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RUGBY
Kavallieri victorious
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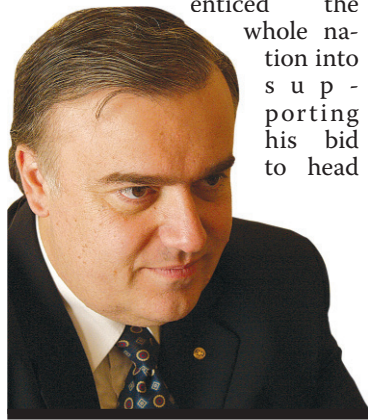
Sunday, 25 November 2007 – issue 420

www.maltatoday.com.mt

BRITAIN BETRAYS MALTA BIG TIME

FOREIGN Minister Michael Frendo will be returning to his home in Sliema tomorrow, closing behind him a chapter that

enticed the whole nation into supporting his bid to head



the Commonwealth – a dream now robbed by an Indian diplomat supported by the invisible hand of the British.

The secret vote between 53 nations and regimes came as a surprise for many although Frendo and the Maltese entourage gathered in Uganda for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) were aware the situation was neck and neck by Friday evening.

"I can't say I'm not disappointed," Frendo told MaltaToday shortly after the vote, adding his election was never a foregone conclusion.

But observers gathered in the

Ugandan capital said Frendo has much to be proud of given the way he tackled some of the thorniest issues to be raised at the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group which decided the suspension of the Pakistani regime.

"I'm proud we gave a very good show," Frendo said, after long weeks of lobbying and international coverage earning him support from all over the world.

"Despite the result, I believe we have raised our country's prestige and exposure, and improved our bilateral relations especially with African countries."

Frendo admitted it was diffi-

cult to grasp where the balance tipped against his candidature.

"I don't think it's just a question of regions, although I guess the Asians wanted to have someone from Asia," he said. "It's closed chapter now."

The end of this chapter means for Frendo his return to the mundane politics of the 10th district, where he faces a veritable battleground sea full of sharks hunting for the Sliema Nationalist votes, and his own canvassers – from George Pullicino to Francis Zammit Dimech and Dolores Cristina, from Robert Arrigo to John Dalli, Pippo Psaila and Georg Sapiano.

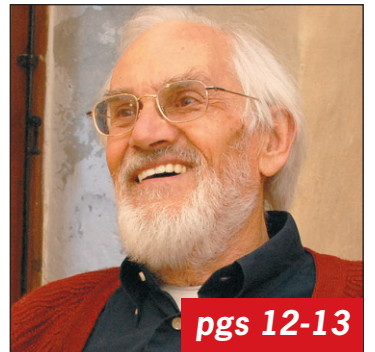
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CHILLISTIC INSIDE

Mass resignation threat by Mental Health Commission

KARL SCHEMBRI

THE National Commission for Mental Health Reform has warned Health Minister Louis Deguara it will be resigning en masse if its proposals to widen the mental illnesses covered by free medication remain ignored by the government.

Chairperson Connie Magro confirmed that a letter sent to the minister earlier this month was still unanswered, as was the commission's previous correspondence demanding the government's attention to what it believes is a pressing problem.

"I can't speak before the minister answers our letter," Magro said. "We're still awaiting his reactions."

In fact, the letter speaks of

the commission's disappointment at the minister's lacking feedback to proposals made last month that would entitle long-term mental health patients to free medicinals while stopping the blatant abuse of patients and the system.

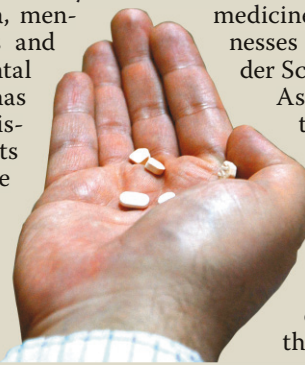
Warning it was determined to resign if the situation persists, the commission – which includes Director of Psychiatry Joe Saliba, mental health NGOs and users of the mental health services – has slammed the minister for ignoring its proposals despite it being a constituted body.

Psychiatrists told MaltaToday that as the present health

regulations stand, most of the medication given for free is being prescribed under a false diagnosis – that of schizophrenia – simply to fall under Schedule V, the list of chronic illnesses meriting free medicine. That means that those suffering from illnesses such as bipolar affective disorder or chronic depression, amongst others, are not eligible for free medicine because the illnesses are not listed under Schedule V.

As a result, most of the medication being given for free is prescribed under the misdiagnosis of schizophrenia or schizo-affective disorder, which are the only

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