

TRAVEL TALK

Asia

#1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP - SRI LANKA'S ONLY TRAVEL TRADE MONTHLY

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The Pekoe Trail voted National Geographic's coveted 'Best of the World' List for 2024

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

The Pekoe Trail, Sri Lanka was recently voted as one of National Geographic's "Best of the World" 2024, the brand's annual guide of the most exciting, meaningful, and one-of-a-kind travel experiences.



Sagala Ratnayaka

Selected under the category of "Top 20 Travel Experiences" Best of The World 2024' was created, researched, reported, and written in collaboration with National Geographic's international editorial teams, which serve millions of readers through their magazines and websites around the world. This year's travel guide celebrates not only must-see destinations but expands the franchise to include a complete and authoritative suite of must-do, must-stay, and must-consume recommendations for travelers to engage with these destinations more deeply and meaningfully. Among those top picks, The Pekoe Trail, Sri Lanka is ranked number 16.

For the first time ever, Nat Geo's BEST OF THE WORLD recommendations also include a selection of wellness retreats, hotels, cultural gems, and restaurants that National Geographic's experts agree are "worth building a trip around," as well as a list of the top 20 travel adventures for the year ahead.

Mr. Sagala Ratnayaka, Chief of Staff to the President and National Security Advisor, emphasized the national significance of this ranking. "Sri Lanka is set to attract a trending new international tourist segment with The Pekoe Trail that offers a world-class nature-based experience in our tea country. This recognition from Nat Geo validates the collaborative efforts of the Plantation companies, Sri Lanka Tourism, Dept. of Wildlife Conservation, Dept. of Forest Conservation, Sri Lanka Railways, the JEDB, the European Union and USAID in creating a world class walking trail."



Miguel Cuañat & Charles Conconi

The Pekoe Trail is developed by the Tourism Resilience Project. Commenting on this latest achievement, Charles Conconi, Project Director said, "We are thrilled The Pekoe Trail is Nat Geo's 'The Best Of The World' readers' choice winner! We've been working on the trail for three years and every day brings a new discovery. There's something meditative—spiritual even—about slowing down and exploring Sri Lanka's beauty and diversity on foot that resonates with the post-Covid, eco-conscious traveler. We thank the European Union and United States Agency for International Development for their unwavering support."

The Pekoe Trail, a 300km, 22-stage discovery of Sri Lanka on foot, is creating international headlines for Sri Lanka as a destination for wellness and nature-based travel. It is a unique tourism experience that supports the long-term environmental sustainability of habitats as well as the social and commercial sustainability of the communities it passes through. The Pekoe Trail promises an immersive and enriching experience for those seeking to connect with the authentic essence of Sri Lanka and will be open to travellers in stages commencing November 2023.

"National Geographic is synonymous with the best in travel, adventure, and exploration, and now our editors are sharing the full breadth of their insight across a variety of categories with our fans all over the world," said Courteney Monroe, president of National Geographic Content.

Germany remains a Key Driver for Sri Lanka's Tourism Growth

Sri Lanka's Immersive Experiences Meet German Traveler Demand

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Germany stands as the fourth-largest tourism-generating market for Sri Lanka, retaining its status as a pivotal source market for the island nation's tourism industry. Renowned for its discerning travelers seeking authentic experiences, Germany continues to play a significant role in shaping Sri Lanka's tourism landscape.

"Despite global challenges, the enduring allure of Sri Lanka's cultural heritage, natural beauty, and warm hospitality continues to resonate strongly with German tourists. From exploring ancient ruins and lush tea plantations to unwinding on pristine beaches, indulging in Ayurveda wellness retreats and the newest addition – the Pekoe Trail, Sri Lanka offers a diverse array of attractions that cater to the interests and preferences of German travelers" said Chalaka Gajabahu, Chairman Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau.

As the second-highest foreign exchange earner for the country, Sri Lanka Tourism continues to witness a steady growth in tourist arrivals compared to pre-pandemic levels. Nalin Perera, Director General of Sri Lanka Tourism recently highlighted a robust start to 2024, anticipating over 100,000 arrivals by mid-February. With this momentum, Sri Lanka Tourism remains confident in achieving its target of welcoming 2.3 million tourists in 2024, or potentially surpassing it, through collaborative efforts with stakeholders.

The number of foreign tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka advanced 103.1% year-on-year to 208.3 thousand in January 2024, easing from a 128.7% surge in the previous month. Among key markets, India was the largest source of foreign tourists at 16%, followed by Russia (15%), the UK (8%) and Germany (6%)

"The average daily arrivals have significantly increased from around 3,000 last year to approximately 7,000 per day and in 2024, Sri Lanka Tourism anticipates exceeding Rs. 7 billion in tourism revenue" said Perera

Gajabahu commented that there has been a significant revenue growth and increase in job creation within the tourism industry, attributing

it to continuous and collaborative promotional efforts and increasing tourist arrivals, particularly from Europe.

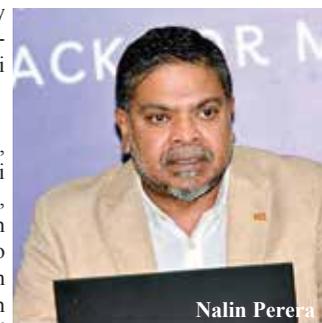
He went on to disclose that the Pekoe Trail's recognition as National Geographic's 'Best of the World for 2024' underscores its pivotal role in bolstering the country's tourism sector while elevating Sri Lanka's tourism profile on the global stage. The trail's inclusion in National Geographic's prestigious list reflects its unparalleled beauty and cultural significance, driving both domestic and international interest.

"For German travelers accustomed to a generally modern fast-paced life, Sri Lanka's wellness escapes offer a welcome respite—a chance to unplug, unwind, and reconnect with themselves and the world around them. Whether it's a tranquil meditation session on a secluded beach or a soothing herbal massage in the heart of a jungle or a tranquil hike across Sri Lanka's tea country, each experience is designed to foster a sense of balance, harmony, and well-being" added Gajabahu

Through insightful interviews and expert analysis, the industry uncovers the evolving preferences and behaviors of German travelers, shedding light on their penchant for immersive experiences, sustainable tourism practices, and off-the-beat-path adventures.

German tourists often opt for extended holidays, which allow them to explore destinations in-depth. This preference for longer stays presents an opportunity for Sri Lanka to promote diverse attractions such as the Pekoe Trail and encourage visitors to engage in multiple activities, thereby maximizing their economic impact on the local economy.

As Sri Lanka continues to position itself as a premier destination for travelers from Germany, the synergy between its wellness offerings and the Pekoe Trail serves as a powerful draw—a harmonious blend of relaxation, exploration, and cultural immersion. Through targeted marketing initiatives, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to sustainable tourism practices, Sri Lanka invites German travelers to embark on a journey of discovery—to unlock the island's hidden charms and create memories that will last a lifetime



Nalin Perera



Chalaka Gajabahu



A positive outlook on global tourism is reflected in the latest UNWTO Tourism Confidence Index survey, with 67% of tourism professionals indicating better or much better prospects for 2024 compared to 2023.

Sri Lanka's tourism industry is poised for a remarkable resurgence in 2024, bolstered by strategic initiatives such as the rollout of the communications campaign, active participation in global trade shows, promotional networking, visiting journalist's programs and key agents FAM trips. Highlighting its key attractions including the 'Pekoe Trail' will further enhance the overall tourism product offering.

Participation in events like ITB Berlin provides Sri Lanka with a platform to showcase its diverse attractions, rich cultural heritage, and untapped potential to a vast international audience. This year's presence at ITB Berlin serves as a testament to Sri Lanka's commitment to reinvigorating its tourism industry and fostering fruitful partnerships with key stakeholders in the travel and hospitality sector.

International tourism is expected to fully recover to pre-pandemic levels in 2024, with initial estimates pointing to 2% growth above 2019 levels. This central forecast by UNWTO remains subject to the pace of recovery in Asia and to the evolution of existing economic and geopolitical downside risks.

There is still significant room for recovery across Asia. The reopening of several source markets and destinations will boost recovery both in the region and globally.

Chinese outbound and inbound tourism is expected to accelerate in 2024, due to visa facilitation and improved air capacity. Two leading Asian flagship carriers, Cathay Pacific and Thai Airways have recommenced operations to Colombo paving the way for an increase in arrivals from the North and Central Asia including China.

As Sri Lanka embarks on this journey of tourism resurgence, it is essential to prioritize sustainability, inclusivity, and the preservation of the country's natural and cultural heritage. By leveraging innovative strategies, forging strategic partnerships, and embracing responsible tourism practices, Sri Lanka can chart a path towards long-term success and establish itself as a leading destination in the global tourism landscape.



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NEWS

ATM 2024 to focus on India's outbound tourism potential, over 30% of Indian travellers choose to visit Middle East destinations

ATM 2024 to host dedicated India summit as 70% of Indians travelling overseas

TTA BULLETIN

choose nearby destinations, one-third travel to the Middle East With the Indian outbound market forecast to be worth \$143.5 billion annually by the end of this decade, the Indian tourism sector will come under the spotlight during Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2024, which returns to the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) for its 31st edition from 6-9 May.



Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: "The boom in outbound travel from India is being driven primarily by the growing middle class. In 2020, only 37 million households had annual income between \$10,000 and up to \$35,000, but due to India's rapid economic growth, by

2030 that number will rise significantly to 177 million households.

According to a report by booking.com and McKinsey, 70% of Indians travelling overseas choose nearby destinations, with one-third choosing destinations in the Middle East.

The UAE is the top regional destination, followed by Saudi Arabia. According to the DET, India is Dubai's top source market, with 1.9 million visitors in the first 10 months of 2023. Saudi Arabia is aiming for 7.5 million visitors by 2030.

To illustrate the sheer size and potential growth of India's overall outbound market, prior to the pandemic in 2019, Indians made 26.9 million overseas trips; the report predicts that by 2030, that number could increase to 50 million departures.

Furthermore, it is not just the volume of Indian travellers that is getting Middle East destinations excited. According to a survey by Acko Insurance, the majority of Indian travellers who responded were willing to spend up to \$7,000 on international trips.

Another reason already alluded to is the close proximity of the Gulf states, Dubai is the most popular city destination for Indian travellers, just three hours flight time from Mumbai. In addition, increased connectivity and affordable air travel from tier-two cities are also driving demand, particularly direct flights with low-cost carriers.

Classic Travels receives Top Agent Award from IndiGo

TTA BULLETIN

Classic Travels, one of Sri Lanka's leading travel service providers was recently recognized as a Top Agent by IndiGo

IndiGo is amongst the fastest-growing low-cost carriers in the world, operating 2000+ daily flights, connecting 86 domestic destinations and 32 international destinations. Currently, IndiGo directly connects Colombo to three cities in India and further offers convenient connections across the Indian sub-continent.



IndiGo presented the prestigious award to Classic Travels Sri Lanka in recognition of its outstanding achievements in driving sales, promoting brand awareness, and delivering exceptional customer service. The award highlights Classic Travels' unwavering commitment to excellence and its significant contributions to the success of IndiGo in the Sri Lankan market.

"This award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team, as well as our strong partnership with IndiGo. We are committed to continuing our efforts to provide our customers with the best travel experiences and to further strengthen our relationship with IndiGo Airlines."

"We are delighted and honored to receive the Top Agent Award from IndiGo," said Mr. Sabry Bahaudeen, Expolanka Holdings PLC Director, Leisure Cluster Classic Travel Ltd

Classic Travels Sri Lanka is committed to providing its customers with comprehensive travel solutions, including airline tickets, holiday packages, hotel reservations, visa assistance, and more. With a strong focus on customer satisfaction and innovation, Classic Travels remains at the forefront of the travel industry in Sri Lanka.

2nd Chance Travels celebrates 25 Years in Grand splendor

TTA BULLETIN

2nd Chance Travels Pvt Ltd, One of Sri Lanka's largest outbound travel companies celebrated its 25th Anniversary in Grand splendor at the Jetwing Blue hotel in Negombo.



The Mega event that took place on the 1st of January 2024 also saw the company acknowledging and appreciating its key Airline and Industry partners. The highlight of the event was the much anticipated 25-year Celebration raffle draw that was also conducted with live streaming, where 10 lucky winners received a bonanza of Rupees 01 Million each



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Engaging Events at IT&CM China and CTW China

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IT&CM China and CTW China 2024 will be held with a brand new experience at Shanghai Exhibition & Convention Center of International Sourcing, China from March 26-28, 2024. This doublebill event integrating MICE and Business travel industry resources welcomes new destinations and brands entering China for the first time as well as those returning to the China market, along with MICE, Association and Corporate Buyers both domestically to internationally. Aimed at enhancing delegates' experience, Shanghai's Doublebill event in MICE and Corporate Travel has re-designed its Business, Networking and Education programme and aims to spearhead industry growth with outbound, inbound and domestic demand.

The Opening Keynote and MICE Forum, The Importance of Government in Meeting and Incentive Destination Growth, will be presented by Dr Sun Weijia, Doctor of Law, Special Researcher of Counsellors' Office of the State Council, former Director of the Exchange and Cooperation Department of Counsellors' Office of the State Council. It is co-organised with China Business Event Industry Committee, CCIOC-CCC. The keynote covers the importance of the collaboration between public and private sector in building the MICE industry.

The MICE Forum will be moderated by Ms Alicia Yao, Vice Chairman, China Congress of Association and Chamber of Commerce, who will be joined by four guest speakers: Ms Zhu Jun, Senior Manager of Convention, Exhibition and Corporate Events, Hong Kong Tourism Board Beijing Office; Mr Joost de Meyer, Former Board Director of the IRF Incentive Travel Research Foundation and CEO of First Incentive Travel, USA; Ms Lisa Xu, President of SITE China Chapter, General Manager of Shanghai Eastar Event Management Co., Ltd and Ms Yu Dandan, Deputy General Manager of Beijing Zhongrunhua Petrochemical Co., Ltd.

The Association Day Forum is co-organised by The China Congress of Association and Chamber of Commerce (CCACC) and covers the Supporting Chinese Associations and Their Efforts to Go Global. The keynote will be presented by Ms Jayne Gallagher, President of the International Association of Aquatic Product Inspectors (IAFI) and founder and CEO of Honey & Fox Pty Ltd. It will be moderated by Ms Alicia Yao, joined by three guest speakers Mr Zhang Lin, Deputy Secretary-General of China Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Association, Ms Mariarosa Azzolina,



President of Istituto Italo Cinese, Ms Deng Qing, Director of the International Exchange Committee of Canal Cities of the World Canal History and Culture Cooperation Organization (WCCO), Honorary Secretary General.

With 3 key topics, CTW China's Forum aims to equip professionals with knowledge and new perspectives from subject matter experts. Forum topic 1: "International Incentives and Meetings in 2024. What opportunities are there for Chinese Enterprises?" delves into key trends, emerging opportunities and strategies for Chinese enterprises looking to engage in international incentives and meetings in 2024.

Forum 2, "The Emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and what it means for the corporate travel and Meetings Industry" covers the emergence of AI and its transformative implications. It will explore how businesses in the travel and meetings industry can harness the potential of AI to

enhance efficiency, decision-making and overall participant experience.

Forum 3 focuses on unravelling the pivotal roles assumed by TMCs and M&E firms in facilitating and enriching corporate ventures across borders, under the topic "Corporate Expansion and movement overseas. How Travel Management Companies (TMCs)/ Meetings & Events (M&E) firms can play a part."

IT&CM China and CTW China 2024 will be held from 26 – 28 March in Shanghai. To explore how you can make the most out of the exhibition, sponsorship, and networking opportunities, contact us at itcmchina@ttgasia.com and ctwchina@ttgasia.com respectively.

IT&CM China has established itself as China's leading international Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) business, education and networking event, dedicated to "Promoting China to the World and the World to China".

Sri Lanka Tourism collaborates with Interface Tourism to launch digital wellness campaign

TTA BULLETIN

Interface Tourism, a leading marketing and communications agency in tourism is excited to announce the launch of a groundbreaking wellness campaign to promote Sri Lanka targeted at the French and German markets. This initiative, commissioned by the European Union Delegation with the support of Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, is a part of Sri Lanka's strategic effort to position itself as a premier wellness destination in Asia.



Interface Tourism is launching a 2-month digital campaign to promote Sri Lanka as the premier wellness destination in Asia, tapping into the burgeoning global wellness tourism market. This initiative underscores Sri Lanka's unparalleled wellness offerings, such as authentic Ayurveda, Yoga, meditation, Pancha Karma, and Hela Wedakama, against the backdrop of the country's abundant biodiversity.

At the heart of the campaign are thirty influencers from France and Germany, embarking on journeys through Sri Lanka to share the country's wellness experiences on their social media platforms, bringing to life the authentic and captivating aspects of their travels.

Supplementing these influencer stories is a well-crafted digital media strategy, featuring captivating video content, a lively social media footprint, and targeted

display advertising. A multilingual microsite further enriches the campaign, acting as a comprehensive source of information and experiences related to Sri Lanka's wellness offerings.

