



A Lavish Escape in the heart of the city at Amari Colombo

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

An Exclusive Interview with Amari Colombo's Hotel Manager Indika Jayawardena

Nestled in Colombo's vibrant commercial district, Amari Colombo, managed by ONYX Hospitality Group, a leading management company in Southeast Asia, specialising in hotels, resorts, serviced apartments, and luxury residences, stands as a beacon of refined living, seamlessly blending contemporary elegance with warm Sri Lankan hospitality. Designed to cater to the discerning Middle Eastern traveller, the hotel offers an elegant sanctuary that harmonises comfort, exclusivity, and cultural authenticity. Featuring spacious accommodations with interconnecting rooms, premium amenities, and halal-certified dining, Amari Colombo ensures a seamless and enriching stay for families. Guests can indulge in personalised services, unwind in the exclusive lounge, and immerse themselves in curated experiences that celebrate the essence of Sri Lanka. From breathtaking city views to thoughtfully designed spaces that reflect the island's charm, every detail is crafted to provide an unforgettable retreat in the heart of Colombo.



Indika Jayawardena

bo, we go beyond simply meeting the expectations of Middle Eastern families – we aim to exceed them with unparalleled luxury and thoughtful design. From our welcoming public spaces to our guestrooms and spacious suites, all crafted by the renowned and award-winning FBEYE International of Singapore, all areas combine elegance with function, offering expansive living areas, plush bedding, and top-tier modern amenities. For our Middle Eastern guests, we provide halal-certified dining experiences, indulgence at our rooftop retreat, and seamless connectivity throughout the hotel. Smart Home integration ensures an effortless and personalised stay, while the exclusive Ceylon Suite provides ultimate luxury with a dedicated butler and private chef-crafted menus, tailored just for you. With Sri Lankan hospitality at its heart, Amari Colombo delivers a unique and exceptional experience at every touchpoint – a truly redefined luxury destination for families seeking excellence."

In recognition of its exceptional design, Amari Colombo is proud to announce that it has received the prestigious FBEYE INTERNATIONAL PTE LTD Award in the category of Hotel Interior for Sri Lanka. The hotel's design is a contemporary masterpiece that pays homage to Sri Lanka's colonial past while offering every modern comfort. Inspired by the island's historical architecture, the design showcases subtle details that evoke a sense of nostalgia—a touchstone for locals and a cultural journey for international guests.

As part of an exclusive feature for the Arabian Travel Mart 2025 edition of Travel Talk Asia, Hotel Manager Indika Jayawardena shared insights into what makes Amari Colombo the ultimate guide to a lavish stay for Middle Eastern guests.

Q: Amari Colombo has positioned itself as an upper upscale destination for Middle Eastern travellers. What sets the hotel apart in this market?

Indika Jayawardena: "At Amari Colombo, we go beyond simply meeting the expectations of Middle Eastern families – we aim to exceed them with unparalleled luxury and thoughtful design. From our welcoming public spaces to our guestrooms and spacious suites, all crafted by the renowned and award-winning FBEYE International of Singapore, all areas combine elegance with function, offering expansive living areas, plush bedding, and top-tier modern amenities. For our Middle Eastern guests, we provide halal-certified dining experiences, indulgence at our rooftop retreat, and seamless connectivity throughout the hotel. Smart Home integration ensures an effortless and personalised stay, while the exclusive Ceylon Suite provides ultimate luxury with a dedicated butler and private chef-crafted menus, tailored just for you. With Sri Lankan hospitality at its heart, Amari Colombo delivers a unique and exceptional experience at every touchpoint – a truly redefined luxury destination for families seeking excellence."

Indika Jayawardena: Location is another key factor in our appeal. Situated in the heart of Colombo, Amari provides easy access to the city's top attractions, shopping districts, and business hubs. Whether guests are visiting for leisure or work, they find our hotel a convenient and welcoming haven.

Q: How does the integration of exclusiveness in the two-roomed Ceylon Suite enhance the guest experience, particularly for your Middle Eastern clientele, especially large families?

Indika Jayawardena: The Ceylon Suite has been meticulously designed to offer an unparalleled level of exclusivity, seamlessly blending modern living with Sri Lanka's rich heritage. Recognising the refined preferences of our Middle Eastern guests, particularly families who value privacy, comfort, and personalised service, we have integrated world-class amenities that elevate the stay to an extraordinary experience.

Sri Lanka Tourism Launches 'A Story for Every Season' Campaign to Elevate Year-Round Travel

DINUSHKA

Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) hosted a landmark event at Cinnamon Life, Colombo recently unveiling its latest initiative—'Sri Lanka, A Story for Every Season.' The campaign aims to position Sri Lanka as a year-round destination, tackling seasonal fluctuations in visitor arrivals and reinforcing the island's appeal to global travelers.



The event was led by Hon. Deputy Minister of Tourism, Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe, with the participation of SLTPB Chairman Mr. Buddika Hewawasam, officials, travel influencers, journalists, and their families. This diverse gathering underscored a collaborative effort to reshape Sri Lanka's tourism landscape through digital storytelling and influencer engagement.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Buddika Hewawasam acknowledged the industry's challenges, particularly the dip in summer arrivals. "The next few years will be crucial for us," he noted, emphasizing the need for strategic development and global partnerships. He also highlighted the influential role of international travel content creators in inspiring potential visitors by showcasing the island's hospitality and attractions.

Hon. Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe elaborated on the campaign's significance, describing it as a transformative approach to positioning Sri Lanka's rich heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and diverse experiences in mainstream and emerging tourism markets.

Sri Lanka's Unique Edge in the Global Tourism Arena

A key highlight of the event was insights shared by renowned travel influencers who have experienced Sri Lanka firsthand. They emphasized the island's effortless ability to captivate travelers, offering a striking diversity of landscapes and experiences within just a few hours of travel.

Unlike other destinations like Bali, which some influencers noted as overcrowded, Sri Lanka offers a more balanced and immersive travel experience. Visitors can

seamlessly transition from golden beaches to misty highlands, dense rainforests to ancient cities, all within a single journey. Sri Lanka's warm hospitality, authentic cuisine, and deep-rooted culture further enhance its status as a must-visit destination.

The event's attendees—representing travel niches such as family vacations, solo female travel, honeymoon getaways, and adventure tourism—expressed enthusiasm in promoting Sri Lanka to their global audiences. With the support of Sri Lanka Tourism and media representatives, they committed to amplifying the island's unique charm through engaging content.

'Sri Lanka, A Story for Every Season' marks SLTPB's first large-scale initiative focused on boosting summer tourism through digital storytelling and influencer-driven content. The campaign includes a curated familiarization tour highlighting Sri Lanka's:

- Wildlife safaris
- Cultural heritage and pilgrimage sites
- Scenic landscapes
- Adventure tourism experiences

Influencers will produce engaging content across Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook, collectively reaching over 2.2 million global travel enthusiasts.

Sri Lanka Tourism also shared promising winter season arrival figures, with 665,295 international visitors recorded by March 23, 2025—a significant year-on-year increase. The new campaign is expected to sustain this momentum by attracting travelers even during the traditionally slower summer months.

With a projected LKR 32 million in media coverage value and a far-reaching global audience, 'A Story for Every Season' is more than just a campaign—it's a strategic shift towards positioning Sri Lanka as a premier destination for travelers year-round.

Your Guide to a Lavish Stay in....

A defining feature of the suite is the incorporation of Armani Casa—from plush bedding and custom-made furniture to signature fragrances that create a sophisticated and calming ambience. Every detail, from the exquisite tableware to the carefully curated décor, reflects a commitment to modern elegance. Additionally, the Alexa Smart Home System allows guests to personalise their environment effortlessly, ensuring convenience at their fingertips.

For those who seek an even more exclusive experience, the suite includes a dedicated personal butler and a private chef, catering to individual culinary preferences with Chef-curated menus. This level of tailored service is especially appealing to Middle Eastern families, who often travel with extended members and appreciate the intimacy of a private dining experience.

Ultimately, the Ceylon Suite is designed as a sanctuary of sophistication, where discerning travellers can unwind in an environment that reflects their elevated lifestyle while embracing the warmth and authenticity of Sri Lanka. This fusion of cultural resonance and contemporary refinement ensures that every stay is not only memorable but also deeply personal.

A Culinary Journey: Halal-Certified Excellence

Q: Dining is an integral part of the travel experience. How does Amari Colombo cater to Middle Eastern guests in terms of cuisine?

Indika Jayawardena: We take immense pride in our culinary offerings, ensuring that our menus reflect the rich flavours and traditions of Middle Eastern cuisine. All meat served in our restaurants is halal-certified, and we offer a diverse selection of dishes tailored to the dietary preferences of our guests. Our chefs collaborate closely with Middle Eastern culinary experts to craft authentic and diverse menus that cater to various palates.

Indika Jayawardena: From traditional Arabic breakfast spreads to aromatic biryanis, our guests can indulge in an exquisite dining experience. Additionally, we offer an extensive in-room dining menu tailored to Middle Eastern tastes, ensuring comfort and convenience throughout their stay.

Exclusive Experiences: Rooftop Indulgence & Seamless

Connectivity

Q: Beyond luxury accommodations and dining, what exclusive experiences does Amari Colombo offer?

Indika Jayawardena: One of our standout features is our rooftop lounge, which offers breathtaking panoramic views of Colombo's skyline. This space is perfect for guests looking to unwind with a refreshing mocktail or indulge in our exclusive Shisha menu while taking in the city's dynamic energy. Additionally, our infinity pool provides a serene escape for relaxation.

Indika Jayawardena: Understanding the needs of corporate travelers, we offer state-of-the-art meeting spaces, high-speed Wi-Fi, and executive services at Club Pahana. Whether visiting for business or leisure, guests at Amari Colombo can enjoy a seamless balance of productivity and relaxation.

A Lasting Impression: Why Middle Eastern Travellers Choose Amari Colombo

Q: What has been the response from Middle Eastern guests so far?

Indika Jayawardena: The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Guests appreciate the blend of refined upper-upscale living with homely comfort. Many have highlighted our customised service, spacious accommodations, and thoughtful amenities tailored specifically to their needs.

Indika Jayawardena: A testament to our commitment to excellence is the high number of repeat visitors. Word-of-mouth recommendations from our Middle Eastern guests have played a significant role in establishing Amari Colombo as their preferred choice in Sri Lanka.

Final Thoughts

With a strong commitment to cultural sensitivity, upper-upscale comfort, and world-class hospitality, Amari Colombo redefines the family retreat experience for Middle Eastern travellers. Whether for a short getaway or an extended stay, the hotel continues to set new benchmarks in personalised service—ensuring every moment brightens your world.

As Amari Colombo continues to enhance its offerings, it remains the quintessential choice for travellers seeking the perfect balance of refined elegance and warmth in Sri Lanka.

Women in Travel Collective Hosts Inaugural Members' Day at Jetwing Colombo 7

TTA BULLETIN

The Women in Travel Collective marked a significant milestone with the successful hosting of its first-ever Members' Day at Jetwing Colombo 7. This inaugural gathering brought together inspiring female professionals from across the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors, providing a dynamic platform for networking, knowledge-sharing, and empowerment.

The event, designed to foster collaboration and professional growth, featured insightful discussions, engaging panel sessions, and interactive networking opportunities. Attendees had the chance to connect with like-minded professionals, exchange ideas, and explore ways to drive positive change within the industry.

A highlight of the event was the keynote address by Bobby Jordan Hansen, who shared her remarkable journey of over 50 years in Sri Lanka's tourism industry. Her inspirational words resonated deeply with young women embarking on careers in travel and tourism, encouraging them to pursue their ambitions with confidence. Her address set the stage for an engaging Q&A session with guest speaker Nayomi Handunetti, a seasoned marketer and travel and tourism industry professional.



The event also highlighted key initiatives such as the International Mentorship Program and the upcoming

Pekoe Trail Female Guides Program, reinforcing the collective's commitment to creating opportunities for women in the industry.

The Women in Travel Collective remains committed to advancing the role of women in travel and tourism, championing equal opportunities, and fostering a community that uplifts and inspires. The success of this inaugural Members' Day marks the beginning of a series of impactful initiatives aimed at strengthening the collective's mission.

Sri Lanka is stepping into a pivotal phase in its tourism journey—one that positions the island as a year-round destination with something to offer every season. In the coming weeks, a digital media campaign will be launched to amplify this message across key source markets, showcasing the island's diversity, from golden beaches and cultural landmarks to lush hills and adventure trails.

Among the newest additions to the country's tourism landscape is the Pekoe Trail, a scenic 300-km long-distance walking trail through tea country. It has already garnered international recognition, offering an immersive, slow-travel experience that appeals to a new segment of high-value, experience-driven travellers.

There has also been increasing chatter online and in travel media referring to Sri Lanka as "the new Bali" or "Bali 2.0." While flattering, this comparison comes with cautionary notes. Sri Lanka must avoid the pitfalls of overtourism and instead focus on a long-term strategy rooted in quality over quantity. The goal is to attract higher-yield travellers who will spend more, stay longer, and engage more deeply with what the destination has to offer.

That said, recent travel search data suggests that interest in Sri Lanka is currently leaning toward more mid-scale options. This trend highlights the urgent need to create awareness about lesser-known, premium experiences and services across the country. Destinations that fly under the radar—boutique wellness retreats, eco-luxury stays, and heritage-focused tours—need to be brought to the forefront of Sri Lanka's tourism narrative.

The Middle East, especially the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, presents a promising opportunity. A large Sri Lankan contingent is preparing to participate in the upcoming Arabian Travel Market to tap into this high-spend segment. The newly opened Cinnamon Life integrated resort in Colombo will no doubt be a strong talking point, offering the kind of upscale urban experience that GCC travellers are drawn to.

Globally, the travel industry is experiencing a robust resurgence. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), international visitor spending is projected to reach an unprecedented \$2.1 trillion in 2025, surpassing the pre-pandemic peak of \$1.9 trillion in 2019. This growth is mirrored in the United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) latest World Tourism Barometer, which indicates that international tourism has nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels, with 1.4 billion international tourists recorded in 2024—a 99% recovery.



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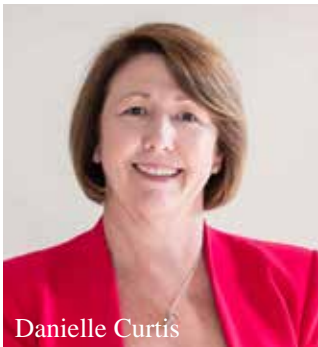
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Arabian Travel Market 2025 to host expanded global participation as international tourism reaches 1.4 billion arrivals

TTA BULLETIN

Arabian Travel Market, the leading global event for the travel and tourism industry, is set to welcome a diverse international presence at its upcoming edition, which takes place at the Dubai World Trade Centre from 28 April to 1 May.



Danielle Curtis

This year’s show will see notable growth in participation from key regions including Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa and the Americas, reflecting continued recovery and rising demand across the global tourism industry.

According to recent data from the World Tourism Barometer by UN Tourism, an estimated 1.4 billion international tourists were recorded globally in 2024, an 11% increase from the previous year. In addition, total export revenues from tourism, including passenger transport, reached a record USD1.9 trillion last year.

The report also indicated that the Middle East was the best-performing region compared to 2019, with international arrivals rising by 32% last year from pre-pandemic levels. The outlook is promising for international tourist arrivals in 2025, which are anticipated to grow by three to five per cent.

“Asia is the fastest-growing region at ATM 2025, with a projected 27% year-on-year increase in exhibitors this year. This growth is largely attributed to enhanced regional connectivity and stronger links with international markets, driving expansion opportunities. It’s not only national tourism organisations that are contributing to this growth but also regional and city-level destinations, with private sector participation on the rise,” said Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market.

