

Imbert: CAL head above waters

PETER BALROOP

Caribbean Airlines (Cal), which is likely to break even in 2009, its third year of operation, has grand plans to become the flagship carrier of the region, and taking over all profitable Air Jamaica routes is part of that scheme.

This was disclosed by Works and Transport Minister Colm Imbert in the Lower House last Friday when he dispelled once and for all any notion that Cal, backed by the T&T Government, intended to pay off Air Jamaica's massive debt.



Colm Imbert

Imbert said in the wake of Jamaican Prime Minister Bruce Golding coming to T&T to meet Prime Minister Patrick Manning a "non-binding letter of intent" had been dispatched to the Jamaica Government.

The details of the letter would have to remain confidential but there were no proposals for either "bailout, handout or merger," he added.

If Cal took over Air Jamaica's routes it would be a deal forged in the spirit of Caribbean integration, according to Imbert.

If Air Jamaica folded, the Jamaican Government would have to buy airlift to support the country's tourism sector, one of its biggest revenue earners, but with Cal on board it was a "win-win situation."

Cal, Imbert told the House, was not a successor airline to BWIA but a completely new entity which operated on a pure business model, far from the sphere of political influence, particularly from the Government.

He said while airlines were folding all around the world Cal was keeping its head above water.

In 2007, its first year of operation Cal had sustained a loss of \$117,000 though revenue had been a whopping \$1 billion.

In 2008 Cal turned a profit of \$34 million from revenue of \$1.4 billion, and it would be even in 2009, Imbert stated.

He was clearing the air on UNC MP Dr Tim Gopeesingh that the Government intended to give Air Jamaica financial assistance from the Caribbean Petroleum Fund.

Gopeesingh stressed that he had filed a motion on the adjournment in the House out of concern that the Government was being tight-lipped about the deal it had forged with the Jamaican Government over the airline.

Cal had cost \$1.5 billion to restructure, Gopeesingh said, noting that the Government had sold the landing slots of BWIA at Heathrow Airport, London cheaply for \$5 million when they were now going at \$100 million. See Page A34



Britney Mattadeen, 15, left, Diamond Small, 13 and Jin-nee Pierre, 15, are animated while playing the iron in the rhythm section of St Francois Girls' College Steel Orchestra, while the band rehearsed its Panorama tune of choice titled Iron and Steel from Fay Ann Lyons and arranged by Clive Telemacque. PHOTO: SEAN NERO

Youths come out to play

...National Junior Panorama at Savannah today

SEAN NERO

Solo Harmonites Youth Steel Orchestra debuts at today's National Junior Panorama competition in the Under 21 category with its sights set on victory.

Produced by the Education Ministry in collaboration with Pan Trinbago and the Pan in Schools Coordinating Council (PSCC), the event takes place at the Queen's Park Savannah, Port-of-Spain, from 9 am. Admission is free.

With the exuberant Adelize Baptiste at its helm, Harmonites Youths will perform Toco Band from the repertoire of the late Lord Kitchener (Aldwyn Roberts) as its tune-of-choice.

Baptiste is also the arranger for the band. This is his arranging debut.

Harmonites Youths has drawn to appear in position number six, while defending champion bp Renegades Youth Steel Orchestra is listed to perform in position 13.

Shelton Besson is arranger for the band which has chosen De Fosto's Smooth Sailing as the tune-of-choice to defend its title.

Thirty-five youth orchestras appearing in three categories will play music arrangements six minutes long before adjudications panels.

Government's mandate to phase out the shift systems at junior secondary schools, giving them full secondary school status

has led to the creation of the Secondary Schools category which replaces the Under 16 class.

Mt Hope Secondary was the Under 16 winner last year, while St Margaret Boys' clinched victory in the Under 13 class which will now be known as the Primary Schools category.

Competing bands will vie for \$697,000 in prizes at the National Junior Panorama competition being held in honour of pan virtuoso Liam Teague.

Arguably T&T's youngest globally-acclaimed pan virtuoso, Professor Teague is known as the Paganini of Pan, and is the recipient various awards at home and abroad.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1	DIEGO MARTIN BOYS RC SCHOOL	Carnival Come Again
2	FEBEAU GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL	Stranger
3	MAYO STEEL ENSEMBLE	Om Shanti Om
4	SIPARIA BOYS RC SCHOOL	Pan in the Classroom
5	MALABAR RC STEEL ORCHESTRA	Radica
6	MAFEKING GOVERNMENT PRIMARY	Trini to the Bone
7	GRANT MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOL	Magic Drum
8	ST MARGARETS' BOYS ANGLICAN SCHOOL	Magic Drum
9	ST FRANCIS ERIN STEEL ORCHESTRA	Jaws
10	SANTA FLORA GOVERNMENT STEEL ORCHESTRA	T&T Belongs To You & Me
11	TAMANA RC PIONEERS	Hot Hot Hot
12	CENTRAL PRIMARY COMBINED SCHOOLS STEEL ORCHESTRA	Template

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1	SPEYSIDE HIGH SCHOOL STEEL ORCHESTRA	The Sweet Sound of Pan
2	EL DORADO EAST SECONDARY Scratch Attack	
3	ST. FRANCOIS GIRLS' COLLEGE STEEL ORCHESTRA	Iron & Steel
4	TOCO SECONDARY	Signal To Lara
5	DIEGO MARTIN CENTRAL SECONDARY SCHOOL STEELBAND	Surrender
6	BATCE STEEL	Scratch Attack
7	EAST MUCURAPO SECONDARY SCHOOL	Surrender
8	WOODBROOK SECONDARY SCHOOL STEELBAND	Surrender
9	TRINITY COLLEGE STEEL ORCHESTRA	Dingolay
10	GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF THE WEST INDIES	Ethel

21 & UNDER

1	PAN GLOW YOUTHS	Indrani
2	MORNE DIABLO PHILADELPHIANS	Flag Woman
3	ST MARGARETS' BOYS' /TRINIDAD ALL STARS YOUTH STEEL ORCH	Pan on Fire
4	TOKYO YOUTHS STEEL ORCHESTRA	Brave
5	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO MUSIC STARS	Battle Zone
6	SOLO HARMONITES YOUTH STEEL ORCHESTRA	Toco Band
7	ST AUGUSTINE SECONDARY STEEL ORCHESTRA	Pan By Storm
8	SOUTHERN MARINES STEELBAND FOUNDATION	Palance
9	TAMANA PIONEERS	Road Show
10	SAN FERNANDO WEST SECONDARY STEEL ORCH	Ramajay
11	SUCCESS STARS PAN SOUNDS	Pan on Fire
12	STARLIFT JUNIOR STEEL ORCHESTRA	Battle Zone
13	BP RENEGADES YOUTH STEEL ORCHESTRA	Smooth Sailing

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