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Why Sri Lanka's Enchanting East Coast is a Year-Round Gem

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

When travelers think of Sri Lanka, the South and Central regions often steal the spotlight. But venture east, and you'll uncover a coastline that's as rich in culture and history as it is in natural beauty. The East Coast is a treasure trove of experiences, with golden beaches, ancient ruins that challenge mainstream narratives, and free-roaming wildlife that make it a destination for all seasons.

First things first, it is an undeniably amazing surfing destination.

Arugam Bay is a name that echoes through the global surfing community, known for its world-class waves and laid-back vibe. But there's more to this coastal stretch than surfboards and sunshine. While the prime surf season runs from May to October, when the region enjoys dry skies and surf-worthy swells, the area remains inviting all year round. During this period, its appeal to surfers is obvious. Stretching 30 kilometers from the southernmost point towards the north, the coast is dotted with iconic surf breaks like the Main Point, Whiskey Point, and Pottuvil Point, catering to everyone from beginners to seasoned pros. However, the real charm of the region doesn't fade when the swells subside, it simply shifts into a slower, more soulful rhythm.

An underrated melting pot of culture and history

The East is steeped in folklore, some literally carved in stone, while others are whispered through the trees. Take Kudumbigala Forest Hermitage, a 3rd-century BCE monastic complex hidden in the jungle. With over 200 meditation caves and a hilltop dagoba offering panoramic views, it's a place where silence speaks volumes.



Dmitri Cooray

Then there's Magul Maha Viharaya, believed to be the site of the royal wedding between King Kavantissa and Princess Viharamaha Devi. Its moonstone, uniquely etched with elephants and mahouts, is a rare artistic marvel. The sprawling temple grounds are scattered with ancient stupas and shrines, inviting quiet contemplation. Closer to the sea, the partially sand-covered ruins of Muhudu Maha Viharaya tell another tale.

A towering Buddha statue flanked by bodhisattvas marks the spot where, according to local lore, Princess Viharamaha Devi first set foot on land, challenging the more widely accepted version of her arrival in Kirinda. These examples merely scratch the surface of what's on offer. The region is strewn with countless treasures, each one waiting to share its story with those who venture off the beaten path.

Wild Encounters in Untamed Landscapes An hour's drive from Pottuvil will take you to the gates of the Kumana National Park, a fantastic year-round alternative to the much-visited Yala National Park.

Though part of the broader Yala ecosystem, Kumana is separated by the winding waters of the Kumbukan Oya, making it less crowded but no less magical. This untamed sanctuary is home to Sri Lanka's iconic big three: elephants, leopards, and sloth bears, who are often seen roaming freely through the forested terrain. Come September and October, migratory birds flock to the region. This 200-hectare bird sanctuary is home to rare species like the black-necked stork, Malabar pied hornbill, and painted stork.

Alternatively, a shorter journey inland will lead you into the dense forests of Lahugala National Park. Here,



THASL Launches Global Digital Campaign to Strengthen Sri Lanka's Tourism Positioning

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Marking a significant milestone for the industry, The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka (THASL) officially launched its global digital marketing campaign on 24th October 2025, in the presence of media and distinguished guests. This strategic initiative aims to elevate Sri Lanka's image in key emerging markets, attract high-value travellers, and support direct hotel bookings through digital innovation.

The campaign, developed in partnership with eMarketingEye, a leading digital agency, will initially focus on Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Oman, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand, with other destinations to be added in the coming months. Supported by NTB and Amex, the project will span the next three years, strengthening the country's brand visibility across international markets.

At the heart of the campaign is the dedicated landing page "Truly Sri Lanka", which links directly to participating hotel websites — allowing potential visitors to discover offers and make direct bookings, enhancing both visibility and conversion for Sri Lankan hospitality brands.

By mid-2025, Sri Lanka recorded a steady year-on-year increase in tourist arrivals. However, the decline in average spending per visitor highlighted the urgent need to reposition the destination to attract higher-value travellers and ensure more sustainable returns for the industry.

Speaking at the launch, THASL President, M. Shanthikumar, said, "We have been lobbying strongly with the Government to roll out a global marketing campaign, and we are optimistic this will happen soon. In the meantime, THASL is taking proactive steps to



M. Shanthikumar

position Sri Lanka in identified source markets and attract a higher-paying clientele to ensure sustainable growth."

As the main body representing the formal sector of Sri Lanka's hotel industry, THASL continues to play a vital role in shaping the country's tourism agenda. Its membership encompasses international hotel brands, local chains, boutique resorts, villas, bungalows, and lodges — all registered with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA).

Commenting at the launch, Founder and CEO of eMarketingEye, Rajitha Dahanayake, said: "We are focusing on identified markets to attract travelers to Sri Lanka, not just during the winter season but ideally throughout the year. Our research shows there is tremendous potential in these key markets, which are typically just a 4-5 hour flight away from Sri Lanka."

The initial campaign, valued at approximately USD 50,000, will run over the first three months and aims to position Sri Lanka as a preferred year-round travel destination.

Nations Trust Bank AMEX is supporting the campaign, and speaking at the launch, Sheahan Daniel, Executive Vice President — Consumer Banking, said: "We are privileged to partner with THASL in this Digital Destination Marketing Campaign. Elevating tourism is of national importance to us, and as part of the banking sector, we are proud to play a role in promoting Sri Lanka as a destination. We hope this campaign will achieve the desired results in attracting more visitors to our beautiful country."

The hotel sector remains the largest and most influential segment in tourism,



Sri Lanka is once again capturing traveller attention. Last year we welcomed over 2 million international visitors, representing a robust 38 % year-on-year increase and a spike in foreign exchange earnings. With over 1.6 million visitors arriving by the third quarter of 2025, the island is well on track toward its ambitious goals. This growth, however, brings both opportunity and urgency.

With this kind of momentum, the challenge now is not just growth — it is sustainable, high-value growth that benefits communities, protects the environment and enhances visitor experience. For Sri Lanka, that means three things must happen: a visionary destination-marketing campaign, solutions to overcrowded sites, and an unrelenting focus on sustainability.

Firstly, despite the strong upturn, Sri Lanka needs a destination-marketing campaign of scale and consistency to convert interest into bookings across source markets such as the UK, Europe and beyond. The UK remains a key market for the island and Sri Lanka’s long-standing participation at WTM is a reminder of that bond. But today’s traveller is discerning, increasingly looking for authenticity, environmental responsibility and memorable experiences — attributes Sri Lanka offers in abundance.

One of the most compelling examples of this shift is The Pekoe Trail — Sri Lanka’s 300-kilometre hiking route that winds through the island’s misty tea country. It offers an entirely new way to experience the destination — connecting adventure seekers, wellness travellers, and culture enthusiasts to the people and landscapes that define Sri Lanka’s hill country.

Secondly, the destination is facing growing pressure at popular sites. Overcrowding — whether at heritage landmarks, nature reserves or beaches — threatens the quality of the visitor experience and the island’s long-term viability. A solid solution framework is mandatory: dispersing traffic to lesser-known regions, investing in infrastructure, and managing visitor flow must be part of the strategy.

Finally, sustainable growth is not optional. Sri Lanka’s tourism can no longer rely purely on volume. It must be rooted in ethical, environment-conscious practices, community engagement and high-yield segments. In doing so, the island will not only grow but grow well.

With this in mind, The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka recently launched a global digital marketing campaigns in key markets across the Middle East and South East Asia with the aim of attracting high-value travelers to the country.

At the same time, the need to position Sri Lanka as a ‘year round destination is also impertaive and the cover feature on the East coast clearly highlights the fact that Sri Lanka has something to offer visitors – 365 days of the year



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NEWS

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Why Sri Lanka’s Enchanting....

the jungle closes around you, and every turn keeps you alert, and your eyes peeled for a fleeting glimpse of wildlife moving through the shadows. Closer to home base, a boat safari at Pottuvil or Urani lagoon, or an enthralling tuk-tuk safari to Rottaikulam are must-try experiences. If luck is indeed in your favour, you will be greeted by some incredible elephant sightings in a far less crowded environment. Wildlife sightings aren’t limited to park boundaries either. Here, elephants and crocodiles are often found wandering the side of the road, adding a touch of the wild to everyday travel.

Where to stay

With a legacy spanning over half a century in the tourism industry, Jetwing Hotels stands as a pioneer in curating unique experiences and delivering the best of legendary Sri

Lankan hospitality. Just 6km away from Arugam Bay, in the coastal village of Pottuvil is where you can find two distinct beachfront properties. Jetwing Surf & Safari, A Luxury Reserve, embraces eco-luxury tourism with its unique, sustainable architecture. Guests can enjoy an all-inclusive package that covers meals, beverages, and wildlife experiences, including a game drive to Kumana National Park, offering an unforgettable experience of the enchanting east. Jetwing Kottukal Beach House, a part of the Premium Collection, offers private, villa-style accommodation surrounded by a 240-degree view of the ocean. Both properties offer easy access to prime surfing spots and a wealth of immersive experiences, making them the perfect base to explore the archaeological, historical, and ecological wonders of the enigmatic east coast.

THASL Marks 60 Years as the Voice of Sri Lanka’s Hotel Industry

M. Shanthikumar – President THASL

It is with pride we announce at this WTM the completion of 60 long years of The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka (THASL) . It was formed even before the starting of the then Ceylon Tourist Board. Since inception to date, THASL functions as the apex body of the formal hotel sector in the country . The main objective of The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka (THASL) is to lobby with authorities concerned on policy matters which will have a positive impact on the accommodation sector in the country which will help its sustainability.

The membership of THASL consists of the entire gamut of the accommodation sector from International brands, local hotel chains, stand alone hotels, resorts, villas, boutique properties, bungalows, theme hotels, lodges etc . Sri Lanka has a varied set of quality accommodation scattered across the country in key touristic locations and off the beaten track enabling all segments of travelers to find space as per their interests at different price points. 90% of travellers to Sri Lanka stay in hotel accommodation across the country.

Hotels are the single largest investor in Tourism. The estimated investment including land exceeds 15 billion USD. The highest revenue to the Government from the private sector tourism sector stakeholders comes from the hotel industry by way of topline taxes, license fees, levies etc. The highest foreign investment in tourism in to Sri Lanka too has come from the hotel industry.

It is worthy to note of the 70% of the tourism workforce is

Expo Lanka Leisure Celebrates Dual Triumph at World Travel Awards 2025

TTA BULLETIN

Expo Lanka Leisure has achieved a historic milestone at the World Travel Awards 2025, becoming one of the first Sri Lankan companies to secure top honours in both Inbound and Outbound Travel categories.

The Group’s subsidiaries, Classic Travel and Classic Destinations, were celebrated for their exceptional contribution to the tourism industry. Classic Travel was named Sri Lanka’s Travel Agency of the Year 2025 for the second consecutive year, while Classic Destinations was recognized as Sri Lanka’s Destination Management Company of the Year 2025 — underscoring the Group’s dedication to service excellence, innovation, and integrity across all facets of travel.

Speaking on the achievement, Sabry Bahudeen, Director / Chief Commercial Officer of Expo Lanka Leisure, said “This recognition is a proud moment not only for our team but for Sri Lanka as a whole. Winning at the World Travel



M. Shanthikumar

in the hotel sector. Due to hotels being located in different regions in the country , most of the employees in hotels are from communities in and around the products helping to enhance the living standards of these communities.

Hence, The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka (THASL) takes it as our main responsibility to ensure the sustainability of this vital sector in the field of tourism. This could be in terms of fees and levies, policy issues governing the industry, unfair tariff structures etc, we will lobby aggressively as we are well aware of the impact it will have on hotel operation viability. Together, we will work with other key associations to address issues from a macro perspective which will sustain demand and drive high value tourism in to Sri Lanka.

Tourism in Sri Lanka is on a surge and we expect the year to end with record numbers. 90% of visitors to Sri Lanka stay in the formal accommodation sector . Hence, the hotels are expected to reach the full benefit of this demand growth in the coming season as well. This has also led to growing interest in investor confidence in tourism and more specifically hotels.

It is these very reasons that hotels across the world are given due recognition by way of engaging with the apex body in order to understand the requirement to sustain this sector of the Tourism industry.



Awards reflects the passion, hard work, and unwavering commitment of every member of the Expo Leisure family. Both Classic Travel and Classic Destinations have worked tirelessly to elevate the travel experience for our clients and showcase the best of Sri Lankan hospitality to the world.”

The World Travel Awards, often regarded as the ‘Oscars of the travel industry,’ honour excellence across all sectors of global travel and tourism. The double win marks a significant achievement for Expo Lanka Leisure, reaffirming its position as a trailblazer in both inbound and outbound travel management.

With a strong emphasis on personalized service, sustainable travel practices, and global partnerships, Expo Lanka Leisure continues to lead the way in shaping the future of travel in Sri Lanka



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Five Decades of Dedication: The Inspiring Journey of Chandra Wickramasinghe

TTA BULLETIN

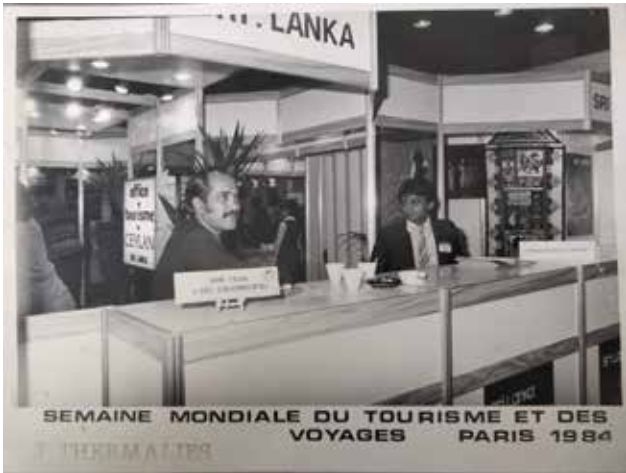
This year marks a golden milestone in Sri Lanka’s tourism landscape as Wickramasinghe Arachchige Don Chandrasiri Jayalath Wickramasinghe, fondly known as Chandra Wickramasinghe, celebrates five decades of pioneering contribution to the industry.

Born on 5th June 1953 in Kurunegala and educated at Maliyadeva College, Chandra’s journey from humble beginnings to becoming one of the country’s most respected tourism visionaries is a story of courage, innovation, and lifelong dedication to hospitality.

Chandra’s foray into tourism began in 1975, when he enrolled in a Diploma in Tourism at the Sri Lanka Technical College, Colombo, while simultaneously studying French at the Alliance Française de Colombo. After completing a Front Office Management Diploma at the Ceylon Hotel School, he joined Hotel Samudra as a receptionist, gaining invaluable firsthand experience.

Eager to expand his horizons, he travelled to France to complete a Certificate in Spoken French at the Alliance Française de Paris. Returning to Sri Lanka with both professional skills and international perspective, he earned the National Tour Guide Diploma from the Sri Lanka Tourist Board and worked as a guide lecturer and freelance tour guide for French operators such as Jet Tours and Kuoni. These formative years gave him deep insight into global travel trends and an appreciation of Sri Lanka’s untapped potential as a world-class destination.

Pioneering the Path Forward



In 1982, Chandra co-founded Connaissance De Ceylan, a boutique inbound travel company that quickly became a trailblazer in experiential tourism. His entrepreneurial instincts soon extended to hospitality when, in 1994, he built Culture Club Resort, Kandalama—the first hotel to be constructed on the banks of the Kandalama Lake. At a time when environmental sensitivity in tourism was still a novel idea, Chandra’s commitment to sustainable development set a benchmark for eco-conscious hospitality in Sri Lanka.

Two years later, he expanded his portfolio with Le Kandyan Hotel, reinforcing his belief that tourism development must reach every region. As Dr. Sarath Amunugama observed, “He is a linguistic and artistic individual, unafraid to take risks. He identi-

fied the ‘Nadi’—the nodal points of tourism—which played a key role in developing destinations.”

An Era of Innovation and Resilience

Chandra’s career is defined by bold “firsts” that have transformed Sri Lanka’s tourism landscape.

- In 2011, he launched Maalu Maalu Passikudah, the first hotel to open on the East Coast after the end of the civil conflict, symbolizing renewal and hope.
- In 2018, he brought Raid Amazonas, the world’s largest women’s adventure challenge, to Sri Lanka’s East Coast, marking the region’s first major international event post-war.
- In 2019, amid the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks, he completed The Tea & Experience Factory, Mandaram Nuwara, showcasing resilience when the industry was at a standstill.
- Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, when global tourism had halted, Chandra defied the odds by opening Wild Glamping Gal Oya, the only hotel launched in Sri Lanka during that period.
- Most recently, in 2025, he unveiled Amba Yaalu Kandalama, Sri Lanka’s first and only 100% female-led and operated hotel—a pioneering concept globally and a strong statement of inclusivity and empowerment.

Thema Collection: Distinctive by Design

In 2014, Chandra brought his diverse hospitality ventures under one umbrella brand—Theme Resorts & Spas, now rebranded as Thema Collection. The portfolio includes some of Sri Lanka’s most distinctive properties: Aliya Resort & Spa (Sigiriya), Mountbatten Bungalow (Kandy), Scottish Planter Bungalow (Nuwara Eliya), Ayurvie Weligama, Parangi Weligama Bay, Vis Ta Vie Mirissa, Wild Glamping Knuckles, and Waraka



Udawalawa, among others.

