

CE election to take place on Oct 13

Yuki Lei

The local government announced yesterday that the election for Macau's sixth-term chief executive (CE) has been slated for October 13, with a spending limit of over 6.4 million patacas set for each CE candidate's campaign.

Dated and signed by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng on August 8, the Executive Order No. 40/2024 of the Macau Special Administrative Region (SAR) published in the Official Gazette (BO) yesterday set October 13, 2024 as the date for the chief executive election.

As cited by the executive order, in accordance with Annex I to the Basic Law of the Macau SAR and the amended Chief Executive Election Law, the chief executive must be a Chinese permanent Macau resident, who has reached the age of 40 and ordinarily resided in Macau for a continuous period of no less than 20 years, upholding the Basic Law and pledging allegiance to the People's Republic of China (PRC) and its Macau SAR. The chief executive is elected by the 400-member Chief Executive Election Committee before his or her appointment by the Central People's Government for a term of



This photo provided by the Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS) shows Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng delivering a speech at a reception held by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Macau Garrison to mark the 97th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army on August 1.

five years. Each chief executive can only be re-elected once for a second consecutive five-year term.

The 400-member committee comprises 120 electors from the

industrial, commercial and financial sectors, 115 from the cultural, education, professional and the sports sectors, 115 from the labour, social services and religious –

Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist and Taoist – sectors, and 50 electors from Macau's 12 deputies to the National People's Congress (NPC) as well as representatives of the

Macau members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the Macau Legislative Assembly (AL) and the city's municipal organs.

The elections of the two former chief executives – Edmund Ho Hau Wah (1999-2009) and Fernando Chui Sai On (2009-2019) – for their respective second terms were both held at the end of August.

Macau's fifth-term Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng will serve out his first five-year term at midnight on December 19 this year.

On April 18, 2019, Ho Iat Seng announced his candidacy for the 2019 Chief Executive Election of the Macau SAR, and on July 22 that year, he became the only candidate who had secured sufficient nominations from the Chief Executive Election Committee.

Ho has not yet disclosed whether or not he will stand for re-election as chief executive. He told the media in May that he had not yet decided whether to run for a second term at that time, adding that he would make an announcement after making a decision on the matter.

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Police arrest man after 11-year-old girl stabbed in London

LONDON – London's Metropolitan Police said yesterday a 32-year-old man had been arrested after an 11-year-old girl was "seriously injured" in a stabbing in Leicester Square in the city centre.

The young victim will require further treatment in hospital but her condition was "not life threatening", while her 34-year-old mother also suffered minor injuries, police added.

The police said in a statement the 32-year-old man was arrested at the scene and that officers were not looking for anyone else in connection with the attack.

"An urgent investigation is now ongoing and detectives are working to establish the details

around exactly what happened," Detective Chief Superintendent Christina Jessah said.

"At this stage we don't believe the suspect and the victims were known to each other.

"While we continue to work to establish the suspect's motive, at this stage there is nothing to indicate the attack was terror-related."

It comes exactly two weeks after the knife attack in Southport, northwest England, in which three girls were killed and eight other children injured, as well as two adults.

The mass stabbing sparked riots across England, after rumours online that the attacker was a Muslim asylum seeker. A British-born teenager has been charged with murder and attempted murder.

That case is also not being treated as terrorism.

Yesterday's stabbing took place in the heart of the British capital, in an area heavily frequented by tourists and shoppers.

A security guard told the Press Association (PA) news agency that he intervened and took a knife from a man attacking the 11-year-old child on the west side of Leicester Square.

The 29-year-old guard at a nearby store, who gave his name as Abdullah, said he heard a scream and then saw someone "stabbing a kid".

"I jumped on him, held the hand in which he was [carrying] a knife, and just put him down on the floor and just held him and took the knife away from him," he said.

"Then a couple of more people

joined as well, and we just held him until the police came."

