ATHLETICS

Sng's mind at ease, thanks to Akira's help

NATIONAL jumper Michelle Sng can now pursue her lofty ambitions – which include competing at the 2012 Olympics – without worrying about finances till 2010.

The promising 20-year-old, who holds the national high jump record of 1.80 metres, received a scholarship from local electronics firm Akira yesterday.

The scholarship, worth about $23,000, comes with no strings attached.

As part of the deal, Sng, who will be skipping this year's South-east Asia Games because of a shin injury, gave Akira a list of performance targets that she would work towards.

These include medals at the 2009 and 2011 SEA Games, plus qualifying for the 2012 London Olympics.

"Akira has shown faith in me by sponsoring me without conditions and I will justify that with dedication and hard work," she said.

Said Akira's managing director, Sng Sze Hiang, a former national 400m runner: "As a former student-athlete myself, I can relate to the problems young athletes face in balancing excellence in studies and sports here. "Through this gesture, we hope to play a part in Michelle's academic and sporting excellence."

LEONARD LIM