Each property carries his signature approach of blending authentic Sri Lankan culture with innovative hospitality concepts. As Prof. Sarath Kotagama notes, “He was the first to introduce the role of a naturalist to guide clients on nature tours—a practice now common across Sri Lanka’s hotels.”

A Global Ambassador for Sri Lanka

Since first representing Sri Lanka at Semaine Mondiale du Tourisme et des Voyages, Paris (1984), Chandra has tirelessly promoted the destination at major global trade fairs including ITB (Berlin), IFTM (Paris), WTM (London), FITUR and IBTM (Spain), and ATM (Dubai).

His efforts to strengthen Franco-Sri Lankan relations were formally recognized in 2017, when the French Government honoured him with the title Officier de l’Ordre National du Mérite, acknowledging his exceptional contribution to tourism and cross-cultural ties.

“In founding your company, you built not only exceptional hotels but a destination management company respected worldwide. Your legacy continues through Maxime, who carries your passion and professionalism.” — Alexandre Gavalda, Commercial Director, Travel Counsellors

Industry Leadership and Recognition

A respected industry leader, Chandra has served as:

- President, Travel Agents Association of Sri Lanka (2001/2002)
- President, Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (2008/2009)
- Board Member, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (2009/2010)
- Board Member, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (2010–2016)
- Founding President, Alliance Française de Kotte (2010–2016)
- Member, Tourism Advisory Committee

(since 2021)

His excellence has been recognized with the National Silver Award for Sri Lankan Entrepreneur of the Year (1999) and the Tourism Legend Award (2018).

Championing Collaboration and Events

Under his leadership, Sri Lanka has hosted several landmark tourism events including the arrival of Concorde (1995), the Golden Oldies Cricket Carnival (2006), and multiple editions of Raid Amazonas (2004–2023). In 2016, his collaboration with SNAV and Les Entreprises du Voyage (LEV) helped boost French arrivals from 68,000 to over 100,000.

“Chandra is a great professional with deep knowledge of Sri Lanka’s diversity and a talent for tailoring experiences to clients’ needs.” — Jean-Pierre Mas, President, SNAV & Les Entreprises du Voyage.



In 2023, he played a pivotal role in hosting the 67th Annual Convention of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), working closely with Jyothi Mayal, who reflected, “His passion, commitment, and thoroughness have made him stand out in the tourism field. His contribution is immeasurable.”

Empowering Communities and Inspiring Futures

Beyond business, Chandra’s work has had a profound social impact. Through the R.e.V. programme, he has built homes for families affected by the tsunami and war, established three preschools and four computer centres, and provided educational opportunities for more than 6,450 children. Projects like the Biodiversity Educational Research Initiative (BERI) reflect his belief that tourism should create lasting value for both communities and the environment.

From an eager student of tourism to a global ambassador and visionary entrepreneur, Chandra Wickramasinghe’s 50-year journey stands as a testament to resilience, creativity, and service. His pioneering projects have redefined Sri Lankan hospitality, inspired a generation of industry professionals, and strengthened the nation’s image on the world stage.

As Sri Lanka enters a new era of tourism, his legacy remains not just an achievement—but a blueprint for the future.

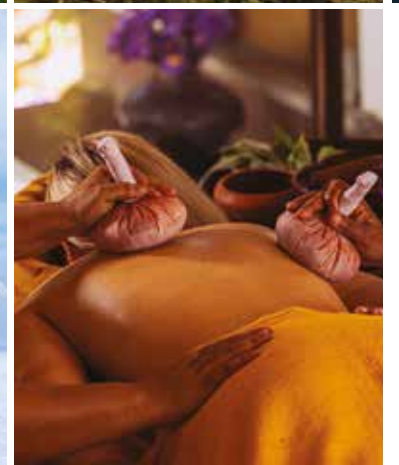
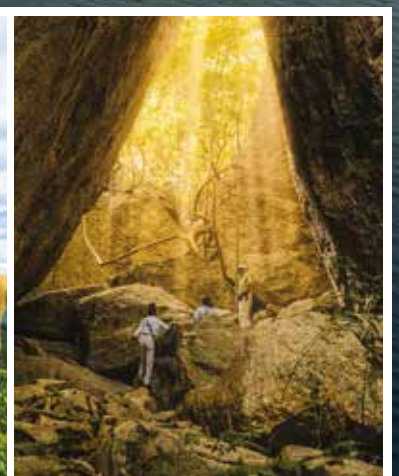


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SLAITO Holds Its 45th Annual General Meeting at ITC Ratnadipa

TTA BULLETIN

The Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) successfully held its 45th Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 3rd October 2025 at ITC Ratnadipa, Colombo, marking yet another significant milestone in the Association’s continued efforts to strengthen the inbound tourism sector.



- Honorary Treasurer: Mr. Nalaka Amarathunga – CEO, Walkers Tours
- Committee Members: Mr. Aman Farook (Lanka Vacations), Mr. Nilan Wickramasinghe (Lion Royal Tourisme), Mr. Maxime Wickramasinghe (Connaissance De Ceylan), Mr. Suchithra Aluwihare (Hayleys Travels), Mr. Suren

Ediriweera (Ceylon Tours), Mr. Darshana Cabraal (Tour Blue), Mr. Lesly David (Lanka Sportreizen), Mr. Rohan Abeywickrama (Hawk Travels), Mr. Bandula Withana (Jetwing Travels), and Mr. Sabry Bahaudeen (Classic Destinations).

Past Presidents Mr. Harith Perera (DTH Travels) and Mr. Nishad Wijetunga (Wayfares Ltd) were also present and commended the Association’s ongoing efforts to promote and protect the interests of the inbound tourism industry.

President Mr. Nalin Jayasundera expressed his gratitude to the organizing committee — Ms. Bobby Jordan Hansen, Mr. Darshana Cabraal, Mr. Bandula Withana, Mr. Nalaka Amarathunga, and Mr. Sabry Bahaudeen — along with Ms. Kshani De Livera, SLAITO Consultant, for their dedicated efforts in ensuring a successful event. He also extended special thanks to ITC Ratnadipa for their exceptional hospitality and to Bally’s Colombo, Gavinro, and Classic Travel for their generous sponsorship support.

Following the formal proceedings, members gathered for an evening of fellowship and networking, creating a dynamic platform for the exchange of ideas, discussions on upcoming initiatives, and collaboration aimed at driving sustainable tourism growth in Sri Lanka.

The 45th AGM reaffirmed SLAITO’s pivotal role as the collective voice of Sri Lanka’s inbound tourism industry, committed to enhancing competitiveness, policy advocacy, and partnership for the future of tourism in the country.

The event brought together over 300 participants, including destination management companies (DMCs), representatives from One Industry One Voice, heads of key tourism associations, and distinguished invitees from both the public and private sectors. The Chief Guest for the evening was Hon. Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe, Deputy Minister of Tourism, while other dignitaries included Mr. Buddhika Hewawasam, Chairman of SLTDA/SLTPB, and Mr. Dheera Hettiarachchi, Chairman of SLCB/SLITHM, among others.

The official proceedings commenced with the AGM, chaired by Mr. Nalin Jayasundera, President of SLAITO, who warmly welcomed members and presented a comprehensive review of the Association’s activities and achievements over the past year. Key highlights included the presentation of the Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements, followed by the election of office bearers for 2025/2026. The entire committee was re-elected unanimously, reflecting the membership’s confidence in the team’s leadership and direction.

The elected office bearers for 2025/2026 are as follows:

- President: Mr. Nalin Jayasundera – Managing Director, Aitken Spence Travels
- Vice Presidents: Ms. Gayangi Weerasinha – Managing Director, Abercrombie & Kent; Ms. Bobby Jordan Hansen – Managing Director, Columbus Tours
- Honorary Secretary: Ms. Paddy Paul – Managing Director, Golden Isle Travels

TAASL Strengthens Ties with the Philippines to Enhance Visa Facilitation and Travel Coordination

TTA BULLETIN

The Travel Agents Association of Sri Lanka (TAASL) recently met with Mr. Hugh Sriyal Dissanayake, Honorary Consul of the Republic of the Philippines in Sri Lanka, to discuss key matters relating to visa facilitation and travel coordination between the two countries.



industry concerns and explored ways to strengthen bilateral collaboration to promote smoother travel between Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

As a follow-up to the discussion, TAASL announced plans to organize a dedicated training session for its members to enhance understanding and efficiency in visa-related procedures.

The TAASL delegation included Mr. Sabry Bahaudeen, Mr. Shanaka Fernando, Mr. Riza Ahamed, Mr. Dishal De Silva, Mr. Romesh Samaranayake, and Dr. Duminda Kuruwitaarachchi. During the meeting, the team highlighted several

Thema Collection Expands with Villa Blue Monk and Hikka House

A Celebration of Serenity, Culture, and Coastal Charm

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Thema Collection, known for its portfolio of distinctive and eco-conscious stays, has announced the addition of Villa Blue Monk and Hikka House to its growing family of boutique retreats. Both properties embody the brand’s commitment to sustainability, authenticity, and creating meaningful travel experiences rooted in Sri Lanka’s heritage and natural beauty.



Maxime Wickramasinghe

rhythm of the southern coast, this charming retreat blends tropical modernism with a touch of coastal charm. Its open spaces, natural textures, and soothing ambiance create a warm, welcoming atmosphere — perfect for travellers looking to unwind and reconnect with the ocean’s gentle energy.

Commenting on the latest additions, Maxime Wickramasinghe said: “Villa Blue Monk and Hikka House perfectly reflect the essence of what we stand for — sustainability, serenity, and a deep connection to Sri Lanka’s cultural and natural heritage. We’re proud to welcome these beautiful retreats to the Thema family, continuing our journey to



Villa Blue Monk, nestled between the sacred town of Katharagama and the world-renowned Yala National Park, offers travellers an immersive escape where spirituality meets wilderness. This tranquil haven in the island’s deep south captures the quiet charm of the countryside, inviting guests to reconnect with nature and explore Sri Lanka’s deep cultural roots. Mornings begin with birdsong and mist rising over the fields, while evenings bring the soft hum of village life — creating a rare sense of peace and belonging.

From wildlife safaris at Yala, famed for its high density of leopards and remarkable biodiversity, to pilgrimages through Katharagama’s sacred shrines where multiple faiths unite in devotion, each experience tells a story of Sri Lanka’s spiritual and natural harmony. Guests can also enjoy hands-on curd-making sessions, learning traditional techniques used in the region — an authentic glimpse into the local way of life.

Hikka House, located in the vibrant coastal town of Hikkaduwa, brings a refreshing contrast to the collection. Designed for those seeking the laid-back

showcase destinations that are not only luxurious, but also meaningful and mindful.”

As part of the Thema Collection, both Villa Blue Monk and Hikka House embody a commitment to sustainable hospitality — where every stay celebrates people, place, and purpose. Whether it’s an early morning safari in Yala, a stroll through Katharagama’s sacred shrines, or a golden sunset over Hikkaduwa’s shore, each experience invites travellers to embrace Sri Lanka in its purest and most soulful form.

Secrets of Ceylon Celebrates Sri Lankan Cuisine whilst you tour Sri Lanka

TTA BULLETIN

Secrets of Ceylon is unique able to offer curated meals allowing guests to enjoy a full range of Sri Lankan cuisine. Most visitors enjoy a limited selection of the most popular



The number of Sri Lankan restaurants across London exploded, putting Sri Lanka and her cuisine on the map

dishes as many hotels serve the same thing, meaning that by day 5 you may have enjoyed dhal and pol sambol several times, but never tasted pittu, lamprais or kothu rotti.

“Secrets of Ceylon is offering a free curated menu plan for guests staying for 8 or more nights across our properties.” Says Jean-Marc Flambert, MD. “This was always a plan which came to fruition after 3 catalysts : Sri Lanka High Commission in London worked to get several new words added to the Oxford Dictionary such as “Kothu Rothi”, “Mallung” and “Watalapam” in June 2025

Several Tour Operators have started to sell multiple Secrets of Ceylon properties such as Travel Bag, Somak Holidays, Experience Indus and Experience Travel.

“When ever we get eligible bookings, we co-ordinate with the properties and roll out a plan to ensure each guests gets different cuisine allowing them to enjoy string hoppers, hopper, pol rotti, manioc, kothu rotti, Thaal cuisine and even authentic lamprais depending on which properties they are staying at. “ explains Jean-Marc

Visit our special offers to learn more <https://secretsofceyloncollection.com/special-offers/>



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“Galle Literary Festival: A Proven Catalyst for High-Value Tourism”

TTA BULLETIN

With Sri Lanka’s tourism industry redefining itself from mass arrivals to high-value, discerning travellers, Galle Literary Festival (GLF) has emerged as one of Sri Lanka’s most powerful cultural and economic drivers. More than a celebration of literature and art, GLF has become a proven mechanism for attracting high-spending international visitors who seek immersive experiences, stay longer, and contribute significantly to the local economy.



With an estimated Rs. 713 million (USD 2 million) in direct and indirect economic impact, GLF has reinforced its value well beyond literature. International visitors spent an average of USD 450 per day over 3-4 days, while domestic attendees spent around USD 175 per day - figures well above national tourism averages. The spending extended across hotels, dining, transport, and the creative economy, firmly positioning the Festival as one of Sri Lanka’s most effective cultural-economic drivers.

This impact directly aligns with national policy goals to prioritise quality over quantity, attracting travellers whose contributions extend beyond arrival numbers. The Festival demonstrates how a curated, high-profile festival can serve as both a cultural showcase and a business model for sustainable tourism growth.

Galle Lit Fest is not only Sri Lanka’s most internationally recognised literary festival, but also one of the country’s few events with a track record of attracting global visitors at scale. Over 8,000 attendees participated in GLF 2025, including a significant international audience. Media coverage over the years from Condé Nast Traveller, Harper’s Bazaar, BBC, Lonely Planet, TimeOut, Wanderlust and more highlighted its global reputation, placing Sri Lanka alongside world-renowned festivals such as Hay (UK), Jaipur (India), and Edinburgh (Scotland). Condé Nast went further, describing GLF as “a must-visit destination for book lovers, placing Sri Lanka firmly on the global literary map.”

“GLF is more than a cultural celebration - it is a powerful catalyst for high-value tourism,” said Amreeya Mowlana, Festival Co-Director of GLF. “Our audiences are cosmopolitan and experience-driven. They invest in accommodation, dining, and curated experiences, and they carry the story of Sri Lanka back to global networks. Few events can demonstrate this level of cultural and economic return. That’s what makes GLF so powerful: it delivers cultural impact and economic value, side by side.”

Luxury hospitality partners see the impact first-hand. Radisson Collection Resort Galle, a returning partner, describes GLF as uniquely positioned to deliver the right kind of visitor profile.

“Galle Literary Festival is a standout event in South Asia, attracting discerning travellers who look for more than sun

and sand,” said Eduard Sarton, General Manager of Radisson Collection Resort Galle. “It positions Sri Lanka as a destination for cultural sophistication and high-value tourism, while directly supporting hotels and local businesses. For us, GLF delivers visitors who stay longer, spend more, and return with others.”

Beyond its audience impact, GLF has strengthened its business and global networks through an expanded Advisory Committee and Membership Programme.

The Advisory Committee now includes leading figures such as Dileep Mudadeniya (Senior VP, John Keells Holdings), Nihal Arthanayake (BBC Broadcaster), Vikrom Mathur (Committee Member & Content Advisor), Azara Jaleel (Editor, ARTRA) & Balaji Srinivasan (Entrepreneur & Investor). Their combined expertise in marketing, media, and partnerships supports GLF’s vision of positioning Sri Lanka as a world-class cultural destination.

The newly launched Membership Programme offers individuals and organisations opportunities to engage more deeply with GLF while enjoying curated benefits such as early access to passes, exclusive gatherings with authors, and cultural experiences. Membership tiers range from Festival Insider (Rs. 75,000) to the invitation-only President’s Circle (Rs. 2,000,000), designed to strengthen sustainability while rewarding patronage.

Returning from 22–25 January 2026, Galle Lit Fest will feature an expanded programme of literature, performance, and cultural experiences, complemented by Gourmet Galle (26 Jan–1 Feb) and the Art Trail & Children’s Festival. Together, these events create a 10-day cultural platform unmatched in Sri Lanka - attracting high-value visitors, generating millions in impact, and shaping the country’s image globally.

By connecting culture with commerce, Galle Literary Festival proves that the arts can drive serious business outcomes. As Sri Lanka works to strengthen its positioning in global tourism, GLF stands as one of the country’s most effective examples of how world-class cultural programming can deliver both prestige and profit.

For more information or to become a member, contact info@galleliteraryfestival.com.

Pekoe Trail Organization Hosts DMC Event to Position Sri Lanka as a Regenerative Tourism Destination

TTA BULLETIN

The Pekoe Trail Organisation (TPTO) hosted its first Destination Management Company (DMC) Insider Session at Colabs Training Room, Mireka Towers, Havelock City, bringing together over 25 industry leaders to explore how Sri Lanka’s first long-distance hiking trail can drive the country’s next wave of sustainable and regenerative tourism.



The session marked the first time TPTO’s vision, governance, and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model were formally presented to the industry. Designed to equip DMCs with insights on marketing and selling the trail, the event also laid the foundation for a series of workshops to strengthen long term collaboration.

“The Pekoe Trail is more than a hiking path, it is a national asset and a shared responsibility,” said Pramudith Thenabadu, Executive Director of TPTO. “Our six-pillar mandate—trail infrastructure, community engagement, conservation, stakeholder collaboration, financial sustainability, and marketing—ensures it can be confidently integrated into DMC itineraries.”

