

《涉朴槿惠“闺蜜门”三星实际控制人李在镕将被传唤》



Samsung heir-apparent Lee Jae-yong is to be interviewed as a suspect in a corruption scandal surrounding the impeached South Korean president.

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The firm is accused of giving donations to non-profit foundations operated by Choi Soon-sil, a confidante of President Park Geun-hye.

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The donations were allegedly made in exchange for political support of a controversial merger.

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Mr Lee will face special prosecutors on Thursday, officials said.

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Samsung declined to comment.

The claims circle around a merger between the electronics giant's construction arm, Samsung C&T, and an affiliate firm, Cheil Industries.

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Prosecutors allege that Samsung gave 2.8m euros (\$3.1m; 2.5m pounds) to a company co-owned by Ms Choi and her daughter, in return for Ms Park's support for the deal.

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Lee Jae-yong has already given evidence to politicians over the scandal, but this is the first time he will be quizzed as a suspect by investigators.

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At the parliamentary hearing in December Samsung admitted giving a total of 20.4bn won (16m pounds; \$17.46m) to the two foundations, but denied seeking favours.

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And Mr Lee also confirmed the firm gave a horse and money to help the equestrian career of Ms Choi's daughter, Chung Yoo-ra, something he said he now regretted.

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Earlier this week two other Samsung executives were interviewed by the special prosecutors, but were treated as witnesses rather than suspects.

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Apologies and denials

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Ms Park's position began to unravel in October last year when details of her friendship with Ms Choi began to emerge. They included revelations that the president had allowed her old friend - who holds no government role - to edit political speeches.

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Since then, hundreds of thousands of protestors have gathered every weekend to demand Ms Park stands down.

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Ms Park denies wrongdoing but has apologised for the way she managed her relationship with Ms Choi, who also denies committing criminal offences.

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Ms Choi has been charged with coercion and attempted fraud.

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