

GOTABAYA APPOINTS RANIL AS SRI LANKA'S PM

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“Congratulations to the newly appointed Prime Minister of #lka, @RW_UNP. I wish you all the best as you navigate these troubled times,” he said in a tweet minutes after his successor was sworn in.

Even before Mr. Wickremesinghe was sworn in by the President, some religious leaders objected to the move, contending that it was “not the solution” people want, and that it would further escalate the crisis.

Prominent Buddhist monk Omalpe Sobitha Thero said Ranil Wickremesinghe was “not suitable” for the job. His appointment “completely disregarded” the proposal made by high-ranking monks to appoint an all-party interim government and was aimed at the “sole protection” of the Rajapaksas, he said.

Archbishop of Colombo Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, was quoted by local media as saying, “People want a person with integrity, not someone who has been defeated in politics.”

The political opposition too expressed strong disapproval at the President's choice. Leader of the leftist Janata Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) Anura Kumara Dissanayake said: “Ranil protects the Rajapaksas, and the Rajapaksas protect Ranil. No citizen in this country will fall for their conspiracy this time.”

Tamil National Alliance lawmaker M.A. Sumanthiran said: “The President has completely lost legitimacy, people want him to go home, and the Parliament will soon vote on a motion expressing displeasure over him. Mr. Wickremesinghe had no legitimacy in the current Parliament right from the beginning. He did not even win in his constituency.”

The Parliament stands adjourned till May 17, when the vote on the President is scheduled to be taken up. Mr. Wickremesinghe may face a trust vote soon after. In order to continue as PM, he must show he has the confidence of the House.

In a cautiously worded reaction on the development, India said it “looks forward to working with the Government of Sri Lanka formed in accordance with democratic processes pursuant to the swearing in of” Mr. Wickremesinghe.

“High Commission of India hopes for political stability and looks forward to working with the Government of Sri Lanka formed in accordance with democratic processes pursuant to the swearing in of Hon'ble @RW_UNP as the Prime Minister of #SriLanka,” said an official tweet.

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