

When a head of state becomes a nation's nightmare

SANJA DE SILVA JAYATILLEKA

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IT is not unknown in history that a single ruler was the cause of a nation's downfall, the obvious case in modern times being Adolf Hitler—an elected leader—one of the best known among a collection of reviled names scattered throughout history as examples of the evil that power can degenerate into. In each case they mercifully failed to prevail in the end.

In Sri Lanka, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has become that nightmare for its people, just two years after he was elected as head of state, a feat not easily achieved.

Before he resigned, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, miffed at his brother's attempts to scapegoat him for the country's increasing instability, brought in thousands of his supporters from the provinces to the city on May 9, proclaiming their demand for his continuance in office. They rioted violently in the streets, clashing with the original, peaceful protesters, smashing the temporary structures that those young people had erected in protest sites in front of the PM's residence and at the Galle Face Green. They succeeded in putting some of them in hospital. The police intervened with tear gas and water cannon to stop the marauding hordes of MR supporters from their scorched-earth intentions at Galle Face Green and beat them back for now.

The peaceful protest at GotaGoGama was finally invaded, not by law enforcement but by provincial politicians of the MR camp with their supporters. Escalation of the situation is now inevitable.

The president owes it to the people to prevent this emerging situation from deteriorating into further blood-letting in a land that has already seen far too much of it. He, and only he, can end this nightmare, instead of continuing to embody it.

Meanwhile, the parties of the parliamentary opposition need a deep-going reckoning to understand why some of them were rejected violently at the protest sites, and some welcomed, as they attempted to solidarize with those young people under attack from MR supporters. As the aspirant government, they need to self-examine and re-position fast, just as the protesters must not descend into anarchy by rejecting even those on their side in parliament.

The abyss stares back

The predictable trajectory into an economic abyss at Gotabaya Rajapaksa's hands, starting with a whimsical overnight ban on chemical fertiliser, following a massive centralisation of power in the presidency, to other eccentric policies, leading to multiple dysfunctions in every sector, saw the hapless citizenry plunged into sudden poverty, dying in gas and fuel queues, as everything, from milk powder to printing paper, became scarce commodities very quickly due to a dearth of dollars in the



treasury.

Despite all his attempts to divert attention to other factors, including through pressure for his brother the prime minister and the cabinet to resign, the people he rules over saw, clear as day, that the president himself was the primary cause that plunged a once middle-income country into such privation and despair that children in neighbouring India began breaking their tills to send a few thousand rupees to alleviate this country's needless misery.

The continuing nightmare for the people, however, is that despite the desperate protests in every province, with one clear message contained in a single ubiquitous slogan of "Gota Go Home", the president appears to have no intention of doing the one thing that could instantly commence the country's rapid recovery.

It is not as if every mode of protest, every possible platform, traditional and digital, has not been used to ensure that the message reached him.

A recent social media post of some women, from Chilaw, ranting against the president in absolute rage, showed them employ swear words that probably had not been strung together in quite that manner against any ruler anywhere. Most of it was disturbingly bloodcurdling, being the more pitiful due to her claim that as a cancer patient, she no longer had the medicines to treat her condition. In her invective, the rage extended to the president's many relatives in parliament but left little doubt as to who would be strung up in public by a nether body part if one of those women got her hands on him.

Exacerbating the already crumbling situation are those members of parliament and officials loyal to the president who excuse his every blunder with inane explanations. Delivered with sycophantic fervour, they only serve to incense the people even more.

The president's rapidly decreasing supporters' solution is to demand that the prime minister leaves and the cabinet with

Anti-government demonstrators take part in a protest near the president's office in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on May 10.

PHOTO: AFP

him. They claim that there would be no point in the president resigning because his replacement will have to be appointed from the now despised 225 MPs in parliament who failed to prevent the country's descent into bankruptcy. They refuse to see that such a replacement, any replacement, would be welcomed with cheers and firecrackers by the people. Those protesters at the many GotaGoGama sites made that amply clear by promising that as long as the president stays, so will they.