A witness who gave his name as Desmond, 45, told the PA that the

suspect – described as a "young, white, skinny male wearing a black T-shirt and jeans" – appeared to focus the attack on the girl. – AFP



Police officers stand by a cordoned off area in London's Leicester Square, after an 11-year-old girl and her mother were stabbed there by a 32-year-old man who was arrested at the scene. – AFP

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Humanoid robotics lending hand to China's innovation-led drive

BEIJING – As the sun rises over Beijing's suburban E-Town, a captivating scene unfolds. Stretching slim arms and legs, jogging at a precise pace and practicing Tai Chi, the participants are not typical gray-haired people. They look stylish, energetic, and like human beings. – Story on p. 7

Putin orders army to 'dislodge' Ukrainian troops

President Vladimir Putin ordered his army yesterday to "dislodge" Ukrainian troops who have entered Russian territory as authorities said over 120,000 people had been evacuated away from the fighting. – Story on p. 11

Kenyan cult leader on trial for manslaughter over mass deaths

The leader of a Kenyan starvation sect went on trial for manslaughter yesterday over the deaths of more than 400 of his followers in one of the world's worst cult-related tragedies. – Story on p. 12

General Audit Committee revalidates 1 of 157 invalid CE Election Committee votes

William Chan

The head of the General Audit Committee of the Chief Executive Election Committee, Kuok Kin Hong, announced yesterday that his 5-member committee decided yesterday to revalidate just one of the 157 votes declared invalid after Sunday's Chief Executive Election Committee ballot.

Kuok made the announcement yesterday afternoon at the Public Administration Building on Rua do Campo during a press conference.

The General Audit Committee concluded after reviewing all the 5,521 votes cast on Sunday that one of them, which initially had been deemed invalid, was found to be valid after yesterday's audit.

The revalidated ballot came from the sports sector, Kuok said.

According to Kuok, a prosecutor, 6,265 voters had registered for Sunday's secret ballot. A total of 5,521 voters elected 344 members of the 400-member Chief Executive Election Committee, with a voter turnout of 88.12 percent.

Regarding the votes cast on Sunday, the initial results showed



The General Audit Committee of the Chief Executive Election Committee reviews the ballots of Sunday's Chief Executive Election Committee election at the Public Administration Building in Rua do Campo yesterday morning, including its president, Kuok Kin Hong (right). — Photos: William Chan

that 5,346 were valid, with 18 ballot papers left blank and 157 initially deemed invalid. After yesterday's review by the General Audit Committee, one ballot initially classified by the Chief Executive Election Committee on Sunday night was declared valid after yesterday's review of all ballot papers by the General Audit

Committee, thereby increasing the number of valid ballots to 5,347, accounting for 96.85 percent, i.e., an increase of 0.02 percent compared to Sunday's initial count.

In the 2019 election, two invalid ballots, also from the sports sector, were revalidated after a review by the General Audit Committee at that time.

Kuok said that the final outcome of the election, such as the number of votes that each of the 348 candidates had received, has been uploaded onto the government's election website as well as stuck on the display window on the ground floor of the Public Administration Building, with the aim of making the data accessible to the general public.

Any pedestrian walking past the building can read the detailed



The election results are being stuck on the ground-floor display window of the Public Administration Building on Rua do Campo yesterday.

results of the election. The results are displayed in the form of about a dozen A4 printouts stuck on the display window, in Chinese and Portuguese, Macau's two official languages.

Among the remaining 56 committee members whose seats were not contested in yesterday's Chief Executive Election Committee election, the 12 local NPC deputies are ex officio members. According to the Chief Executive Election Law, the 22 representatives from the city's lawmakers, the 14 representatives from among the Macau members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, and the two representatives of the members of the city's municipal organs are chosen by their respective peers.

The six members from the religious segment on the committee are chosen by the city's main religions – Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, and Protestantism.

In Sunday's election, Caritas Macau General Secretary Paul Pun Chi Meng garnered the highest number of votes – 1,275 in total – in the social services segment.

In the industrial, commercial and financial segments, MGM Chairperson and Executive Director Pansy Ho Chiu King received the highest number of votes – 831.

The ballots were transferred to the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) for formal and final verification yesterday, after which the names of the 400 committee members will be published in the Official Gazette, scheduled for next Monday. ■

CE election to take place on Oct 13

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In line with the Chief Executive Election Law, any person who intends to stand for the election of the chief executive – or his or her representative who must be a permanent Macau resident and has registered as a voter – shall obtain from and submit to the sixth-term Chief Executive Electoral Affairs Commission (CAECE) a nomination form for candidature in the chief executive election, endorsed by no less than 66 Chief Executive Election Committee members, or 16.5 percent of the committee's members. The nomination period shall run for at least 12 days and the deadline for submission of candidacy nominations shall be 30 days prior to the date of the chief executive election.

Each CE candidate and his or her representative or campaign organisation is free to carry out electioneering activities between 14 days before and one day prior to the CE election date, i.e., this time between September 28 and October 11, including publishing

election platforms and giving interviews to the media; sending free publicity materials by post; meeting CE election committee members; organising CE election committee members' rallies; and making speeches and answering questions.

