well-researched reporting was something more sinister: FAKE NEWS, stories that seemed accurate, but were actually downright false. Fake news is nothing new. But bogus stories can reach more people more quickly via social media than what good old-fashioned viral emails could accomplish in years past.

While fake news has been circulating as long as its legitimate counterpart, it’s been getting a lot of play recently, thanks to the way we consume information. According to Pew Research Centre, people under age 50 get half of their news online. And for those under 30, online news is twice as popular as TV news.

Thousands of people circulate false stories, perhaps because eye-popping headlines in our social media feeds make it easier for us to share content than evaluate or even read it. This creates a viral storm of sound bites without substance. Another contributing factor, according to Pew Research, is confirmation bias. People are more likely to accept information that confirms their beliefs and dismiss information that does not. But the result of all this misinformation isn’t simply ignorance. It can also provoke serious consequences.

Concern about the phenomenon led Facebook and Google to announce that they’ll crack down on fake news sites, restricting their ability to garner ad revenue.

News consumers themselves are the best defence against the spread of misinformation. Not all of the misinformation being passed along online is complete fiction, though some of it is.

Snopes.com has been exposing false viral claims since the mid 1990s, whether that’s fabricated messages, distortions containing bits of truth and everything in between. In an article on November 17 last year, the site noted not to lump everything into the “fake news” category. Snopes founder, David Mikkelson warned not to lump everything into the “fake news” category.

“The fictions and fabrications that comprise fake news are but a subset of the larger bad news phenomenon, which also encompasses many forms of shoddy, unsearched, error-filled, and deliberately misleading reporting that do a disservice to everyone,” he wrote.

A lot of these viral claims aren’t “news” at all, but fiction, satire and efforts to fool readers into thinking they’re for real. Readers have long been encouraged to be sceptical of viral claims, and make good use of the delete key when a chain email hits their inboxes. In December 2007, the Ask FactCheck feature was launched that answers readers’ questions, the vast majority of which concern viral emails, social media memes and the like.

Readers were advised to rid their inboxes of garbage described as a list of red flags that were clear tip-offs that a chain email wasn’t legitimate, that is sent to their accounts. Among these could be by an anonymous author; excessive exclamation points, capital letters and misspellings; entreaties that “This is NOT a hoax!” and links to sourcing that does not support or completely contradicts the claims being made.

Snopes.com, which has been writing about viral claims and online rumours since the mid-1990s, maintains a list of known fake news websites, several of which have emerged in the past two years.

Read beyond the headline. If a provocative headline drew your attention, read a little further before you decide to pass along the shocking information. Even in legitimate news stories, the headline doesn’t always tell the whole story. But fake news, particularly efforts to be satirical, can include several revealing signs in the text. Check the author. Another tell-tale sign of a fake story is often the byline. Who is it?

What’s the support? Many times these bogus stories will cite official – or official-sounding – sources, but once you look into it, the source doesn’t back up the claim.

Check the date. Some false stories aren’t completely fake, but rather distortions of real events. These claims can take a legitimate news story and twist what it says – or even claim that something that happened long ago is related to current events.

Is this some kind of joke? Remember, there is such thing as satire. Normally, it’s clearly labelled as such, and sometimes it’s even funny. And then there are the more debatable forms of satire, designed to pull one over on the reader.

Consult the experts. We know you’re busy, and some of this debunking takes time. Between FactCheck.org, Snopes.com, the Washington Post Fact Checker and Politifact.com, it’s likely at least one has already fact-checked the latest viral claim to pop up in your Facebook feed.

Try this simple test. What other stories have been posted to the “news” website that is the source of the story that just popped up in your Facebook feed?
A look at two countries’ investment programmes

Many countries around the world try to attract investments by offering various types of concessions resulting in citizenship or residency. As countries are planning their ways out of the coronavirus crisis, they will be looking carefully at all visa/citizenship programmes to maximise their economic recovery.

Australia’s significant investor visa – colloquially called “golden ticket” – is aimed at Chinese investors who invest AU$5 million (US$3.8 million) in Australia. The investment parameters for the visa are strict.

Of the AU$5 million, AU$500,000 must be invested into Australian venture capital or growth private equity funds investing in start-up and small private companies; AU$1.5 million must be invested in managed funds invested in emerging companies on the ASX; and the AU$3 million balance in funds with a combination of eligible assets, corporate bonds and property in Australia.

There is a 10 per cent limit on residential real estate investment. Applicants can be nominated by state governments or by Austrade.

The Significant Investors Visa (SIV) programme is open to all nationalities but is targeted towards Chinese investors – the visa number 888 (eight is auspicious in Chinese culture) is designed to attract Chinese interest – and is used overwhelmingly by that nationality. About 87 per cent of SIVs granted since the scheme was launched in 2012 have been to Chinese nationals.

The visa brings significant advantages for applicants. They need only spend an average of 40 days in Australia a year and there is no English-language requirement. Applicants can pay more if they have a low level of English.

Since the scheme started on November 24, 2012, 1,932 SIVs have been granted, with AU$9.6 billion invested in complying investments, government figures show.

A spokesman for the Department of Home Affairs said there had been no changes to the programme since 2015 but that the SIV, along with all business, investment and talent visas, was under review in response to a 2015 recommendation of the joint standing committee on migration.

On the other side of the world, many European countries are engaged in similar schemes; the island of Malta is one of them.

Malta is seeking to attract reputable individuals who will be a good influence on the State, have a substantial business network, and who will raise the international profile of Malta.

The Malta Individual Investor Program (MIIP) requires that successful applicants make a contribution of €650,000 to the State, which will be invested in the economic and social well-being of the community.

The individual would also be required to invest in immovable property, wherein the case of a purchase, the property should be of a minimum of €350,000, and in the case of a lease, the latter should be for a minimum of €16,000 per year. Such immovable property shall be retained for a period of at least five years and may not be let or sublet.

(Interested persons, should contact: info@iip.gov.mt. Tel +356 21225 232).

Despite this win-win situation these programmes attract their fair share of criticism although both countries adopt a very stringent due diligence process to make sure only reputable applicants are accepted.

When Malta initiated the Individual Investor Programme, some criticised what was only viewed as the commoditisation of citizenship, but it is safe to say that for Malta, the IIP has been much more than that.

It took up this challenge and turned it into an opportunity, by designing a programme that is intended to take Malta to the world, to expand the country’s horizons and bring to Malta people not only willing to invest, but who believe in its potential despite the fact that it is a small island nation.

Through the MIIP, the individual would also be required to invest in approved government stocks, bonds, debentures or special purpose vehicles of a minimum amount of €150,000, which investment must be retained for a period of five years.

The total investment that such an individual would be required to make for himself in the MIIP is therefore €1.15 million.

In addition to this, an applicant would be required to show proof of residence in Malta for at least twelve months prior to becoming naturalised as a citizen of Malta, and in the case that such individual wishes to extend the scheme to a spouse and/or children, an additional €25,000 per spouse and per child, under the age of 18 years must be paid.

The individual would be required to pay an additional €50,000 for any dependant parent aged 55 years and over and the same amount for any child between the ages of 18 to 25 years of age.

All applicants and each and every dependant must have a global health insurance coverage of at least €50,000 and must provide evidence that they can maintain it for an indefinite period.
Q. I am 74 years of age and my husband is 82. We took him to hospital two weeks ago and were told that he should not return home but move directly into aged care. As the hospital advised on this the assessment may already have happened. Centrelink would then need to know what personal and financial assets you both have and they would advise accordingly.

A. Your husband will need to be assessed by an ACAT team prior to moving into aged care. As the hospital advised on this the assessment may already have happened. Centrelink would then need to know what personal and financial assets you both have and they would advise accordingly.

Q. I am 39 years of age and my wife is 35 and we have a large mortgage. I was contemplating on applying for the Refundable Accommodation Deposit (RAD) as I have been told that it is a very large amount of money that we do not have. Can you help?

A. Although your wife has now lost her job, however her income for the year is still below $37,000. If she is still under age 65 and therefore still able to make superannuation contributions, then you can still make a spouse contribution of $3000 and you should still qualify for the $540 tax rebate. Just remember to advise your accountant of this when lodging your tax return.

