

President Ranil Wickremesinghe at the Opening of ITC Ratnadipa Hotel

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President Ranil Wickremesinghe unveils the plaque to open the ITC Ratnadipa Hotel while Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena, Sanjiv Puri, Chairman and Managing Director, ITC and Santosh Jha, Indian High Commissioner look on.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe expressed his dedication to fostering an economic landscape in the nation that would prevent future struggles among its citizens. Emphasizing the swift reconstruction of the economy within a mere two-year span, he underscored his

resolve to elevate the standard of living by fortifying the economy's resilience. These remarks were made during the Ceremonial Opening of the ITC Ratnadipa Hotel. Located in the Galle Face Green, this luxurious hotel marks the first venture outside India by the ITC Hotel Group.

President Wickremesinghe extended a warm welcome, stating, "ITC welcome to Sri Lanka." He highlighted the prominent hotels in the vicinity, including the historic Galle Face Hotel, which is bestowed as the first five-star hotel in Asia, the Taj Hotel from India, and the Shangri-La Hotel from Singapore. He emphasized the significance of the newly established ITC Ratnadipa Hotel, positioned among these esteemed establishments by its height. He mentioned the forthcoming Cinnamon Life project located behind the hotel.



President Ranil Wickremesinghe with Sanjiv Puri, Chairman and Managing Director, ITC. Also present were Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena and Santosh Jha, Indian High Commissioner.

The President highlighted the rich heritage of the Sri Lankan hotel industry, noting the Oberoi Hotel as the pioneering city hotel in the country. He emphasized India's historical contribution to Sri Lanka's tourism sector, citing the early establishment of tourist hotels. Reflecting on the diverse range of hotels in the vicinity, including those representing India

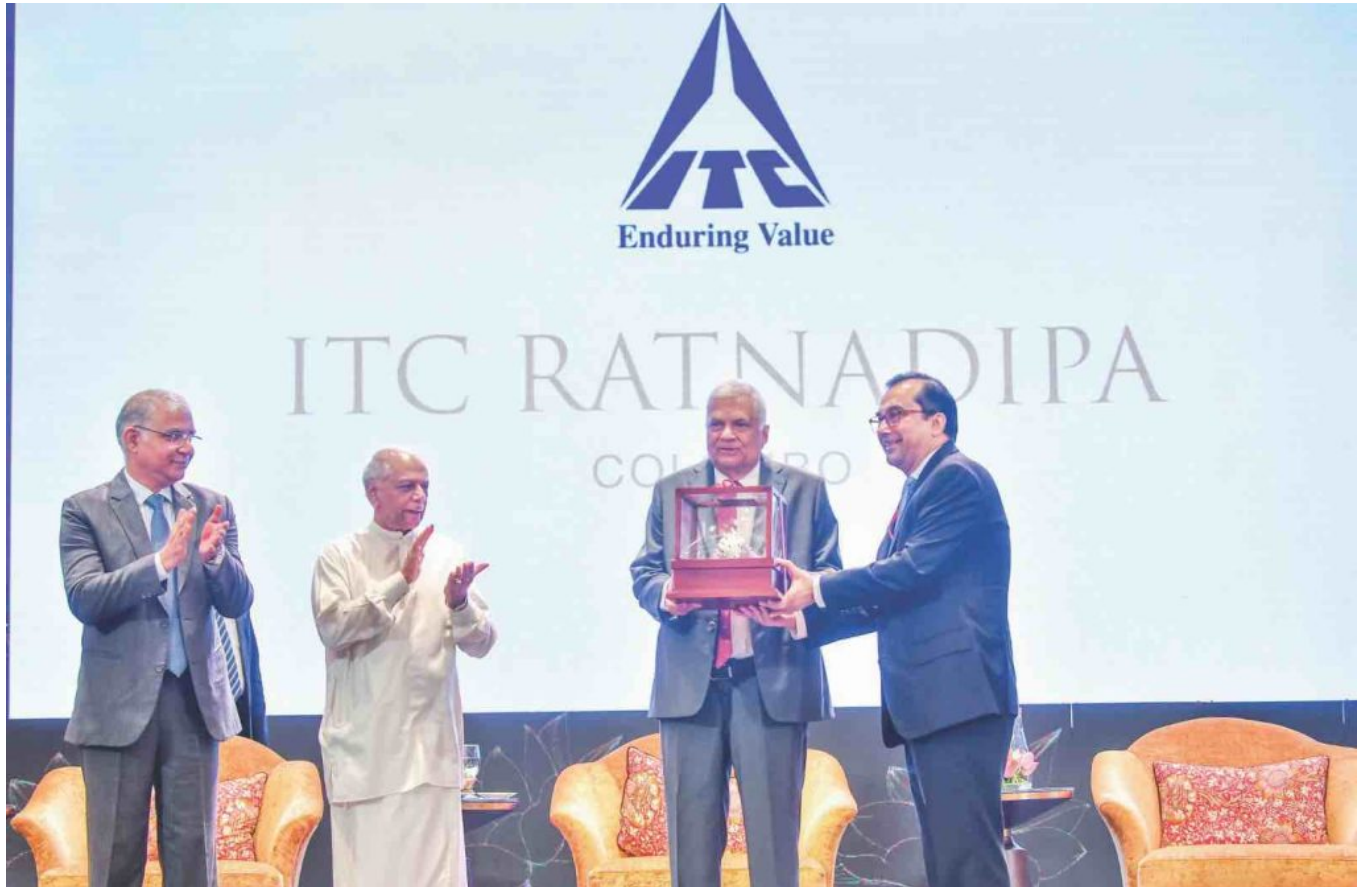
and Singapore, he expressed his belief that the location of the ITC hotel is unparalleled in Asia, offering a truly unique experience. President Ranil Wickremesinghe expressed confidence that the ITC Ratnadipa Hotel will symbolize Colombo city and tourism centered around Colombo. He highlighted the significance of Sri Lanka being chosen as the preferred destination by ITC following their successful establishment of a 10,000-room hotel chain in India.

