

Search
GO

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- Front Page
- News
- Sports
- Editorial
- Columns
- Letters
- Lifestyle
- Western News
- Careers
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News

Beijing stars awarded national honours

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Sunday, October 05, 2008

SEVERAL members of Jamaica's 2008 medal-winning Olympics team were yesterday honoured in a special ceremony and awarded with the country's fifth highest national honour, the Order of Distinction, Commander and Officer Class.

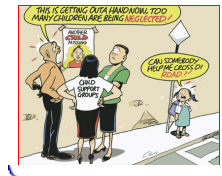
In a classic 45-minute-long exercise witnessed by scores of excited Jamaicans, athletes Usain Bolt, Asafa Powell, Veronica Campbell-Brown, Shelly-Ann Fraser, Melaine Walker, Dwight Thomas, Michael Frater, Nesta Carter, Danny McFarlane and Bridgitte Foster-Hylton were honoured .



Six members of Jamaica's world-beating delegation to the Beijing Olympics in August who were yesterday invested with the Order of Distinction (Commander class) at a special investiture ceremony at the National Stadium. From left: President of the Jamaica Amateur Athletics Association (JAAA) Howard Aris; triple gold medallist and world record holder Usain Bolt; gold medallist Veronica Campbell-Brown; Glen Mills, Bolt's coach; former 100m world record-holder and Olympic gold medallist Asafa Powell; and 1976 Olympic 200m gold medallist and consultant in the preparations for the 2008 Summer Olympics Donald Quarrie. (Photo: Bryan Cummings)

Jamaica finished the Beijing Olympics with a record haul of 11 medals - six gold, three silver and two bronze. Bolt, Powell and Campbell-Brown were bestowed with honours in the rank of Commander, and their colleagues in

editorial cartoon



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the rank of Officer.

Also honoured were president of the Jamaica Amateur Athletics Association (JAAA) Howard Aris; Glen Mills, coach of Usain Bolt; 1976 Olympic 200m gold medallist and consultant in the preparations for the 2008 Summer Olympics, Donald Quarrie, who were awarded the Order of Distinction Commander Class (CD) for their service to track and field and their contribution to the athletes' success.

The appreciative crowd, clad mostly in the green, yellow and black of the Jamaican flag which filled the stands to see the athletes, cheered and screamed to their hearts' content, many calling out to the athletes as if they were lifelong friends.



From left: Nesta Carter, Bridgitte Foster-Hylton, Shelly-Ann Fraser, Michael Frater, Danny McFarlane, Dwight Thomas and Melaine Walker pose after being presented with the Order of Distinction Officer Class yesterday at a special investiture ceremony held at the National Stadium in Kingston. (Photo: Bryan Cummings)

"Is one of the best thing this mi ever si, whenever dem perform mi si crime cut so mi think the athletes should go into the garrison and go hol' a vibe; it nice," Solomon, a Kingstonian, told the Sunday Observer.

Meanwhile, triple world record holder Usain Bolt in a brief chat with the Sunday Observer could hardly find words to describe his emotions.

"It's just great. I am enjoying it. It's wonderful," he said before being whisked away.

Kingstonian Charmaine Smith said she had enjoyed the brief ceremony to the hilt.

"It's good. I go for everybody, all the athletes. At least the Government has done something good for them," she said beaming.

Popular Jamaican actor Glen "Titus' Campbell, a member of the team of organisers for the event, also took time to bask in the moment.

"I am very thrilled, it's one of the times when I am very proud to be Jamaican," he told the Sunday Observer.

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