

Jailed 12 weeks for 'renting' cellphone to SAF detainees

By LIM YI HAN

A FORMER army medic was sentenced to 12 weeks in jail yesterday after he accepted money from detainees in military detention barracks to let them use his mobile phone.

Chai Yit Hoong, now 25, was a full-time national serviceman at the time of the offences and had been posted to the Singapore Armed Forces detention barracks – the army's equivalent of prison.

The offences took place between February and April 2012.

He pleaded guilty to six charges under the Prevention of Corruption Act, and seven others were taken into consideration during sentencing.

One of the detainees at the barracks in Kranji, Sarvenan Sundramutthy, wanted to contact his fami-

ly and asked Chai if he could borrow his mobile phone. Chai did not agree initially as he was afraid of being caught, given that he was not allowed to extend any favours to the detainees.

But he relented when Sarvenan offered him \$100. Sarvenan then told Chai to contact his girlfriend, who would transfer the money to him. Chai lent his phone to Sarvenan on a few more occasions.

In March 2012, he met Sarvenan's girlfriend at Marsiling MRT station to collect a mobile phone to pass to him. Chai would slip the phone to Sarvenan during his rounds at night, then collect it from him early next morning.

He went on to lend his phone to seven other detainees, typically in exchange for \$50 each time. He also smuggled in another mobile phone and snacks.

So far, three of those who bribed him have been jailed for four weeks each. The others' cases are ongoing.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Jasmin Kaur told the court that the accused showed a complete disregard for security protocol, even though he was aware of the rules.

He was also in a superior position and it was within his duty to instil discipline in the detainees. Instead, he helped them to break the rules, she added.

Chai was not represented in court. He told the court that he regretted his actions and had learnt his lesson. He asked for a chance to prove himself as a lawful citizen, saying said this was his first offence, and it would be his last.

District Judge Victor Yeo ordered him to pay a penalty of \$750 – the amount he had pocketed.

For corruption, he could have been jailed for up to five years and fined up to \$100,000.

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