



Business Today

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Luigi Crispino

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KAMRA TAL-PERITI

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Police ready to arraign VAT fraud suspects

Karl Stagno-Navarra

Investigators are reported to have completed their work in compiling the long list of accusations to be brought against a number of people who are to be charged with the VAT department fraud scandal.

The fraud is estimated to run into millions of Euros and the exact entity of such a scam will perhaps never be known.

Six VAT department employees, a number of businessmen and a criminal gang have been arrested and interrogated by the police over the past four months and are expected to be charged in court in the coming days, as all the paperwork has been prepared by the Economic Crimes Unit and have been sent to the Attorney General.

The investigation – triggered by Finance Minister Tonio Fenech following a tip-off from a concerned businessman – has reportedly unearthed a well organised fraudulent



scheme that evolved around a VAT department clerk who is said to have pocketed more than €190,000 over

three years.

Other colleagues at the VAT department were allegedly roped into the scheme and included intermediaries, some of whom with a criminal background.

When police first raided the VAT department offices, an employee and an unidentified intermediary were allegedly caught red handed, while other employees were arrested and had all their computers and other paperwork seized for investigation.

A number of VAT inspectors were also investigated and are to be charged over the scam.

Business Today has learnt that apart from charges of fraud to the government's detriment, a number of company directors from a leading air conditioning company, a paint manufacturer, carpenters, and restaurateurs are to be charged with corruption and criminal association. ▶ **page 5**



Foiled hold-up on HSBC

Karl Stagno-Navarra

The police are reportedly investigating a foiled hold-up on the HSBC Bank branch in Birkirkara a few weeks ago.

Sources have confirmed that the attempted hold-up happened on Police Day, when most officers were in Valletta for the annual parade, and was foiled by passers-by who noticed a parked car close to the bank with three men inside.

One passer-by saw three men putting balaclavas to their heads, while a man who was on the back

seat of the car appeared to be loading a weapon.

At that point, the passer-by raised the alarm by shouting and catching the attention of other people in the street who also noted the men in the car.

Panic ensued and the men sped off with their car which was later found abandoned by the police.

While the alarm was raised, bank employees shut the door while an emergency procedure was put into place to secure the bank and its surroundings.

Markets

Security	Closing Prices in Euro Tue 07-July-09	Closing Prices in Euro Tue 14-July-09	% Change from previous wk
Bank of Valletta p.l.c.	2.635	2.680	1.708%
HSBC Bank Malta p.l.c.	2.610	2.610	0.000%
Lombard Bank p.l.c.	2.550	2.549	-0.039%
Middlesea Insurance p.l.c.	1.860	1.860	0.000%
Simonds Farsons Cisk p.l.c.	1.750	1.680	-4.000%
GO p.l.c.	1.800	1.800	0.000%
IHI p.l.c.	0.810	0.810	0.000%
Plaza Centres p.l.c.	1.650	1.650	0.000%
FIMBank p.l.c. (US\$)	\$1.170	\$1.170	0.000%
Malta International Airport p.l.c.	2.101	2.101	0.000%
GlobalCapital p.l.c.	1.500	1.500	0.000%
Datatrak Holdings p.l.c.	0.190	0.190	0.000%
San Tumas Shareholdings p.l.c.	3.200	3.200	0.000%
Medserv p.l.c.	3.500	3.500	0.000%
Grand Harbour Marina p.l.c.	1.980	1.980	0.000%
Gpm Holdings p.l.c. (GBP)	£0.590	£0.590	0.000%
Crimsonwing p.l.c.	0.250	0.250	0.000%
MaltaPost p.l.c.	0.675	0.710	5.185%
RS2 Software p.l.c.	0.679	0.679	0.000%

BusinessToday takes a SUMMER break with MALTATODAY



Throughout the summer period starting next Wednesday, until 23 September, Business Today's summer edition will be distributed free of charge with sister paper MaltaToday Wednesday edition. The decision has been taken in line with our commitment to keep on bringing the latest business news to our readers. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our readers and wish them a happy summer.



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