

## Important Vocab For the Editorial

1. **pursue** (verb) – engage in, follow, conduct.
2. **apparently** (adjective) – seemingly, evidently, it appears that.
3. **instinctive** (adjective) – intuitive, unconscious, emotional.
4. **credit** (verb) – praise, commend, acclaim.
5. **inflict on** (verb) – impose, force, thrust.
6. **loyalist** (noun) – a person who is loyal (faithful/devoted).
7. **referendum** (noun) – public vote; a direct vote in which people cast ballots to decide on a specific issue or policy.
8. **departure** (noun) – deviation, divergence, change/shift.
9. **authoritarian** (adjective) – oppressive, dictatorial, totalitarian.
10. **majoritarian** (adjective) – relating to a philosophy that states that a majority (sometimes categorized by religion, language, social class, or some other identifying factor) of the population is entitled to a certain degree of primacy (priority) in society, and has the right to make decisions that affect the society.
11. **triumphalism** (noun) – an attitude or a belief that a particular doctrine, religion, culture, social system is superior to and should triumph all over others.
12. **denudation** (noun) – stripping, divesting, depriving.
13. **revive** (verb) – regenerate, resuscitate, revitalize.
14. **persistent** (adjective) – continuous, never-ending, unceasing.
15. **sought** past and past participle of **seek** (verb) – try, attempt, aim.
16. **stall** (verb) – obstruct, impede, delay, distract.
17. **popular** (adjective) – general, common.
18. **apprehension** (noun) – anxiety/worry, concern, fear.
19. **accentuate** (verb) – highlight, underline, focus attention on.
20. **multi-ethnic** (adjective) – constituting several ethnic groups.
21. **backdrop** (noun) – situation, scenario, context.
22. **fray** (noun) – contest/competition.
23. **evoke** (verb) – suggest, stimulate, bring to mind.
24. **infamous** (adjective) – ill-famed, with a bad reputation, notorious/disreputable.
25. **abduction** (noun) – kidnapping, hostage-taking.
26. **renounce** (verb) – surrender, forgo, abandon/reject.
27. **candidacy** (noun) – candidate-ship.
28. **reinforce** (verb) – strengthen, fortify, support.
29. **detractor** (noun) – critic, fault-finder, censurer.
30. **keen on** (phrasal verb) – interested in, passionate about, attracted/fascinated by.
31. **appellation** (noun) – name/title, tag/byname, designation.
32. **sarcastic** (adjective) – ironic, mocking, ridiculing.
33. **approbation** (noun) – approval, praise, assent.
34. **reversion** (noun) – a return to a previous condition; backsliding, regression/downturn.

## Strongman candidate: On Gotabaya nomination as Sri Lanka presidential candidate

### Gotabaya nomination may strengthen view that Rajapaksas are pursuing family interests

#### In naming his brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa as his party's presidential candidate,

former Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapaksa has apparently gone by his instinctive understanding that the people may favour a strong leader who prioritises internal security. Mr. Gotabaya, a former defence secretary credited with being the brain behind the crushing military defeat inflicted on the Liberation Tigers in 2009, is the candidate of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP). The party was launched in 2016 by Mahinda Rajapaksa loyalists, but he has taken over its leadership only now. Sri Lanka is set to have a presidential election before the year is out, one that would be a virtual referendum on the performance of a power-sharing arrangement between political rivals from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the United National Party (UNP). The alliance of Maithripala Sirisena and Ranil Wickremesinghe came to power in 2015 on the promise of 'good governance', and a democratic departure from nearly a decade of authoritarian rule, majoritarian triumphalism and denudation of democratic institutions under Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa. The Sirisena-Wickremesinghe combination does not seem to have done enough to revive the economy or introduce political and economic reforms. Their alliance collapsed last year due to persistent differences, and in October 2018, Mr. Sirisena sought to replace Mr. Wickremesinghe with Mr. Rajapaksa. The courts stalled the move and restored the UNP leader's office. Earlier this year, the Easter Sunday bomb blasts in churches and hotels, may have brought back popular apprehensions about national security and accentuated differences in the multi-ethnic country. In this backdrop, the candidature of Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa is no surprise.

However, Mr. Gotabaya's presence in the fray comes with its own controversies. His strongman image evokes fear among minorities. His name is linked with war crimes, murder, corruption cases as well as with the infamous 'white van abductions' that led to many disappearances. That he holds dual citizenship is another controversy, but it is now claimed he has renounced his U.S. citizenship and obtained a new Sri Lankan passport. With Mr. Mahinda likely to aim for the PM's position in a Gotabaya presidency, the candidacy may reinforce their detractors' view that the Rajapaksas are keen on securing their family's interests. His brother Basil Rajapaksa recently said in support of Mr. Gotabaya that elimination of corruption in Sri Lanka "needs a terminator", but the

appellation only evoked sarcastic approbation for its deadly and destructive import. He will most likely have the support of President Sirisena's SLFP. However, the UNP is yet to decide on its candidate. It will have to choose from among its leader, Mr.

Wickremesinghe, deputy leader Sajith Premadasa, and Parliament Speaker Karu Jayasuriya. A larger question now is whether Sri Lanka still believes in the platform of reform and progress that decided the 2015 elections, or would not mind a reversion to the Rajapaksa era.