

Jail for ex-cop who was on the run for nearly 17 years after taking \$48k in bribes

A former police officer was sentenced to nine years' jail on May 26 after obtaining monetary bribes totalling \$47,700 from a man linked to unlawful gambling activities.

Koh Kian Tiong, alias Mark Koh, who went on the run for almost 17 years till 2024, was also fined \$1,000 and ordered to pay a penalty equivalent to the amount of bribes.

If he fails to pay the total amount of \$48,700, Koh, now 52, will have to spend an additional 47 days and a week behind bars.

At the time of the offences, Koh was an assistant superintendent with the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). He had obtained the bribes from Chua Chin Hoe, who was then notorious for operating several illegal gambling dens across Singapore.

In exchange, Koh provided Chua with information about CID operations that could affect the latter's criminal activities.

On May 21, Koh pleaded guilty to five counts of graft involving cash totalling \$31,000 and one count of desertion under the Police Force Act.

Ten other graft charges linked to the remaining \$16,700 were considered during his sentencing.

Koh obtained monetary benefits and free entertainment from Chua between January 2006 and May 2007.

Chua and several other people linked to the case were dealt with in court earlier.

Koh joined the Singapore Police Force in 1998. When he became acquainted with Chua in 2005, he was an officer with CID's Anti-Unlicensed Money Lending Task Force, with a team of subordinates reporting to him.

Towards the end of that year, Koh was in the midst of divorce proceedings and struggling to pay his legal bills.

He approached a colleague, an officer from the Secret Societies Branch (SSB), and asked for a \$15,000 loan.

When the colleague replied that he could not afford to give the loan, Koh asked him to check if Chua – referred to in court documents as "Ah Hoe" – could provide the loan instead.

In earlier proceedings, Deputy Public Prosecutor David Menon said: "The accused relayed this request to Ah Hoe through (the SSB officer, who) was better acquainted with Ah Hoe at the time. Ah Hoe agreed to give the accused \$15,000 to cover the legal bills arising from the accused's divorce proceedings."

On or around Jan 21, 2006, Koh



Koh Kian Tiong, alias Mark Koh, was sentenced to nine years' jail on May 26.

On May 21, Koh pleaded guilty to five counts of graft involving cash totalling \$31,000 and one count of desertion under the Police Force Act.

went to Geylang to collect the money from Chua. The latter gave the bribe so that Koh would show favour to him in future police-related matters. No repayment terms were discussed, and Koh did not repay the \$15,000.

In September 2006, Koh reached out to Chua directly and asked for his help to settle some credit card bills. Chua handed him \$16,000 later that year, and Koh did not repay the amount.

Throughout 2006, Koh also frequented various bars with Chua, who always paid for the drinks and occasionally paid the tips for hostesses and singers.

Eventually, Koh introduced Chua to at least five other police officers at CID, all of whom received free entertainment and alcohol from Chua.

Based on Chua's bank statements, he paid at least \$27,000 in entertainment expenses relating to these drinking sessions in 2006 alone.

In 2007, Koh was on leave in China when he found out that the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau had started an investigation into his dealings with Chua.

Fearing he would be implicated, Koh decided to remain in China. An Interpol red notice was then issued against him.

Once such a notice is issued, the police in other countries can be on the lookout for foreign offenders. The red notice can then be used to support extradition proceedings after an arrest is made.

Koh was later jailed in China over unrelated offences, the details of which were not disclosed in court documents.

Following his release from jail in China, he was sent back to Singapore and arrested at Changi Airport in April 2024.

Shaffiq Alkhatib