Countries such as Japan, Macao, the Maldives, Mauritius, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, China, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and India are playing a pivotal role. India is anticipated to witness a remarkable 41% increase in participation at ATM this year, which includes a stronger presence from the Ministry of Tourism and major national airline carriers, among other stakeholders.

Regional tourist boards, including Rajasthan Tourism, the Government of Goa, Andhra Pradesh Tourism, the Phuket Tourist Association, Hong Kong, and the Jakarta Provincial Government, are also contributing to Asia’s growing presence at ATM.

Reflecting the region’s continued infrastructure growth and appeal to both business and leisure travel-

ers, participation from Middle East exhibitors at the event has grown by 17%. Saudi Arabia’s participation continues to rise at ATM, where the country’s giga projects and many prominent private sector companies from the Kingdom will be showcased to an international audience.

With its cultural diversity and historical tourism appeal, Europe is on track for steady growth of 12%, with participants from across the continent participating in the upcoming edition of ATM. Meanwhile, exhibitor participation from Africa and the Americas remains in line with last year’s edition.

ATM 2025 will centre on the theme “Global Travel: Developing Tomorrow’s Tourism Through Enhanced Connectivity,” underscoring the importance of connectivity in shaping the industry’s future. The event is set to attract over 47,000 attendees and feature over 2,600 exhibitors from more than 161 global destinations.

Across three main stages, which include the Global Stage, Future Stage and the all-new Business Events stage, attendees will have the opportunity to gain insights from more than 200 high-profile speakers across 60 conference sessions. The ATM Conference programme will explore key international regions, including specialised sessions on important source markets such as Asia-Pacific (APAC), Latin America (LATAM) and India.

Curtis concluded: “ATM 2025 presents a unique opportunity for stakeholders in the travel and tourism industry to engage with influential players from across the globe. Participants can stay informed about emerging industry trends, connect with key decision-makers, and establish valuable partnerships. These collaborations aim to drive innovation and shape the future direction of global travel and tourism.”

Held in conjunction with Dubai World Trade Centre, ATM 2025’s strategic partners include Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), Destination Partner; Emirates, Official Airline Partner; IHG Hotels & Resorts, Official Hotel Partner; and Al Rais Travel, Official DMC Partner.



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Skal International Colombo Celebrate Women’s History Month with Exclusive Ladies’ Luncheon at Galle Face Hotel

TTA BULLETIN

In celebration of Women’s History Month, Skal International Colombo, in collaboration with the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Sri Lanka Chapter, hosted an exclusive Skal / PATA Ladies’ Luncheon at the historic Galle Face Hotel. The elegant afternoon gathering served as a platform to honour and recognize the incredible contributions of women in Tourism, while fostering camaraderie and meaningful connections among attendees.

The event brought together leading female professionals in the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors, creating a space for inspiration, networking, and shared experiences. Guests enjoyed an afternoon of warm conversations set against the timeless charm of one of Colombo’s most

iconic hotels.

Adding a special touch to the occasion, Rohan Fernandopulle, General Manager of Galle Face Hotel, went the extra mile to ensure a truly memorable experience. His thoughtful attention to detail and dedication to hospitality excellence elevated the luncheon, making it a cherished moment for all in attendance.

The luncheon not only highlighted the role of women in shaping the tourism and hospitality industry but also reinforced the importance of collaboration and Skal International Colombo’s commitment to creating opportunities for professional growth



BOC Travels Marks 30 Years of Service and Dedication

TTA BULLETIN

BOC Travels (Pvt) Ltd, a proud subsidiary of the Bank of Ceylon, recently celebrated a significant milestone—30 years of unwavering service, resilience, and shared success in the travel and tourism industry.

Reflecting on its journey, the company acknowledges the challenges it has overcome—particularly in recent years—and attributes its strength to the enduring relationships it has built over three decades.

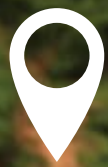
“As we celebrate this remarkable milestone, we are reminded that every achievement has been built on trust, partnership, and the collective efforts of

those around us,” said Romesh Samaranyake, General Manager / CEO of BOC Travels.

BOC Travels extended heartfelt appreciation to its valued customers, dedicated staff past and present, trusted partners, former board members, current leadership, and the Bank of Ceylon, for being pillars of strength throughout its journey.

With a renewed sense of purpose, BOC Travels looks ahead with confidence, ready to embrace the future while continuing to uphold its commitment to excellence in travel solutions.





PEKOE TRAIL
Stage 21
Kandapola

Step Into a Storybook: The Pekoe Trail's Final Stages Unfold at Heritance Tea Factory

For those seeking to turn their Pekoe Trail journey into a timeless memory,
Heritance Tea Factory stands ready to welcome adventurers, tea lovers, and storytellers alike



Adani’s Colombo Terminal Commences Operations

TTA BULLETIN

Developed under a landmark public-private partnership, CWIT is operated by a consortium comprising India’s largest port operator Adani Ports & SEZ Ltd, leading Sri Lankan conglomerate John Keells Holdings PLC, and the Sri Lanka Ports Authority, under a 35-year Build, Operate, and Transfer (BOT) agreement.



to set new benchmarks in operational efficiency and reliability in regional maritime logistics.

“The commencement of operations at CWIT marks a momentous milestone in regional cooperation between India and Sri Lanka,” said Mr Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group. “Not only does this terminal represent the future of trade in the Indian Ocean but its opening is also a proud moment for Sri Lanka, placing it firmly on the global maritime map. The CWIT project will create thousands of direct and indirect jobs locally and unlock immense economic value for the island nation. It also stands as a shining example of the deep-rooted friendship and growing strategic ties between the two neighbours, and of what can be achieved through visionary public-private partnerships. Delivering this world-class facility in record time also reflects the Adani Group’s proven ability to efficiently execute large-scale critical infrastructure projects anywhere in the world.”

The CWIT project represents a significant investment of USD 800 million and features a 1,400-metre quay length and 20-metre depth, enabling the terminal to handle approximately 3.2 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs) annually. It is the first deep-water terminal in Colombo to be fully automated, designed to enhance cargo handling capabilities, improve vessel turnaround times and elevate the port’s status as a key transshipment hub in South Asia.

Construction began in early 2022 and has since achieved rapid progress. With the installation of cutting-edge infrastructure now nearing completion, CWIT is poised

Classic Travel Unveils Priority Service Centre: A New Chapter in 30 Years of Exceptional Service

TTA BULLETIN

For over three decades, Classic Travel has been a trusted name in Sri Lanka’s travel industry, a brand synonymous with reliability, innovation, and customer-first service. Since its humble beginnings in 1994, the company has grown into a leading travel management company, earning the loyalty of thousands of travelers both locally and internationally.



Saby Bahaudeen

Designed with comfort and accessibility in mind, the new centre ensures a smooth, personalized experience for all people, especially elderly clients, differently-abled individuals, or anyone who simply prefers a more relaxed, guided approach to travel planning. Whether it’s

booking flights, arranging tours, or managing documentation, customers can expect attentive service in a calm, dedicated space.

This year marks another important milestone in Classic Travel’s journey — the launch of a Priority Service Centre designed to cater to the needs of senior citizens and customers who require accessible, hassle-free travel support. Located in the heart of Colombo, this new space is a continuation of the company’s mission: to make travel seamless, inclusive, and stress-free for everyone.

“From the very beginning, we’ve always placed customer convenience at the heart of everything we do,” said Sabry Bahaudeen, Director of Classic Travel and Expo Lanka Leisure. “We started with a simple goal: to make travel easier for people. Today, this Priority Service Centre stands as proof of that same vision, made real. It’s yet another milestone that reflects our promise to offer a world of difference to our customers.”



In addition to this, Classic Travel continues to offer the convenience of a 24/7 walk-in office, allowing customers to plan and book their travel at any time, day or night. This round-the-clock availability has long been a hallmark of Classic Travel’s customer-centric approach, providing peace of mind in moments when travel needs are urgent or spontaneous. Located in a prime area of Colombo, the centre also offers ample parking facilities, making visits comfortable and stress-free. This small but important detail speaks volumes about the company’s attention to convenience.

Over the years, Classic Travel has stayed ahead by not just adapting to change, but by anticipating the needs of modern travelers. With a strong digital footprint, global partnerships, and a passionate team, the company continues to redefine what it means to be a travel partner, not just an agent.

Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority Charts Course for Marine Tourism with Strategic Roadmap

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka marked a major milestone in its tourism development efforts with the official launch of the Marine Tourism Roadmap. This initiative, led by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under its technical assistance program TA9881 SRI: Supporting Tourism Resilience, lays the groundwork for a new chapter in tourism and the nation’s blue economy.



The Marine Tourism Roadmap was developed through an extensive process of data collection, stakeholder consultations and site visits conducted by the ADB appointed international consultant together with officials of the SLTDA. The final validation of the Roadmap was done by the Marine Tourism Steering Committee, which included representatives from key marine related public and private sector institutions. International expertise was provided by Ms. Aleksandra Dragozet (CEO & Founder - Sea Going Green), ADB’s appointed marine tourism consultant, whose guidance ensured the strategy aligned with global best practices for sustainable tourism. The SLTDA officials, Dr. Prasad Jayasuriya, Director-Tourism Planning, Development & Investments and Mr. S Dadeepan, Assistant Director-Tourism Planning & Development coordinated all meetings, site visits and activities with relevant stakeholders and the Steering Committee.

The Marine Tourism Roadmap emphasizes a balanced approach between conservation and economic development, promoting eco-friendly activities such as diving, snorkeling, ship wreck diving and marine wildlife watching. These activities are designed to support local livelihoods while safeguarding Sri Lanka’s rich marine biodiversity, particularly coral reefs, marine mammals, and fragile coastal habitats that face increasing environmental pressure. The strategy outlines two categories of coastal destinations: areas covering Kalpitiya through Galle to Trincomalee, which possess established marine tourism industries; and areas covering Mannar, Jaffna and the North-Eastern coastal belt, which are recognized for their emerging tourism potential. Notably, Sri Lanka’s ocean territory is nearly seven times larger than its landmass, highlighting the vast, untapped opportunities for marine-based tourism. The roadmap presents both short-term and long-term implementation strategies, aiming to develop sustainable marine tourism infrastructure, enhance visitor experiences, and ensure the protection and resilience of marine ecosystems in the years ahead.

The roadmap itself was the result of collaboration among stakeholders covering coastal areas of Negombo, Kalpitiya, Mannar, Jaffna, Mullativu, Trincomalee and Galle and also the Steering committee

members representing 18 key marine related public and private sector institutions including Presidential Secretariat, Ministry of Tourism and the SLTDA. This unified approach ensured that the document reflects the diverse perspectives of stakeholders directly involved in marine and coastal tourism development.

The launch ceremony was graced by Hon. Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe - Deputy Minister of Tourism, as the Chief Guest. The event also saw the participation of Mr. Buddhika Hewawasam, Chairman of SLTDA, Mr. Takafumi Kadono, Country Director of ADB’s Sri Lanka Resident Mission, Mr. S. L. Naseer, Chairman of the Marine Tourism Steering Committee & Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Dr. Prasad Jayasuriya, Director - Tourism Planning, Development & Investments of SLTDA, along with several other steering committee members and representatives of the ADB.

In his address, Hon. Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe emphasized the critical importance of marine tourism in strengthening the national tourism strategy and assured fullest support of the government to implement the roadmap. He noted that sustainable marine tourism offers long-term opportunities for job creation, environmental protection, and community-based development.

ADB Country Director Mr. Takafumi Kadono highlighted the ADB’s continued commitment in supporting marine tourism in Sri Lanka. He noted that the roadmap serves as a model of strategic planning and confirmed ADB’s interest in supporting a pilot project in Passikudah, to catalyze future developments in marine tourism.

This launch event—though simple in form—marked a vital moment in Sri Lanka’s journey towards more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism development. With the Marine Tourism Roadmap now in place, Sri Lanka is poised to transform its coastal belt into a world-class marine tourism destination that balances economic opportunity with environmental stewardship.

By implementing these actionable recommendations and fostering collaboration across sectors, Sri Lanka’s marine tourism sector is set to become a key driver of the country’s tourism growth, job creation, and ecological preservation in the years to come.



Your Guide to a Lavish Private Stay in the Heart of Colombo

Experience unparalleled refinement at Amari Colombo, thoughtfully designed for discerning Middle Eastern families. Honoured by FBEYE International Singapore's award, indulge in halal-certified culinary artistry, elevate your senses on our rooftop, and enjoy effortless living with Smart Home integration. For ultimate exclusivity, the Ceylon Suite features dedicated private chef and butler service. An exceptional hospitality, evident in every detail.

G'Day Australia! Ministry of Crab opens in Melbourne

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka’s award-winning crab restaurant, Ministry of Crab founded by chef-restaurateur Dharshan Munidasa together with Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara opened its first outpost in Australia on the 10th of April, making the restaurant in Melbourne its 10th restaurant opening.

Ministry of Crab, Melbourne is located at 226, Flinders Lane, a 5-minute walk from the iconic Flinders Street Station in the heart of the Central Business District. Flinders Lane is one of the city’s most popular culinary hotspots, known for its mix of eclectic, high-end, and inventive dining experiences.

The restaurant is situated in the 100-year old art-deco Invicta House, a former silk factory. A palette of orange (representing crab) and green (the sea) dominate the interior, and there are elevated banquettes and counter seating overlooking the open kitchen, where the centerpiece is Ministry of Crab’s now-famous crab board, showcasing all available crab sizes right up to the 2kg Crabzilla.

Partnering with Dharshan, Kumar and Mahela on this restaurant are local restaurateurs Harsha Kumarasingha and Jayantha Warnakula. The duo’s H&J Restaurants previously coordinated Ministry of Crab’s Melbourne pop-ups in 2022 and 2024.

The Melbourne restaurant features signature dishes from the flagship in Colombo, reimagined with the best of Australia’s catch. In keeping Ministry of Crab’s commitment to freshness, the heroingredient is the wild-caught Australian mud crab from the Northern Territories. The restaurant also celebrates other local seafood such as leader prawns, oysters and clams, combining them with Sri Lankan spices and Japanese culinary philosophies to plate up the flavours Ministry of Crab is synonymous with.

Speaking at the opening Chef Dharshan said, “Provenance of ingredients is very important to me, and Australia having the mud crab is the reason we are here. I want to serve the best crab of Australia, in Australia and that’s how we brought Ministry of Crab here!”.



Ministry of Crab Melbourne is open for dine-in from Tuesday – Saturday from 12:00pm – 3:00pm and for dinner from 5:00pm to 10:00pm; and on Sunday from 12:00pm to 5:00pm. Reservations can be made via email at reservations@ministry-ofcrab.com.au

Ministry of Crab is a celebration of Sri Lanka’s abundance of seafood, particularly the wonderfully succulent mud crab, commonly held to be the best in the world. Launched in December 2011, Ministry of Crab was the first of its kind, with Sri Lankan mud crab being the hero ingredient, whereby for decades, it had been more easily available internationally than in Sri Lanka itself.

The brainchild of renowned chef-restaurateur Dharshan Munidasa, in partnership with Sri Lankan cricketing legends Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara, Ministry of Crab is located in the historic 400-year-old Dutch Hospital in the heart of Colombo. With overseas outposts in Singapore, Shanghai, Chengdu, Mumbai, Maldives, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Melbourne the restaurant continues to expand internationally.

Ministry of Crab was built on the ethos of serving the highest quality ingredients in their freshest form, and to reiterate this, the restaurant employs a daring no-freezer policy. The restaurant’s core philosophy is that we promise our guests only the best catch of the day (our crabs are wild caught and not farmed) – which means that no small or meatless crab or those with uneven claws are served.

Unique in its dedication to showcasing the best of Sri Lanka’s produce, Ministry of Crab transformed Colombo’s dining scene, and placed the island on the global culinary map.

