

Business Today

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KAMRA TAL-PERITI

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VAT scam culprits could be put out of business

Fraud estimated to exceed €10 million, gone undetected for years

Karl Stagno-Navarra

Businessmen who have been convicted by the courts over the VAT scam, may be shortly put out of business, as a string of hefty garnishee orders are being issued against them

by the VAT department.

Meanwhile, the Attorney General is asking for the courts to order the confiscation of property and funds in terms of the Money Laundering Act.

Finance ministry sources told

MaltaToday that VAT officials are accounting on each and every single individual businessman involved in the scam in a bid to recover all the money due with interest according to law, that add up to millions of Euros.

Former VAT department employees, and middlemen implicated in the scam are also facing the tough implications of breaching the Money Laundering Act as well as the government's wrath to recover the monies due

through the scam, with interest.

While unofficially the VAT fraud was said to be estimated to be around €10 million, experts say that the fraud is calculated to be far more than that, and went undetected for years. ▶ **page 2**

New gaming machine amendments proposed: A tall order

Charlot Zahra

Amendments to the Lotteries and Other Games Act were presented by Finance Minister Tonio Fenech

last Monday evening during the first sitting of the House of Representatives after the summer recess.

In general, the amendments would regulate the place of gaming, the

gaming machines themselves and persons who could enter such places. It also sought to safeguard the players.

The definition of a gaming

machine is not being restricted to specific and identified devices but is wide-ranging.

This was purposely being done so as to encompass a variety of machines, putting the onus on the LGA to determine whether a machine presented to it was a gaming machine or an amusement machine.

Operators would be able to seek to obtain four different licences. Machines would be sealed by the LGA and those who manufactured, repaired and serviced such

machines would require a licence.

The suppliers and distributors of gaming machines, as well as operators of gaming places, would also require licences.

Gaming places would not be licensed if these were situated close to schools.

If, after the issue of a licence, government were to decide to open a school nearby, the operator would have to move his operation.

Moreover, premises must be restricted to offer gaming services exclusively. ▶ **page 2**





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Markets			
Security	Closing Prices in Euro Tue 22-September-09	Closing Prices in Euro Tue 29-September-09	% Change from previous wk
Bank of Valletta p.l.c.	3.010	3.350	11.296%
HSBC Bank Malta p.l.c.	2.610	2.800	7.280%
Lombard Bank p.l.c.	2.540	2.540	0.000%
Middlesea Insurance p.l.c.	1.640	1.640	0.000%
Simonds Farsons Cisk p.l.c.	1.600	1.699	6.188%
GO p.l.c.	1.690	1.579	-6.568%
International Hotel Investments p.l.c.	0.800	0.820	2.500%
Plaza Centres p.l.c.	1.640	1.640	0.000%
FIMBank p.l.c. (US\$)	\$1.250	\$1.195	-4.400%
Malta International Airport p.l.c.	2.120	2.230	5.189%
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.	3.040	3.040	0.000%
Medserv p.l.c.	3.745	3.745	0.000%
Grand Harbour Marina p.l.c.	1.980	1.980	0.000%
6pm Holdings p.l.c. (GBP)	£0.590	£0.590	0.000%
Crimsonwing p.l.c.	0.390	0.389	-0.256%
MaltaPost p.l.c.	0.690	0.690	0.000%
RS2 Software p.l.c.	0.599	0.599	0.000%