

POLITICS

# I HAVE NO REGRETS ABOUT DEMOTION, SAYS 'HUMBLE' LEW

**Responsibility more important than honour when it comes to speaking up, dumped CPPCC member insists after attack on chief executive**

Joshua But, Gary Cheung and Lauren Ho

Lew Mon-hung said yesterday that he had no regrets about pointing fingers at former ally Leung Chun-ying, after it was confirmed he had been stripped of his seat on the nation's top political advisory body.

While the move was largely expected after he blasted the chief executive in an interview published last week, some delegates said they believed an investigation by the Independent Commission Against Corruption was the nail in his coffin.

Lew's name did not appear on the final list of delegates to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which was unveiled in Beijing yesterday, and the outspoken member said he "would take it calmly".

"I speak for the nation and the people," Lew said. "I see responsibility as more important than honour."

He said officials from the central government's liaison office in Hong Kong contacted him on Friday "with congratulations" on the renewal of his tenure, so he believed his name had been removed from the list at the last minute.

"Everyone knows the reason but I am not disappointed, and I have no regrets," Lew said.

A CPPCC delegate who declined to be named believed the action against Lew was related to his arrest by the ICAC in an investigation of his company, Pearl

tions against the chief executive," the delegate said. "If what he said is true, Lew has colluded with Leung to engage in election bribery. In either case, he is not qualified to be a CPPCC delegate."

CPPCC Standing Committee member Chan Wing-kee said the central authorities had "carefully considered" the list and Lew's name was not mentioned during yesterday's meeting in Beijing.

Once a staunch supporter of

Leung, Lew told *iSun Affairs* magazine that the chief executive had lied about his handling of illegal structures at his home on The Peak. He also alleged Leung reneged on a promise to appoint him an executive councillor in return for his election support.

Lew's interview prompted bribery complaints from the League of Social Democrats and the Neo-Democrats. The ICAC has opened an investigation.

A Department of Justice spokesman said there was a mechanism to ensure prosecutions involving people in sensitive positions were handled "fairly, impartially and strictly".

## Beijing 'did not want precedent'

**Insiders say this is why Donald Tsang was not appointed to the top advisory body**

Colleen Lee, Tony Cheung and Phoenix Kwong in Beijing

Beijing's unwillingness to set a precedent to have every former SAR chief executive take up the vice-chairmanship of the nation's top advisory body could be the reason Donald Tsang Yam-kuen was denied the post, insiders said.

In Beijing, Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference standing committee member Chan Wing-kee, who has seen the proposed list of members who will serve for the next

why he had retained his post. Ng Hong-mun, a former local deputy to the National People's Congress, shared Chan's view.

CPPCC member Lee Kok-keung also echoed the view that the central government did not want to set a precedent.

But he believed Beijing was not concerned about having more than one CPPCC vice-chairman from Hong Kong.

"It is not about the number. What matters [to Beijing] is that whether the person is suitable or not," Lee said.

Local entrepreneurs Ann Tse-kai and Henry Fok Ying-tung

CULTURE



(From left) Charwei Tsai of Taiwan, Australia's Marc Standing and Hongkonger Movana Chen are on the shortlist. Photo: Sam Tsang

## Four locals in running for region's biggest art prize

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Four Hong Kong artists are on this year's list of 30 finalists vying for the region's biggest art award, the Sovereign Asian Art Prize.

And some of them took the opportunity to call for better funding and support for artists in the city, saying the private sector could not continue to drive development in the arts.

Among the award finalists announced yesterday were local artist Lam Tung-pang's plywood landscape painting *Travel and Leisure 280612012*.

Movana Chen's *Art Diary - Issue 1*, a large work knitted from the shredded pages of her favou-

rite Asian art magazines, is on the list as well. Also shortlisted is the MAP Office - the Hong Kong-based duo Laurent Gutierrez from Morocco and France-born Valerie Portefaix - for *Back Home with Baudelaire No. 5 (2005)*, a photography work of a cargo ship's voyage from Yantian port in Shenzhen to Hong Kong. Morgan Wong is in contention with a conceptual digital print work exploring interpersonal space.

Other finalists from across the Asia-Pacific region included Taiwan's Charwei Tsai, whose work *Etrangere II* is a photograph of a baby octopus on which she has written her passport number to express the feeling of alienation.

*Natural Wonder*, an oil painting by Australian artist Marc

Standing, was also selected. The award was founded by the Sovereign Art Foundation in 2004 and is funded by Swiss private bank Julius Baer. Hong Kong artists have won the prize many times in previous years.

The winner will be unveiled at

a charity gala dinner on February 21 and their works will be kept in the foundation's collection. The other works will be auctioned, with half of the proceeds going to charity and the rest to the artist.

Wong, who is studying at London's Slade School of Fine Art, said he was delighted to be in the running for the first time. He said he appreciated private-sector art awards but hoped the public sector could catch up. "The private sector plays a big role in Hong Kong's arts ... the public sector needs to make more noise."

Chen agreed, saying even with the support of the private sector, "artists still need a full-time job to support themselves". She hoped for more flexibility in funding for solo exhibitions.