Q. I am 68 years old, a widow and have recently sold my house in order to downsize but have not found a smaller house to purchase. My children are encouraging me to use the Government’s downsizing strategy of investing $300,000 into superannuation. My concern is that when I find a house it may be more expensive than what I have budgeted for, and may need some of that $300,000 back. What can I do?

A. In order for you to use the downsizing strategy you will need to invest the funds in superannuation within 90 days of settlement. Therefore you could invest the funds in superannuation now and if you find that you need some of this money, you could ask to withdraw it. This will be a tax-free withdrawal and as you are over 65 you have access to all your superannuation money at any time.

However, you should ask to maintain these funds in super in defensive assets such as cash or fixed interest until you find the house to your liking. This will avoid any down turn in the markets and any loss of funds on your part if you need to withdraw them again.

Q. We have just come into a reasonable inheritance of $200,000 from a distant relative. My husband and I are both in our 50s and we are wondering whether to invest in superannuation in my name or invest them in equal portions into our separate superannuation funds. Is there any preference?

A. There are a number of things to consider. If you both invested $100,000 into each of your superannuation as non-concessional contributions just make sure that you have not made any other non-concessional contributions for the year. In this way you will not be using the “bring forward cap” and thus able to make more non-concessional contributions in the future.

Another thing to consider is whether either of you are close to reaching the lifetime cap of $1.6 million in super. If that is the case then the funds should be invested in the lower of the two super funds. The age difference should also be looked at. If one is early 50s and the other late 50s than the one approaching 60 could have earlier access to super money if the funds are needed. I believe your best option should be to see a financial planner who should cover all options and you would be able to make an informed decision.
Maltese lady at the pinnacle of journalism in Australia

One of Australia’s best known journalists, Prof Monica Attard is our selection for this month’s Personality. The Voice of the Maltese is pleased to give Prof Attard, a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Law recipient, author and writer; and Order of Australia for services to journalism, winner of five Walkley Awards for excellence in journalism, including gold, the chance to tell her story to the readers.

Professor Monica Attard

When I was a child, I always thought of myself as different from my friends. I might have been born in Sydney, Australia, but my entire world was Maltese, unlike theirs. Both my parents were Maltese. My father, Joseph, was born in Naxxar, and mother, Mary, in Birirkara. My only sister, Vivienne, was born in Malta too. So, Malta loomed large – in its history, geography and language. Yet until I turned 19, I had never visited the country.

That perhaps was the result of the times – when airfares were expensive and international travel was one of the more exotic things that one could do. Indeed, my parents, who came to Australia in 1949 with my sister, Vivienne, only travelled back to their homeland twice after emigrating to Australia. Still, Malta remained alive, beating, vivid notion. No more than a notion. But alive.

We had a really large extended family in Australia. My father’s sister had also emigrated and she had six children. They were older than me and married before I had even turned 10, but Sundays and many an evening were spent with them.

My dad’s niece, a nun, lives here too and Ina Debattista became the only of my ‘over-there’ cousins who I knew really well from childhood. There was also my father’s cousin, who of course I defied the burden of low expectation and did ok. And mercifully, the high level of overt racism has significantly subsided in Australia – though it remains in different forms.

My childhood was full of family get-togethers, my father and sister playing the piano, my mother’s homemade ravioli on special occasions and Christmas’s that started in October! It was full of stories of Malta too.

My most enduring childhood memory remains of my dad’s stories of Malta before the war. Through him, I could see the town church in Naxxar, long before I first actually laid eyes on it. I could feel the exhilaration of the annual fiesta before I ever went to one. I could envisage the harbour in Valetta before it became my entry point on my first visit to Malta in 1980.

And of course, I knew the taste of pastizzi from the countless fiestas we went to in Sydney’s western suburbs during my childhood. Malta was real.

Of course, it became even more real after my first visit. Life dragged me in other directions – as the ABC’s correspondent to Russia from 1989 to 1995, and then later from 2003-2005. And plans to visit were often interrupted by career and family. But I have been back many times and taking my own son there remains one of the most memorable of overseas trips. He couldn’t grasp that we ‘owned’ so much of the island of Malta. Every shop owned by an Attard, the town named Attard, we seemed suddenly to him to be very rich!

As the daughter of migrants in Sydney, the 1970’s were perhaps the most challenging. My father put great emphasis on education and I remember him telling me when I was very young that I’d face many challenges as I grew up. For him, the greatest would be that I was a female and non-Anglo. And he wasn’t wrong; I would have to try harder than most.

Racial discrimination was palpable. Sometimes, most often, in fact, it was the burden of low expectations. I was expected to achieve very little by those who were in charge of my education and my development. Opportunities would be given to anyone but the olive-skinned girl with jet black hair.

“Wog” became a reference of such derision and hurt that now; I recoil when I hear it. The number of times my father would come home from work distressed at some casual racial slur hurled his way are too many to count.

But time, ambition and family have a way of healing most wounds. I defied the burden of low expectation and did ok. And mercifully, the high level of overt racism has significantly subsided in Australia – though it remains in different forms.

Though you can take the girl out of the Maltese cultural bubble, it’s hard to burst the bubble completely. When I was the ABC’s correspondent in Russia, during a time on seemingly endless revolution, as Soviet communism was being slayed and protests would be more than a million people strong, I’d often stay up into the wee hours of the morning to file reports so that my mother would know I was still alive!

My parents’ concern about me being in the midst of the maelstrom in Russia was only slightly alleviated by the Order of Australia I received in 1991 for services to journalism. Sure, they were proud. But I’m sure they both wished it had come via some other story! Any other story but revolution.

And when capitalism and communism had their final showdown on Russian soil in October of 1993, when two foreign journalists were killed, I remain absolutely and unequivocally certain that my father sensed the danger and became fatally ill to force me home.

Such is the Maltese embrace.

Do I consider myself Maltese? Yes. Maltese, born in Australia by happenstance. I’m not the only Maltese Professor in Australian academia. But surely one of a small group.

*Continued on page 6
Monica Ann Attard OAM (born December 12, 1958) is an Australian journalist and worked with the ABC for most of her journalistic career.

Early life
She was born in Sydney, where she was educated at Bethlehem College and later at Santa Sabina College, Strathfield. She attended the University of Sydney, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts. She also holds a Bachelor of Laws from the University of New South Wales, which she attained in 2002.

Career
Attard's career in journalism began at Channel Seven, where she was a reporter from 1977–1981. From 1981–82, she worked for 2WS Radio and at 2GB Radio from 1982–83. In 1983, Attard moved to the ABC, where she remained for 28 years.


Attard was Russian Correspondent for ABC Radio and TV from 1990–94. She received three Walkley Awards during this period, including the Gold Walkley in 1991. She published a book entitled Russia: Which Way Paradise? in 1997, which documented some of her experiences and interactions with Russians during a period of rapid change.

Attard returned to 'The World Today' as host from 1997–99 and was the host of 'PM' from 1994–97.

During 2001–03 and 2005–2011, she was the national presenter on 'Sunday Profile' on ABC Local Radio. In this period, she received the 2002 Walkley Award for Broadcast Interviewing, and graduated with a law degree from the University of New South Wales.

On December 1, 2005, Attard received the 2005 Walkley Award for Broadcast Interviewing. This was given for a series of interviews entitled On The Brink, which aimed to examine the lives of several prominent people who had been experiencing some kind of upheaval in their lives.

She interviewed NSW magistrate Pat O'Shane, former HIH Insurance director Rodney Adler and Douglas Wood, a former hostage in Iraq. Her interview with Rodney Adler was a scoop and she received particular praise from the Walkley judges. This brought her total Walkley count to 5, with one Gold award.

On December 6, 2005, Attard was announced as the new host of the ABC TV programme Media Watch for 2006. She hosted Media Watch for two years, until announcing her retirement at the end of the 2007 series.

Attard also worked as a lawyer for Coudert Bros in Moscow from 2003–04.

She is currently Professor and head of Journalism at University of Technology (UTS), Sydney.

