

TRAVELTALK

ASIA

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

VOL 25 NO 06 2026 20 PGS



Cape Weligama Joins the World's Most Celebrated Hotels with Condé Nast Triple Crown

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Cape Weligama, the celebrated cliff-top resort perched dramatically above Sri Lanka's southern coastline, has achieved something that very few hotels in the world can claim: a Condé Nast Traveller Triple Crown.

The Resplendent Ceylon property has now been recognised across three of the publication's most prestigious platforms: the Hot List, the Readers' Choice Awards, and the Gold List — making it the only Sri Lankan property to have earned all three distinctions and cementing its place among Asia's most acclaimed luxury retreats.

The journey began over a decade ago. When Cape Weligama opened its doors, Condé Nast Traveller welcomed it onto the coveted Hot List in 2015, reserved for the world's most exciting new hotels. What followed was not a fleeting moment of recognition, but a sustained decade of excellence, five consecutive years of Readers' Choice Awards honours, chosen by the well-travelled readership of one of the world's most respected travel publications. The trilogy was completed most recently with inclusion on the Gold List 2026, the publication's definitive edit of the world's best hotels.



For Resplendent Ceylon Chairman Malik Fernando, the achievement resonates well beyond the resort's cliff-top boundaries.

"This recognition goes beyond Resplendent Ceylon. It speaks to something larger — the spirit of Sri Lankan hospitality itself. Cape Weligama sits at the heart of the Southern Coast, a region leading the country's next chapter in tourism. It truly is a win for all Sri Lankans."

It is a sentiment that will resonate with anyone who has experienced the resort.

The sweeping views of the Indian Ocean, the seamless blend of Sri Lankan warmth and world-class luxury, and the sense that you are somewhere genuinely, irreplaceably special.

For Sri Lanka's tourism industry, the Triple Crown is more than an accolade for one property. It is a signal to the world that the island's south is firmly on the map of global luxury travel and for those who have yet to discover Sri Lanka's southern coast, the world's most trusted travel authority has just made the case rather compellingly.



ITB China 2026 Concludes Successfully with more than 23,500 Attendees Driving Global Travel Collaboration

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

The three-day event recorded continued year-on-year growth, welcoming more than 23,500 attendees. A total of over 44,000 high-value business meetings were facilitated during the show, highlighting China's continued appeal and strong growth momentum in global travel industry cooperation. Key trends shaping this year's conference included the rapid development of travel technology, growing demand for MICE and customised travel, and the continued expansion of the luxury travel segment.

ITB China 2026, the premier B2B travel trade show dedicated to the Chinese travel market, concluded today at the Shanghai World Expo Exhibition and Convention Center, recording a 20% year-on-year increase in net exhibition area. The event brought together more than 900 travel organisations and companies from 85 countries and regions, 1,700 hosted buyers, as well as 280 media representatives and KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders). Held alongside the exhibition, the ITB China Conference, featured more than 180 global industry speakers for in-depth discussions across over 70 forward-looking topics.

Across its three days, ITB China 2026 achieved further growth in exhibition scale, international participation, buyer quality, conference content and on-site business exchanges. Travel organisations and companies from 85 countries and regions represented the full travel industry value chain, covering national tourism organisations and destination management organisations (NTOs/D-MOs), DMCs, hotels and accommodation providers, OTAs, transport service providers, airlines, cruise companies, travel technology companies, attractions and experiences, themed and customised travel providers, insurance providers, and integrated travel services.

In terms of regional participation, exhibitors from Europe, Asia, the Americas and Caribbean, the Middle East, and Africa all expanded further at this year's show. Asia recorded the strongest growth, with participation increasing by 40% year-on-year. Malaysia brought a delegation of more than 60 companies and

organisations, including Sarawak and Malaysia Airlines, while Türkiye recorded a 93% increase in exhibition scale and presented nearly 40 travel companies and organisations, covering key regions and cities such as Cappadocia and Trabzon. The Americas and Caribbean region grew by 26% year-on-year, with countries, city destinations and related travel resources from Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Colombia, the Bahamas, Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Los Angeles, California, reflecting the region's continued efforts to expand engagement with the Chinese market. Europe recorded 20% year-on-year growth, with Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain all increasing their exhibition space. Destination promotion organisations from 29 European countries, including Malta, Cyprus, Austria, Hungary, Finland and Romania, together with the European Travel Commission, further strengthened the overall presentation of European tourism resources. Africa grew by 11% year-on-year, with the national tourism boards of Morocco, Egypt, South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as Ethiopian Airlines Group, taking part in the show. The Middle East was represented by key destinations and companies including Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Emirates, showcasing the region's high-quality tourism resources and global connectivity. The growth of upstream and downstream resources across the travel industry value chain provided Chinese travel buyers with a wider range of global travel products, destination resources and cooperation opportunities.

ITB China 2026 welcomed 1,700 hosted buyers, including Chinese outbound travel buyers from all 31 provincial-level regions across mainland China, as well as Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. Among them, 34% focused on customised travel, themed travel and high-end travel, while 25% were dedicated to the MICE and business travel market, reflecting the continued growth of mid- to high-end and specialised purchasing needs.



The numbers tell a compelling story. Eastern Asia and Southeast Asia together now account for 31.7% of global international travel demand, and that figure is only set to grow. As geopolitical tensions across the Middle East continue to cast a shadow of uncertainty over travel flows, the Middle East crisis is actively reshaping travel patterns in Southeast Asia's favour and travellers are responding decisively.

