

A travesty of democracy



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FACING the ignominy of being voted out, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan has taken an unprecedented step—advising the president for dissolution of the National Assembly and calling for early elections. In what many believe to be a blatant violation of the rules, the deputy speaker declared the no-confidence motion illegal on the basis of what he described as a “foreign conspiracy,” thereby scuttling the much-anticipated vote that would decide whether Imran Khan remained in office or not.

Reacting in the immediate aftermath of Sunday morning's events, Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, who heads the think tank Pildat, pointed out in a TV broadcast that Fawad Chaudhry had hardly finished asking Qasim Suri for a ruling that the former deputy speaker began to read out a ruling—no doubt prepared in advance—showing that there had been no “application of mind” to the matter and a pre-prepared plan had been followed.

It was evident that with the crumbling of the ruling coalition and defeat looming in the numbers game, the prime minister had lost the confidence of the house, and that this was a last-ditch attempt to escape his imminent ouster. The development has now plunged the country into a constitutional crisis. The Supreme Court has taken *suo motu* notice of the matter, and the whole country is awaiting its ruling over the government action.

Lawyer Faisal Chaudhry, who is the brother of former Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry, said there were judgments of the Supreme Court that put Article 5 of the constitution “above all other matters.”

Speaking on a TV channel, he also said that the court would have to have a deeper look into the “Lettergate” affair—a reference to the “threat letter” from a foreign country that Prime Minister Khan has repeatedly alluded to as proof that the no-confidence move

was a part of a global conspiracy. Last week, the PTI government had approached the military leadership to salvage the situation. Over the past several months, the security establishment had taken a step back, leaving the government to fight its own political battles with a re-energised opposition alliance. This



decision seemed to encourage the opposition to step up its attacks on the government.

It also triggered an unravelling of the fragile coalition and led to a rise in the number of dissidents within the ruling party's ranks. The PTI government has been floundering for some time, but no one expected it to unravel so quickly. The rising number of party defectors had also shaken the government and things were looking extremely grim for the embattled prime minister.

By his own admission, the ISI chief had reportedly given Imran Khan three options: face the no-confidence vote, resign or go for elections. Imran Khan apparently opted for the third option, provided the opposition withdrew the no-confidence motion. The shrewd opposition, however, refused and asked for the prime minister's resignation in order to end the showdown. That, many believe,

was the end of the arbitration move involving the security establishment. Meanwhile, the prime minister piloted a fresh narrative: that the opposition's no-confidence motion was part of a “US-backed conspiracy.” He also claimed that he was being threatened for not accepting foreign dictation and for pursuing an

change in Pakistan. The line that most people point to in the communiqué issued after the meeting is, “The committee concluded that the communication amounted to blatant interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan by the country in question, which was unacceptable under any circumstances.”

However, any expert will tell you that this is standard diplomatic parlance whenever a third country comments on matters considered internal by any sovereign state.

But the contention was used by the government to throw out the no-confidence motion.

What is most troubling is that the PTI government is using the issue to declare opposition leaders “foreign agents” and “traitors.” The use of this “ultra-nationalist” card could prove to be extremely dangerous for the country and could harm Pakistan's national interest. The prime minister has been using religion to galvanise his right-wing support base. He has declared the unfolding power struggle “a battle between good and evil”—rhetoric that has made the political environment extremely volatile.

Imran Khan's latest move is a further demonstration of his contempt for parliament and the democratic process. Such unconstitutional steps will only weaken democracy further. Surely, elections are the only solution to current political crisis in the country, but the “apparently unconstitutional” means employed to block voting on the no-confidence resolution sets a bad precedent and cannot be tolerated.

In the words of Deputy Attorney General Raja Khalid Mehmood Khan, the federal government has “toyed” with the law of the land. In his view, the deputy speaker's action was totally in violation of the constitution.

What we witnessed in the National Assembly on Sunday was a travesty of democracy, and what the prime minister doesn't realise is that his surprise “trump card” could easily turn into a nightmare for him if the Supreme Court deems the government's actions “not kosher.”

This article was first published in Dawn, an ANN partner of The Daily Star, on April 4, 2022.

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Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan may have avoided getting ousted on April 3, 2022, but his country is now in a constitutional crisis.

FILE PHOTO:
REUTERS

independent foreign policy. The story of foreign interference in Pakistan's internal political matters was built around a cable from a Pakistani diplomat, based on his conversations with certain American officials. Although the contents of the letter were reportedly shared with some journalists, there is little evidence to substantiate the government's claims that the no-confidence motion was sponsored by foreign forces.

The government, it would seem, purposely exaggerated an informal, undiplomatic expression by an American diplomat to build a narrative that suited their political needs and tried to paint the opposition's “wholly democratic” move as some kind of foreign conspiracy.

Even the statement issued after the national security committee meeting did not directly mention any such foreign-backed conspiracy for regime

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Ensure equal opportunities for hijras

People of the third gender, known as hijra, are one of the most discriminated against and vulnerable communities in Bangladesh. In our society, the term “hijra” is stigmatised and used as an insult. They are often the targets of jokes and stereotyped as hostile. Normalisation of such behaviour has resulted in their exclusion from society as a whole,

which is a blatant violation of their basic human rights. Radical changes are needed in our society to ensure that hijras have equal rights and opportunities. They have as much potential as any other citizens to contribute to our country's development.

