

Press Release

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Listed company chairman arrested in ICAC probe faces \$20m theft charges

The chairman of publicly listed Wealthmark International (Holdings) Ltd. (Wealthmark), who was among 10 persons arrested by the ICAC in an operation commencing Monday, has been charged today (Wednesday) for allegedly misappropriating company funds totalling \$20.8 million.

Wong Chor-wo, 53, faces seven charges of theft.

The charges allege Wong Chor-wo of stealing seven cheques, totalling \$20.8 million, drawn on the bank accounts of Wallmark Enterprise Co. Ltd. (Wallmark), a subsidiary of Wealthmark.

Wong Chor-wo further faces a charge of knowingly making a false statement to the company's auditor, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, contrary to Section 134 of the Companies Ordinance.

The alleged false statement purported to show that there was a meeting of the Board of Directors of Wealthmark held on April 24, 2002, in which it was resolved that certain arrangement with C.K. Trading Company. (C.K. Trading) / Wong Chun-ping were approved.

Also charged in the same investigation is Wong Chun-ping, director of C.K. Trading.

Wong Chun-ping, 49, faces a charge under Section 25 of the Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance.

The charge alleges that Wong Chun-ping dealt with a sum of \$20,800,000, knowing or having reasonable grounds to believe that the property in whole or in part, directly or indirectly represented the proceeds of an indictable offence.

The alleged offences took place between February and March 2001.

The defendants, currently being detained by the ICAC, will appear at Eastern Magistracy at 9:30 am tomorrow (Thursday).

The ICAC earlier received information, alleging that the chairman of a listed company might have corruptly offered advantages to other persons for their connivance at the misappropriation of company funds and assets.

The defendants were among 10 persons arrested by the ICAC in the past two days (Monday and Tuesday) in an operation code-named "Oasis".

The other arrestees were alleged to have corruptly connived at the suspected misappropriation, and have been released on ICAC bail pending further inquiries.

The ICAC's investigation into the corruption allegation is continuing.