By law, all elections in Macau shall take place on a Sunday. Moreover, electioneering is banned on the eve of polling day, i.e., Saturday, known as "reflection day".

The local government has set the campaign expenditure limit as 6,439,847.85 patacas for each 2024 Chief Executive Election candidate, according to the Executive Order No. 128/2024 dated and signed by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng on August 8 and published in the Official Gazette (BO) yesterday.

Apart from the CE election in 1999, when there were two candidates – Edmund Ho and Stanley Au Chong Kit – vying for Macau's top post, all the other CE elections (2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019) only involved one candidate each time. ■

Lawmaker urges govt to mandate lifeguards for hotel pools

Ginnie Liang

Lawmaker-cum-current affairs commentator Ron Lam U Tou urged the government in a written interpellation submitted on Friday to make it a mandatory requirement for hotels to provide lifeguards at their swimming pools when they are open to the public, as well as come up with a more comprehensive regulation on large-scale water recreational facilities at local resorts, following the drowning of a 12-year-old boy last Sunday in the swimming pool of Pousada de Coloane in Coloane.

Lam made his written interpellation on Friday, a copy of which was sent to the media by email on Sunday. The government hasn't replied to the written interpellation yet.

Lam pointed out that there is no requirement under the existing legislation governing hotels and similar establishments for the provision of lifeguards at their swimming pools, nor is there any requirement on the qualifications or conditions of the lifeguards concerned, but in line with the government's "Hotel Pool Safety Requirements", recommendations regarding the provision of

lifeguards during the opening hours of swimming pools have been given to hotels equipped with swimming pools. However, there is no penalty for hotels that don't provide lifeguards at their swimming pools.

Lam also pointed out that the current requirements recommend that for swimming pools with a water surface area of less than 250 square metres, a minimum of two lifeguards should be provided, however, Lam said, it was "worrying" that the requirements only regulate the hotels' swimming pools, while water parks are not subject to the requirements.

Lam underlined that it is a mandatory requirement for Macau's public swimming pools under the Sports Bureau (ID) to have lifeguards there on duty before they open to the public. He pointed out that no fatal drowning accident has occurred at public swimming pools under the bureau in recent years.

Lam expressed concern that currently it is difficult to ensure the safety of residents and tourists frequenting hotels' swimming pools, adding that while Macau has positioned itself as an emerging World Centre for Tourism and Leisure, the relevant laws and



This undated file photo was provided by lawmaker-cum-current affairs commentator Ron Lam U Tou yesterday.

regulations on lifeguards for hotels' swimming pools and the inspection of large-scale water parks have not been followed up in a timely manner.

Lam questioned whether the government was ready to review and revise its official guidelines on hotel swimming pools in the near future, and whether it would introduce legislation to regulate recreational facilities such as large-scale water parks. ■

Published since Aug 2004

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- Graphic Designer – Colin Zhong
- Administrative Assistants – Ester Mak, Carl Leong
- Printed by Tipografia Welfare Lda., 82-86 Rua dos Pescadores
- Wire services – AFP, Xinhua



Macau Weather

VERY HOT. CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY INTERVALS. A FEW SHOWERS. POSSIBLE THUNDERSTORMS AT FIRST. FORCE 2 TO 4 SOUTH TO SOUTHWESTERLY WINDS WITH GUSTS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 70% AND 95%. 27°C~32°C



Source: SMG

Man jumps from bridge after gambling away HK\$4.9 million stolen from boss: police

Yuki Lei

A local man in his thirties jumped to his death from the Friendship Bridge on Saturday, and Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chan Wun Man said yesterday that the victim committed suicide after stealing HK\$4.9 million (5.05 million patacas) from his boss and gambling it all away at a casino in Zape on Friday.



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chan Wun Man looks on during yesterday's regular press conference at the PJ headquarters in Zape. - Photo: Yuki Lei

A PJ statement on Sunday noted that the victim's body was retrieved by Macau Customs Service (SA) officers and brought ashore at the Macau Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal in Zape after the corpse had been found in coastal waters off Macau Tower in Nam Van earlier that day, adding that the victim, wearing only a pair of grey underpants and without any identification documents, was later identified as the man who had jumped off Ponte da Amizade (Friendship Bridge) on Saturday.