The campaign commenced on February 15th with the introduction of six German influencers to Sri Lanka. They are set to discover the country's distinct landscapes, rich culture, and diverse wellness services. Their experiences will be broadcasted on Instagram and TikTok, providing a glimpse into their journeys to a global audience.

Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu, Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau said "This collaborative effort with the European Union in promoting wellness tourism segment through this campaign will definitely support the wellness industry to capture a lucrative market." He also expressed his sincere gratitude to European Union, Interface Tourism and local industry for their contribution in making this possible.

Digital companions for ITB Berlin 2024: ITB app and ITBxplore with new features

TTA BULLETIN

In only a few weeks, the halls of the World's Leading Travel Trade Show and ITB Berlin Convention will open from 5 to 7 March on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds. This year, a mobile app with many useful features is again available to attendees. The platform ITBxplore has been further developed for the laptop and equipped with a range of new features. Both tools help visitors, exhibitors and the media prepare for a successful visit.

ITBxplore: focus on networking
With ITBxplore, users once again have an innovative, digital platform at their fingertips for networking and research. In the run-up to ITB Berlin they can navigate the exhibitor portfolio, plan their visit to the ITB Berlin Convention and schedule appointments. After buying a ticket to ITB Berlin or obtaining accreditation, users can create a free personal profile on ITBxplore, giving them access to all functions.

The ITBxplore experience is all about networking. Users can make their profiles visible, search for exhibitors, and engage with them and other attendees through the online chat. Buyers Circle members, the handpicked senior buyers at ITB Berlin, are marked 'ITB Buyers Circle' under ITBxplore, making it even easier to identifying them.

Exhibitor lists and product highlights provide a comprehensive overview of the global markets and products at ITB Berlin 2024. The hall plan makes planning easy



and pinpoints the stands of individual exhibitors. As well as tried and tested features, users can look forward to many innovations this year – including an optimised diary management tool in the Communication Center, additional diary functions that link to Outlook, and simplified functions for requesting and confirming dates. Updating a profile is easier now too. Based on a user's own personal interests, the system suggests tailored business contacts.

The programme section under ITBxplore lists a wide range of events, including the official ITB Berlin Convention programme featuring numerous keynote speeches, masterclasses, expert panels, product presentations, roundtables and other live formats. Users can search the programme with filters according to time, theme track and stage, and can bookmark their personal highlights, which are automatically inserted into their diary. Selected convention content can be streamed via the digital platform.

The app provides comprehensive information, ranging from an exhibitor list to hall plans, and enables seamless integration of personal data for efficient networking. Users who previously installed the ITB app on their smartphone in 2023 can simply download the latest version.



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Sri Lanka soaring to New Heights this Winter Season

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M Shanthikumar, President of the Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka recently told TTA that Sri Lanka is witnessing a steady flow of arrivals, paving the way for the 2023/2024 winter to be one of the best seasons in a long time.

"We are in the midst of the Tourist season in Sri Lanka and we are absolutely delighted to see the growth in tourism, which is far beyond what the industry expected. It is a clear message that Sri Lankans are ready to overcome any challenge and move forward with an upbeat mindset.

Tourist arrivals this season is an indication that 2024 will be a very positive year. All traditional markets such as India, Western Europe, UK, Australia, USA, Russia and Eastern Europe are seeing positive growth lines. China has still not opened up fully for outbound travel to Sri Lanka

The nature of the country with an abundance of its diverse beauty and attractions is attracting all segments of holiday travelers of different age groups. Individuals, couples, families, honeymooners, wildlife specialists, weddings, adventure lovers, MICE delegates, corporates etc are a few of the many segments. Most of them have one thing in common and that is to venture out to experience the destination.

Sri Lanka is truly experiential with its golden beaches, waterfalls in the misty mountains covered with tea gardens, wildlife which includes the world's largest



M Shanthikumar

two mammals the Blue Whale and the Elephant, leopards, variety of birds etc, culture, adventure, festivals, ancient cities and temples wellness combined with local cuisine and the Sri Lankan hospitality! It is a highly recommended holiday destination for 2024 by many international publications. There is so much on offer if you travel across the country or limit yourself to a specific region. It is also extremely positive to note that Sri Lanka is a country that has a large number of repeat visitors and those who have a close relationship with this nation.

The Government has taken Tourism as a thrust industry and its main focus is to offer visitors an experience to remember for a lifetime. The quality accommodation available in all regions is as diverse as the country's attractions with a choice of products available at different price points. Visitors to the country can book hotels via online channels, hotel websites, tour operators or select a local travel agent.

If you haven't yet experienced the beauty of Sri Lanka, we hope you would book your trip and see for yourself what a gem awaits you in the Indian ocean.

ITB Berlin is one of the world's leading international trade and business platforms and we look forward to forging new partnerships and renewing our existing collaborations with the German market which has been a very strong tourism generating market for Sri Lanka.

70th Annual General Meeting of Skal International Colombo

The 70th Annual General meeting of Skal International was held recently at the California Grill, Galadari Hotel in Colombo and Sk Ahintha Amarasinghe, Managing Director WorldLink Travels was elected President.

The Chief Guest at the event was Mr. Sagala Ratnayaka Chief of Staff to the President and National Security

Advisor who addressed the members and guests on the current status of debt restructuring and the impact on the economy.

The Executive Committee for 2024/2025 is headed by President Ahintha Amarasinge, Vice President Prasanjith Perera, Secretary Zahara Cader, Treasurer Nirmalan

Nagendra, Immediate Past President Dinushka Chandrasena, Asst. Secretary Shereene Gunasekera, Membership Development officer Denesh Silva and committee members Sutheash Balasubramaniam and Samrat Datta. The Ex-officio members on the board are Bernard Wijetunge, Keethi Jayaweera, Shamali De Vas and Dushy Jayaweera





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eMarketingEye Celebrates Its 17th Anniversary, Marking a Remarkable Journey Filled with Groundbreaking Achievements

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Marking its 17th anniversary milestone in February 2024, eMarketingEye (EME) remains at the forefront of the digital marketing sphere, distinguished by a legacy of historic achievements, innovative partnerships, and an ever-growing clientele in over 45 countries. Led by its Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Rajitha Dahanayake, the company has established itself as an innovative leader, pushing boundaries to redefine excellence in the Travel & Hospitality industry.

Celebrating a record-breaking year in 2023, eMarketingEye is surging towards an unparalleled 40% revenue growth, solidifying its position as a leader in the Asia Pacific region. This historic achievement is a testament to the company's unwavering commitment to innovation and client satisfaction. As eMarketingEye continues to remain a driving force in the digital marketing domain, it is steadfastly committed to continual growth and excellence, delivering top-notch services to world-class brands.

For the past 17 years, EME has been dedicated to further elevating its presence in the hospitality sector, fueled by demonstrated success in countries across the Asia Pacific and Middle East region, such as Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Sri Lanka, UAE, Malaysia, and the Maldives, where the company oversees campaigns for approximately 40% of premium hotels and resorts.

EME extends beyond its role as the digital strategic partner for its clients by educating and sharing its expertise within the industry. Embarking on this mission, the company has resumed a series of workshops exclusively for its clients, designed to provide insights into the digital industry with a focus on the travel and hospitality sectors. The primary objective of these workshops is to empower clients to generate direct revenue by adopting the most effective approaches in targeting the right

audiences at the right time. The most recent workshops were conducted for Thema Collection, Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts in Sri Lanka, and Paramount Hotels in Dubai. eMarketingEye is committed to continuing these educational workshops for its leading clients, ensuring they cater to their evolving needs and demands.

As a Google Premier Partner, Google Marketing Platform Certified Partner, and Microsoft Advertising Select Partner, EME has made a tremendous impact on the digital landscape. Additionally, EME also earned the prestigious Yandex Leading Partner status. Given Yandex's stature as Russia's premier search engine, this partnership equips EME to provide cutting-edge solutions to its clients, advancing its commitment to excellence in digital marketing.

EME leads the way with innovative and award-winning campaigns for both local and global clients, strengthening its position as an industry trailblazer. Notably, EME won an Effie award for its Social Media Advertising campaign titled 'Visit Sri Lanka: Reviving Tourism Together,' executed for Sri Lanka Tourism in 2023. Moreover, eMarketingEye proudly took the pioneering initiative as the first in Southeast Asia to introduce Google Performance Max for Travel Goals, in collaboration with Minor Hotels. The campaign earned recognition as a Google case study, showcasing its remarkable impact. By leveraging this strategy, the Anantara and AVANI brands uplifted their performance by doubling their bookings and achieving a remarkable 76% increase in ROAS. This stellar achievement was further highlighted when the campaign was presented at the prestigious Google Think Travel APAC 2023 event, held at Google's APAC headquarters in Singa-

pore in October 2023.

EME's success is rooted in its exceptional staff — a blend of predominantly millennials and a growing number of Gen Z professionals — whose energy and innovative ideas drive its rewarding 17-year journey in an industry where youth and innovation are paramount. At the heart of EME's continued growth lies the unwavering support of its leadership team, providing the necessary guidance and resources to propel the company to new heights — while ensuring that the company's strategic objectives align with industry trends and emerging technologies.

While striving for excellence, EME team stands as the cornerstone of the achievements, continuously driving innovation and pushing boundaries with unwavering dedication. To ensure the team stays at the forefront, EME has launched the ELITE Programme, a continuous and ongoing initiative featuring a series of internal and external training sessions led by both local and international experts. One standout feature of this program is the 'LEVEL UP' internal conference, exclusively tailored for EME employees with the tagline 'Think, Innovate, Elevate.'

eMarketingEye has consistently earned the prestigious 'Great Place to Work' certification every year since 2019 and proudly stands as the sole digital marketing agency highlighted among

the '40 Best Workplaces in Sri Lanka 2020'. This recognition reflects the company's dedication to not only delivering excellence to its clients but also ensuring the well-being of its employees.

Drawing on its extensive expertise accumulated over the years, EME eagerly anticipates a future marked by exponential growth. Understanding the necessity of staying ahead in a competitive landscape, the company is in the final phase of a strategic restructuring process, poised to usher in a more scalable future as it prepares for the next financial year. This initiative underscores their commitment to an innovative, client-centric approach, poised to reshape the company's trajectory for years to come. When queried about future prospects, Rajitha expressed unwavering confidence, stating:

"As the travel and hospitality industry continues its booming growth, the future looks even brighter for EME. Leveraging AI and other advanced technologies, we are poised to further enhance our strategies and offerings. EME eagerly anticipates expanding its clientele and global footprint by exploring new opportunities and forging valuable connections. With a dedication to growth and expansion, EME is positioned for continued success, embracing innovation and anticipating an even more promising future ahead."



The Executive Team at eMarketingEye



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250+

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Take Flight into History: 'Colombo Heritage International Kite and Air Show' (CHIKA) scheduled for June 2024

TTA BULLETIN

Under the aegis of the Governor of the Western Province, Sri Lanka will host the Colombo Heritage International Kite and Air Show (CHIKA) this year.

CHIKA 2024 is scheduled to be held on the 29th and 30th June 2024 at the Panadura Beach, Sri Lanka.



Capt. Harsha Koralearachchi

With Sri Lanka experiencing a record number of tourist arrivals in 2023 and early 2024, CHIKA 2024 aims to contribute significantly to sustaining and enhancing this demand.

The festival/ kite airshow comprises of two main days of events. Day 01 is a Children's Kite Workshop conducted by Capt. Harsha Koralearachchi, Chairman of the Ravana Aviation Kite Association, with a focus on the theme: World Peace and Harmony. The Kite workshop and safe flying activities is open to children aged 8 and above, providing them with kite-making materials. The workshop will be followed by the Kite Air Show, scheduled in the evening hours at the Panadura Beach.

All children participating in the workshop will receive a valuable certificate.

On Day 02, the event opens its doors to international kite flyers and Kite Associations and the Provincial Cultural Heritage Air Show with the participation of all 09 provinces in the country.

“There is a growing demand for activities and festivals like CHIKA 2024 to add to Sri Lanka’s calendar of events. Festivals that combine cultural themes, such as World Peace and Harmony, with engaging activities like kite flying appeal to a wide audience. Such festivals will lure visitors to the island to contribute to tourism arrivals providing unique and memorable experiences that attract both local and international participants” said Capt. Harsha Koralearachchi. “Events such as this adds diversity to Sri Lanka’s tourism landscape and caters to both individuals and families seeking immersive and entertaining experiences” he added.

The festival, being an international kite airshow, has the potential to attract a diverse audience, including international participants. The unique combination of cultural themes, kite workshops, and international participation could make CHIKA 2024 an annual event. This also paves the way to making it a compelling reason for tourists to visit Sri Lanka prior to the mid-year tourism season which commences from July and will positively impact the tourism sector to extend their stay in the Western Province.

With Sri Lanka being known mostly for its beaches, nature, culture and wildlife, the 05 nights /06 days package tours offered for CHIKA 2024 will boost interest and showcase the Western Province for visitors to Sri Lanka.

CHIKA 2024 is being steered by the Western Province Governor's Tourism Promotional Committee appointed by the Governor of the Western Province Marshal of the Air Force Roshan Goonetilleke for the promotion of tourism within the Western Province of Sri Lanka. This could involve initiatives to showcase the cultural, historical, and recreational attractions of the region, fostering events like CHIKA 2024 to boost tourism and contribute to the overall economic development of The Western Province.

For more information email wptourismpromo@gmail.com

Siddhalepa Pelawatte: A Symphony of Wellness Unveiled

TTA BULLETIN

Located in Pelawatte, Siddhalepa introduces a sanctuary that transcends the ordinary – a haven where health and wellness intertwine seamlessly. Opening its doors last month on the 23rd of January, the new Siddhalepa branch blends the realms of spa, clinic, and store into a singular, transformative experience.



Entering the branch is an invitation to a warm display, an ode to Siddhalepa's wide range of products nestled among an arrangement of herbs and ingredients. From shooters, elixirs, ayurvedic capsules, herbal teas to soaps, oils, scrubs, salts, balms, masks, the product range addresses every conceivable health and wellness concern.

Upon the inaugural visit, patrons are welcomed into a complimentary consultation with an Ayurvedic doctor. These expert practitioners, hailing from the prestigious Siddhalepa Ayurvedic Hospital, keenly observe and recommend treatments after considering each visitor's unique needs.

The new location urges patrons to embark on a journey of self-discovery with dedicated time upon visit. The objective is clear – to decipher the most effective products and treatments based on individual conditions, habits, lifestyles, diet, and daily rituals.

Signature wellness treatments at Siddhalepa Pelawatte weave a narrative of their own – Chavyalaukaraya and Preenauaya for Skin, Kayalaguthwaya for Weight gain, Shiro Chikitsa for stress relief, Chakra for holistic balance, and Shiro Dhara for Insomnia, Anxiety, and Depression among many others.

And stands as an entity offering an array of health treatments ranging from cleansing to detox, herbal inhalation to steaming in recognition of diverse health concerns – from Sciatica to Arthritis, Hair Loss to Dry Scalp to name a few. It's not just a space; it's an embodiment of curated, customized advice tailored to each individual's needs.

The Wellness Areas are carefully designed to cocoon patrons in an ambiance of calmness, harmonizing elements of music, lighting, aroma, and color tones to create an immersive experience. The current space allows seven treatments to be carried out simultaneously with fourteen in all including foot, head, and shoulder treatments.

The commitment to a wholesome experience at Siddhalepa is evident – male-to-male, female-to-female staff, a VIP Room with a personal shower, and an open walkway



leading to a secluded capsule with a fountain surrounded by white stones introduced encouraging patron to walk after a treatment to improve organ stimulation and balance.

Stepping into Siddhalepa Pelawatte is akin to stepping into serenity, an escape from life's daily cacophony. Herbal baths, steam rooms, and an upcoming sauna add layers to the experience, each tailored to the individual's concerns.

Locker rooms, showers, and a pebble walk set the stage for a journey of rejuvenation, accompanied by a consultation and the wellness relaxation area that offers herbal tea in recliners, a little prep-time prior to a treatment. Siddhalepa thus advises patrons to take time to immerse themselves fully in these complimentary experiences outside the treatment hour, to ensure a holistic encounter.

Siddhalepa's proposition of health and wellness is more than just a tagline – it's a considered claim of the most authentic Ayurvedic practice, catering to the diverse needs of both locals and foreigners alike. Each treatment and product conceptualized are meticulously curated over a period to ensure quality and credibility before offering to the public.

The story unfolds as a response to persistent pleas from the community for a health and wellness branch in their proximity. The location is not just accessible; it comes with added parking spaces and enhanced facilities, a true testament to Siddhalepa's commitment to its customers.

For those who have been loyal patrons for decades, the proximity of the new entity is a blessing. A variety of massages, from head, foot to full body, unfold in a location that eliminates the need for commuting to other far out Siddhalepa establishments.

