

Prosecutors add more charges in Chen Shui-bian case

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Taipei District Prosecutors yesterday added more charges against detained former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), alleging the former president instructed his former aides to lie about the reimbursement processes for the presidential “state affairs fund.”

Prosecutors allege that in 2006, when he was still in office, Chen called a meeting at the Presidential Office with former Presidential Office deputy -secretary-general Ma Yung-cheng (馬雲成) and former Presidential Office director Lin Teh-hsun (林德順) to instruct them to lie about inappropriate receipts that were used in reimbursements for the fund.

Although Ma and Lin allegedly complied with Chen’s request, prosecutors did not charge Ma because the false testimony was not given when Ma was questioned as a witness.

Additional perjury cases were opened last September.

Ma and Lin were convicted of helping the former first family launder money in the first round of legal proceedings at the Taipei District Court last year. They were sentenced to 16 years and 20 years in prison respectively as well as being stripped of their civil rights for eight years and 10 years.

Former Hsinchu Science Park head James Lee (李傑) was also charged with perjury yesterday. Prosecutors allege Lee gave false testimony regarding the government’s purchase of a plot of land in Longtan (龍潭), Taoyuan County.

In related news, former Yuanta Financial Holding Co president Victor Ma (馬安祥) and former -Yuanta Securities Corp board member Tu Li-ping (涂立平) yesterday pleaded guilty in court to helping the former first family launder money.

The two said they hoped that by pleading guilty, they would be able to enter plea-bargaining to receive lighter sentences.

Another defendant who was summoned to court, Cathay Financial Holdings Co vice chairman Tsai Chen-yu (蔡陳宇), yesterday angrily accused prosecutors of ruining his reputation with false charges.

Tsai defended himself by saying the money he gave to the former first family was not a bribe, but a political donation, because his father Tsai Wan-lin (蔡萬霖) had been a long-time supporter of the Democratic Progressive Party.

Tsai said he was following his father’s instructions and denied allegations that prior to the merger of Cathay Financial Holdings and Cathay United Bank, the Tsai family bribed the -former president into pressuring the -Ministry of Finance to approve the merger.

The indictment of high-profile businesspeople and members of the former first family were issued on Dec. 24 when Chen and his wife were accused of taking bribes from executives of

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banks and financial holding companies who sought to “protect” themselves and their businesses from being adversely affected during the second phase of financial reform.

One of the financial consolidation cases involved Yuanta Financial Holding’s merger with Fuhwa Financial Holding Co, the nation’s 11th--largest financial group by assets in April 2007.

Prosecutors allege that Chen and his wife took NT\$600 million (US\$19 million) from Cathay Financial Group and more than NT\$200 million from Yuanta Securities as a “payment” for ensuring the financial groups’ mergers and acquisitions of smaller financial institutions went smoothly.

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