

## Experience Jamaica at 'Bolt speed'

A series of television commercials starring sprint sensation Usain Bolt and aimed at boosting Jamaica's tourism product will begin airing throughout the United States, Canada and Europe on February 8.

The commercials, produced by world-famous director Jorn Haagen to the tune of US\$420,000 and featuring Jamaica's uniqueness and her people, are also expected to hit social network sites soon. They were launched at a special function at Devon House in Kingston on Monday night. The first commercial portrays Bolt as the ultimate insider, as he sprints along the countryside where he is repeatedly stopped in his tracks by Jamaica's beautiful scenery. A smiling Bolt exclaims, "On any other island, I'd probably be a marathon runner." The second commercial highlights the personality of the Jamaican people with different individuals, including Bolt, doing his victory pose in front of a collection of beautiful landscapes and locations. In the third, Bolt is depicted as the fastest tour guide sprinting from one location to another across the island to an up-tempo beat. He stops to enjoy a beautiful sunset, providing viewers the opportunity to experience Jamaica at "Bolt speed". All three commercials end with the destination's marketing slogan, "Jamaica . Once you go, you know". Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett said most athletes of international celebrity status would require so much for the use of their image as well as their athletic ability in presenting destination images, but not Bolt. When approached to do the ad campaign, Bolt, he said, responded with great "generosity of spirit". "When the prime minister approached him and then I did, he said minister this will all be done for Jamaica pro bono," Bartlett said. Bartlett, who spoke with the Observer shortly after the launch, said this new ad campaign will further boost arrivals for the winter season and far beyond. Some 220,000 visitors have arrived on our shores since December 15 when the winter tourist season began. "I want to give credit to Usain Bolt and his team because an ad like this would cost us somewhere close to US\$1.5 million. So I think the effect of it is a saving to Jamaica, is a little over \$1 million," Bartlett said. The ads, Bartlett said, will be shown throughout the United States, Canada and parts of Europe initially but will later be translated into different languages for audiences in Germany, Continental Europe, China, and South America. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Bruce Golding said the country would not want a more valuable input than to have the fastest man in the world being the "poster boy of Jamaica's tourism". Golding said notwithstanding all of his successes and achievements, Bolt continued to be grateful to the country which produced him and to the people who have made him the success he is. "I am sorry he is not here for me to commend him personally," Golding said as he lauded Bolt for having made himself available at a time when Jamaica needs him. Bolt was said to be in training and could not attend the launch. Golding also lauded the tourism minister and his team for the growth in the tourism sector at a time when many countries were seeing a decline in stopover arrivals.