Awards and honours
- Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 1992 for services to the community as a radio correspondent while working in Russia.
- Walkley Award for Best Interviewing for 'on the Brink' 2005
- Walkley Award for Best Interviewing for 'Kernot, Beazley and the Bishop' 2002
- Gold Walkley Award for Excellence in Journalism 1991
- Walkley Award for Best International Report (all Media) and Best Coverage of a Current Story (Radio) 1991

Further Information on this month's Personality

Professor Monica Attard

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Message from the Maltese Community Council of NSW:
Looking after the community’s best interests

In these difficult times, as most of us are observing the isolation that COVID-19 has brought us in, I want to assure the Maltese community of NSW that the MCC is still functioning and looking after the community’s best interests.

The Maltese Language School closed a week early at the end of Term 1 to reduce the risk of the possible spread of Coronavirus. With restrictions still in place, we had to find a new way of continuing the lessons. Embracing modern technology, Term 2 classes will now commence online.

When restrictions ease, we will return to the classroom for face-to-face lessons, all in good time, following Government regulations, and when we believe it will be safe to do so.

Because the studio has been isolated due to the current restrictions, the Sunday Maltese Radio programme on 2GLF FM89.3 is being recorded at home with limited equipment. The radio programme is pre-recorded and sent via Dropbox to 2GLF staff to be downloaded and broadcast at 11 am on Sunday.

We ask our listeners to be patient as radio station staff is using new technology and sometimes may experience some technical issues that can affect sound quality and possible data loss resulting in the programme being shorter than expected.

The MCC apologises for any inconvenience or disappointment experienced by listeners for any such issues which are beyond our control. We are working closely with 2GLF staff to improve the broadcasts each week.

We could have easily stopped the radio programme like some other ethnic groups have done but the MCC Radio team is dedicated to producing the best programme as possible for the benefit of our listeners, keeping them informed and entertained.

Our work in the community is on-going: the Executive Committee meets via Zoom meetings when necessary and keeps in touch by phone and email. Contact with State and Federal Ministries is also maintained by similar non-contact means.

Our welfare officer, Marisa Previtera, is still actively responding to requests for assistance and also maintaining contact with the various seniors’ groups and the Maltese Community in general, via various means including Facebook.

A new Facebook page, “Keeping Connected for Maltese Seniors”, was set up specifically for the purpose of providing and sharing important Government updates on COVID-19 as well as providing uplifting and interesting articles for the much-needed mental wellbeing of the community.

As for, myself, I spend quite a lot of time contacting some of the elderly members of the community who live at home, by themselves or in aged-care centres.

In these circumstances, we need to be patient and less complacent about our health risks. We should also remember and respect those behind the scenes and in essential services that are working so hard to help us through as safely as possible.

Should anybody wish to contact me by phone, call: 0409744376 or through an email: mccconsw@gmail.com

Emanuel Camilleri (President MCC NSW)
COVID-19 pandemic is worse than WWII for the Maltese

Doris Cannataci from Sliema, Malta writes:

I do not fully agree with Ron Borg’s article “Others have also endured” on page 9 of the May 5 issue of The Voice. Ron might have read or heard about life in Malta during WWII. I lived through it from beginning to end and can speak from experience.

In several respects, this pandemic is worse than WWII for us Maltese. During WWII in Malta schools remained open, educational courses remained open, during the air raids when we were in the underground shelters we used to find solace in each other; praying together united us and gave and gave us courage.

After each air raid as soon as the sirens announced the “Air Raid passed” we were all back in the streets, went to the shops, and life carried on. Now the streets are deserted.

During WWII we were afraid of our enemy and not of our friends and members of our family who are afraid to visit because they can be carriers of the virus.

Churches were never closed and were the places where most of the Maltese found their energy and courage, as a result, the strong Faith and prayers of the besieged.

In my opinion, could COVID-19 be a WAKE-UP CALL from above?

No humanity in a disunited EU

Claire Khan, from Mandurah, WA writes:

No wonder the European Union is losing its feathers and popularity. It will keep on doing so if it continues to treat its member states differently and fails to give due respect to each and every nation the same.

We keep reading about the EU’s failure to alleviate the burdens of illegal or irregular immigrants on Italy and Malta, the two ports closest to Libya from where thousands of immigrants are off-loaded by contrabands promising them heaven.

After leaving Libya these immigrants are left on their own to fight for their lives in open seas with the hope of reaching Europe, but only arrive in Malta or Italy. No other EU country is willing to help them out. Where is humanity and camaraderie?

Lost in translation

Maria Cassar from Plumpton, NSW writes:

Thank you for your wonderful magazine that keeps us connected wherever we are in this big wide world, always very interesting and informative. I would like to comment in reference to the Maltese translation of directives from the Australian authorities in regards to COVID-19.

Amongst the multitude of new words created in the terminology of health and science as in other areas, it is apparently becoming harder and harder for translators to keep up with finding the right word that fits the context without having to borrow words from the source language and modifying them into Maltese, using words that are ambiguous.

Translating literally word-for-word makes any article look like a machine translation, not thought out to keep the natural flow of the language. The use of unfamiliar words in an attempt to translate some of the terms makes it better off to leave the word in English since that is what the reader is accustomed to listening to in Australia.

For Maltese readers, this could make the whole article somewhat confusing. In reality, one would think that these phenomena would impact many other languages with the introduction of new terminology making harder for all translators of languages other than English.
Il Festa ta’ San Ġwann l-Ghammieli

M adwar xahar iktor, ezattament fl-24 ta’ Gunju, suppost tiġi mafkra l-festa ta’ San Ġwann (San Ġwann l-Ghammieli), imma ta’ min jghid, li daż-zmien din il-festa qajla sirna naghunt kasha, mhux bhal fl-antik. Ta’ min jghid li r-raġuni m’ganghda x’taqsam xejn mal-imxijja tal-COVD-19 li minhabba fiha l-festi bhalissa mhumiex jiġu ċċelebrati.

Fl-antik din il-festa kienet popolari hafna, u sa anke kienet jum ta’ btala. Izda minhabba l-għadd kibir ta’ btajel li kien hawn f’Malt, kemm nazzjonali jew tal-Knisja, wara l-gwerra din il-festa bdiet issir fl-ewwel Hadd fuq l-24 ta’ Gunju, u fil-fatt hu dakinhar li fir-raħal sabiħ taxx-Xevxija t’Għordex issir il-festa tar-raħal.


X'għandkom x'titilfu?

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

F itt wara li kien felett President tal-Istati Uniti Donald Trump, kont iddeċedjiet li nieqaf niktet dwar u dwar l-affarijiet tat-tellhi li jgħid jew jikteb.

Ikoll li mejn mill-majhom mill-ewwel id-diffikulta tiegħi li nofrit gudizzju bilanċjat dwar dan il-bniedem partikulari, xi ħaqxa li s-soluż nizzomma quddiem nett meta nkun qed niktet din il-kolluna.

Dan għaliex inħoss dżiżgut kbir kif kull darba li nisma' jew naqra bl-ahħar ċuċata li jkun ftiettilu jħabbbar lid-dinja, li dżigrazjazzament ġie li jkun hemm f'kif min takt ir-ranja flimba kulha. X'ħin niftakar fil-gideb saċċajt li jaghmel anke dwar affarijiet trivalji, jikekkem kif ifettillu dak il-bniedem anke meta s-suġġett tkun ta' l-importanza kbira, in-nepotizmu biex xi ħaż ġożiet żiegħa li ħafna flimba, minflok tiċċenibika mill-ħumanità madwar id-dinja?

Qerrieda imma jispiċċa f'monopolju ta' pajjiż wieħed għax għandu F'Donald Trump, kont Jannar, u sas-27 ta' Frar kien hemm 15 il-każ. Dakinhar, Trump mwett fit-12 ta' Mejju 2020, u bħalissa rata ta' 18,000 infettjoni stqarr li r-riskju għall-poplu Amerikan kien 'baxx ħafna' u ftaħar li soltu nżommha quddiem meta nkun qed niktet din il-kolonna.

Aħħar ċuċata li jkun fettillu jħabbar lid-dinja, li diżgrazzjatament kbira, in-nepotiżmu tiegħu, il-fatt li qed juża l-pożizzjoni tiegħu biex jitkellem kif ifettillu dak il-ħin anke meta s-suġġett ikun ta' ħofna flimba għar-din id-dinja biex jippruvaw irrazżu l-avanz tal-virus.