International air capacity is up 5.9% year on year, and Southeast Asia holds 15.4% of global inspirational travel demand, led by Vietnam, alongside Indonesia, the Philippines and Cambodia. For a region already brimming with potential, this is a moment of extraordinary opportunity

Closer to home, there is much to celebrate. The arrival of VietJet in Colombo with the airline now officially opening its local office is a timely and significant development for Sri Lanka's aviation landscape. It signals growing airline confidence in this market and opens up exciting new connectivity for Sri Lankan travellers heading to Vietnam and beyond.

Air connectivity between Western India and Sri Lanka has also kicked off with a collaboration between FitsAir, Walkers Tour and Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams. This will further secure both arrival from the region and enhance visibility through the multiple channels of distribution.

And then there is news that will delight every Sri Lankan in the travel and hospitality industry. Cape Weligama has been awarded the Condé Nast Triple Crown, one of the most coveted recognitions in global luxury travel. This extraordinary achievement is a powerful affirmation of Sri Lanka's credentials as a world-class destination. Our heartfelt congratulations

to the entire team - you have made the whole industry proud.



Dinushka

Dinushka Chandrasena
Editor

DoubleDee
PUBLICATIONS

Editor / Managing Director
Dinushka Chandrasena

Directors

Firoze Munzeer
Dinesh Chandrasena

Head of Marketing
Anoj Tillekeratne

Digital Marketing & Communication
Lakshini Wanigesinghe

Lead Designer
Eshan Perera

Digital/ Website Associate
Navodh Jayasundara

Website Design
Antyra Hospitality

Printing/ Publishing
Printage (Pvt) Ltd

Traveltalk Asia is a Monthly publication
of DoubleDee Publications Private Limited

15A, Swarna Road, Colombo 6, Sri Lanka
Phone / Fax: +94-115345346
Mobile: +94-777756726,
+94-777756762,

E-mail: Dinushka@doubledee.lk
Anoj@doubledee.lk
Web: www.traveltalkasia.com

Travel Talk Asia is a publication of DoubleDee Publications. All information in Travel Talk Asia is derived from sources, which we consider reliable and a sincere effort is made to report accurate information. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. Similarly, opinions/views expressed by third parties in abstract and/or in interviews are not necessarily shared by Travel Talk Asia. However, we wish to advise our readers that one or more recognized authorities may hold different views than those reported. Material used in this publication is intended for information purpose only. Content of this publication are protected by copyrights laws. Material appearing in Travel Talk Asia cannot be reproduced whole or in part without prior permission. The same rule applies when there is a copyright or the article is taken from another publication. Publications reproducing material either in part or in whole, without permission could face legal action. The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning unsolicited material nor is she responsible for material lost or damaged in transit. This publication is not meant to be an endorsement of any specific product or service offered. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw or amend or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation. All advertisements must comply with the Sri Lankan and International Advertisement Code. The publisher will not be liable for any damage or loss caused by delayed publication, error or failure of an advertisement to appear.

NEWS

CIMX Announces EGYPTAIR as Official Airline Partner

TTA BULLETIN

Partnership signing during ITB China highlights role of international connectivity in China's MICE market. Taking place from 3 to 5 November 2026 in Beijing, CIMX is a new international trade show dedicated to meetings, incentives, conferences, business events and corporate travel management.



The China International MICE Exchange (CIMX) has announced that EGYPTAIR will participate in CIMX 2026 as Official Airline Partner. Taking place from 3 to 5 November 2026 in Beijing, CIMX is a new-generation international B2B trade show dedicated to the MICE and business travel sector, developed by Messe Berlin China. The partnership was formally confirmed during a signing ceremony at ITB China, where Messe Berlin China officially presented the Official Partner plaque to EGYPTAIR. The collaboration underlines the growing importance of international air connectivity in supporting the continued expansion of China's MICE industry.

As Official Airline Partner of CIMX 2026, EGYPTAIR will receive prominent visibility across CIMX's official communications channels, onsite branding, and delegate touchpoints. The partnership positions EGYPTAIR as a recommended airline for MICE buyers, exhibitors, and registered visitors from both China and international markets.

Organized by Messe Berlin China, CIMX connects global and Chinese MICE suppliers with qualified buyers, corporate decision-makers, agencies, associations and industry professionals through exhibition, curated match-making, knowledge exchange and networking opportunities. "CIMX was created to bring together the partners, destinations and decision-makers shaping the next phase of China's MICE market," said Nikolaos Swoch, Director of CIMX. "The partnership with EGYPTAIR combines international travel access with professional business exchange — an

essential driver for the further development of China's meetings, incentives and business events sector."

As Official Airline Partner of CIMX 2026, EGYPTAIR will receive prominent visibility across official CIMX communications, onsite branding and delegate touchpoints. The partnership positions EGYPTAIR as a recommended carrier for MICE buyers, exhibitors and registered visitors from China and international markets.

For EGYPTAIR, this partnership provides a targeted platform to engage with China's corporate travel, meetings and incentive travel market. As Egypt's national carrier, EGYPTAIR connects China with Egypt and onward destinations across the Middle East, Africa and Europe through its international route network.

