

Ranil Wickremesinghe, the 8th Executive President of Sri Lanka

FIRST TIME IN SRI LANKAN HISTORY A PRESIDENT HAS TAKEN OATHS AT THE PARLIAMENTARY COMPLEX

LEADER OF THE UNP SINCE 1994

THE 73-YEAR-OLD VETERAN POLITICIAN HAS HELD THE OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER SIX TIMES

STARTED POLITICAL CAREER AS CHIEF ORGANISER OF THE UNP IN KELANIYA

The Parliament on Wednesday (July 20) elected Ranil Wickremesinghe as the 8th Executive President of Sri Lanka by a majority of 52 votes.

In a secret ballot that got underway in the House on Wednesday, the Members of Parliament (MPs) voted to elect a succeeding President to fill in the post left vacant by the resignation of former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on July 14 after protesters broke into several key buildings in Colombo.

Wickremesinghe was elected to the office of President with a total of 134 votes whereas his two rival candidates Dullas Alahapperuma received 82 votes and Anura Kumara Dissanayaka received just three votes. Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa, who was to contest, withdrew his candidature to support Alahapperuma.

Wickremesinghe, a six-time former Prime Minister who became Acting President after his predecessor resigned, had the backing of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), the largest bloc in the 225-member Parliament.

First time

Wickremesinghe was sworn in as the 8th Executive President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka on Thursday (July 21) morning before Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya in the Parliamentary Complex. This is the first time in Sri Lankan history that a President has taken oaths at the Parliamentary complex. Moreover, it came on the 45th anniversary of the 1977 General Election (July 21, 1977) from which Wickremesinghe entered Parliament.

Wickremesinghe embarked on active politics in the mid-1970s representing the United National Party (UNP) and entered the Parliament in 1977. He has been the Leader of the UNP since 1994. The 73-year-old veteran politician has held the office of Prime Minister six times although he has never completed a full term. Born on March 24, 1949, Wickremesinghe also held the position of Prime Minister of the previous Yahapalana Government.

Breakaway faction

Wickremesinghe was elected to the 9th Parliament on June 23, 2021 as a National List Member representing the United National Party, whose breakaway faction Samagi Jana Balawegaya headed by Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa scored major gains

at the expense of the UNP.

An alumnus of the Royal College of Colombo, Wickremesinghe was later selected to the Faculty of Law of the University of Colombo and sworn in as a lawyer. He started his political career as the Chief Organiser of the United National Party in Kelaniya Constituency in the mid of 1970 and was later appointed as the Chief Organiser of the Biyagama Constituency.

In 1977, he was elected as a Member of Parliament for the first time and was the youngest Cabinet Minister in the J.R. Jayewardene Government where he held the position of Minister of Youth Affairs and Employment. He was the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the age of 28, and later served as the Cabinet Minister for Youth Affairs, Education and Industry, Science and Technology.

Wickremesinghe, who also served as the Leader of the House between March 6, 1989 and May 7, 1993, also served as the Leader of the Opposition from 1994 to 2001 and from 2004 to 2015.

He was first elected as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka on May 7, 1993 and held that position until August 19, 1994. Wickremesinghe was the Prime Minister for the second time from December 9, 2001 to April 2, 2004, for the third time from January 9, 2015 to August 21, 2015, for the fourth time from August 24, 2015 to October 26, 2018, and for the fifth time from December 16, 2018 to November 21, 2019.

