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Panorama 2002:

# Decision on preliminary Panorama venue Oct 28

By SEAN NERO

**EVEN AS** three of Pan Trinbago's four regions engage in preparation for the judging of the National Panorama preliminaries 2002 in the pan yards of competing orchestras, the organisation's president Patrick Arnold has denied that a final decision has been reached on this issue by his executive.

Newsday has learnt from executive members of the pan fraternity's regional executive — east, south/central and Tobago — that they are in the process of making the necessary provisions for the opening round of the coveted steelband contest, in the pan yards or venue close to it.

However, this does not include the northern region, which to date has remained defiant about the suggestion of a new judging site.

Keith Diaz, head of this region, said he had no desire to speak to the media on the issue prior to the October 28 meeting.

"After that meeting the region would be willing to make a statement or statements," he said.

In addition, candidates who will form panels of judges are being drafted. Each region must assemble its own aggregation, consisting of nine persons for the conventional category — seven seated and two alternates — while in the Single Pan Band category seven persons would be selected — five seated and two alternates.

Impetus for this effort on the part of the regions is the fact that sponsors have reportedly stated to Pan Trinbago their interest in the proposed format for the National Panorama preliminary citing increased mileage for their respective products.

Since the inception of the National Panorama competition in 1963 the "Big Yard" Queen's Park Savannah, in Port-of-Spain has been home to the event. At Pan Trinbago's unveiling of the proposal mere months ago, the organisation said the relocation of the event from its traditional venue would be a historic move.

Arnold confirmed that the corporate community has shown signs of enthusiasm toward the new approach taken by his administration, contrary to what steelband leaders were fearful of initially.

Speaking to Newsday he said:



NINE-TIME and Panorama hat-trick winner BP Renegades Steel Orchestra. PHOTO BY RATTAN JADOO

"Any decision about where the preliminary round of next year's Panorama would be held is left up to the national membership. And on Sunday October 28 panmen would give the central executive a mandate at our annual general meeting."

Arnold said to date the topic of

changing the venue for the first round of Panorama has only caused confusion and he had nothing further to say on the matter, until he met with the pan guild.

"Repeatedly, I am accused by my membership of going to the media before coming to them. I

don't intend to make that mistake this time around. This issue is too sensitive," he remarked.

Withfield Weeks, chairman of Pan Trinbago south central region stated that since the last meeting with Arnold months ago, copies of the rules had been presented to them.

However, the document referred only to the semi-final round of the contest and "not the preliminary round".

"Some band leaders in my region, from early, expressed a willingness to participate with the judging of preliminaries in their pan yards. We are hosting a meeting soon and the burning issue would be dealt with," he said.

Renison Quashie, head of the Tobago zone, said final arrangements were now being put in place for this new format and hotels have been informed.

"All along we have been supporting it. All bands in Tobago are now in a state of readiness to capitalise on this new

format. Enhancement work has begun on pan theatres and their environs.

"Bands in Tobago are seizing the opportunity to get into the business aspect of the programme. Redemption Sound Setters, for instance, has indicated it would be staging a show on that night where calypsonians, folk singers and dancers are to perform. Also trinkets would be on sale, as well as food and beverages," he said.

Meanwhile, the atmosphere among orchestras resident in the eastern region has been one of optimism following a meeting called with its membership last Thursday.

"Things have been finalised," said Vernon Morancie, chairman of the zone.

"Several bands have begun collaboration work towards identifying a venue where they could be judged and where they would host either steelband jamborees or fetes after judging takes place," he said.