

GUYANA NEWS

Alexander nominated to fill GECOM vacancy left by Parris

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Former PNCR Vice-chairman Vincent Alexander has been nominated to fill the existing vacancy on the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM).

According to a statement from the party, Opposition Leader Robert Corbin notified President Bharrat Jagdeo of the nomination, following consultations with the opposition parliamentary parties. The party's statement said that consultations were held between Corbin and the leaders of the other opposition parliamentary parties at the National Assembly on Thursday.

Alexander, who is the Deputy Registrar of the University of Guyana, served as the party's Director of Elections in the run up to last year's polls. His name had been notably absent from the party's list of candidates for the National Assembly, and this had fuelled speculation that he would succeed former commissioner Haslyn Parris.

Parris resigned from the commission a month before the 2006 general elections, saying his continued participation on the panel would compromise his professional integrity. Parris had said he was unable to have his concerns

about preparations for the polls allayed. These included GECOM's handling of multiple registration findings and its failure to revise the election plan for an accurate poll date.

Parris' actions have been cited in the international observer reports on the polls as one of the reasons for a review of the way in which GECOM is composed. The OAS, the Commonwealth and the Carter Center have urged that the process for the composition of the commission be changed, citing it as one of the reasons for the deadlocks and delays that led to a lack of trust and confidence among the general public. Significantly, the Carter Center has recommended changing the Carter-Price formula for the composition of the GECOM to avoid division along political lines. Since the 2001 elections, the Carter Center had urged that careful consideration be given to alternative models for the commission, towards either reducing or eliminating entirely political party representation in favour of increasing the role of civil society and professional experts. The Carter-Price formula, used since the 1992 elections, governs the composition of the commission. It provides for the appointment of the six members of the commission – three appointed by the President, acting in his own deliberate judgement; and three appointed by the President acting on the advice of the Opposition Leader after meaningful consultation with the opposition parties represented in the National Assembly. The Chairman is appointed from a list of six persons, who are not unacceptable to the President, submitted by the Opposition Leader after he has meaningfully consulted with the non-government political parties represented in the Assembly.