Every day now, people gather on the city streets with their empty gas canisters, blocking the roads in protests. Feelings are running high and the tension among the crowd is palpable, as minor skirmishes break out intermittently. A 100 gas cylinders were forcibly acquired recently by people who waited for days for a sighting of the trucks carrying them and pounced on it to grab one any which way. People have also turned on each other as they stand in line for essentials. It is clear that serious rioting is only a hair's-breadth away.

Revolution is not the only solution

What does the president see when he surveys the land? His pet initiative, the

organic fertiliser decision, has collapsed, and taken a land once self-sufficient in rice with plentiful vegetables, a thriving, world renowned tea industry and a prosperous rural community into irreparable failure in the short to medium term. Similarly, the economic mismanagement has resulted in the desperate shortage of dollars in the treasury, impacting every aspect of life. The protests have now passed a month and continue to grow.

The trust in this regime's integrity is dwindling as the Easter bombing of April 2019, which instantly lifted the chance of this president's election to office as the candidate of law and order, is now increasingly seen as having been used to propel the candidacy on the fears of the people. The cardinal himself has expressed his misgivings of a possible grave conspiracy, endangering the Catholic community and other worshippers engaged in prayers on that fateful Easter Sunday. The cardinal's entreaties to the pope himself have evoked concern in Rome about the massacre. The many bereaved and injured who suffer to this day have yet not had justice delivered, despite the powerful presidency and a security apparatus with a huge portion of the nation's budget.

The president's party has practically thrown up its hands in defeat, starting with the newly appointed minister of finance. The president has been forced to call for the establishment of an all-party government to replace it. No party is jumping at the chance, and talks are ongoing with professional associations intervening with proposals for recovery.

The president has been unable to appear in public since the protests started.

A no-confidence motion against the president and prime minister has been submitted to parliament by the opposition. Wrangling within the governing political circles is being publicly played out, while living conditions of the people are deteriorating dangerously.

The existentially besieged people ask only that the president makes the all-important decision to resign, together with his regime, if he has any regard for them or the country. They are convinced that the solutions to all else will flow from that.



The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd.
Gazipur-1703

Local e-Tender Notice
Website: www.spcbl.org.bd

Ref: 87/2022 Dated: 11 /05/2022

Name of work: Supply of bank note packing box made of mango wood and GP sheet

Electronic tenders (e-Tender) are hereby invited from the Supplier having experience of supply work in the departments of government, semi-government/autonomous organizations/bank/insurance organizations for the supply of abovementioned goods for this Corporation as per under noted schedule. Tender documents showing terms and conditions with specification will be available at the website <https://spcbltender.bb.org.bd>. It is to mention here that this is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted and no hard copy will be accepted except price of tender schedule and earnest money. To submit e-Tender the Supplier need to register on <https://spcbltender.bb.org.bd>. For more details please contact cell: +88-01534002183 & +88-0153400218. Necessary information is given below:

- Price per e-Tender schedule** : 2000.00 (Two Thousand) Taka only (not refundable).
- Date of publish of e-Tender** : 12/05/2022.
- Last date & time for submission of e-Tender** : 08/06/2022 up to 11.00am.
- Date & time for opening of e-Tender** : 08/06/2022 at 11.15am.

Supplier may collect the e-Tender schedule from the abovementioned website. Supplier need to submit earnest money @ 3% (three percent) of the total quoted price in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order in favour of the "Managing Director, The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd." along with the price of e-Tender schedule in the form of Pay-Order/DO in the tender box kept at Corporation's office in Gazipur on or before the scheduled deadline for submission of e-Tender. e-Tender(s) without earnest money and price for procurement of e-Tender schedule shall not be acceptable. The e-Tender shall have to be submitted as per e-Tender guidelines mentioned at above website. Offer(s) shall be opened as per schedule mentioned above in presence of the tenderer(s) if any. 01 (one) e-Tender schedule is applicable only for one Supplier firm submitting one offer along with earnest money and price of e-Tender schedule. The authority reserves the right to reject or accept any e-Tender without assigning any reason whatsoever. Submission of e-Tender after the specified time shall not be acceptable under any circumstances.