Siddhalepa also shares its further plans for the branch – Ayurvedic surgeons and consultants for Gynecology, Pediatrics, Orthopedics, and other specialties. And later, arranging spaces for Yoga and means to experiment a healthy diet at the premises, as it is a part of their vision of holistic healthcare.

Long-standing customers and international visitors alike seek authentic Ayurvedic insights at Siddhalepa Pelawatte. Thus, the branch is open seven days a week, from 9 am to 9 pm, with the last appointment at 6.30 pm. Prior bookings are encouraged to ensure a seamless experience.

Siddhalepa is not merely a brand; it's a promise of an ever-evolving journey of rejuvenation. Elevate your senses and immerse yourself in the ancient healing power at Siddhalepa Pelawatte. It's not just a clinic; it's a narrative of well-being.

Western Province Annual Kite Show

CHIKA 2024
Colombo Heritage International Kite AirShow



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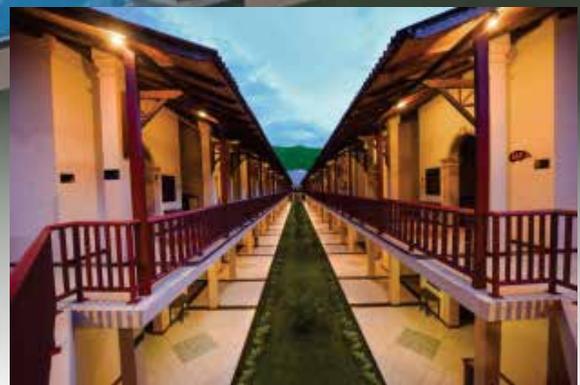
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Sun Siyam Resorts appoints industry experts to ignite the reopening of Sun Siyam Pasikudah in Sri Lanka this November 2023

Arshed Refai, General Manager & Dulanka De Mel, Sales and Marketing Manager

TTA BULLETIN

Sun Siyam Resorts, a renowned multi-award-winning Maldivian hospitality group, is pleased to introduce Arshed Refai as the General Manager and Dulanka De Mel as Sales and Marketing

Manager at Sun Siyam Pasikudah in Sri Lanka. Their appointment comes in anticipation of the eagerly-awaited reopening on November 17, 2023 of this remarkable five-star boutique haven. The property has undergone a comprehensive rejuvenation, assuring guests a captivating experience that

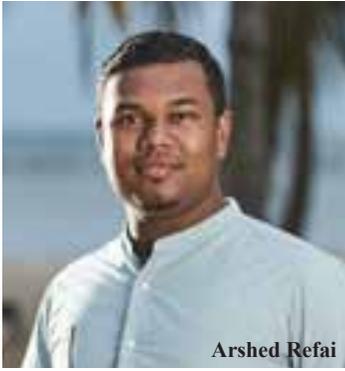
harmoniously blends accessible luxury with the cultural opulence of Sri Lanka. Arshed and Dulanka bring a wealth of industry expertise to this rejuvenated gem.

In his role as General Manager, Arshed, a Sri Lankan national, will oversee the overall operations of Sun Siyam Pasikudah. He collaborates closely with the CEO and the Group General Manager at Sun Siyam Resorts. Arshed began his career in IT but gradually transitioned into operations, accumulating extensive experience in the field over the years. Prior to this new role as General Manager, he served as the Operations Manager at Sun Aqua Pasikudah, which was rebranded to

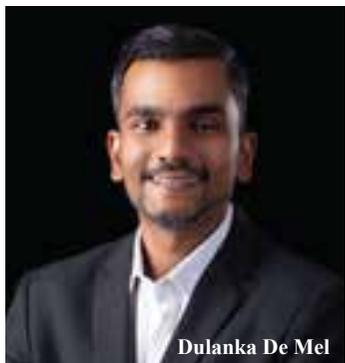
Sun Siyam Pasikudah in 2020. With over a decade of dedication to Sun Siyam Resorts, Arshed has been involved from the inception and initial construction stages of Sun Siyam Pasikudah, and has since overseen all operational aspects of every department within the property.

Arshed said "I'm very proud to be part of a dynamic and vibrant organisation where ideas, vision and creativity thrives. With Sri Lanka back on the map and tourism buzzing, my main role will be spurring its growth and continuously create that local yet diversely rich cultural stay for our guests and go onto contribute significantly to the country's tourism industry and economy as a whole."

Sri Lankan national Dulanka will be leading all marketing and sales efforts of Sun Siyam Pasikudah as he comes with over 13 years of progressive experience in the country's hospitality sector. Having previously worked with ANI Private Resorts, Onyx Hospitality, UGA Escapes, Resplendent Ceylon, Aman Resorts and Cinnamon Grand, Dulanka will also be key in driving destination and product positioning.



Arshed Refai



Dulanka De Mel

"Sri Lanka has always shown resilience despite numerous challenges, from the covid-19 pandemic to the economic crisis. With the country on a steadfast economic recovery and a positive outlook for tourism, we are putting together some ambitious plans for Sun Siyam Pasikudah and for Sri Lanka as an ideal destination. I'm honored to be a part of this journey," said Dulanka.

Sun Siyam Pasikudah invites travelers to embark on a remarkable journey, promising an adventure, a cultural immersion, and a sanctuary of serenity. Take advantage of fantastic opening, family, and festive offers and visit the website for more information or reservations www.sunsiyam.com/sun-siyam-pasikudah/.

Sun Siyam Resorts is a multi-award-winning hospitality group with over 30 years of experience, owning and managing five luxury private island properties in the Maldives and a boutique beach retreat on the East Coast of Sri Lanka.

The five-star boutique retreat is located on the unspoiled eastern coastline of Sri Lanka, approximately a six-hour scenic drive from Colombo's Bandaranaike Airport. Boasting just 34 spacious and contemporary, one-to-two-bedroom, garden or beach pavilions, with or without pools, Sun Siyam Pasikudah ensures an exclusive coastal experience, whether traveling as a couple, a family, or a group of friends. Sun Siyam Pasikudah offers diverse dining experiences, from The Cellar, Sri Lanka's largest eastern coast wine cellar, to the Tea House's extensive tea collection. There's also Slice & Grill for casual poolside dining and the Beach Shack for tropical beach beverages. Guests can explore Sri Lanka's wonders with underwater adventures, jet-skiing, sailing, and romantic dining. The resort also organizes day-long safaris to iconic destinations like Sigiriya Rock, Dambulla Cave Temple, whale-watching trips from May to September, and visits to Polonnaruwa and Minneriya National Park for wildlife enthusiasts. Sun Siyam Pasikudah is an affordable luxury haven where you can embrace Sri Lanka's cultural richness. It's ideal for meetings, weddings, and private events, offering boardroom facilities and beachfront wedding settings.

Keith Tomkies Appointed Cluster General Manager for Anantara Kalutara Resort and Avani Kalutara Resort

TTA BULLETIN

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Mr. Keith Tomkies as the Cluster General Manager for Anantara Kalutara Resort and Avani Kalutara Resort. With an extensive background in hospitality and a passion for creating memorable guest experiences, Mr. Tomkies brings a wealth of expertise to his new role.

Mr. Tomkies' career journey reflects his dedication to the hospitality industry. Starting as a waiter during his student years, his fascination with hotels in Asia was sparked during a trip to Hong Kong with his parents. This experience ignited his determination to pursue a career in hospitality, leading to roles in prestigious locations such as Hong Kong, Tokyo, Bangkok, Beijing, and various cities in Europe.

His tenure with Shangri-La over the past 14 years, including General Manager positions in Shanghai and Penang, Malaysia, has equipped him with invaluable leadership skills and a deep understanding of the Asian hospitality landscape.

Mr. Tomkies' diverse interests, including sports like rugby and skiing, as well as his love for travel, music, and cuisine, reflect his commitment to embracing different



Keith Tomkies

cultures and experiences. He believes in the importance of creating moments of delight for guests and making a positive impact on team members and local communities.

"I am honored to join the esteemed teams at Anantara Kalutara Resort and Avani Kalutara Resort," said Mr. Tomkies. "I look forward to working closely with our dedicated staff to deliver exceptional guest experiences and contribute to the vibrant communities of Kalutara."

Please join us in welcoming Mr. Keith Tomkies to his new role as Cluster General Manager for Anantara Kalutara Resort and Avani Kalutara Resort.

Hoteza: The Complete Guest Journey - Unlocked

TTA BULLETIN

Imagine a hospitality solution where every guest's visit to the hotel is not just a stay, but rather a meticulously crafted experience through different digital touchpoints before, during and after their stay. Hoteza Guest Journey is a platform that streamlines hotel communications to elevate the experience during every stay, bringing together entertainment, communication, services and information for a seamless and enjoyable experience. Hoteza is meant to follow the hotel branding, creating coherent and continuous visual communication throughout the journey.

Hoteza Guest Journey is more than a platform - it's a perfect combination of innovation that transforms stay into personalized and deliberate experiences, designed to connect hotel teams with their guests, transcending the conventional boundaries of service. Hoteza is set to provide intuitive solutions for self-check-in, check-out and user-friendly guest apps that create opportunities to interact with guests easily. Solutions also include in-room touchpoints, such as TV with different streaming and casting options, as well as integrations with services such as Airtime, provider of the latest blockbusters and movies for guests' pleasure of watching with only one click. In-room experience can also be elevated through the use of Hoteza on tablets, giving an interactive solution with flexibility in guest communication. A fast network connection distribution and digital signage screens are part of the journey, as Hoteza provides hotels with chances to implement revenue-boosting strategies while optimizing staff communication.

In the centre of everything is the guest: meant to be engaged, entertained, informed and offered a selection of services, beginning with a warm welcome message on different channels, as the perfect introduction to what is to come. From interactive in-room dining created with attention to detail to booking

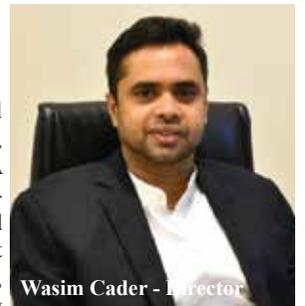
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is meant to enhance the guest's experience and boost revenues through upselling and personalized marketing modules.

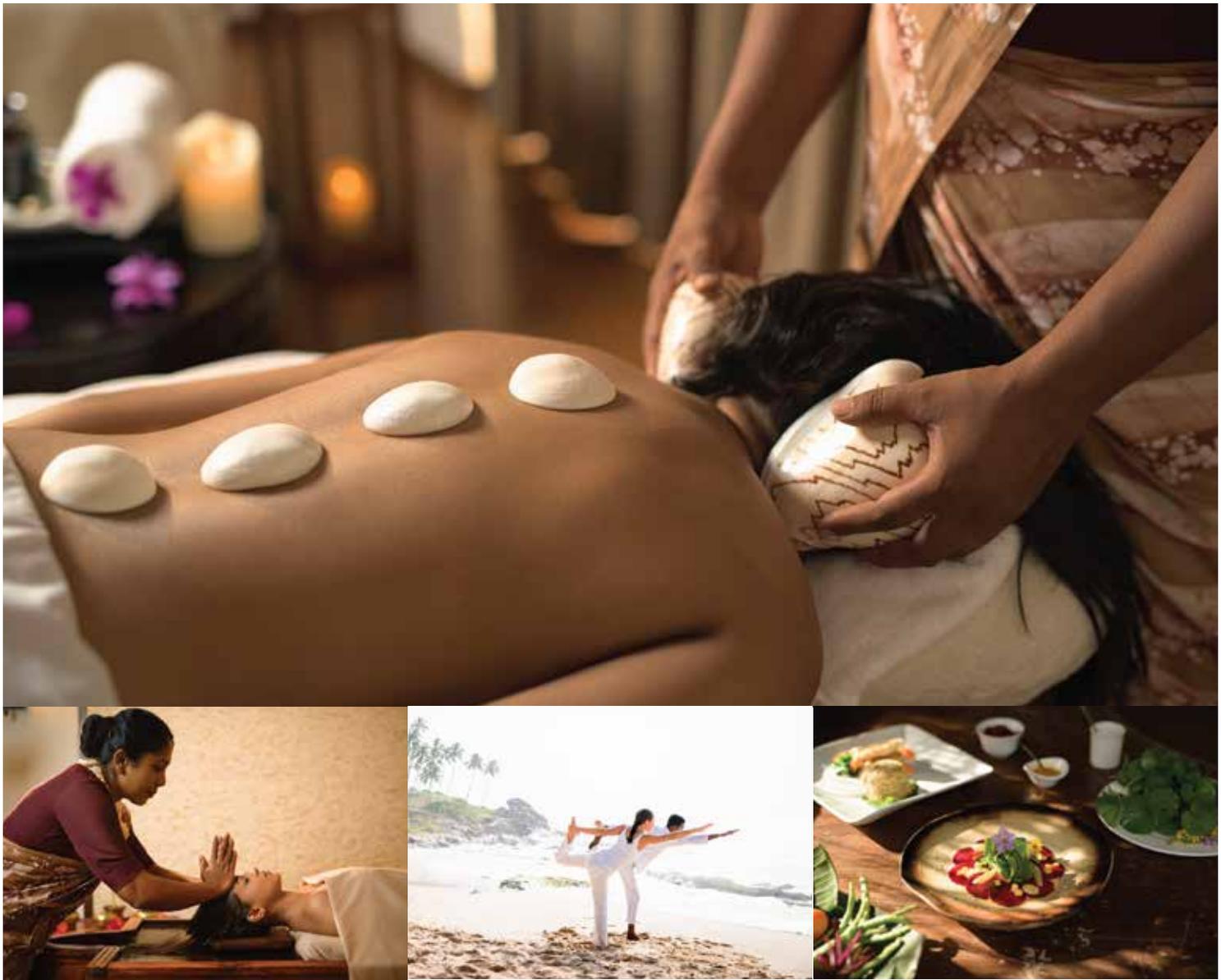
Guests can easily reach hotel staff through their device or in-room solution, the option to use a Mobile Key eliminates the need for plastic key cards and digitalization of all the printed materials will help you reach sustainability goals. With Hoteza, you will learn more about your guests - Statistics and Reports module gives more insight into their habits while providing a perfect tool to promote hotel services.

In today's world of hospitality, genuine connections with guests are paramount in creating a perfect stay. With that in mind, Hoteza Guest Journey provides a direct, effortless connection with the guests while delivering an amazing experience which will resonate before the check-in and long after the check-out.

Bringing Hoteza to Sri Lanka is Cine Digital, a total AV solutions provider that has partnered with the renowned IPTV brand as a distributor for both Sri Lanka and Maldives. Located in the heart of Colombo, Cine Digital brings over three decades of experience in the cinema industry and a team with over a decade experience in IPTV. Cine Digital is confident to deliver hospitality experiences like no other, in collaboration with Hoteza. Cine Digital's expert team would be there every step of the way in your Hoteza journey with consistent after-service and island wide tech support.



Wasim Cader - Director



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Our resort offers an exceptional journey to well-being, designed to awaken bliss within you.



Take a journey with us



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Tourism Alliance Launches Sri Lanka's First Dedicated Travel Agent Training Portal

TTA BULLETIN

The Sri Lanka Tourism Alliance proudly announces the launch of Sri Lanka's first Travel Agent Training Portal "The Sri Lanka Travel Expert", a pioneering initiative to elevate the standards of tourism expertise. Developed in collaboration with the European Union (EU) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Tourism Resilience Project, this platform marks a significant milestone in Sri Lanka's tourism sector.



Malik Fernando

"The Travel Agent Training Portal represents a concerted effort to enhance the skills and knowledge base of travel professionals across the world and encourage them to sell Sri Lanka. As the first of its kind, it offers comprehensive training modules designed to equip agents with the tools and insights needed to excel in this dynamic and evolving industry" said Malik J Fernando, Chair of the Tourism Alliance.

With the unwavering support of the EU and USAID, the Sri Lanka Tourism Alliance has meticulously crafted this portal to address the evolving needs of the tourism landscape. By providing access to cutting-edge resources, best practices, and industry insights, the platform empowers travel agents to deliver unparalleled service and experiences to visitors.

Commenting on the launch, Shehan

Ramanayake, Director of the Tourism Resilience Program (TRP) said, "This portal is a novel opportunity designed to take the best of Sri Lankan experiences to the world through well informed and equipped international travel agents. We thank the EU and USAID for their support in creating a more resilient industry

This interactive learning resource offers engaging multimedia content, including videos, and carefully curated thematic itineraries to enhance the learning experience and ensure the retention of key information. Course content will be regularly expanded.

Upon successfully completing the training modules and achieving the test score required for certification, the travel agents will receive a "Travel Expert" badge from the Tourism Alliance, recognising their expertise in promoting Sri Lanka as a preferred tourist destination.

This initiative underscores the commitment of the Tourism Alliance to foster resilience and sustainability within the tourism sector. By investing in the professional development of travel agents, the overall objective is to enhance the visitor experience, bolster destination competitiveness, and drive economic growth.



