

Chen silent during trial, angry about family's case

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Former president Chen Shui-bian yesterday maintained his silence during his trial for corruption, but expressed his anger through a spokesperson about his son and daughter being named as defendants in a related perjury case.

Yesterday was the first day of a week of consecutive full-day court appearances for the former president. Hundreds of his supporters again gathered outside the Taipei District Court to show their dissatisfaction with the judicial process.

They were clad in green shirts and carried signs with slogans calling for the release of the former president and protesting the unfair judicial system.

Among them was Chen's secretary Chiang Chih-ming. Asked for comment outside the courthouse, he said that the former president was extremely distressed after events on Monday, when his son Chen Chih-chung, daughter Chen Hsing-yu and son-in-law Chao Chien-ming were questioned by prosecutors on perjury charges.

"[The former president] is very angry that the case now involves his whole family, and with no mercy," Chiang said. "[He] thinks that the cases involving [people in his] generation should not involve the second generation [his children]."

"He thinks it's a political witch hunt that is directed at his entire family and no one will be left alone," he said.

The three, along with former chairman of the Taipei Financial Center Co, Diana Chen, were charged with perjury on June 3. The three on Monday admitted to giving false testimony regarding Chen Shui-bian's money laundering and embezzlement charges.

Presiding Judge Tsai Shou-hsun had scheduled yesterday's hearing to summon witnesses Hsu Sheng-chang and Liu Chi-ling, division chief and section chief respectively of the Science Park Administration, a government agency in charge of managing science parks around the country.

Hsu and Liu gave accounts of land deal negotiations between government officials and Quanta Display Inc, the company that planned at the time to use the land to build factories.

Former Hsinchu Science Park chief James Lee, along with the former president, is charged with taking kickbacks from a government land deal in Longtan, Taoyuan County.

Prosecutors allege that in a meeting at the Presidential Office between the former president, Lee and other government officials, Chen Shui-bian proposed that the administration first rent the plot of land, then buy it and eventually include it as part of a science park.

Prosecutors allege the idea was for former first lady Wu Shu-jen to collect NT\$400 million (US\$12 million) in bribes as part of a deal between the government-run Hsinchu Science Park

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and Dayu Development Corp.

In related news, local media -reported yesterday that the former president would soon face another wave of corruption charges as the Department of Investigation in Taipei City under the Ministry of Justice's Investigation Bureau wraps up its probe into classified diplomatic affairs during Chen Shui-bian's time in office.

Investigators suspect the former president failed to report remaining balances of between US\$20,000 and US\$80,000 in his expense account each time he returned from overseas, allegedly embezzling a total of US\$300,000 in the eight years he was in office.

The former president has denied the accusations.

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