Chan during a regular press conference yesterday disclosed details about the victim's involvement in an aggravated theft case: "At noon on August 10 [Saturday], the Judiciary Police received a report from the proprietor of a luxury goods shop in the city centre that one of his employees had stolen HK\$4.9 million from him. According to our investigation, we found that the employee opened the shop's safe when no one was in the shop at around 7 p.m. on August 9 [Friday] and stole HK\$4.9 million in cash. Subsequently, the employee

took the cash to a casino in Zape to gamble and ended up losing all of the money on the same night before returning to his home in Fai Chi Kei district. At 9 a.m. on August 10, the employee set off on his motorcycle from his home, driving around the city until 10 a.m. when the Judiciary Police were notified that a man had fallen into the coastal waters from the highest point of Friendship Bridge."

The employee was identified by the Judiciary Police as a local man surnamed Chan who had worked for the shop as a salesman for four years. His body was found by the Macau Customs Service floating off Macau Tower on Sunday afternoon.

The PJ investigation also showed, according to Chan, that the victim took HK\$ 2.5 million from the shop's safe at the request of his employer on Friday when he took the opportunity to steal the remaining HK\$4.9 million from the safe. ■

IC to host lecture exploring the mystery of Sogdian civilisation

Rui Pastorin

An English-language lecture exploring the mystery of the bygone Sogdian civilisation is slated to be held at the Macau Museum of Art's (MAM) auditorium on September 8, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) says in a recent statement.

The lecture, entitled "Sogdiana, its mural paintings and religious art: A forgotten civilisation from pre-Islamic Central Asia", is the fourth in "The Belt and Road Cultural Talk Series – Collections of Mural Paintings".

Sogdiana, according to the statement, was "a historical region of Central Asia that corresponds to modern central Uzbekistan and western Tajikistan in ex-Soviet Central Asia".

Many Sogdians started migrating along the Silk Road caravan trade network and between the fifth and eighth centuries C.E. and dominated the trade in the entire Eurasian continent for

several centuries, according to the statement, and also maintained close relations with China's pre-Sui and pre-Tang Chinese courts.

The statement added that some tombs belonging to powerful Sogdians in modern northern China were excavated by Chinese archaeologists. The lecture, which will be conducted by Beijing's Capital Normal University's School of History Prof. Matteo Compareti from Italy, will explore mural paintings and artefacts found at the Penjikent archaeological site, the statement said.

Those interested in the lecture, which will also have simultaneous interpretation into Putonghua, can sign up via their Macao One Account on activity.mo.gov.mo/activity-h5/activity-list-web, with those successful to be notified via SMS. More information can be found on www.icm.gov.mo/academics or by calling 8399 6210 during office hours. ■

Sports Bureau aims to raise public awareness of healthy lifestyle

Ginnie Liang

The Sports Bureau (ID) said in a reply to a written interpellation by lawmaker Ho Ion Sang recently that it will provide residents with physical check-ups, exercise and dietary advice across Macau, to raise public awareness of their physical condition and to encourage the public to develop a healthy lifestyle of regular exercise.

Ho made the interpellation on June 14 urging the government to better promote fitness for all, and the government replied on July 10, copies of which were sent to the media by email yesterday.

The bureau also said it was preparing for next year's "Macau Population Physical Condition Assessment Survey 2025", which is carried out every five years, while the current "Physical Fitness Assessment Report of Macau Residents 2020" would continue to be optimised so that members of the public could better obtain more personalised and specific advice on exercise guidance.

Moreover, the bureau said it was also exploring the feasibility of uploading its assessment reports to the "Macao One Account" mobile app, with a view to enhancing the public's awareness and ability to take the initiative to manage their health.

In respect of enhancing the physical fitness of students, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) has ensured that primary and secondary school students

shall have no less than 150 minutes of physical exercise per week, so as to develop students' interest and ability in sport, and to help them develop the habit of engaging in sports.

Meanwhile, sports competitions across schools are organised annually to enhance students' sense of self-identity, self-worth and self-confidence, and also provide students with the possibility of participating in international and national sporting competitions to promote sports exchanges with overseas students.

In addition, the reply also said that the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) plans to build leisure walkways and cycling trails along the green corridors of the Nam Van Waterfront, as well as provide special open spaces, activity plazas, fitness facilities, and play areas. ■



Undated file photo provided by lawmaker Ho Ion Sang yesterday

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4 local artists aim to inspire creativity in ‘Vibrant Art of Macau’ exhibition

Rui Pastorin

The works of Alley Leong Tin I, PIBG2038 (林家豪), Julia Lam Tsz Kwan and Siomeng Chan are on display at an exhibition entitled “Vibrant Art of Macau” at the Humarish Club gallery in Lisboeta Macau’s H853 Fun Factory in Cotai, with the local artists aiming to promote and show appreciation for Macau’s contemporary art scene.