Shehan Ramanayake

PATA International Conference on Women in Travel to be held in Bohol, Philippines from March 20 - 22, 2024

TTA BULLETIN

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is set to organise PATA International Conference on Women in Travel from March 20-22, 2024, hosted by the Department of Tourism, Philippines.

"PATA recognises that addressing gender equality in the travel and tourism sector is absolutely important to the responsible and sustainable development of the travel and tourism industry," said PATA CEO Noor Ahmad Hamid. "Despite comprising almost 50% of the tourism workforce in the Asia Pacific region, women have not received the appreciation and support necessary for their own economic and social prosperity. The event aims to spark meaningful dialogues and creative solutions dedicated to the empowerment of women in the travel sector. It underscores that women's prosperity is integral to the industry's overall success, particularly as we navigate the challenges and opportunities in the post-pandemic travel and tourism landscape."



The three-day conference, featuring industry leaders will underscore the crucial role of women and the current state of gender diversity in the tourism industry. It will uncover initiatives and strategies towards progress and equality such as breaking barriers for women's empowerment in the industry, promoting sustainability with women as agents of change, and fostering women's leadership development. The event will not only celebrate women's achievements and contributions to travel and tourism but also provide an opportunity to critically examine gender disparities in the industry, shedding light on various issues such as the lack of women in managerial positions.

WTTC Report: AI Set to Revolutionise Travel & Tourism

TTA BULLETIN



Major new reports from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and Microsoft highlight the transformative power of AI (Artificial Intelligence) for Travel & Tourism, marking a commitment to a digital future with unparalleled customer experiences.

The first in a series of AI reports, announced during the global tourism body's event at FITUR and in collaboration with WTTC's Industry Partner, Microsoft, is poised to redefine Travel & Tourism standards and call on the sector for greater integration of such technologies.

As the global leader in Travel & Tourism, WTTC is committed to driving innovation and supporting the sector to embrace AI and other cutting-edge technologies. To promote sustainability and excellent customer experiences, WTTC acknowledges the crucial importance of AI in revolutionising the sector.

Throughout the traveller's journey, WTTC believes AI can play a pivotal role in delivering a tailored and enhanced experience now and in the future.

This technology can empower personalised recommendations and marketing strategies by analysing traveller data, optimising pricing strategies through real-time adjustments, and offering instant responses and fine-tuned interactions via sophisticated AI powered chatbots.

The report also highlights AI's capabilities extend to predicting future demand patterns, efficiently allocating resources, and providing valuable insights for governments and Travel & Tourism stakeholders.

This contribution can be pivotal in promoting sustainability with efficient resource management by monitoring and minimising environmental impacts, ensuring a more responsible and sustainable sector.

Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO, said: "As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of Travel & Tourism, AI emerges as a catalyst for positive change.

"The transformative capabilities highlighted in this report demonstrate that AI is not just a technological advancement, it is a strategic tool that can personalise the customer experience, drive sustainable improvements, and create real time pricing models."

Despite the increasing examples of AI applications in Travel & Tourism, the report reveals the sector lags other consumer-facing industries in AI adoption. AI's surge across various sector's last year is now a relevant force, and the Travel & Tourism sector must act now to leverage its impact.

Challenges that must be overcome by Travel & Tourism businesses include a shortage of AI-skilled workers, limited AI infrastructure, and the absence of a formal 'AI strategy' in many business plans.

Travel & Tourism businesses are urged to embrace AI as a strategic priority, investing heavily in talent to foster collaboration between humans and AI.

Amidst concerns about AI's impact on jobs, the report addresses the potential for job creation, recognising that although AI will be disruptive, it will in turn generate new opportunities.

Acorn Group successfully concludes role as Official Travel Partner for the HSBC Ceylon Literary & Arts Festival 2024

TTA BULLETIN

The Acorn Group, a leading travel and tourism company, partnered with the esteemed HSBC Ceylon Literary & Arts Festival 2024 as the official Travel Partner for the event.



The HSBC Ceylon Literary and Arts Festival, renowned for its celebration of literature, arts, and cultural heritage, brings together artists, writers, intellectuals, and enthusiasts from around the world and Sri Lanka together on one platform. As the official Travel Partner, Acorn Group played an integral role in facilitating travel arrangements for the foreign participants, speakers, and attendees, ensuring a seamless and memorable experience both to and from their arrival into Sri Lanka and to the festival venues of Colombo and Kandy.

"We are extremely happy to support and be associated with the HSBC Ceylon Literary and Arts Festival 2024 as the official Travel Partner," said Suranjith De Fonseka, Managing Director Travel Sector, Acorn Group. "This festival is a testament to Sri Lanka's rich literary and artistic traditions, and one which would be a great addition to an annual calendar of events. Partnering and supporting such events is also a window of opportunity to showcase the versatility of Sri Lanka's

tourism landscape and highlight our travel services to all visitors and participants"

The Acorn Group brings years of expertise and a commitment to excellence in travel services, offering a wide range of solutions tailored to the unique needs of each traveler. From flight bookings to accommodation, transportation, and beyond, Acorn Group ensures a hassle-free travel experience, allowing participants to focus on immersing themselves in the enriching program of the festival.

"We are delighted to have the Acorn Group on board as our official Travel Partner for the HSBC Ceylon Literary & Arts Festival 2024," said Ajay Vir Singh Founder and Creator

Ceylon Literary and Art Festival. "Their professionalism, reliability, and dedication to customer satisfaction makes them the perfect partner for this event."

Discover the Maldives with Sun Siyam Resorts and Make Unforgettable Memories

A collection of affordable luxury private island resorts offerings something for everyone

TTA BULLETIN

Escape to a realm of unparalleled beauty and luxury, where the turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean meet the powder-white sands of pristine beaches – welcome to Sun Siyam Resorts.

Maldivian-owned and run, Sun Siyam Resorts is a multi-award-winning hospitality group with over 30 years of experience, owning and managing five affordable luxury private island properties in the Maldives and a boutique beach retreat on the East Coast of Sri Lanka

This collection of properties guarantees a truly authentic experience of the idyllic island nation. Each has its own unique character, offering guests a bucket-list holiday they will never forget, whether it's a family adventure or an intimate romantic getaway.

Nestled amidst the breathtaking atolls of the Maldives, Sun Siyam invites you to indulge in a sensory journey of relaxation, adventure, and pure bliss. From the moment you arrive, you'll be enchanted by the serenity of this tropical oasis, where every detail is meticulously crafted to ensure an unforgettable experience. Join us as we embark on a voyage to paradise, where luxury knows no bounds and dreams come to life at Sun Siyam Maldives.

Sun Siyam Olhuveli is located on the South Male Atoll, just a 45-minute scenic speedboat ride from Velana International Airport. This convenient yet secluded location ensures that guests are whisked away to their tropical oasis in no time.

Traditional Maldives meets contemporary design at Sun Siyam Olhuveli which is strategically perched across three picturesque islands with rooms and villas spread along the beautiful white sandy beaches

It is a haven to sip a drink in the vista from the adults-only infinity pool, go kitesurfing over the crystal waters of the Indian Ocean or dive below the surface to discover a sunken shipwreck on a day out in the nearby Vaavu Atoll.

Accommodation options ranging from Maldivian-inspired suites to sleek contemporary villas are carefully designed to cater to the ultimate levels of guest satisfaction. The property also boasts three pools to choose from, including an adults-only infinity pool that never fails to impress – but be warned, the lagoon may entice you into adventure.



Sun Siyam Vilu Reef

It all begins on the water, and whether it's parasailing, kitesurfing or diving, there's countless ways to stay active. The SSI Certified Diving School on site provides the perfect start to explore over 50 dive sites including secret ship wrecks. The ultimate experience for many, is the three-point snorkeling tour to get up close and personal with nurse sharks, manta rays and dolphins.

The outstanding cuisine holds the ocean at its heart, too, with creative menus served across selection of 17 restaurants and bars, all prepared by world-class chefs. Daily changing buffets at Sunset Restaurant and Malaafaiy, fresh seafood at Maghrib Grill, Thai specialties at Siyam Orchid and Indian dinners at Namaste are just a few to select from.

Further south in the archipelago, nestled in in Dhaalu Atoll, Sun Siyam Iru Veli is steeped in romance, with its chic decor, tranquil overwater spa and stunning natural landscape offering honeymooners and couples a holiday they'll never forget. Located, a 40-minute seaplane flight from Velana (Male) International Airport, Sun Siyam Iru Veli offers the ultimate tropical retreat

The resort boasts stunning overwater villas with private pools, each offering panoramic views of the crystal-clear turquoise waters. These spacious villas are elegantly designed with contemporary furnishings and feature private decks with direct access to the ocean.

Sun Siyam Iru Veli offers a diverse array of dining options, including signature restaurants serving delectable international cuisine, seafood specialties, and authentic Maldivian dishes. Guests can also enjoy romantic beachfront dining experiences under the stars.

A huge draw is the extensive Premium All-Inclusive Signature Plan which includes endless dining opportunities within the six restaurants and bars, spa or diving and exciting motorized watersports credit, as well as guided snorkeling and sunset cruises.

The resort's overwater spa provides a tranquil sanctuary where guests can rejuvenate their mind, body, and soul with a range of holistic treatments and massages. The weekly pool parties, a world-class wine cellar, the romantic castaway sandbank getaway or a beach dining and cinema experience under the star-studded sky, are just some of the other unforgettable experiences available at Sun Siyam Iru Veli

Sun Siyam Vilu Reef, meanwhile, has a track record in wooing travelers, with repeat visitors making up almost

three-quarters of its guests. Go snorkeling in the vibrant coral reef that rings the resort's water villas, unwind with a couples' massage session in the spa, or go island-hopping to neighbouring isles for your own Robinson-Crusoe castaway experience.

Step into a world of luxury and comfort with Sun Siyam Iru Fushi. Those seeking a blend of fun activities, leisurely downtime, and top-notch cuisine will be in their element at this gem of a resort hidden away in the Noonu Atoll.

Spread across 52-acres island the resort offers exquisite accommodations perfecting the balance between rustic charm and understated luxury. Each villa is thoughtfully designed to blend seamlessly with the island's pristine surroundings and offers stunning views of the Indian Ocean. With private pools, spacious sun decks, and direct beach or lagoon access, your personal sanctuary awaits.



Sun Siyam Iru Fushi

Complete with a kids' club, a wealth of watersports and a plethora of must-visit oceanside restaurants, it's ideal for young families and adventurous groups of friends or couples.

Families with kids under 15 sleeps and eat for free with two paying adults in the same room. This is a huge plus and one which makes the resort attractive for families traveling with children. The local marine life is extraordinary and Nemo's Reef is where you can snorkel and see hundreds of tiny clownfish in their natural habitat which is an unforgettable experience for kids of all ages. A range of recreational activities are at hand at the Koamas Kidz Club for those who like a little social engagement with like-minded teens and pre-teens.

Guests can choose from a variety of meal plans and benefit from the excellent dine around program of 15 restaurants & bars, including French cuisine at the overwater restaurant Flavours; Asian fusion at Bamboo and freshly caught fish at Islander's Grill.

An award-winning Spa by Thalgo France with more than 160 spa treatments to choose from, makes this tropical island the perfect



Siyam World Horse Ranch

wellness getaway. Treat yourself to a blissful massage overlooking the ocean, unwind in our tranquil relaxation lounges, or embark on a journey of self-discovery with our holistic wellness programs. Whatever your desire, our expert therapists are dedicated to ensuring your complete relaxation and rejuvenation.

Siyam World, an all-inclusive island destination that is unapologetically quirky, all-embracing destination that transcends cultures and borders to offer guests an ever-expanding array of 'never-seen-before' experiences – from the Maldives' biggest floating water park to the country's first-ever resort horse ranch.

This 54-hectare island resort boasts an enticing variety of 16 accommodation categories, all with private pools, ranging from 89 to 3,000sqm, from lush Beach Pool Villas, expansive Beach Suites and breath-taking Beach Residences to playful overwater villas complete with irresistible water slides

The food and beverage offering in expansive. Forget any preconceptions of monotonous dining –

Siyam World guests can enjoy more than a 15 restaurants and bars with the peerless WOW!

The premium all-inclusive concept offers a selection of health, fitness and wellness activities, excursions, water sports, kids and teens activities, and loads of excitement around every corner.

You can ride along the shoreline on horseback at sunset, slow down in an outdoor Pilates class, take a diving lesson at the SSI certified diving school or get an adrenalin rush at Siyam Water World, which takes the crown as the Maldives' biggest floating water park.

Whether it's romance, relaxation or adventure you're craving, there's a slice of paradise to be discovered among the atolls.



Siyam World Maldives

THE CLARKS

HOTELS & RESORTS

Explore Sri Lanka with
The Clarks Hotels & Resorts.


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VILLAS & SUITES
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VILLAS & SUITES
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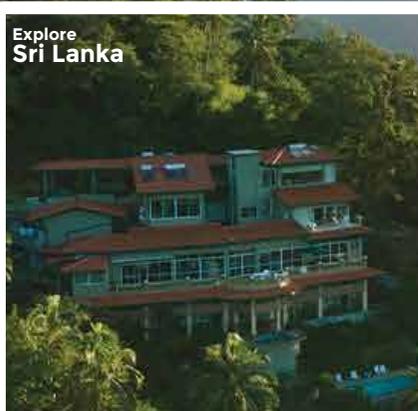
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KANDY-SRI LANKA

Explore
Sri Lanka



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Explore
Sri Lanka



theclarksmoments

Explore Sri Lanka, amidst nature

Villas & Suites by The Clarks brand caters to the boutique and luxury homestay segment, appealing to adventurous individuals seeking enriching experiences. "Villas & Suites by The Clarks" are strategically located in exotic settings, offering authentic local cuisine and personalized services for a relaxing and rejuvenating experience. This marks the beginning of a transformative journey that enhances travel experiences both within India and abroad.

Albatross Villas & Suites By The Clarks stands as a splendid Boutique Villa Resort in Kandy, Sri Lanka, representing the inaugural property of The Clarks Hotels & Resorts in the country. Situated within walking distance of the Victoria Golf Course, it rests atop "The Coconut Hill" with a backdrop of the Pidurutalagala Peak. The property is conveniently close to an 18-hole Golf Course, offering breathtaking views of the hills and the Victoria Reservoir. Centrally located near the Temple of the Tooth Relic in

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Sri Lanka

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Kandy and the Pallekelle International Cricket Stadium, it features magnificent suites with private balconies, jacuzzis, rain showers, and butler service, along with other modern amenities. The in-house bar serves strong and exotic mocktails and cocktails, while the multi-cuisine restaurant offers Indian, Sri Lankan, and international cuisines.

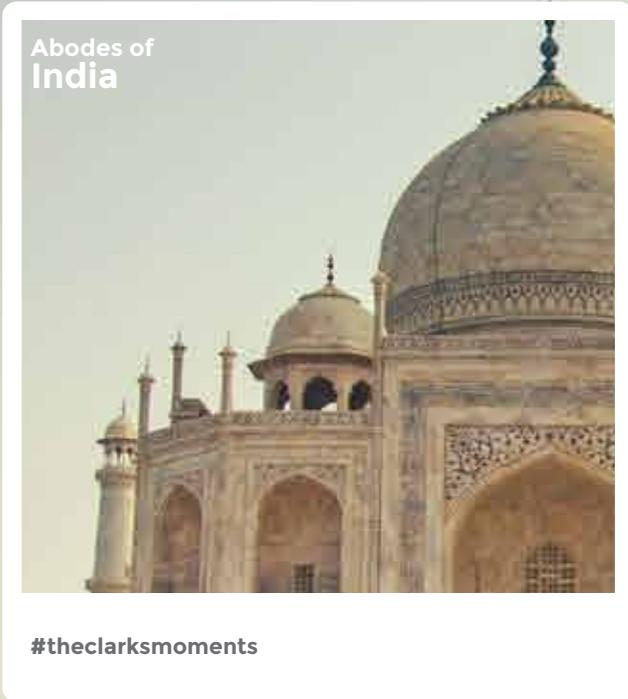
The Clarks Hotels & Resorts proudly introduces its second property in Sri Lanka, nestled in a picturesque environment amid tea plantations - "Celestial Hills Villas & Suites by The Clarks", Kandy. Surrounded by lush greenery and breathtaking mountain views, Celestial Hills comprises 11 individual villas, including 9 single-room villas and 2 family villas, each with 2 rooms.

