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GUYANA: Burnham in Total Control

Forbes Burnham's overwhelming victory in the election on Monday--blatantly rigged by his supporters--solidifies the Executive President's control. His party's sweep of most seats in the National Assembly will allow Burnham to amend the constitution at will, thereby eliminating all forms of opposition participation in the political process. Opposition leaders have denounced the electoral abuses, which ranged from double voting by Burnham's supporters to the detention of members of a self-appointed international observer team by the security forces. Nevertheless, they will be unable and unwilling even to try to rouse the apathetic public to violence and may choose to protest ineffectively through a boycott of the legislature. Burnham now faces the greater challenge of curing Guyana's economic ills; the fraudulent election tactics, however, may detract from government efforts to gain more Western assistance.

