

maltatoday



Vince Vaughn's Christmas hit Fred Claus

SPORT
See page 61 ▶

CLASSIFIEDS
See page 57 ▶

CINEMA / TV
See page 40 ▶

Sunday, 02 December 2007 – issue 421

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PM decided alone



BACK TOGETHER: It has taken three and a half years

LAWRENCE Gonzi took a solitary decision to heal a long-standing rift in the Nationalist Party by publicly exonerating former John Dalli of any allegations pertaining to his resignation three years ago, after secret meetings between the prime minister and Dalli – meetings which were unknown to most senior Cabinet ministers and senior aides at the OPM.

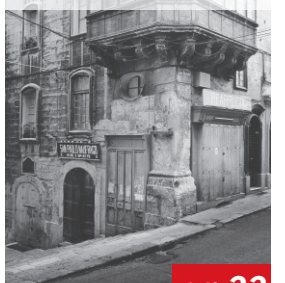
But knowingly, the prime minister has opened himself up to censure from the party faithful and backbenchers. “The PM was fully aware of the political risk of his decision but he placed his conscience before that of political expediency,” senior aides told MaltaToday.

A simple e-mail from Auditor General Joseph G. Galea sent to Gonzi last week whilst still attending CHOGM in Uganda, led the prime minister to take one of his riskiest political decisions ever – because the caretaker auditor had been advised by lawyer Profs.

Ian Refalo he could not sign the audit report on the procurement of airline tickets by government ministries, because his term of office had long expired.

The long-awaited report was commissioned by the PM in July 2004 on suggestion of John Dalli himself in his resignation letter. ▶ page 6

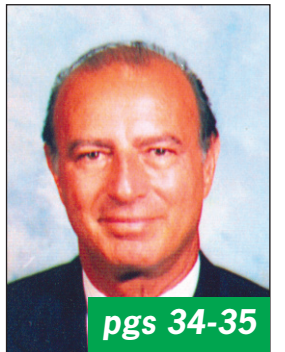
INVISIBLE CITY



pg 33

Interview
DAVID PISANI

Interview



pgs 34-35

MAURICE MIZZI:
A greener shade of green

ALL IS FORGIVEN PGS 8-9 • SAVIOUR BALZAN PG 17 • EDITORIAL PG 23

54% want change

JAMES DEBONO

THE Nationalist Party faces an uphill struggle convincing the electorate that its time is not up. Not only does Labour now enjoy a 3% lead over the PN, but 54.3% of respondents think that the country needs a change of government.

Yet desire for a change in government does not necessarily translate into support for the Labour's government in waiting. Without even being prompted, 6% qualified their “yes” saying that they would not like to see an MLP-led government.

Another 8% of those who think that a change in government is good for the country would still vote for the PN in a general election.

Yet with Labour opening a 3% lead after two consecutive surveys in which the PN was at par with Labour, the indications are once again pointing towards a Labour victory.

The bad news for the PN is that among non-committed voters – a crucial category which includes the undecided, non voters and those who refuse to divulge their voting intentions – only 16% think that the country does not need a change in

government.

Among non-committed voters 45% would think that the country needs a change while a pivotal 5.8% (2.7% of the entire sample) think that country needs change but add that Labour is not fit for government.

Electoral Barometer

| | |
|------------------|------|
| MLP | 27.0 |
| PN | 24.0 |
| AD | 2.3 |
| AN | 0.7 |
| Not voting | 8.3 |
| Don't know | 19.3 |
| No reply | 18.3 |

This is a clear indication that Labour Leader Alfred Sant is in synch with the electorate when he constantly harps on the need for change, even if the MLP is not exploiting this advantage to the full.

Neither are those who want change in government but ▶ page 14

Malta snubs Great Britain

KARL SCHEMBRI

THE Maltese government has left Britain out in the cold on the diplomatic front in the wake of the secretive backdoor dealings it believes to have led in the last-minute shift of the vote to India in last week's election of Commonwealth Secretary General.

Sources say the British High Commissioner, Nick Archer, is under pressure to restore relations with the country while trying to also get the government into distancing itself from MaltaToday's reporting of a feeling of “betrayal” and “diplomatic backstabbing” carried last Sunday. At the same time, he remains steadfastly refusing to state whom his country lobbied for and backed in the election.

But Archer's calls have remained unanswered both pub-

licly and in private as top government officials have snubbed his pleas for explanations, also repeated on his blog earlier last week.

Sources close to the British diplomat added Archer even tried pressuring the Nationalist Party in this regard, something they said reminded them of the Libyan government's confusion between government, party and free press when it had taken issue with this newspaper's reporting, recently.

Writing on the high commission's website, Archer said he could “hardly believe his eyes” at the reports carried by this newspaper. He also informed MaltaToday editor Saviour Balzan he was pulling out of an agreed interview that was to be broadcast on TVM on the daily programme, Reporter, in reaction to the reports.

“There have been some strange things written here ▶ page 7



pg 26

PAMELA HANSEN

Safer to call the bear Rupert

MONA'S MEALS



pgs 36-37

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