

· TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2011 ·

THE



HINDU

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

New Zealand to offer sports scholarships

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NEW DELHI: New Zealand will offer sports scholarships to talented young Indians in an effort to promote the relationship between the two nations. On a state visit here, New Zealand Prime Minister John Key made this offer while speaking at a function at the Ferozeshah Kotla on Monday.

Mr. Key, overwhelmed by the media presence, noted: "India loves sports, and cricket obviously is the major one," he said. The under-privileged children from the Asha Foundation were gifted cricket gear before getting to show their skills to former New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming.

New Zealand High Commissioner Jaan Henderson emphasised the growing importance of sports, trade and education

as the binding force between the two countries while Mr. Key added his government would welcome Indian students to avail of the scholarships and study various aspects of sports management. "This is dream come true for these children," said Asha Foundation Director Kiran Martin.

Fleming spent time with the children and observed: "In New Zealand, everyone gets opportunities to play and study. We are very, very lucky. India has the sheer number and sheer competition to produce the best and cricket's playing a big part in this."

Also present at the occasions were former international cricketers Bishan Singh Bedi, Madan Lal and Surender Khanna, apart from the top brass of the Delhi and District Cricket Association.



A GESTURE OF GOODWILL: New Zealand Prime Minister John Key and Stephen Fleming enjoyed a game of cricket with children from the Asha Foundation. — PHOTO: S. SUBRAMANIAM