Dr Anthony Fauci, l-impert sprp qif il-mard infettiv ta' pijjizju, fit-12 ta' Mejju wissa li jkun hemm konseġwenti serji jekk l-Istati Uniti terga' tiffah l-eleznjka taghba maljar wisq.


Afrikan-Amerikani ta' pajjiżu, l-attentati b'axx jikkunsidraw jivvutawlu, "X'għandkom x'titilfu?" Meta s-sistema ekonomika ma tkunex qif tghid lill-Ġermanja, dan huwa jistgħu inwieġbu għal din il-mistoqsija. "Tajżinita."
The greatest tragedy of war

by LUCY CALLEJA

Economists warn us about the debt burden for years to come, as a result of dealing with this pandemic. Let not the health and education of today’s children and youth become the collateral damage, as subsequent administrations “tighten the belt” in the pursuit of balancing the books.

As the world grapples with the pandemic of COVID-19, nations’ leaders refer to it as the silent killer. Elderly and frail residents of aged care facilities or those in their homes have died here, in Australia, and in other parts of the world. Quite frequently overseas they were not included in the numbers of victims.

More pertinently, children have been, in large numbers, taught remotely for the first time in living memory. What’s more, this looks nothing like the more conventional School of the Air for children on remote properties.

School personnel, worried parents and students alike wonder when life will get back to normal. At this time, and indeed quite frequently, we should all spare a thought for all the children and young people the world over who have, for generations, missed out on the life opportunities that education and training can bring.

Fleeing civil wars or tribal conflicts, or living through more conventional wars and the childhood trauma that accompanies such experiences, hardly make for an optimal time of learning throughout childhood and youth.

Over the years, in my travel, I have witnessed what can be achieved in communities when there’s peace and tranquillity. Maasai children in Kenya and Tanzania may not have pen and paper in their environment; at least, not until they attend formal school locally. Yet, from the age of about three, they’re becoming numerate and literate, frequently in three languages: their tribal language, then the wider spoken Swahili and the lingua franca that is English.

All this is achieved using sticks to write on sand, under the guidance of their elders.

We have witnessed on TV documentaries on war or any civil unrest and the destruction that they bring. Families are torn apart; buildings, including major infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and residential blocks bombed to the ground.

Children who are orphaned in war, or brought up in refugee camps lacking essential food and sanitation, miss out on crucial development. They are impacted for life, no matter how much we speak about childhood resilience.

Families who lost conscripted young men in the Vietnam War would have been spared the gory details of how they were killed. The resistance movement had set booby traps that minced bodies of some advancing soldiers.

Those who returned, besides the trauma that frequently follows engagement, have had their progeny born with various defects, if they were exposed to the defoliant Agent Orange. The occurrence of is significantly higher than in the general community.

In the Support Unit where I taught for many years, the odd Australian child born of perfectly healthy Vietnamese parents had quite pronounced disabilities. Some families, in fact, had every offspring being born with various impairments.

In the ever-growing field of epigenetics, one particular meta-analysis study concluded, “Parental exposure to Agent Orange appears to be associated with an increased risk of birth defects” (Ngo et al, 2006).

Considering the fact that the Vietnam War was a major Western debacle – Vietnam is now, and has been since, one nation republic – tragic results are facts now faced by many families of veterans and Vietnamese exposed to the defoliant during that war. For those children, life prospects for education, training and work life are sadly very limited, if not altogether non-existent.

At this time, as we go about our limited life as a result of the pandemic, let us hope and pray that world leaders strive for global harmony in the first place.

At national level, let’s use our democratic right to elect our representatives who are more inclined to ensure equity and opportunities for all children. The postcode, the family background or any other external characteristics should not dictate the opportunities for all children and young people wherever they live.

Economists warn us about the debt burden for years to come, as a result of dealing with this pandemic. Let not the health and education of today’s children and youth become the collateral damage, as subsequent administrations “tighten the belt” in the pursuit of balancing the books.

Childhood and youth come only once in any one’s lifetime. Let us all be part of contributing, through the policies of our representatives, towards the optimum opportunities for every child and young person.
Malta fulfilling all its obligations, saving lives

When it comes to saving the lives of those stranded out at sea, Malta is fulfilling its obligations according to the Search & Rescue convention, Prime Minister Robert Abela (right) told Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe, Dunja Mijatovic. In reply to a letter by Mijatovic in which she called on Malta to give priority to humanitarian conditions and demonstrate that it was saving the lives of those who were stranded out at sea and that it was guaranteeing a safe port, Abela stated that the position Malta has taken is according to the principles agreed upon so that humanitarian aid is given as quickly as possible.

Mijatovic had urged Malta to fulfil its obligations and save lives, ensure safe disembarkation and investigate allegations of delays or lack of help in cases of difficulty. At the same time she said that she also recognised the challenge Malta is facing during this pandemic and assured that she would continue with her work so that the Council of Europe and its member states would show more solidarity with member states such as Malta which are facing the challenge of immigration.

The Prime Minister pointed out that over the last few months, despite the fact that it is facing unprecedented migratory pressure as a result of increasing numbers of boats crossing from North Africa to Europe, Malta, which is one of the smallest Member States of the Council of Europe and at the forefront of the immigration crisis, has always, and shall continue, to respond effectively and urgently to any situation of distress at sea, it becomes aware of.

He said Malta has consistently abided by this commitment and by other international obligations, and would continue to do so.

Dr Abela said that the number of arrivals to Malta last year exceeded 3,400, and as of May 6, the figure for 2019 translates into 486,000 arrivals in Italy, 527,000 in France, 646,000 in Germany, 370,000 in Spain and to 4 million across the EU’s member states.

Dr Abela said, “In the present circumstances, where Malta has declared a state of public health emergency and closed its ports and airport to passenger traffic, we have a duty and obligation to protect the health of all persons living in Malta, including that of migrants who reached Malta by boat in the last few years. We must take measures to ensure that we do not import nor facilitate the spread of COVID-19 cases.”

He said that all this, and in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, the situation in Malta is far from easy. However, even in these difficult circumstances, the government has ensured and would continue to ensure that the authorities carry out their obligations of coordination in the country’s SAR area.

He went on to say that Malta is simply not in a ‘de facto’ position, at present, to ensure a ‘safe place’ on Maltese territory to any persons rescued at sea, a position that has even been acknowledged by the European Court of Human Rights.

Dr Abela appealed for solidarity with Malta and for other countries members of the Council of Europe to share the burden of immigration. He said that everyone’s participation is crucial to stop traffickers from carrying out illegal operations that endanger people’s lives.

‘Malta with third lowest negative growth rate in the euro area’, EC

The European Commission (EC) forecasts that after contracting by 5.8 per cent this year, the Maltese economy should grow by 6.0% in 2021.

The 2020 Spring Economic Forecast was greatly welcomed by the Ministry for Finance and Financial Services as it corroborated the Government’s own macroeconomic forecasts in expecting economic growth to recover lost ground.

Furthermore, Malta’s negative growth rate this year is expected to be third lowest in the Euro Area.

Cushioning the crisis’ impact on consumption is the dynamic performance in the labour market in 2019, where unemployment was at a record low and its growth was amongst the highest, together with the households’ high saving rate.

Malta is also forecast to record the third lowest unemployment rate in the Euro Area at 5.9% this year, but will be expected to fall to 4.4% in the next. The inflation rate is expected to fall below 1% in 2020 and remain close to 1% next year.

On external trade, the Spring Economic Forecast expects the current account surplus, which peaked in 2017, to gradually narrow over the forecast horizon, but to remain high.

In his reaction, Finance and Financial Services Minister Edward Scicluna (picture) said he was pleased to note that EC’s forecast. He added that Malta has provided a number of economic shock absorbers that are expected to stand up well during this crises, help the economy to recover quickly and to return to strong growth next year.
World Tourism Organisation praises Malta’s commitment

The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has praised Malta for its commitment to the tourism sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a letter to Prime Minister Robert Abela, the organisation singled out Malta for its “incredible work” in what it called “this exceptional crisis”.