Key highlights included:

* Community impact & partnerships – Senior Consultant Renusha Gomis

highlighted TPTO’s PPP model, and a new collaboration with Frella to launch an organic wellness range for hikers that DMCs can integrate into curated client experiences.

* Beyond hiking – Head of Operations Ayesha showcased new opportunities across wildlife, history, wellness, family travel, and soft adventure, introduced wheelchair-accessible trail sections, and announced a two level certification program for Pekoe Trail hosts.

* Trail Pass & stewardship – Signature Experience Specialist Kushlani Karunaratne emphasized the Trail Pass as a key tool to regulate access, prevent overcrowding, and fund long term conservation, while offering DMCs exclusive partner benefits.

By creating space for collaboration, the Insider Session enabled DMCs to explore curated niche itineraries that highlight less traveled regions of Sri Lanka, supporting local communities while diversifying the country’s tourism offering.

Through collective action, the initiative positions Sri Lanka as a regenerative tourism destination, blending inclusivity and diversity with niche experiences such as slow travel, wellness tourism, and soft adventure to elevate the country’s global appeal and redefine sustainable travel in the region.

ITB Asia 2025 Expands to Five Halls in Singapore, Marking Its Largest Edition Yet

TTA BULLETIN

The 18th edition of ITB Asia officially opened today at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre in Singapore. Running from 15 to 17 October, the event is organised by Messe Berlin (Asia Pacific) and brings together international exhibitors, over 1,500 top buyers and key leaders from the Corporate, Leisure, MICE, hospitality and travel technology sectors. This three-day B2B trade show serves as the essential platform covering all key aspects of the travel trade industry, offering attendees valuable insights and practical takeaways to improve their business operations. Alongside the exhibition, insightful conference sessions are held across three dedicated theatres, fostering business, networking, partnership building, and knowledge exchange.



Tourism Promotion Center, the Kaohsiung City Government, and Visit Alatau, further broadening the show’s international diversity.

New for this year, the Experience & Attractions Highlight Zone brings an extra layer of excitement, showcasing an impressive lineup of global and regional leaders such as Resorts World Sentosa (Official Integrated Resort Sponsor), AMA Waterways, Cruise Wonders, Disney Cruise Line, HX Expeditions, Mandai Wildlife Reserve, Merlin Entertainments Group, and Universal Destinations & Experiences. This vibrant new zone is where destinations, themed attractions, and immersive experiences come to life. From captivating cultural showcases to hands-on, interactive highlights, the area is curated to inspire and engage, offering industry professionals direct access to the innovations and experiences redefining the future of global travel.

This year marks a major milestone: For the first time, ITB Asia 2025 spans five exhibition halls, an expansion from three halls last year, across two levels, offering a record exhibition footprint and welcoming over 1,500 top buyers, the highest participation in the show’s history.

Among the new destinations joining the line-up are the City of Monreale (Sicily, Italy), Lithuania Travel, Visit Hungary, the Government of Tamil Nadu, Da Nang

The Official Opening Ceremony was graced by Mr Alvin Tan, Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry & Ministry of National Development, Singapore, who

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IBTM World announces Nathalie Nahai as day one keynote in world-class speaker line-up

TTA BULLETIN

IBTM has revealed behavioural science advisor and rare polymath with deep expertise in tech, marketing and psychology, Nathalie Nahai, as the opening keynote in a stellar line-up of distinguished speakers for its flagship IBTM World event, organised by global events planner RX.



Grace Blakeley, former economics commentator for the New Statesman, staff writer at Tribune Magazine and author of several books, including 'Vulture Capitalism: Corporate Crimes, Backdoor Bailouts and the

Death of Freedom'.

The leading global trade show will explore its theme of People. Power. Potential throughout its conference programme, with day one sessions focusing on the collective power of people to achieve extraordinary results.

Opening the show on day one, Nathalie's thought-provoking talk will explore one of the most pressing issues of our age: 'The power of human connection and empathy in the age of AI'.

With all the headlines surrounding the impact of AI on work, relationships, and our collective future, how can we discern fact from fiction, and distinguish AI hype from reality? Nathalie will explore the power of real connection in a technological age, and what it means to leverage AI without losing what makes us human.

Taking a deep psychological dive, Nathalie will unpack some of the perils and possibilities of this moment - from the three types of human empathy (and whether AI can replicate this), to collaboration, creativity, and the power of real relationships to unlock human potential.

Picking up the people power baton will be

Sharing her expertise on neuroscience-backed storytelling will be six-time TEDx speaker and sought-after global keynote, Natalia Talkowska. Natalia's session, 'The neuroscience of storytelling for event success: influence, persuasion and unforgettable experiences', will reveal how stories shape attention, trust, and emotion, and how to use them to craft experiences that stand out in a competitive market.

Also on day one, Julius Solaris, founder of Boldpush, will be joined on stage by Ameca, the world's most advanced humanoid robot to answer the question: is AI ready to take over events? In a riveting session about the future of events, discover what happens when robotics meets real intelligence.

In, 'Different, Diverse, Dynamic: Could this be the ultimate conference model' founder of The Big Festoon and seasoned diversity and inclusion speaker, Dani Wallace, will share a compelling case study about the benefits of working with an event's community to shape content, increase diversity and develop an event with a look and feel like no other.

Baihu Launches in Colombo: A Pan Asian Dining Experience Rooted in Myth, Flavor, and Community

TTA BULLETIN

Colombo's dining scene welcomes a powerful new addition with the launch of Baihu, co-founded by Mr. Sanka Abeywana, Mr. Karl



Kao and Mrs. Kaeshavie Parinathan.

Baihu is a Pan-Asian restaurant inspired by the legendary White Tiger of Chinese mythology. Located on Stratford Avenue, Baihu brings together bold flavours, modern design and a refreshing BYOB concept, offering guests a unique space to gather, celebrate, and connect.

The name Baihu meaning White Tiger, comes from the ancient guardian of the West — a mythical creature symbolizing courage, elegance and cosmic balance. This legend is not just a name but the foundation of the restaurant's identity, reflected in its culinary philosophy, interior design and storytelling.

"This restaurant is all about three friends

from three different backgrounds coming together as one to launch a concept for Pan-Asian flavours and introducing a subculture in BYOB for families and like-minded people to gather over food and flavours," said Karl Kao, Director and Co-Founder of Baihu.

The Baihu menu is a vibrant showcase of Asia's culinary diversity with over 40 carefully curated dishes. Highlights include Baihu Signature Yang Chow Fried Rice, Bao Buns, Dumpling Selections and Whole Fried Snapper served with signature sauces. Guests can journey through flavours inspired by Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Cambodian, Malaysian and Singaporean cuisines, each dish balancing authenticity and innovation.

One of Baihu's most distinctive features is its BYOB (Bring Your Own Bottle) concept, an emerging subculture in Colombo's dining landscape. By inviting

Uga Resorts Welcomes Himaj Jayasinghe to its Leadership Team

TTA BULLETIN

Himaj Jayasinghe has been appointed Vice President Operations, bringing with him over 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry across Sri Lanka and the Maldives. His extensive background in property operations, strategic management, and brand development makes him a valuable addition to Uga's continued journey of excellence in Sri Lankan luxury hospitality.



distinctive properties. His international experience includes holding senior leadership positions in the Maldives as Group Director of Operations at Pulse Hotels & Resorts, where he managed three luxury resorts and an ultra-luxury boutique property.

Throughout his distinguished career, Himaj has managed a diverse portfolio of properties ranging from luxury boutique hotels to large-scale resort operations, consistently delivering operational excellence and guest satisfaction.

Prior to joining Uga Resorts, he served as Chief Operating Officer and earlier as Director – Operations at Hayleys Leisure PLC, where he oversaw a portfolio of nine

Himaj also held key positions as Director of Sales & Marketing at Taj Resorts, Maldives, and Director/General Manager – Marketing & Operations at Saman Villas, Sri Lanka, where his leadership contributed to strengthening brand visibility and operational success.

Himaj's appointment marks an exciting new chapter for Uga Resorts as the brand continues to enhance its footprint in Sri Lanka's luxury hospitality sector through innovation, service excellence, and sustainability.

SLAPCEO Elects Nadeeka Leeniyagoda as the First Female President

TTA BULLETIN

The Sri Lanka Association of Professional Conference, Exhibition and Event Organisers (SLAPCEO), the national industry body representing Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs), Professional Exhibition Organisers (PEOs), Event Management Companies (EMCs), Destination Management Companies (DMCs), Wedding Planners, and Event Venues, held its 21st Annual General Meeting (AGM) recently at Amari Colombo.



forums related to the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector. The Association works closely with the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB), Tourism Industry Skills Council (TISC), and other national institutions to strengthen Sri Lanka's position as a premier MICE destination.

At the AGM, Ms. Nadeeka Leeniyagoda, Assistant General Manager of Aitken Spence Travels, was unanimously elected as the Association's first female President, marking a historic milestone for SLAPCEO and Sri Lanka's MICE industry.

The Sri Lanka Association of Professional Conference, Exhibition and Event Organisers (SLAPCEO) was established in 2002 with the objective of developing and strengthening the MICE industry in Sri Lanka. It is the only association in the country that exclusively represents the MICE sector, and is the sole industry body officially recognized by the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB).

SLAPCEO maintains a stringent membership selection process to ensure that only qualified and reputable professionals are represented. This commitment to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism not only safeguards the integrity of the association but also contributes to the overall growth and advancement of the MICE industry in Sri Lanka.

SLAPCEO continues to play an integral role in private-sector decision-making

The AGM was attended by industry stakeholders, including presidents of tourism associations, representatives from tourism authorities, and members of SLAPCEO.

In her inaugural address as President, Ms. Leeniyagoda outlined her vision to build a more inclusive and progressive industry. She pledged to:

- Empower informal sector organisers to shift to the formal sector through enhanced local and international networking opportunities and improved access to modern technology.
- Strengthen collaborations with key stakeholders such as SLCB, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB), Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism & Hotel Management (SLITHM), and industry associations including SLAITO, THASL, ASMET, and TISC.
- Invest in capacity building by introducing targeted training programs to inspire and engage the Gen Z workforce, ensuring their active participation and leadership in shaping the future of Sri Lanka's MICE and events industry.

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DEMYSTIFYING THE DIGITAL WORLD
WITH THE BASICS OF DIGITAL MARKETING

“THERE WAS SO MUCH INFORMATION OUT THERE AND NOT ALL OF IT WAS ACCURATE OR RELEVANT. WE WANTED TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT SIMPLIFIED THE PROCESS AND EMPOWERED PEOPLE TO MAKE CONFIDENT, INFORMED DECISIONS..”



JAVON RAYMOND
CO - FOUNDER

In today's fast-paced digital world, where algorithms shift overnight and trends change in the blink of an eye, many businesses struggle to keep up. Recognizing this growing challenge, Javon Raymond and Shemani Jayasinghe, two dynamic professionals with experience in marketing and communications, co-founded The Basics of Digital Marketing an educational platform designed to help individuals and businesses truly understand how digital marketing works.

The concept was born during their time in the Middle East, where they observed how overwhelming the digital space had become for many small business owners and entrepreneurs. “We kept meeting people who wanted to make the most of their marketing spend but didn't really know where to start,” recalls Javon Raymond. “There was so much information out there and not all of it was accurate or relevant. We wanted to create something that simplified the process and empowered people to make confident, informed decisions.”

Unlike typical digital marketing courses that promise quick results or focus on selling complex strategies, The Basics of Digital Marketing takes a back-to-basics educational approach. It helps participants understand the fundamentals from audience targeting and content creation to analytics and budgeting enabling them to communicate more effectively with their agencies or manage small campaigns themselves.



SHEMANI JAYASINGHE
CO - FOUNDER

Importantly, Javon and Shemani emphasize that their mission is not to replace digital agencies but to bridge the knowledge gap between clients and professionals. “We want to demystify digital marketing,” says Javon. “When clients understand the basics, they can collaborate better with their agencies, ask the right questions, and get the results they want.”

The program is structured as a one-time investment, giving users lifetime access to continuously updated content as the industry evolves. This ensures that participants always stay informed about the latest tools, trends, and algorithm changes without the burden of recurring fees.

Beyond its practicality, The Basics of Digital Marketing represents something much larger: a movement toward digital literacy and empowerment. By equipping individuals with the knowledge they need to make smarter decisions, Javon and Shemani are helping businesses and people grow with confidence in an ever-changing digital landscape. Through their journey, they remind us that simplicity, when grounded in purpose, can be transformative.

“WHEN CLIENTS UNDERSTAND THE BASICS, THEY CAN COLLABORATE BETTER WITH THEIR AGENCIES, ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, AND GET THE RESULTS THEY WANT.”

Angola is the official host country of ITB Berlin 2026

TTA BULLETIN

Angola, located in southwest Africa, and the World's Leading Travel Trade Show officially announce their partnership for the sixtieth anniversary of ITB Berlin in 2026.

An international stage for a hidden gem: Angola's Ministry of Tourism and ITB Berlin today officially announced their partnership for 2026. The country located in southwest Africa is the host country of ITB Berlin, which will celebrate its sixtieth anniversary on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds from 3 to 5 March 2026. At an official event today the Tourism Ministry of the Republic of Angola and Messe Berlin, the organiser of ITB Berlin, signed a partnership agreement. The signatories were Márcio de Jesus Lopes Daniel, Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Angola, and Dirk Hoffmann, COO of Messe Berlin.

“We are delighted that Angola is the official host country of ITB Berlin 2026. This partnership offers a unique opportunity to showcase the country's diversity, culture and natural beauty on one of the world's most important platforms“, said Márcio de Jesus Lopes Daniel, Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Angola. “With our new brand identity ‘Visit Angola – The Rhythm of Life’ we want to show how vibrant, diverse and authentic our tourism products

are and invite the international travel industry to experience the rhythm of Angola with all their senses.”

“With its new brand identity and slogan 'The Rhythm of Life', Angola is sending a strong signal on the international tourism stage. It is a special honour for us to welcome this multifaceted country as the official host country for the sixtieth anniversary of ITB Berlin", said Dirk Hoffmann, COO of Messe Berlin. “The partnership once again highlights ITB Berlin's role as a platform that supports destinations in making their tourism potential visible on the world stage.”

“It is a great pleasure and honour to present Angola as the host country on the major tourism platform that is ITB Berlin," said Julia Kleber, CEO of the Kleber Group and official representative of the Angola Tourism Board. "Angola inspires with its fascinating contrast of wild coasts, impressive desert landscapes, majestic waterfalls and ancient rock formations. Our country embodies the spirit of The Rhythm of Life – full of energy, diversity and warmth. We are proud to represent Angola as the official Tourism Board and to raise its profile as a new, authentic destination in international tourism.“

FITUR to host the 9th 'AMT Smart Destinations Awards 2026', which will reward tourism innovation

TTA BULLETIN

The Alliance of Sun and Beach Tourism (AMT, Alianza de Municipios Turísticos de Sol y Playa) and the Spanish Hotel Technological Institute (ITH, Instituto Tecnológico Hotelero), announce the 9th edition of the AMT Smart Destinations Awards, which recognise the technological solutions and tools implemented that help tourist destinations to advance towards their transformation into Smart Tourism Destinations (STD). The awards will be presented at the International Tourism Trade Fair (FITUR), which takes place from 21 to 25 January 2026, in the new Knowledge Hub, Hall 12 of IFEMA MADRID, which will be the epicentre of debate and innovation in the tourism industry.

The deadline for the submission of applications will remain open until 16 November 2025 through the official website for companies and public or private entities in the tourism industry, such as town councils, tourism boards, associations and foundations, among others. These entities will be able to participate both as beneficiaries and promoters of the technological solution implemented.

Nominations may be submitted in five categories:

- * Integrated Destination Management
- * Interaction with Tourists and Citizens
- * Environmental Sustainability
- * Destination Promotion and Marketing
- * Innovative Destination Project

Private companies may apply for the first four categories, while the fifth category is only open to applications from public or private entities in the tourism industry. This category (Innovative Destination Project) will assess innovative projects that are operational or that, although already completed, can be replicated in other destinations. These projects must be aligned with one of the other four categories.

The three finalists in each category will present their solutions at the techYdestino-forum at FITURTECHY, a space dedicated to innovation and technology in tourism. The official presentation of the AMT Smart Destinations Awards will take place on 22 January 2025, at 16:00 at techYdestino.

The shortlisted solutions will be announced on 8 January 2025, and will be included in an online catalogue of technology solutions that will be made available to the jury members and published on the awards website. In addition, participants will be able to accelerate their businesses by applying for a free place (100% subsidised) in the mentorDay tourism acceleration programme.

The jury is composed of representatives of the AMT member municipalities: Adeje, Arona, Benidorm, Calvià, Lloret de Mar, Salou, San Bartolomé de Tirajana and Torremolinos, together with tourism industry experts from organisations such as INVAT-TUR, SEGITTUR, FITUR, ITH and Thinktur.

Historic Milestone for India: NSN Mohan Elected as First Indian and Asian to Assume the Role of President of Skål International (2027)

TTA BULLETIN

In a moment of unprecedented significance in the annals of global tourism leadership, NSN Mohan has been elected as the Vice President for 2026, and is set to ascend as the President Elect of Skål International for 2027. This monumental achievement marks the first time in Skål International’s 93-year history that an individual from India and the Asian continent has been elected to this esteemed position.



And now, the incoming Vice President of Skål International 2026 & President Elect 2027

This achievement reflects the convergence of visionary leadership, institutional excellence, and collective national effort, honoring the contributions of past and present Indian Skålleagues who have steadfastly nurtured the Skål movement across the country.

The announcement was officially made during the 84th Skål International World Congress held in Cuzco, Peru, a gathering of the world’s foremost tourism and hospitality professionals. Mohan currently serves as the Deputy Vice President, overseeing the global finance portfolio of Skål International. His election is a testament to his exemplary leadership, strategic foresight, and steadfast dedication to the values and vision of Skål.

Founded in 1932, with its headquarters in Torremolinos, Spain, Skål International is the world’s oldest and largest association of travel and tourism professionals, encompassing a vibrant network of over 294 clubs across 75 countries. The first Skål club was established in Paris in 1934, and since then, the organization has become a beacon of global camaraderie, collaboration, and professional excellence within the tourism sector.

NSN Mohan's elevation to the apex of Skål International not only breaks geographical and cultural barriers but also underscores the rising global stature of Skål India. Today, India stands as a powerhouse within the Skål ecosystem, home to:

The largest Skål club globally

The highest membership base worldwide

NSN Mohan's journey is emblematic of perseverance, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to the ideals of Skål. His deep-rooted association with the organization, combined with his global perspective and financial acumen, has culminated in what many considered an improbable milestone — now rightfully achieved.

His election also coincides with a transformative phase for Skål International. The Governance Reform Plan initiated in 2023 emphasized equitable global representation and progressive leadership. India, recognized as an independent region owing to its exponential growth and influence, has emerged as a pivotal player in shaping the future of Skål.

The ascendancy of N S N Mohan is more than a personal triumph — it is a collective victory for India and the larger Asian community. It heralds a new era for Skål India, energizing its dynamic membership base and inspiring the next generation of tourism professionals to engage, innovate, and lead.

With Sanjeev Mehra as the National President and his valiant team marching forward, India proudly leads Region 10 with 19 active Skål Clubs, taking the region to new heights of glory in Skål International. Together, under this dynamic leadership,

Cinnamon Life Presents “Dancing through the Decades” this New Year’s Eve

TTA BULLETIN

It’s the night everyone’s been waiting for! This 31st December, the city’s heartbeat will be at one address — Cinnamon Life, the Entertainment Capital of Colombo — where the Lumina Ballroom transforms into a glittering time machine for “Dancing through the Decades”, an unforgettable New Year’s Eve celebration that promises to keep you grooving well into 2026!

Hosted by the ever-charming Kumar de Silva, this one-of-a-kind soirée takes guests on a vibrant journey through music’s greatest eras, from the electric 80s to the rhythmic 90s and iconic 2000s. It is nostalgia with a neon twist, where disco balls meet digital beats and timeless classics collide with fresh sounds.

Headlining the night is the legendary Sohan Weerasinghe, whose commanding stage presence will set the tone for an evening bursting with rhythm and flair. Sharing the spotlight are some of Sri Lanka’s most celebrated performers — powerhouse diva Corrine Almeida, the effortlessly smooth Geoffrey Fernando, the ever-energetic Clifford Richard, musical genius Rukshan Perera, the dynamic Damian Wikramatillake, and dazzling Falan Andrea, who brings a new-age edge to the lineup. Together, they will deliver a spectacular set list that transcends generations.

And what’s a party without a beat? The

night’s pulse will be driven by two of Sri Lanka’s most-loved bands — Flame and AROH — bringing non-stop, heart-thumping performances that will have everyone from the disco kings to the Gen Z dancers lighting up the floor.

As midnight draws near, the energy will crescendo to a dazzling countdown, setting the stage for a brand-new year in true Cinnamon Life fashion — bold, beautiful, and brimming with joy. Guests can indulge in a sumptuous gourmet buffet spanning international favourites and local delights, before ending the night (or starting the morning!) with a comforting traditional Sri Lankan breakfast as 2026 dawns over Colombo’s skyline.

With glitz, glamour, and a dash of golden-age groove, “Dancing through the Decades” promises to be the most happening New Year’s Eve party in town.

Tickets are priced at LKR 35,000 per person, with tables for 10 available. For reservations call +94 77 962 8132

So gather your friends, dust off those dancing shoes, and get ready to turn back time while stepping into the future, only at Cinnamon Life’s “Dancing through the Decades”. Because when Colombo celebrates, it celebrates here!



WTM London welcomes new tourism minister as ties with UK government strengthen

TTA BULLETIN

Stephanie Peacock, recently named as the new minister in charge of tourism, will be on-site at Excel London for the opening day of this year’s Word Travel Market (WTM) London, the world’s most influential travel and tourism event.

Peacock’s days begins as part of the official opening ceremony for WTM London 2025, taking place on Tuesday 4 November at 09:00. She will be joined by other dignitaries including Patricia Yates, CEO of VisitBritain, the premier partner for this year’s event.

Next, the new minister will be joining her peers at the UN Ministers Summit, hosted by WTM in association with UN Tourism and WTTC. The summit, now in its 19th year, is the world’s largest gathering of tourism ministers, aides and advisors, with

selected representatives from the private sector also in attendance. Peacock will deliver a short opening address.

At 14:00 she will host a closed roundtable where ministers from across the EU will discuss sustainable tourism. She is also scheduled to take part in a C-suite panel discussion entitled “Soft Power Advantage: Leveraging the UK’s Global Influence.” The session will take place at 15:00 in the Yellow Theatre and is open to all visitors.

Later on, Peacock will be a guest at the Ministerial Reception, a networking evening dinner for attendees from the



Ministers Summit. The event will take place at the Churchill War Rooms in central London.

Chris Carter-Chapman, Event Director, WTM London, said: “We’re delighted to welcome the new tourism minister, and we are proud that she has earmarked time in her schedule to visit WTM London. We look forward to discussing the importance of inbound, outbound and domestic tourism, introducing her to some of the major players and highlighting the major role that WTM plays in supporting the UK tourism sector.”

WTM London is itself an important part of the UK tourism industry and a significant contributor to the London economy. Last year’s event welcomed more than 40,000 travel professionals, four out of five (82%) of whom visited from overseas, spending money on transport, accommodation, and entertainment during their time in London and research suggests this is worth around £200 million to London.

Carter-Chapman concluded: “With VisitBritain confirmed as the Premier Partner, this year’s event sees an even stronger government presence at WTM London, which reflects not only how important the travel and tourism industry is to the UK authorities but also the role that WTM London plays to support that industry.”

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Aitken Spence Travels Leads the Way in Sri Lanka’s Sustainable Tourism Transformation

On World Tourism Day 2025, Aitken Spence Travels reaffirms its ethos of creating shared values, pledging regenerative impact that uplifts communities, protects environments, and inspires future generations.

TTA BULLETIN

On World Tourism Day 2025, Aitken Spence Travels reaffirms its ethos of creating shared value, pledging to champion a regenerative approach to tourism that uplifts communities, protects environments, and inspires future generations.

This year’s theme, “Tourism and Sustainable Transformation”, clearly states a truth the company has long embraced—that real transformation is not a one-off initiative but a continuous journey, one that demands vision, persistence, and, most importantly, collective action.

As one of Sri Lanka’s leading Destination Management Companies, Aitken Spence Travels believes its responsibility extends

beyond the scope of its own operations. The company is committed to ensuring that Sri Lanka as a whole evolves into a truly sustainable tourism destination, setting benchmarks, inspiring change, and working with partners across the value chain to embed responsible practices into the very fabric of tourism.

“At Aitken Spence Travels, sustainability is not an option for us—it is the very foundation of how we do business. True transformation happens when every stakeholder moves forward together, creating shared values that touch communities, protect environments, and inspire future generations. This is the legacy we are committed to building,” said Suranga Ratnayake, Chief Operating Officer, Aitken Spence Travels.

with a seal of trust, ensuring that responsibility and quality go hand in hand.

Education also lies at the heart of Aitken Spence Travels’ sustainable vision. The company emphasizes that the shift towards a regenerative industry must begin at the grassroots level, with awareness and capacity-building initiatives for guides, chauffeurs, village hosts, culinary artisans, and homestay operators. These stakeholders—often the first and last touchpoints for travelers—play a vital role in shaping Sri Lanka’s image as a sustainable destination.

“Our outreach also extends to small and medium enterprises, the heart of authentic Sri Lankan hospitality. As contributors, they are all stakeholders and are the lifeblood of responsible tourism. Through awareness and training, we aim to amplify their positive impact, ensuring that their livelihoods thrive while communities and traditions are preserved” added Ratnayake.

Looking to the future, Aitken Spence



Travels is actively engaging with schools, universities, and youth networks to spark early awareness and inspire the next generation of hospitality leaders. By embedding sustainability into education, the company hopes to nurture a culture of purpose, innovation, and responsibility in tourism.

In commemoration of World Tourism Day 2025, Aitken Spence Travels reaffirms its pledge: to walk this journey of sustainable transformation hand in hand with communities, partners, and stakeholders, building a tourism industry for Sri Lanka that is not just sustainable, but regenerative, inclusive, and profoundly transformative



The company’s AST Green Partner Program is a significant step in this journey, recognizing hotel partners who embed sustainability into their operations. The “Green Partner” badge, displayed across contracting platforms, itineraries, and booking tools, provides both trade and travelers

Kandy Myst by Cinnamon – Redefining Urban Hospitality in Sri Lanka’s Hill Capital

TTA BULLETIN

Travel Talk sits down with Johan Aschan, Area Vice President, Sri Lanka Resorts at Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, to discuss the newest addition to the Cinnamon portfolio — Kandy Myst by Cinnamon. Developed in partnership with Indra Traders (Pvt) Ltd, this stunning new property is transforming the hospitality landscape in Kandy with its modern design, sustainable ethos, and seamless blend of culture and comfort.

A Reimagined Urban Escape

Q: Kandy Myst has been positioned as a unique offering within the Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts portfolio. Could you share what sets the property apart in terms of design, experience, and guest engagement?

A: The newest addition to the Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts portfolio developed in partnership with Indra Traders (Pvt) Ltd, Kandy Myst by Cinnamon reimagines urban hospitality in the heart of Sri Lanka’s hill capital. With 215 modern

rooms, the largest inventory in Kandy, we offer guests a seamless blend of comfort, culture, and connectivity. The hotel’s contemporary architecture is complemented by subtle local design elements that reflect Kandy’s unique character and heritage.

From Grains Dining, the all-day dining restaurant, to the rooftop Kosmos Skybar with its infinity pool and panoramic views, every space is designed for interaction, relaxation, and discovery. What truly sets us apart is how we capture the rhythm of modern Kandy — vibrant social spaces, curated experiences, and the warmth of genuine Sri Lankan hospitality delivered with international standards.

Appealing to the British Traveller

Q: The UK has long been one of Sri Lanka’s strongest inbound markets. What specific experiences or aspects of Kandy Myst by Cinnamon do you believe resonate most with British travellers?

A: We believe that British travellers are drawn to destinations that combine authenticity, sustainability, and scenic beauty, and that is exactly what Kandy Myst by Cinnamon offers. We’re located just minutes from the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy Lake, and the city’s cultural



Dhinah Perera



Johan Aschan, AVP

heart, with easy access to urban convenience while surrounded by hills, forests, and close proximity to the

Mahaweli River.

Many of our UK guests appreciate being able to experience Sri Lanka’s culture and nature in one stay. They can enjoy a morning heritage walk, an afternoon by the rooftop pool, and an evening of live local music all within a few minutes’ reach. With our modern amenities, personalised service, and easy access to the Hill Country, Kandy Myst by Cinnamon serves as the ideal base for those seeking both adventure and relaxation in the heart of Sri Lanka.

Leading in Sustainability

Q: Sustainability and responsible tourism are becoming priorities for global travellers. How is Kandy Myst aligning with these trends and embedding sustainable practices into its operations?

A: Sustainability is woven into the DNA of Kandy Myst by Cinnamon. We’re proud to be the first LEED Gold-certified hotel in the Kandy region, setting a new benchmark for environmentally responsible hospitality in Sri Lanka’s hill capital.

From energy-efficient design and natural

light optimisation to advanced water recycling and waste management, every detail was planned with purpose. Our architecture promotes natural ventilation and a connection to greenery, ensuring our guests experience a sense of calm and wellbeing throughout their stay.

Aligned with Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts’ broader ESG framework, we also prioritise local community engagement, heritage preservation, and responsible sourcing. For our UK guests, many of whom are increasingly conscious of where and how they travel, Kandy Myst by Cinnamon offers the reassurance of a stay that’s both indulgent and environmentally mindful.

Immersive Experiences Beyond the Stay

Q: Kandy is known for its cultural significance and natural beauty. How does the hotel leverage its location to curate immersive experiences for international guests looking for more than just a hotel stay?

A: Kandy Myst by Cinnamon brings a fresh, modern perspective to the heritage city of Kandy — blending its timeless charm with contemporary energy and a touch of urban sophistication. We see ourselves not just as a hotel, but as a gateway into the city’s story, where tradition and modernity coexist beautifully.





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Occidental
Eden Beruwala

Club Hotel
Dolphin



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SLAITO Holds 45th Annual General Meeting at ITC Ratnadipa

The Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) successfully held its 45th Annual General Meeting (AGM) recently at ITC Ratnadipa, Colombo, marking yet another significant milestone in the Association's continued efforts to strengthen the inbound tourism sector.

The event brought together over 300 participants, including destination management companies (DMCs), representatives from One Industry One Voice, heads of key tourism associations, and distinguished invitees from both the public and private sectors.





Scan for more information



“Ramada by Wyndham Colombo combines culinary excellence with the art of hospitality, offering four-star luxury in the heart of Colombo. The hotel features spacious, modern rooms equipped with every essential amenity to meet the needs of both business and leisure travelers. Guests can also enjoy a diverse selection of restaurants and lounge bars, serving an array of flavors from around the world.”



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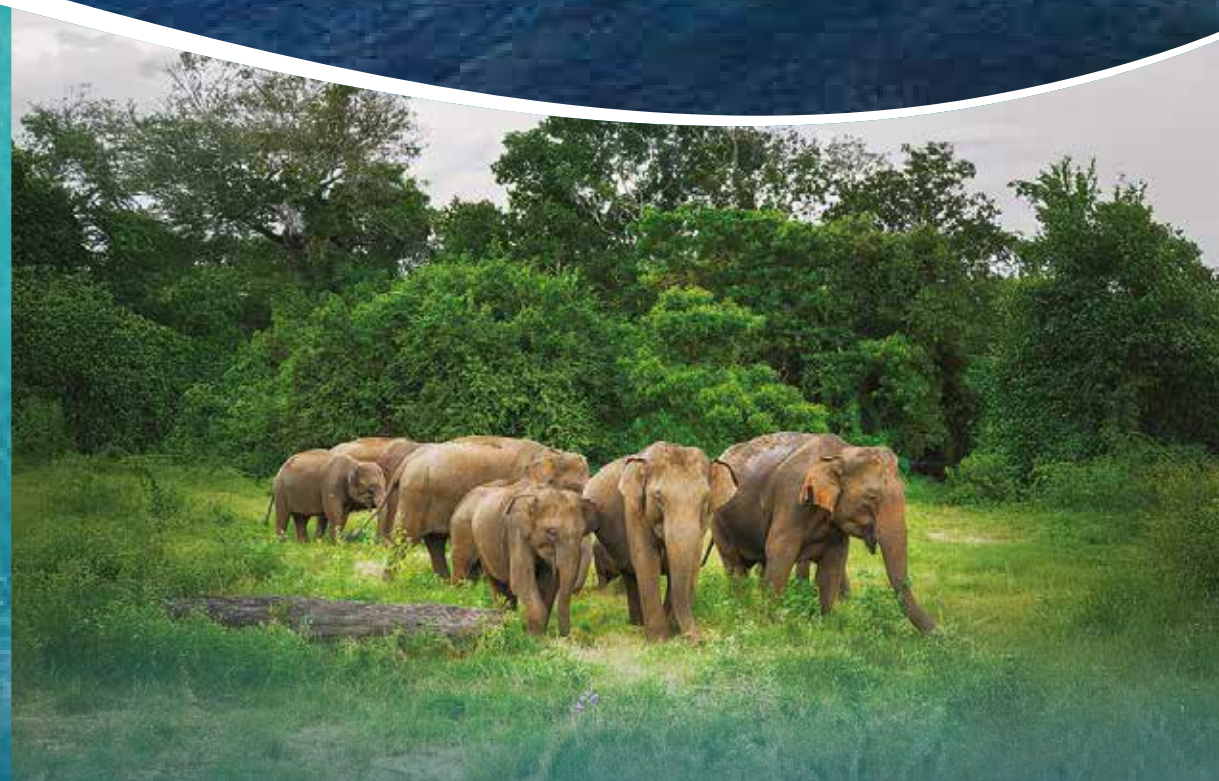


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Google Features eMarketingEye and Minor Hotels' AI Max for Search Case Study at Google Marketing Live: Think Travel Summit 2025

Case Study

TRAVEL / HOSPITALITY

The AI Pivot: Minor Hotels performance campaign driven with AI Max, Achieving +361% Revenue at a lower CPA of -27%

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The Challenge

Minor Hotels, a global leader with over 560 properties, faced the significant challenge of launching and promoting Minor Hotels as a unified master brand. Historically, the company emphasized its individual hotel brands. The new consolidated brand had limited consumer awareness and historical conversion data, making it difficult to drive traffic and bookings effectively.

