

Former ST Marine exec in graft scandal gets 6 months' jail, \$80k fine

Han abetted in paying out \$15.8 million in bribes between April 2004 and March 2008

Amir Hussain

A former executive at shipbuilder ST Marine implicated in one of the largest graft scandals in corporate Singapore was yesterday sentenced to six months' jail and fined \$80,000.

Han Yew Kwang, 59, who was the company's chief operating officer and deputy president, is the second of seven former ST Marine senior executives charged in the case to be sentenced. He is the first to be given a jail term. Han is out on bail of \$200,000, pending an appeal against his sentence.

He had earlier pleaded guilty to 50 out of 407 charges: one of graft and 49 of falsification of accounts.

The remaining 357 charges – one count of corruption and 356 of falsification of accounts – were taken in-

to account in sentencing.

Urging District Judge Liew Thiam Leng to mete out a sentence of six months' jail and a \$100,000 fine, Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP) G. Kannan highlighted that the case had caused public disquiet and damaged Singapore's reputation.

He said: "The offences committed by (Han), forming part of the overall corrupt and fraudulent conduct by ST Marine and its officers, clearly have an adverse impact on Singapore's international reputation, both as a country which is near-corruption-free, and as a pre-eminent and reputable hub for the provision of marine services."

ST Marine staff had been using cash bribes to get business since 2000, with the approval of its senior management team. The company is a subsidiary of blue-chip engineering giant ST Engineering.

ST Marine's records showed that at least \$24.9 million in kickbacks were paid between 2000 and 2011.

Employees of ST Marine's customers, mainly overseas companies, would request "commissions" for giving ship-repair contracts and

other business to the company.

After getting approval from ST Marine's senior management, an employee would submit petty cash claims for "entertainment expenses". Cash cheques issued for these claims would be encashed, and the amount given as a kickback.

Han abetted in paying out \$15.8 million in bribes between April 2004 and March 2008, by approving such false claims and/or signing the cash cheques for these claims.

DPP Kannan, asking for a stiff sentence, pointed out that Singapore is one of the world's premier ship repair and conversion centres, and that more than half of the marine industry's revenue comes from these areas. The industry also plays a crucial part in Singapore's economic growth, with an annual turnover of nearly \$10 billion and around 100,000 workers.

He added: "The public disquiet in this case has been evident, with the charging of a string of former senior executives of a prominent government-linked company (with) corruption, and falsification of documents involving illegitimate pay-



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ST PHOTO: WONG KWAI CHOW

ments worth millions of dollars, attracting significant media attention and public discourse."

Han's lawyer, Senior Counsel Sant Singh, asked for two months' jail and a \$75,000 fine.

Among other things, he pointed to Han's good character and his contributions to the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN). He said: "Since 1986, (Han) has been highly instru-

mental in the local design and/or construction of the bulk of vessels in the RSN fleet and the acquisition of the Republic's first submarines in the mid-1990s."

Han is a former Public Service Commission scholar who worked at ST Marine for most of his career. He left the company in June 2014.

amirh@sph.com.sg