As a result, the restaurant has been recognised as one of Asia’s 50 Best Restaurants from 2015 – 2022, received press coverage via multiple international media outlets and has been invited to conduct pop-up events across the globe, including Australia, United Kingdom, France, Japan, UAE, Singapore, Thailand and the People’s Republic of China.

Saudi Arabia to showcase record tourism growth at ATM 2025, marked by a 16% increase in exhibitor participation at the event

TTA BULLETIN

Saudi Arabia’s travel and tourism sector continues on an upward trajectory, with the Kingdom welcoming 30 million international visitors in 2024, representing a 9.5 percent increase from the previous year. This impressive growth will be under the spotlight at the upcoming Arabian Travel Market (ATM), where Saudi Arabia will present its latest tourism milestones, showcase new projects and highlight its vision to become a premier destination.

ATM 2025 will feature several prominent exhibitors from the Kingdom. In addition to the Saudi Tourism Authority, returning exhibitors include SAUDIA, flynas, Qiddiya Investment Company, Sixth Gulf Travel Company, Taiba Investment, Makkah Clock Royal Tower, Fairmont Hotel, Cruise Saudi, and L’azure Hospitality. First-time exhibitors this year include flyadeal, Riyadh Air, Diriyah Company, Aseer, BAAN Holding Group, Makkah Hotel & Towers, Alhussam Tourism, and StayKSA.

These exhibitors, along with many others, will be highlighted in a dedicated Saudi Land hall, an expanded version of last year’s ATM Saudi Village, which will be representative of the Saudi Arabian culture, heritage and tourism, while reflecting the upward trajectory of the Kingdom’s travel industry, which has seen Saudi Arabian exhibitor presence increase by 16% this year.

Recent research conducted by VIDECON, on behalf of ATM, has highlighted Saudi Arabia’s remarkable status as the largest and fastest-growing economy within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. In 2023, Saudi Arabia’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached an impressive USD 1.1 trillion, translating to a per capita GDP of USD 32,500. This positions the nation as one of the most significant and influential markets in the region.

The report further reveals that the contribution of the non-oil sector to the country’s GDP has increased substantially, reaching 63% in 2021. This represents a significant leap from 39% in 2000, indicating a strategic diversification of the economy away from reliance on oil revenues. Saudi Arabia also experienced a surge in inbound leisure tourists in 2023, growing from 1.12 million in 2019 to 6.2 million. Meanwhile, domestic travel grew from 48 million to 78 million in the same period.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: “Saudi Tourism Authority’s unwavering commitment to the event highlights the Kingdom’s rapid progress in establishing itself as a world-class tourism hub and reflects the broader momentum of investment, innovation and ambition that is



driving the region’s travel sector forward. This year, ATM 2025 will have one of the strongest Saudi presences to date, with leading airlines, hospitality brands and cruise representation taking centre stage.”

VIDECON estimates that Saudi Arabia’s Total Air Market (TAM) will grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 12.2%, reaching USD11.3 billion by 2028. With SAUDIA focusing on international expansion and new airline Riyadh Air aiming to connect the Kingdom with over 100 cities by 2030, the report predicts that this will have a significant impact on the international air travel market, which is expected to grow at a CAGR of 14.1% until 2028.

The report also outlines how Saudi Arabia’s hotel market accounted for 60% of the GCC’s hotel market in 2024, emphasising its dominant position in the region. Hotel bookings are predominantly driven by the domestic market, which accounts for approximately 70% of the Gross Booking Value (GBV). With 40,000 hotels under development, adding approximately 320,000 rooms, the Kingdom’s hotel market is set to accelerate further.

Saudi Arabia’s growing importance in the global travel industry will be explored during the ATM Conference Programme, which will unfold across three stages – the Global Stage, the Future Stage and the New Business Events Stage and will feature 68 sessions, led by 185 high-profile speakers.

On 28 April, Turkey Kari, Executive Director of Marketing, AROYA Cruises, will join a distinguished panel on the Global Stage to explore the Considerations and Implications of Involving Communities in Destination Revitalization. Meanwhile, Abulkarim Aldarwish, MEA President, Saudi Tourism Authority, will join tourism leaders and travel experts to discuss Big Ticket Events: Global Impact and Learnings on the Business Events Stage.

ATM 2025 is poised to welcome 55,000 attendees and will serve as a platform to showcase over 2,800 exhibitors from more than 161 global destinations. The event will centre on the transformative power of connectivity as part of the theme "Global Travel: Developing Tomorrow’s Tourism Through Enhanced Connectivity.”

Held in conjunction with Dubai World Trade Centre, ATM 2025’s strategic partners include Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), Destination Partner; Emirates, Official Airline Partner; IHG Hotels & Resorts, Official Hotel Partner; and Al Rais Travel, Official DMC Partner.

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Sri Lanka successfully host 3rd BIMSTEC working group meeting in Colombo

TTA BULLETIN

BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation) as a regional corporation was initiated to bring together the countries in the Bay of Bengal to discuss and work in collaboration to develop major sectors in a country including tourism within the region. The Member States include Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand whilst its Headquarters is based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Followed by the 2nd working group meeting which was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, the 3rd meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Tourism was held in Sri Lanka hosted by Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau , under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism,

Mr. S.L Naseer , Additional Secretary , Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism, chaired the meeting together with Mr. Si Thu Aung and Mr. Uttam Kumar Shahi, Directors of BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka. Distinguished heads from other member states, Sri Lankan government officials, and Industry representatives attended the meeting. He thanked the government of Sri Lanka and the Ministry for hosting this working group of Tourism and elaborated on the key areas of discussion. Speaking at this occasion, Mr. S.L Naseer as the Chair of the meeting, underscored the shared commitment of BIMSTEC countries in fostering regional collaboration and advancing sustainable tourism and emphasized Sri Lanka’s rich cultural heritage and natural beauty. He encouraged constructive discussions aimed at enhancing connectivity, promoting cultural exchanges, and developing innovative strategies to strengthen the tourism sector across the BIMSTEC region.

The meeting commenced with the open remarks of Mr. Si Thu Aung , representing the BIMSTEC Secretary General. Thereafter, the keynote remarks were made by Mr . Buddhika Hewawasam , Chairman , Sri Lanka Tourism. Addressing the meeting, he stressed the importance of sustainable tourism which will ensure long-term benefits for all BIMSTEC member States. “We envisage the tourism momentum to continue into the future and the ongoing collaboration with BIMSTEC will have far reaching benefits for the member nations”

“Deliberations were made on important topics commonly beneficial for the BIMSTEC countries, such as ‘BIMSTEC policy guidelines for having harmonized and coherent tourism policies among member states, operationalizing BIMSTEC Tourism circuits, and developing BIMSTEC Tourism packages and products”



During the forum, discussions were also held with regard to forming a virtual tourist information centre, which will be coordinated by India as the lead country. Another important topic which was discussed was implementing the BIMSTEC Tourism circuits. Accordingly, Buddhist circuit, temple circuit, Ecotourism circuit, cruise and adventure circuits will be developed., Operational modalities will be formulated by the lead member state/s assigned for each circuit. In this regard, Sri Lanka will be one of the countrys leading Buddhist and cruise circuits. The representatives from the industry who attended recommended including Ramayana Trail as one of the BIMSTEC Tourism cultural circuits.

During the meeting, discussions were held with regard to developing tourism packages and products, that would benefit each of the member states, which would be supported by training, workshops, FAM Tours for tour operators, joint promotional activities and strengthening connectivity. Infrastructure, promoting seamless travel with member states was also discussed.

Other issues such as Visa facilitation, Intra regional currency facilitation, reducing entrance fee of the tourism sites, organizing a regional travel fair and enhancing BIMSTEC Tourism fund were also discussed in length. Thus the working group meeting concluded on a positive note, confirming to hold the 3rd BIMSTEC Tourism Minister’s roundtable meeting in July 2025 in Bangladesh and the 4th meeting of the network of tour operators to be held in Sri Lanka in 2026. Further, it was confirmed that the 4th meeting of the BIMSTEC working group on Tourism will be hosted in Thailand in 2026.

At the end of the forum gift items were given away for the delegates which was followed by a dinner, hosted by the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau at Hotel Ramada, Colombo, along with cultural entertainment. Before their departures, a city tour in Colombo was organized by the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, highlighting the main tourist attractions to take some memories back home. Arrangements for the meeting was coordinated by Ms. Shirani Herath , Market Officer , (South Asia) of SLTPB in collaboration with the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs , Foreign Employment and Tourism .

Australia’s MDF and Tree of Life resort unveil Sri Lanka’s first immersive ‘Coffee Heritage Trail’

TTA BULLETIN

Tree of Life Nature Resort, in partnership with Australia’s Market Development Facility (MDF), launched Sri Lanka’s first ‘Coffee Heritage Trail’ on 4 April 2025 at the resort’s property in Kandy. The trail will allow tourists to explore the rich heritage of Sri Lanka’s coffee sector, from cultivation to brewing.

Sri Lanka’s thriving coffee industry has sparked rising demand for local specialty coffee, paving the way for an immersive new tourism experience—the Coffee Heritage Trail, the country’s first-ever coffee tour. The trail spans 1.5km and invites travellers and coffee enthusiasts to explore the bean-to-cup journey of specialty coffee in Sri Lanka. The trail is also a unique addition to the visitor offering in Kandy, one of Sri Lanka’s key tourism hotspots.

Tree of Life is a 65-acre nature resort located in the heart of Kandy that recently diversified into coffee cultivation. The resort offers guests a diverse range of activities and, in collaboration with MDF, has added its inaugural coffee tour to its visitor offering. The new tour will give tourists the opportunity to explore a coffee nursery and hike through the resort’s scenic plantation, learning about seed selection and coffee planting. Visitors will be able to participate in coffee processing and learn about traditional and modern roasting techniques. A key highlight of the tour is a guided tasting session led by Tree of Life’s in-house barista, where guests can savour freshly brewed Sri Lankan coffee that has been harvested, processed and roasted on-site. The trail also offers people the unique opportunity to plant their own coffee tree and receive updates on its growth, creating a lasting connection to Sri Lanka’s coffee culture.

Tree of Life Founder and Managing Director, Mr. Shelton Thenuwara, stated, “We are delighted to offer this unique product to our guests. While Sri Lanka is renowned for its tourism products, there is always a demand for new and, especially in Kandy. This coffee tour has the potential to diversify Sri Lanka’s offerings and position our coffee in

global markets.” Australia has been a strong supporter of Sri Lanka’s coffee sector, playing a key role in its revival, through MDF, since 2017. Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, H.E. Paul Stephens, remarked,

“Sri Lanka’s coffee story is one of resilience and revival, and Australia is proud to be part of this journey. Through MDF we have supported the re-emergence of specialty coffee, helping it gain both local and international recognition. This initiative is more than just about coffee—it’s about creating opportunities, driving tourism, and strengthening the export potential of local coffee. We remain committed to showcasing Sri Lanka’s unique coffee to the world and ensuring its well-deserved place on the global coffee map.”

With its extensive experience in both the specialty coffee and tourism sectors, MDF identified an opportunity to merge the two through this collaboration with Tree of Life. MDF has supported Tree of Life to curate the trail and commission sector experts to deliver specialised coffee trainings for the trail’s tour guides. As Sri Lanka reclaims its place on the global coffee map, this tour serves as a gateway for coffee enthusiasts and travellers alike to discover the unique flavours, traditions and landscapes that make Sri Lankan coffee truly special.

Tree of Life (Hint Nuwara Eliya) is a popular nature resort located in Kandy which was established in 1992 operating both as a nature resort situated in a 65-acre property in the central province of Sri Lanka. Situated in a peaceful environment and natural surroundings, the Resort offers nature walks and bird watching, allowing guests to immerse themselves in the local flora and fauna. In addition, the resort provides Ayurveda treatments, promoting relaxation and wellness and is a manufacturer and exporter of organic herbs, spices, tea and coffee products. They currently supply their products both to the domestic and export markets in Japan and the Australian market in small volumes.





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eMarketingEye Wins at Google Agency Excellence Awards 2024

eMarketingEye is awarded the 2024 Google Agency Excellence Award for International Growth!

TTA BULLETIN

The company achieved a historic milestone by winning the International Growth Award at the Google Agency Excellence Awards 2024. This prestigious recognition marks eMarketingEye as the first and only Sri Lankan agency to win an Agency Excellence Award, reinforcing our commitment to driving global success for our clients through cutting-edge digital marketing strategies.

The 2024 Agency Excellence Awards recognise companies around the world for excellence with Google’s advertising solutions. Winning in the International Growth category is a testament to eMarketingEye’s ability to leverage Google’s advertising solutions to drive growth

and sustainability for its clients.

Our win in the International Growth category underscores our success in helping clients break geographical barriers, scale internationally, and maximize their return on investment through strategic digital marketing initiatives.

Commenting on this remarkable achievement, Rajitha Dahanayake, CEO of eMarketingEye, stated:

“To win at the Google Agency Excellence Awards is a testament to our team’s expertise, dedication and relentless pursuit of innovation. Our success in the International Growth category reflects our unwaver-



ing commitment to delivering cutting-edge solutions that help our clients thrive in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.”

He further added, “This win reaffirms our leadership in digital marketing and our ability to craft tailor-made strategies that align with evolving industry trends and client needs. We remain steadfast in our mission to set new benchmarks in digital excellence and drive measurable success for businesses worldwide.”

In addition to this achievement, eMarketingEye was also named a finalist in two other competitive categories; Search Transformation and Measurement Solutions, further solidifying its expertise in crafting data-driven strategies that optimize search marketing performance and enhance measurement capabilities. These recognitions reinforce eMarketingEye’s commitment to delivering sustainable and impactful results for its clients.

eMarketingEye has consistently champi-

oned performance-driven digital marketing solutions, enabling businesses, particularly in the travel and hospitality sector. By combining in-depth market insights, advanced data analytics, and innovative advertising strategies, we have successfully positioned our clients for scalable, long-term success.

This victory at the Google Agency Excellence Awards 2024 serves as a powerful motivator for eMarketingEye to continue pushing the boundaries of digital marketing. As we move forward, our focus remains on innovation, data-driven insights, and delivering exceptional value to our clients.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our clients, partners, and dedicated team members for their unwavering support and trust. This achievement belongs to everyone who has been part of our journey, and we look forward to continuing to drive growth and transformation in the digital marketing space.





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Strategies to Attract and Retain Italian Tourists in Sri Lanka

TTA BULLETIN

In a significant step toward strengthening bilateral ties in tourism, the Sri Lanka–Italy Business Council (SLITBC) of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the Italian Embassy for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, hosted a high-profile workshop on April 2, 2025, under the theme “Winning & Retaining Italian Tourists” held at the prestigious Cinnamon Life – City of Dreams in Colombo, the event brought together tourism industry leaders, diplomatic representatives, and Italian travel experts.

The evening commenced with a keynote address by Mr. Alberto Arcidiacono, Deputy Head of Mission at the Italian Embassy. Mr. Arcidiacono highlighted the evolving preferences of Italian travelers the potential that Sri Lanka holds in offering unique experiences that resonate with the many demographics of the Italian market.

A lively and insightful panel discussion followed, moderated by Mr. Hashan Cooray, Director - Marketing & Development at Jetwing Hotels. The panel featured four prominent voices in the tourism and travel industry: Mr. Buddhika Hewawasam, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) and Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB); Mr. Nalin Jayasundera, President of the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) and Managing Director Aitken Spence Travels; and Mr. Miguel Cuñat, founder and designer of Sri Lanka’s revolutionary 300km plus, 22-stage hiking route, the Pekoe Trail.