The Approach

The strategy centered on leveraging AI Max's keywordless targeting to efficiently discover high-value users and new search terms, effectively bypassing the need for historical conversion data.

To ensure success, a strong foundation was established through close partnership with the client and the agency, ensuring the right test campaign was selected, best practices for the AI Max setup were adopted, and initial insights were used to select seed keywords. The campaign was closely monitored and actively managed, with constant, data-driven adjustments to ensure campaign success.

The Results

The campaign was a resounding success, overachieving all planned metrics compared to performance prior to the AI Max activation.

New Business Pipeline:

AI Max effectively captured non-Minor-related search demand, driving traffic and consideration among new customers and creating a valuable new business pipeline.

Actionable Insights:

The campaign provided the client with crucial search term insights that can now be leveraged to inform and optimize their broader marketing strategies.

"AI Max gives us a smarter way to surface intent, drive performance, and maintain precision in Search. By consistently adopting emerging capabilities, we're growing revenue potential while lowering our cost base. Our ongoing collaboration with Google ensures we stay ahead of the curve, leading in practices, relevance, reach, and return."

Ian Di Tullio

Chief Commercial Officer - Minor Hotels

"Collaborating closely with the Google Thailand team to implement AI Max for Minor Hotels has been truly transformative. Together, we unlocked new audiences and drove remarkable revenue growth, showcasing how AI-powered solutions can deliver measurable business impact at scale."

Rajitha Dahanayake

CEO - eMarketingEye

+294%

Increase Bookings

+61%

Increase ROAS

+361%

Increase Revenue

-27%

Lower cost per Booking

Primary Marketing Objective(s)

• Conversions (Complete Booking)

Featured Product Area(s)

• AI Max

eme

Google Ads

Search Ads 360

Google

eMarketingEye, a global leader in digital marketing for the travel and hospitality industry, is proud to announce that its groundbreaking AI Max for Search case study for Minor Hotels was showcased at the recent Google Marketing Live: Think Travel Summit held in Singapore in October 2025. The recognition spotlights the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in driving performance marketing and unlocking significant growth for premier hospitality brands.

The featured case study centred on AI Max for Search, a sophisticated suite of AI-powered enhancements for Google Ads' Search campaigns. It leverages AI to automatically expand keywords, customise ad copy, and guide users to the most relevant landing pages, all while introducing vital new controls for brand targeting and location-based intent.

Minor Hotels, a global leader with over 560 properties, faced the significant challenge of launching and promoting its master brand with limited consumer awareness and historical conversion data.

To overcome this challenge, the eMarketingEye team harnessed AI Max's keywordless targeting capability to efficiently identify high-value users and uncover new search opportunities without relying

on past data. A highly strategic test campaign was launched through a close, collaborative effort between eMarketingEye, Minor Hotels, and the Google Thailand team, focusing on precision, automation, and continuous optimisation.

The results were truly exceptional: the campaign achieved a massive +361% revenue growth while delivering a significant 27% reduction in Cost Per Acquisition (CPA), definitively proving the effectiveness of AI-powered optimisation in today's competitive search landscape.

Reflecting on the success, Ian Di Tullio, Chief Commercial Officer of Minor Hotels, said, "AI Max gives us a smarter way to surface intent, drive performance, and maintain precision in search. By consistently adopting

emerging capabilities, we're growing revenue potential while lowering our cost base. Our ongoing collaboration with Google ensures we stay ahead of the curve, leading in practices, relevance, reach, and return."

Adding to this, Rajitha Dahanayake, CEO of eMarketingEye, shared, "Collaborating closely with the Google Thailand team to implement AI Max for Minor Hotels has been truly transformative. Together, we unlocked new audiences and drove remarkable revenue growth, showcasing how AI-powered solutions can deliver measurable business impact at scale."

This remarkable achievement not only demonstrates the success of the AI Max-powered campaign but also reinforces the strength of innovation and collaboration between

eMarketingEye, Google, and Minor Hotels in redefining what's possible in travel marketing today.

eMarketingEye is an internationally acclaimed Digital Marketing Agency specialising in the travel and hospitality industry. Working with over 1200+ hotels across 45+ countries globally, we are honoured to be considered a thought leader and trailblazer in digital marketing.

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- Online Invoicing System (PaymentsEye)

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- Performance Dashboards
- Web Analytics
- Tag Manager

One Year of LIFE: Cinnamon Life Celebrates a Year that Reimagined Colombo

TTA BULLETIN

A year ago, the skyline of Colombo changed forever. Rising along the Beira Lake, Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams, Sri Lanka opened its doors, not just as a hotel, but as a bold promise of what the city could become. Twelve months later, that promise has come to life. Today, Cinnamon Life stands as a cultural heartbeat, a playground for dreamers, and a dazzling symbol of Sri Lanka’s hospitality renaissance.

What began as a destination has become an experience — a living, breathing celebration of the city’s rhythm. From rooftop concerts that echo into the night to glittering galas, art-filled corridors, and unforgettable weddings, Cinnamon Life has redefined how Colombo celebrates. It is where ideas meet art, where laughter lingers, and where the spirit of the city feels most alive.

Nestled within City of Dreams, Sri Lanka, Cinnamon Life offers 687 rooms and suites, five stunning ballrooms, and skyline views that reflect the vibrancy and ambition of modern Colombo. Over the past year, its culinary journey has expanded to 11 distinctive venues — from the coastal charm of Bistro des Marées to the sophistication of Staten Bar

& Grill, the artistry of Yoroko, the spice symphony at Indiya, the authentic flavours of Sapphire Dragon, and the stylish flair of Cloud Wine. At Gatz, Colombo’s nightlife finds its rhythm, with live performances that make every night a story worth telling.

To mark its first anniversary, Cinnamon Life invites guests to indulge in a series of celebratory experiences across its restaurants and bars, a fitting toast to an unforgettable year. Guests can collect stamps on their Cinnamon Life Passport, available with a minimum spend of LKR 10,000 at any of their specialty restaurants, and stand a chance to win a complimentary Ruby Membership. The celebrations continue at Gatz, with live performances by Colombo’s favourite local bands every weekend, while Sweet Labs introduces a limited-edition range of anniversary chocolates, featuring Ambarella Green, Ceylon Black Tea and Cardamom Milk, and Jackfruit and Black Pepper Dark varieties.

But Cinnamon Life’s story isn’t just about luxury, it’s about legacy. Home to Colombo’s largest art collection, the



property celebrates over 1,000 pieces created by 687 Sri Lankan artists, turning every hallway into a gallery of imagination. From the Meeting in the Sky Kites Festival to Sri Lanka’s first Sotheby’s auction and the World Press Photo Exhibition, Cinnamon Life has become the creative soul of Colombo — where art, culture, and hospitality collide.

In just one year, Cinnamon Life has become the epicentre of Sri Lanka’s events and MICE landscape. With five grand ballrooms and the expansive Podium outdoor venue, it has hosted a wide range of occasions — from international conferences and high-level corporate events, to national award ceremonies, music festivals, and diplomatic receptions attended by global ambassadors — transforming Colombo into a global stage.

The past year also marked a historic

milestone, as Cinnamon Life joined forces with Melco Resorts & Entertainment to become part of the City of Dreams portfolio — placing Colombo alongside global destinations like Macau, Manila, and Cyprus. With the addition of The Shoppes, an elevated luxury retail experience, the resort has cemented its place as South Asia’s first fully integrated resort city — a destination where hospitality, retail, entertainment, and gaming come together in dazzling harmony.

Reflecting on the milestone, Sanjiv Hulugalle, General Manager and CEO of Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams, said, “This first year has been about bringing a dream to life — creating a space that captures Colombo’s creative spirit while welcoming the world to experience it. As we celebrate this milestone, our hearts are full of gratitude to our guests, partners, and team. Together, we’ve built more than a destination; we’ve built a living, breathing city of connection, celebration, and endless possibilities.”

As Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams steps into its next chapter, it continues to define Colombo’s tomorrow — shaping not just its skyline, but also its story, its spirit, and its future.

RAW Indulgence Elevated: Virticle by Jetwing Introduces a 6-Chapter Tasting Menu

TTA BULLETIN

At Virticle by Jetwing, dining has always been more than a meal—it is an exploration of creativity, sustainability, and bold culinary expression. The restaurant raises the bar once again with the launch of its RAW 6-Chapter Tasting Menu, a journey through six courses (or rather, six “chapters”) that reimagine familiar flavors with flair and finesse. Available to diners at a very special introductory price, the experience requires just 24 hours’ notice to reserve, ensuring each menu is curated with the utmost care.

There are dining experiences, and then there are journeys—those that unfold slowly, course by course, weaving together flavors, textures, and stories. The Elementally Raw is curated to capture both artistry and indulgence. Each course is composed with a painter’s eye for detail and instinct for balance—where vibrant seasonal produce meets carefully sourced proteins, and traditional techniques are reimaged for a contemporary palate while keeping is all RAW.

Elementally Raw was born from a simple moment of inspiration by the culinary maestro, Chef Pathum, Cluster Executive Chef of Jetwing Hotels. With the vision of keeping each element as close as possible to its purest form, the menu moves away from the use of fire, instead relying on techniques such as curing, dehydrating and sun drying.



The evening begins with Chapter One, a redefined Falafel made not from chickpeas but from pumpkin seed, paired with marinated carrot, cumin, coriander, and a sesame dressing—elevated further with a playful tamarind and bee honey shooter.

Chapter Two brings freshness to the fore with a Kottamba See and Ambarella Salad, a vibrant plate that artfully balances star fruit and avocado.

For many, the star of the menu is Chapter Three—a silky cold Gazpacho crafted from young coconut, peanut, chili oil, and lime zest. Light yet deeply layered, it is a dish that lingers long after the last spoonful.

Chapter Four is perhaps the most intriguing—a witty reinterpretation of pizza. Here, a dehydrated avocado and pineapple purée crust becomes the base for A-grade yellowfin tuna, cherry tomatoes, and citrus aioli, creating a delightful play on textures and taste.

As mains, diners are spoiled for choice. The Cured Seer Fish, marinated with beetroot and curry leaf, arrives accompanied by avocado, pomegranate, tomato, and coriander salsa—a dish that is both elegant and deeply satisfying. Alternatives include Beef Three Ways, offering a robust carnivorous indulgence, or a

Three Resplendent Ceylon Properties Honoured in the 2025 Michelin Key Distinctions

TTA BULLETIN

The 2025 Michelin Key distinctions have been revealed, recognising the finest hotels across the globe for extraordinary hospitality. Resplendent Ceylon is proud to announce that all three properties have received the following accolades in the South Asia region: Ceylon Tea Trails with 3 Michelin Keys, Wild Coast Tented Lodge with 2 Michelin Keys and Cape Weligama with 1 Michelin Key.

Ceylon Tea Trails stands out as the only property in Sri Lanka to be awarded the prestigious 3 Michelin Keys, reaffirming its reputation as the pinnacle of luxury estate living.

Malik J. Fernando, Chairman of Resplendent Ceylon, commented: “We are honoured to see all three of our resorts recognised by the Michelin Key distinctions. To have Ceylon Tea Trails as the only Sri Lankan property with 3 Keys is a proud moment, underscoring our belief in offering extraordinary, authentic experiences that showcase the very best of Sri Lanka. These accolades are a testament to the passion and dedication of our teams, and to our ongoing mission of elevating the island’s standing as a world-class luxury destination.”

The Michelin Key distinctions were unveiled in Paris recently at the inaugural



global awards ceremony. The Michelin Keys were introduced in 2023 as the hotel world’s equivalent of the Michelin Star—highlights the very best stays worldwide. Keys are awarded to hotels excelling across five universal criteria: architecture and interior design; service quality; personality and character; value for money; and contribution to the local environment. The recognition spans all types of lodging, from boutique city hotels and heritage castles to ryokans, luxury tents, and remote retreats.

While some Key properties may also host Michelin-Starred restaurants, the awards are determined independently, ensuring each Key reflects the highest standards of lodging excellence. The rare Three Michelin Keys signify an extraordinary stay, the highest benchmark in global hospitality—where design, comfort, and service converge to create an experience that lingers in memory long after departure.



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HOTELS

Anantara Kalutara Resort Crowned India’s Best Global Wedding Venue at the India’s Best Wedding Makers (IBWM) Conclave 2025

TTA BULLETIN

A destination where love stories are written in the language of nature and celebrated with timeless elegance, Anantara Kalutara Resort has been named India’s Best Global Wedding Venue at the prestigious India’s Best Wedding Makers (IBWM) Conclave 2025, held at the Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai.



The occasion also marked the unveiling of the 5th Edition of The Great Indian Wedding Book 2025, where Anantara Kalutara made its debut appearance, joining the ranks of the world’s most exquisite destinations for weddings and celebrations of love.

An architectural masterpiece by the legendary Geoffrey Bawa, Anantara Kalutara embodies Sri Lanka’s poetic duality, where the calm of the Kalu Ganga River flows gently toward the boundless Indian Ocean. This rare confluence of landscapes creates a natural amphitheatre for love stories to unfold. Whether exchanging vows on the golden sands, hosting elegant banquets by the lagoon, or celebrating under starlit skies, every wedding here is a work of art woven with nature’s grace and Anantara’s signature touch.

“We are deeply honoured to be recognised as India’s Best Global Wedding Venue,” said Christoph Dueker, General Manager of Anantara Kalutara & Avani

Kalutara Resorts. “What makes our resort truly special is its ability to bring worlds together as it offers the grandeur of a destination wedding without leaving home and is a hidden gem easily accessible yet enchantingly secluded. With the river on one side and the ocean on the other, every celebration here becomes an unforgettable journey of love framed by Sri Lanka’s natural beauty, heartfelt hospitality, and Anantara’s timeless elegance.”

Only an hour from Colombo yet a world apart, Anantara Kalutara continues to redefine destination weddings in South Asia, an idyllic haven where design, culture, and emotion unite. With its debut feature in The Great Indian Wedding Book 2025, the resort joins an elite circle of venues that inspire couples from across the globe to begin their forever in a place touched by serenity, soul, and splendour.

Peacock Hill Sigiriya: The Jewel in Kassapa’s Kingdom

TTA BULLETIN

A new chapter in boutique luxury has unfolded in Sri Lanka’s Cultural Triangle with the opening of Peacock Hill Sigiriya — an intimate, design-driven villa that captures the soul of the region while introducing a fresh, contemporary aesthetic.

Perched amid the serene Wewela Lake and the ancient Nuwara Gala mountain range, Peacock Hill has been thoughtfully created to deliver a refined “Soho Chic” experience that celebrates individuality, privacy, and sense of place. The property is the latest addition to the Secrets of Ceylon Collection, a portfolio of distinctive boutique stays that continue to elevate Sri Lanka’s hospitality landscape.

Following a year of meticulous refine-

ment, Peacock Hill is already generating excitement among travel partners and discerning guests.

Jean-Marc Flambert, Managing Director of Secrets of Ceylon Collection, shared his enthusiasm: “We are excited to see this experience open after a refinement process of one year. We are confident that it will offer something unique and well-priced in Sigiriya. Guests can enjoy activities on Wewela Lake such as kayaking and paddle boarding, along with breathtaking sunrises and sunsets.”

With just three elegant suites, the villa has been designed to deliver exclusivity and flexibility. Accommodating up to seven guests, it can be reserved on a full-house basis, making it ideal for small, high-end groups, multi-generational families, or high-net-worth individuals seeking absolute privacy.



Behind the seamless service and polished experience is Founder Thushara Perera, a hospitality expert with a background in luxury guest experience design for elite global brands including Aman Resorts and Qatar Airways.

Introducing Beach Padel Tennis to Colombo – At Pegasus Reef Hotel

TTA BULLETIN

Pegasus Reef Hotel proudly introduces Beach Padel Tennis to Colombo, adding a new wave of excitement, fitness, and fun to the city’s coastline.

beginner or a seasoned player, Beach Padel Tennis offers the perfect blend of energy, recreation, and relaxation by the sea.

Set on our breathtaking beachfront, players can enjoy this dynamic sport — a lively mix of tennis and squash — while taking in panoramic views of the entire Colombo city skyline. Whether you’re a

With golden sands beneath your feet and the ocean breeze around you, Pegasus Reef Hotel invites you to experience the newest sporting sensation in Sri Lanka — where sport meets stunning scenery.



Mandara Resort Mirissa: Nurturing Life, One Turtle at a Time

TTA BULLETIN

Along the golden coastline of Mirissa, where gentle waves meet sun-kissed sands, a quiet but powerful conservation story unfolds each year. The Turtle Conservation Initiative at Mandara Resort Mirissa—a heartfelt project that began in 2008—has evolved into one of Sri Lanka’s most inspiring examples of sustainable hospitality in action.

where turtle eggs are found in local hands, the resort ethically purchases them back to guarantee their protection—turning potential threats into opportunities for awareness and collaboration.

What started as a small act of compassion has now become a defining feature of the resort’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme, reflecting its deep commitment to protecting marine life and preserving the country’s fragile coastal ecosystems.

For Chairman Sagara Palihawadana and the dedicated staff of Mandara Resort, this initiative is more than a CSR project—it’s a shared mission. “Our team takes great pride in knowing that each hatchling we help protect represents hope for the future of Sri Lanka’s marine heritage,” he says.

