

Ja offers sports scholarships to China

Jamaica has offered 10 scholarships to China for its sportsmen, administrators or coaches to be schooled at the G.C. Foster College.

"I indicated to China's sports administration that we are quite willing to offer, in the first instance, 10 scholarships to athletes and if they would want us to train an administrator or a physical education teacher, we are quite willing," the Prime Minister said. Simpson Miller made the disclosure during an interview with Chinese media in Beijing. She noted that while Jamaica is blessed with naturally gifted athletes, the country's success, particularly in track and field, has been greatly assisted by the nurturing of talents. She said China has accepted the offer. The Prime Minister, who is on a five-day official visit to China, said the offer is a result of the long years of friendship, dating back some 40 years in terms of diplomatic relations. The Prime Minister, who, on Friday, visited the Birds Nest Stadium where Usain Bolt sped to Olympic and world records in the 100 and 200 metres at the 2008 Games, said the sprinter is special to the country. "Sports for us is a big thing. When we get a world champion, Jamaica celebrates. We have had a number of outstanding athletes, and Usain Bolt is one very special to us, and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce is now the fastest woman," the Prime Minister said. Of Bolt, she said "he is very famous, everybody would like to be like lightening Bolt. He is very special to us and a very humble nice young man". The Prime Minister said in addition to the role G.C. Foster has played in the development of Jamaica's athletics, the food eaten on the island as well as the way of life of rural folks contribute to the development of their talents. "Perhaps it is in our food, the yams, the bananas, and whatever they consume," she said. "The rural athletes do walk very far, the distance to get to school is quite challenging," she said while adding that Jamaica's success in track in field is not a flash in the pan. She chronicled Jamaica's success from the 1948 Olympic Games, and noted that athletes such as Cynthia Thompson, Merlene Ottey, Herb McKenley and Donald Quarrie have long been world beaters.