On until September 8, the free-admission exhibition features works created using media such as oils and acrylic gouache on canvas, showcasing each of the artists’ styles.

Introducing the artists, a statement from the gallery noted that Leong, a self-taught painter, has created paintings that are “instantly recognisable”. Her works are often inspired by Buddhism and spiritual teachings, as well as featuring eccentric figures and “multi-dimensional worlds of technicolour combinations”, among others. She worked as a professional tattoo artist for six years

before becoming a full-time artist.

The statement added that graffiti artist PIBG2038 has been an artist for over 20 years, having participated in a dozen collective exhibitions and art projects, while his work has also been collected by the Macau Museum of Art (MAM). He is among the founders of Macau’s first graffiti art group GANTZ5 and is also the organiser of the “Outloud” international street art festival.

His works are filled with stylized playful characters, along with contrasting bright colours “to show vitality”, the statement said.

Meanwhile, Lam is a painter in Macau who has had her works displayed in Beijing, Lisbon and the US, which also have been collected by MAM and private institutions, the statement noted. She has been combining her watercolour painting skills and offset printing plate-making techniques to “create a new ‘super-flat’ series, with overlapping and

infiltrating particles by spray and brushes of acrylics” since 2020, the statement said.

Lastly, the statement said that Chan is an artist whose creations often have a “whimsical fascination and mystique with the natural world” and who was influenced by Japanese animation master Hayao Miyazaki in his formative years. His studio, The Dino Workshop, was established in 2017, with “Dino”, his popular original character, having been used in collaborations with Uniqlo and the Macau Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT), according to the statement.

Together, these four artists aim to “spark dialogues, inspire creativity, and evoke a deeper appreciation for the art scene in Macau” through their works, the statement said.

One can visit the gallery from Mondays to Fridays from 12 noon to 8 p.m. More details can be found on the gallery’s website on <https://www.humarish.com>



Photos: Rui Pastorin

Govt suspends plan to convert part of Taipa Ferry Terminal into airport's Terminal 2

Staff Reporter

The government has told lawmakers that it has decided to suspend its plan to convert part of the Taipa Ferry Terminal into the adjacent airport's Terminal 2 because it now expects the airport's current capacity to still be able to handle its annual passenger movement for the next few years, considering that the post-pandemic recovery of the airport's passenger movement has been "relatively slow".

The legislature's Follow-up Committee for Public Finance Affairs held a meeting yesterday where its members concluded their discussion on a newly drafted report detailing the government's latest implementation of its public project investment plans. The committee's president, Wong Kit Cheng, briefed reporters about the matter after the closed-door meeting, which no government officials attended.

The government announced in 2020 its plan to convert part of the large Taipa Ferry Terminal into the adjacent airport's Terminal 2, as part of its long-term development plan to enlarge the airport. The government said at that time that the Terminal 2 project was designed to raise the number of the airport's annual capacity to handle passengers by up to two million.

In pre-pandemic 2019, the airport's capacity was planned to be able to handle seven million passengers annually but it recorded 9.6 million passengers that year.

Wong said yesterday that according to the report prepared by her committee, the government has told its members that the post-pandemic recovery of the airport's passenger number has still been "relatively slow".

The COVID-19 pandemic affected Macau from early 2020 through 2022.

The local airport recorded a total of 5.15 million passengers last year, the first post-pandemic year, returning to around 54 percent of the number of passengers recorded in pre-pandemic 2019.

According to Wong, the government has told the committee

that the airport recorded 1.8 million passengers in the first quarter of this year, returning to 77 percent of the level recorded in the same period of 2019. The government now expects the number of airport passengers in 2024 to increase by 10 percent to 15 percent year on year.

The government noted that the airport is currently able to handle 10 million passengers annually after the existing terminal was expanded in 2022. Consequently, according to Wong, the government has concluded that the airport's current capacity would still be able to handle passengers in the near future. Therefore, the government has decided to suspend its Terminal 2 project.

However, according to Wong, the government underlined that in line with Macau's future development of its civil aviation sector, the government would again study the feasibility of relaunching the Terminal 2 project in the future.

Meanwhile, according to Wong, the government has also told the committee that it expects a helipad at the Taipa Ferry Terminal to come into service in the second half of next year, adding that it is now preparing to launch a tender for the project. ■



This photo taken from the airport's monthly magazine published last month shows a carpark and a pick-up and drop-off area for tourist coaches outside the airport at that time.

