

Ex-LTA deputy group director jailed for 5½ years for taking \$1.2m in bribes

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A former Land Transport Authority (LTA) deputy group director was yesterday sentenced to 5½ years' jail for taking about \$1.24 million in bribes in the form of loans from contractors and subcontractors.

Henry Foo Yung Thye, 47, who chalked up debts from his gambling addiction, was also ordered to pay a penalty of \$1,156,250, equivalent to the

amount he had not returned.

The Singaporean had earlier pleaded guilty to seven counts of corruption. Another 29 charges, including those of cheating, were taken into consideration for sentencing.

Deputy Presiding Judge Jennifer Marie said Foo had persistently asked contractors and subcontractors for loans between 2014 and 2019, and the bribes involved were more than \$100,000 for each of the charges he was found guilty of.

Investigations found that the gratification came from contrac-



Henry Foo Yung Thye, 47, who had a gambling addiction, must pay a penalty equivalent to the amount he had not returned.

tors and subcontractors who had about \$815 million in contracts with LTA that Foo oversaw.

“The appalling conduct displayed reveals a man who had no qualms in persistently... corrupting the very people he was

expected to have a watchful oversight of,” the judge said.

“Some harm would also have been caused to the competitors of the giver of the gratification as they would not be able to compete on an even playing field.”

Foo had joined LTA in 1999 and rose to become the deputy group director of the Thomson-East Coast and Cross Island lines.

This position gave him oversight of the construction of tunnels and MRT stations such as Havelock, Stevens, Great World, Napier and Orchard.

The individuals Foo sought loans from included directors of firms such as Tiong Seng Contractors, MEPT Engineering, Trittech Engineering & Testing and China Railway Tunnel’s Singapore branch.

In exchange, he promised to advance their business interests with LTA or shared confidential infor-

mation pertaining to LTA tenders.

His offences came to light in October 2018, when the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau received an anonymous complaint that Foo had been soliciting loans from LTA subcontractors.

Foo resigned from LTA in September 2019.

Among the seven people and China Railway Tunnel’s Singapore branch that were charged alongside Foo, at least two have been jailed.

Foo was later diagnosed at the Institute of Mental Health with a pathological gambling disorder, which a psychiatrist stated had contributed to his offences.

However, Judge Marie said his gambling disorder “does not merit any significant mitigating weight” as he had other ways of settling his debt.

“The accused was aware that what he was doing was wrong and

that he had placed himself in a position of conflict of interest,” she said.

The judge urged Foo, who has two young sons, to start afresh after his jail term. “You have done well scholastically and performed very well in your career,” she said.

“I do hope that on your release, you will have put this whole episode behind you and not remain in guilt and shame... Atone for your mistakes and serve the community. Be a person you and your children will be proud of.”

For corruption, Foo could have been fined up to \$100,000 and jailed for up to five years for each offence. If the offence is related to a matter or contract with the Government or a public body, the maximum jail term for each offence can be increased to seven years.

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