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www.theclarkshotels.com 
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aravinda@theclarkshotels.com 

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HOTELS & RESORTS

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Clarks Collection

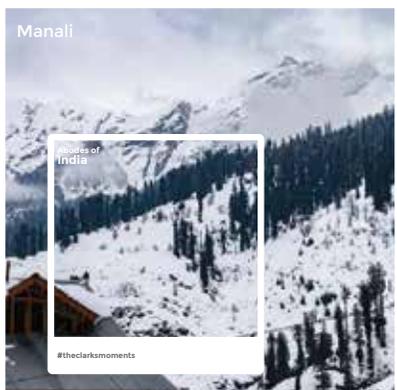
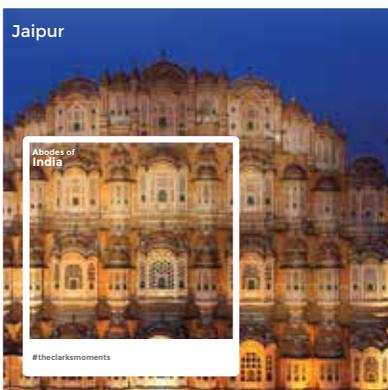
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HOTELS

Anantara Resorts & Spas in Sri Lanka Curate Transformative Wellness Journeys

TTA BULLETIN

Anantara Resorts & Spas, Sri Lanka, epitomize a commitment to offering travellers holistic and transformative experiences. With a focus on meaningful travel, the resorts have introduced wellness escapes designed to rejuvenate guests' mind, body, and spirit.

At Anantara Peace Haven Resort Tangalle, immersive wellness experiences await, centred around ancient Ayurvedic treatments renowned for their healing properties. Guests can indulge in Ayurvedic doctor consultations, mindfulness meditation sessions led by local monks, guided yoga sessions by the ocean and personalized treatments tailored to individual consultations. Further enhancing the experience, Executive Chef Chaminda Pathirana who specializes in authentic Sri Lankan cuisine has curated Ayurvedic menus featuring organic produce from the resort's herbal garden, crafting nutritious dishes to promote healing and detoxification. The resort offers the dedicated "Sanjeewana"



package, a transformative 3-day Ayurvedic retreat personalized to each guest's consultation, providing a deep dive into holistic wellness practices.

Meanwhile, Anantara Kalutara Resort's spa stands as a beacon of excellence, having been honoured as Sri Lanka's best spa at the 2023 World Spa Awards. Renowned for its diverse range of therapies, the spa offers everything from Ayurvedic treatments to Balinese and international therapies. Additionally, guests can partake in sunrise and sunset yoga sessions, savour healthy meals, and enjoy rejuvenating drinks made from organically sourced ingredients. These offerings reflect the resort's commitment to promoting a healthy lifestyle and providing guests with unparalleled wellness journeys.

Hilton Announces Global Partnership with Deepika Padukone for 'Hilton. For The Stay' Campaign in India

TTA BULLETIN

Amidst the boom in India's travel sector, global hospitality company Hilton partners with celebrated Bollywood icon Deepika Padukone to shine the spotlight on Hilton's world class offerings and signature hospitality.



announced a global ambassador partnership with Indian actress, producer, philanthropist, and entrepreneur, Deepika Padukone. The partnership is an extension to Hilton's first global marketing platform, 'Hilton. For The Stay,' in India, spotlighting why it matters where you stay amid continued demand for travel in the region.

This strategic collaboration marks an important milestone for Hilton, reaffirming the company's commitment to expand in the dynamic Indian market. Recognized for her inspiring journey in the entertainment industry and beyond, Deepika embodies the spirit of modern India and resonates with the aspirations and ethos of the Indian traveler. Her resilience, innovation, and global outlook, complements Hilton's mission to offer exceptional experiences, making her the ideal choice to champion Hilton's global marketing platform. Deepika's connection with her audience is built on authenticity and a shared pursuit of excellence – qualities that are at the heart of Hilton's service philosophy.

Breaking away from conventional stereotypes and scripting her success story, Deepika's rise in the highly competitive Bollywood and Hollywood entertainment

industries, coupled with her philanthropic work mirrors the ethos of the entrepreneurial generation which is shaping contemporary India today.

Acknowledged with the Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum for her leadership in raising mental health awareness in 2020 and named the TIME 100 Most Influential People in the World, Deepika's achievements have set her firmly on the world stage.

Led by consumer insights, 'Hilton. For The Stay' was launched in July 2022, and illustrates the realities and stresses of traveling, highlighting the importance of 'The Stay' as a crucial element that can make or break any trip. Hilton's hyper-localized approach for the India campaign will start with understanding the unique preferences of local consumers in the coming months. Through market research and Deepika's synergy with the Indian audience, Hilton aims to uncover relatable tensions in travel which will be interwoven into the campaign, alongside demonstration of how Hilton is here to remove their pain points and extend our signature hospitality, for every stay.

Deepika Padukone said, "I am proud to be partnering with Hilton, a global brand that resonates deeply with me, to champion the significance of 'The Stay' for Indians not only in India but across the globe. Our generation is defined by relentless dedication to our pursuits and a keen eye for meaningful experiences. I look forward to creating unforgettable memories with Hilton and share them with the world."

Secrets of Ceylon Collection focuses on growing through trade partnerships

TTA BULLETIN



Secrets of Ceylon continues to make waves as it builds her reputation in the Sri Lanka Travel Trade. The brain child of Jean-Marc Flambert recognises potential in unique and boutique experiences, and then works with the owners to build a business plan for success. The focus is on the travel trade and the process includes creating awareness and training front line staff. "People sell what they know, so it is our role to help our DMC partners understand why and how to sell our experiences. It is for this reason that we don't share rates till we have had a training session, and why we organise a quarterly quiz to re-enforce the learning. Our recent Quarterly DMC Quiz saw Esna Holidays come first and it was a lot of fun



Jean-Marc Flambert

Wild Culture has hit Yala like a storm in 2023. Today, Wild Culture is a top seller in Yala. Reviews have been exceptional and both DMC's and foreign tour operators are adding her as a must visit on many itineraries. Wild Culture is an elegant resort of 4 suites and 4 rooms, 2 swimming pools, large manicured gardens, a pool bar / lounge and a dining area. Guests can relax and enjoy the unparalleled views of paddy fields in between their safaris in to the Yala National Park.

Floating Mountain Villa is a retreat near Ramboda in the Nuwara Eliya district and just an hour and a half from Kandy. In March 2023, a partnership was started with Secrets of Ceylon Collection to market the

property and since then she has been delivering to an exceptional standard culminating in a Booking.com Traveller Review Award 2024 for 10/10 (see attached). The secret to success is Gowri Ganesan the owner and her magnificent assistant Akila who look after each guest as if they were a member of their family. Guest talk about the amazing service and also the views.

Secrets of Ceylon Collection are a collection of brands that deliver exceptional service, are in great locations and all offer something unique:

Horathapola Coconut Estate for example offers an introduction to rural life, and this includes a tour of a coconut estate to learn about this important crop.

Idal Villa offers a 15 minute train ride to Idalgashinna, picnic breakfast near the station and a visit to a village home to make local sweet treats.

Kulu Safaris offers high quality safari in their own vehicles, and a free kayaking tour or bike walk in their extensive gardens.

Forgotten Colombo on a Landy offers a 3 hour guided tour of Colombo in a restore Land Rover and an introduction to some of Colombo's best kept secrets.

To learn more visit www.SecretsofCeylonCollection.com



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Sun Siyam Pasikudah – A tropical Oasis on the East Coast

Sun Siyam Resorts is a multi-award-winning hospitality group with over 30 years of experience owning and managing properties in the Maldives and Sri Lanka

TTA BULLETIN

Welcome to a realm where azure waters kiss pristine shores, where lush greenery dances with the gentle breeze, and where luxury intertwines with tranquility – welcome to Sun Siyam Pasikudah

With numerous affordable luxury resorts in the Maldives, Sun Siyam proudly extends its legacy to the captivating island of Sri Lanka, inviting you on a journey of unparalleled bliss and indulgence.

This luxury boutique 5 star property with 34 suites is located on the north east coast of Sri Lanka. Imagine waking up to the melodious symphony of waves caressing the shore, greeted by the warm embrace of the tropical sun. This is the everyday reality at Sun Siyam Sri Lanka, where every moment is an ode to luxury and relaxation.



These exquisite collections of villas and suites are meticulously designed to offer the epitome of comfort, adorned with lavish amenities and adorned with breathtaking views of the Indian Ocean or the lush garden landscapes.

Indulge your senses in a culinary adventure like no other, as world-class chefs curate a symphony of flavors to tantalize your taste buds. From authentic Sri Lankan delicacies bursting with exotic spices to international cuisines crafted with finesse, every meal at Sun Siyam Sri Lanka is a gastronomic delight.



For those seeking rejuvenation and tranquility, the award-winning spa beckons with a promise of unparalleled relaxation. Let the skilled therapists transport you to a state of bliss with an array of holistic treatments inspired by ancient healing traditions from around the world. Unwind amidst the soothing ambiance, as the gentle hands of our experts melt away your worries and revitalize your body, mind, and soul.

Adventure awaits around every corner at Sun Siyam Sri Lanka. Dive into the crystal-clear waters of the Indian Ocean and discover a mesmerizing underwater world teeming with vibrant marine life. Embark on a thrilling safari through the lush wilderness of Yala National Park,

home to majestic elephants, elusive leopards, and a myriad of other exotic creatures.

For those seeking a more leisurely pace, immerse yourself in the rich culture and history of Sri Lanka with guided tours to ancient temples, colonial fortresses, and bustling local markets.

Transfer options include, a scenic drive of 6 hours from Colombo or a Seaplane ride of 35 minutes to Batticalo and from thereto resort a 45 minute drive

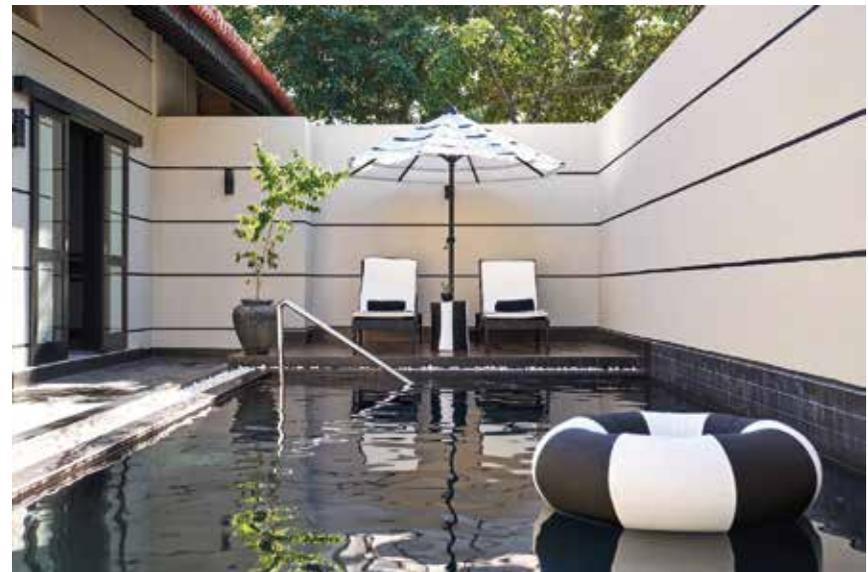
At Sun Siyam Sri Lanka, we redefine



luxury with a commitment to impeccable service, unparalleled comfort, and unforgettable experiences. Whether you seek a romantic retreat, a family getaway, or an adventure of a lifetime, let Sun Siyam Sri Lanka be your sanctuary in paradise.

Experience the magic of Sun Siyam Sri

gates a world of UNESCO Heritage Sites, breathtaking national parks and thriving neighbourhood villages await, where you'll be greeted with open arms and warm, welcoming smiles. One of the most peaceful spots on the coast, we promise the crowds won't find you here



Lanka – where every moment is a cherished memory waiting to be made. Book your stay now and embark on a journey to a world of luxury, serenity, and pure bliss.

A variety of dining options are on offer at the resort and you can savour the best of Sri Lankan fare – the signature Lentil Dal is the best you'll ever taste. Beyond the

Sun Siyam is the visionary creation of the renowned Maldivian entrepreneur, Ahmed Siyam Mohamed, and is one of the most forward thinking and dynamic companies with over 30 years of experience within the Maldivian hospitality industry. Sun Siyam has over the years diversified into other complementing businesses including logistics, sustainable farming and construction within its corporate profile.





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Experience the epitome of coastal luxury at The Calm Resort & Spa by Browns Hotels & Resorts, nestled along the pristine East Coast of Sri Lanka. Wake up to the exclusive spectacle of a sunrise over Pasikuda beach and indulge in a blissful beachside vacation with exceptional hospitality. Dive into exhilarating water sports while exploring the vibrant world beneath the waves through snorkelling and diving excursions. For a more leisurely exploration, embark on a coastal cycling tour to discover the charm of coastal living, traditional fishing villages and the exquisite artistry of Palmyrah handcrafts. With 70 elegantly designed rooms and an array of activities, every moment at The Calm Resort & Spa promises an unforgettable experience of relaxation and adventure.



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HOTELS

Niyama Welcomes Back Surf Pro Brad Gerlach and Surf Photographer Junior Garcia

TTA BULLETIN

At Niyama Private Islands Maldives, surfing is a way of life. And with peak surf season fast approaching, two renowned surfies – Wave-Ki founder and instructor Brad Gerlach and whiz-behind-the-lens Junior Garcia – are set to take up residence.



memory for improved surfing once in the water.

There to capture guests mid-wave will be photographer Junior Garcia, at the resort 8 March 8 – September 30. Originally from Brazil, and now based in Bali,

Junior has spent his life chasing the ultimate wave and the ultimate shot.

"The return of Brad and Junior to Niyama is epically exciting," says Nathan Kemp, Surf Development Director at the resort. "Their unrivalled talents, combined with the perfect surf conditions and absolutely incomparable backdrop that is the Maldives, guarantees an unforgettable experience for all who will be staying with us during this time".

While surfing in the Maldives can be enjoyed year-round, peak season runs from March to November. Brad can be booked for private or family coaching, first on land (USD 249) then in the water (USD 447). There will also be regular group land sessions (USD 74). Packages include a year's access to Wave-Ki online, with video lessons, live sessions and Q&As, plus the option of one-on-one virtual coaching.

Niyama Private Islands Maldives is the ultimate surf destination. Guests can jet in with their boards or get fully outfitted at the Rip Curl boutique, set up camp in one of the specially outfitted surf villas, then hit the waves – including Vodi, a powerful and sometimes hollow wave that breaks right on shore. Afterwards, chill time awaits at the Surf Shack with rum and reggae, or at Drift Spa with a recovery back massage and sunburn-soothing aloe vera wrap.

In residence 10 March – 20 April to offer his revolutionary method of coaching is Brad Gerlach, the world's #2 in 1991 after dominating the leader board for the majority of the year. He is the founder of Wave-Ki, a land-based method to perfect surf skills favoured by pros like Parker Coffin, with a martial art-like focus on slow, precise movements which create kinaesthetic motor

Sofia Colombo: Elevating Luxury and Comfort in Urban Hospitality

TTA BULLETIN

Experience luxury and comfort at the brand-new city hotel, Sofia Colombo. Strategically located in the heart of the city, discover the perfect blend of contemporary design and warm hospitality as you step into this iconic 12-story cityscape.



Sofia Colombo boasts state-of-the-art facilities, including meeting and conference spaces designed to inspire creativity and success. From corporate meetings to private occasions, the space options can cater to a variety of event options.

With 212 meticulously designed rooms, including stunning suites offering panoramic views of the Indian Ocean, Sofia Colombo redefines elegance for the discerning traveler.

Designed with the discerning business traveler in mind, the hotel offers tailored amenities and services to meet the travelers' professional needs. Although it is ideal for the business traveler, it is well equipped to cater to leisure travelers as well.

Sofia Colombo is the perfect blend of business and leisure - where seamless transitions between work and relaxation create a harmonious stay.

Sports enthusiasts could experience comfortable accommodation, potentially with an opportunity to unwind in a

25-meter-long swimming pool with beautiful sunset after an active day. For those who prefer lodging options with special facilities and services tailored to their respective sports.

Additionally, the fitness center is equipped with the latest equipment, promoting an active and healthy lifestyle during your stay.

From corporate meetings to conferences and events, the versatile spaces and professional support services cater to all MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) requirements.

Revel in serenity at our vast pool and rooftop area. Dive into the refreshing waters or bask in poolside relaxation, savoring peaceful moments amidst the tranquil ambiance.

Embark on a global culinary journey at Sofia Colombo's All Day Dining Restaurant. Savor authentic Sri Lankan cuisine and fresh, expertly crafted dishes. Experience open-kitchen dining, a rooftop bar with a view, and relaxation by the 25m infinity pool, complete with a grand pool deck bar and high tea.

Discover a culinary adventure at our restaurant, offering a diverse menu that tantalizes taste buds with flavors from around the world. Enjoy delightful meals prepared by our experienced chefs in a welcoming and elegant ambiance.

Breaking the Mould: Women Inspiring Transformational Travel Experiences with Avani Hotels & Resorts

TTA BULLETIN

This International Women's Day, taking place on 8th March 2024, Avani Hotels & Resorts salutes the women who inspire guests through their courage and creativity. Guests can join them on four transformational travel experiences, led by women who have carved their own paths in the worlds of ballet, craft beverages, weaving and gastronomy. Whether it's learning ballet in the Maldives, discovering Cambodian botanicals through gin, supporting female weavers in Sri Lanka, or making new friends at a supper club in Milan, these unique journeys lead guests to return home with a new skill and a newfound sense of purpose.

