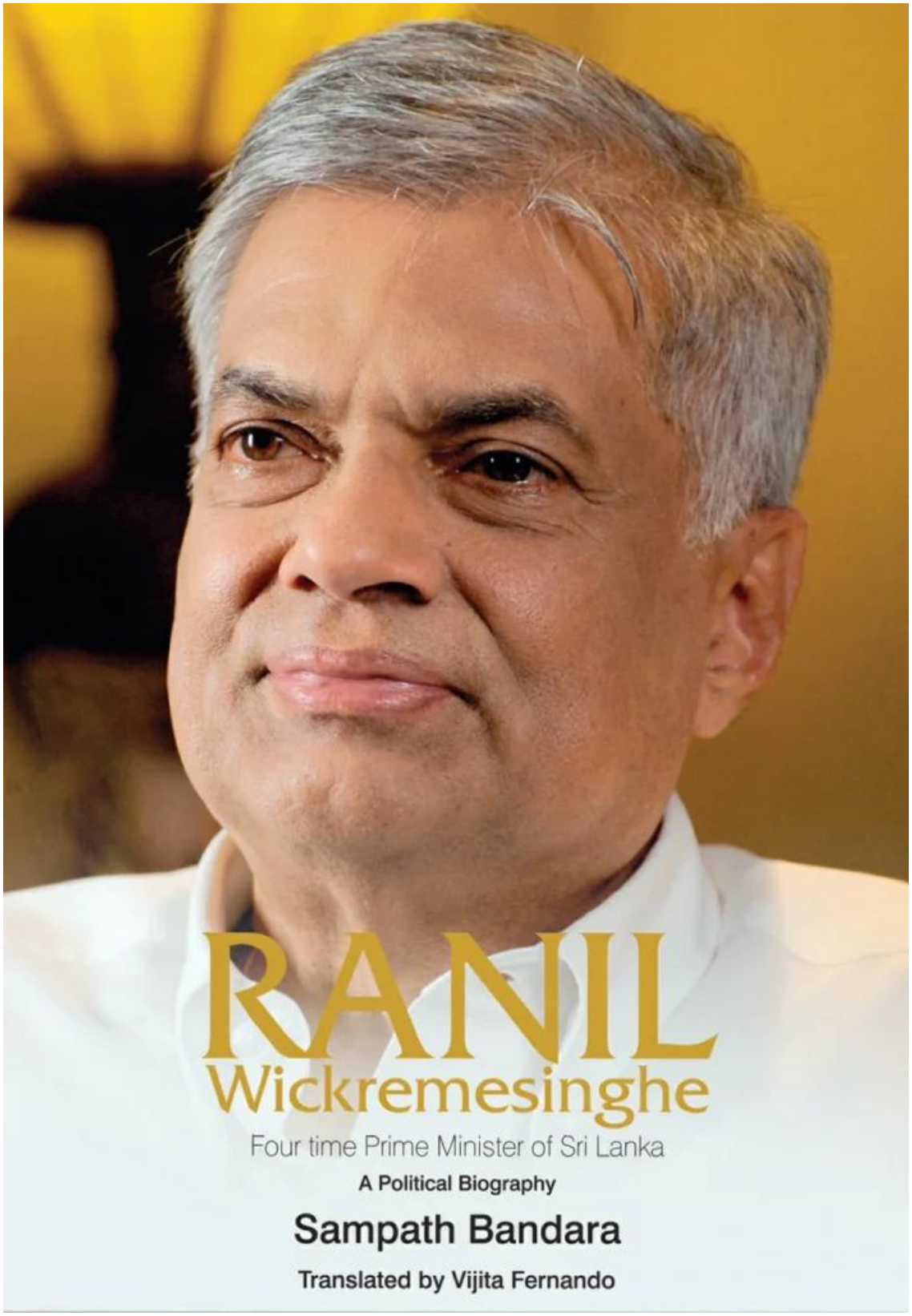


A Storied Life


RANIL
Wickremesinghe
Four time Prime Minister of Sri Lanka
A Political Biography
Sampath Bandara
Translated by Vijita Fernando

‘Ranil Wickremesinghe: Four time Prime Minister of Sri Lanka’ by Sampath Bandara is the political biography of Sri Lanka’s most iconic politician.

By Yomal Senerath-Yapa

Ranil Wickremesinghe, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, has a singular claim to fame. Like his compatriot Dudley Senanayake and Queen Victoria’s Prime Minister William Gladstone, he has held the office of Premier four times. ‘Ranil Wickremesinghe’ is a remarkable story that would instruct and edify many others. It was this thought that made Sampath Bandara take up his pen to document the political life of the great statesman.

‘Ranil Wickremesinghe: Four time Prime Minister of Sri Lanka’ is a literary work that strikes a balance in showing both the private and public image.

In chronological order, the book follows the life of the incumbent Prime Minister from birth. It first recounts how he as a child was a boy scout, a pianist, a student of music and dancing. Though he studied to be a lawyer, he became a first class statesman.

The writing flows through the high points and challenges of PM Ranil Wickremesinghe’s career seamlessly. The youngest Deputy Minister sworn in to late Prime Minister J R Jayawardena’s cabinet at the age of 28 (1977); his many diplomatic negotiations; the 1999 Presidential Election; the Peace Process of 2002 and the chapter titled ‘The Maithri – Ranil Era Begins’ will provide the reader an in-depth look into the strategic political mind, patience and determination of the statesman.

> **“Ranil Wickremesinghe – Four Time Prime Minister Of Sri Lanka” Is A Literary Work That Strikes A Balance In Showing Both The**

Private And Public Image

The author has understood the elusive side of the Prime Minister. Readers are provided a glimpse of the connoisseur of art, books, good music and films, behind the committed politician. A chapter is dedicated to show the Premier's knowledge on the Dhamma.

