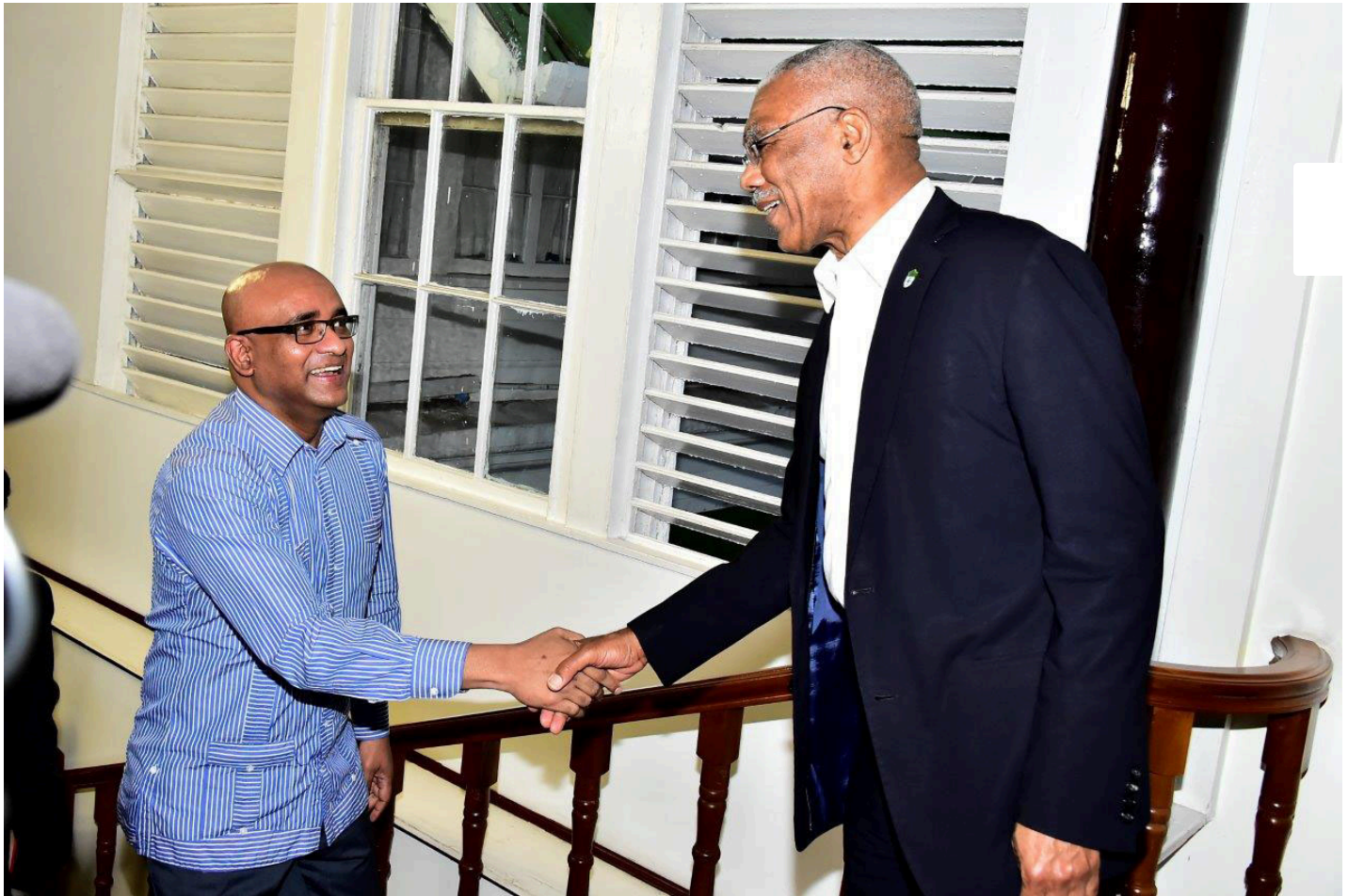




GUYANA NEWS

Justices Cummings-Edwards, George-Wiltshire appointed to act at top of judiciary



President David Granger (right) greets Opposition Leader, Bharrat Jagdeo on his arrival at State House last evening. (Ministry of the Presidency photo)

By [Stabroek News](#) March 2, 2017





the positions of Chancellor and Chief Justice respectively, President David Granger yesterday appointed Justices Yonette Cummings-Edwards and Roxane George-Wiltshire SC to act in the respective positions in the interim.