Mr. Arcidiacono discussed the demographics and characteristics of the Italian tourist, describing them as culture-oriented, experience-driven, and increasingly focused on sustainability. Mr. Hewawasam addressed the critical issue of air connectivity between Italy and Sri Lanka, noting the need for improved direct flight access and expanded B2B and B2C partnerships. He also highlighted the Mr. Jayasundera emphasized the importance of attracting high-spending tourists and strategies to increase tourism revenue by delivering premium experiences. Meanwhile, Mr. Hewawasam pointed out that Colombo need not be a mere transitional destination, but can attract city break tourists. It was indicated that several projects including a night market would be introduced to this end. Mr. Cuñat highlighted the untapped potential of the Pekoe Trail, developed in collaboration with the European Union and USAID, which offers immersive, nature-based authentic experiences that contribute to the rural economy at its grassroots, while ensuring that the right type of explorer would be promoted and attracted to keep the trail sustainable, pleasant for all, and economically viable in the long term.

The discussion centered around key themes such as the expectations of various Italian traveler segments, particularly luxury tourists, and what Sri Lanka must do to compete with regional rivals such as Thailand and Malaysia. The panelists also explored the “wish list” of Italian travelers, including personalized itineraries, addressing language problems, and delivering

authentic local experiences and high-quality service standards.

Adding significant value to the event was the virtual participation of three Italian tour operators, who joined the discussion live from Italy. Ms. Susanna Crementi & Ms. Lucie de Gaulmyn from Evaneos, Ms. Luisa Quaglieri from ideeperviaggiare, and Mrs. Paola Pesce from PaloaMaldives shared their insights on traveler behavior, current booking trends, and the competitive positioning of Sri Lanka in the Italian market. They pointed out the positives that Sri Lanka has vs. the competition, including the friendliness of its people, the diverse offering available within relatively short travelling times, the flora, fauna and bird diversity. They highlighted the fact that Sri Lanka should be a year-round destination to avoid the trap of over-tourism, which can detract from the experience. The speakers highlighted that the cost levels of competitors, while currently lower were on the rise, and there was an opportunity for Sri Lanka in this. Sustainability was also stressed by Mr. Arcidiacono. The main pain point identified was the lack of visa free access, and the lack of information on requirements and specifications of a given tour itinerary, including the lack of comparability between properties with the same star rating. It was recommended to have available accurate photographs, as well as a rating comparable with that used in the European Union; so that a level of predictability can be given, without sacrificing the authenticity and charm of the destination.



The level of air connectivity was finally highlighted as one of the significant disadvantages, vs. the competition.

The event saw an enthusiastic turnout, filling the venue with industry professionals ranging from destination management companies and tour operators to airline representatives and online travel agents. Following the formal program, guests were invited to a networking dinner at Quizine, providing a relaxed setting for further dialogue and collaboration. The event was principally supported by Cinnamon Life – City of Dreams, which served as the Exclusive Event Venue Partner and Platinum Sponsor.

Special appreciation is also extended to Omega Line, the Gold Sponsor, for their generous contribution and support in making the evening a success. Additionally, the Sri Lanka–Italy Business Council conveys sincere thanks to its Event Chair Mr. Heshan Perera (Vice President), the President, Mr. Daminda Mulgama, Honorary Member Mr. Rajeev Aloysius, and executive committee members - Mr. Sanjeeva Rajapakse of Aitken Spence Travels, Ms. Dushy Jayaweera of Acorn Group, and Ms. Anika Williamson of JAT Holdings - for their outstanding efforts in organizing and driving this initiative forward.

Sri Lanka–Italy Business Council & the Italian Embassy in Sri Lanka host Interactive workshop

In a significant step toward strengthening bilateral ties in tourism, the Sri Lanka–Italy Business Council (SLITBC) of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the Italian Embassy for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, hosted a high-profile workshop recently under the theme “Winning & Retaining Italian Tourists” held at the prestigious Cinnamon Life – City of Dreams in Colombo. The event brought together tourism industry leaders, diplomatic representatives, and Italian travel experts.





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MOVEMENTS / FAMILY ALBUM

The Leela Hyderabad Appoints Rajesh Gopalakrishnan as General Manager

TTA BULLETIN

The Leela is pleased to announce the appointment of Rajesh Gopalakrishnan as the General Manager of The Leela Hyderabad. With over three decades of rich experience in the hospitality industry, Rajesh brings a wealth of expertise and leadership to this prestigious property.

Rajesh has a proven track record in steering luxury hotels to new heights, having held key leadership positions across renowned hospitality brands. His extensive experience spans managing operations, business development, guest experience, and sustainability initiatives in both established and emerging markets. His previous roles include General Manager at Radisson Hotel Group, Novotel Visakhapatnam, and Grand Mercure Vadodara, as well as senior leadership positions with Accor and Greenpark Hotels & Resorts.

Throughout his career, Rajesh has demonstrated exceptional acumen in pre-opening projects, driving revenue growth, and implementing international hospitality standards. His tenure at iconic properties such as The Leela Mumbai, Grand Hyatt Mumbai, and Taj Coromandel Chennai has equipped him with a deep understanding of luxury hospitality and guest-centric



Rajesh Gopalakrishnan

service excellence.

A graduate of the Glion Institute of Higher Education, Switzerland, with an MBA in International Hospitality and Service Industries Management, Rajesh has also completed the prestigious International Hospitality Management

Program from Accor Academy Asia, Thailand. His commitment to operational excellence, team development, and innovation aligns perfectly with The Leela's vision of delivering unparalleled guest experiences.

Expressing his enthusiasm for the new role, Rajesh said, "I am honoured to join The Leela Hyderabad and be part of such an iconic brand. I look forward to leading the team in delivering world-class experiences and upholding The Leela's legacy of hospitality and luxury."

The Leela Hyderabad, renowned for its grandeur and impeccable service, continues to redefine luxury hospitality in the city. With Rajesh at the helm, the hotel is geared up for a new era of excellence and growth.

Sanjiv Hulugalle Appointed CEO and General Manager of Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams Sri Lanka

TTA BULLETIN

Cinnamon Life announces the appointment of Sanjiv Hulugalle as the Chief Executive Officer and General Manager of Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams Sri Lanka, marking a pivotal moment in the evolution of Sri Lanka's hospitality landscape.

With a career that spans over three decades and 12 countries across five continents, Hulugalle brings to Cinnamon Life an unparalleled legacy in luxury hospitality, real estate development, and transformative leadership. From the Maldives to Canada, China to the UAE, he has been at the helm of some of the world's most prestigious hospitality and real estate ventures.

Previously the Group President of Hospitality & Real Estate at KOHLER Co., Hulugalle drove innovation and strategic growth across a diverse portfolio. At Auberge Resorts Collection, he led the ambitious repositioning of a \$210 million development. His 24-year tenure with Four Seasons saw him lead top-tier teams and deliver award-winning results across the globe.

But this latest chapter is deeply personal.

Having been semi-retired, Hulugalle's return to Sri Lanka was sparked not by circumstance, but by calling and purpose. "This is not just a role," says Hulugalle. "It's a way of giving back to the country that raised



Sanjiv Hulugalle

me—with its gracious hospitality, boundless warmth, and vibrant soul."

Raised in a bustling household with five sisters, Hulugalle describes his upbringing as "full of life, colour, and chaos"—a dynamic energy that shaped his eccentric, vibrant, and whimsical personality. It is this very spirit that he intends

to infuse into Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams: a bold, new vision of urban escapism, of global experiences grounded in local soul, and of Sri Lankan hospitality elevated to its highest form.

"Sri Lankan hospitality is naturally gracious and kind," he reflects. "It's in our DNA. My mother would've wanted me to return and give back."

With Hulugalle at the helm, Cinnamon Life is set to emerge not just as a landmark development in Colombo—but as a destination, that captures the imagination of the world. Under his leadership, City of Dreams will embody the essence of modern Sri Lanka: rooted in culture, rich in character, and radiating with opportunity.

In addition to his work in hospitality, Hulugalle is also an active investor in AI-led technologies, residential real estate, and wellness-driven consumer brands, always seeking to blend strategic foresight with heartfelt service.

BOC Travels Marks 30 Years of Service in the Travel Industry

BOC Travels (Pvt) Ltd, a proud subsidiary of the Bank of Ceylon, recently celebrated a significant milestone—30 years of unwavering service, resilience, and shared success in the travel and tourism industry. A celebration took place at the BOC Head office in Colombo.





TAJ BENTOTA RESORT & SPA

WHERE COASTAL SRI LANKA WELCOMES FAMILIES WITH SOULFUL LUXURY

As Sri Lanka continues to earn global recognition as one of the top family-friendly destinations in Asia, Taj Bentota Resort & Spa emerges as a standout for those seeking a seamless blend of relaxation, cultural immersion, and engaging experiences for all ages.

Set along one of Asia's most celebrated coastlines — named among the best beaches by TripAdvisor — the resort offers panoramic views of the Indian Ocean, lush tropical gardens, and warm hospitality that defines the Taj legacy. Just a scenic two-hour drive from Colombo International Airport, this beachside sanctuary promises the perfect setting for a meaningful family escape.

A Haven for Family Escapes

Taj Bentota is thoughtfully designed to cater to the diverse needs of modern families. While children are entertained with curated activities and excursions, parents can unwind at the award-winning J Wellness Circle, a sanctuary of wellness offering time-honoured Indian therapies and modern beauty rituals in a serene setting.

For younger guests, the experiences go beyond fun — they are educational and eye-opening. From learning about marine conservation at the Turtle Hatchery, to walking the historic ramparts of the UNESCO-listed Galle Fort, each outing is designed to inspire curiosity and awareness. Families with a love for art and architecture will be captivated by a visit to Lunuganga — the former country home of legendary architect Geoffrey Bawa, which offers a rare glimpse into tropical modernism and timeless design.



Nature & Adventure at Your Doorstep

Just steps from the resort, the Bentota River invites families to explore its tranquil beauty with lazy cruises through mangrove forests, where children can observe birds, fish, and unique aquatic plants in their natural habitat. For those in search of excitement, the resort offers easy access to water sports including jet skiing, banana boating, and tube rides — all supervised by professional operators to ensure safety and fun.



Looking Ahead: A New Kids' Club Coming Soon

By October 2025, Taj Bentota will unveil its newly enhanced Kids' Club, offering a rich program of activities that blend creativity, cultural engagement, and sustainability — giving families even more reason to return and reconnect.

Culinary Journeys & Seaside Sunsets

Dining at the resort is a journey in itself — from authentic Sri Lankan cuisine to international favourites, all served with a warm, personalized touch. The Shack, a relaxed beachfront venue, is ideal for families to gather over a leisurely meal while soaking in the golden hues of a coastal sunset.

A Destination Rooted in Comfort, Culture, and Care

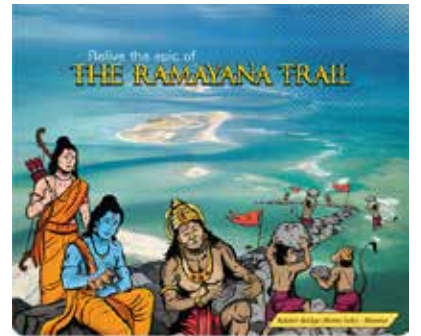
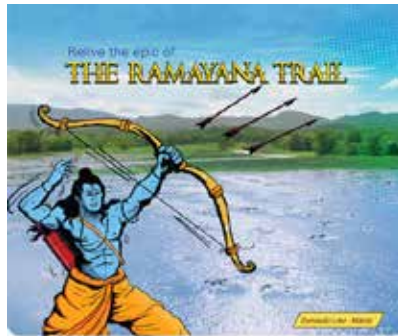
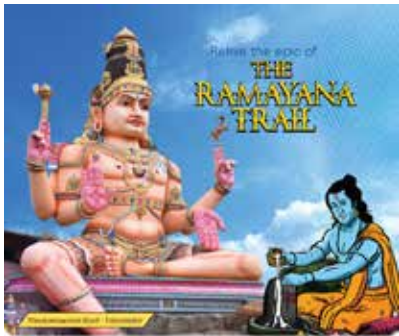
With a strong emphasis on safety, comfort, and family-focused hospitality, Taj Bentota Resort & Spa continues to offer a destination that's both inspiring and reassuring. Whether it's a multi-generational holiday or a quiet family getaway, the resort delivers an experience that lingers long after the journey ends.

Taj Bentota Resort & Spa is not just a destination — it's where memories are made, naturally.



SRILANKAN AIRLINES' RAMAYANA CAMPAIGN: A SUCCESS THAT TOOK INDIA BY STORM

A MASTERSTROKE IN DESTINATION MARKETING

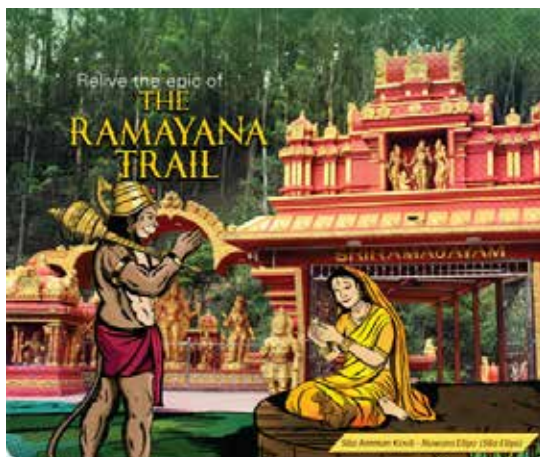


In a remarkable feat of Destination Marketing, SriLankan Airlines has delivered one of the most successful campaigns in Sri Lanka's tourism history, catapulting the island into the spotlight through a deeply cultural and emotionally resonant narrative. The Ramayana Campaign has not only gone viral but has captivated the Indian market, with over 40 million views across digital platforms, making it an unprecedented triumph for both SriLankan Airlines and Sri Lanka Tourism.

The Ramayana Trail is a spiritual and historical journey that resonates deeply with the Indian audience, tracing the footsteps of Lord Rama through key locations in Sri Lanka. By tapping into this profound connection between the two countries, SriLankan Airlines has reignited interest in Sri Lanka as a must-visit destination, blending mythology with modern travel aspirations.

The entire campaign was conceptualized and produced by a deeply passionate team of professionals, leveraging digital storytelling to deliver an authentic, engaging, and visually stunning representation of the Ramayana legacy. The campaign's success was powered by a strategic multi-platform approach, spanning YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and a dedicated microsite (www.ramayana.bysrilankan.com).

For the Indian audience, the Ramayana holds the same cultural and historical weight as Homer's Iliad does for the Western world. Believed to date back as far as the 7th century BCE, the Ramayana is not just a tale of devotion but a cornerstone of Indian and Sri Lankan culture, shaping art, literature, and traditions for centuries. The Ramayana Trail allows devotees and travelers alike to retrace the legendary journey of Lord Rama, offering an immersive blend of spirituality, history, and adventure. As Hinduism sees a global resurgence, particularly with the grand opening of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, interest in Ramayana-themed travel has soared. As one of the most revered texts in Hinduism, the Ramayana imparts timeless values such as duty (dharma), devotion, loyalty, and righteousness. This campaign strategically capitalized on this momentum, positioning Sri Lanka as the natural extension of this sacred pilgrimage.



Tour operators, travel agencies, and influencers played a crucial role in amplifying the campaign's reach. Their endorsement of the Ramayana trail experience helped create an authentic and trustworthy narrative, encouraging more Indian travelers to consider Sri Lanka for their next spiritual and cultural expedition. What set this campaign apart was its ability to seamlessly blend mythology, history, and travel aspirations, creating an emotionally compelling experience. The video showcased multiple storytelling formats, from nostalgia to traditional depiction - a timeless way sharing cultural knowledge.

Given the overwhelming response, SriLankan Airlines is actively exploring opportunities to expand operations in India, with potential frequency increases and the addition of new Indian cities to its route map.