Each year, from October to May, the beach near Mandara Resort becomes a sanctuary for several species of sea turtles, including the Green Turtle, Olive Ridley, Hawksbill, Loggerhead, and the Leatherback—some of the most endangered marine creatures in the world.

Guests are also invited to be part of this meaningful journey. Many find the experience of witnessing a turtle release or learning about conservation practices both emotional and educational—leaving them with a renewed appreciation for nature’s resilience.

Under the careful supervision of the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Department, eggs laid on the beach are safely relocated and protected in the resort’s hatchery. In the most recent nesting season (2024–2025), the Mandara team successfully protected over 13,000 hatchlings out of approximately 14,000–15,000 eggs laid, ensuring that these young turtles have a chance to begin their journey into the vast ocean.

Over the years, the Mandara Hatchery has become a highlight for eco-conscious travellers visiting Mirissa, reinforcing the resort’s reputation as a pioneer in sustainable hospitality. Continuous investment from the resort’s CSR budget and collaboration with the Wildlife Department ensure that the initiative remains ethical, scientific, and impactful.

Safeguarding these nests is not without its challenges. The team maintains round-the-clock vigilance against natural predators such as dogs, monitor lizards, and snakes, while also working closely with local fishermen and residents to prevent illegal egg collection. In cases

As sea turtles—creatures that can live over a century—continue their ancient nesting ritual along the southern coast, Mandara Resort Mirissa stands proudly as a guardian of their survival. What began as one man’s personal passion has grown into a collective movement to protect life, nature, and the enduring spirit of Sri Lanka’s coastal beauty.

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HOTELS

ONYX Hospitality Group Elevates Thai Ingredients Through Sustainable Partnerships

TTA BULLETIN

ONYX Hospitality Group, a leading Southeast Asian hospitality management company with a diverse portfolio of hotels, resorts, serviced apartments, and luxury residences, is deepening its commitment to sustainability by transforming its approach to dining. The Group has begun working directly with local farmers across Thailand who practice sustainable production methods, sourcing premium ingredients that celebrate provenance and reduce environmental impact.

At ONYX’s properties in Thailand, these ingredients form the foundation of menus that are not only refined and flavourful, but also rooted in the stories of the communities from which they are sourced. Guests can enjoy exceptional cuisine while experiencing a more meaningful connection to place and culture.

This initiative highlights ONYX’s two core principles: “Responsible Sourcing,” which emphasises the careful selection of ingredients that benefit consumers, society, and the environment, and “Empowering Local,” which focuses on supporting local producers in achieving stable, sustainable growth. Together, these principles not only elevate ONYX’s service standards but also create added value for guests—allowing them to be part of the sustainability journey with every meal crafted from thoughtfully sourced premium ingredients.

Every dish becomes a storyteller, showcasing the dedication of quality producers from across Thailand.

For instance, organic eggs are sourced from Neville Organic Farm, a free-range chicken farm where hens are raised naturally. The result is fresh, clean, and highly nutritious eggs that embody the farm’s commitment to improving animal welfare. The meat and cold cuts served in ONYX restaurants are supplied by Antica Luna, a producer renowned for its expertise in creating premium-quality cheeses and cold cuts. Freshly made each day, these products are crafted using ingredients sourced from Thai farmers and developed under the guidance of Italian specialists who uphold the highest standards of sustainability and safety. For its dairy selection, ONYX sources artisanal cheese from Jartisann Cheeserie, a Chiang Mai-based producer renowned for crafting Michelin-starred creations that have gained international acclaim.

Guided by its vision to deliver memorable experiences and world-class service while embracing social and environmental responsibility, ONYX Hospitality Group is redefining dining as more than a culinary moment. Each meal becomes an opportunity to blend luxury with authenticity, celebrate the richness of local culture, and generate lasting value for Thai farmers, surrounding communities, and the wider world.

Uga Halloowella Recognized Among Asia’s Finest at Condé Nast Traveler Readers’ Choice Awards 2025

TTA BULLETIN

Uga Halloowella, the latest addition to the renowned Uga portfolio, has been ranked No. 5 in the “Rest of Asia” category at the prestigious Condé Nast Traveler Readers’ Choice Awards 2025. This recognition places Uga Halloowella among the best hotels in Asia, further solidifying Sri Lanka’s presence on the global luxury travel map.



The annual Readers’ Choice Awards celebrate the world’s most exceptional destinations, hotels, and experiences — chosen entirely by Condé Nast Traveler readers. This year’s results highlight Asia’s dynamic and ever-evolving hospitality landscape, with Uga Halloowella standing out as a distinctive retreat that beautifully blends modern luxury with Sri Lanka’s serene natural charm.

Aptly described by CNT stating – ‘Sri Lanka’s Uga Halloowella is one shiny new Asian address which caught the attention of our readers’, Uga Halloowella continues to be one of the most sought after luxury stays in Asia.

Located amidst the misty hills and lush landscapes of Halloowella, the property offers an intimate escape inspired by Uga’s commitment to sustainability, authenticity, and refined design. Its architecture harmoniously integrates with nature, offering guests an immersive experience that embodies the brand’s philosophy of understated elegance and personalized service.

With this latest recognition, Uga Halloowella joins an exclusive list of world-class properties that continue to redefine hospitality in the region — an achievement that cements Uga’s enduring reputation as one of Sri Lanka’s leading luxury hospitality brands.

Resplendent Ceylon Recognised at Condé Nast Traveller Readers’ Choice Awards 2025 for Fifth Consecutive Year

TTA BULLETIN

Resplendent Ceylon has once again been recognised at the prestigious Condé Nast Traveller Readers’ Choice Awards, marking the fifth consecutive year of international acclaim for the luxury hospitality brand.



ties, Kayaam House and Ahu Bay have been recognised on this global stage, whilst Ceylon Tea Trails is celebrating its 20th anniversary and still setting the benchmark.

The Readers’ Choice Awards, now in their 37th year, are

At the 2025 awards, Kayaam House was ranked 3rd in the Best Hotels in the Rest of Asia category, while Ahu Bay secured 3rd place in the Best Resorts in the Rest of Asia category. In addition, Ceylon Tea Trails was awarded 9th place among the Best Resorts in the Rest of Asia, reaffirming its enduring appeal as Sri Lanka’s iconic tea country escape.

“These awards are especially meaningful to us because they reflect the voices of discerning travellers from around the world,” said Malik J. Fernando, Chairman of Resplendent Ceylon. “We are constantly evolving to elevate Sri Lanka’s luxury hospitality offering and are immensely proud of the international recognition this brings to Sri Lanka. It is particularly gratifying that two of our newer proper-

among the most respected in the travel industry. Each year, hundreds of thousands of Condé Nast Traveller readers worldwide vote on their favourite destinations, hotels, resorts, and experiences. Being included in these rankings is a mark of both exceptional quality and consistent guest satisfaction, underscoring Resplendent Ceylon’s role as a pioneer of luxury travel in Sri Lanka.

Resplendent Ceylon is also part of the Dilmah Tea family, Sri Lanka’s iconic, family-owned tea company founded on principles of taste, tradition, and sustainability. This connection brings an authentic tea heritage to the guest experience while reinforcing the brand’s values of ethical luxury and environmental responsibility.

Minor Hotels Expands ‘Dollar for Deeds’ Programme Partnering with Ayati Trust in Supporting Children with Disabilities Throughout Sri Lanka

TTA BULLETIN

Minor Hotels, an international hotel owner, operator and investor with a portfolio of more than 560 properties across 59 countries, continues to deepen its commitment to supporting the destinations in which it operates. As part of this long-standing focus, the group’s global ‘Dollars for Deeds’ initiative has played an important role in connecting hospitality with meaningful community support.



First introduced nearly a decade ago in Minor Hotels’ Anantara branded properties in Thailand, ‘Dollars for Deeds’ is now embedded into the social responsibility strategies of Minor Hotels worldwide. The programme invites guests to opt-in at check-in by contributing one US dollar per night of their stay. Minor Hotels matches each donation in full, with funds directed to carefully selected charitable and environmental projects tailored to each location.

From coral conservation in the Maldives to child welfare projects in Hungary, the initiative has consistently sought to create measurable impact. In Sri Lanka, support has been directed towards the Turtle Hatchery near Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle and the Elephant Orphanage in Pinnawala through Anantara Kalutara and Avani Kalutara.

Now, Minor Hotels Sri Lanka is taking this commitment even further by partnering with Ayati Trust, a national centre dedicated to supporting children with disabilities. Established in 2016 and operational since 2020, the Ayati National Centre for Children with Disabilities provides diagnostic, therapeutic, and educational services to children and families across Sri Lanka. The facility — the first of its kind nationally — was formed through collaboration between the University of Kelaniya, Hemas Holdings, MAS Holdings, Roshan Wijerama family Foundation, Rotary International, and several philanthropic partners.

Ayati was built on the understanding that every child has potential — but children with disabilities often face social barriers that limit their access to care and opportunity. The centre offers early intervention programmes, occupational and speech therapy, prosthetics and orthotics, supported education services, and family counselling, while also training healthcare and education professionals to extend its impact across the country. Since opening, over 14,000 children have

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HOTELS

Cinnamon Bentota Beach – Signature Selection welcomes Kurundu Wellness

TTA BULLETIN

Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts has extended its wellness concept to the southern coast with the introduction of Kurundu Wellness at Cinnamon Bentota Beach -Signature Selection, following its successful debut at Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams, Colombo.

Named after the Sinhalese word for “cinnamon,” Kurundu is the brand’s dedicated wellness concept that combines Ayurvedic principles with elements of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Operated under the theme “Wellness by Choice,” it aims to provide structured and personalised wellness experiences supported by locally inspired practices.

The new facility at Cinnamon Bentota Beach – Signature Selection includes:

- Two Signature Wellness Suites, each featuring a private relaxation pavilion and jacuzzi.
- A Thai Massage Room, offering traditional Thai therapies.
- A Manicure and Pedicure Room, designed for restorative care.
- Access to an expansive Wellness and Relaxation Area with a sauna, steam room, jacuzzi, and cold plunge showers for a complete thermal and hydrotherapy experience.



Treatments incorporate locally sourced botanicals and cinnamon-based therapies, complemented by programmes that integrate movement, mindfulness, and nutrition.

Johan Aschan, General Manager of Cinnamon Bentota Beach – Signature Selection, stated: “The launch of Kurundu Wellness at Cinnamon Bentota Beach – Signature

Selection marks a significant enhancement to our resort’s wellness proposition. Establishing our own wellness identity allows us to offer authentic, locally inspired experiences that meet the expectations of today’s traveller. This initiative further strengthens our resort’s position as a destination for relaxation, rejuvenation, and mindful living.”

As part of its continued development at Cinnamon Bentota Beach - Signature Selection, the Kurundu Wellness will expand its offering with specialised wellness packages and extended-stay programs in the coming months. These will include targeted wellness journeys tailored to individual guest needs, alongside collaborative retreats with visiting practitioners and experts. The expansion highlights the resort’s commitment to evolving into a comprehensive wellness destination on Sri Lanka’s southern coast.

Stafford Bungalow Achieves Sanderson Phillips 'Green Status' Accreditation

TTA BULLETIN

Stafford Bungalow is proud to announce that it has achieved the prestigious Sanderson Phillips 'Green Status' accreditation — a globally recognized mark of safety, quality, and compliance. This distinction signifies that Stafford Bungalow has been independently audited and deemed fit for sale by meeting international accommodation safety standards.

The Sanderson Phillips audit covers a comprehensive range of critical areas, including fire safety, fuel and gas safety, food and water hygiene, swimming pool management, and general maintenance standards. By meeting or exceeding these benchmarks, Stafford Bungalow ensures that our guests enjoy not only luxury and heritage, but also peace of mind knowing that their wellbeing is safeguarded throughout their stay.

The ‘Green Status’ is the highest assurance level within the Sanderson Phillips safety system and is trusted by leading global



tour operators and travel partners. For our travel trade partners, this accreditation offers an additional layer of confidence when recommending Stafford Bungalow to discerning guests — knowing that the property aligns with international best practices in hospitality safety.

At Stafford Bungalow, we view safety and sustainability as integral to our brand promise — to offer an authentic, luxurious, and secure experience amidst the serenity of our private tea estate in Ragala, Nuwara Eliya. This recognition underscores our ongoing commitment to excellence, transparency, and guest wellbeing.

“Around The World In Magnets – Sri Lanka”: A Journey That Captures the Island’s Soul, One Magnet at a Time

TTA BULLETIN

Travel meets art in a celebration of stories, culture, and craftsmanship with the launch of “Around the World in Magnets – Sri Lanka”, a ground-breaking travelogue by Dr. Anthony Vipin Das and Vidushi Duggal, published by Sarasavi Publishers. The book was unveiled on October 16, 2025, at Jetwing Colombo Seven, by His Excellency Shri. Santosh Jha, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka.



histories, shared culture, cuisine, and centuries of close people-to-people connections. The book ‘Around the World in Magnets – Sri Lanka’ is a heartening example of the warmth and affection that naturally flow across our borders. It beautifully showcases Sri Lanka’s rich tourism potential and the spirit of friendship that continues to strengthen our ties.”

A first of its kind, this vibrant edition captures the essence of Sri Lanka through an extraordinary collection of 100 magnets, each representing a story, a destination, or a cherished memory from the island. From the northern charm of Jaffna to the southern coastal beauty of Galle, and from the serene Negombo shores to the historic harbour of Trincomalee, the authors journeyed across the nation, immersing themselves in Sri Lanka’s rich art, craft, culture, cuisine and heritage.

Each magnet in the collection is paired with a three-part narrative, a personal travel anecdote, an insight into the destination, and a guide for exploring further. For those magnets that could not be found during the journey, the authors collaborated with local artisans to handcraft special pieces, infusing the book with creativity and authenticity. The result is a tapestry of stories that transcend borders and transform everyday travel souvenirs into timeless keepsakes.

His Excellency Shri. Santosh Jha, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, on launching the book said: “India and Sri Lanka share a deep and enduring civilisational bond — reflected in our intertwined

“Every magnet in this book holds a story — not just of a place, but of the emotion it evoked,” says Vidushi Duggal, co-author of the book.

“Through these miniature masterpieces, we wanted to capture the heartbeat of Sri Lanka — its people, places, and profound sense of connection,” adds Dr. Anthony Vipin Das, co-author.

“We are delighted to celebrate this milestone with our dear friends, Vipin and Vidushi, whose energy and curiosity have deeply inspired us. Supporting ‘Around the World in Magnets – Sri Lanka Edition’ has been a joyful journey. This book captures Sri Lanka through the eyes of two Indian travellers whose passion turns simple magnets into symbols of connection. To us, it reflects not just a story, but the enduring friendship and creative partnership between Sri Lanka and India,” said Shehani Gomes and Michael Jayawardana, Project Collaborators.

Supported by Ceylon Roots and Jetwing Hotels, the project exemplifies a shared vision to promote responsible, immersive tourism and showcase Sri Lanka’s diversity to global travellers.



Dishan Perera, Chief Executive Officer of Ceylon Roots, said: “We are proud to have partnered on this landmark project, ‘Around the World in Magnets - Sri Lanka,’ which reimagines travel writing for our region.

Experience Kele Kade at Pegasus Reef Hotel

TTA BULLETIN

Step into Kele Kade, Pegasus Reef Hotel’s charming village-style food corner celebrating authentic Sri Lankan flavors. Guests can enjoy traditional dishes like hoppers, coconut roti, spicy curries, and sweet treats, all served in a rustic, nostalgic setting.

With its earthen décor, aromatic spices, and warm hospitality, Kele Kade offers more than a meal — it’s a true taste of Sri Lankan culture and tradition, right by the sea.



HOTELS

Kayaam Wellness and Cape Weligama named among Tatler Best 100 Hotels in Asia-Pacific 2025

TTA BULLETIN

Resplendent Ceylon & Reverie the luxury hospitality collection by Dilmah Tea, are proud to announce that Kayaam Wellness and Cape Weligama have been named to the Tatler Best 100 Hotels in Asia-Pacific 2025, unveiled recently at the Tatler Best Awards ceremony in Bangkok.



Selected through Tatler’s regional platform — which recognises establishments setting new standards of creativity, craftsmanship and guest experience across Asia-Pacific — the Tatler Best 100 represents peer recognition from influential tastemakers, industry leaders and discerning travellers across 20+ destinations.

They join an award-winning portfolio that includes Ceylon Tea Trails, Wild Coast Tented Lodge and Ahu Bay- all conceived as living expressions of Sri Lankan hospitality, conservation and purpose.

Commenting on the recognition, Dilshan Gnanapragasam, Chief Commercial Officer of Resplendent Ceylon, “We are deeply proud that Kayaam Wellness and Cape Weligama have been recognised on a global platform such as Tatler. This honour is not only a validation of our teams and our philosophy - it is a win for Sri Lanka as a destination. Recognition of this calibre strengthens confidence in the country’s ability to compete among the world’s finest experiences.”

Kayaam Wellness, formerly known as

Kayaam House, part of the Reverie collection, is a contemplative coastal sanctuary on Sri Lanka’s south, combining Ayurvedic-led therapeutics, new Spa Complex, and restorative spaces framed by tropical gardens and the open sea —purpose-designed for deep healing in residence.