"China is a strategically important market for EGYPTAIR, and the MICE sector offers significant opportunities for deeper cooperation between China, Egypt and wider international markets," said Captain Mohamed Elyan, Chairman & CEO of EGYPTAIR AIRLINES. "Through our partnership with CIMX, we look forward to supporting growing demand for international meetings, incentives and group travel from China to Egypt and beyond."

The formalization of this strategic partnership during ITB China further demonstrates CIMX's industry influence and resource aggregation capabilities. CIMX 2026 continues to attract leading domestic and international destinations, top-tier business travel service providers, and brand-side corporate buyers, building a strong foundation of high-quality partners for the successful launch of its inaugural edition in Beijing this November.

SATA 2026 Evaluations Kick Off in Sri Lanka for Landmark 10th Edition

TTA BULLETIN

The prestigious South Asian Travel Awards (SATA) has officially commenced its evaluation process for 2026. Jury members have arrived in Colombo to begin assessing the outstanding hospitality and travel nominees representing Sri Lanka.



As SATA celebrates its landmark 10th anniversary, the competition is fiercer than ever, highlighting the resilience,

innovation, and excellence of South Asia's tourism sector.

TripWorks launches Lead Center: The first native CRM purpose-built for tour and activity operators

TTA BULLETIN

TripWorks, the operating system for modern tour and activity businesses, today announced the launch of Lead Center, the first native customer relationship management (CRM) and sales pipeline built directly into a booking platform for tour, activity, and attraction operators.



For years, operators have been forced to duct-tape together spreadsheets, inboxes, third-party automations, and generic CRMs to manage high-value sales activity. But traditional CRMs were built for software pipelines – not live departures, fluctuating capacities, guide schedules, guest counts or inventory that moves in real time.

Lead Center re-architects the sales workflow to meet the unique needs of this industry.

Built natively inside TripWorks, Lead Center connects

inbound demand directly to live booking operations in a single system. Calls, chats, referrals, walk-ins, and web inquiries stream into a unified pipeline where teams can qualify leads, prioritize high-intent demand, and convert opportunities into confirmed bookings without switching tools, syncing data, or navigating disconnected systems.

"Booking systems have traditionally focused on checkout," said Melanie Gannone, Director of Product at TripWorks. "But for many operators, the most valuable revenue starts long before payment. It starts in organic conversations, custom requests, and group coordination. Lead Center brings the entire sales process into TripWorks with a workflow designed for how experience businesses operate in the real world and how operators actually sell. The era of disconnected sales workflows stops now. We're entering a new era of fully integrated lead management."



A SERENE *beachfront escape* ALONG NEGOMBO'S GOLDEN COAST



Set along the golden coast of Negombo, Jetwing Sea offers a refreshed take on a much-loved escape, where light-filled spaces and life by the beach shape an easy, welcoming stay, elevated by legendary Sri Lankan hospitality.

The newest addition, the Sea Residence, is a spacious suite where the sea greets you before the day even begins with wide, uninterrupted views right from the comfort of your bed. Across the hotel, a natural ease carries through, from Seaside Social, an easy-going lounge and cocktail bar, to The Horizon on the beachfront, where thoughtfully crafted cuisine and drinks reflect both local character and global flavour.

With the ocean always in frame and the shore just steps away, Jetwing Sea invites you to check-in, unwind and let Negombo surprise you.



Scan to book your stay
or contact
+94 31 493 3413-7
resv.sea@jetwinghotels.com

f @jetwingsea

YOUR HOME OF LEGENDARY SRI LANKAN HOSPITALITY

Jetwing
SEA
NEGOMBO • SRI LANKA

Thailand Advances Global MICE Ambitions Launching New Brand “MaxiMICE Thailand – From Potential to Exponential”

TTA BULLETIN

The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) today unveiled “MaxiMICE Thailand – From Potential to Exponential,” a new Thailand MICE brand reinforcing the country’s position as a premier destination for business events and for advancing global agendas. It is designed to transform events into exponential opportunities that generate lasting value and meaningful impact for organisers, delegates, and industries worldwide.

Launched at IMEX Frankfurt 2026, the brand is anchored by three strategic pillars: MaxiMICE Your Convenience, MaxiMICE Your Experience, and MaxiMICE Your Impact. Together, they reflect Thailand’s capabilities to deliver a connected, cohesive, future-ready, and human-centred experiences, leveraging the country’s strengths in infrastructure, creativity, and support network to create more impactful business events and deliver unparalleled success.

Dr. Supawan Teerarat, President of the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (Public Organization), or TCEB, said the launch of MaxiMICE Thailand aims to elevate delegates’ quality of life through quality of MICE experiences. It is rooted in the TCEB’s vision to transform Thailand into Global Asia’s platform for impactful and sustainable events covering such key agendas as energy, finance, wellness and longevity, DEI, sustainability and food security. These are all issues of growing importance amid today’s complex economic and social landscape.

“Today’s business events are no longer measured solely by attendance numbers, but by the quality of connections, outcomes, and long-term impact they create. As the world faces increasingly multidimensional challenges, business events must serve as platforms for collaboration, collective solutions, and actionable progress. Our study identified the key factors shaping successful meeting destinations today. The results highlighted Thailand’s operational reliability, strong business impact, and ability to deliver beyond memorable experiences. This inspired the development of our new brand, built around three strategic pillars.”

