

# PM: Govt will build pan headquarters

By **TERRY JOSEPH**

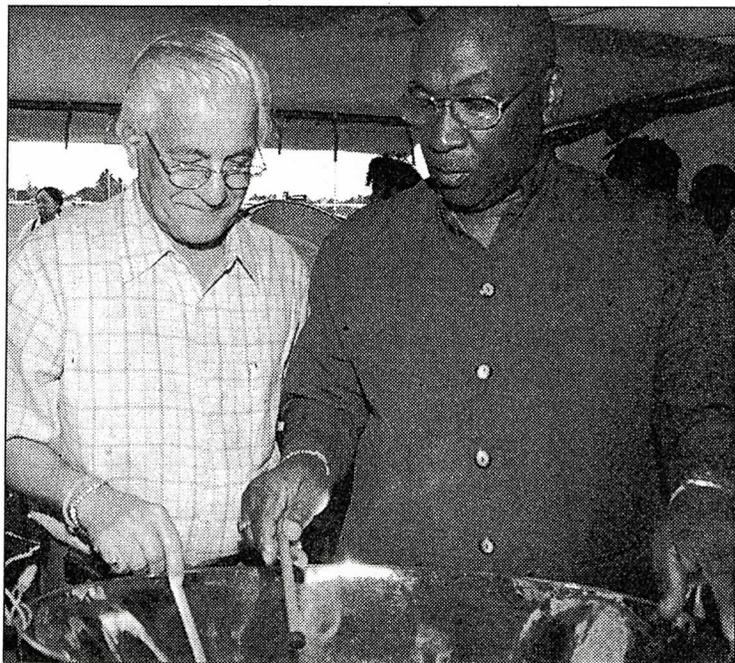
**EVEN** as he handed over instruments of ownership of a parcel of land valued at some \$9 million to Pan Trinbago, Prime Minister Basdeo Panday yesterday said Government would fund the cost of constructing the pan body's headquarters on the site.

He was, at the time, delivering the feature address at a ceremony on site to mark the occasion. "You come up with the plan for your headquarters and I will find the money to build it." Panday also pledged Government's financial support for next July's World Steelband Music Festival.

The eight-acre parcel, situated off the westbound lane of the Churchill Roosevelt Highway (Orange Grove Estate) near Trincity Mall, was acquired from Caroni 1975 Ltd. In addition to Pan Trinbago's headquarters, the building will house a performance centre and offices for the body's eastern region.

Saying pan would become even sweeter through this association with sugar producers Caroni 1975 Ltd, Panday added: "I wish to point out to Pan Trinbago that my Government's planning perspectives envision a new city with commercial and industrial development to complement the new airport.

"This land therefore constitutes prime property, so I am asking Pan Trinbago to consult with the Ministry of Transport, Tourism and Tobago Affairs as to the areas in which alliances can be established for the development of this land to the greater glory of the steelband movement. This moment of triumph for Pan Trinbago is a moment of triumph for the human spirit," he said.



**PRIME MINISTER Basdeo Panday**, left, and Pan Trinbago president **Patrick Arnold** play a tenor pan at the site for the Pan body's new headquarters at Orange Grove Estate, Trincity, yesterday

**Photo: STEPHEN DOOBAY**

In his turn, Pan Trinbago president Patrick Arnold said: "Anyone who has followed the evolution of pan will know the tremendous sense of accomplishment we feel at finally acquiring real estate, given our history of tenancy and the vagaries of perennially being on the wrong end of a lease.

"Pan is now universally accepted as legitimate music, shedding the exotic image of natives drinking rum and beating drums under coconut trees. Concomitant with that advance is the global requirement for efficiency in dealing with requests for assistance in steelband matters and day-to-day administration.

"This gift therefore means much more than having a parcel of land on which to erect a building as a monument to pan. Indeed, it is part of the vehicle we needed to move the instrument into the 21st Century," Arnold said.

Other speakers at yesterday's function, which was chaired by Winston "Gypsy" Peters, included Human Development, Youth, Culture and Education Minister Ganga Singh, Attorney General and Legal Affairs Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Caroni's corporate secretary Clarence Rambarrath and Pan Trinbago's Peter Khan-hai, one of the prime movers in the acquisition of the land.

ML 1040