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EMERGING AND CONTINUING MONEY LAUNDERING TRENDS

Emerging Trend

ATM Skimming

The FIU noted an increase in the number of skimming cases from late 2015 to 2016. Cases were brought to the attention of the FIU involving foreign nationals who obtained customers bank card details by fraudulent means using ATM and EFTPOS skimming devices. In December 2015, more than 500 credit and debit cardholders were affected by a carefully orchestrated skimming scheme. An attempt to conduct ATM skimming in January 2016 was successfully foiled.

In August 2016, the FIU received information that three Asian nationals were using stolen and counterfeit Visa and Mastercard cards at a bank's ATMs in Tonga and Samoa. Two of the Asian nationals were in custody in Samoa whilst the third national reportedly left for Fiji. The trend of ATM skimming appears to have emerged not only in Fiji but across the Pacific.

Continuing Trend

Advance Fee Fraud

The FIU issued 6 alert notices to commercial banks and money remittance service providers to conduct enhanced due diligence procedures for suspected possible advance fee fraud, lottery scam related remittances and email spoofing activities.

The FIU continued to receive cases related to unsolicited emails promising attractive job opportunities, payment of lottery awards, inheritance of large amounts of funds, lucrative investment opportunities and other "get-rich-quick" schemes.

Tax Evasion

The FIU continues to note STR cases for possible tax evasion such as the use of family members (including minors) personal bank accounts to hide business proceeds.

Prison terms for six Chinese nationals

Shayal Devi
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THE Magistrates Court in Lautoka has handed a two-year 11 months prison terms to six Chinese nationals charged with theft and dishonestly dealing in personal financial information.



Appearing before Magistrate Raramasi Salakubou on Monday were Sanlin Xie, Changbao Xie, Liu Jinling, Zhong Chenhua, Weiqiang Liu and Yanyan Yang.

The court heard the men were apprehended in different locales throughout Lautoka last December.

They had arrived in the country as tourists and were found making suspicious withdrawals at an ANZ ATM in Lautoka.

Upon capture, police found more than 400 ATM cards on the men.

While delivering the sentence last week, Mr Salakubou said he had taken into account the seven months the men had spent in remand.

He said the men had shown remorse for their crimes and had co-operated with police.

Some of the Chinese nationals outside court. Picture: REPEKA NASIKO

Source: The Fiji Times Online (<http://fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=359920>)