In his letter, the UNWTO’s secretary general Zurab Pololikashvili said, “We are closely following the incredible work of your government in this exceptional crisis and I wish to personally congratulate you for your commitment and efforts as Prime Minister in helping the travel and tourism sectors to deal with the coronavirus outbreak and to address its socio-economic impact”.

Pololikashvili went on to say that while travel restrictions and bans are closing down entire countries during the current crisis, resuming activities after the corona lockdowns would require a carefully coordinated response from all, putting safety as the primary objective.

UNWTO said once travel is resumed, one needs make sure it will be safe, seamless and more sustainable. It expects international tourist arrivals to be down by 60% to 80% this year - a decline in international tourism receipts of between US$ 910 billion to US$ 1.2 trillion, (€842 billion to €1.11 trillion), 100 to 120 million direct jobs are at risk and impacts are felt across the whole value chain.

Tourism sector investing in human resources

Minister for Tourism and Consumer Protection Julia Farrugia Portelli confirmed during a webinar on the way forward for the tourism sector, that there would indeed be a summer in tourism even if it could be different from previous ones, especially with the lifting of some restrictions in the sector in connection with domestic tourism.

Meanwhile, thanks to an investment of €5 million by the Ministry for Tourism and Consumer Protection, in collaboration with the Malta Tourism Authority, Malta could be the first country to boldly invest in human resources in order for the tourism sector to be prepared for the post-COVID phase.

This investment is offering a top-level training platform to thousands of workers in the sector and is even wholly financing it.

PM indicates relaxing of more measures by end of this week

By the end of this week, a number of establishments that were shut down over two months ago in a bid to contain the COVID-19 pandemic are expected to reopen under new regulations. Prime Minister Robert Abela gave the news during an interview on One News on Sunday.

Two weeks ago Malta relaxed some measures by allowing some nonessential shops to open once again but they had to adhere to a number of safety precautions.

On Sunday he indicated that on Monday and throughout the week he would be indicating the next steps to be taken, as the economy would start opening up again. This would be possible as the country has been successful in its fight against COVID-19. The Prime Minister said the next step would be to allow restaurants, hairdressers and beauty parlours to reopen by the end of the week, but with some restrictions.

In the past few days, the number of positive cases has gone up slightly as a result of the additional tests that have increased three-fold. He said that new regulations would be put in place to ensure that health standards remain in place.

Due to the new reality that business owners would be facing, certain regulations such as the allowance of tables and chairs on pavements will be temporarily allowed.

Dr Abela said people should go out, but respect social distancing and follow health authorities instructions. He pointed out however, that vulnerable persons should only leave home for essential needs.

Referring to travel, he said the Government was in discussions with other countries, but this did not mean an immediate re-opening of Malta’s airport; rather it called for planning for when the time was ripe to open up again.

A bilateral mechanism has been triggered with nine other countries to start talks on the concept of safe corridors that like Malta have addressed COVID in a good manner for when travel starts.

The countries involved are, Luxembourg, Norway, Serbia, Slovakia, Austria, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, and Israel.

MHRA President Tony Zahra expressed his satisfaction at the news and said that working hand in hand, the situation would improve, “and we can move further ahead.”

Malta retains top LGBTIQ ranking

Malta has maintained its top ranking among 49 countries across Europe in the human rights situation of LGBTIQ people. The ILGA-Europe index published on the occasion of International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biophobia (IDAHOTB), which was celebrated last Sunday, Malta obtained a total of 89 points.

In its report ILGA-Europe praised Malta’s commitment during 2019 for the progress made in respect of LGBTIQ+ families and commends the use of ‘Gender Neutral’ terminology in Maltese law.

This index analyses the human rights situation of LGBTIQ people. In 2013 Malta ranked 18th. But in the last seven years, it made great progress in the field of civil liberties through the introduction of a substantial number of laws, including civil unions, gay adoption and equal marriage; law on gender identity, gender expression and gender characteristics and a law on cohabitation.

A public call has attracted more than 36 companies, including the University of Malta, ITS and international bodies such as Forbes, UNESCO and a number of international universities and training centres.

The training courses – 300 accredited and around 750 short courses also in languages – provided by world-renowned quality names and local experts in their fields, are to be delivered online. They are offered to 25,000-30,000 individuals and will address a wide range of skills that are required in the tourism industry.

Minister for Tourism and Consumer Protection Julia Farrugia Portelli said that from the initial stages the Ministry intended to safeguard the thousands of jobs in the tourism industry. In fact, 90% of those working in the accommodation and food sector are benefiting from the COVE&D wage supplement.
Wara 86 sena ċgħin

Wara snin ta’ taħbit mill-antenati taghna, l-Awtoritajiet Kolonjali, 68 sena ilu għarfuri ufficjalment l-alfabett Malti u allura, dawk li mohlhom ma kienex ghadu fissaqt fuq l-lisen Tagljan, bdew, fost kollox ippoġġu t-tikka fuq iċ-ċ, il-ġ u ż-ż u jaqgtu b’sinjal b’sinjal ras l-h.

Iżda wara 86 sena, jidher li għadna kif imbħaħna, li għal xi r-raguni r-Registru Publiiku taghna kien ghadu ma aġġorna ruħu tal-inqas fejn jidħol l-alfabett Malti.


Il-pożittiv


Il-pożittiv

L-Isqof Cefai ixammar il-kmiem


Fin-nuqqas ta’ makkinarju, l-Isqof il-ġdid għen jinħatt trakk mimli xkejjer tal-għaġin, ross, żejt u bosta affarijiet oħra essenzjali biex wara, flimkien ma’ sħabu l-membri l-oħra tal-istess Soċjetà li jinsabu f’din il-Prelatura, ippakkjaw dawn l-oġġetti kollha f’diversi basktijiet u qassmuhom lil-foqra.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) TESTING NEAR YOU

If you have a fever (or history of fever) or acute respiratory infection (cough, shortness of breath, sore throat) call your local GP or Healthdirect on 1800 022 222.

They may recommend you get tested - www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/clinics.aspx

Julie Owens MP FEDERAL MEMBER FOR PARRAMATTA

My office will continue to be available through email and phone:
E julie.owens.mp@aph.gov.au P (02) 9689 1455
Australia’s economy hit very hard

The Treasury has estimated Australia’s economy will shrink by between 10 and 12 per cent by June, equivalent to $50 billion. A harsher lockdown, akin to the eight-week closures seen across Europe, could wipe $120 billion from GDP.

The Treasurer Josh Frydenberg confirmed this when he delivered a sobering economic update in Parliament. He was forced to stop due to a coughing fit. He later tested negative for Covid-19.

He outlined the boost to jobs and GDP expected during the three-stage relaxing of restrictions between now and July. Once the third stage is reached, the economy should be $9.4 billion a month better off and 850,000 Australians should be back in work.

That includes people who have been stood down and are receiving the JobKeeper wage subsidy, who aren’t counted among official unemployment numbers.

Labour force figures show a million more people out of work now than in February. Mr Frydenberg warned any improvements depended on Australians continuing to follow health advice. “Failing to do so could see restrictions re-imposed at a loss of more than $4 billion a week to the economy,” he said.

“This is the economic cost we all have to bear if we fail to act. Every extra week the current restrictions stay in place costs the economy another $4 billion, but Australia is fortunate in not having had to resort to a full lockdown.”

According to Mr Frydenberg, notwithstanding Australia’s success to date on the health front, and the unprecedented scale and scope of our economic response, our economic indicators are going to get considerably worse in the period ahead before they get better. But still, he believes there is cause for optimism about the future.

The first case of the coronavirus on Australian soil was recorded on January 25 in a man visiting the State of Victoria from Wuhan, China.

“The power of dynamic, innovative, and open markets must be central to the recovery, with the private sector leading job creation, not the government,” Frydenberg will say.

Cardinal Pell "surprised" by findings

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse findings related to Cardinal Pell’s knowledge of abuse allegations while a Ballarat priest and Melbourne bishop in the 1970s and 1980s have been released.

The commission rejected Cardinal Pell’s evidence that he was deceived and lied to by Catholic Church officials about Australia’s worst paedophile priest, Gerald Ridsdale, and Melbourne parish priest Peter Searson.