The President outlined plans for further development beyond Colombo, including relocating the President's House to the Madiwela area within the next decade. He also emphasized the potential for transforming sites like Republic Square, Navy Headquarters, Old Jetty, Customs House, and the General Post Office into key components of the burgeoning Colombo Tourist City.

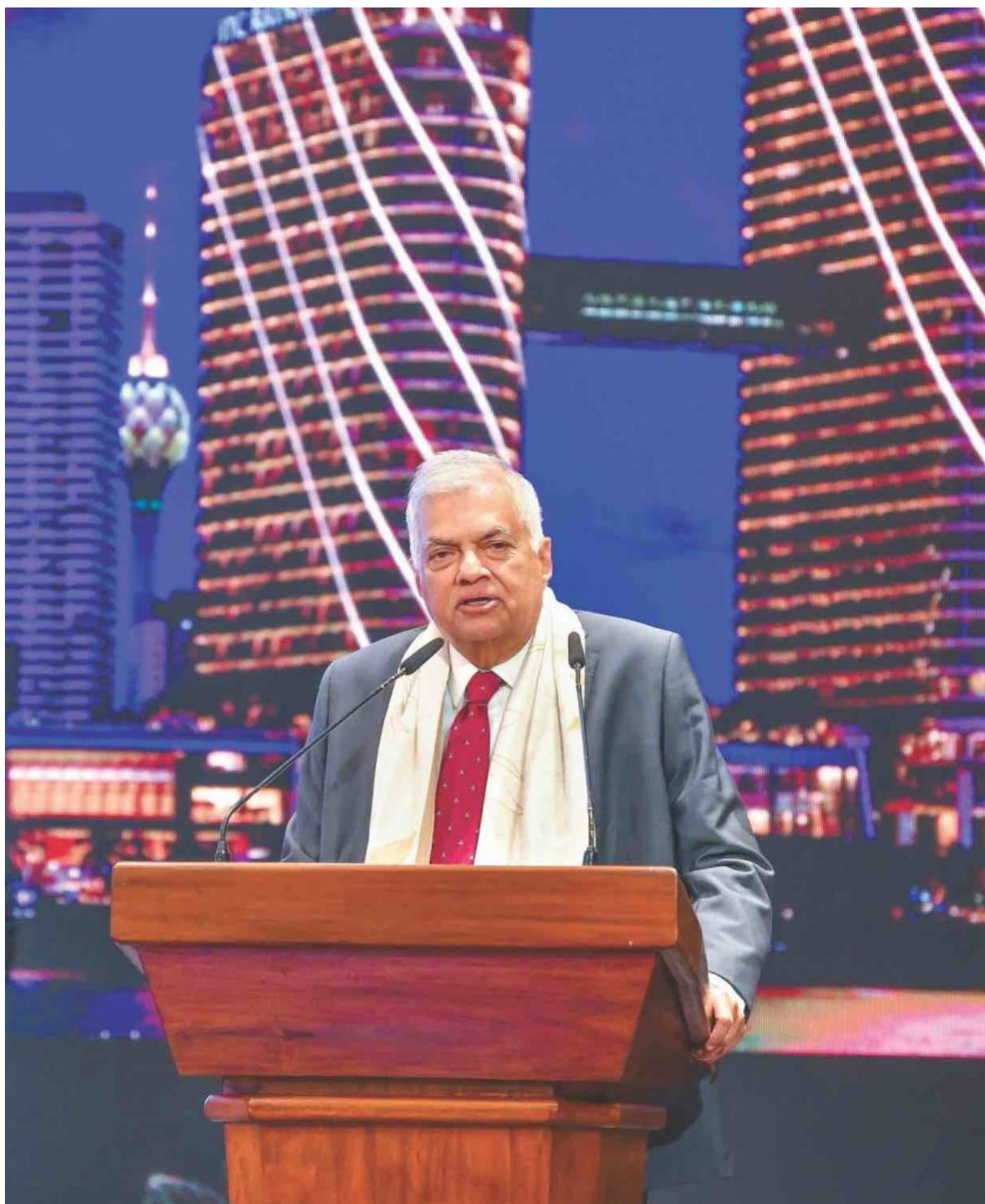
President Ranil Wickremesinghe reflected on the country's challenging circumstances two years ago, recalling the raid on the former President's office that sparked unrest amid an economic downturn. However, he highlighted the remarkable progress in rebuilding the economy within two years.

With Colombo emerging as a bustling tourist destination and star-grade hotels offering hope for the future of tourism, President expressed confidence that the tourism sector would play a pivotal role in revitalizing the economy. He affirmed the government's commitment to providing necessary support and facilities to expedite the recovery process through tourism.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe emphasized the importance of establishing an economy that would ensure stability and prosperity for all citizens. He highlighted ongoing efforts to implement strategic plans to achieve this goal, emphasizing that these initiatives would contribute to stabilizing the Sri Lankan economy and enhancing the standard of living for its people.



Sanjiv Puri, Chairman and Managing Director, ITC presenting a token of appreciation to President. Also present were Santosh Jha, Indian High Commissioner and PM Dinesh Gunawardena.



President Ranil Wickremesinghe.



Sagala Ratnayake, Senior Advisor to the President on National Security and Chief of the Presidential Staff and Harin Fernando, Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs of Sri Lanka.



Shehan Semasinghe, State Minister of Finance and Ali Sabry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka.