

Green light for back to Savannah mas...

PANORAMA KILLING STEELBANDS

By SEETA PERSAD

THE Grand Stand will be definitely be completed before February 10. This assurance came yesterday as three Government ministers toured the site for the newly constructed Grand Stand (Carnival venue) at the Queen's Park Savannah yesterday. After touring, the Minister of Art and Multi-culturalism Winston Peters, together with Works Minister Jack Warner and Public Utilities Minister Emmanuel George addressed the media. They each assured the media that the newly constructed Grand Stand will be ready before February 10.

Peters also noted that the Panorama competition was killing steelbands.

Peters brought along the project manager of the construction, Derek Hamilton who said he had 27 years experience in this field and can predict that the stand will be ready by the given date. He said the foundation is 60 percent complete and within seven days the structural steel fabrication will begin.

After some three years of being out on the streets, bandleaders will see a return of mas to the big stage at the Queen's Park Savannah for Carnival 2011 which will take place on March 7 and 8.

"Carnival is back in the Savannah where it belongs," Peters said. The Parade of the Bands was moved from the Savannah by the former PNM administration for the construction of the National Carnival Centre, which is still to be completed. Masqueraders were made to pass along judging points on the street outside the Savannah. The Grand Stand is now moved further east in line with the North Stand with better



HEAVY MACHINERY: Work at the Queens Park Savannah well on the way for Carnival 2011. In the background is the new North Stand and the foreground where the stands will go up. PHOTO BY SUREASH CHOLAI

stage settings and other added amenities will be put in place for the upcoming Carnival.

As for a permanent home for Carnival, Peters said he has a plan to create a Carnival Village that can accommodate Calypso tents and a Carnival museum as well as everything else that Carnival has to offer. "There is more productivity in and around Carnival time than any other time in the country," Peters said, adding that his ministry is preparing for a most productive Carnival next year.

Peters said the country has little money and he plans to generate more money out of Carnival than the previous years — the building of the Grand Stand being one of the steps in that direction. He hopes to establish an active, year-round Carnival "place" in the Savannah for tourism purposes.

Peters also said that later on his

Government will be inviting local architects to submit drawings for the structure detailing the permanent home for Carnival at the Queen's Park Savannah. "We will host something of a contest whereby we will be seeking out the best suited facility for Carnival," he said, adding that this will be taken to Parliament and work should start on the construction before the end of 2011.

Peters also spoke out on steelpan saying that Panorama competition is killing steelpan. "When pan men are asked to learn just one song for this competition, then every other calypso is left out and steelpan finds it way on the side and not as a major part for the Parade of Bands," he said.

Peters also outlined his ministry's plans to bring out a "people's band" where the People's Partnership Government will provide music trucks as they invite the public to wear any costume and join in. "The

aim is to provide a band for the ordinary man who just wants to join in and have a good time," Peters said.

Warner spoke briefly saying that his ministry is overseeing the construction of the facility and this is the reason he took the time to tour the Savannah yesterday morning. George said his ministry will be working alongside the Ministry of Works to provide the utilities, including water and lights for the facility in quick time. He was accompanied by the CEO of WASA, Ganga Singh and Chairman of TTEC, Omar Khan.

Chairman of the National Carnival Commission, Kenny De Silva who was also present expressed satisfaction with the plans outlined by Peters. He told *Newsday* he will be monitoring the work done by the various ministries in getting the facility ready. He is also looking forward to Carnival back in the savannah.