

Samsung chairman says son to be promoted

November 17 2010, By KELLY OLSEN , AP Business Writer



FILE - In this Feb. 28, 2008 file photo, Lee Jae-yong, son of then-Samsung Group Chairman Lee Kun-hee, arrives for questioning by special prosecutors investigating allegations of corruption at the huge conglomerate at the office of special prosecutors in Seoul, South Korea. Lee Jae-yong would be promoted from executive vice president, Samsung Electronics Chairman Lee Kun-hee said Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2010. (AP Photo/Yonhap, Park Ji-ho) KOREA OUT

(AP) -- The chairman of Samsung Electronics said Wednesday his son will be promoted to a more powerful executive position, preparing the global technology giant for an eventual change in leadership.

Samsung Electronics Co. is the flagship corporation of the Samsung Group conglomerate, which consists of dozens of other businesses

including shipbuilding, construction, leisure and finance.

Chairman Lee Kun-hee, 68, has steered Samsung into a major force in the world electronics industry, where it holds the No. 1 positions in [memory chips](#) and flat screen televisions and ranks No. 2 in mobile phones.

Attention has long been focused on an expected handover of power to Lee's son at family controlled Samsung. The company is a source of pride among South Koreans for its technological prowess as well as controversy for its scrapes with the law.

Lee Kun-hee, returning from the Asian Games in Guangzhou, China, answered "yes" to a question from a reporter about whether he had decided to promote his son, executive vice president Lee Jae-yong, video footage on cable news channel YTN's website showed.

Lee Kun-hee, ranked by Forbes Asia as South Korea's richest person with a \$7.9 billion fortune, also nodded his head affirmatively to another question on whether the promotion would be reflected in Samsung's upcoming executive changes.

Samsung in the past has carried out reshuffles of top executives at the end or beginning of the year. There was one in December last year and South Korean media reports said promotion of the younger Lee would likely come at the end of this year.

Some reports said Lee Jae-yong would be made president, but his father did not appear to specify any position in the YTN footage. Lee Soo-jeong, a Samsung spokeswoman, said that Lee did not mention one.

Samsung's current president and CEO is Choi Gee-sung. The company's management includes other positions that also come with the title of

president, such as in its mobile communications business.

Lee Jae-yong, 42, also holds the position of chief operating officer at Samsung. Sometimes known as Jay Y. Lee, he was promoted to his posts in December last year and has previously served as chief customer officer and vice president for strategic planning.

He graduated from South Korea's elite Seoul National University with a degree in East Asian history and has an MBA from Japan's Keio University. His father is a graduate of Japan's Waseda University.

Lee Kun-hee stepped down as chairman of Samsung Electronics in April 2008 upon indictment for tax evasion. He was later convicted and sentenced to a suspended three-year prison term, though pardoned by South Korea's president in December 2009. He returned to lead the company in March this year.

Presidential pardons for convicted tycoons are not unusual in South Korea. Despite democratic reforms, the country has struggled with a legacy of political and corporate corruption that has roots in military-backed governments that helped spearhead its rise from one of world's poorest countries to an industrial powerhouse.

The Samsung conglomerate was founded by Lee's father, the late Lee Byung-chull.

Shares in [Samsung Electronics](#) fell 2 percent Wednesday to close at 795,000 won.

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