

Profile of Anura Kumara Dissanayake

Personal Information

- Full Name: Dissanayake Mudiyanseelage Anura Kumara Dissanayake
- Date of Birth: November 24, 1968
- Age: 55
- Nationality: Sri Lankan
- Ethnicity: Sinhalese
- Religion: Buddhism
- Education:
 - Primary and Secondary Education: Nalanda College, Colombo
 - Higher Education: Bachelor's degree from the University of Kelaniya, where he was also actively involved in student activism.
- Profession: Politician
- Spouse: Dr. Varuni Dissanayake
- Children: Two children
- Political Status: Leader of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and the National People's Power (NPP) movement
- Residency: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Political Background and Career

- Current Position:
 - Leader of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP): A left-wing Marxist political party in Sri Lanka.
 - Leader of the National People's Power (NPP) movement: The JVP spearheaded the formation of the NPP, a broader coalition focused on representing the working class, youth, and marginalized communities.

- Member of Parliament (MP): Represents the Colombo District.
- **Political Party: Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)**
 - The JVP, originally a Marxist-Leninist party, evolved under Anura Kumara Disanayake into a more pragmatic left-wing political force, advocating for social justice, workers' rights, and corruption-free governance.

Political Rise and Party Evolution:

- Anura Kumara Disanayake's political career began with his involvement in student politics during his university days, where he became an active member of the Socialist Students' Union (SSU), the student wing of the JVP.
- He joined the JVP in the late 1980s and rose through the ranks, becoming a central figure in Sri Lankan leftist politics.
- Leadership: Disanayake took over the leadership of the JVP in 2014, succeeding Somawansa Amarasinghe. Under his leadership, the JVP has worked to modernize and broaden its appeal, focusing on good governance, anti-corruption, and social justice.

Notable Political Initiatives and Contributions

- Anti-Corruption Campaigns:
 - One of the key pillars of Anura Kumara Disanayake's political platform is the fight against corruption. He has been a vocal critic of corruption within the ruling political elite and has advocated for transparency and accountability in government.
- Workers' Rights and Social Justice:
 - As the leader of the JVP, Disanayake has consistently championed the rights of the working class. He has advocated for labor rights, fair wages, and the protection of workers from exploitation.
- Economic Justice and Equality:
 - Disanayake has called for comprehensive economic reforms to reduce the wealth gap in Sri Lanka, advocating for policies that benefit the majority of citizens, especially in rural areas. He has been critical

of neoliberal policies and foreign debt accumulation, proposing a more self-reliant economic model.

- Youth and Education:
 - One of Dissanayake's key focuses has been on improving the education system, ensuring that Sri Lankan youth have access to quality education and job opportunities. He has also campaigned for the reduction of the cost of education and promoted policies that would alleviate the burden on students and families.
- Agricultural Reform:
 - Dissanayake has advocated for agricultural reforms aimed at supporting local farmers, ensuring food security, and reducing Sri Lanka's dependence on imports. His policies emphasize sustainable farming and increasing government support for agriculture.

2024 Presidential Campaign and Focus

- Presidential Candidate (2024):
 - Anura Kumara Dissanayake is one of the prominent candidates for the 2024 Presidential Election. His campaign is built around the themes of anti-corruption, social justice, and good governance.
- Campaign Focus:
 - Eradicating Corruption: Dissanayake's top priority is to root out corruption from government institutions and hold public officials accountable.
 - Social Justice and Equity: His policies aim to reduce income inequality, ensure fair distribution of resources, and create a welfare state that supports all citizens.
 - Economic Reform: Advocates for a more equitable economic system that supports local industries, reduces foreign debt, and prioritizes sustainable development.
 - Democratic Reform: Promotes strengthening democratic institutions, improving transparency, and reducing the influence of powerful political families and elites.

- Key Issues:
 - Corruption: Continually focuses on exposing the corruption of past and current governments, and pledges to establish independent institutions to combat it.
 - Education Reform: He proposes reforms to make education accessible and affordable for all, including reducing tuition costs for higher education and improving the quality of public education.
 - Worker Empowerment: Advocates for labor rights, improving wages, and ensuring safe working conditions, particularly for blue-collar workers.
 - Youth Employment: Focuses on creating new job opportunities for the youth, particularly through industrial and technological development.

Election Symbol

- Candidate Symbol: The bell symbol is the official symbol of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), and Dissanayake's campaign will use this symbol, which is historically associated with the party's fight for workers' rights and social justice.

Political Achievements

- Revitalization of the JVP:
 - Under Dissanayake's leadership, the JVP has transformed from a hardline Marxist party into a broader progressive political movement, focusing on governance, economic justice, and anti-corruption.
- Public Exposure of Corruption:
 - Dissanayake has consistently used his position in Parliament to expose corruption scandals, including those involving high-ranking government officials and political leaders. His work has raised public awareness of governmental malpractice and contributed to greater scrutiny of public officials.
- Social Policy Initiatives:
 - Through his advocacy in Parliament, Dissanayake has introduced and supported numerous social policy initiatives aimed at improving the

welfare of the Sri Lankan people, including healthcare and education reforms.

Controversies and Criticisms

- JVP's History of Violence:
 - The JVP's history, particularly its involvement in the armed uprisings in 1971 and 1987-89, remains a controversial aspect of the party's legacy. While Disanayake has moved the party away from violent tactics, critics still associate the JVP with its militant past.
- Criticism of Pragmatism:
 - Some left-wing critics argue that under Disanayake's leadership, the JVP has strayed too far from its original Marxist principles and become too moderate, compromising on issues that were central to its ideology.
- Electoral Performance:
 - While the JVP has gained popularity under Disanayake's leadership, the party has struggled to convert this into significant electoral victories. Critics argue that the JVP's strong rhetoric on corruption and economic justice has not been matched by electoral success.

Personal and Family Life

- Family:
 - Disanayake's family life is relatively private compared to other politicians. His wife, Dr. Varuni Disanayake, is a medical professional.
- Political Influence:
 - Though a prominent figure in national politics, Disanayake is known for maintaining a simple lifestyle, contrasting with many of the wealthier political elites in the country. He is admired for his consistency and integrity in political life.

Visual and Symbolic Representation

- Appearance:
 - Anura Kumara Disanayake often presents himself in casual, modest attire, reflecting his alignment with the working-class ethos. He is rarely seen in formal, Western suits, preferring simple Sri Lankan national dress or informal clothing.
- Election Symbol:
 - The compass symbol, central to his party's identity, represents the call to action for justice and equality. This symbol has become iconic for the JVP's campaigns, signaling the party's emphasis on grassroots activism and mobilization.

Color and Branding

- Campaign Colors:
 - Red: The dominant color associated with the JVP, symbolizing socialism, revolution, and workers' rights.
 - White: Often used to symbolize purity, honesty, and a commitment to clean governance, in contrast to the perceived corruption of other political parties.