

Government statement on Tatler XFEST Hong Kong, Hong Kong Team vs Inter Miami CF

The Government today (February 4) expressed deep disappointment over Messi not playing at Tatler XFEST Hong Kong, Hong Kong Team vs Inter Miami CF, and the organiser failing to provide a detailed explanation promptly.

The event has been awarded "M" Mark status, as well as a matching grant of 15 million and a grant for venue of 1 million by The Major Sports Events Committee (MSEC). The Government has also provided a variety of coordination and assistance, including venue arrangement and crowd management, in order to offer football fans a wonderful game and an opportunity to witness the world-class player showcasing his skills.

Many Hong Kong fans looked forward to the match with enthusiasm, and a lot of tourists came to Hong Kong particularly for the match. The Government, as well as all football fans, are extremely disappointed that Messi could neither play in the friendly match, nor explain to the fans in person upon request. The way that the organiser and Inter Miami CF handled the situation could not meet the expectations of the fans who showed strong support to Messi, especially those visitors who came all the way here for the match.

The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and the MSEC, will rely on the terms and conditions of the agreement in requiring the organiser to take responsibility, including a reduction of the amount of funding as a result of Messi being not able to play in the match.