Cardinal Pell was one of a number of senior church officials criticised over their handling of abuse complaints or allegations against numerous priests and Christian Brothers in the Melbourne archdiocese and Diocese of Ballarat.

The 1974-1996 Melbourne archbishop Frank Little and the 1971-1997 Ballarat bishop Ronald Mulkearns led the catastrophic failures. Cardinal Pell released a statement on which said he was "surprised by some of the views of the Royal Commission" and they were "not supported by the evidence".

The former Vatican treasurer and Melbourne and Sydney archbishop was released from a Victorian prison on 7 April after the High Court overturned his five abuse convictions.

Australia relies heavily on immigration to survive

Australian National University demographer Liz Allen (on right) told SBS News, “We need immigration to survive this next stage of our future. We have an ageing population with more people retiring from the workforce than people entering the workforce”.

She went on to say that what this means is, that there are have fewer people contributing to the tax base, which pays for Australians’ vital services: its roads, infrastructure, its hospitals, and schools – everything. “Our migrant intake will help fill the gaps,” Allen said.

Australia’s immigration programme has played a key role in nearly three decades of essentially uninterrupted economic growth. Due to border closures around the world, the total number of migrants who will make Australia home this financial year, both temporary and permanent, will be far lower than it has been in a long time.

Nearly 300,000 temporary visa holders have left Australia since the start of the year according to the federal government, and there are predictions the country will miss out on another 240,000 would-be migrants by the end of the year.

Researchers say that could cause a "demographic ripple effect" to last for some time because Australia will be relying heavily on migrants to rebuild once the pandemic has passed.

Australia’s 2019-20 permanent migration programme will now fall well short of the cap of 160,000 places set by the federal government, with projections by sharemarket broker CommSec suggesting that around 240,000 fewer people could migrate to Australia over the next 12 months.

A spokesperson for acting immigration minister Alan Tudge said while COVID-19 will clearly have an impact on the 2019-20 programme, it was still too early to tell what the final outcome would be.
Unease about US pressure on the COVID-19 investigation

U
S President Donald Trump has been increasingly critical of China’s management of the outbreak, repeatedly saying that he had seen evidence linking the virus to the Wuhan lab and threatening new trade tariffs against Beijing.

However, the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told reporters “We don’t have certainty, and there is significant evidence that this came from the laboratory - those statements can both be true.” The United States is the worst-hit country in the world, with more than 90,000 deaths (at time of publishing).

Beijing has accused the US of trying to divert attention from its domestic handling of the outbreak. “We urge the US to stop shifting the focus to China,” Ms Hua Chunying, Chinese Foreign spokeswomen said. “It should handle its domestic affairs properly first. The most important thing now is to control the US’ domestic pandemic spread and think of ways to save lives.”

The Australian government and its agencies are understood to be growing increasingly uneasy with President Trump’s bold claims about Covid-19 probably having been leaked from Wuhan laboratory.

The Five Eyes Intelligence agencies of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, UK, and the US are investigating the origin of the virus, but they are concerned that the US with a Presidential election looming may be putting undue emphasis on the theory that the virus originated in a Wuhan laboratory.

There is an emerging fear in the intelligence community that the US administration could be repeating mistakes made by George Bush, Tony Blair and John Howard when they pressured the UN weapon inspector to declare that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction.

Chuches to reopen

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The Church in South Australia has welcomed Premier Steven Marshall’s announcement that churches may reopen for private prayer and that mourners at funeral attendance can be increased, to 20 mourners indoors and 30 people outdoors plus those officiating.

Weddings are now allowed to have ten people plus those officiating, while private baptisms are being allowed to resume with ten people plus those officiating.

Meanwhile, places of worship in New South Wales will be allowed to open for personal prayer for up to ten people, while in Western Australia, they will be open for up to 20 people. In the ACT, places of worship are allowed to open for up to ten people.

As these announcements can be changed from time to time readers are advised to check with their local parishes.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

T
The Catholic bishops of Australia have elected Brisbane Archbishop Mark Coleridge to a second two-year term as president of the Bishops Conference. Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP of Sydney was re-elected Conference vice-president, a role he also took on in May 2018.

Archbishop Coleridge said he and Archbishop Fisher have worked very closely over the past two years and was grateful the bishops backed their ongoing partnership.

Four members of the Permanent Committee of the Bishops Conference were also elected: Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB; Toowoomba Bishop Robert McGuckin; Adelaide Archbishop-Designate Patrick O’Regan; and Maronite Bishop of Australia Antoine-Charbel Tarabay.

Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli of Melbourne and Port Pirie Bishop Greg O’Kelly SJ, elected in May 2019, are continuing members of the Permanent Committee.
**Taghrif dwar il-kitba Maltija**

**Kemm tihaftak minn dawn? Ġabra ta' rimi Maltin Antiki**

Banni bannozi ġej il-papa ġej  
Bil-pastizzi tal-habtejn  
Kollox ghaliq  
U l-mama ta' miehu xejn  
Ninni ninni ruhi ninni.  
Fil-benniena tal-harir.  
Ghandekk ommok il-Madonna.  
U missierek il-Bambah.  
Meta omni kellha lili  
Kemm kienet ferhana bija  
Kif poġġietti fil-benniena  
Il-granpun inqala’ bija  
O’Ġesu xi grazzja tajtni  
Kont fiz-xifer u ’mbuttatjni  
Kont musmar gibrtni grampus  
U issa qiegħed kif ghandi nkun.  
Gallarja ma genb l-ohra  
Kemm hi tajba ghan-Namur  
Hi titfaghli ċ-cikkulata  
U jien nilqagħla fil-maktur.  
Ajma qaqqi kemm tugaghni  
Kilt il-għeneb mhux misjur  
Iddendelt mal-kannizzatta  
Qbisi kelb tal-kacċatur

**Snajja antiki Maltin: Il-landier**


**Xi frażijiet popolari**

**Ingliż/Malti**

Bil-Malti

**Good morning!**  
Bonġu / L-għdwa t-tajba  
**Good afternoon!**  
Wara nofs in-nhar it-tajjeb!  
**Good evening!**  
Bonswa!  
**Welcome!**  
Merhba  
**Hello my friend!**  
Hawn sieħbi!  
**How are you?**  
Kif int?  
I’m fine, thank you!  
Jien tajjeb/tajba grazzi  
**And you?**  
U int?  
**Good**  
Tajjeb  
**Not so good**  
Mhux daqshekk tajjeb  
**Long time no see**  
Ilni ma narak  
**I missed you**  
Hassejt in-nuqas tiegħek  
**What’s new?**  
X’hemm gdid?  
**Nothing new**  
Xejn gdid  
**Thank you (very much)!**  
Grazzi ħafna/ħajr  
**You’re welcome! (for “thank you”)**  
Ta’ xejn  
**My pleasure**  
Pjaċir tiegħi  
**Come in! (enter!)**  
Għaddi!  
**Make yourself at home!**  
Qisu tiegħek!
I am sure, that like me, many readers must have been received hundreds of messages in their inboxes about COVID-19. One of these was attributed to Bill Gates, the co-founder and former CEO of Microsoft, known as a great philanthropist who has given and still gives away billions to combat poverty and to help make this world a better place.

In this message, people are encouraged to reflect positively on their lives during the coronavirus outbreak. The message has been shared thousands of times in multiple countries. The earliest time the message was attributed to Gates was on March 22.

I read the message and believe that many like me could learn very important lessons in times of crisis. However, I was curious to know how come that Gates authored this letter. True enough, it wasn’t written by him. Somebody else wrote it and he had nothing to do with it.

Later I learned that a man named Mohammed Ali from London approached the BBC and claimed that he penned the message and posted it on his Facebook page way back on March 16. The BBC said it could not be sure of that claim, but on further investigation, it could not find an earlier version of it. It was also unclear how it morphed into a message from Bill Gates.

According to the social media analysis tool CrowdTangle, the earliest time the message was attributed to Gates is on March 22. Roshan Thiran, author, founder and CEO of the Leaderonomics Group believes that whoever wrote this note truly believed that despite the chaos and the uncertainty, there is ‘a spiritual purpose behind everything that happens’. He goes on to say that as we all battle together against this virus that is not only destroying our health, but also the economy and causing so much fear and panic, we are all rallying behind a united cause.