The MaxiMICE Your Convenience pillar underscores Thailand’s global accessibility and connectivity, infrastructure, enhanced capacities of MICE Cities, digital capabilities, and strong government’s support. In addition, a number of global conferences scheduled in Thailand in 2026 are hosted or supported by Thai ministries, along with city and provincial agencies under “Government-Ready” campaign.

The MaxiMICE Your Experience pillar positions Thailand as a destination capable of offering diverse experiences beyond meeting rooms. This is possible because TCEB has a strong network of MICE Cities and local communities ready to offer locally immersive experiences. With a strong private sector partner, Thailand Incentive and Convention Association (TICA), Thailand has a large pool of suppliers with highly creative skills ready

Pegasus Reef Hotel Participates in Sancharaka Udawa 2026

TTA BULLETIN

Pegasus Reef Hotel proudly participated in Sancharaka Udawa 2026, one of Sri Lanka’s premier tourism and travel exhibitions, joining industry stakeholders, travel partners, and tourism enthusiasts under one roof.

The exhibition provided an excellent platform for the hotel to showcase its diverse offerings, including leisure stays, weddings, corporate events, dining experiences, and special promotions. Visitors to the stall engaged with the team, explored the hotel’s facilities, and discovered exclusive packages tailored to both local and international travelers.

Throughout the event, the Pegasus Reef team connected with travel agents, tour operators, and industry professionals, strengthening existing partnerships while creating new business opportunities and promoting Sri Lanka’s tourism industry more broadly. The enthusiastic response from visitors reaffirmed the hotel’s commitment to the sector’s growth and its continued appeal as a preferred destination for leisure, business, and celebrations.

Pegasus Reef Hotel extends its appreciation to the organizers, industry partners, and all visitors who stopped by the stall,



marking a successful opportunity to showcase its hospitality excellence within Sri Lanka’s vibrant tourism landscape.



Classic Travels Earns Gold Award From Malaysia Airlines At Trade Elevation Summit 2026

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka’s Leading Travel Company Recognised as Top Performing Partner for 2025/2026

Classic Travels, one of Sri Lanka’s most distinguished travel management companies, has been honoured with the prestigious Gold Award by Malaysia Airlines at the Malaysia Airlines Trade Elevation Summit 2026, held in the scenic city of Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.

The coveted Gold Award, presented for the performance year 2025/2026, recognises Classic Travels’ outstanding contribution to Malaysia Airlines’ passenger growth and its unwavering commitment to delivering world-class travel solutions to its clientele.

The award was formally presented by Mr. Amit Mehta, Regional Manager – South Asia, Middle East, Africa and India, Malaysia Airlines, in a ceremony that brought together leading travel trade partners from across the region.

The Trade Elevation Summit, a flagship event by Malaysia Airlines, celebrates excellence among its top travel trade

partners and provides a platform for strategic engagement, collaboration and recognition of outstanding performance across key markets.

Receiving the award on behalf of Classic Travels was Mr. Sabry Bahaudeen, Chief Commercial Officer and Director, who expressed his pride in this milestone achievement.

“Receiving the Gold Award from Malaysia Airlines is a tremendous honour and a true reflection of the dedication and passion of our entire team at Classic Travels.”

“Malaysia Airlines has been a valued airline partner, and this recognition motivates us to continue raising the bar in delivering exceptional travel experiences to our customers. We look forward to deepening our partnership and driving even greater results in the years ahead,” said Bahaudeen

This recognition further reaffirms Classic Travels’ position as a premier travel management company and a trusted partner to leading international carriers operating in Sri Lanka and South Asia

Macao Plays Host To 55th Skål International Asia Congress 2026

TTA BULLETIN



The 55th Skål International Asia Congress concluded this week in Macao, bringing together nearly 200 tourism professionals from across Asia and beyond for four days of high-level dialogue, cultural discovery, and industry networking. Hosted by Skål International Macau with the support of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), the congress once again confirmed Macao’s standing as one of Asia’s premier MICE destinations.

Held at the Grand Lisboa Palace Resort Macau from 11 to 14 June, the event gathered 198 delegates representing Skål clubs from 18 countries and regions spanning Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America. The congress marked the fourth time Macao has welcomed the Skål Asia Area Congress, following previous editions in 1994, 2007, and 2018.

A Destination Defining Its Next Chapter Under the theme Celebrating Heritage – Empowering Innovation, the congress showcased the many dimensions of Macao’s evolving tourism proposition. MGTO Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes welcomed delegates at the opening ceremony, highlighting Macao’s growing role as a gateway to the Chinese mainland and its increasingly strategic position as a multi-destination travel hub, bolstered by

current visa-free policies and deepening regional connectivity. “The Skål International Asia Congress further reinforces Macao’s position as a world centre of tourism and leisure and a premier MICE destination,” she noted, pointing to the congress as a platform for spotlighting the city’s unique cultural heritage and world-class hospitality to an influential international audience

The message from Director MGTO was preceded by Skål International Macau President Vinzenz Rosa de Pauli delivering the official opening message and welcoming Vice President elect 2027 for Skål International NSN Mohan who praised the congress as a model of what can be achieved through passion and vision, commending the organising team for not only strengthening partnerships among Asia’s tourism leaders but also for placing Macao’s rich culture firmly in the international spotlight.

