

Ex-ST Marine senior exec fined, two others charged

By Claire Huang
huangjy@sph.com.sg
@ClaireHuangBT

Singapore

THE first of seven former Singapore Technologies Marine Ltd (ST Marine) senior executives implicated in the corruption scandal that hit bluechip engineering giant Singapore Technologies Engineering's (ST Engineering) subsidiary last December has been fined S\$210,000.

Patrick Lee Swee Ching, ST Marine's former group financial controller, on Wednesday afternoon pleaded guilty to seven counts of abetting bogus entries for entertainment expenses. 31 other similar charges were taken into consideration during sentencing. The amount of expenses involved in all 38 charges was more than S\$126,000.

The prosecution had pressed for a fine of S\$140,000 to S\$150,000 rather than a custodial sen-

tence as Lee did not face any corruption charges unlike some of the other accused involved in the scandal. Instead, he was charged under the penal code for abetment, which carries a maximum penalty of seven years in jail and a fine.

The court heard that Lee had shown remorse by pleading guilty at the earliest possible opportunity and had been cooperative during investigations. The court was told Lee is available to give evidence against his co-conspirators, if called to testify.

In sentencing, district judge Jasvender Kaur noted that Lee had expressed concern about the bribery practice. Still, she said it was Lee's responsibility to ensure that illegal payments were not discharged and should have known better than to act on his superior's instructions.

Earlier in the day, two other former senior executives were charged in court, bringing the number of key ST Marine personnel implicated to seven.

Tan Mong Seng, 63, a former president of commercial business, faces one count of conspiring with three former colleagues to bribe an agent of Hyundai Engineering and Construction, Pyo Sei Jin, with some S\$43,700 between 2004 and 2010, in return for ship repair contracts.

The alleged three are: ex-ST Marine president See Leong Teck, former chief operating officer Han Yew Kwang, and former senior vice-president Mok Kim Whang. Han, 58, was also charged in court on Wednesday morning with conspiring to corruptly give bribes of more than S\$790,700 to agents of ST Marine's customers between 2004 and 2009 on eight occasions.

Tan's bail was raised to S\$220,000, while Han had his S\$150,000 bail extended. Their pre-trial conference has been fixed for July 9. If convicted, they could each face a maximum fine of S\$100,000 and jail term of up to five years on each count.