A former Royal Ballet dancer who overcame a career-ending injury, Karis Scarlette is an inspirational artist who travels the world sharing her love of ballet with people of all ages and abilities, from beginners to professionals. Her exclusive ballet retreat is returning to Avani+ Fares Maldives Resort from 11th – 24th November 2024, bringing the graceful and elegant movements of classical ballet to the resort's breezy dance studio. Popular programmes include the kid-friendly "Tutus & Twirls" where storytelling meets interactive props; "Sunrise Serenity" that blends stretching, mobility and mindful breathing; and one-on-one sessions focusing on perfecting posture and alignment, mastering footwork and improving strength and confidence. Guests can experience the unique benefits of ballet, while surrounded by the stunning scenery of the Maldives.

Pari Sophary, the founder of Herbal Kulen, is a woman on a mission. As a champion of sustainability, she uses local botanicals from the foothills of Kulen mountain to ensure her products are organic, fair-trade and eco-friendly. In an industry dominated by men, Pari has made her mark with her expertise for botanicals and relentless drive to put Cambodia on the global craft gin map. Gin-curious travellers can try Herbal Kulen at the historic Scribe Bar at FCC Angkor by Avani, where skilled mixologists use it as a base in such cocktails as Cambodian Negroni and Apsara Sour, both carefully crafted to represent the spirit of Cambodia in a glass.

In Sri Lanka, where only about 35% of women participate in the labour force, Sooriya Weaving is a rare example of a successful female-centric enterprise. Founded in 1976, the family-led company produces high-quality fabrics and garments, employing women weavers, some of whom have been working there for



over 40 years. Sooriya Weaving is also dedicated to reviving and preserving the Sri Lankan traditional handloom industry, using 100% virgin cotton and natural dyes. From their base at Avani Kalutara guests can visit Sooriya Weaving to tour the largest handloom factory in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka, meet the skilled women weavers, and have the chance to try their hand at weaving their own piece of fabric, choosing from a vibrant range of colours and patterns.

With her powerful presence, Valentina Mazzi Cugusi knows how to entertain and cook up a storm. Along with her husband Marco, she runs the supper club for guests of Avani Palazzo Moscova Milan, where the dynamic duo showcases organic wines and niche products from small artisanal producers. As they prepare and serve a delicious Italian meal using seasonal and local ingredients, they also share entertaining stories from the regions where the products come from, such as Cinque Terre and Sardinia, suggesting tips on how to experience Italy like a local. Valentina has carved her niche with her supper club concept in the largely male-dominated restaurant industry.

Avani Hotels & Resorts, part of Minor Hotels, was launched in 2011 and designed for the millennial-minded traveller whose priorities are style, value and comfort. The brand is an upbeat and contemporary hotel concept that delivers the perfect balance, with a focus on good sleep, designed social spaces, locally inspired sustenance and friendly service. Avani welcomes guests to over 35 hotels located in Asia, Australia, the Indian Ocean, the Middle East, Africa and Europe, with an exciting pipeline of properties to come.

Minor Hotels is an international hotel owner, operator and investor currently with more than 540 hotels in operation. Minor Hotels passionately explores new possibilities in hospitality with a diverse portfolio of properties designed intelligently to appeal to different kinds of travellers, serving new passions as well as personal needs. Through our Anantara, Avani, Oaks, Tivoli, NH Collection, NH Hotels, nhow, Elewana, Marriott, Four Seasons, St. Regis, Radisson Blu and Minor International properties, Minor Hotels operates in 56 countries across Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Africa, the Indian Ocean, Europe, South America and North America.

With dynamic plans to expand existing brands and explore strategic acquisitions throughout opportunistic markets, Minor Hotels pursues a vision of a more passionate and interconnected world.





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Jetwing Hotels recognised at the Annual Green Building Awards 2023

TTA BULLETIN

The Green Building Council of Sri Lanka (GBCSL) recognised Jetwing Hotels, among the tourism sector, for their commitment to promoting environmental sustainability and sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka, at the recently concluded Annual Green Building Awards 2023.

GBCSL, a consensus-based nonprofit organization representing diverse sectors of the property industry, environment, and academia, seeks to revolutionize the Sri Lanka construction sector through green building practices. Their goal is to promote sustainability as the foundation for environmental well-being, economic prosperity, and societal growth. The Annual Green Building Awards, initiated by GBCSL, aims to recognize business leaders who have demonstrated their commitment for environmental sustainability.

A Committee was set up by the Board of Directors of GBCSL, to gather relevant data and information relating to the sustainability performances of the business organizations in the hotel sector in Sri Lanka. The committee conferred that Jetwing Hotels Ltd has made a commendable commitment to foster environmental sustainability and integrate sustainable development principles throughout its chain of hotels, while also working for the promotion of sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka. In recognition of this commitment Jetwing Hotels was honoured with the Green Investment Excellence Award for 2023 in the tourism sector.

Each Jetwing property unfolds a distinctive narrative, intricately weaving together the local culture, the spirit of its people, and a harmonious integration with the environment. Designed to seamlessly blend with their surroundings, each hotel's architecture embraces green building principles, prioritizing energy efficiency, resource conservation, and waste management.

The open architectural layout and incorporation of courtyards not only enhance the aesthetic appeal but also facilitate natural illumination and ventilation. Jetwing Hotels takes a significant stride towards sustainability by investing in renewable energy, which contributes to over 60% of the hotels' total energy demand. Most properties have integrated grid-tied or off-grid solar installations contributing to meet the daily



electricity required. Innovative vapour absorption chillers are employed in 04 Jetwing hotels. These systems are powered entirely by steam generated from biomass boilers that utilise cinnamon wood – a byproduct derived from the cinnamon industry. A comprehensive waste management system is diligently implemented in each hotel. Solid waste is sorted at source; food waste is fed into onsite biogas digesters – with the biogas generated fuelling staff kitchens and the sludge produced utilised as liquid fertiliser in the gardens. Waste generated in the gardens are composted and repurposed as fertiliser. Any plastic, glass, and paper waste are entrusted to third-party recyclers. Demonstrating a commitment to reducing its ecological footprint, Jetwing Hotels pioneers the use of glass water bottles which are filled at on-site bottling plants around the island. This initiative serves as a sustainable alternative to single-use plastic bottles, emphasizing the brand's dedication to environmental responsibility and resource conservation.

Commenting on the latest accolade, Director of Engineering at Jetwing Hotels, Jude Kasturi Arachchi, stated “We are honored to receive the Green Investment Excellence Award from GBCSL. This recognition reaffirms our commitment to environmental sustainability and sustainable tourism. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with GBCSL, paving the way for innovative solutions, and setting new benchmarks for environmentally conscious practices in the hospitality sector. This accolade is not just an award; it's a testament to our ongoing journey towards a more sustainable and responsible future for Sri Lanka's tourism industry.”

With a legacy spanning over half a century in the tourism industry, Jetwing Hotels has established itself as a pioneer in curating unique experiences and offering authentic Sri Lankan hospitality. The brand's diverse portfolio includes a range of luxury hotels and villas, each offering a unique perspective on Sri Lanka's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty. As a family-owned brand, Jetwing remains steadfast in its commitment to enriching and safeguarding the environment, while actively contributing to the well-being of local communities. The recent award stands as a testimony to Jetwing's unwavering dedication to sustainable development and the advancement of sustainable tourism throughout Sri Lanka.

Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle – Where Wellness meets Culinary

Excellence

TTA BULLETIN

Nestled on the southern coast of Sri Lanka, Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle provides a serene haven where wellness and culinary delights intertwine to offer guests an unforgettable experience. This luxurious retreat, ensconced amidst lush greenery and overlooking the Indian Ocean, seamlessly blends traditional Sri Lankan hospitality with modern amenities, making it a destination of choice for discerning travelers seeking rejuvenation and culinary excellence.

Anantara Tangalle is not just a place to rest; it's a sanctuary for the mind, body, and soul. From the moment guests step into the resort, they are enveloped in an atmosphere of tranquility. The soothing sound of waves crashing against the shore, coupled with the gentle sea breeze, sets the tone for a deeply relaxing stay.

The overall dining experience is one to be savored and cherished. The resort's culinary team headed by Executive Chef Chaminda Pathirana is dedicated to delighting guests' palates with a diverse array of flavors and ingredients, showcasing the rich tapestry of Sri Lankan cuisine alongside international favorites.

The meticulously curated wellness and Ayurveda menu, is prepared to elevate the guest experience to unparalleled heights of rejuvenation and holistic wellness. Rooted in ancient healing traditions, the resort's wellness offerings are thoughtfully crafted to harmonize the body, mind, and spirit

The Ayurveda menu at Anantara Peace Haven is a testament to the resort's commitment to promoting holistic wellbeing. Drawing inspiration from centuries-old Ayurveda practices, the menu features a harmonious blend of nourishing dishes and therapeutic elixirs designed to restore balance and vitality. Each culinary creation is thoughtfully infused with indigenous herbs, spices, and medicinal ingredients, meticulously selected for their healing properties and nutritional benefits.

“Sri Lanka has been the seat of indigenous medicine for centuries and traditional cooking methods and ingredients have been fused to draw out the highest level of medicinal properties. I am passionate about elevating our guest experience through the culinary offering and the Ayurveda and



Chef Chaminda Pathirana

Wellness menu is one of them” said chef Chaminda.

Guests can embark on a journey of self-discovery and renewal as they explore the diverse range of Ayurvedic delights, from revitalizing herbal teas and detoxifying soups to nutrient-rich salads and soul-satisfying main courses.

The resort's wellness offerings are designed to cater to every individual's needs, whether they seek relaxation, rejuvenation, or holistic healing. Guests can indulge in a variety of wellness activities, including yoga sessions by the beach, meditation classes, and rejuvenating spa treatments inspired by ancient Sri Lankan healing rituals. The expert therapists use locally sourced ingredients infused with 37 different medicinal herbs along with coconut oil, cinnamon, and sandalwood to create bespoke treatments that nourish the body and calm the mind.

For those looking to maintain their fitness regime while on vacation, Anantara Tangalle boasts state-of-the-art fitness facilities, including a well-equipped gym and outdoor swimming pools overlooking the ocean. Additionally, the resort offers personalized wellness programs tailored to each guest's specific goals, whether it's weight loss, stress management, or simply achieving a healthier lifestyle.

Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle offers a well-rounded culinary offering that caters to the demands of the modern-day traveler. The signature Italian restaurant Il Mare is where you can savour the rich aromas and bold flavors of our carefully crafted menu, featuring classic Italian dishes prepared with the finest and freshest ingredients. The fusion signature restaurant ‘Verala’ serves a selection of Asian specialty dishes with a twist. The all-day dining outlet ‘Journey’ is open to those who want to embark on a gastronomic journey around the world. Theme night dinners offers a range of global delights together with a dedicated ‘Sri Lankan spread’ to complement the various delicacies from across the world.

For those seeking a more intimate dining experience, the resort offers private dining options, including romantic beachfront dinners under the stars and bespoke culinary experiences where guests can learn the art of Sri Lankan cooking from the resort's talented chefs.

Anantara Tangalle epitomizes the perfect blend of wellness and culinary excellence, offering guests a truly transformative experience that nourishes the body, mind, and soul. Whether you're seeking relaxation, rejuvenation, or simply a culinary adventure, this luxurious retreat promises to exceed your expectations and leave you longing to return again and again.

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BELIEVE

Thema Collection Partners with MDF to Measure & Reduce their Carbon Emissions

TTA BULLETIN

With the escalating impact on the environment and natural resources, fueled by anthropogenic activities, there is a growing interest among travelers to shift towards more sustainable travel experiences.



Taking a significant stride towards sustainability in the tourism sector in Sri Lanka, Thema Collection joined hands with Australia's Government-funded Market Development Facility (MDF) to move towards a more sustainable Sri Lanka.

During the prelude to the signing of the agreement, Mr. Maxime Wickramasinghe, Director of Marketing and Business Development at Thema Collection, emphasized the brand's commitment to sustainability. Highlighting Thema Collection's identity as a thematic, eco-friendly hotel chain with 12 unique properties across Sri Lanka, he underscored the numerous initiatives already in place to promote sustainable tourism. Mr. Wickramasinghe expressed optimism that this collaboration with MDF would not only further Thema Collection's sustainability endeavors but also reveal the brand's strategic plan to meticulously measure and actively reduce the carbon footprint of the entire chain, underscoring a dedicated effort towards achieving this ambitious goal.

This transformative initiative is strategically designed to address pivotal elements, including the measurement of the carbon footprint associated with Thema Collection properties, heightening awareness, enhancing staff capacity, and actively sharing success stories with stakeholders. The overarching objective is to nurture a community of individuals deeply committed to achieving sustainable practices. Notably, this marks a significant milestone in Sri Lanka, where the carbon footprint of an entire hospitality chain is meticulously measured.

MDF Country Director Maryam Piracha mentioned that MDF aims to work with leading businesses to expand the growing market in tourism by supporting the industry's transition to sustainable practices and supporting

businesses to develop market segments that enhance competitiveness. She further added that MDF is significantly invested in positioning Sri Lanka as a sustainable tourism destination by partnering with businesses that are committed to responsible and climate-friendly initiatives with vital players like Thema who encourage sectorial change.

Elaborating further on the plans for the future, Chamin Wickramasinghe, CEO/Director of Thema Collection, weighed in on the challenging issue of a lack of awareness regarding sustainability practices. He stressed the importance of building awareness, starting with hotel associates, to ensure the success of sustainability initiatives. According to Mr. Wickramasinghe, fostering awareness at the grassroots level within the hotel industry is a crucial step towards creating a better and more sustainable future.

Thema Collection and the Market Development Facility's collaboration represents a united front in the pursuit of sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka. By combining their expertise and resources, they aspire to measure and reduce the carbon footprint and inspire a wider community to embrace and implement sustainable practices.

Mathi Thayanan, Tourism Country Coordinator further added that as the industry is on a path to recovery, shifting towards sustainable practices while focusing on quality would develop tourism more responsibly and will thereby give higher returns attracting eco-conscious travelers, positioning Sri Lanka as a year-round destination which is one of the main aims of this partnership.

The objective of the MDF program is to create and nurture a community of individuals with a deep commitment to achieving sustainable practices across the board within the entire tourism industry.

The Calm Resort & Spa invites you to Explore Sri Lanka's East Coast Charms

TTA BULLETIN

Have you ever imagined waking up to a sunrise so stunning it feels like a dream? At The Calm Resort & Spa by Browns Hotels & Resorts, which is nestled along Sri Lanka's pristine East Coast, this dream becomes your reality. With 70 impeccably designed rooms and a plethora of activities



catering to your every whim, The Calm Resort boasts Pasikuda's best sunrise vista and invites you to embark on a beachside retreat like no other.

"At Calm Resort, we've crafted an experience where top-tier hospitality seamlessly intertwines with the irresistible charm of Sri Lanka's East Coast. It's not just a seasonal destination—it's an evergreen sanctuary awaiting exploration year-round. Whether it's discovering the vibrant marine life, delving into the local culture or embarking on thrilling adventures, our team is here to ensure that your experience exceeds expectations. Renowned for its exceptional properties across some of Sri Lanka's finest destinations, with Browns Hotels & Resorts you can trust that you're in good hands" said Eksath Wijeratne, CEO of Browns Hotels & Resorts.

Dive into exhilarating watersports or set sail on deep-sea fishing expeditions, where the waters teem with barracuda, tuna and billfish, offering seasoned anglers a thrilling challenge. Embark on a mesmerising marine expedition to Kayankerni, a secluded underwater paradise which offers a kaleidoscope of marine life in their natural habitat. Here, vibrant coral gardens thrive, housing over 200 species of fish, enveloped by the tranquility of nature's embrace. Explore the Pasikuda Reef just five minutes away from the Calm Resort on a glass-bottom boat, uncovering hidden wonders beneath the waves.

For those yearning for a leisurely escape, our cycling tours offer an

idyllic opportunity to immerse yourself in the laid-back charm of coastal living. Catch a glimpse of traditional fishing villages, where fishermen skillfully cast their nets into the deep blue sea, offering a mesmerising sight of coastal livelihoods. Don't forget to explore the local craftsmanship, with Palmyrah handcrafts adorning roadside stalls, offering unique souvenirs to take home as a reminder of your seaside adventure.

You can explore the Batticaloa Fort, built by the Portuguese in 1628 and witness its enduring legacy through its weathered walls and historic charm. Each year, thousands gather for the mid-August chariot festival by the Kakkadicholai Hindu Temple, preceded by weeks of prayer and ritual to honour Lord Shiva. Experience the vibrancy of this ancient tradition as you immerse yourself in the spiritual fervour of the temple's festivities.

