

## Ex-air cargo company manager jailed for bribes-for-contract scam

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A former general manager of an air cargo handling company, charged by the ICAC, was today (Tuesday) sentenced to five months' imprisonment at the District Court for offering over \$120,000 in bribes intended for bidding for a contract.

William Low Teck-ann, 53, formerly employed by Silver Express International Limited (SEI), earlier pleaded guilty to one count of offering an advantage to an agent, contrary to Section 9(2)(a) of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance.

In sentencing, Judge Kevin Browne said corruption could strike at the heart of the society, and private sector corruption was as serious as public sector corruption.

A custodial sentence had to be meted out to the defendant so as to serve as a deterrent, the judge added.

The judge also ordered \$13,000, being part of the bribe payments, to be forfeited.

The court heard that SEI was a contractor of Asia Airfreight Terminal Company Limited (AAT), which operated an air cargo terminal base at the Hong Kong International Airport.

The defendant left SEI in July 2008, when he and his associates were contemplating to set up a company to bid for a cargo handling services contract offered by AAT.

The defendant learnt from AAT general manager Ma Hung-chiu that the latter had received an offer to take up his vacancy at SEI.

Ma told the defendant that he was tempted to accept SEI's offer for the higher pay being offered.

The defendant was concerned that his chance to bid for the contract would be affected should Ma join SEI.

The defendant and his associates then paid Ma a monthly sum of between \$20,000 and \$22,000, so that Ma would not leave AAT to join SEI.

Between December 2008 and May 2009, the defendant offered to Ma bribes amounting to between \$120,000 and \$132,000.

When the defendant was arrested on June 26, 2009, ICAC officers seized from his home \$13,000, being part of \$22,000 to be offered to Ma in June 2009, the court was told.

Ma, 59, who was also charged by the ICAC, earlier pleaded guilty at the District Court to one count of agent accepting an advantage. He was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, and ordered to pay a restitution of \$198,000.

AAT had rendered full assistance to the ICAC during its investigation.

The prosecution was today represented by Senior Public Prosecutor Prakash Daryanani, assisted by ICAC officer Kenny Wong.