Govt gazettes regulation on Plot P seniors' rental housing's public carpark

Tony Wong

The underground public carpark of the government's high-rise rental residential building for senior citizens on Plot P in Areia Preta district is expected to come into service in the near future, after the government's regulation on the use and operation of the carpark was promulgated in the Official Gazette (BO) yesterday.

While the regulation takes effect today, the Transport Bureau (DSAT), which oversees the operations of the city's public carparks, yesterday did not announce the exact date when the carpark will open.

The government expects the first group of the building's tenants to be able to move into their flats in October at the earliest.

According to the regulation promulgated yesterday, the public carpark of the Plot P seniors' rental residential building has three



This file photo taken earlier this year shows the rental housing building for seniors on Plot P in Areia Preta district. — Photo: Tony Wong

underground levels, namely the first, second and third basement floors, providing a total of 479 public parking spaces that consist of 345 for cars and 134 for motorcycles.

In the new carpark, cars will be charged eight patacas per hour

during the day (from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) and four patacas per hour during the night (from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. the next day), while motorcycles will be charged three patacas per hour during the day and 1.50 pataca per hour during the night. ■

Man nabbed for reselling Mark Six tickets

Yuki Lei

Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Lai In Hon announced yesterday the arrest of a local man in his sixties on Thursday for reselling Mark Six lottery tickets.

On Thursday, the Public Security Police, according to yesterday's regular police press conference, were tipped off about the illegal sale of Mark Six lottery tickets in Rua dos Hortelãos.

PSP officers dispatched to the scene found a man sitting in front of a writing desk outside a shop on Rua dos Hortelãos. On the table was a plastic board with 10 tickets for the Hong Kong Jockey Club Mark Six Lottery and a card with the words "Mark Six is on tonight".

Under questioning, the local suspect, surnamed Lai, admitted that he started operating the stall late last month. When apprehended he was attempting to resell 10 Mark Six lottery tickets with a face value of HK\$40 each for 50 patacas (HK\$48.53), which he bought from an unknown man for HK\$450 earlier that day.

The suspect, who told the police that he is jobless, has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing a charge of the illegal sale of Mark Six lottery tickets. ■



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday shows two PSP officers escorting the local suspect to the northern district's police station on Avenida do Almirante Lacerda.

HK govt welcomes court judgement on Jimmy Lai appeal over unauthorized assembly case

HONG KONG — The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government said yesterday that it welcomes the judgment by the Court of Final Appeal (CFA) that unanimously dismissed the appeals of seven appellants including Jimmy Lai Chee-ying arising out of them knowingly taking part in an unauthorized assembly on August 18, 2019.

The CFA reiterated that the defendants' applications for leave to appeal on the ground of challenging the trial judge's factual findings had been refused.

The court also stated in its judgment that the appellants' constitutional challenges against the relevant section of the Public Order Ordinance had failed, adding that they had not raised any constitutional challenge against the

Commissioner of Police's decision to ban the march, and that was not to suggest that such a challenge would have succeeded as there were compelling reasons to accept that the Commissioner of Police's decision had been constitutionally sound and proportionate.

The CFA has explained and modified the legal concept of "operational proportionality," placing it in the well-established framework for constitutional challenges in this jurisdiction. In view of the differences between the respective frameworks for human rights challenges in the HKSAR and Britain, the court also held that the decisions of two British cases should not be followed in the HKSAR, and they rejected the appellants' argument that each of a defendant's arrest, prosecution, conviction and sentence must be

separately justified as proportionate.

The HKSAR government reiterated that Hong Kong citizens have the rights to peaceful assembly and procession conducted in accordance with the law. That said these rights must be exercised in conformity with the relevant legislation to ensure the safeguarding of national security, public order, public safety and the protection of the rights and freedom of others. The impact of such public events on members of the public should also be minimized.

A HKSAR government spokesperson said that Hong Kong residents have the obligation to abide by the laws in force in the HKSAR. Equality before the law is one of the fundamental facets of the rule of law, and all persons, regardless of race, rank, politics or religion, are subject to the laws of the land. — Xinhua

STOCK MARKETS

Hang Seng Index closes 0.13 pct higher

HONG KONG — The Hong Kong stock market ended mixed yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index up 0.13 percent to close at 17,111.65 points.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index rose 0.2 percent to end at 6,029.66 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index dipped 0.2 percent to close at 3,429.84 points. — Xinhua