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Taxmen enter into agreement with doctors, hairdressers and mechanics

AN answer to a PQ tabled yesterday has revealed that the Tax Compliance Unit has entered into three-year agreements with three categories: doctors, hairdressers and mechanics.

The details were tabled in answer to a PQ by Labour MP Leo Brincat.

The exact details of the agreement are unknown but the deal focuses on a specific income threshold for each of the categories.

The workings of the secretive

TCU, which falls under the Ministry of Finance, has finally come under scrutiny in parliamentary question time. In the first nine months of 2007, eight large companies were investigated by the TCU, in contrast with 18 small and medium sized companies and six self-employed individuals which were also investigated.

Though the figures only refer to the first nine months, the trend in TCU investigations repeats itself over the last three years, with limited focus on big companies: six in

2005, 10 in 2006. There were 48 and 40 SMEs investigated in 2005 and 2006 respectively. Individuals selected for TCU investigation were 18 in 2005 and 25 for 2006.

The TCU's rigorous techniques have come under heavy criticism by the GRTU. More interestingly, the criteria used to select companies or individuals for scrutiny remains unclear, and the TCU says that as is the practice abroad, the criteria used to select companies or individuals for investigation will not be divulged.

Sant shrugs off PN 'hamallagni'

LABOUR LEADER GETS FRANK WITH CLAIRE BONELLO ON DEMONISATION **PAGE 11**

IN an exclusive interview with Claire Bonello, Labour leader Alfred Sant talks about why it is difficult to fight a whispering campaign after disparaging comments made by Austin Gatt at the PN General Council. "What should I do? Stoop to the level of the Nationalists? I refuse to play that game," Sant says.

He also reveals he keeps one of the pamphlets ("Alfred Sant ma jisma' minn hadd") with the bishops' stand against the introduction of divorce, in a silver frame perhaps to remind him of Opposition perfidy.

Sant also dismisses that his appearance may be an issue with the electorate, saying people are more concerned with other matters such as housing costs and social problems.



BUDGET 2008 - HOW GONZI STOLE LABOUR'S XMAS p4-5



Pullicino cites 'sub judice' to avoid 'kangaroo court' questions

No comment from Minister on allegations of corruption at MEPA

RAPHAEL VASSALLO

GEORGE Pullicino, the Minister responsible for the environment and its regulatory body, MEPA, has fallen back on the age-old excuse that the issue is 'sub judice' (i.e., being contested in court) in order to avoid answering awkward

questions about the serious criticism levelled at the authority by a senior Criminal Court Judge.

Judge Joe Galea Debono, currently contesting a development application in Zebbug, Gozo, last December launched a scathing attack on the internal operations of the Malta Environment Plan-

ning Authority, which he likened to a "kangaroo court".

Quoted extensively in last Sunday's Illum, Galea Debono spoke brazenly of a "web of intrigue" involving a confraternity of interconnected architects, each looking after his own interests: "An architect who is a board member on DCC A **page 8**

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