Farhin Tasnim, IUB

Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar
Dhaka-1207

Tender No. 06

Date: 04/04/2022

Invitation for Tender

01	Ministry/Division	Health Services Department, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.		
02	Agency	Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute.		
03	Procuring entity name	Director, Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute.		
04	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.		
05	Tender name	"Supply of Cardiac Mechanical Devices & Cardiac Disposable Items"		
06	Invitation Ref No.	BSHI(M)/2022/ME/01		
07	Date	04.04.2022		
08	Procurement method	OTM (NCT)		
09	Budget and source of fund	Development Budget (GOB)		
10	Development partner	Prime Minister's Relief & Welfare Fund.		
11	Tender publication date	05.04.2022		
12	Tender last selling date and time	08.05.2022, During the office hour within 02.00pm		
13	Tender closing date and time	09.05.2022, 12.00pm		
14	Tender opening date and time	09.05.2022, 01.00pm		
15	Name and address of the office(s)	Office of the Director, Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207		
16	Name and address of the office(s) Selling tender document	1. Primary Place: Office of the Director, Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. 2. Secondary Place: Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Thana, Agargaon, Dhaka.		
17	Name and address of the office(s) Receiving tender document	1. Primary Place: Office of the Director, Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. 2. Secondary Place: Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Thana, Agargaon, Dhaka. Or by post/courier service/by hand		
18	Name and address of the office(s) Opening tender document	Office of the Director, Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute (Board Room), Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.		
19	Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	All requirements described in the Standard Tender Document (STD)		
20	Brief description of goods	Lot-01, Cardiac Mechanical Devices Lot-02, Cardiac Disposable Items		
21	Price of tender documents	Tk 5000/- (five thousand only)		
Package No. GD-06	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount in Taka
	01	Cardiac Mechanical Devices	Bangladesh Shishu Hospital & Institute	2.5% of bid amount
	02	Cardiac Disposable Items	Bangladesh Shishu Hospital & Institute	2.5% of bid amount
22	Name of official inviting tender	Prof. (Dr.) Md. Jahangir Alam		
23	Designation of official inviting tender	Director, Bangladesh Shishu Hospital & Institute		
24	Address of official inviting tender	Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207		
25	Contact number of official inviting tender	55050451-60		
26	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject the tender proceedings			
27	Tendering method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)		
The tender notice can be seen at website: www.dsh.org.bd and www.cptu.gov.bd				
Prof. (Dr.) Md. Jahangir Alam Director Bangladesh Shishu Hospital & Institute				

GD-651

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Prime Minister's Office
Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority
Dhaka Export Processing Zone
Ashulia, Savar, Dhaka-1349.
(www.bepza.gov.bd)

Ref. No. 03.06.2672.333.018.002.20- 7463

Date: 04-04-2022

Auction Notice (2nd Time)

Sealed tenders (2nd Time) are hereby invited from the interested National/Foreign Buyers/Companies in order to sell Inventoried & Valuated Structure, Machinery & other Materials of a terminated Sweater, Cardigan and Pullover manufacturing industry named M/s. A-One (BD) Ltd., Plot # 114-120, DEPZ (Old Zone) "as and where basis" and also to operate the factory as per the terms & conditions stated below (It was 100% foreign compliance factory located on 3.5 acres of land having 160,000 Sq. feet (Approx.) production floor space. This factory is equipped with state of the art Machinery, Boiler, Generator, Chillers and has Gas connection, which is ready for production):

Terms & Conditions:

- Interested Organizations/Persons/Existing enterprises of EPZ(s) (Local/Joint Venture/Foreign) or any other interested persons/organizations from outside EPZ can take part in this auction who are interested to operate the enterprise in Dhaka EPZ by observing the existing rules and regulations in this regard.
- Successful bidder will have to pay VAT, TAX and other payable fees as per custom rules for the duty free imported materials of the industry to be taken out to the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA).
- Auction documents attached with a pay order/bank draft/FDD from any schedule bank of an amount of 10% as earnest money (refundable) of the total quoted price must be submitted in favour of BEPZA. Auction documents without earnest money will be treated as rejected.
- Structure, Machinery & other Materials under the inventory list may be seen on 19/04/2022, 20/04/2022 & 21/04/2022 from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. Information regarding the visit and the list of materials may be collected by contacting with the Executive Director, Dhaka EPZ directly.
- Successful bidder will have to pay the remaining 90% amount of the quoted price along with applicable TAX & VAT within 15 days to BEPZA if the tender is accepted. Accordingly, the delivery of Structure, Machineries & other Materials will have to be taken as per Customs & BEPZA rules.
- Auction Schedule of the company shall be bought by paying Tk. 5,000.00 (non-refundable) within 24/04/2022 during office hours (9:00 am to 3:30 pm) from the Accounts Department of Dhaka-EPZ, Chattogram-EPZ, Adamjee-EPZ & Accounts Department, BEPZA Executive Office, Dhaka.
- Auction schedule shall be dropped on 25/04/2022 on or before 12.00 noon into the auction boxes kept at the office of Executive Director (IP), BEPZA, BEPZA Complex, House # 19/D, Road # 6, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka, Executive Director, Dhaka-EPZ, Adamjee-EPZ & Chattogram-EPZ.
- Submitted Auction/Tender documents will be opened on 26/04/2022 at 11.00 am at the office of Executive Director, Dhaka-EPZ in presence of the bidders (If any).
- Successful bidder will be allowed to operate the industrial unit in the EPZ subject to fulfillment of the project sanctioning procedure of BEPZA.
- Persons/Organizations/Investors who are interested to operate this industry will get priority in auction.

The Authority reserves the right to accept any tender or reject any or all of the submitted tenders without showing any reason. The Authority also preserves the right to cancel the Auction and accordingly take next action if the desired rates are not obtained.

(Md. Abdu Sobhan)
Executive Director
Phone: 02-996689002
E-Mail: ed.depz@bepza.gov.bd

GD-652