So, regardless of who wrote the message – certainly not Bill Gates - it should inspire us to view this pandemic as an opportunity to reinvent ourselves, and to try to make a difference in this world! That is why I am sharing it with you below:

Joseph Cutajar

What is the Corona/ COVID-19 virus really teaching us

1) It is reminding us that we are all equal, regardless of our culture, religion, occupation, financial situation or how famous we are. This disease treats us all equally, perhaps we should too. If you don’t believe me, just ask Tom Hanks.

2) It is reminding us that we are all connected and something that affects one person has an effect on another. It is reminding us that the false borders that we have put up have little value as this virus does not need a passport. It is reminding us, by oppressing us for a short time, of those in this world whose whole life is spent in oppression.

3) It is reminding us of how precious our health is and how we have moved to neglect it through eating nutrient poor manufactured food and drinking water that is contaminated with chemicals upon chemicals. If we don’t look after our health, we will, of course, get sick.

4) It is reminding us of the shortness of life and of what is most important for us to do, which is to help each other, especially those who are old or sick. Our purpose is not to buy toilet roll.

5) It is reminding us of how materialistic our society has become and how, when in times of difficulty, we remember that it’s the essentials that we need (food, water, medicine) as opposed to the luxuries that we sometimes unnecessarily give value to.

6) It is reminding us of how important our family and home life is and how much we have neglected this. It is forcing us back into our houses so we can rebuild them into our home and to strengthen our family unit.

7) It is reminding us that our true work is not our job, that is what we do, not what we were created to do. Our true work is to look after each other, to protect each other and to be of benefit to one another.

8) It is reminding us to keep our egos in check. It is reminding us that no matter how great we think we are or how great others think we are, a virus can bring our world to a standstill.

9) It is reminding us that the power of freel will is in our hands. We can choose to cooperate and help each other, to share, to give, to help and to support each other or we can choose to be selfish, to hoard, to look after only our self. Indeed, it is difficulties that bring out our true colours.

10) It is reminding us that we can be patient, or we can panic. We can either understand that this type of situation has happened many times before in history and will pass, or we can panic and see it as the end of the world and, consequently, cause ourselves more harm than good.

11) It is reminding us that this can either be an end or a new beginning. This can be a time of reflection and understanding, where we learn from our mistakes, or it can be the start of a cycle which will continue until we finally learn the lesson we are meant to.

12) It is reminding us that this Earth is sick. It is reminding us that we need to look at the rate of deforestation just as urgently as we look at the speed at which toilet rolls are disappearing off of shelves. We are sick because our home is sick.

13) It is reminding us that after every difficulty, there is always ease. Life is cyclical, and this is just a phase in this great cycle. We do not need to panic; this too shall pass.

14) Whereas many see the Corona/ Covid-19 virus as a great disaster, I prefer to see it as a great corrector. It is sent to remind us of the important lessons that we seem to have forgotten and it is up to us if we will learn them or not.
The Voice is not just a digital portal: We comment, we fight for your rights. We believe in freedom of expression. We are read in the right places.
Is-sit tal-Biċċerija l-Qadima fil-Belt qed jigi mibdul fi proġett kulturali


Is-sit jinsab fi Triq San Kristofru wara l-Berga tal-Baviera n-naha t’isfel tal-belt. Id-Design Cluster se jginli li tigi rigenenerata din in-naha t’isfel tal-kapitali Maltija, u johloq opportunitajiet godda fis-settur tad-disinm.

Ix-xoghol qed isir mill-Ministru ghall-Wirt Nazzjonali, l-Arti u l-Gvern Lokali mmexxi mill-Ministru José Herrera, li wkoll żar is-sit u qal li r-rigenemazzjoni ta’ dan is-sit hija proġett importanti mhux biss ghall-kapitali Maltija u r-residenti tagħha, tiegħu izda wkoll ghas-settur kreattivi u kulturali kollha.

Fil-fatt, permezz tal-Ministeru ghall-Patrimonju Nazzjonali, l-Arti u l-Gvern Lokali, l-Gvern, se jibqa’ mpenjat li jkompli jsir ukoll ir-restawr tat-toroq u l-ispazji pubbliċi ta’ tagħmir u għamara fid-diversi spazji tal-proġett u se jikompli bl-installazzjoni b’Belt Valletta.


Il-Valletta Design Cluster jikkonsisti f’aktar minn 3,000 metru kwadratu ta’ spazju intem li qed jigi riabiliat, u se jinkludi bosta żoni aċċessibbli għall-pubbliku u tkun jista’ jintużaw minn studenti, residenti, had-diema kulturali u prattikanti freelance fil-qasam tal-arti, id-disinm u l-intrapriża kreattiva kif ukoll mill-NGOs.


Sostna wkoll li s-saħħa ta’ dan l-ispazju tinsab f’l-ordni xogħol biex l-proġett qed se jsir b’investiment ta’ l-ewwel wieħed tiegħu fil-belt Valletta. Għal snin l-ordni jinkludi bosta żoni aċċessibbli għall-pubbliku, u tkun jista’ jintużaw biss bħala biċċerija madwar ghaxar snin.

Il-Valletta Design Cluster jikkonsisti f’tar minn 3,000 metru kwadratu ta’ spazju intem li qed jigi riabiliat, u se jinkludi bosta żoni aċċessibbli għall-pubbliku u tkun jista’ jintużaw minn studenti, residenti, had-diema kulturali u prattikanti freelance fil-qasam tal-arti, id-disinm u l-intrapriża kreattiva kif ukoll mill-NGOs.

First hugs for Nanna in months

MOTHER’S DAY COVID-19

Hardships and solitude abound; people becoming restless. A very dangerous mix. Most people are easing into new restrictions – such relief, a Godsent, in time for health and mental wellbeing.

Freedom is delicious, even a little bit … BUT NOT YET! New cases keep emerging with more elderly and staff deaths in an aged-care home and interstate.

“Drive-In COVID-19 testing” from store to carpark lessening the spread quicker. We are assured this COVID-19 App detector on iPhones tracks millions of people are downloading the “Drive-In COVID-19 testing” in suburbs and affluent areas helping to detect the virus. So COVID has not slowed down yet. Need to be careful before we release ourselves too soon in the jungle yonder! Can’t keep up with the latest!

Millions of people are downloading the COVID-19 App on iPhones tracking the spread quicker. We are assured this app will be deleted after a few months; much uncertainty and many questions!

Online shopping is now picked by “Drive-In” from store to carpark lessening contamination. Need to check everything against the list; still, need to wipe everything down. I seem to have no skin left on my hands lately.

It was heartening to watch on TV planes bringing stranded travellers back home all safe. In 2014 I was in Madrid, Spain after bringing stranded travellers back home all safe. At my hotel, I gravitated to a fantastic family reunion I had organised in the Ukraine! That was heart-stopping!

Mum was born in 1918 when the Spanish Flu raged in Malta. She speaks, reads, and writes in Maltese, English, and Italian if challenged, albeit sprinkled with doses of varied dementia. A great heartfelt visit in my heart and memory. So thankful to God.

My husband is enjoying some projects i.e. putting up fence wires to support a flower-vine. He even made a cupboard with doors and finished it for Mother’s Day. Just what was needed, I was so pleased.

There is always work in our Aussie yards, but these jobs have been lifesavers, lots of exercise, fresh air, and sun. We are both pleased to have this extra COVID-19 time to tinker out id-eru la-gnien (house and garden) despite commitments. He misses his golf and friends, as I do my friends!

On Monday we visited my husband’s mum’s grave. Rest in Peace! An exceptional Deutsch Frau. We miss her spinach and potato sauces, Weiner Schnitzels, delicious cakes and Friezine Hosen, etc. I will make spinach sauce next week.

How time flies, we are now in the twilight of our lives. “COVID-19 go away!”

