

mid week

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OMBUDSMAN CENSURES EP

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CASH FOR HEARSESES

Commotion in Valletta yesterday between police officers and a demonstrator: police have effected four arrests as the public transport strike enters its third day

Gatt offers compensation in last ditch attempt to end strike

KARL SCHEMBRI

TRANSPORT Minister Austin Gatt yesterday offered thousands of euros to the Motor Hearses Association as a compensation for the decision to liberalise their market, Malta-

Today can reveal.

The offer was made behind the scenes in the ongoing back-door negotiations between the minister and the association through the intervention of an unnamed mediator.

According to the President of the Federation of Public Trans-

port, Victor Spiteri, the minister was offering €60,000 to the association to be distributed among its 10 members.

"After deciding on his own and against a previous agreement to liberalise motor hearses, the minister has now offered to pay compensation to the as-

sociation," Spiteri said yesterday night, at the end of the second day of the nation-wide strike ordered by the federation.

"While it's true the agreement with the previous minister was unsigned, it was put into effect, so much so that the motor hearses association bought the

new vehicles on the understanding that no new licences would be given. To me, Gatt's offer is a clear admission of a political blunder, a big political mistake, even though he deliberately failed to tell the public that he made the offer," Spiteri added.

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