Signed/-
Md. Mustafizur Rahaman
Additional Chief Engineer (Incharge)
(Engineering Office)
Phone: 88-02-9205110-15, Ext.-250/268

GD-940

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project
Directorate of Technical Education
F/4-B, Argargaon A/A, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207



Request for Expression of Interest (Selection of IDG Management Specialist)

The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost for the Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project and intends to apply part of its for consulting services for the Project by some individual consultants.

1	Ministry/Division:	Technical & Madrasah Education Division
2	Agency:	Directorate of Technical Education
3	Procuring Entity Name:	Project Director, Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project
4	Procuring Entity Code:	Not used at present
5	Procuring Entity District:	Dhaka
6	Expression of Interest for Selection of :	Individual Consultant (Time based)
7	Invitation Ref No.:	57.03.0000.000.07.008.21- 84
8	Date:	10.05.2022

KEY INFORMATION

9	Procurement Method:	Individual Consultant Selection (Time Based)
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FUNDING INFORMATION

10	Budget and Source of Funds:	Development Budget (IDA)
11	Development Partners:	International Development Association (IDA)

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

12	Project Code:	P-167506
13	Project Name:	Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project
14	EOI Closing Date and Time:	16.06.2022 and 5.00 P.M.

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

15 Brief Description of Assignment:

- Technical support to PMU in executing the tasks related to the processing, implementation, review, management, monitoring and evaluation of Institutional Development Plans (IDP) sub-projects;
- Support to organizing the awareness, promotion of IDG in participating institutions and prepare/adopt such awareness, communication and promotional materials;
- Assist to organize training/workshops for eligible institutions and faculties on proposal writing and submission and prepare the contents/materials for such training workshops;
- Contribute to preparing the budget, financing plan, and procurement plan and rationalization of approved IDP proposals;
- Support to processing the evaluation of proposals;
- Assist surveys and work closely with the M&E unit to prepare, updates M&E reports on IDP sub-projects;
- N.B. Please see the ToR for detail description of assignment.

16 Experience, Resources and Delivery Capacity Required:

- At least Master in Engineering or related discipline from any recognized university;
- At least 15 years' experience of teaching in a university or a tertiary education or diploma offering institutions, including 3 years of experiences in the development projects/programs;
- Conversant with organizational and operational aspects of polytechnics and other diploma institutions in Bangladesh;
- Conversant with GoB's national development objectives and goals (SDG), National Education Policy (NEP), including that of vocational education, National Skills Development Policy, TVET sub-sector policies, strategies, and their implementation procedure;
- Proficiency in English and Bangla are essential;
- Competencies in curriculum development and pedagogical issues;
- Demonstrated proficiency in writing and speaking English and Bengali;
- Report writing skills and ability to deliver them within a timeline and under pressure;
- Experience in institutional development grant activities will be treated as an additional qualification;
- Good command in computer operations, including MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Internet etc.

17 Other Details (If Applicable):

Interested applicants shall obtain further information from the Project office during office time in any working day before the closing date. They also requested to collect Standard Procurement Document (SPD) and other documents from the office undersigned during office time and website of DTE (www.techedu.gov.bd) within the stipulated date.

18	Association with foreign firm is:	Not Applicable			
19	Ref No.	Phasing of Services	Location	Indicative Start Date	Indicative Completion Date
	57.03.0000.000.07.008.21-84	24 Person Month	DTE, Dhaka	01 July, 2022	30 June, 2024

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

20	Name of Official Inviting EOI:	Md. Mohsin
21	Designation of Official Inviting EOI:	Project Director(Additional Secretary), ASSET Project
22	Address of Official Inviting EOI:	Project Director, Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project, Directorate of Technical Education, Room No - 501, F/4-B, Argargaon A/A, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
23	Contact details of Official Inviting EOI	Tel: 02-41024954
24	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all the Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings	

R/10.05.2022
(Md. Mohsin)
Project Director (Additional Secretary)

GD- 927