The opening ceremony was followed by three substantive panel discussions featuring approximately ten national and international guest speakers. Topics ranged from the transformation of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area into a unified world-class tourism destination, to the role of cultural regeneration in driving sustainable tourism growth.

WHERE

FOREVER BEGINS

T I M E L E S S C O A S T A L R O M A N C E



Watch us in 360° | VR / 4K



PEGASUS REEF
the city resort that's just right!



www.pegasusreefhotel.com



www.facebook.com/pegasusreefwattala



www.instagram.com/pegasusreef_wattala

NH Collection Colombo strengthens leadership with Kedar Dighe as General Manager

TTA BULLETIN

NH Collection Colombo welcomes Mr. Kedar Dighe as General Manager, bringing with him extensive hospitality experience gained through leadership roles with internationally recognised brands including Marriott International, Accor Group, and Radisson Blu Hotels & Resorts. With a strong operational background and experience across diverse hospitality markets, his appointment reflects the hotel's continued commitment to strengthening guest experiences, service excellence, and strategic growth within Colombo's evolving hospitality sector.

In his role at NH Collection Colombo, he will oversee the hotel's overall operations and strategic direction while continuing to strengthen service standards, elevate culinary experiences, and further position the property as one of Colombo's leading hospitality destinations for both business and leisure travellers.

Mr. Kedar Dighe stated, "NH Collection



Colombo holds strong potential within Sri Lanka's hospitality landscape, and I look forward to working alongside the team to further strengthen the hotel's positioning through service excellence, operational innovation, and guest-centric experiences. My vision is to continue building meaningful connections with our guests, partners, and the wider community while delivering a contemporary hospitality experience that reflects the evolving expectations of today's travellers."

Located in the heart of the city, NH Collection Colombo continues to offer guests a contemporary hospitality experience through its thoughtfully designed spaces, diverse dining concepts, and attentive service, catering to both business and leisure travellers visiting Colombo

Jetwing Journeys Unveils 'Mysteries of the Ganges' with an Exclusive Evening of Storytelling and Discovery

TTA BULLETIN

Jetwing Journeys, a subsidiary of Jetwing Travels and the company's specialist outbound travel arm, recently hosted an exclusive evening to unveil Mysteries of the Ganges, an extraordinary luxury river voyage through the cultural heart of India aboard the elegant ABN Rajmahal Cruise. The event brought together travel enthusiasts, industry partners and members of the media for an immersive introduction to one of the world's most legendary rivers and the remarkable stories that flow along its banks.

Curating journeys to some of the world's most fascinating destinations, Jetwing Journeys specializes in thoughtfully designed travel experiences that combine cultural immersion, authentic encounters and seamless service. Built on the expertise and legacy of Jetwing Travels, the brand continues to offer discerning travellers unique opportunities to explore the world through meaningful and enriching journeys.

The evening was hosted by Gehan Cooray, Vice Chairman of Jetwing Travels and Shiromal Cooray, Chairman and Managing Director of Jetwing Travels, who welcomed guests and shared the vision behind creating travel experiences that inspire deeper connections with people, cultures and places.

Addressing the gathering, Gehan Cooray reflected on the enduring appeal of journeys that go beyond sightseeing and encourage travellers to engage with the stories, traditions and heritage that define a destination. He highlighted the growing demand for meaningful travel experiences and the importance of curating journeys that leave a lasting impact long after travellers return home.



A highlight of the evening was a captivating storytelling session by Hiran Cooray, Chairman of Jetwing Symphony PLC, who shared personal reflections and memorable experiences from his own voyage along the Ganges. Through stories of ancient cities, sacred rituals, riverside communities, colonial heritage and enduring traditions, guests were offered a vivid glimpse into the rich tapestry of life that continues to thrive along one of the world's most significant waterways.

The 12 day Mysteries of the Ganges voyage, departing in December 2026, takes travellers on an unforgettable journey from Farakka to Kolkata aboard the luxurious ABN Rajmahal. Along the way, guests will explore historic towns, sacred sites, architectural landmarks and vibrant local communities while experiencing the unique rhythm of life along the river.

Often described as the cultural and spiritual lifeblood of India, the Ganges has shaped civilizations, inspired generations and connected communities for centuries. The itinerary has been thoughtfully curated to provide travellers with a deeper understanding of the river's history, traditions and living heritage through a blend of immersive shore excursions, cultural encounters and enriching onboard experiences.

Pegasus Reef Hotel Hosts Glamorous "Paparazzi Night" for Media Partners

TTA BULLETIN

Pegasus Reef Hotel recently hosted an exclusive "Paparazzi Night," bringing together journalists, content creators, and media representatives for an evening of networking and entertainment by the sea, organized as a gesture of gratitude to the media professionals who support the hospitality and tourism industry.

Guests enjoyed a vibrant atmosphere featuring specially curated food and beverage offerings, live entertainment, and interactive moments designed to encourage networking. The lively ambiance provided the perfect setting for media professionals to unwind, connect, and celebrate their contributions to the industry.

Hotel management expressed appreciation for the valuable partnerships built with the media community over the years, reaffirming their commitment to fostering strong relationships through meaningful experiences. Beyond celebrating media excellence, the evening offered an opportunity to strengthen collaborations and showcase Pegasus Reef Hotel's dedication to exceptional hospitality.

Pegasus Reef Hotel extends its sincere thanks to all media partners who attended, helping make the evening a memorable celebration of energy and camaraderie.