Browns Hotels & Resorts, operating as the leisure arm of the LOLC Group, boasts a portfolio of exquisite properties across Sri Lanka: Club Hotel Dolphin, The Calm Resort & Spa, Hotel Sigiriya, Thaala Bentota Resort, Dickwella Resort, Reveal Boutique Collection and associate hotels Occidental Eden Beruwala and Occidental Paradise Dambulla. Browns Hotels & Resorts welcomes you to come and experience Pasikuda in all its glory at The Calm Resort & Spa, where the allure of one of the world's longest stretches of shallow coastlines awaits, beckoning you to discover paradise anew.

Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle resort is set to take the spotlight in the acclaimed TV series "From Scratch" by David Moscow

TTA BULLETIN

Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort will be exclusively featured on "From Scratch" by David Moscow, a renowned TV show celebrated for its culinary adventures. With a global audience and widespread popularity, "From Scratch" airs on major networks, captivating viewers with its immersive exploration of cuisines from around the world. The show's reach extends far and wide, engaging food enthusiasts and travellers alike. This opportunity would not only take Sri Lankan cuisine to the international stage but will also uncover the economic, environmental and social impacts on food production and agriculture in Sri Lanka.

In an unprecedented move, the Sri Lankan episode of "From Scratch" will exclusively showcase Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort, highlighting its rich culinary heritage and exquisite offerings. Executive Chef Chaminda Pathirana takes centre stage as he masterfully curates an authentic Sri Lankan feast, featuring local delicacies such as fish curry, Pol sambol, Pol roti, dhal curry, and ayurvedic tea. David Moscow, the host, immerses himself in the culinary journey, meticulously documenting each ingredient used in the preparation process. With dedication and passion, Moscow endeavours to recreate

the sumptuous meal, embarking on a quest to source the finest ingredients and replicate the flavours of Sri Lanka.

David, renowned for his multifaceted career, is the creator, executive producer, and host of the acclaimed TV show "From Scratch." With a remarkable journey spanning over three decades, Moscow gained widespread recognition for his role as the young Josh Baskin in the iconic film "Big" at the age of thirteen, alongside Tom Hanks. His stellar performances extend to various mediums, including film, television, and theatre, solidifying his status as a celebrated actor and producer.



This collaboration promises to showcase the essence of Sri Lankan cuisine and the unparalleled hospitality of Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort on a global stage, inviting viewers to indulge in a gastronomic adventure like never before.

Emirates soars ahead in the adoption of Sustainable Aviation Fuel

TTA BULLETIN

In an era where climate change is at the forefront of global concerns, the aviation industry faces increasing pressure to reduce its carbon footprint. Amidst this challenge, Emirates, one of the world's foremost airlines, is focusing its efforts on supporting the industry's deployment of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) as a crucial step towards achieving a more sustainable future for air travel.



SAF, derived from renewable sources such as agricultural residues, waste oils, and non-food crops, offers a promising alternative to traditional fossil fuels. Unlike conventional jet fuel, SAF significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to mitigating the environmental impact of aviation.

Emirates' efforts to be a catalyst in the adoption of SAF is not new: the airline began using the eco-friendly alternative to jet fuel as far back as 2017 on a flight from Chicago and operated with a Boeing 777 aircraft, but has made huge strides in this sphere since then.

Emirates recently operated a demonstration flight the world's largest passenger aircraft, the Airbus A380, with one of four engines powered on 100% SAF, helping demonstrate its potential as a drop-in replacement that matches jet fuel's technical and chemical requirements, while being a more sustainable alternative. SAF can reduce carbon emissions by up to 85% over the fuel's life cycle when compared to conventional jet fuel. SAF is the most effective way to address CO2 emissions in the aviation industry and Emirates' use of SAF will play a key role in meeting the sector's target of achieving net-zero by 2050.

The airline's commitment to sustainability is evident in its proactive approach to incorporating SAF into its operations. Being at the forefront of research and development efforts, Emirates is partnering with industry stakeholders to advance the production and adoption of SAF on a global scale.

Some of the initiatives carried out in 2023 include partnerships with Neste, which will supply Emirates three million gallons of SAF for use in 2024 and 2025. Emirates also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Shell to explore areas of collaboration around sustainable travel and technology-driven travel experiences in 2023, and Emirates operated its first Shell SAF powered flight in October that year.

In January 2024, Emirates became the first international airline to join The Solent Cluster, a UK initiative focused on low carbon investments established to reduce CO2 emissions from industry, transport and households in the South Coast of England.

The Solent Cluster is a cross-sector collaboration of international organisations, including manufacturers and engineering companies, regional businesses and industries, leading logistics and infrastructure operators and academic institutions.



Emirates also recently announced the launch of the "Air-CRAFT" initiative - a UAE based research consortium focused on developing, producing, and scaling sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) technologies.

Air-CRAFT, or the UAE Centre for Renewable and Advanced Fuel Technologies for Aviation, is a first-of-its-kind initiative that will bring together entities across the value chain - industrial policy makers, aviation regulators, fuel producers, academia and researchers, aircraft and power plant manufacturers, and airline operators.

The UAE is a global energy leader in actively pursuing the decarbonization of its economy. It was the first country in the Gulf region to sign the Paris Agreement and the first country in the Middle East and North Africa to commit to reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

The biggest decarbonization lever available to the aviation industry is the adoption of SAF. For long-haul commercial flights in particular, no other technology platform is expected to significantly contribute to carbon neutrality goals in the next three decades at least, due to cost, technical or regulatory barriers.

Emirates' longstanding efforts have been and continue to be rooted in tangible, meaningful actions across three focus areas that form its environmental framework: reducing emissions, consuming responsibly and preserving wildlife and habitats. The airline recently announced the establishment of a US\$ 200 million fund for research and development (R&D) projects focussed on reducing the impact of fossil fuels in commercial aviation, representing one of the biggest single commitments of any airline on sustainability.

The airline has been actively championing to strengthen the body of research around the industry's understanding of SAF use in higher blends, its performance, safety and reliability, supporting standardization and future certification of 100% SAF, which is currently not yet approved for regular commercial use.

As the world looks towards a more sustainable future, Emirates stands as a beacon of innovation and leadership in the aviation industry. Through its commitment to Sustainable Aviation Fuel, the airline not only redefines the possibilities of air travel but also paves the way for a more sustainable and environmentally-conscious world. With Emirates leading the charge, the sky is truly the limit in the journey towards a greener future for aviation.

Qatar Airways reaffirms commitment to Sri Lanka's Travel and Tourism industry

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka's tourism industry is on the path to recovery with the island welcoming over one million tourists in 2023. How do you view this growth?



Sri Lanka has always been known for its resilience. We seem to have a knack of bouncing back – and doing it well. Probably the patriotic vibrancy we carry as a nation is attributing to this drive. Also, I believe global Airline capacity regaining its pace to nearly Pre-Covid levels has helped, whilst stakeholders like Civil Aviation and Airport & Aviation too have done a tremendous job at navigating the industry through a financial crisis in 2022-23.

We must give credit to the team at the forefront of Tourism as well, i.e. the Hon. Minister of Tourism Harin Fernando, along with an able team headed by Chalaka Gajabahu (Chairman - Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau). I believe a synchronized, well thought out plan is reaping much needed benefits for the country, now in 2024.



Jonathan Fernando

Having a strong visibility in the market, is Qatar Airways looking at further enhancements in the near future?

Qatar Airways do have a strong foothold in the region and our growth has been robust not just in Sri Lanka but globally. In fact, 2023 has been such an exceptional and amazing year for all of us at Qatar Airways – from making a net profit of US\$1.026 billion for the first half of the FY 2023/2024, to winning the Skytrax's 'World's Best Business Class' for the tenth time and being the official global airline partner of Formula 1®.

For Sri Lanka, we recently opened our new, fully fledged Ticket Office at World Trade Centre in late 2023, to facilitate direct customer communication with our team, as well as relaunching the Hotline (011 775 0000) which allows the local team to communicate with the market directly.

Currently the 35 weekly flights to/from Colombo are performing exceptionally well. At present, early 2024 load factors are impressive and this speaks volumes of the progress Sri Lanka has made in terms of regaining its "preferred destination" status. Since Colombo is always in the limelight in terms of growth plans, we can positively anticipate further capacity and/or frequency enhancements in 2024-25.

How has the USD crisis affected pricing platforms and do you see this as a challenge going forward?

When the Sri Lankan Rupee plummeted from 200/- to 360/- to the USD, over a span of 3 months in early 2022, we saw airfares increase rapidly as the base values are pegged to the USD, as per the industry practice. Looking at the current price-points from a year ago, with the Sri Lankan Rupee settling to about 315/- we can see an overall decrease of about 15% - 20% in airfares comparatively. As a result, this reduction in airfares has had a positive correlation to air travel demand.

Nevertheless, it may remain relatively challenging to predict the stability of the Sri Lankan currency, but we can be sure that any depreciation will directly impact price-points of travelers departing from Sri Lanka.

In terms of your global operations, what are the newest developments and what of these would directly impact Sri Lanka?

This summer, an interesting 2024 beckons us with the resumption of Venice, Italy effective 12 June, and followed by the exciting new destination of Hamburg, Germany from 1 July.

Tashkent, Uzbekistan is also on the horizon to re-commence operations from 2 June 2024.

Of the 3 destinations mentioned, I believe both Venice and Hamburg would be vital markets for Sri Lanka not only because they are good feeder gateways for Europeans to travel to Colombo, but also because of the diaspora community that resides in both Italy & Germany.

Apart from the frequency and seat capacity into Colombo, are there any other ways that QR supports the Sri Lankan tourism industry?

Yes. We are closely collaborating with Sri Lanka Tourism, both locally, and at head office levels in order to engage on various initiatives. One of particular interest is the ongoing discussion to potentially partner with our Qatar Airways Holidays arm to splash the Sri Lankan holiday options, in the umbrella of offerings.

In some other recent developments, we are also engaging with local Hotel partners to accommodate top Tour Operators from around the world to use Qatar Airways and visit Sri Lanka for a complete end-to-end sponsored familiarization trip this 2024.

Emirates to expand its South American network with launch of services to Bogotá from 3 June

Emirates to operate daily flights to Bogotá via Miami on widebody three-class Boeing 777-300ER aircraft

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates has announced it will launch a new daily service from Dubai to the Colombian capital, Bogotá, starting 3 June. As well as connecting Colombia with the United Arab Emirates, the new services will establish a historic first-ever link between the greater Middle East region and the northern part of the South American continent. Emirates' entry into Bogotá will expand its South American network to four gateways, complementing its scheduled services to São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires. The latest destination will also enhance the airline's operations in the Americas to now serve 19 points across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Colombia.

The daily services will link Dubai and Bogotá via Miami, with Emirates set to become the first airline to offer a host of premium services on the popular route between south Florida and Colombia.

Commenting on the launch of the new route and destination, Sir Tim Clark, President Emirates Airline, said: "We've long wanted to serve Colombia, and the addition of Bogotá to our network is part of our strategy to deliver better connectivity, expand options and choice for travellers and provide unparalleled premium experi-

ences on the ground and in the air. The launch of our daily operations to the dynamic capital of Colombia also underscores our deep commitment to South America, and is poised to foster increased business and leisure travel opportunities for customers.

"There is a huge demand for travel to and from Bogotá and we can't wait for customers to experience Emirates' signature products and services on the flights between Bogotá and Dubai as well as between Bogotá and Miami. We would like to thank all the authorities involved for supporting our plans and making this new route possible. We look forward to adding value to the new communities served and building new partnerships to promote tourism and trade."

The daily flights to Bogotá, South America's second largest city by population, will help cater to strong and growing demand for air travel between Colombia and the United Arab Emirates as well as between Colombia and numerous destinations on Emirates' global network beyond Dubai which are not served directly from Bogotá. It will also provide convenient flights between Bogotá and Miami, allowing travellers to fly between the two cities in

unprecedented style and comfort. Due to the high altitude of the city of Bogotá, it is not possible to operate a non-stop flight from Dubai, deeming a stopover necessary. Miami was selected due to its tourism and trade links with Bogotá.

Passengers on flights in both directions between Dubai and Bogotá should meet entry regulations for the United States and hold the required documents, due to immigration procedures in Miami. Colombian and UAE citizens can enjoy visa-free entry for up to 90 days in Dubai and Bogotá respectively, thanks to reciprocal visa arrangements in place between both countries.

Tickets to Bogotá go on sale today for flights starting 3 June and can be booked on emirates.com, the Emirates App, or via travel agents.

Emirates' Boeing 777-300ER aircraft will offer 354 seats across three cabins and will raise the bar for premium services on the Bogotá – Miami route. Lie-flat seats in First Class and Business Class, compli-



mentary food and beverage, and a generous free baggage allowance (conditions apply) are amongst the firsts that Emirates will introduce on the direct services connecting Colombia and the U.S.

Emirates' customers can also sit back and relax with complimentary access to more than 6,500 channels of carefully curated global entertainment content, including in Spanish, featuring movies, TV shows, music, podcasts, games, audiobooks and more with ice, Emirates' award-winning inflight entertainment system.

The new Boeing 777-300ER services will also offer up to 20 tonnes tonnes of capacity for cargo on each flight, opening up access to more global markets for Colombian exports such as fresh flowers, fruits and vegetables and other perishable goods.

Qatar Airways Announces Flights Resumption to Lisbon, Portugal

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways announces the resumption of flights to Lisbon, Portugal as part of its 2024 network expansion of over 170 destinations. The four weekly flights will be served on a Boeing B787-8 aircraft commencing Thursday, 6 June 2024.



As the capital of Portugal, Lisbon offers the perfect starting point for travellers eager to delve into the rich tourism offerings of the country. With countless historical sites only a day trip away, adventurers can embark on a journey to the medieval town of Sintra and its UNESCO World Heritage Site, Quinta de Regaleira palace. A train ride away, the National Palace of Pena is adorned with colourful tiles inspired by the exotic plants surrounding it, creating a captivating ambience.

Qatar Airways Chief Commercial Officer, Mr. Thierry Antinori, said: "As we continue to expand in the European market, we celebrate the resumption of our flights to the beautiful city of Lisbon. Qatar Airways passengers can now enjoy very efficient ways to travel between Qatar and Portugal, as well as connect between Portugal and Asia, Africa, Middle East and the Indian subcontinent, through the Best Airport in Middle East which offers customers the best duty free and best lounges in the region."

Travellers wishing to escape the city life can venture to Cascais, also known as the "Portuguesa Riviera". With several beautiful beaches, Cascais is the ideal destination for water sports enthusiasts, especially surfers and windsurfers. Cascais is also the perfect beach destination with delectable seafood and stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean.

Qatar Airways passengers in Portugal can now uncover new corners of the world through the award-winning Hamad International Airport (DOH). This latest addition to the summer schedule opens up new entry point for international travel from Europe, through Lisbon, to the continents of Africa and Asia, as well as the subcontinent of India.

oneworld reaches a 25-year milestone, having flown nearly nine billion customers since 1999

TTA BULLETIN

The oneworld® alliance recently celebrates 25 years of delivering an exceptional and seamless travel experience to its customers worldwide, with a member airline flight taking off or landing somewhere in the world every six seconds, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



will wear unique pin badges which have been specially-designed with a new 25th anniversary logo.

Since 1999, the alliance has flown nearly nine billion customers on its member airlines, connecting them with friends, loved ones and different cultures around the globe.

Launched on 1 February 1999 by its founding members American Airlines, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, and Qantas, the alliance was formed to increase connectivity and flexibility for passengers and to reward frequent flyer customers with special benefits and privileges.

Since then, oneworld has grown to include 13 of the world's top airlines – Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Finnair, Iberia, Japan Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Qantas, Qatar Airways, Royal Air Maroc, Royal Jordanian, SriLankan Airlines, 26 affiliate airlines and a oneworld connect partner Fiji Airways. Oman Air is set to join the alliance in 2024, becoming its 14th full member.

More than 330,000 airline professionals across oneworld member airlines work tirelessly on the ground and in the air, delivering smooth and memorable travel experiences for customers across the alliance. To celebrate the alliance's landmark year, uniformed staff across oneworld member airlines

Representing rich cultures from more than 170 territories served by oneworld member airlines, the alliance celebrates diversity, uniqueness and inclusivity, making every customer feel welcomed and valued.

Robert Isom, American Airlines Chief Executive Officer and oneworld alliance Chairman, said: "We are happy to celebrate the world's leading airline alliance with more than 200 million loyal customers around the globe. "Together, we now operate more than 12,000 departures every day – equivalent to a oneworld member airline flight taking off or landing every six seconds, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Ronald Lam, Chief Executive Officer of Cathay Pacific, a founding member of the alliance, said: "Celebrating 25 years of oneworld is a testament to the power of collaboration and shared vision. Our partnership has enabled us to connect cultures, bridge continents and create lasting memories for travellers around the world."

Vanessa Hudson, Chief Executive Officer of the Qantas Group, a founding member of the alliance, said: "For 25 years our alliance has brought together the best carriers, lounges, frequent flyer programs and networks to benefit our shared customers.