Therefore, the Ramayana Trail for Indians is more than just a geographical journey; it is a spiritual odyssey that connects devotees to the timeless teachings of the Ramayana. It is also a source of pride, devotion, and cultural identity, making it an integral part of their religious and cultural landscape. From the legendary Ashok Vatika to the sacred footprints of Lord Hanuman, Sri Lanka is home to several sites mentioned in the Ramayana. The campaign successfully brought these locations to life, inspiring travelers to embark on a pilgrimage-like journey to explore these ancient landmarks.

With SriLankan Airlines operating 88 flights per week from nine major Indian cities—including Chennai, Mumbai, New Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Trichy, Madurai, Cochin, and Trivandrum—India remains Sri Lanka's largest inbound market. The campaign was a targeted effort to not only reinforce cultural ties but also boost tourism recovery and business growth, aligning with the airline's long-term objectives.

The numbers speak for themselves. India has consistently ranked among Sri Lanka's top tourism source markets, and SriLankan Airlines' Ramayana campaign further fueled this demand, proving that storytelling-driven marketing can yield tangible business results. As the flagship carrier of Sri Lanka, SriLankan Airlines is uniquely positioned to drive cross-border connectivity, making the Ramayana Trail more accessible than ever before. Beyond its role as a carrier, the airline has emerged as a cultural ambassador, strengthening bilateral ties through tourism.

Moreover, SriLankan Holidays, the airline's leisure arm, has been actively curating specialized Ramayana-themed travel packages, providing travelers with customized pilgrimage experiences—further solidifying the airline's position as the go-to carrier for spiritual tourism. The Ramayana campaign's video over 40 million views within weeks of its release—making it the most successful marketing campaign in SriLankan Airlines' history. The narrative style, creative transitions, and emotional depth of the video played a crucial role in its virality, capturing the hearts of audiences across India and beyond.

The campaign's success was further amplified by organic media coverage, with leading Indian outlets such as Times of India, Hindustan Times, MSN, PunePulse, and India Today featuring the campaign. Additionally, influencers from both Sri Lanka and India reshared and promoted the content, extending its reach even further.

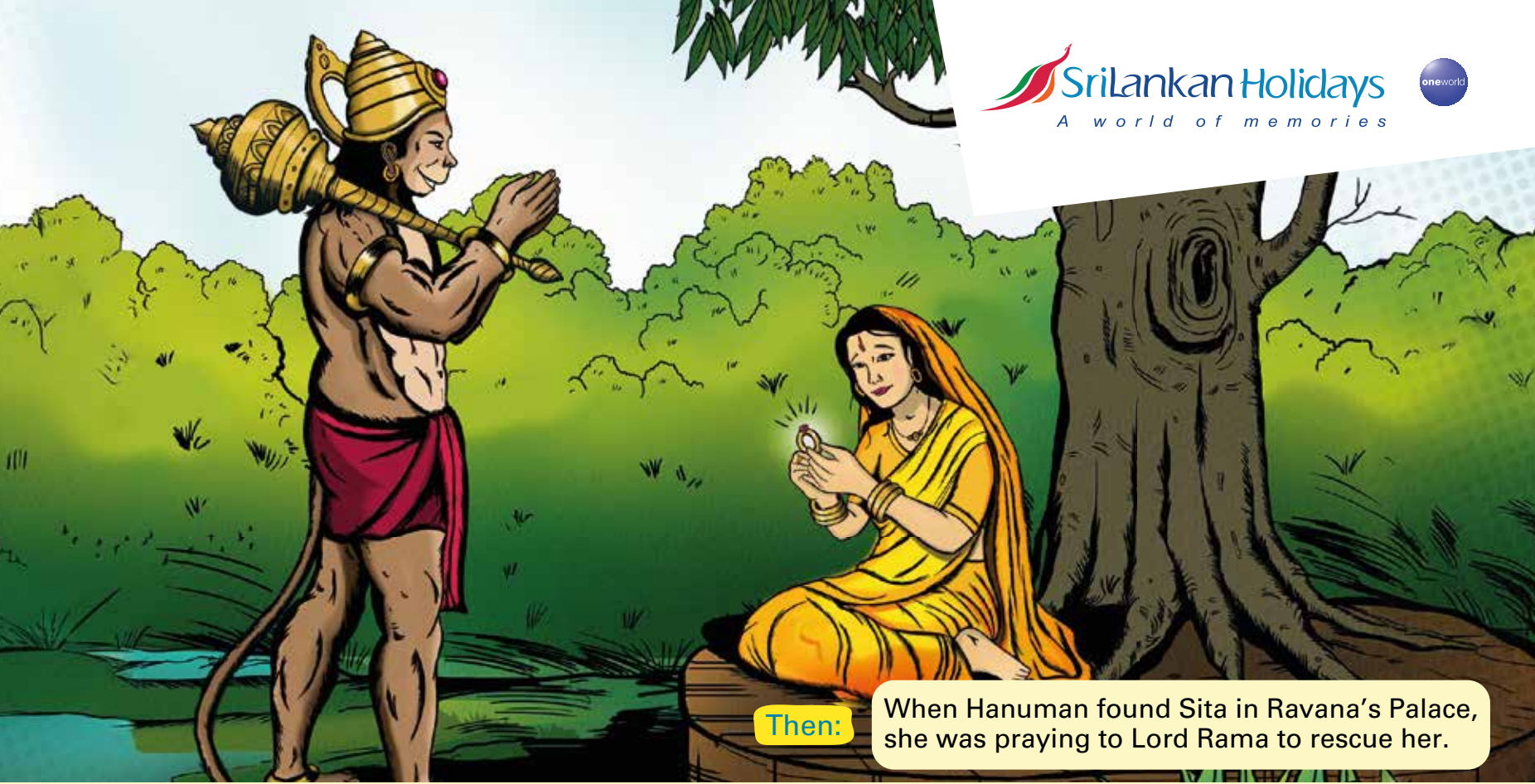
Prior to the pandemic, the airline operated over 100 weekly flights from India, and with its ongoing fleet expansion plans, restoring these numbers is a key priority. SriLankan Airlines' Ramayana campaign is more than just a marketing success—it is a case study in cultural storytelling and strategic branding. By intertwining mythology with modern travel experiences, the airline has not only revitalized interest in Sri Lanka as a destination but has also strengthened its brand presence in a critical market which to date remains the largest in-bound market for Sri Lanka Tourism.

As Sri Lanka continues to recover and rebuild its tourism sector, this campaign stands as a testament to the power of authentic storytelling, proving that when history, culture, and emotion come together, travel marketing can transcend borders and capture the imagination of millions. SriLankan Airlines has long been a forerunner in promoting Sri Lanka's tourism offerings through a dynamic digital lens, continuously producing campaigns that celebrate the island's diverse cultural and natural heritage. Beyond its latest Ramayana campaign, the airline has previously demonstrated its creative prowess with "Colours of Jaffna"—a groundbreaking initiative that won the prestigious PATA Gold Award under the category of 'Marketing Carrier.' This campaign marked a historic milestone as the first by a Sri Lankan entity to exclusively spotlight the island's vibrant Northern province, capturing its unique culture, rich heritage, and stunning landscapes.

The significance of Colours of Jaffna was further reinforced by CNN's recognition of Jaffna as one of Asia's most underrated destinations, bringing global attention to the region's untapped tourism potential. With the success of the Ramayana Campaign, SriLankan Airlines has redefined tourism promotion, blending heritage, strategic branding, and viral digital engagement. This visionary approach not only elevates Sri Lanka's global appeal but also sets a new benchmark for Destination Marketing. As the airline continues to produce content that resonate with travelers, it reinforces its role as a catalyst for lasting impact and one that inspires, captivates, and positions Sri Lanka as a must-visit destination in Asia.



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**WHERE ART, HERITAGE, AND HOSPITALITY MEET.
DISCOVER THE SIGNATURE SELECTION EXPERIENCE
AT CINNAMON BENTOTA BEACH**

Recently repositioned under Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts’ Signature Selection—alongside Cinnamon Life, City of Dreams—Cinnamon Bentota Beach now presents a refined hospitality experience designed for the discerning traveller. With enhanced privacy, curated moments, and a deeply personal approach to service, the Signature Selection represents a soulful expression of luxury where every detail is meaningful.

Set along Sri Lanka’s storied southern coastline, Cinnamon Bentota Beach has long stood as a timeless retreat. Originally brought to life by the legendary architect Geoffrey Bawa, the property also celebrates the creative legacies of Sri Lanka’s most beloved artists—Ena de Silva and Barbara Sansoni—whose vivid textiles and design accents continue to add warmth, character, and artistic soul to its surroundings.

A Thoughtfully Elevated Experience

Cinnamon Bentota Beach Signature Selection is renowned for its genuine warmth and attentive care, brought to life through a collection of Signature Selection Experiences. Every guest is welcomed with a symbolic Signature Welcome Ritual, complete with the rhythmic beats of traditional drums, the call of the conch shell, and the ceremonial lighting of the oil lamp—a heartfelt gesture of arrival and belonging. Stays conclude with the Signature Departure Ritual, a poetic blessing from the Gira Sandeshaya, wishing guests safe travels and a meaningful journey onward.

The **Signature Selection experience** is a refined expression of hospitality—an elevated tier of service designed for travellers who value personalised care, enhanced privacy, and meaningful details. It offers guests added comforts such as in-room check-ins, bespoke dining experiences, curated itineraries, and exclusive experiences that bring greater depth to every stay. Whether it’s a quiet moment of reflection or a joyful family gathering, Signature Selection ensures each experience is thoughtfully considered and seamlessly delivered. The resort’s 16 uniquely designed Signature Suites, each offering sweeping views of the Indian Ocean or Bentota River, create the perfect setting for romance, reflection, or family connection.



A Taste of Sri Lanka and Beyond

Culinary experiences are central to the Signature Selection. Guests are invited to indulge in a thoughtfully curated journey across multiple dining venues: Ottimo, offering authentic Italian fine dining; Zest, the resort’s vibrant intercontinental buffet; and Sea Meats Spice, where local seafood is elevated with Sri Lankan flair. For lighter fare, Café Comida serves artisanal coffee and snacks, while Fuze Bar offers a sophisticated lounge atmosphere and Drench bar keeps things refreshing by the pool. Bloom House, set in a riverside flower garden, creates a charming space for leisurely high teas—one of the most beloved Signature experiences.

Curated Moments, Inspired by Sri Lanka

The Signature Selection is designed to immerse guests in the richness of the island’s culture and natural beauty. From private high teas and riverside dining to curated cooking sessions with chefs, each moment celebrates connection—to place, to people, and to self. Families often speak of the joy their children find in the freedom to explore and play, while couples discover spaces of quiet romance and renewal. The resort takes pride in offering experiences that bring every generation together.

A Destination for Life’s Celebrations

Cinnamon Bentota Beach Signature Selection also stands as one of the region’s leading destination wedding venues, particularly cherished by the Indian market. Its close proximity to India, combined with flexible event spaces and a deep understanding of South Asian wedding traditions, makes it ideal for grand ceremonies and intimate unions alike. Whether it’s a floating Mandap, a beachfront Nikah, or a fusion of customs, the resort’s experienced team ensures every celebration is seamless and soulful.

With Every Stay, A Story Unfolds

Cinnamon Bentota Beach continues to shape its Signature Selection not just as an offering, but as a way of seeing the world—with care, grace, and intention. Each stay becomes a story: one of discovery, of stillness, of moments that linger. Along the golden curve of Sri Lanka’s southern coast, the resort remains quietly rooted—present, poetic, and ever ready to welcome those in search of something more than a holiday.

**KANDY MYST BY CINNAMON: A STYLISH NEW
LANDMARK IN SRI LANKA’S HILL CAPITAL**



Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, in partnership with Indra Traders, expanded its footprint in Sri Lanka’s hill capital with the launch of Kandy Myst by Cinnamon – a vibrant new addition to the brand’s portfolio. This strategic collaboration reflects the brand’s commitment to elevating Sri Lanka’s tourism landscape, bringing a fresh, modern experience to one of the country’s most popular cultural hubs.

Located conveniently along the bustling Kandy Katugastota Road, Kandy Myst by Cinnamon provides easy access to urban convenience spots and key tourist hotspots. Beyond its prime location and contemporary design, the property is poised to become a standout destination for food lovers and social explorers, thanks to its thoughtfully curated food and beverage offerings and versatile public spaces.

Culinary Delights at Kandy Myst

At the core of Kandy Myst by Cinnamon’s offerings is its diverse and dynamic culinary scene, setting new standards for dining in the region.

Grains Dining: As one of the largest buffet restaurants in Kandy, Grains Dining boasts seating for up to 500 guests. It offers an extensive selection of local and international cuisines, providing a gastronomic journey that caters to a variety of palates.

Kosmos Skybar: Perched adjacent to the hotel’s stunning infinity pool, Kosmos Skybar offers signature cocktails and panoramic rooftop views. It’s the perfect setting for social gatherings and memorable evenings under the stars.

Terra Lounge: Located on the ground floor, Terra Lounge serves as a vibrant social hub. This walk-in coffee shop welcomes both in-house guests and visitors, making it an ideal spot for casual meetups, business meetings, or simply unwinding with a cup of coffee.

Spaces Designed for Comfort and Connection

Kandy Myst by Cinnamon offers 215 contemporary rooms, including interconnecting rooms tailored for families and business travellers. Guests can enjoy amenities such as a heated infinity rooftop pool, a well-equipped gym, and a spacious car park, ensuring a comfortable and convenient stay.

A New Benchmark in Kandy’s Hospitality

With its modern design, vibrant social spaces, and exceptional dining experiences, Kandy Myst by Cinnamon is redefining hospitality in Sri Lanka’s hill capital. Whether you’re seeking a relaxed getaway or a dynamic space to connect, the hotel offers an elevated urban stay that captures the essence of Kandy’s charm.



CINNAMON LIFE: REDEFINING COLOMBO'S MICE AND LUXURY EVENT LANDSCAPE

As Sri Lanka looks to cement its place on the global MICE map, Cinnamon Life stands at the forefront of this transformation. Positioned as the country's first fully integrated lifestyle destination, the property blends luxury hospitality, state-of-the-art event infrastructure, and curated experiences into a seamless offering. In this exclusive Q&A, Padmi Fernando, Director – Sales & Marketing at Cinnamon Life, shares insights into how the landmark development is poised to elevate Colombo's appeal as a regional hub for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions — while also catering to the discerning Middle Eastern traveler.

Q: Cinnamon Life is positioned as a premier integrated development in Sri Lanka. What makes it a game-changer for MICE tourism in the region?

As Sri Lanka's first fully integrated lifestyle destination, Cinnamon Life isn't just a venue — it's a statement. We offer an unmatched combination of luxury hospitality, world-class event infrastructure, premium retail, and entertainment all within a single footprint in the heart of Colombo. This kind of scale and sophistication is unprecedented in the region. What sets us apart is our ability to host global conferences, luxury incentive programs, and curated corporate experiences — all with seamless connectivity and exceptional service, making Cinnamon Life a definitive game-changer for South Asia's MICE landscape.

Q: With Sri Lanka looking to strengthen its MICE offerings, how does Cinnamon Life's state-of-the-art banquet and meeting facilities cater to the evolving needs of global business events?

Our event spaces have been meticulously designed to accommodate the dynamic expectations of today's global event planners. From intimate board meetings to grand international forums, our venues are outfitted with cutting-edge technology, customizable layouts, and a design aesthetic that reflects understated luxury. What's more, every detail — from F&B to lighting — can be tailored, ensuring each event feels exclusive and elevated. We offer more than just functionality — we deliver a sense of occasion.