Effective yesterday, Justice Cummings-Edwards, who has been acting as Chief Justice will assume the responsibility of Acting Chancellor and Justice George-Wiltshire will replace her as the new Acting Chief Justice. It will be the first time that two women hold the top two positions in the judiciary simultaneously.



Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards



Alison Roxane McLean George-Wiltshire

The President's appointments followed consultations with Leader of the Opposition Bharrat Jagdeo last evening; on the eve of Granger leaving the country for official duty. Both sides issued separate press releases last night.

Jagdeo was accompanied, to the 6 pm State House meeting with Granger and a delegation which included Minister of State Joseph Harmon and Attorney General Basil Williams, by Williams' predecessor and PPP/C Member of Parliament and executive Anil Nandall.

While the statements indicated that Jagdeo informed the President that he requires one week to offer his views on the names of the two persons proposed, Minister of State Joseph Harmon pointed out that there is no requirement that the Opposition Leader agree to the



Constitution of Guyana.

Harmon also informed that for the substantive posts the Opposition Leader's agreement was needed and government was awaiting a report from a panel set up to review the applications received. "A panel was put together, which comprised former Justice of Appeal, Ms. Claudette Singh, Mr. James Patterson, and Mr. Harold Lutchman. The panel of course met and we are waiting the report of that panel. Once that is submitted to His Excellency, the President, he will in due course, make his decision on the matter," the Ministry of the Presidency release quoted Harmon as saying after the meeting.





“We will have to have consultations so at that point the Leader of the Opposition will be invited to consultations... That process also requires that he be given in advance the names of the persons who are proposed, the Curriculum Vitae of those persons and all information, which we will have at our disposal and that information will come out from the interviewing process, which took place recently. So we will submit all of that information to the Leader of the Opposition so that he will recognise that the choice which was made was a good one and I’m sure, will find his agreement,” the Minister of State also said.

Government said in its statement that it believes that this process sends a strong signal to professionals in the conduct of their public life since their character and professional records will be scrutinised as they seek to advance in their careers. “What we have done is to basically introduce a process, which will add to the entire architecture of the legal system in this country that will see our Judges going through a process before they are actually appointed and, therefore, the things like the quality of the judgement, which they give once they want to move to higher office, all of these are issues which are taken into consideration,” Harmon explained in the release.

The Opposition used the meeting to address other issues and asked about the the absence of action in relation to the unanimous recommendations made to the President since February 2016, by the Judicial Service Commission for appointments be made. Jagdeo pointed to Justices Rishi Persaud and Dawn Gregory who were recommended to be appointed to the Court of Appeal and Attorneys at Law Sandil Kissoon and DamoneYounge, to be appointed as Puisne Judges. Jagdeo said that he reminded Granger that the President has



“The Leader of the Opposition emphasized that equal urgency attaches to both sets of appointment because there is currently no sitting Judge in the Court of Appeal, a three member Court and certainly, the appointment of a person to act in the position of the Chancellor alone will not fill the critical void which currently exists in that Court,” Jagdeo’s statement asserts.

“Moreover, the Leader of the Opposition adverted to a public perception that the delay in acting upon the recommendations of the Judicial Service Commission is deliberate and intended to await a differently constituted Judicial Service Commission, which may not have confidence in the recommendations of their predecessors. Additionally, he pointed out that the delay in elevating the two Judges to the Court of Appeal as recommended by the JSC for over a year, places them at a comparative disadvantage in respect of seniority. The Leader of the Opposition also enquired whether the recommendations of the JSC will be implemented at the same time when these acting appointments will take place,” it adds.

According to the Leader of the Opposition, the President promised that he will address the areas of concern outlined at a meeting which will be held on the 8th March, 2017.



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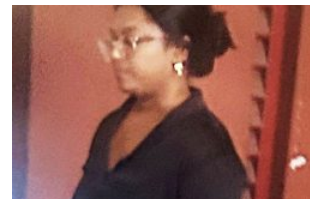
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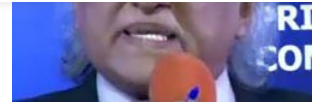
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