ONYX Hospitality Group Celebrates 60th Anniversary, Sets THB 10.33 Billion Revenue Target with THB 5.5 Billion Expansion Plan

TTA BULLETIN

ONYX Hospitality Group, a leading hospitality management company in Asia-Pacific, has unveiled its growth strategy as it celebrates its 60th anniversary. With a portfolio spanning hotels, resorts, serviced apartments, luxury residences, as well as dining and spa offerings, the Group is targeting total revenue of THB 10.33 billion in 2026, representing a 14% year-on-year increase. It also plans to expand its portfolio to more than 75 properties by 2030, underscoring its sustained growth momentum and strengthening its position across the Asia Pacific region. This expansion will be supported by a planned investment of THB 5.5 billion over the next three years, primarily focused on enhancing and upgrading existing properties.

Over the past six decades, ONYX Hospitality Group has grown from managing a single hotel in Thailand into a regional hospitality company with a multi-brand portfolio including Amari, OZO, Shama and Oriental Residence. Each brand has a clearly defined identity and market position, enabling the Group to meet the evolving needs of modern travellers across a range of segments.

Today, ONYX manages 49 properties and remains on track to expand its portfolio to more than 75 properties across Asia Pacific through a disciplined and sustainable

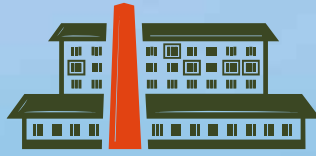


growth strategy.

Yuthachai Charanachitta, Chief Executive Officer of ONYX Hospitality Group, said: "Over the past six decades, ONYX Hospitality Group has built a strong foundation of expertise and experience, growing from the management of a single hotel in Thailand into a regional hospitality player with an expanding presence across Asia Pacific, continuously earning the trust and confidence of both partners and customers.

This growth has been driven by a strong Thai foundation, combined with a global outlook and a strategic focus on regional markets, which have consistently served as the key pillars underpinning the Group's development.

As we celebrate our 60th anniversary, we see this milestone not merely as a reflection of our past achievements, but as the beginning of our next phase of growth. Looking ahead, we remain committed to expanding our regional footprint, strengthening our brands, and creating long-term value for our partners, investors and customers.



NEWBURGH ELLA
THE TEA FACTORY RESORT

Live the *Tea Story*
Love the *Stay*



Once a working tea factory, Newburgh's legacy was shaped by generations who crafted some of the island's finest Ceylon tea. Today, that heritage lives on as a refined hospitality experience by Browns Hotels & Resorts.

Wake up to sweeping views of the Ella Gap at Newburgh Ella Tea Factory Hotel, where misty mountains open into rolling tea estates and endless horizons. Just minutes away lie Ella's most celebrated trails and landmarks—the Pekoe Trail, the legendary Nine Arch Bridge, and Little Adam's Peak.

Step into rooms where colonial heritage meets quiet luxury, designed for comfort and character in equal measure. At Newburgh, the journey continues beyond the view—it unfolds at the table, where curated dining reflects the richness of Ceylon tea culture with both local and international flavours.

Here, history is not preserved behind glass—it is lived, shared, and experienced in every cup, every view, every moment.

Come experience Ella's most distinctive address.



brownshotels.com/newburghella/



(+94) 57 233 3400



Browns

HOTELS & RESORTS

HOTELS

Charith Wijesundara features on 7th Artist Spotlight presented by City of Dreams Sri Lanka and John Keells

Foundation

TTA BULLETIN

City of Dreams Sri Lanka, in partnership with John Keells Foundation, presents the 7th edition of its Artist Spotlight series titled 'Urban Pop – Colombo Reconstructed', a new exhibition by Sri Lankan multidisciplinary artist Charith Wijesundara, curated by Kasun Jayamanne.

Drawing from both his self-taught artistic practice and professional background in architecture, Charith's work reflects a deeply personal interpretation of Sri Lankan identity. His compositions are informed by the textures and contradictions of the city, where old and new structures coexist, fragments of popular culture overlap with tradition, and everyday urban experiences become embedded with memory and meaning.

"Colombo especially continues to inspire me because it constantly feels unfinished and evolving. New developments sit beside older structures, street culture overlaps with commercial imagery, and different generations experience the same spaces in completely different ways," says Charith Wijesundara. "Rather than documenting the city directly, I'm more interested in capturing its atmosphere, energy, and the feeling of living within it."

Through layered imagery, familiar symbols, fragmented urban references, and moments of humour and irony, 'Urban Pop – Colombo Reconstructed' examines how culture is continuously reshaped within



contemporary city life. The works draw from recognisable Sri Lankan visual language while reinterpreting it through a contemporary lens, creating moments that feel both nostalgic and immediate.

"I'm naturally drawn to familiar Sri Lankan symbols, myths, and everyday visual culture because they already exist within people's memories and experiences," he explains. "By reworking them through a more contemporary visual language, I'm exploring the relationship between tradition and the present moment."

For curator Kasun Jayamanne, the exhibition arrives at a particularly significant time for Colombo as the city continues to evolve both physically and culturally.

"Charith's work holds a compelling tension between architectural order and intuitive disruption. His compositions feel layered, fragmented, and alive, reflecting the complexity of Colombo itself," says Kasun Jayamanne. "Rather than depicting the city directly, he reconstructs it through multiplicity and overlap, allowing audiences to experience Colombo through emotion, memory, and contradiction."