Q: What are some of the large-scale international conferences and corporate events Cinnamon Life has hosted or is set to host? How do you see this shaping Sri Lanka's reputation as a MICE destination?

We're proud to be the chosen venue for several high-calibre regional summits, luxury incentive movements, and industry showcases — with more on the horizon. These are not just events; they're milestones for the country's positioning. Each gathering hosted at Cinnamon Life sends a powerful message: that Sri Lanka is ready to take its place as a sophisticated, globally relevant MICE destination. We're seeing Colombo gain traction not just as a gateway, but as a destination in its own right.



Q Beyond facilities, what unique experiences does Cinnamon Life offer to MICE travelers in terms of business-leisure integration, incentive programs, and networking opportunities?

At Cinnamon Life, we're curating more than conferences — we're crafting experiences. Our guests can go from a morning seminar to a sunset cruise in the Indian ocean, or from a boardroom to an authentic spa journey within minutes. We collaborate with Sri Lanka's top curators and experience designers to deliver one-of-a-kind incentive programs — whether that's an architectural trail of Geoffrey Bawa's works, a canvas cruise within the hotel's multiple floors, or a curated culinary showcase.

Q: How does Cinnamon Life collaborate with industry stakeholders, including the Sri Lanka

Convention Bureau and international event organizers, to position Colombo as a MICE hub? Collaboration is at the heart of our strategy. We work closely with the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, key DMCs, and global MICE planners to offer curated, end-to-end solutions. From joint bids and incentive packages to international roadshows and hosted buyer programs, we ensure Colombo is on the global radar. Cinnamon Life plays the role of both host and ambassador — actively shaping the narrative around Sri Lanka as a premium MICE destination.

Middle East Market Focus

Q: The Middle East is a high-value source market for Sri Lanka. How does Cinnamon Life cater to Middle Eastern travelers, particularly in terms of luxury, privacy, and cultural preferences?

The Middle East is a discerning market, and we have curated our offering to reflect that. At Cinnamon Life, luxury is layered with personalization — from our opulent suites and floating cantilever ballrooms to exclusive concierge services and discreet butler offerings. We understand the importance of privacy, family-friendly spaces, and cultural sensitivities. Whether it's Arabic-speaking staff, prayer facilities, or tailored in-room dining, we ensure Middle Eastern guests feel both understood and indulged.

Q: With a myriad of specialty restaurants and premium hospitality services, how do you tailor the culinary experiences to meet the expectations of Middle Eastern visitors?

Cuisine is a central part of the travel experience, especially for our Middle Eastern clientele. Our culinary program is crafted to be inclusive, inventive, and authentic — with chefs trained in regional cuisines, and the flexibility to accommodate bespoke preferences. From lavish buffet spreads during Ramadan to elegant, private dining experiences, our F&B offerings are designed to surprise and delight even the most seasoned gourmet travelers.

Q: Luxury tourism and high-net-worth travelers from the Middle East are looking for exclusive, all-encompassing experiences. How does Cinnamon Life's upcoming casino and entertainment offerings align with this demand?

Cinnamon Life has been envisioned as a playground for the modern luxury traveler — where experiences are immersive, indulgent, and effortless. Our upcoming luxury casino, high-end retail promenade, and entertainment spaces will offer a curated lifestyle ecosystem. It's about creating spaces that feel private yet vibrant, elevated yet inviting. This resonates strongly with the high-net-worth Middle Eastern traveler who values both exclusivity and excitement.



Q: What marketing strategies and partnerships are in place to increase awareness and attract Middle Eastern tourists and corporate clients to Cinnamon Life?

We've adopted a highly targeted, relationship-driven strategy in the Middle East — working closely with travel advisors, luxury consortiums, and regional influencers. Through roadshows, hosted familiarization visits, and joint promotions with airlines and tourism boards, we're building a strong emotional and aspirational connection with our audiences.

Q: Looking ahead, how do you see Cinnamon Life evolving as a key player in both the MICE and Middle East tourism segments? What are the long-term goals for growth in these markets?

Our long-term vision is to establish Cinnamon Life as the definitive lifestyle and event destination in South Asia. For the MICE segment, our goal is to lead with innovation, experience design, and scale. For the Middle East, we aim to build enduring relationships — making Cinnamon Life the first choice for everything from family holidays to high-profile business gatherings. Ultimately, we want every guest from the region to feel a deep sense of belonging, sophistication, and possibility when they walk through our doors.

HOTELS

Reveal the Collection’s Turtle Hatchery in Mirissa

TTA BULLETIN

Nestled along the golden shores of Mirissa, Reveal the Collection isn’t just a sanctuary of boutique luxury—it’s a champion of marine conservation. Among its four beachfront escapes, both Lantern Boutique Hotel and Beach House foster something truly extraordinary: the only turtle hatchery in Mirissa owned and operated by a hotel corporation. Established in partnership with the Department of Wildlife in 2022, the hatchery is more than a conservation project; it is a lifeline for Sri Lanka’s endangered sea turtles, with nearly 50,000 eggs nurtured under its care since its inception.

Between January and February alone, 9,000 turtle eggs were safeguarded under the Reveal the Collection team’s watchful care, alongside wildlife officials. The hatchery stands as a vital refuge against the growing threats of habitat destruction, plastic pollution, and climate change. Each nesting season, dedicated wildlife experts and the properties’ passionate team work in tandem to monitor nesting sites, protect fragile eggs, and ensure hatchlings safely reach the ocean.

For guests, this is more than just an experience—it is a rare once-in-a-lifetime encounter with nature’s resilience. Watching a hatchling take its first determined steps towards the waves is a moment that lingers in the soul—a humbling reminder of the delicate balance of marine life. The hatchery isn’t just about conservation; it is about connection. Through interactive sessions, community education programmes, and direct guest participation, Reveal the Collection Mirissa fosters awareness and inspires action beyond its shores.

Sea turtles are more than just a wonder of the natural world - they play an irreplaceable role in maintaining the health of marine ecosystems. From keeping seagrass beds balanced to supporting thriving coral reefs, their survival is intricately linked to the ocean’s wellbeing. Yet, threats like entanglement in fishing nets, pollution, and coastal development continue to push them towards the brink. Recognising this urgency, Reveal the Collection Mirissa’s conservation initiatives extend beyond protection—they strive to create a lasting impact.



At Reveal the Collection Mirissa, luxury intertwines with purpose. Guests don’t just revel in breathtaking ocean views; they become part of a movement to safeguard marine life. Every stay directly contributes to conservation efforts, ensuring future generations can continue to witness the awe-inspiring journey of these gentle navigators.

“At Reveal the Collection, we believe true luxury lies in experiences that leave a lasting impact—not just on our guests but the world around us. Our commitment to marine conservation is deeply woven into our identity, and through the turtle hatchery, we strive to create a meaningful difference. Each hatchling that takes its first swim represents a future we are helping to secure. As part of Browns Hotels & Resorts, Reveal the Collection remains deeply committed to sustainable initiatives that protect wildlife, preserve the environment, and uplift local communities.” said Arul Ambikaibalan, General Manager of Reveal the Collection.

The exquisite Reveal the Collection, which falls under the flagship of Browns Hotels & Resorts, features four stunning beachfront villas in Mirissa: Ubuntu Beach Villas, The Lantern Boutique Hotel, and The Beach House. Additionally, it includes The Lavender House, a colonial bungalow in the hill country, and Ayr Castle 1922, a heritage bungalow in Padukka.



Discover Unforgettable Escapes with Serendipity Retreats: Where Luxury Meets Adventure

TTA BULLETIN

In a world where travel has become more about experiences than mere sightseeing, Serendipity Retreats redefines hospitality by offering exclusive, experiential stays in Sri Lanka’s most captivating destinations. Each property is a masterpiece seamlessly blending luxury, nature, and culture—to create unforgettable journeys for the discerning traveller.

Whether you seek serene lakeside solitude, a historic fort hideaway, birdlife havens, or an off-the-grid cave retreat, Serendipity Retreats crafts immersive experiences that go beyond the ordinary.

From a luxury cave hotel to a flamingo-fronted sanctuary, each of our six retreats is designed to immerse guests in Sri Lanka’s diverse landscapes.

Perched in the misty Hanthana Mountain range, Dendrobium House is a six suite hill country boutique hotel, with breathtaking views of Sri Lanka’s Highlands. Thoughtfully designed in a contemporary colonial style with interiors by renowned architect Channa Daswatte, this luxurious house is a home away from home.

Guests are treated to an exquisite farm to table culinary experience, with homegrown three course menus and a signature high tea to die for.

A property unlike any other, The Cavern is built into a cave within a high-elevation 50-acre forest in Agarapathana. Once an abandoned tea plantation, the replanted cloud forest now houses a luxury three bedroom villa set into the cave. The villa features balconies, modern amenities, and stunning interiors. Guests enjoy full board stays with curated menus showcasing seasonal local produce.

The only luxury hotel in Mannar, Palmyrah House is hidden amidst nature in the middle of Mannar island, the gateway to the North. The 14 bedroom hotel is well appointed with a full suite of facilities for the whole family including a swimming pool, gym, library, bicycles, conference centre and breezy restaurant that specialises in North-

ern cuisine. The locally hired and long-standing team is always on call to take care of all your needs with attention and care.

A classic home offering a genuine flavour of Sri Lanka’s culture and heritage, 32 Middle Street a three bedroom villa is enveloped within the vibrant Galle Fort; combining historic charm with modern luxuries. Take meandering walks through cobblestoned streets and rediscover the picturesque Galle heritage city, shop for the day’s freshest seafood or explore the bustling restaurant, bar and cultural scene of the fort.

Along the South Coast, Villa Thuya is located in the coastal town of Balapitiya. Featuring a captivating ocean backdrop, an outdoor pool with a natural rock formation and sweeping ocean views, this three bedroom luxurious villa offers private access to a boulder beach. End a perfect day with evening tea or drinks on the boulders as the sun sets.

Lying between the main Northern and Southern Bolgoda lakes, Lilypod is only a short drive south of the capital city, making it the ideal getaway spot for families, groups and hosting special events. This tranquil home is built to flawlessly blend in with its surrounding environment; featuring expansive lake and garden views, a swimming pool and luxurious living spaces.

For those looking for a unique event venue, Dendrobium House in the hills and Lily Pod by the lake are ideal locations for weddings, special occasions and executive retreats.

The Cavern has been crafted into a natural cave hotel within a Rolex Award winning cloud forest surrounded by tea plantations. Providing the perfect environment for a flourishing eco-system featuring abundant birdlife, native and highland flora, reptiles, fishing cats and roaming leopards. Guests can experience close encounters with these stunning creatures through estate tours, nocturnal tours and highland hiking around the property.

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SERENDIPITY RETREATS | HANTHANA

32 MIDDLE STREET

SERENDIPITY RETREATS | GALLE FORT

THE CAVERN

SERENDIPITY RETREATS | AGARAPATHANA

VILLA THUYA

SERENDIPITY RETREATS | BALAPIITIYA

LILY POD

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Writer’s Lodge – A Quiet Refuge in the Heart of Galle Fort

TTA BULLETIN



The most remarkable homes are those that offer more than just comfort—they evoke a sense of belonging. This is the philosophy behind Ishq Luxury Villas, a collection of some of Sri Lanka’s most exclusive private residences, where luxury is intimate, deeply personal, and seamlessly delivered.

Inspired by the Sufi concept of Ishq, meaning ‘Divine Love,’ the brand was founded on the belief that true hospitality is felt in the smallest details, in the warmth of a home, and in experiences that linger long after departure. From the refined urban retreat of Ishq Colombo, designed by Channa Daswatta, to the five-suite beach-front sanctuary of Ishq Talpe, each villa is a distinct expression of place and character. Highgrove Estate, a meticulously restored 19th-century bungalow in Nuwara Eliya, brings timeless elegance to the hills, while the latest addition—Writer’s Lodge—introduces Ishq’s signature hospitality to the heart of Galle Fort.

Tucked away on a quiet street, Writer’s Lodge is a lesson in considered simplicity. Carefully restored to preserve its colonial charm, the villa is a place where time slows—where books line the walls, the scent of aged teak lingers in the air, and mornings begin with the distant call of fishermen setting out to sea.

Designed for exclusivity, Writer’s Lodge is as much a sanctuary as it is a gateway to the fort’s rich history. Landmarks like the Dutch Reformed Church and Galle Lighthouse are a short stroll away, while nearby cafés and galleries invite unhurried exploration. Yet within the villa’s quiet

embrace, there is a sense of retreat—a place to pause, reflect, and, perhaps, put pen to paper.

The lodge’s design is a delicate balance of heritage and restraint. High ceilings and vintage furnishings echo the colonial past, while soft linen drapes and warm lighting lend a sense of intimacy. One suite is appointed with a queen-sized bed and an ensuite bathroom, while the other features a queen-sized bed with a detached bathroom, offering a quiet refuge after a day of discovery. A fully equipped kitchen allows guests the freedom to create their own meals, though the flavors of Galle’s culinary scene—from Sri Lankan seafood feasts to European-inspired fine dining—are never far away.

For those who wish to explore beyond the fort, the southern coast of Sri Lanka offers endless diversions. A short drive leads to Unawatuna Beach, where golden sands meet turquoise waters, or to Koggala Lake, where boat safaris wind past tiny islands and cinnamon plantations. Further afield, Mirissa beckons with its seasonal whale-watching excursions, while the lesser-known Dalawella Beach remains a haven for those seeking a quieter stretch of coast.

Yet it is within Galle Fort that the true magic remains. In the evenings, as the sky turns to amber and the fort’s ramparts glow under lantern light, Writer’s Lodge becomes part of the town’s living history—a quiet refuge for those who appreciate the beauty of stillness in an ever-moving world.



Jetwing Hotels Announces Portfolio Restructure to Align with Modern Travel Expectations

TTA BULLETIN

Jetwing Hotels has unveiled a readjustment of its branding strategy, signalling a bold step forward in aligning its offerings with the evolving trends of modern travel. This initiative reflects the company’s commitment to addressing the diverse needs and preferences of today’s travellers while reinforcing its position as a leader in Sri Lanka’s hospitality sector.

Recognising the shifting dynamics of the travel industry, Jetwing Hotels is transitioning from its previous categorization of "Hotels" and "Villas" to a refreshed and more defined portfolio structure. The properties will now be grouped into four distinct segments: Jetwing Luxury Reserves, Jetwing Premium Hotels, Select Hotels, and Essentials. This strategic move aims to provide guests with a clearer, more intuitive understanding of the brand’s offerings, catering to a wide spectrum of travellers—from the budget-conscious to those seeking truly extraordinary escapes.

The first of the newly defined segments, Jetwing Luxury Reserves, represents the epitome of indulgence, crafted for discerning travellers seeking unparalleled exclusivity and personalised experiences. This segment features 5-star, flagship properties, each offering a harmonious blend of distinct architecture in stunning locations, gourmet dining experiences, and bespoke service that anticipates every need. Designed to provide not just stays but unforgettable journeys, Jetwing Luxury Reserves promises intimate sanctuaries where luxury meets authenticity.

The second category, Jetwing Premium Hotels, is a collection of elegant spaces where contemporary comfort meets Sri Lanka’s rich heritage. This category includes a selection of 4-star and 5-star properties, each offering full-service accommodation and modern amenities. For those in search of a peaceful retreat or a place to reconnect, each stay is designed with refinement, warmth, and a touch of timeless charm. Rooted in the legacy of Jetwing, these hotels go beyond a place to stay—they deliver immersive experiences shaped by regionally inspired architecture and the hallmark of legendary Sri Lankan hospitality along with a variety of activities and excursions.