Resignation

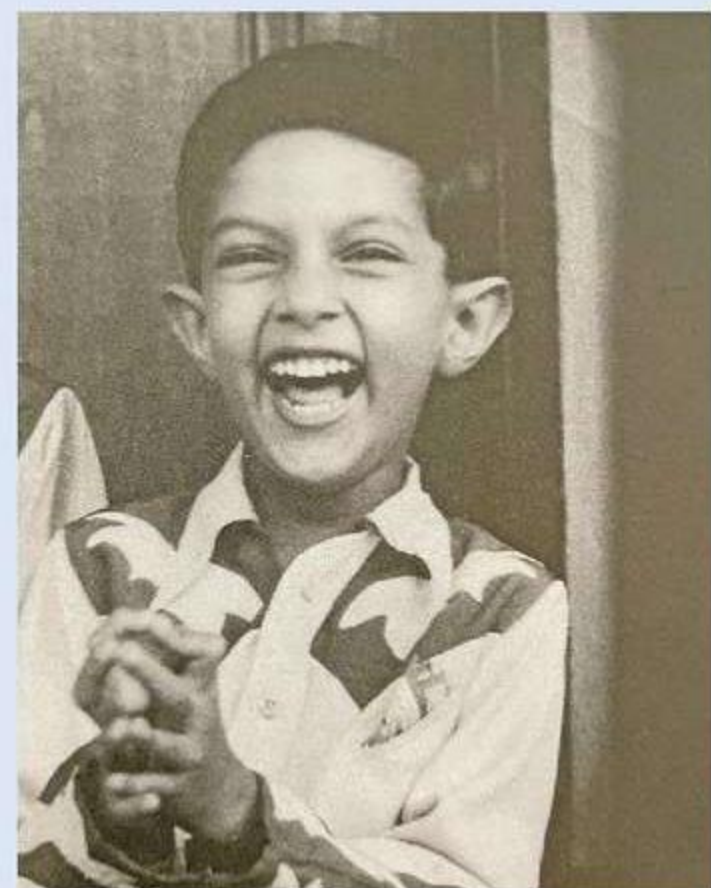
After the resignation of the former Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on May 9, Wickremesinghe returned to the post of Prime Minister on May 12 in the capacity of Prime Minister. Following the resignation of Gotabaya Rajapaksa from the office of President, he became the Acting President from July 14 as per the provisions of the Constitution.

Over his various terms in office, both as Prime Minister and Opposition Leader, Wickremesinghe became known for being economically capable and a pro-Western reformer, particularly for his role steering the country out of a recession in 2001. Since his entry to active politics, he was described as a "clean" politician, as he was untouched by corruption allegations.

He will be the President for the remainder of former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's term which ends in 2024.

RANIL WICKREMESINGHE - Fact File

The new President Ranil Wickremesinghe, 73, has been in Parliament for 45 years. He is the leader of the United National Party (UNP) since 1994.



Ranil at a tender age

1949: Born in Colombo. Ranil Wickremesinghe's parents were Esmond Wickremesinghe and Nalini Wickremesinghe



Ranil's parents

1954: Entered Royal College, Colombo

1966: Sat for the Advanced Level Examination

1967: Sat for the London Advanced Level Examination

1967: Passed both A-Level exams and entered the Faculty of Law in the Colombo University. President of the Law Students Union and the Vice President of the University Students Council

1970: Voted for the first time at the seventh General Election of Independent Sri Lanka. Sat for the law final exam. Entered Law College to sit for the Attorney's examination

1971: Passed both the Law Faculty and Law College exams

1972: Sworn in as Attorney-at-Law

1975: Appointed as chief United National Party (UNP) organiser of the Kelaniya electorate and later chief organizer of the Biyagama electorate

1977: Submitted nomination as the UNP candidate for the Biyagama electorate. Entered Parliament for the first time winning the Biyagama electorate with a majority of 6,769 votes. Appointed as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs



Ranil with former President late J.R. Jayewardene

1978: Appointed as Minister of Youth Affairs and Employment – the youngest member of the Cabinet

1980: Appointed as Minister of Education in addition to Youth Affairs and Employment

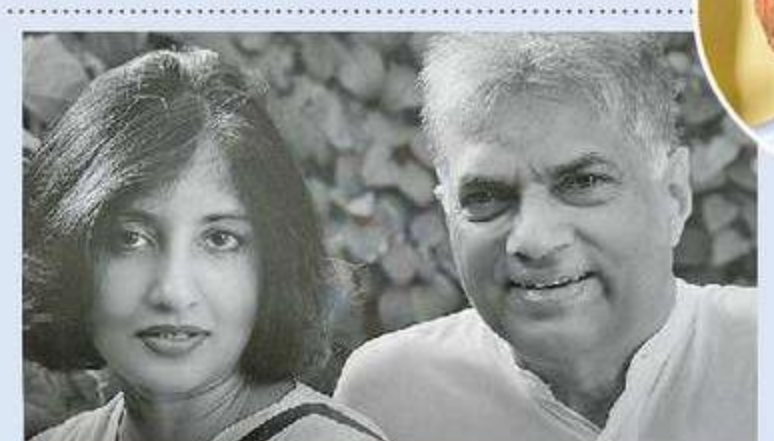
1989: Sworn in as Minister of Industries. Appointed as the Leader of the House in Parliament

