

Transcript of remarks by SCST at media session (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, at a media session on Tatler XFEST Hong Kong, Hong Kong Team vs Inter Miami CF today (February 5):

Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism: An exhibition match between Hong Kong Team and Inter Miami CF was held at the Hong Kong Stadium yesterday (February 4). The Hong Kong Team played very well. However, as Messi did not play in the match, we, the Government, like the many fans, especially those visitors who travelled to Hong Kong for the match, were deeply disappointed.

The match was organised by Tatler Asia, and the Government has provided matching fund under the "M" Mark system. One of the key terms of our funding agreement with Tatler Asia was for Messi to participate in the match for at least 45 minutes, subject to fitness and safety considerations. Yesterday before the match began, the organiser, Tatler Asia, still reaffirmed that Messi was going to play in the second half. When the second half began without Messi, we immediately followed up with the organiser, Tatler Asia, requesting them to liaise with Inter Miami CF to arrange for Messi to play as soon as possible, but was later informed by Tatler Asia that Messi could not play due to injury. We reiterated our request for Messi to play in the match about 10 minutes before the match ended. The organiser, Tatler Asia, confirmed that Messi could not play. We therefore immediately requested them to explore other remedies, such as Messi appearing on the field to interact with his fans, and receiving the trophy. Unfortunately, as you all see, these did not work out.

We will take into account the experience of this incident and will further work with the Major Sports Events Committee to further improve our "M" Mark system. We will continue our efforts to promote more major events to be held in Hong Kong.

Reporter: First of all, I would like to know how the Government handled the issue with Tatler about the \$16 million subsidies. Has it all been paid or has it been called back in this situation? Has the Government cancelled originally scheduled event for the football team?

Second question is that because the Government subsidised that large amount of public money for this event, has the Government feel its responsibility in due diligence and supervision of the overall organising of this event? Because Messi getting injured is not a secret; it has been reported in the news, but seems the Government has not been following the situation, and made sure that he actually can show up at the pitch.

Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism: Firstly, for the sponsorship that we have agreed to provide for this event, we haven't paid any money yet. I

think in the coming weeks, we will further liaise with the organiser Tatler Asia on the overall performance of the whole event, and then we will make the decision on how to deal with the sponsorship.

On other event, there will be no other event organised by us today. I understand that the team will be leaving later this afternoon.

About supervision, I think we have been following the practices that we have been using in the past for this event. We monitor closely the overall event. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, our team has been following up with Tatler Asia over the past few weeks, and has been helping them to liaise with different departments. In the process, of course we would keep ourselves abreast of the developments. But for this particular case, if you are talking about injury, we could not tell well in advance whether a particular player could play unless it is very serious. So, in this particular case, we will follow up with Tatler Asia to see when they were aware of the injury of Messi and also their dealing with the football team. But at this stage, we cannot tell for sure the real arrangement between the two parties.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)