The third category, Select Hotels, bridges the gap between value and comfort, designed for modern travellers seeking

authentic experiences at an accessible price point. Though these properties do not carry the Jetwing brand name, they embody its renowned warmth and hospitality. This collection of unique 3-star hotels, including destinations such as Hotel Sigiriyaaya, the award-winning Mermaid Hotel and Club in Kalutara, and Meena Amma’s Tea Experience in Ambewela, offers a delightful variety of experiences—whether it’s the tranquility of a charming cottage, the lively energy of a beachside retreat, or an engaging immersion into Sri Lankan traditions.

The final category, Essentials, is designed for adventurers and explorers; offering budget-friendly accommodations that meet essential travel needs, focusing on simplicity, practicality, and comfort. Included in this category are 3-star and 2-star brands, Hotel J and City Beds, respectively, that provide comfortable rooms at the convenience of a central location. Whether it’s a quick overnight stop or a base for exploring the region, guests can enjoy reliable, no-frills hospitality.

Hashan Cooray, Director of Marketing and Development, stated, “Today, after the turmoil we all faced for over four years, we are more optimistic than ever about the growth potential of our industry and its role in transforming Sri Lanka’s economy. With this in mind, we felt it was time to bring more clarity to our branding as we now operate over 35 properties around our paradise island.”

Jetwing Hotels remains steadfast in its commitment to sustainability and delivering exceptional hospitality across all segments, ensuring every traveller experiences the warmth, service excellence, and legendary Sri Lankan hospitality that define the brand. From the quiet indulgence of Jetwing Luxury Reserves to the refined sophistication of Jetwing Premium Hotels, the cosy comforts of Select Hotels, and the practical simplicity of Essentials, Jetwing Hotels offers thoughtfully tailored experiences that resonate with the needs of every guest. Each category reflects the brand’s dedication to providing not just accommodation but meaningful journeys that celebrate Sri Lanka’s beauty, culture, and heritage. With a focus on innovation, sustainability, and personalised service, Jetwing Hotels continues to set new benchmarks in the global hospitality landscape, ensuring that every guest feels truly at home.





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Explore Bawa's Sanctuary
in Kalutara

HOTELS

Minor Hotels Announces the First Avani Branded Resort to be Built in India

TTA BULLETIN

Minor Hotels announces the arrival of the Avani Hotels & Resorts brand in India with Avani+ Sunray Beach Visakhapatnam Resort, an exclusive new-build resort and branded residences development set along the scenic Sunray Beach in Visakhapatnam, India. The project will feature 117 hotel rooms and 58 branded residential villas, alongside a suite of premium amenities designed to set a new benchmark for hospitality in the region. The announcement comes as Minor Hotels significantly accelerates its expansion strategy in India, targeting 50 new openings in the country over the next decade.

Slated for completion by 2028, the development promises an elevated lifestyle experience for both guests and residents. Highlights include three distinctive F&B venues including an all-day dining restaurant, a vibrant specialty restaurant and a stylish bar, as well as a versatile banqueting hall designed for memorable gatherings and celebrations. Additional facilities will include an AvaniSpa, an expansive swimming pool, a beach bar and an Avani-Fit gym. A key feature of the leisure offering will be the nine-hole par-three golf course, perfect for both beginners looking to improve their short game and experienced golfers seeking a more relaxed, time-efficient round.

Located on a 25.5-acre site in Bhogapuram, the development is strategically situated near the upcoming Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport, set to enhance regional connectivity upon completion in 2026. The proximity to both the Bay of Bengal and National Highways 16 and 26 further positions this project as a prime destination for both domestic and international travel-



lers.

Avani+ Sunray Beach Visakhapatnam Resort is poised to meet the growing demand in Visakhapatnam, a city renowned for its thriving commercial sector, MICE business, and emerging leisure tourism. With the rapid development of Information Technology Special Economic Zones and the area's infrastructure enhancements, the resort will provide an exceptional accommodation option for both business and leisure visitors.

The project is developed by Sunray Green Space Pvt Ltd, a renowned real estate developer in Visakhapatnam. Mr. I.A. Raja Varma, the founder and Managing Director of Sunray Green Space, has been recognised for his commitment to excellence in the region, with multiple awards from the Government of Andhra Pradesh for sustainable and eco-friendly tourism projects.

Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO of Minor International and CEO of Minor Hotels commented, "We are pleased to announce the launch of this significant new project in Visakhapatnam. The Avani brand will offer an exceptional blend of contemporary design, upbeat service and elevated experiences for both hotel guests and residents alike. We look forward to bringing our expertise in delivering premium hospitality to this dynamic market."

Grand Hotel Nuwara Eliya and Fairway Colombo Honored with Agoda Gold Circle Award

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka's hospitality sector continues to shine on the global stage as Grand Hotel Nuwara Eliya and Fairway Colombo have been honoured with the prestigious Agoda Gold Circle Award. Recognized for their outstanding service, exceptional guest experiences, and strong partnerships, these two properties have cemented their place among the top-performing hotels in the region.

The official award ceremony took place at the Oberoi Gurgaon, India, where Agoda celebrated high-achieving hotels that have consistently demonstrated superior performance in bookings, customer satisfaction, and seamless digital integration. The event brought together industry leaders and distinguished hoteliers for an evening of recognition and celebration.

Grand Hotel Nuwara Eliya, a heritage property and has long been a favourite among travelers seeking timeless elegance

and warm Sri Lankan hospitality. The hotel's commitment to delivering world-class service while preserving its historical significance has earned it a well-deserved place among Agoda's top-tier hotels.

Fairway Colombo, located in the heart of Colombo, has gained acclaim for its contemporary design, prime location, and innovative approach to hospitality. With a strong focus on guest satisfaction, the hotel continues to set new benchmarks for urban accommodation in Sri Lanka.

The Agoda Gold Circle Award is a testament to both properties' unwavering dedication to excellence, further solidifying Sri Lanka's position as a premier destination for travelers. As they celebrate this achievement, Grand Hotel Nuwara Eliya and Fairway Colombo remain committed to elevating guest experiences and setting new standards in the industry.

Awurudu Spirit Comes Alive at Kurulu Kele

Pegasus Reef Celebrates Sri Lankan Traditions with Flair
TTA BULLETIN

In the heart of the lush and tranquil Kurulu Kele at Pegasus Reef, the vibrant colors, joyful rhythms, and rich aromas of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year came alive in spectacular fashion. This year's "Awurudu Village" was a jubilant tribute to Sri Lankan heritage, bringing together families, friends, and communities to celebrate unity, tradition, and festivity under the golden April sun.



Held over two exciting days, the event welcomed more than 300 guests, including both local and international visitors, all coming together to experience the warmth and richness of Sri Lanka's New Year traditions.

From the crackle of firecrackers to the inviting aroma of kavili, the atmosphere was electric with joy and excitement. The day officially began at 10:00 a.m., welcoming guests into a full programme of traditional rituals, cultural performances, and lively outdoor games that captured the true spirit of Awurudu.

The celebration kicked off with the lighting of firecrackers and the symbolic boiling of milk, signifying prosperity and new beginnings. Soon after, the grand Sinhala and Hindu Kavili Table was unveiled, generously filled with traditional

sweets like kokis, kevum, and asmi, bringing smiles to every sweet tooth in the crowd.

The "Awurudu Village" at Kurulu Kele was more than just an event—it was a vibrant, living celebration of Sri Lankan identity, tradition, and community. Once again, Pegasus Reef proved itself as a cherished hub for honoring Sri Lankan culture with color, flavor, and heartfelt connection. No doubt this event is planned to be one of the main highlights in the Sri Lankan must experience calendar of events.

Cultural performances soon followed, including the graceful Salupaliya dance, children's dance performances, and a showcase of traditional attire and music, immersing everyone in the magic of Sri Lanka's heritage.

An "Egg-citing" Easter Sunday at Pegasus Reef Hotel

TTA BULLETIN

Pegasus Reef Hotel, renowned for its beachfront charm and vibrant hospitality, brought joy and laughter this April 20th with a truly "Egg-citing" Easter Sunday Brunch. The hotel transformed into a cheerful garden of pastel hues, smiling children, and fun-filled activities that created unforgettable memories for families.

Guests were welcomed with refreshing drinks in the garden, setting the tone for a delightful day ahead. The morning kicked off with classic Easter games such as "Guess the number of eggs in the jar," "Pin the tail on the bunny," sack races, and tug-of-war challenges—sparking laughter among both kids and adults.

Guests indulged in a delightful culinary spread designed to satisfy all ages. The menu featured an exciting mix of international and local favorites—freshly baked breads, colorful salads, an assortment of hot dishes, and live action stations.

Families enjoyed with live Music, while the little ones excitedly ran back and forth between the buffet and the bunny-themed games.

Throughout the event, a dedicated Craft



Corner, face painting station, and a bouncy castle kept little ones entertained. A lively DJ provided upbeat music, adding to the festive spirit.

Pegasus Reef once again proved why it remains a beloved destination for holiday celebrations. This Easter celebration was more than an event—it was a day of laughter, connection, and cherished family moments.

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Se Saya Introduces Sri Lanka’s First Luxury Poshtel Experience

Welcome to Se Saya- where hospitality meets innovation

TTA BULLETIN

Colombo’s travel scene has just been elevated with the grand opening of Se Saya Poshtel and Bistro—the city’s first-ever luxury poshtel. This groundbreaking concept seamlessly fuses the relaxed, communal spirit of a hostel with the upscale amenities of a boutique hotel, setting a new benchmark for modern hospitality in Sri Lanka.

Strategically positioned between the city center and the airport, Se Saya offers a stylish sanctuary for digital nomads, business travelers, and urban explorers. With its unique blend of comfort, convenience, and community, it’s more than just a place to stay—it’s a lifestyle destination.

Se Saya Poshtel introduces a revolutionary hybrid model that caters to today’s evolving traveler. Guests can expect a thoughtfully curated experience that balances privacy with social interaction. Whether checking into a stylish private suite or opting for the sophisticated yet budget-friendly poshtel bunk beds,

travelers will find an environment that is both welcoming and inspiring.

What sets Se Saya apart is its emphasis on co-living and co-working, making it the ultimate hub for remote workers and entrepreneurs. The poshtel features spacious co-working areas, modern meeting spaces, and high-speed Wi-Fi, allowing guests to remain productive while soaking in Colombo’s vibrant energy.

Beyond accommodation, Se Saya Bistro & Bar is set to become one of Colombo’s most talked-about social hubs. Offering a carefully curated menu of international flavors infused with fresh local ingredients, the bistro is perfect for both casual dining and refined culinary experiences. Guests can indulge in signature cocktails while taking in the breathtaking sunset views from the rooftop bar, making it a prime spot for both visitors and locals.

Located in the heart of Colombo, Se Saya

places travelers within easy reach of the city’s top cultural landmarks, bustling markets, trendy cafés, and art galleries. Whether stopping over en route to another destination or planning an extended stay, its prime location offers unmatched accessibility and urban charm.

"Se Saya is more than just a place to stay—it’s an experience," says Rajith Gooneratne, General Manager of Se Saya. "We’ve designed it to be a hub for global travelers and locals to connect, collaborate, and celebrate life."

With its seamless blend of luxury, community, and functionality, Se Saya Poshtel and Bistro is poised to redefine Colombo’s hospitality landscape. Whether you’re a business traveler, a digital nomad, or an adventurer seeking a unique city escape, Se Saya invites you to embrace a

new era of connected living.

Property Highlights

- Co-working Spaces: A dynamic work environment designed for productivity.
- Rooms & Poshtel Bunks: A range of stylish private rooms and premium hostel accommodations.
- Rooftop Bistro & Bar: A social hotspot with curated cuisine and scenic views.
- Prime Location: Easy access to Colombo’s cultural, business, and entertainment hubs.



Se Saya Introduces Sri Lanka’s First Luxury Poshtel Experience

Colombo’s travel scene has just been elevated with the grand opening of Se Saya Poshtel and Bistro—the city’s first-ever luxury poshtel. This groundbreaking concept seamlessly fuses the relaxed, communal spirit of a hostel with the upscale amenities of a boutique hotel, setting a new benchmark for modern hospitality in Sri Lanka.





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30

YEARS



30 YEARS OF INCREDIBLE JOURNEYS

As we celebrate 30 years of making over a million dreams come true, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who have trusted us along the way. Together, we've created unforgettable moments, and we invite you to continue building a world of difference with us, even in the smallest ways.

Here's to many more adventures ahead,
creating a World of Difference

Step Into a Storybook: The Pekoe Trail’s Final Stages Unfold at Heritance Tea Factory

TTA BULLETIN

The world’s travelers are turning their attention to Sri Lanka’s Pekoe Trail—a 300-kilometer odyssey through misty mountains, emerald-green tea estates, and the heart of Ceylon’s most storied landscapes. This epic trekking route has captured global attention, making headlines in National Geographic’s Best of the World 2024 and securing its place among the world’s most spectacular walking trails. Among its most breathtaking sections is Stage 21, Uda Pussellawa to Kandapola, where the iconic Heritance Tea Factory offers a one-of-a-kind experience in the heart of tea country.



As hikers continue their descent, this stage of the trail ends in Kandapola, a charming highland town where the grandeur of the Heritance Tea Factory stands as a beacon of the region’s rich tea heritage and hospitality.

After days on the trail, weary feet and adventure-worn souls will find respite in an experience that blends heritage with indulgence. At Heritance Tea Factory, guests can plunge into the world of tea like never before—donning a picker’s basket to hand-pluck the finest leaves, crafting their own signature tea blends, and indulging in a curated tasting session guided by experts who decode the delicate symphony of flavors in every cup.

For those still hungry for adventure, the hotel’s Tea Estate Walks and Cycling Trails provide an intimate look at the rolling plantations, the historic tea bungalows, and the lush highlands that surround this iconic property. And then, of course, there’s the ultimate reward—an exquisite high tea experience, where freshly brewed Ceylon tea is paired with delicate treats, enjoyed amidst the very plantations that inspired them.

With the Pekoe Trail now recognized among the world’s most exhilarating trekking routes, Heritance Tea Factory is poised as one of its most rewarding stops—where adventure meets nostalgia,

Barbeque Nation Opens First Outlet in Sri Lanka at Colombo City Centre

TTA BULLETIN

Barbeque Nation, one of Asia’s most celebrated and pioneering casual dining chains, officially made its Sri Lankan debut with the opening of its first-ever outlet at Level 2 of Colombo City Centre. Making Sri Lanka the fifth country outside of India in its expansive range of 200 plus outlets in India, UAE, Malaysia and Oman, the launch had former Sri Lankan Skipper Aravinda de Silva as chief guest. This launch marks a significant milestone in the brand’s global expansion journey, which also eyes Saudi Arabia, Sharjah and Thailand for its next expansion.



de Silva was accompanied by his wife Anushka to the opening. “The experience of having the live grill to the table barbeque concept is unique for Sri Lanka,” he said. “And the wonderful spread at Barbeque Nation adds flavour to the whole experience. Sri Lankans have an affinity for Indian food and therefore I think this concept has great promise.”

The Colombo City Centre outlet is designed to reflect the brand’s signature vibrant ambiance and engaging dining format, making it a must-visit destination for families, corporate groups, and food lovers. With an all-you-can-eat model, interactive elements, and an array of succulent grilled delicacies, Barbeque Nation promises an unforgettable dining experience for Sri Lankan guests.

Founded in 2006 in India, Barbeque Nation revolutionized the casual dining landscape with its Live Grill on the Table concept, allowing diners to grill their own skewers of meats, seafood, and vegetables right at their table. With its core values of quality, innovation, and warm hospitality, Barbeque Nation is more than just a restaurant—it’s an interactive culinary adventure where guests can indulge in unlimited flavors, live food stations, and festive-themed dining experiences.

Barbeque Nation’s signature dining experience combines entertainment with indulgence, offering: Live Grill at Every Table – A personalized grilling experience where diners can barbecue their own skewers to perfection.