Presented within the dynamic setting of City of Dreams Sri Lanka, the exhibition forms part of a broader vision to position Colombo as an emerging destination for contemporary art and cultural dialogue.

Celebrating Mother's Day at Pegasus Reef Hotel

TTA BULLETIN

On 10th May, Pegasus Reef Hotel hosted a heartwarming Mother's Day celebration honoring the mothers who inspire and nurture their families every day.

Families gathered for a memorable evening featuring a delightful dining experience, live entertainment, and family-friendly activities set against a beautifully decorated venue. Mothers were treated to thoughtful surprises as a token of appreciation for their unconditional love and dedication, creating cherished moments guests will carry with them.

Pegasus Reef Hotel extends its heartfelt gratitude to all the mothers who joined the celebration, recognizing their invaluable role in shaping families and communities. We thank everyone who made the occasion a memorable success and look forward to welcoming families back for many more special experiences ahead.

Happy Mother's Day to all the amazing mothers who make the world a better place with their love and care.



Avani Kalutara Resort Makes a Splash with the First Edition of FIESTA AVANI

TTA BULLETIN

Avani Kalutara Resort successfully hosted the first edition of FIESTA AVANI bringing together sun, sound, flavour and vibrant poolside energy for an unforgettable daycation experience by the Indian Ocean.

Designed as a lively lifestyle event for guests seeking a refreshing weekend escape, FIESTA AVANI welcomed guests to a full day of entertainment, dining and leisure. The event featured an energetic line-up including live music by OMEI, poolside sets by DJ E2 and Black Beauty, as guests gathered to enjoy the chill sunset atmosphere at the beach, bringing the day to a smooth and easy-going close.

Guests enjoyed flavourful food, bites, brews, cocktails, shisha, games, lucky draw giveaways and a bouncy castle. The event successfully captured the playful spirit of Avani, offering a laid-back yet upbeat atmosphere for friends, couples and families to celebrate the weekend in style.

Speaking about the event, Mr. Christoph Dueker, General Manager of Avani Kalutara Resort, said: "We wanted to create an awesome, full of good energy event - for a great west coast weekend afternoon. FIESTA AVANI Pool Edition brought together music, cocktails, sunset vibes and



a really laid-back crowd. It was great to see people simply enjoying themselves by the pool, the music the food and drinks whether with friends, family or just escaping Colombo for the day. We learned a bit from this first edition and are already excited to make the next one even bigger and better in August!"

Following the success of the first pool party, FIESTA AVANI is set to return in August 2026 with an even more exciting experience. The upcoming edition will continue the spirit of sun, splash, sound and social energy, bringing together music, art, entertainment, dining and poolside fun in true Avani style. Party people and guests: Stay tuned!

The launch of FIESTA AVANI marks the beginning of a new lifestyle event series at Avani Kalutara Resort, positioning the property as a go-to destination for weekend daycations, vibrant social gatherings, music-led experiences and tropical escapes within easy reach of Colombo.

Globally Renowned Wildlife Tracking Experts Return to Hilton Yala for Inspiring Ecology & Tracking Programme

TTA BULLETIN

Hilton Yala Resort is once again set to welcome internationally acclaimed wildlife tracking and ecology experts Mr. Lee Gutteridge and Dr. Kersey Lawrence to Sri Lanka for another immersive wildlife tracking and ecology training programme, reaffirming the resort's position as a leading destination for conservation-led learning and nature education.

Held within the extraordinary landscapes surrounding Hilton Yala Resort, located in the buffer zone of Yala National Park, the programme will bring together aspiring trackers, naturalists, field guides, and wildlife enthusiasts for a rare opportunity to learn from two of the world's most respected names in tracking, ecology, and wilderness education.

With decades of field experience spanning Africa and beyond, Lee Gutteridge and Dr. Kersey Lawrence are globally recognised for their contributions to wildlife tracking, conservation, and ecological literacy. Lee, a Master Tracker and External Evaluator for CyberTracker Conservation, has spent over three decades in the African wilderness and is among the highest qualified field guides in Southern Africa and worldwide. He is also one of only a select few FGASA Scout Guides — the highest guiding qualification in Southern Africa



— and a published author of numerous wildlife and natural history books.

Joining him is Dr. Kersey Lawrence, a scientist, award-winning educator, and globally respected tracking specialist whose doctoral research explored the ecology and culture of tracking. Dr. Lawrence is notably the first woman in the world to achieve Senior Tracker certification within the internationally recognised CyberTracker system and continues to teach ecological literacy through the art and science of wildlife tracking around the world.

The programme at Hilton Yala Resort is designed to go beyond conventional wildlife experiences, combining ecological theory, track and sign interpretation, animal behaviour, and immersive field learning in one of Sri Lanka's richest biodiversity hotspots. Participants will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of tracking as both a science and an ancient form of observation—connecting deeply with the landscapes and wildlife of Yala.

BUSINESS TRAVEL



Experience **Comfort.**
Your one-stop shop for all your travel needs.



