

Ex-BP exec charged in \$5.7m bribery case

Former regional director allegedly took bribes to advance interests of businessman's firm

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A former executive of BP Singapore was hauled to court yesterday to face charges of obtaining about US\$4 million (S\$5.7 million) in bribes from businessman Koh Seng Lee.

Clarence Chang Peng Hong, BP's former eastern regional director for marine fuels, allegedly took the bribes to advance the business interests of Mr Koh's company with BP.

Chang, who faces 47 charges, allegedly corruptly obtained bribes amounting to US\$3.95 million from Mr Koh, executive director of Pacific Prime Trading (PPT), via Chang's HSBC bank account in Hong Kong.

A total of 19 payments ranging from US\$100,000 to US\$350,000 were made to his bank account between July 2006 and September 2008.

Chang, 51, is said to have also corruptly agreed to accept a bribe of \$500,000 from Mr Koh some time before September 2009 to advance the business interests of PPT with BP.

Besides allegations that he had received bribes, Chang was accused of moving the corrupt proceeds through his various bank accounts and, separately, using some of the proceeds to partially pay for properties.

On 16 occasions between January 2007 and March 2010, while he was at BP, Chang allegedly transferred a total of \$4.7 million, which were benefits of corrupt proceeds, from his HSBC account in Hong Kong to a POSB bank account and two other HSBC Singapore accounts. The amounts ranged from \$76,568 to \$725,500.

He also faces 10 charges of allegedly using the corrupt proceeds to make partial payments for several properties to the tune of \$3.97 million. The properties comprise three houses in Da Silva Lane in Hougang, Jalan Limau Purut in Tanah Merah and Ettrick Terrace in Siglap, and two condominium units in Pasir Ris Grove.

He is also accused of using \$111,000, which formed part of his benefits of criminal conduct, to acquire share capital in Mind-Champs Preschool @ City Square on Sept 16, 2009.

Chang's lawyer Alfonso Ang told the court that he had just been



Above: Clarence Chang Peng Hong faces 47 charges. His case has been adjourned to April 6.

Left, from top to bottom: Properties in Da Silva Lane in Hougang, Ettrick Terrace in Siglap, and Jalan Limau Purut in Tanah Merah. Chang allegedly used corrupt proceeds to make partial payments for several properties, including these houses.

ST PHOTOS: JAMIE KOH

briefed. The case was adjourned to April 6, and Chang's \$200,000 bail has been extended until then.

A BP spokesman said in an e-mail that Chang's employment with BP ended in July 2010.

"We became aware of some activities of concern in 2010 which we reported to the authorities. These charges have been filed by the Singapore authorities, we cannot comment on them," she said.

The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau said in a statement that Singapore adopts a zero-tolerance approach towards corruption. The bureau said it takes a serious view of any corrupt practices and will not hesitate to take action against any party involved in such acts.

The maximum punishment for corruption is a \$100,000 fine and five years' jail on each charge.

If convicted of offences under the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act, Chang could be fined up to \$500,000 and/or jailed for up to seven years on each charge.

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A BP SPOKESMAN, who says Chang's employment with BP ended in July 2010.