Speaking about the expansion, Director of Barbeque Nation Lanka Mansoor Memon, said: “We are thrilled to bring the signature Barbeque Nation experience to Sri Lanka. Our goal is to provide an unmatched grilling experience that blends great food with a lively and engaging atmosphere. We look forward to welcoming Sri Lankan food lovers to enjoy our hospitality and the joy of live grilling.”

With its grand launch in Sri Lanka, Barbeque Nation continues to redefine the dining experience, offering a perfect blend of taste, tradition, and entertainment under one roof.

Celebrated Sri Lankan cricketer Aravinda

Amari Colombo - ‘Catalysts of Change’ –in Collaboration with Kaleidoscope with Savithri Rodrigo

Amari Colombo successfully concluded “Catalysts of Change,” a dynamic two-week initiative dedicated to advancing gender parity, empowering women, and fostering meaningful conversations on equality across industries. The event celebrated outstanding women in diverse sectors, including hospitality, aviation, shipping, foreign affairs, and beyond. The initiative provided a platform for progress, collaboration, and actionable change.



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Air India integrates baggage tracking with Apple AirTag

TTA BULLETIN

Air India, India's leading global airline, has integrated Apple AirTag with its baggage-tracking system and mobile app, allowing customers using Apple iPhone, iPad or Mac devices* to securely track the location of their baggage.



their flight to the "My Trips" section of the app, baggage information becomes automatically available soon after the bags are checked-in, as well as on the "Track my Bags" tab of the website. Customers may also scan the barcode on their baggage receipts to initiate tracking.

Air India is the first airline in Asia to offer this integrated tracking service to guests. Air India transports more than 100 million items of baggage annually, with more than 99.6% of items arriving together with the accompanying customer. For the small proportion that does not, due to issues with airport baggage systems, flight misconnection or other factors, this new AirTag integration will help locate items and expedite recovery.

The integration builds upon the easy-to-use baggage tracking feature Air India offers on its mobile app and website, which leverages real-time information available from airports to keep guests informed. For customers who have added

"At Air India we continue to innovate and introduce cutting-edge digital capabilities as part of our customer-centric approach. As we transform into a world-class global airline, we are excited to offer our guests an innovative option to help locate their baggage in case it does not arrive at the destination on schedule. We are confident that our guests will find the baggage location capability offered using Apple's AirTag and Share Item Location feature along with Air India's real-time baggage-tracking system on its website and mobile app quite helpful," said Dr Satya Ramaswamy, Chief Digital & Technology Officer, Air India.

IndiGo Announces Summer Sale

TTA BULLETIN

IndiGo, India's preferred airline, is thrilled to announce its 'Summer Sale' featuring unbeatable fares and exciting add-on deals on domestic and international flights. Additionally, IndiGo is offering an exclusive 25% discount on IndiGoStretch, our tailored business product, for direct domestic flights. Simply use the promo code 6ESTCH on our app or website to avail this offer.

During this limited-time offer, customers can book all-inclusive one-way fares starting from INR 1,499 for domestic and INR 4,499 for international sectors. IndiGo is also offering an additional discount of 5% when customers book directly through IndiGo app or website <https://www.goindigo.in/>.

The sale is valid for bookings made from April 15, 2025, to April 18, 2025, for travel beyond seven days from the date of booking.

To make it more rewarding, passengers booking through IndiGo's official website (<http://www.goIndiGo.in/>) or mobile app and selecting the 6Exclusive fare can enjoy an additional 5% discount over and above the sale fare.



Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, has welcomed its sixth A350 to its growing fleet.

TTA BULLETIN

The state-of-the-art aircraft arrived this weekend following a successful delivery flight from Toulouse, France, further strengthening Etihad's position as one of the airlines with the youngest and most fuel-efficient fleets in the sky.

The A350 is a favourite with guests, boasting an unparalleled flying experience with award-winning Business Class, featuring privacy-focused sliding doors, wireless charging, and cutting-edge inflight entertainment systems, while Economy Class offers ergonomic seating, device holders, and Bluetooth connectivity with inflight entertainment.



Renowned for its sustainability, the A350 stands out as one of the most efficient wide-body jets, with 25 per cent lower CO2 emissions and a 50 per cent smaller noise footprint compared to earlier-generation aircraft.

The long-range of the A350-1000 makes it a versatile aircraft for Etihad's fleet. This summer, Etihad will begin operating the A350 to Atlanta, its newest and sixth gateway into North America and one of 16 new routes Etihad is launching this year.

Qatar Airways to Showcase 'Qsuite Next Gen' at ATM Dubai 2025

TTA BULLETIN

First in Business, Qsuite Next Gen is coming to the Arabian Travel Market for audiences to experience first-hand the finest in luxury and innovation



DOHA, Qatar – Qatar Airways is bringing the latest in cutting-edge airline luxury to this year's Arabian Travel Market (ATM) Dubai with its 'Qsuite Next Gen' – the newest iteration of its multiple award-winning patented Qsuite Business Class. Visitors and exhibitors will have the opportunity to experience the latest and greatest of the Qatar Airways' industry-leading product from 28 April to 1 May 2025.

The airline is again setting the industry's benchmark for travel innovation and business class experiences through the design of Qsuite Next Gen that features fully customisable Quad Suites creating the largest social space in the sky for groups of four and window aisle Companion Suites. All suites have 4K OLED manoeuvrable in-flight entertainment screens that can be moved to connect the spacious and private suites.

From ambient lighting to privacy controls to the 'Make My Bed' button for the 5-star

Qatar Airways turn-down service; ATM visitors are invited to interact with Qsuite Next Gen's vast range of customisation options that create an unparalleled experience. Both the Quad and Companion Suites further boast increased dining space and taller digitally controlled privacy dividers, a testament to the airline's consideration of passenger comfort in the skies.

With this year's ATM theme, "Global Travel: Developing Tomorrow's Tourism Through Enhanced Connectivity", Qatar Airways will spotlight its continued investment in technology, and customer experience, reinforcing its position as a global aviation leader.

Join Qatar Airways at ATM Dubai 2025 and experience the next evolution in travel at the Dubai World Trade Centre, stand ME 1420 between hall 3 and 4.

Emirates' A350 debuts in Sri Lanka, offering airline's unique Premium Economy experience

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates' latest aircraft, the Airbus A350, has made its debut in Sri Lanka, introducing an exciting new dimension in air travel to and from the popular destination of Colombo.

The roll out of Emirates' A350 aircraft to Sri Lanka featuring the airline's latest interiors, industry-first technologies and innovations, reinforces the airline's commitment to a market it has served for 39 years, and offers exceptional levels of comfort onboard.

Presenting the first experience of Emirates' sought-after Premium Economy cabin on the Colombo – Dubai route, the A350 now operates flight EK654/655 six days a week.

EK654 departs Dubai International Airport (DXB) at 10:45hrs (every day except Wednesdays) and arrives at Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA), Katunayake at 16:50hrs (all times are local). The return flight, EK655 departs BIA at 22:05hrs and reaches DXB at 00:55, the following day on Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays and at 01:05hrs, the following day, on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Emirates' Premium Economy customers

can experience quiet luxury with cream-coloured leather and wood panel finishing similar to Business Class. Each 19.5-inch seat is designed to provide optimal comfort and support, with 6-way adjustable headrests, a footrest and a generous recline. Each seat has a 13.3-inch screen, in addition to in-seat charging points and a wood-finished side cocktail table.

The Premium Economy dining experience includes a welcome drink served in fine glassware, and a selection of meals made with seasonal ingredients, served on Royal Doulton china tableware with stainless-steel cutlery. Premium Economy customers are also offered an extended beverage list.

The Emirates A350 aircraft offers three cabin classes, with 32 next generation Business Class seats, 21 seats in Premium Economy, and 259 generously pitched Economy Class seats. The A350 aircraft are earmarked to serve short to medium haul cities on the Emirates network, and Colombo is among the first nine destinations to be served by one.

Emirates' A350 showcases the latest in cabin innovation and has been designed to maximise customer comfort





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As the sun dips below the horizon, casting a warm glow across the landscape, Occidental Paradise Dambulla reveals itself as more than just a destination; but as a kaleidoscope of experiences woven into the very essence of one's stay. Here, one can immerse themselves in the island's rich history, indulge in the flavours of authentic Sri Lankan cuisine and unwind in a sanctuary designed for comfort. Each moment spent within these enchanting surroundings becomes a cherished memory, beckoning one to return time and again. Come, discover Occidental Paradise Dambulla, where every visit promises relaxation and rejuvenation, enveloped in the warmth of authentic Sri Lankan hospitality.

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Over 600 Incredible Offers with My Emirates Pass – Now Available Year Round

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates has revealed that for the first time ever, My Emirates Pass will be available all year round, giving passengers access to over 600 exclusive offers across Dubai. In addition to the year-round benefits, Emirates will introduce seasonal summer and winter offers, giving travellers even more ways to make the most of their visit.

Passengers flying from, through, or to Dubai can now unlock discounts on top culinary experiences, world-class shopping experiences, unmissable leisure attractions, and tranquil luxury spas any time of the year. Whether it's an unforgettable family trip, a relaxing couples retreat, or a solo adventure, My Emirates Pass will offer those visiting Dubai unforgettable experiences no matter the season.

Using My Emirates Pass will remain as easy as ever. Passengers will simply need to show their physical or digital boarding pass along with a valid ID at participating venues to enjoy the benefits.

Passengers who checked in online and downloaded their boarding pass to the Emirates App or Wallet should remember to screenshot it before landing, as it will no longer be accessible afterward.

From sun-soaked summer deals to fantastic winter treats, My Emirates Pass helps passengers unlock year-round excitement in Dubai. Emirates will roll out exclusive seasonal summer offers, running from 1st April through to 30th September, making it easier than ever to experience the best of Dubai, including the return of the much-anticipated Dubai Summer Surprises.

From 27th June to 31st August 2025, visitors can take advantage of Dubai Summer Surprises, a deal packed season filled with exciting offers and unforgettable experiences. Emirates passengers



flying to Dubai can look forward to luxurious shopping, spectacular entertainment, and exceptional dining. With countless offers and surprises in store, summer in Dubai is the perfect time to enjoy incredible value and create unforgettable memories for visitors of all ages.

Whether passengers are seeking Dubai's beautiful golden beaches, world class hospitality or cultural attractions, the city caters for all visitors. Emirates offers its passengers unrivalled means to make the most of their visit: from customised holiday itineraries to bonus Miles, Emirates continues to provide its customers with first class services.

Skywards Partners: Members of the award-winning Emirates Skywards programme can earn Miles with world-wide partners like hotels, airlines, car rentals, retail and banking. Members can spend these Miles on reward tickets, upgrades, or even concerts and sports events. Learn more about Emirates Skywards here. While in Dubai, people can also earn Miles with partners across the city, including the Dubai Mall, Arabian Adventures, Emirates Holidays and more.

Emirates Holidays: Customers can book their holiday to Dubai through Emirates Holidays. All Emirates Holidays include flexible booking options. For further peace of mind, Emirates Holidays' dedicated 24/7 On Holiday Service team will be there to support holidaymakers at every step of the journey. When Emirates customers book their holiday with Emirates Holidays, they receive bonus Miles on top of the Miles they would receive for their flights.

Cathay Pacific's human-centric design thinking nets two wins at the prestigious Crystal Cabin Awards

TTA BULLETIN

Cathay Pacific is delighted to share that it has received two accolades at the Crystal Cabin Awards 2025, the world's leading awards for outstanding innovations in aircraft interiors. The airline was named winner of the Passenger Comfort category, with its new Aria Suite Business class introducing a ground-breaking system that unifies the inflight entertainment and cabin environment control like never before. Cathay Pacific was also named winner of the Judges' Choice: Airline Innovation category for its innovative Gallery in the Skies art concept.

General Manager Customer Experience Design Guillaume Vivet said: "Being recognised with these prestigious awards is an incredible honour, and a reflection of our deep commitment to delivering a world-class customer experience through thoughtful, human-centric design. To be recognised with two awards in the same year for features as diverse as our IFE and control system and Gallery in the Skies in our Aria Suite cabins is a testament to the innovation and the holistic approach to design that guides everything we do for our customers. These accolades are the result of incredible teamwork by our people at Cathay Pacific and with our partners."

First launched on Cathay Pacific's Boeing 777-300ER aircraft in October 2024, the all-new Aria Suite features a range of innovations and enhancements that take the Business class experience to the next level and provide an unparalleled level of comfort and control.

The entire suite environment can be controlled seamlessly through all connected control panels – a first in aircraft



cabins. This unique experience was co-designed with JPA Design, alongside the award-winning IFE interface by Reaktor.

Furthermore, cabin lighting and seat position can all be synchronised with a single touch through Activity Modes. Featuring five pre-set modes that can be customised and saved, the Activity Modes empower customers to tailor their experience. The Aria Suite has six controllable lights with over 14 settings, providing an unmatched level of sophisticated ambience.

The IFE system now connects with aircraft systems to include a lavatory availability function. This intelligent feature helps travellers manage their time more effectively, reducing stress and unnecessary waiting.

These two Crystal Cabin Awards follow Cathay Pacific recently being recognised with two iF Design Awards for its In-Flight Entertainment Design & Experience, and another for its Aria Suite Business class product.

Cathay Pacific's IFE system was also named a Gold winner in the "Excellent Communications Design – Interactive User Experience" category of the German Design Award and a winner of the Red Dot Award: Brands & Communication Design – User Interface Design earlier this year.

SriLankan Airlines Wins 'Outstanding Food Service – South Asia' at PAX Awards

TTA BULLETIN

SriLankan Airlines has won the 'Outstanding Food Service by a Carrier – South Asia' award at the PAX Readership Awards 2025, held on 9 April 2025 in Germany, proving once again its culinary expertise in serving an inflight dining experience that truly stands out. The PAX Readership Awards, presented by PAX International and PAX Tech magazines, are exclusively determined by a popular vote from over 15,500 aviation professionals worldwide.

Dimuthu Tennakoon, Head of Commercial at SriLankan Airlines, shared his thoughts on the win, saying, "A big thank you to everyone who voted us. We take great care to ensure our onboard menus are a sensory treat, as food plays a crucial role in shaping the overall flying experience – whether you are a first-time traveller or frequent

flyer. We continuously review passenger feedback across different sectors to craft our menus, while guaranteeing that meals are prepped with the freshest ingredients, cater to diverse preferences and dietary needs and feature regular updates. This recognition reaffirms that we've got the recipe right for our onboard food service."

The SriLankan Airlines' inflight menu offers an international flair, with a perfect blend of local cuisine from each market the airline operates in. In its South Asian service, SriLankan presents a choice of meals inspired by the localities within its



widespread network spanning India, the Maldives, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. The airline's customers from this region can look forward to the familiar tastes of home; from an assortment of biriyani and masala; to Idli, upma, samosas, paratha, chapathi; and traditional curries such as palak paneer, aloo gobi, gobi masala, butter chicken makhani; and more.

Wherever one is flying, a mainstay on every SriLankan Airlines' flight is the Sri Lankan meal option, featured under its award-winning 'SriLankan Flavours'

menu. Using heritage recipes and authentic, local ingredients, SriLankan Airlines serves delicious classics such as egg roti with paraw fish curry and crumb fried prawns; dhunthel rice with traditional curries; kuruluthuda heirloom rice with chicken pepper curry and local vegetables; and lamprais. SriLankan Flavours was the recipient of the 2024 IFSA Best Inflight Food or Beverage Innovation Award.

SriLankan Airlines, the National Carrier of Sri Lanka and a member of the oneworld alliance, is an award-winning airline with a firm reputation as a global leader in service, comfort, safety and reliability. Launched in 1979, the airline's hub is located at Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo providing convenient connections to its global network

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