The story is complemented by rare photos from the Prime Minister's private collection. A heartfelt tribute from his long-time friend the late Anura Bandaranaike is included. It also contains biographies on the illustrious Wijewardenes and Wickremesinghes, the Premier's maternal and paternal families, beginning with grandparents, parents, and stretching on to include younger members of the family like Ruwan Wijewardene.

Sampath Bandara, the author, is well known in the sphere of sports journalism. He compiled Sinhala encyclopedias on football and cricket. His first political biography was on Sonia Gandhi.

Once he approached the Prime Minister with the idea of compiling a fresh political biography, the idea was endorsed. Bandara was conscious of the profundity of the task. The book was three years in the making, research being the most pivotal phase. A collector of books who has amassed more than 200 of the world's best biographies, Bandara had the different styles at his fingertips, and he would choose one that would flow on its own. To further enlighten readers, an introduction titled 'Biographies and Political Biographies' has been inserted in the book.

After Completing His 'Portrait' Sampath Had Got To Know The Elusive Image Of The Private Ranil. Behind The Committed Politician Is A Connoisseur Of Art, Books, Good Music And Films.

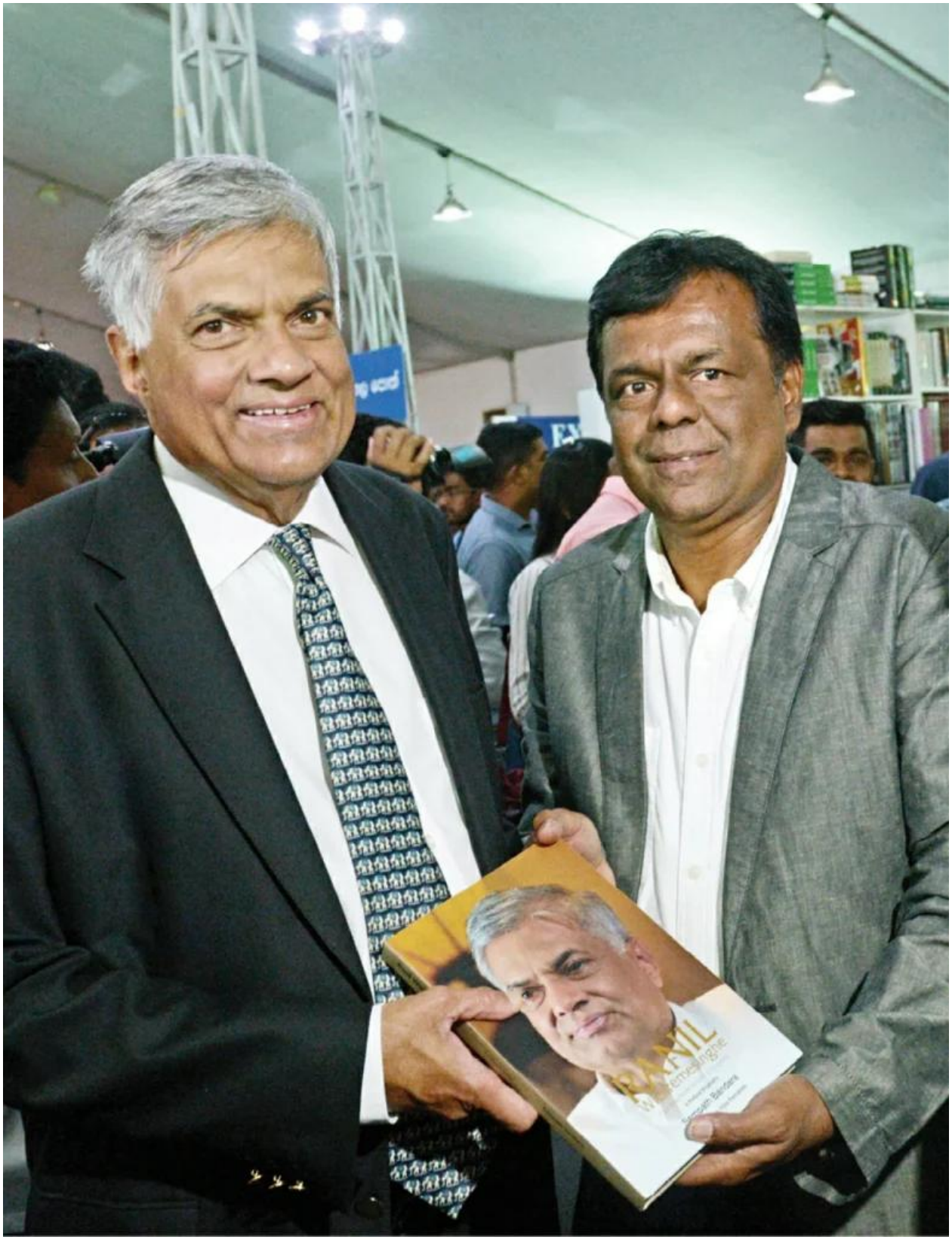
The author was aided by members of the Wickremesinghe family, especially Channa Wickremesinghe, the Prime Minister's younger brother. Accuracy is crucial in a biography such as this, therefore the greatest pains were taken to ensure each miniscule fact was true. Yet, the greater predicament lay in how to actually portray

the premier. The writer, Bandara believed, should be neutral.

Vijita Fernando who translated the book into English is a journalist whose literary career is decorated with two national literary awards and the Gratiaen Prize of 2003. The crowning glory of the biography is the photo on the cover, a special portrait for the book by Sarath Perera, which represents the tone within the pages.

A revised edition of the original Sinhala book is in the offing, allowing more and more readers to discover the eventful and engrossing life of the gentleman politician par excellence.




RANIL

