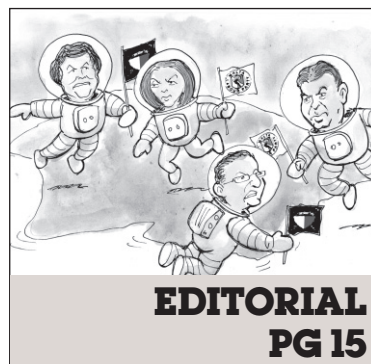


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31 CHARGED OVER €10 MILLION VAT DEPARTMENT FRAUD

Six VAT employees arraigned, two face drug charges

POLICE investigators from the Economic Crimes Unit (ECU) yesterday presented writs of summons in Court against 31 persons, including two women, in connection with the alleged multi million euro VAT Department fraud.

While the names of the accused cannot

be named, sources explained that it is just a matter of days before the accused stand before a court to respond to the charges.

Six of the accused are VAT Department employees, while the rest are reportedly company directors, accountants and criminals who reportedly

operated as intermediaries between companies in default and the VAT Department.

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Gozo party gets 4am clearance as Gianpula Fields ordered 2am limit

KARL STAGNO-NAVARRA

WHILE a government-sponsored, open-air music event in Gozo planned for next week has been given the green light from the police to play music until 4am, the popular music festival Creamfields at Gianpula Fields has been ordered to change its traditional closing time from 4am to 2am.

Creamfields will be held on the night of the feast of Santa Marija on 15 August, where the island will be alight with some half-a-dozen firework and petard displays from towns and villages, until the early hours of the next day.

The owners of Gianpula Fields have said the new closing time was discriminatory, adding that their police application had already been processed with very clear demands on the noise levels.

These demands were accepted by Gianpula's owners, and confirmed by their sound expert Chris Calleja. The owners said that earlier this year, the club had invested in new technology to reduce sound levels originating from the open-air venue.

Speaking to MaltaToday, Gianpula director Matthew de Giorgio said: "Stopping the party at 2am is financially unsustainable, in view of the demands of people who attend parties late at night."

De Giorgio said Creamfields would still attract thousands and would go on within the Gianpula discotheque between 2am and 4am.

Yesterday, a court presided by Judge JR Micallef ruled that there was no urgency for the application to extend opening hours to be heard, and postponed the case until September.

Gianpula has now reapplied with the police to have the permit for the hosting of the Creamfields festival valid until 4am. The owners said that they were willing to accept any demands by the authorities on the required noise levels.

The new application is an attempt at reaching an acceptable compromise, that will allow the party to go on until 4am while keeping sound at an acceptable level for the authorities, but reasonable for festival-goers.

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GOZO

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