This morning the Cockatoos woke me up at the crack of dawn with their gregarious Kah Kah Kah call as the huge gum tree swayed in the fierce winds, bringing autumn in. A beautiful straw white/grey/honey coloured long hair cat blue-eyed cat nuzzled around my legs. We gave it milk and bread! We miss having an animal nowadays.
Some Radio stations may be off air due to covid-19 restrictions

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

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

On SBS Radio
Day Time Analogue and Digital
Tuning in is by station name not frequency. Digital radio can also be heard via digital TV.

SYDNEY: listen to the MCC radio programmes on 2GLF FM 89.3. Isma’ l-programm tar-radju bil-Malti mill-Kunsill Malti ta’ NSW minn fuq l-istazzjon 2GLF 89.3FM. Also On Demand on l-Internet: www.893fm.com.au)
On Demand: Ethnic Maltese Council (11am)
Il-Hadd 11.00 am: l-aħħar aħbarijiet minn Malta, mużika, tagħrif, kultura, avvivi u suġġetti ta’ interress.
SBS Radio 2 on Channel 38. Programmes can be accessed online (live/catch up) at: sbs.com.au/maltese (mobile), using the SBS Radio app.
For television news from Malta - SBS2 TV 32 (Viceland) on Thursdays and Sundays at 8am.

VIVA MALTA on COAST FM 96.3 Community Radio in Gosford Central Coast NSW. Aired on Thursdays every fortnight from 6 pm -7 pm. Presenter: Nathalie Gatt. Web streaming: www.coastfm.org.au

SBS MALTESE NEWS: L-Aħbarijiet are now on SBSTV Vincelad HD Channel 32 every Sunday at 8.00 a.m. and on Thursday at 8.00 a.m.

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

Maltese Community Radio Adelaide: Maltese Programmes on 5EBI 103.1fm; Monday: 7.30am; Monday: 8.00 am; Monday: 6.00pm. Contact: Bernadette Buhagiar: 0420 944 205. Email bernadettebuhagiar@gmail.com Ron Borg: 0418 843 850. Email ronborg@mac.com

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

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**Important Notice**

If you are unable to buy the next issues of *The Voice* from the usual sources, you can inquire about our subscription at: maltesevoice@gmail.com

We will deliver *The Voice* by mail to your address anywhere in Australia.

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**Għall-attenzjoni tal-qarrejja**


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**Avviż lill-qarrejja**


Dawk kollha li jixtiequ li jibdew jirċevu kopja priprintjata bil-posta d-dar bi ħlas. Dawk kollha li jixtiequ li jibdew jirċevu kopja priprintjata tal-magazine kull darba li johrog biex ikunu jistgħu f’mellha, huma mheġġa li jabbaw biex għal sena halli jaghmuż ġżur mill-kopja

Biex dan isir wieħed l-ewwel jibgħat email lil maltesevoice@gmail.com fejn jittob tagħrif dwar il-ħlas ta’ ġabonament għal sena fl-israt fejn ġjihix. Imbaghad jekk ikun irid jissieħeb ma’ dawk kollha li mhumiex kuntenti biss li jaqraw il-magazine online, imma wkoll li jixtiequ kopja tiegħu, jgħarrafna u jkunu moqdidjin.

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**Events for 2020**

Sunday July 5
Lejla fil-Busket
Sunday October 18 Fete
Saturday November 14 Dinner Dance
Sunday December 6 Festa San Nikola

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**Please Note:**

If interested in advertising on *The Voice of the Maltese* magazine in order to reach the widest audience possible, particularly among the Maltese diaspora is requested to write for details to: Maltesevoice@gmail.com
The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected sports in general, and not just football, all over the world. It has thrown most domestic and international competitions into disarray, perhaps some more than others, while global organisations had to postpone and indicate new dates for their commitments.

Football competitions, club or international that are the bread and butter for most clubs have been most hit, and the stoppage has hit perhaps some more than others, while global organisations had to postpone and indicate new dates for their commitments.

Some competitions could soon return but without the support of enthusiastic spectators at their stadiums. Participants rightly believe that though they are glad to be back in action, mass sports are nothing without the spectators. They also understand that it is imperative that they adhere to social distancing in order to prevent the spreading of the pandemic and that the health, wellbeing, and safety of players, spectators, and all those involved is a priority.

One of Europe’s top football leagues, the Bundesliga kicked off behind closed doors at the weekend. Whoever watched the matches on their TV sets could see that competition looked very different from athletes battling each other in empty stadiums.

In Malta, Monday evening the Premier League clubs were expected to decide whether the MFA should either restart the season at a later date, and if the health authorities give the go-ahead, or officially end the 2019-2020 season as per the wish of 10 of the clubs.

The International Football Federation, FIFA, has said that health comes first and should remain everyone’s priority until the coronavirus has been defeated.

With the world facing new challenges, FIFA said it has been partnering with the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to provide guidance to people to protect their health and wellbeing.

Pandemic forces FIFA to make major rule change

The International Football Federation (FIFA) has confirmed a major rule change in order to cope with the potential fixture congestion when football completely returns after the coronavirus pandemic.

All major European leagues have been suspended for several weeks but a number are still hoping to complete the 2019-20 season, which will almost certainly involve fixtures being crammed into a slim time frame.

With several leagues across the world taking action, from Belgium, France, and the Netherlands ending their campaigns immediately, to Germany’s Bundesliga and Italy’s Serie A preparing for potentially finishing the season, FIFA and the International Football Association Board (IFAB) have taken swift action.

A temporary amendment to Law 3 has been made, in that each team is to be given three opportunities to make five substitutions, excluding half-time, in an amendment that comes into play immediately for competitions that start and finish before the end of 2020.

In a bid to prevent unnecessary stoppages, each team will be limited to three stoppages per match for substitutions, not including half-time. In competitions where an extra substitute is permitted in extra-time, a sixth substitute will be allowed.

The IFAB is made up of the four British associations and world governing body FIFA.

Proposals to allow an additional two substitutes were put forward by FIFA in order to protect player welfare.

However, the respective leagues around the world will have the final say on whether or not the new rules would be adopted.

In a statement, FIFA said: “The decision on whether to apply this temporary amendment will remain at the discretion of each individual competition organiser, while the IFAB and FIFA will determine at a later stage whether this temporary amendment would need to be extended further (e.g. for competitions due to be completed in 2021).”

If both teams make a substitution at the same time, this would count as one of three opportunities for both sides, while in the event of extra-time, unused changes will be carried over.

Meanwhile, the Federation further announced, that the controversial video assistant referee system (VAR) could be discontinued upon football’s restart and that it could be ditched ‘at the discretion of each individual competition organiser.’

The statement concluded: “In relation to competitions in which the video assistant referee (VAR) system is implemented, these competitions are permitted to cease its use upon restart at the discretion of each individual competition organiser.

“However, where VAR is used, all aspects of the laws of the game and, by extension, the VAR protocol will remain in place.”

Coe says sports leaders frustrated, could rebel against pandemic rules

No much has been focused on athletics, that, like other key sports, has seen its calendar and finances badly hit by the postponement of this year’s Olympic Games in Tokyo, but it is worth noting recent comments by World Athletics chief Sebastian Coe (right) about the situation.

The British legend said, that it was crucial to get top events started again even as the coronavirus takes a mounting toll around the world. He expressed the frustrations felt by many sports chiefs, and even went as far as to warn that sports leaders may rebel against pandemic restrictions as they struggle to get major events back on track.

Coe, 63, said, “We have to be guided by what governments, the WHO and local authorities are telling us, but we also have to make our own decisions and make sensible compromises.”

He went as far as to say that there might be a moment when a sport decides that it is ready to stage events even if it is not always with the approval of those authorities.

He insisted, “We will be respectful, but we have to make decisions in the best interest of our sport and our athletes.”

He added that when it comes to the Tokyo Games next year no one could give a cast-iron assurance that the Olympics would be held “Speculating about something that is over a year away is unhelpful. We are trying to give the athletes some clarity about the calendar and speculation from scientists and medical experts do not help.

“I hope that the pandemic will be contained so that we don’t have to cancel the Games. Meeting directors will have to take their own decisions about how to get athletes to compete in a safe and secure manner that doesn’t risk infection and each event will have to decide on a format for competition with these safety considerations two months in advance,” he said.

Coe believes there would be greater use of technology to make events “more exciting” for television viewers and adapt to coronavirus threat.