1990: The functions of Science and Technology were added to his portfolio of Industries

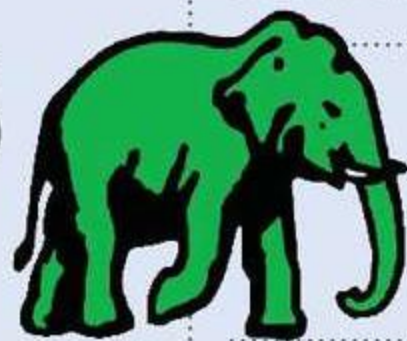
1991: Appointed as the Chief Media Spokesman for the Cabinet

1993: Sworn in as the 10th Prime Minister of Sri Lanka in the presence of President D.B. Wijetunga

1994: Appointed as the Leader of the UNP and the Opposition Leader of Parliament



Ranil with his wife Maithee



1995: Married Maithee Wickremesinghe, Senior Lecturer at the Department of English, University of Kelaniya

1999: Contested as the UNP nominee at the 4th Presidential Election and lost

2000: Contested the Colombo District from the UNP in the 2000 Parliamentary election and polled 363,668 preference votes

2001: Organised the elections as the Leader of the UNP. Won 109 seats for the UNP in the 2001 Parliamentary election and polled a record 415,686 preference votes. Became Prime Minister for the second time



Cease fire treaty with the LTTE

2002: Signed a Cease-fire treaty with the LTTE. The rate of economic growth which was minus 1.5% in 2002 was raised 4.0% during this regime

2003: Attended the International Fund Conference in Tokyo and approved the largest amount of foreign aid for the country – 4.5 billion dollars

2004: Contested the Colombo District at the 2004 Parliamentary Election and polled the largest number of preference votes – 329,524 votes. UNP won only 82 seats and was defeated. Started duties as Opposition Leader

2005: Lost the Fifth Presidential Election to Mahinda Rajapaksa by a small number of votes – 180,786

2010: Left the Presidential campaign and offered the party's sponsorship to General Sarath Fonseka

2014: Left the Presidential Election candidature and made way for Maithripala Sirisena to be the common candidate

2015: Sworn in as the Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the third time. Polled the largest number of preference votes 500,556 contesting the Colombo District in the Parliamentary Election held on August 17, 2015. Sworn before President Maithripala Sirisena as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka for the fourth time

2018: President Sirisena sacked Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and appointed Mahinda Rajapaksa as PM, which triggered a constitutional crisis. But Ranil Wickremesinghe was re-instated after 52 days.

2020: Sajith Premadasa formed the Samagi Jana Balawegaya with many stalwarts of the UNP. UNP suffered its worst defeat at 2020 General Election and gained one National List seat, which was filled by Ranil Wickremesinghe in 2021



Ranil sworn in as Prime Minister

May, 2022: Due to public protests, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa requested PM Mahinda Rajapaksa to step down. Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as Prime Minister for the sixth time

Ranil Wickremesinghe 8th Executive President of Sri Lanka

July 9, 2022: Protesters stormed President's House and President's office forcing President Gotabaya Rajapaksa flee the country. They burnt Premier Ranil Wickremesinghe's 5th Lane house in the night

Gotabaya Rajapaksa

July 14, 2022: President Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigned. Premier Wickremesinghe was sworn in as the Acting President.

July 20, 2022: Ranil Wickremesinghe was elected after securing 134 votes in the secret ballot held in Parliament, as the 8th President of Sri Lanka to complete the remaining tenure of the former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa



Ranil takes oaths as 8th Executive President

July 21, 2022: Ranil Wickremesinghe has takes oaths as Sri Lanka's 8th Executive President in Parliament complex