Cape Weligama, the cliff-top and beach-side flagship of Resplendent Ceylon, sits on a headland overlooking two secluded bays on the island’s southern riviera. The resort blends generous villas and pavilions with cinematic terraces, curated dining, sailing and surf, and a new generation of family and nature-forward experiences against sweeping ocean horizons.

Resplendent Ceylon Relais and Chateaux collection which comprises of Ceylon Tea Trails, Wild Coast & Cape Weligama and Reverie which include Ahu Bay & Kayaam Wellness. are the luxury hospitality brands founded by Dilmah Tea to set a new standard for Sri Lankan hospitality — combining place-making, people development, community value and conservation with globally benchmarked guest experience.

Uga Hallowella Recognized Among the World’s Best at the National Geographic Traveller Hotel Awards 2025

TTA BULLETIN

Uga Hallowella, the latest addition to Uga Resorts distinguished collection of luxury boutique properties, has been recognized as the Runner-up in the “Food Hero” category at the National Geographic Traveller Hotel Awards 2025, cementing its place among the top 30 hotels in the world.



Each year, the National Geographic Traveler Hotel Awards celebrate the most remarkable new and renovated hotels across the globe — from bold architectural designs to properties that showcase a deep commitment to sustainability, authenticity, and local culture.

In its feature, National Geographic described Uga Hallowella as “a retreat that celebrates the natural bounty of its surroundings.” Once owned by a British First World War fighter pilot, this early 20th-century bungalow nestled among Sri Lanka’s lush tea plantations has been

thoughtfully restored into a serene hideaway that champions local produce and culinary excellence. Guests can enjoy immersive experiences such as plantation tours, where they sip freshly plucked and brewed tea, before returning to meals crafted with ingredients sourced from the estate and its surrounding communities.

This accolade reaffirms Uga Resorts ongoing dedication to sustainability, heritage preservation, and exceptional guest experiences, placing Sri Lanka prominently on the global luxury travel map.

Building Resilience: Amari Colombo & Wijeya Newspapers Lead Sri Lanka’s World Architecture Day 2025 Celebrations

TTA BULLETIN

In celebration of World Architecture Day 2025, Amari Colombo, in proud collaboration with Wijeya Newspapers Limited (WNL) as the Title Partner, led an exclusive panel discussion themed “Design for Strength.” The event was held recently at the Saffira Ballroom, Amari Colombo, bringing together leading voices in architecture, design, and sustainable fashion for a dialogue on resilience, cultural identity, and purpose-driven rebuilding.



Discussing future-focused design education that empowers the next generation of resilient, adaptive, and culturally conscious creators. Design for Strength — Sri Lanka’s Creative Dialogue

This initiative convened distinguished architects, designers, educators, and cultural creative leaders to explore how design transcends aesthetics to foster resilience, heritage, and sustainability in a rapidly evolving world. The panel, moderated by The Sun newspaper’s Mifra Sadikeen, featured experts from diverse creative and operational disciplines:

- Sonali Dharmawardena – Artist & Fashion Designer
Showcasing heritage Batik in contemporary fashion, bridging art, culture, and design.
- Vinod Jayasinghe – Architect, Vinod Jayasinghe Associates
Highlighting architecture inspired by Geoffrey Bawa’s ethos, demonstrating how spaces can embody continuity, harmony, and cultural resilience.
- Indika Jayawardena – Hotel Manager, Amari Colombo
Presenting Amari Colombo as a platform for sustainability, inclusivity, and cultural identity within global hospitality standards.
- Dinesh Chandrasena – Academic
Director, College of Fashion and Design (CFD)

The panel explored four key dimensions of strength in design:

1. Cultural Resilience: Preserving identity through innovation and adaptive design.
2. Sustainable Practices: Integrating environmental and social responsibility into creative disciplines.
3. Global Relevance, Local Identity: Balancing international standards with contextual sensitivity.
4. Creative Adaptability: Embracing change and reinvention as tools for enduring impact.

Monty Ariyaratne, General Manager, Amari Colombo, commented: "This was more than a partnership—it was a cultural statement. We were honoured to collaborate with Wijeya Newspapers Limited to present a design narrative that is not only visually compelling but emotionally resonant. ‘Design for Strength’ reminds us that resilience, heritage, and innovation are intertwined, and that thoughtful design can empower communities, inspire creativity, and enrich cultural identity."

Rediscover the Magic of Bar Reef Resort

TTA BULLETIN

Nestled on the sun-kissed shores of Kalpitiya, along Sri Lanka's northwestern coast, Bar Reef Resort has long been the world’s best kept secret for those seeking an authentic escape into nature. Welcome to the reimagined Bar Reef Resort, Kalpitiya's answer to the modern traveler.



waves lap gently, perfect for sunrise yoga or sunset strolls. The resort's eco-design harmonizes with this natural splendor, featuring 16 premium cabanas thoughtfully divided into garden villas and beach villas.

Drawing inspiration from the nearby Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary – the resort invites global tourists and nomads to rest, recharge, create, and connect amid the waves of the Indian Ocean.

Established as one of Sri Lanka's chic’ eco premier beach resorts, Bar Reef has earned acclaim for its commitment to sustainability and immersive experiences. A few years ago, it was recognized globally for exceptional hospitality and eco-friendly practices. This relaunch builds on that legacy, transforming the property into a haven for travelers

Aerial view of the expansive eco-friendly saltwater pool and golden sands.

At the heart of Bar Reef's allure is its pristine, uncrowded beachfront – a stretch of powdery golden sand where turquoise

These spacious retreats, inspired by traditional Sri Lankan architecture with thatched roofs and open-air layouts, allowing coastal breeze through open-sided bedrooms, creating naturally ventilated spaces that stay refreshingly cool while keeping you connected to ocean rhythms. No stuffy confines here; instead, envision waking up by the ocean waves and palm fronds rustling in the wind, with open-air rain showers under starry skies, spacious verandahs perfect for morning meditation or afternoon brainstorming.

Tailored for travelers from all around the world, each villa offers premium comforts in a boutique setting. Lush private gardens envelop the garden villas, providing secluded tranquility amid tropical foliage, while the beach villas grant direct access to the shore.

Dive into leisure at the resort's crown jewel: the spectacular 40-meter saltwater pool in



Discover the art of refined travel with Hilton’s collection of four exceptional stays across Sri Lanka. From the sophistication of Hilton Colombo in the heart of the capital to the cosmopolitan comfort of Hilton Colombo Residences, city luxury meets effortless ease.

Journey south to Hilton Yala Resort, where wilderness and indulgence intertwine, or retreat to the tranquil beauty of DoubleTree by Hilton Weerawila Rajawarna Resort, a serene escape by the lake. Each offers a distinct escape — all defined by Hilton’s world-renowned hospitality.

For more information, visit [Hilton.com](https://www.hilton.com)



📍 Hilton Colombo



📍 Hilton Colombo Residences



📍 DoubleTree by Hilton
Weerawila Rajawarna Resort



📍 Hilton Yala Resort

SriLankan Airlines - Connecting the World to the Heart of Paradise

As the National Carrier and proud member of the oneworld alliance, SriLankan Airlines continues to serve as the gateway to Sri Lanka and beyond, offering travellers a seamless blend of world-class connectivity, comfort, and the island's renowned warmth.

Operating daily direct flights between London Heathrow and Colombo, the Airline ensures reliable and convenient access for both leisure and business travellers. The well-timed schedule allows smooth connections for those looking to immerse themselves in the island's natural beauty or connect to onward destinations across Asia and the Pacific.

From Colombo, SriLankan Airlines offers an impressive network spanning nine major cities in India, the Maldives (Gan and Malé), key Asia-Pacific destinations, and Sydney and Melbourne in Australia, making it a preferred choice for travelers seeking efficient regional and long-haul connectivity.

Experience Comfort and Style in the Skies

The Colombo – London – Colombo route is typically operated by the Airbus A330-300, a wide-body twin-engine aircraft that balances range, efficiency, and comfort perfectly suited for long-haul travel.

In Business Class, passengers can enjoy fully flat-bed seats with generous space and direct aisle access, complemented by curated meal selections that celebrate both international cuisine and authentic Sri Lankan flavours. A highlight of the journey is the signature Ceylon tea service, served with the same attention to detail and charm that defines the island's hospitality.



In Economy Class, travellers can expect comfortable seating with adjustable headrests, personal in-seat entertainment, and a thoughtfully designed meal service that reflects Sri Lanka's rich culinary heritage. Most aircraft are equipped with Wi-Fi connectivity, USB and power ports, and a modern inflight entertainment system featuring a wide range of movies, TV shows, and music for every taste.

A Journey That Begins with Genuine Sri Lankan Hospitality

Every flight with SriLankan Airlines is a prelude to the island experience itself. From the warm greetings of the attentive cabin crew to the small touches that showcase the essence of Sri Lanka—such as local teas and duty-free souvenirs—the Airline embodies its nation's famed



hospitality.

At London Heathrow, passengers benefit from streamlined check-in, priority services for premium travellers, and access to exclusive lounges. Upon arrival at Bandaranaike International Airport, Colombo, efficient ground services ensure a smooth transition for onward journeys across the island or to regional hubs.

Discover the Island's Timeless Appeal

Any time is the perfect time to discover Sri Lanka—an island blessed with diversity and depth. From ancient cities and lush tea estates to serene beaches and wildlife sanctuaries, Sri Lanka offers a destination rich in heritage and heart. With SriLankan Airlines as your carrier, the journey to this island paradise begins the moment you step on board.

The World Travel Awards Recognises The Cavern As 'Sri Lanka's Leading Boutique Hotel 2025'

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka's boutique hospitality landscape is renowned for offering travelers an intimate, luxurious experience immersed in the country's rich heritage and breathtaking landscapes. The Seven Angels Collection, a distinguished group of boutique hotels, exemplifies this ethos by blending world-class luxury, authentic Sri Lankan charm, and exceptional service across its diverse range of properties. From heritage bungalows in Kandy to wellness retreats in the misty highlands of Haputale, Seven Angels offers a curated selection of boutique properties that cater to discerning travelers seeking comfort, privacy, and personalized experiences.

The story of Seven Angels is deeply connected to the city of Kandy, a place of cultural and historical significance for its founders, Sujeewa and Michelle Palliyaguruge. Their passion for boutique hospitality is reflected in each property, ensuring that guests receive an authentic yet sophisticated Sri Lankan experience. Among the



collection's most iconic stays is Castle Hill Bungalow in Kandy, a heritage property that provides easy access to the city's most revered landmarks, including the Sacred Temple of the Tooth, Kandy Lake, and the ancient temples on the outskirts. Meanwhile, Liyya Water Villas in Dambulla, located in Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle, offers an idyllic retreat within reach of world-famous historical and natural attractions, such as Sigiriya Rock, Dambulla Cave Temple, and the wildlife-rich Minneriya and Kaudulla National Parks. The collection also includes Heritage Boutique Kandy, Clodagh Manor House in Riverston, and Leopard Reach Yala, each offering an experience that combines

Browns Hotels & Resorts Celebrates World Tourism Day by Spotlighting Sri Lanka's Artisans

TTA BULLETIN

This World Tourism Day, Browns Hotels & Resorts, in collaboration with the National Crafts Council, launched Crafting Journeys — a long-term initiative dedicated to celebrating Sri Lanka's artisans and creating new opportunities for their crafts to thrive.

Across Sri Lanka, age-old traditions such as beeralu lace weaving, Dumbara mats, batik, pottery, brassware, mask carving, Sesath, and handloom reflect the island's cultural richness. Yet, while these art forms are admired worldwide, the artisans behind them often face declining demand, lack of visibility, and limited access to sustainable livelihoods. Crafting Journeys was created to change this by providing stronger platforms and connections with international tourism.

Eksath Wijeratne, CEO of Browns Hotels & Resorts, highlighted the vision behind the initiative:

"Tourism must be more than leisure — it must uplift communities. With Crafting



Journeys, we are proud to create a bridge between culture and the traveller. By partnering with the National Crafts Council, we are giving artisans a platform to share their skills with the world, while offering our guests authentic, memorable encounters that go beyond the ordinary."

The initiative transforms Browns Hotels & Resorts properties across the island into cultural hubs, hosting rotating craft villages where artisans demonstrate their skills, conduct workshops, and connect directly with tourists. These interactive experiences create new income opportunities for artisans, while giving tourists from across the world a rare chance to engage with Sri Lanka's living heritage.



Browns

HOTELS & RESORTS

The best kind of *luxury* Is the kind that changes you



When was the last time a vacation truly changed you? At Browns Hotels & Resorts, we believe the best kind of luxury is the kind that transforms you. After all, what's the point of travelling across the world if all you bring back is a photo album?

We curate journeys that break routine, ignite wonder, and awaken your senses—whether you're witnessing the world's largest gathering of wild elephants, sharing beachside dinners, immersing in rich Sri Lankan traditions and culture, or reconnecting with your breath at a forest Ayurveda retreat.

Browns Hotels & Resorts offer authentic Sri Lankan hospitality that embraces you from the moment you arrive, and every experience is designed to connect you more deeply with the island, and with yourself.

Exactly how Sri Lanka as it should be felt...leaving you changed, inside out.



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SriLankan Airlines Scores Hat-trick as Leading International Airline in South Asia at SATA

TTA BULLETIN

SriLankan Airlines scored a hat-trick, winning the title of Leading International Airline in South Asia under the Visitors' Choice Awards category at the South Asian Travel Awards (SATA) 2025, for the third consecutive year, placing the airline at the pinnacle of aviation in the region. The airline directly connects to 33 destinations in 21 countries across the Indian Subcontinent, the Middle East, the Far East, Europe and Australia. This includes major cities in five South Asian countries, covering three-quarters of the region. A comprehensive flight schedule, combined with SriLankan's legendary warmth and hospitality, continues to make the airline a favourite among discerning travellers time and again.



distinction not once, but three times in a row, and we are grateful to everyone who chose SriLankan Airlines for the top place. This award is a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellence, strategic growth and connectivity, as well as our vision to shape the future of air travel in our home region – South Asia. It is truly rewarding to know that our customers and peers share this belief.”

SriLankan Airlines prides itself on providing passengers with an authentically Sri Lankan experience, while maintaining world-class standards in inflight meals, entertainment and amenities. Travellers from across the region can enjoy cuisine curated to suit every palate, ranging from regional specialties and continental flavours to the airline's own award-winning Sri Lankan meal option. Passengers also have access to a comprehensive library of movies and music, with the option to stream content directly to their own devices through wireless inflight entertainment.

Since its inception in 2016, SATA has become of one of South Asia's most esteemed platforms for celebrating excellence in hospitality and travel. Winners are selected through a rigorous nomination process and endorsed by their peers for their service, innovation and impact.

Indunil Wijekoon, Regional Manager Sri Lanka & Indian Ocean at SriLankan Airlines, commented on the award, stating, “We are delighted to be recognised with this

Beyond service excellence, SriLankan Airlines is celebrated for its extensive schedule, offering convenient connections worldwide.

Qatar Airways Lands Inaugural Flight at The Red Sea, Saudi Arabia

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways recently marked the launch of three weekly non-stop flights to Red Sea International Airport (RSI), operated by daa International, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from Hamad International Airport (DOH), the Best Airport in the Middle East as voted by Skytrax in 2025.

The Red Sea is the 12th destination in Saudi Arabia to be serviced by Qatar Airways, following operations in Abha, AIUla, Dammam, Jeddah, Medina, NEOM, Qassim, Riyadh, Tabuk, Taif, and Yanbu. This expansion reinforces Qatar Airways' position in the Saudi market and demonstrates the airline's long-term commitment to enhancing connectivity across the Kingdom.

The RSI service further adds to the airline's global network of more than 170 destinations, offering seamless connections for travellers from across six continents, including Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe to the Kingdom's west coast through Doha.

Upon landing, Qatar Airways delegation headed by Qatar Airways SVP Business Control and Financial Support, Mr. Abdul-lah Al Malki, and VP Sales – Middle East, Caucasus, Pakistan & ISC, Mr. Karthik Viswanathan, and Head of Aeropolitical & Regulatory Affairs, Sheikh Jassim bin

Fahad Al-Thani, was welcomed by John Pagano, Group CEO at Red Sea Global – the developer behind The Red Sea destination and RSI, and Andrew Tyler-Smith, Chief Executive Officer at RSI.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Officer, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer, said: “We at Qatar Airways are proud to expand our global network of more than 170 destinations with the inauguration of service to The Red Sea. The importance of the Saudi market, and our commitment to it, is proven by the growing reach of our services in the Kingdom. This new route – a testament to the close ties between the two countries – offers travellers seamless, world class access to one of the Middle East's emerging destinations onboard the World's Best Airline.”

RSG Group Chief Executive Officer, Mr. John Pagano, said: “Welcoming Qatar Airways to Red Sea International Airport is a key step in giving more travellers from around the world easy access to The Red Sea destination. With the opening of Shura Island last month and our second destination AMAALA welcoming guests in the coming months, enhanced international connectivity means even more people can now experience the best of Saudi culture, hospitality, and nature in one of the most picturesque places on the planet.”

Hilton Colombo Hosts Oktoberfest for the 32nd Consecutive Year

TTA BULLETIN

Hilton Colombo is once again raising the steins as it hosts Oktoberfest for the 32nd consecutive year, inviting guests to gather in the spirit of Bavarian tradition. Taking place from 6 to 15 November 2025 at the hotel's Sports Centre Arena, the festival promises nights filled with authentic German flavors, flowing brews, and vibrant entertainment.