A 360° *Experience* at Ramada Colombo

Mastering the culinary magic and the art of hospitality, Ramada by Wyndham Colombo offers star-class luxury in the heart of Colombo. Catering to business and leisure travelers alike, Ramada Colombo truly offers a 360 experience.

- ▶ Spacious and modern-day rooms
- ▶ A range of restaurants serving flavours across the world
- ▶ Contemporary lounge bar
- ▶ Premium wellness therapies at AYU Balinese Spa
- ▶ Fully equipped gymnasium
- ▶ Blissful outdoors and pool
- ▶ Elegant banquet spaces to host events of any scale

the
GARDENIA
COFFEE SHOP

Elhambra

BAKED

Oasis Lounge
Spin your own tunes



TONE
fitness centre



Arkia Airlines start direct flights to Colombo from TelAviv

TTA BULLETIN

Arkia Airlines will operate a daily flight from Telavive to Colombo increasing passenger connectivity while promoting tourism and bilateral relations between Israel and Sri Lanka.

MAHEN Kariyawan - Regional Director Arkia Airlines Hosted a reception recently to celebrate the launch of Arkia Airlines operations to Sri Lanka in the presence of Hon Miri Rage Minster of Transport & Road Safty of the State of Israel & His Excellency Naor Gilon Ambassador of The state of Israel.

The event was also graced by Hon Nimal Siripala Silva Minister of Ports & Shipping, Hon Harin Fernando Minister of Tourism ,Land &Sports and the Hon Consul for israel Mr Denesh Rodrigo. Officials from the Civil Aviation Authority & Airport and Aviation together with officials from Sri Lanka Tourism were also present.

Arkia Airlines will operate an Airbus A321 Neo with a seat capacity of 210. Flight schedule and information can be obtained from the General Sales Agents in Sri Lanka, Andrew the travel co Pvt Ltd

7 Air is a new cargo airline based in Miami

TTA BULLETIN

7 AIR is a new all-cargo air carrier that is planning to begin operations in April 2024 with two leased Boeing 737-800Fs.

7 AIR, LLC is a cargo airline in the certification process that is undergoing the necessary regulatory procedures to obtain certification as a specialized cargo carrier. This involves meeting stringent requirements and standards set by aviation authorities to ensure safe and efficient operations.

During the certification process, the airline is establishing its infrastructure, operational procedures, and safety



protocols specific to cargo transportation. The focus is on developing dedicated cargo aircraft capabilities, specialized handling facilities, and logistics systems to accommodate various types of cargo.

The company is also working to establish partnerships with cargo operators, ground handling agents, and freight forwarders to build a reliable and efficient network. Through the certification process, the cargo airline is positioning itself to become a fully functional and accredited carrier, ready to provide high-quality cargo transportation services to meet the demands of businesses and industries.

Emirates Flight Catering fully acquires Bustanica, the world's largest indoor vertical farm

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates Flight Catering, one of the world's largest catering operations, has fully acquired Emirates Bustanica, formerly called Emirates Crop One, and its consumer brand Bustanica, the world's largest indoor vertical farm.



This strategic move establishes Emirates Bustanica as a fully UAE-owned company, helping sustain the country's vision of enhancing food and water security and its agricultural capabilities. The acquisition empowers Emirates Bustanica to leverage its local expertise and the latest tech know-how to meet the growing demands of the market.

Located near Al Maktoum International Airport at Dubai World Central, Bustanica's 330,000sqft facility has the capacity to grow more than 1 million kilograms of exceptional quality leafy greens a year, equivalent to 3 tonnes daily, while using 95% less water than conventional agriculture.

Operating under the brand name Bustanica, the produce is available across all major retailers in the UAE such as Spinney's, Waitrose, Carrefour, and Choithrams.

Customers on Emirates and other airlines enjoy this farm-fresh produce in their salads and meals.

Since its launch in July 2022, Bustanica has become a part of UAE's dinner table conversations, thanks to its growing range of leafy greens, herbs and microgreens that can and should be eaten straight out of the box – even tap water can contaminate the produce. Bustanica's produce is grown without pesticides or herbicides, and is 100% clean, fresh, and nutrient-rich. Bustanica produces a variety of lettuce, spinach, parsley, and kale.

Bustanica is driven by powerful technology – machine learning, artificial intelligence, and other patented technologies – and a highly specialised in-house team that includes agronomy experts, engineers, horticulturists, and plant scientists.

More recently, Emirates Bustanica was a preferred produce supplier for COP28, a recognition of its commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility.

THAI Strengthens Fleet Efficiency by Adding Boeing 787 Dreamliners Powered by GEnx Engines

TTA BULLETIN

Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, (THAI) Boeing [NYSE:BA] and GE Aerospace [NYSE:GE] announced the carrier has placed an order and acquisition of 45 Boeing 787 Dreamliner airplanes equipped with GEnx engines, with the potential to acquire up to 80 Dreamliners, at the Singapore Airshow 2024.

THAI further detailed that for this order, THAI has also secured flexibility to convert between aircraft within the Boeing Dreamliner Family, providing the airline with adaptability and versatility to meet evolving market demands. Moreover, THAI has secured a pathway to acquiring the Boeing 777X as part of this arrangement, potentially further enhancing its fleet with superior range, capacity, and performance. The seamless interchangeability between these Dreamliner models and B777X offers THAI strategic advantages in optimizing routes, capacity, and operational efficiency. By leveraging this flexibility, THAI is poised to meet future challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

"Thai Airways' strategic investment in the 787 Dreamliner builds on our long-standing partnership and signifies the airline's commitment to operate a modern, efficient and flexible fleet," said Brad McMullen, Boeing senior vice president of Commercial

Sales and Marketing. "This significant order will support Thai Airways' ability to meet demand, foster tourism and trade, and create further opportunities for this carrier."

"To accomplish the Company's carbon neutral goals by 2050, the 45 new Boeing 787 Dreamliners will be equipped with GEnx engines which are known for their cutting-edge technology and reduced environmental impact. Furthermore, we are confident that the acquisition of the 787 Dreamliners will ultimately benefit our customers and support the growth of our country's economy," said Chai Eamsiri, THAI CEO.

The GEnx engine family has more than 50 million flight hours since entry into service in 2011 and is the fastest-selling, high-thrust engine in GE history with nearly 3,000 engines in service and on backlog, including spares, according to data from its manufacturer.

"GE Aerospace is proud to add Thai Airways to the list of leading airlines that have chosen the proven performance and superior efficiency of the GEnx engine to power its new 787 Dreamliners," said Russell Stokes, President and CEO, Commercial Engines and Services, GE Aerospace.

Air India to set up South Asia's Largest Aviation Training Academy

TTA BULLETIN

Air India, India's leading global airline, today announced the launch of a 600,000 sq ft integrated aviation training academy, the largest in South Asia, in Gurugram, India. The academy is another significant step in Air India's ongoing transformation and will power the growth of India's aviation ecosystem over the coming years.

The announcement was made at Wings India 2024, the ongoing airshow in Hyderabad.

The aviation academy will start functioning from this month and aims to train more than 50,000 aviation professionals, including pilots, cabin crew, ground handling, engineering, and security staff, over the next few years.

Air India is also in the process of setting up its own flight schools to train over 500 pilots per year which will cater to the growing in-house requirements. An Aircraft Maintenance Engineering (AME) school, offering comprehensive training for engineering cadets, is also being planned. Air India is setting up centers for advanced training of pilots in two state-of-the-art simulator training units, in collaboration with OEMs.

The airline entered a joint venture with Airbus to equip the training center with 10 of the 20 FFS Bays. The Academy will feature simulators of the Airbus A320

Family, A350, Boeing 777, Boeing 787, and Boeing 737 family.

Campbell Wilson, CEO & MD, Air India, said: "Our new training academy is a major step forward in making the Indian aviation industry more self-reliant, and to building the aviation infrastructure that India needs as one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets. We are delighted to be working with our partners in this journey." With world-class equipment and the latest technology, the training academy will provide an immersive industry-best training with safety as a core focus and a vision to become a major aviation training hub in Asia.

The aviation academy will have best-in-class equipment for inclusive training on Safety and Emergency Procedures (SEP) along with service training, grooming, voice, and accent training for cabin crew. Training for ground and security staff will cover key functions such as departure control, customer service, airport security, and refreshers.

The academy will also have a management training wing, offering commercial, HR and leadership training. A safety promotion centre, with input from Boeing and Airbus, will be an integral part of the academy to ensure the culture of safety is embedded in every aspect of the training system.

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REFER BELOW FOR THE SCHEDULE

SECTOR	FLIGHT NO.	DEPARTURE TIME	ARRIVAL TIME	FREQUENCY
CMB-DEL	AI 282	08:20	11:45	DAILY
DEL-FRA	AI 121	13:30	18:40	DAILY
FRA-DEL	AI 120	21:15	08:35	DAILY
DEL-CMB	AI 281	11:55	15:55	MON,TUE,THU,FRI,SAT,SUN
DEL-CMB	AI 281	13:50	17:20	WED

CONNECTION TIME

CMB-DEL-FRA: **01 Hr 45 Mins**
 FRA-DEL-CMB: **03 Hrs 20 Mins**
 FRA-DEL-CMB: **05 Hrs 15 Mins**

Emirates boosts flights to Osaka, introducing Airbus A380 fitted with Premium Economy

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates will be boosting its services to Osaka with the introduction of the A380 starting from June 1, 2024. The A380 to be deployed to Osaka will be retrofitted with the airline's latest product, Premium Economy, making it the second Japanese gateway to operate with the newly upgraded aircraft. The upgraded service will offer increased seat capacity on flights to and from Japan's second largest city, in addition to introducing the highly sought-after Premium Economy Class for customers, as well as refreshed interiors across First, Business and Economy Class cabins.

From June 1, Emirates' four-class A380 will replace the airline's Boeing 777-300ER aircraft currently operating the EK316/EK317 service to and from Osaka's Kansai International Airport (KIX). With upgraded A380 operations, Emirates will offer 910 additional weekly seats between Dubai and Osaka, offering more opportunities to connect to and beyond Dubai to popular destinations for travelers including Milan, Madrid, Brazil, Paris and London. Emirates celebrated the 20th anniversary of its services between Dubai and Osaka last year and during that time, the airline carried more than 220,000 passengers on

more than 360 flights between the two gateways in 2023.

Emirates' four-class A380 deployed to Osaka will feature 14 First Class suites, 76 lie-flat seats in Business Class, 56 seats in Premium Economy Class and 338 ergonomically designed seats in Economy Class. On a four-class Emirates A380, the Premium Economy cabin is located at the front of the main deck with the 56 seats laid out in a 2-4-2 configuration. In the cabin, every inch of space anticipates customer needs with a generous seat pitch and width for working and relaxing, and customised features that offer function and convenience like in-seat charging points and a side cocktail table. The experience is rounded off with expertly curated in-flight amenities, an inventive menu and extensive beverage options. Emirates' "ice" in-flight entertainment includes up to 6,500 channels of movies, TV programs, and music. Customers flying in both Business and First Class will enjoy access to Emirates' onboard lounge, while First Class passengers will have exclusive access to the airline's luxurious shower spa. In addition, passengers can enjoy Emirates' award-winning signature hospitality, and meals prepared using



carefully selected ingredients from around the world.

In December 2023, Emirates launched its Premium Economy product on the Dubai-Narita route and it has so far garnered great interest from customers. The airline's distinctive product is currently available on flights to 14 other destinations globally, including New York JFK, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, London Heathrow, Sydney, Auckland, Christchurch, Melbourne, Singapore, Mumbai, Bangalore, Sao Paulo and Dubai.

The airline's A380 operations to Kansai International Airport (KIX) come as Japan expects an increase in tourism through the unique attractions nestled within the Kansai region, such as Osaka and Kyoto, in addition to a packed schedule of events including the Osaka-Kansai Expo planned for 2025. Emirates also operates a daily

four-class A380 service to Tokyo Narita, and a daily Boeing 777-300ER service to Tokyo Haneda. Through its scheduled operations to Japan's three largest international travel hubs, Emirates provides convenient air connectivity to serve the growing demand.

As part of its commitment to travellers, Emirates last year announced the resumption of its Chauffeur-drive service in Tokyo Haneda for the airline's First and Business Class customers. Emirates had also introduced a complimentary shuttle bus service for the airline's Economy class customers from Tokyo Haneda airport to major train stations – Tokyo (TYO) and Shinagawa (SGW).

In other news, the airline will also launch flights from Dubai to Bali on March 1, 2024.

IndiGo recognizes top 10 Sri Lankan travel agencies contributing to its growth

TTA BULLETIN

IndiGo, India's preferred airline, with the second highest frequency amongst the Foreign Airlines to Sri Lanka, conducted a successful



Agents workshop at the Mövenpick Hotel, Colombo on January 31, 2024. During this event, IndiGo took the opportunity to honour the top 10 travel agencies in Sri Lanka who had supported IndiGo during the period of 2022-2023.

IndiGo is amongst the fastest-growing low-cost carriers in the world, operating 2000+ daily flights, connecting 86 domestic destinations and 32 international destinations. Currently, IndiGo directly connects Colombo to three cities in India and further offers convenient connections across the Indian sub-continent.

The workshop served as a platform for IndiGo to appreciate the remarkable contributions of these agencies to the tourism sector. Mr. Vishesh Khanna, Head of Sales - International Markets at IndiGo, emphasized the dedication and professionalism demonstrated by the recipients during his presentation while highlighting the significance of the occasion.

The awarded agencies included 2nd Chance Travels (Pvt) Ltd, Acorn Travels (Pvt) Ltd, BOC Travels (Pvt) LTD, Classic Travel (Pvt) Ltd, JSK Travels & Tours (Pvt) Ltd, Metro Travels & Tours (Pvt) Ltd, Satisfly Travels & Tours (Pvt) Ltd, Sharmi-

la Travels & Tours (Pvt) Ltd, Sky Line Travels (Pvt) Ltd, and, V Care Travels & Tours. The award recipients were commended for their contribution to the airline, their exceptional service and commitment to promote IndiGo.

Notable guests in attendance included Mr. Bastien N. Chacko from the Indian High Commission, Mr. Rayhan Wannappa, Deputy Director General of the Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka, Eng. Athula Galketiya, Chairman of Airport and Aviation Services (Sri Lanka) Ltd., Mr. Aruna Rajapakse, Head of Regional Airports and Ground Operations - Airport & Aviation Services Sri Lanka, Dr. Sumith De Silva, Head of Marketing and Corporate Communications - Airport & Aviation Services Sri Lanka and members of both IATA and TAASL who had continuously promoted IndiGo over the years.

Their presence at the business session significantly contributed to the success of the event, highlighting the importance of collaboration and recognition within the travel industry.

Acorn Aviation (Private) Limited is the General Sales Agents for IndiGo in Sri Lanka.

Thai Airways International Signs General Sales Agency (GSA) Agreement with MAC Holdings Private Limited

Flights to Resume from 1st April 2024 ex BKK

TTA BULLETIN

Expanding its subcontinent profile, Thailand's National carrier "Thai Airways" has announced their resumption of direct flight services to Colombo, connecting the Fareast and Southwest Pacific towards the pearl of the Indian Ocean. Thailand being one of the famous leisure destinations in the region with Bangkok being its capital city is well known for nightlife, excellent cuisine and an oasis of history and culture. Bangkok being a vital hub is not only popular for tourism but also religious, economic and trade activities.



Andre Fernando

"We are delighted to announce the resumption of Thai Airways flights from Bangkok to Colombo, marking a significant step towards enhancing bilateral relations and promoting seamless travel between our nations. As the General Sales Agent, we reaffirm our dedication to ensuring the best in travel experiences and are committed to serving our passengers with excellence" said Andre Fernando Managing Director of Mac Holdings Sri Lanka.

The operation of Thai Airways marks its re-entry to the Sri Lankan market after

3years of absence due to the unfortunate COVID-19 pandemic and brief 20-day operation directly into the Sri Lankan economic issue in 2022. Nevertheless, throughout the pandemic Thai Airways continued to play a pivotal role in maintaining essential air cargo services with P2C charter flights to Sri Lanka.

The airline operates to more than 60 plus destinations in Asia, Australasia, Middle, Scandinavia and Europe. Flights are being scheduled to commence from 31st March 2024 incoming and depart on 01st April 2024. The route will operate daily flights with an early morning departure out from Colombo arriving in Bangkok in the morning hours itself enabling tourists to gain more time in their respective travelling destination. Passengers who are having connecting flights beyond Thailand too have a smooth and hassle-free transfer with immediate connecting flights.

Thailand has always been a preferred leisure destination for Sri Lankans and a convenient transit hub connecting Asia, Australia & Korea-Japan. It further serves as a connecting point to Europe and Scandinavia as well.



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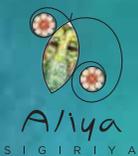
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