

Chen facing new set of indictments

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Prosecutors investigating former president Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) alleged money-laundering activities yesterday said they were close to concluding their investigation and delivering another round of indictments to the former first family and businesspeople involved in the case.

Special Investigation Panel (SIP) spokesperson Chen Yun-nan (陳運南) said the panel had recently questioned several witnesses and defendants suspected of helping the former first family launder money and it would soon summon former China Development Financial Holding Corp (中發金控) president Angelo Koo (辜仲諒) for questioning.

Koo and China Development Financial chief financial officer Sherie Chiu (邱淑慧), both of whom have been named as defendants in the money-laundering case, allegedly helped former first lady Wu Shu-jen (吳淑珍) transfer US\$600,000 and NT\$34 million (US\$1 million) from a Taiwanese account in the name of Wu's elder brother Wu Ching-mao (吳清毛) to the family's accounts in Singapore and the Netherlands between 2003 and 2005.

In 2004, Wu Shu-jen allegedly gave Koo US\$1 million and asked him to transfer the money to Wu Ching-mao's and her son Chen Chih-chung's (陳智雄) foreign accounts, prosecutors said.

Another person being investigated on suspicion of helping the former first family launder funds is former China Steel Corp chairman Lin Wen-yuan (林文淵). Lin, who was also named as a defendant in the investigation, was in charge of Chen Shui-bian's campaign funds during the 2000 presidential election.

Prosecutors said Lin allegedly helped the former first family buy two pieces of real estate in 2007, then profited to the tune of tens of millions of NT dollars by selling off the properties.

Other defendants who have been questioned and may soon receive indictments include Yuanta Financial Holding Co president Victor Ma (馬英九), former Yuanta Securities Corp (元大證券) board member Tu Li-ping (涂立平) and chairwoman Judy Tu (涂月卿), Wu Ching-mao (吳清毛) and his wife Chen Chun-ying (陳俊英), as well as Chen Shui-bian's son Chen Chih-chung and daughter-in-law Huang Jui-ching (黃璦晶).

In related news, the panel has petitioned that the Taiwan High Court try Chen Chih-chung, Chen Shui-bian's daughter Chen Hsing-yu (陳幸瑜) and his son-in-law Chao Chien-ming (趙建民) for corruption in conjunction with perjury charges.

The three were suspected of corruption by district court judges, who had requested prosecutorial action.

Prosecutors said they petitioned for the cases to be combined at the High Court based on the principle of double jeopardy which protects defendants from being tried or punished twice for the same crime.

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