Since its debut more than three decades ago, Oktoberfest at Hilton Colombo has grown into a highlight of the city's social calendar, drawing both locals and international visitors eager to experience its festive atmosphere. This year, guests can savor a hearty Bavarian buffet paired with flowing brews and the lively beats of the Oompah Band from Germany.

Bavarian games and activities, including the ever-popular brew drinking competition, Bavarian whip cracking, and brass music, ensuring every evening is filled with laughter and festive cheer. “Oktoberfest at Hilton Colombo is more than a festival, it's a tradition that brings people together year after year to celebrate good food, great music, and meaningful connections. We are proud to keep this tradition alive for 32 years, and we look forward to welcoming our community back this November to share in the joy of Bavarian culture, surrounded by Hilton hospitality,” said Manesh Fernando, Area General Manager, Hilton Sri Lanka

Adding to the excitement are traditional

Emirates expands London Heathrow schedule to 48 weekly flights ahead of winter rush

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates, the world's largest international airline, is unlocking more opportunities for travel with the addition of six weekly flights to its London Heathrow schedule, starting 26 October 2025.

The boosted schedule for the winter season follows record growth and demand, providing more convenience and departure time choices for travellers journeying to and from London Heathrow, and is well-timed to serve the year-end travel peak.

Emirates already flies six times a day to and from London Heathrow, and all flights are served by its flagship Airbus A380. The additional flights will operate on all days except for Fridays during the winter period with the airline's Boeing 777-300ER, offering over 350 seats each way in a three-class configuration split between First, Business, and Economy.

Strategically timed overnight departures from London Heathrow to Dubai provide convenient onward connections to destinations like Durban, Phuket, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Beijing, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Jakarta. Flights to London Heathrow offer well-timed connectivity for travellers coming from cities across West Asia like Ahmedabad, Lahore, Maldives, Hyderabad and Chennai, Beijing and Shanghai in the Chinese mainland as well as several points within the Middle East including Bahrain, Dammam and Riyadh.

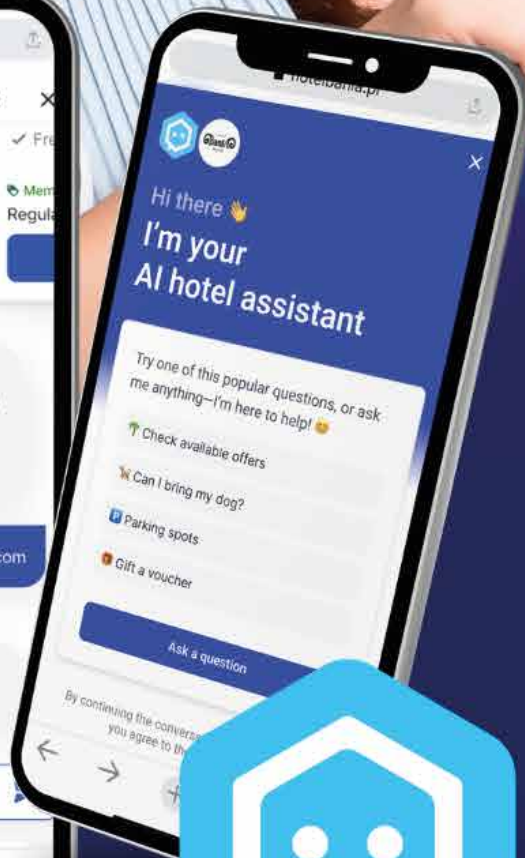
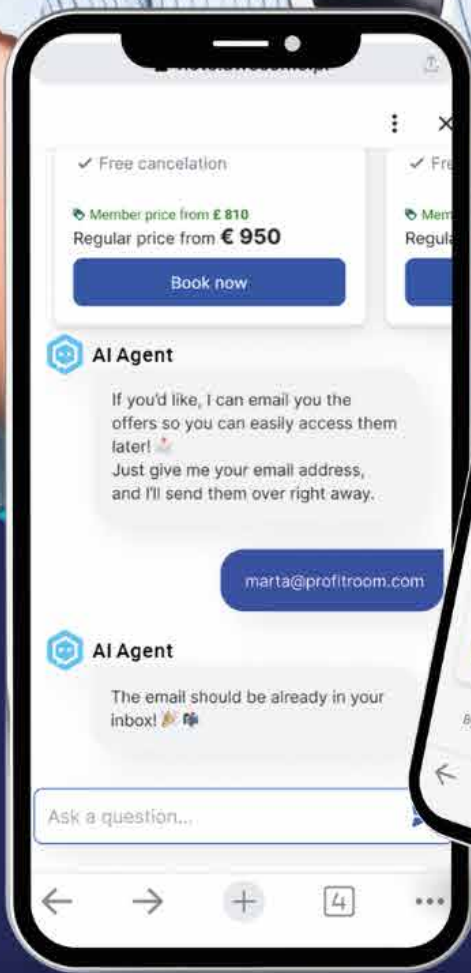
Flight EK41 will depart Dubai on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday at 13:40hrs, arriving in London Heathrow at 17:40hrs*. The return flight, EK42, departs London Heathrow at 22:35hrs on Monday, Wednesday and

Sunday, arriving in Dubai at 09:35hrs the next day. The return flight, EK42, departs London Heathrow at 21:20hrs on Tuesday and Saturday, arriving in Dubai at 08:20hrs the next day. On Thursdays, EK41 will depart Dubai at 12:55hrs, arriving in London Heathrow at 16:55hrs. The return flight, EK42, departs from London Heathrow at 21:20hrs, arriving in Dubai at 08:20hrs the next day. All times are local.

For more information or to book tickets, customers can visit emirates.com, the Emirates App, Emirates retail stores, Emirates contact centres, or via travel agents.

Enhanced frequencies at Emirates' London hubs, including London Heathrow** and London Gatwick, will take the airline's total weekly services to 90 flights by early next year. Last month, Emirates announced a fourth daily flight to London Gatwick, starting from 8th February 2026, operated on the airline's newest aircraft, the Airbus A350.

By February 2026, Emirates will serve the UK with 146 weekly flights across its three London airports London Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, in addition to its regional gateways Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, Glasgow and Edinburgh. All customers travelling with Emirates can expect to enjoy a best-in-class onboard experience with exceptional levels of comfort and hospitality. The airline offers its customers an unmatched culinary experience in the skies with regionally inspired multi-course menus developed by a team of award-winning chefs, complemented by a wide selection of premium beverages.



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Chandra Wickramasinghe Celebrates Five Decades of Dedication in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Chandra Wickramasighe, Chairman/Managing Director Connaissance De Ceylan recently hosted a reception to celebrate the significant milestone of 50 years in the hospitality and tourism industry





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‘Aircrafted KIDS’ backpacks reach more than 800 children in Jordan

TTA BULLETIN

As part of its commitment to empowering Jordanian youth and their educational aspirations, Emirates, the world’s largest international airline, has distributed 834 handcrafted children’s backpacks alongside essential school supplies through its dedicated ‘Aircrafted KIDS’ initiative. The bags were distributed to four organisations across Jordan, including SOS Children’s Villages, Madrasati Initiative, Jewels, and Al-Hussein Social Foundation Society.

Education is one of the most powerful drivers of social mobility and economic empowerment, which inspired Emirates to launch this initiative distributing limited-edition handcrafted backpacks and essential stationery from its ‘Aircrafted KIDS’ collection to students in Jordan. The initiative equips students with learning essentials, reinforcing Emirates’ longstanding dedication to empowering young people in the communities it serves.

Mohammad Bin Hafiz, Emirates’ Country Manager for Jordan and West Bank, said, “Education is a fundamental driver of progress, and through Aircrafted KIDS, we want to help children have access to resources necessary to build a better, successful future. We have been a part of Amman’s skies since the beginning of our



operations, dating back to 1986 and share a long and storied history in this country. We are proud to have invested in not just scaling our operations over the years but also in the local community.”

“We are grateful for our partnership with Emirates. It goes beyond mere distribution of schoolbags; it carries a message of hope, joy, and learning. These bags have touched our students’ hearts, inspiring them to dream bigger and strengthening their sense of responsibility towards our world”, said Tala Sweis, Madrasati’s Director.

Areej Khatib, Fund Development and Communications Director at SOS Children’s Villages, stated: “A child’s school bag holds more than just books, it carries the beginning of a dream and marks the first step toward a future we believe in and strive to build with every child.”

Edelweiss Air to Resume Direct Flights Between Zurich and Colombo for Winter 2025/26

TTA BULLETIN

Swiss leisure carrier Edelweiss Air, wholly owned by Swiss International Airlines and a member of the Lufthansa Group, has announced the resumption of its seasonal direct flights between Zurich and Colombo for the upcoming winter schedule. Starting end of October 2025, the airline will operate twice-weekly flights until Q2 2026, providing enhanced connectivity between Sri Lanka and Switzerland, with convenient onward connections across Europe, North America, and beyond via Zurich.



The announcement was made during a recent visit to Colombo by Urs Limacher Director / Head of Sales, Services and Distribution, where the occasion was marked with a special reception hosted at the Swiss Ambassador’s residence. The event brought together key representatives from Sri Lanka’s aviation and tourism industries, highlighting the importance of this direct link for leisure and business travel.

Edelweiss first launched flights to Colombo in 2016 and has since become a valued seasonal operator, contributing significantly to Sri Lanka’s inbound tourism, particularly from Switzerland and wider European markets. The airline’s Airbus A340-300 aircraft, offering a 314-seat configuration with 27 Business Class, 76 Premium Economy, and 211 Economy Class seats, ensures a premium travel experience for passengers.

Founded in 1995 and named after Switzer-

land’s symbolic Edelweiss flower, the airline is recognized for its focus on quality, comfort, and reliability. The renewed Zurich-Colombo service is expected to further strengthen tourism ties, attract high-value European travelers, and support Sri Lanka’s ambitious visitor arrival targets for the upcoming year.

“We are delighted to welcome Edelweiss Air’s return for the 2025/26 winter season,” said Limacher. “The direct connectivity between Zurich and Colombo is not only a gateway for Swiss travelers but also a vital link to Europe through the Lufthansa and SWISS network.

We extend our appreciation to Edelweiss, Swiss International Airlines, and United Ventures (Pvt) Ltd., the General Sales Agent for Lufthansa Group in Sri Lanka, for their continued commitment to strengthening tourism and aviation ties with Sri Lanka.”

With twice-weekly operations through to spring 2026, Edelweiss Air reaffirms its long-standing relationship with Sri Lanka and its role in connecting global travelers to the island’s diverse and vibrant experiences.

Etihad Airways Continues to Soar Across Southeast Asia - Only Airline Directly Connecting the GCC to Sumatra and Phnom Penh

TTA BULLETIN



Etihad Airways, the national carrier of the United Arab Emirates, celebrated the launch of two new routes into Southeast Asia, bringing the airline’s global network to 83 destinations. On 2 October, the airline operated its first-ever flight to Medan in Sumatra, Indonesia, followed by the launch of flights to Phnom Penh, the capital of the Kingdom of Cambodia, on 3 October.

These new routes strengthen the airline’s commitment to enhancing global connectivity and enriching cultural exchange and economic connections between Southeast Asia and markets across the Middle East, Europe and Africa.

“We’re proud to expand our network in Southeast Asia, inviting more guests across the region to explore our home with a convenient and direct route to Abu Dhabi, creating new connections for commerce and tourism between Abu Dhabi and the region. We’re also pleased to encourage and inspire travel to these two new culturally rich and diverse places, both Sumatra and Phnom Penh are extraordinary destinations with both natural and man-made wonders to offer and explore,” said, Antonoaldo Neves, Chief Executive Officer at Etihad Airways.

Airways.

Etihad’s inaugural flight to Medan unlocks a gateway to one of Southeast Asia’s best-kept secrets and one of Indonesia’s most captivating yet lesser-known regions. Sumatra is home to lush rainforests, ancient cultures, and spectacular natural landmarks such as Lake Toba, the world’s largest volcanic lake and a UNESCO Global Geopark.

Travellers can explore the region’s distinctive Batak culture, wander through misty highlands, or encounter critically endangered orangutans in their natural habitat. Medan itself offers a rich urban tapestry of colonial architecture, stunning temples, and vibrant markets filled with traditional Sumatran cuisine.

Beyond tourism, Medan is a thriving economic hub, making the new route a valuable conduit for business and trade between Indonesia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa. Phnom Penh: Etihad Spreads its Wings in Cambodia

Celebrating Etihad’s entry into Cambodia, the airline has introduced four weekly flights that link the Kingdom with Abu Dhabi’s global network, increasing to six

Tour Blue Named Best Destination Management Company for Sri Lanka at Global Tourism Awards 2025 – Jury’s Award

TTA BULLETIN

Tour Blue Holdings (Pvt) Ltd, one of Sri Lanka’s most dynamic Destination Management Companies, has been honoured with the Jury’s Award for Best Destination Management Company – Sri Lanka at the Global Tourism Awards 2025 held on 30th September in New Delhi



The accolade, presented at a glittering gala ceremony, was received by Darshana Cabraal, Joint Managing Director of Tour Blue Holdings, amidst applause from global tourism leaders, industry experts, and dignitaries. This recognition reflects Tour Blue’s unwavering commitment to excellence, sustainability, and innovation in the travel and tourism sector.

Founded 12 years ago, Tour Blue has grown from humble beginnings into one of Sri Lanka’s most recognized medium-scale tour operators. Renowned for delivering personalized, hassle-free travel experiences, the company has earned a reputation for creating journeys that leave lasting impressions.

Over the past year, Tour Blue has achieved

significant milestones, including the Good Travel Seal and recognition as a Travelife Engaged Partner—awards that highlight its dedication to fair, responsible, and sustainable tourism practices. The company has also extended its presence to the North and East of Sri Lanka with a dedicated branch office in Jaffna, further enhancing its ability to serve diverse markets and regional tourism development. This latest honor in India further underscores Tour Blue’s strategic focus on the South Asian market, particularly catering to Indian travelers, who represent a major share of inbound visitors to Sri Lanka.

“This award is not just a recognition of our work, but a celebration of Sri Lanka’s potential as a world-class destination,” said Mr. Cabraal in his acceptance speech.



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Blending Sri Lanka's natural beauty with world-class design and heartfelt service, Radisson Collection Resort, Galle invites you to experience a stay that is as inspiring as it is unforgettable.



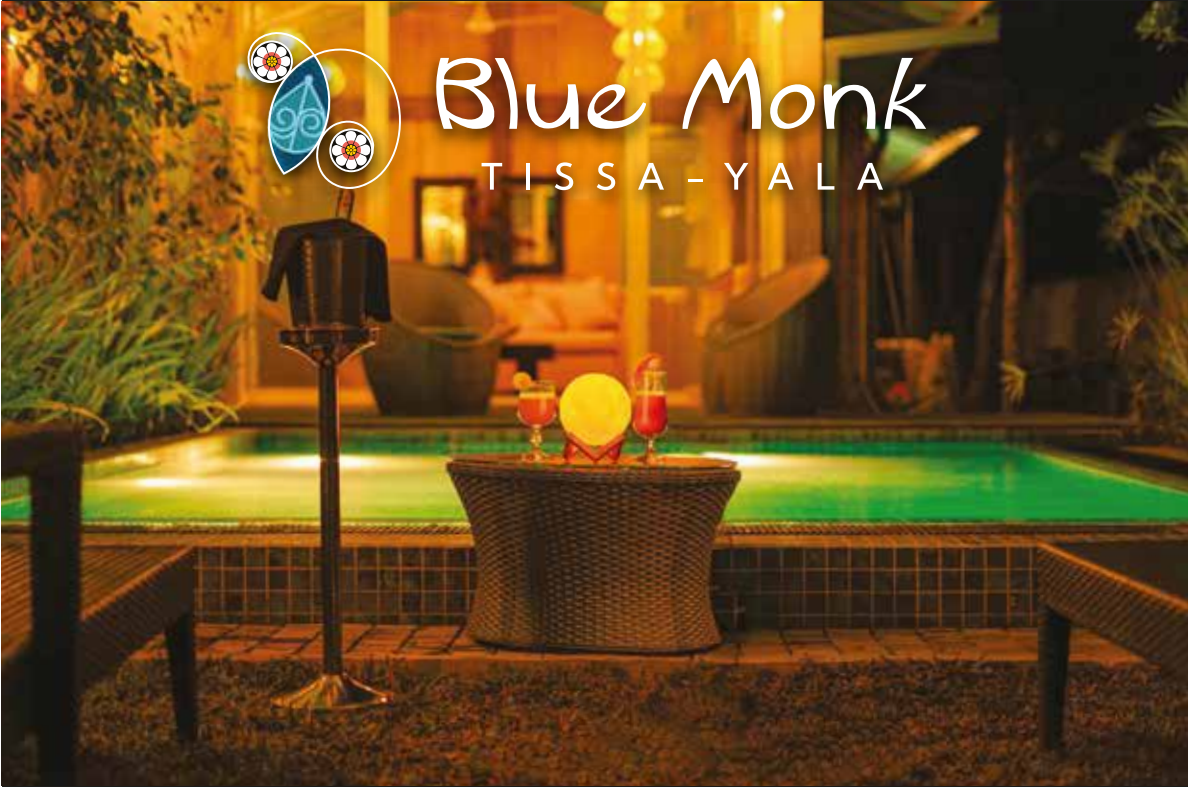
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