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\$100,000 for Pan Chutney

... but 'Jahaaji Bhai' banned

By TERRY JOSEPH

STEELBANDS participating in this year's Pan Chutney Festival stand to win up to \$100,000 in prizes, but none of them can play "Jahaaji Bhai".

The new sum represents an increase of \$40,000 over the 1995 figure.

However, Brother Marvin's popular crossover hit is one of the songs the organisers have ruled to be pure soca and not "chutney" for the purposes of this competition.

The Chutney Singers Association will present a formal list of eligible songs for the competition. Such songs must be no more than one year old at the time of the contest.

Last year, the contest was won by the Laventille Stryke Stars and Trinidad Nostalgic in the conventional and traditional categories respectively.

The Maharaj group of companies and Pan Trinbago are the organisers of the festival which, police said, last year attracted 15,000 to the Princess Royal Park in Arima.

At yesterday's launch of the festival, which took place at Pan Trinbago headquarters in Port of Spain, Bindra Maharaj, speaking for the sponsors, said that his company did not need much prompting to work toward increasing the prizes, what with the level of enthusiasm demonstrated by the participating bands.

"We have been getting a lot of calls about

when we are staging the competition in 1996," said Maharaj, who later announced that this year's contest would take place on Indian Arrival Day (May 30).

The Amoco Renegades will participate this year as their regular arranger Jit Samaroo has been freed from the agreement to write the test pieces, which will now be composed by Teddy Bissambhar or the D Rampersad Indian Art Orchestra.

Bissambhar wrote the test piece "Indarhanus (The Rainbow)" for the first Pan Tassa competition put on by the Hindi Nidhi in 1989.

Samaroo last year said he would not have been comfortable bringing the Amoco Renegades to the contest, having composed the test pieces.

The organisers were still working out the fine details of a plan to include interested bands from the Tobago region.

Four stages are being constructed, so that even as a band is playing for the judges another can be setting up its instruments on a stage far enough away that no distraction obtains.

Both traditional and conventional bands will be limited to 25 players including the oriental rhythm section, the best of which will receive a special prize.

Other prizes are available for the best dressed band and players of the best test piece and best tune of choice.