Classictravel

A world of difference

HOTELS

The Kingsbury Invites Colombo to Spend “A Few Hours in Italy”

TTA BULLETIN

Italian cuisine is one of the world's most celebrated culinary traditions, yet beyond familiar pizzas and pasta, many of its most beloved regional dishes remain largely undiscovered by local diners. This June, The Kingsbury's Sky Lounge aims to change that with “A Few Hours in Italy”, a new dining experience that brings together authentic Italian recipes, regional specialities and the expertise of a chef who spent nearly two decades immersed in the country's food culture.



braised in red wine until it reaches its famously tender, melt-in-the-mouth texture. The menu also celebrates Italy's coastal heritage through dishes such as Spaghetti ai Frutti di Mare and Gamberoni alla Griglia, while timeless desserts, including Tiramisù Classico, Cannoli con Crema di Ricotta and Panna Cotta alle Fragole, complete the experience.

What makes A Few Hours in Italy particularly distinctive is its setting. Rather than recreating a traditional trattoria, The Kingsbury has brought the experience to Sky Lounge, where authentic Italian flavours meet handcrafted cocktails, panoramic city views and the relaxed sophistication of one of Colombo's most sought-after rooftop destinations. It is an experience created for conversations, shared plates and unhurried evenings, much like dining in Italy itself.

Leading the experience is Chef Brayan, whose 17 years in Italy have shaped a menu inspired by the dishes Italians actually cherish. Guests can discover everything from Ravioli Croccanti di Ossobuco and Prosciutto di Parma con Melone to Fettuccine al Ragù d'Agnello, Risotto ai Funghi di Bosco e Essenza di Tartufo Nero, and the standout Guancia di Manzo, a Northern Italian classic where beef cheek is slowly

Ishq Luxury Villas Unveils Ishq Digana — A new Pinnacle of Private Luxury in Sri Lanka's Kandy Hills

TTA BULLETIN

Ishq Luxury Villas is proud to announce the official opening of Ishq Digana, an extraordinary six-bedroom private villa set within the Victoria Golf Resort in the heart of Sri Lanka's Kandyan highlands. The newest and most ambitious addition to the Ishq portfolio, Ishq Digana is now open and accepting reservations.



Carved dramatically into the mountainside and positioned above the championship fairways of Victoria Golf Resort — widely regarded as one of the most beautiful golf courses in the world — Ishq Digana commands uninterrupted views stretching from the celebrated Knuckles mountain range to the serene valley landscapes of Digana. It is a residence where nature's grandeur and architectural vision converge in seamless harmony.

At the creative heart of Ishq Digana is one of Sri Lanka's most celebrated architects, Channa Daswatte, renowned for his masterful synthesis of traditional Sri Lankan craftsmanship and contemporary design. His signature philosophy — dissolving the boundary between interior and exterior — is fully realised here, with natural light, fresh mountain air and sweeping panoramas woven into every living space. The result is a home that is at once expansive and intimate, deeply rooted in heritage yet unmistakably of the present.

Conceived as a private retreat for families and discerning travellers, Ishq Digana offers a rare balance of personal sanctuary and shared indulgence. Six opulent en-suite bedrooms provide refined comfort and complete privacy, while generous communal spaces invite natural moments

of togetherness.

Amenities include:

- Six spacious bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms
- Private infinity pool overlooking the golf course and mountain range
- Private screening room
- Indoor and outdoor dining settings
- Fully equipped kitchen
- Dedicated team of professional villa staff providing personalised, seamless service throughout every stay

Whether guests choose to begin the morning with a swim above the fairways, spend the afternoon on the championship 18-hole course, or simply watch the Kandyan hills turn gold at dusk, Ishq Digana is designed to make every moment feel effortless and unhurried.

Positioned near Kandy — once the royal capital of the last great Sri Lankan kingdom and home to the revered Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic — Ishq Digana situates guests within one of the island's most culturally and historically significant landscapes. The surrounding region offers a wealth of experiences, from exploring ancient temples and botanical gardens to tea country drives and wildlife encounters.

Avani Kalutara Resort Unveils Refreshed Suites Inspired by Artsy West Coast Living

TTA BULLETIN

Avani Kalutara Resort is pleased to announce the refreshment of its suites experience, unveiling a stay experience that captures the resort's signature blend of laid-back hospitality, contemporary comfort, and the easy-going charm of Sri Lanka's west coast.



getaway by the water.

“At Avani Kalutara Resort, we are always looking

for ways to create experiences that feel relaxed, meaningful, and memorable,” said Mr. Christoph Dueker – Cluster General Manager. “The refreshed suites reflect the artsy and laid-back personality of Avani, while introducing new details that celebrate Sri Lankan culture, comfort, and our unique west coast setting.”

Designed for travellers who seek a relaxed yet stylish coastal escape, the refreshed suites bring together an artsy spirit, natural textures, warm lighting, and thoughtful local design touches. The result is a calm, colourful, and inviting space that reflects the effortlessly chill personality of Avani Kalutara Resort.

The refreshment introduces a range of new design and guest experience elements across the suites, including new artworks, new batik-inspired accents, refreshed lighting, enhanced interiors, and personalised in-room amenities. Each suite has been thoughtfully elevated to create a more welcoming and characterful environment while staying true to the resort's relaxed coastal identity.

A key highlight of the suite experience is the inclusion of meaningful cultural touches that connect guests with the spirit of Sri Lanka. Every suite guest is invited to take part in an oil lamp lighting ritual, creating a warm and memorable welcome moment that celebrates local tradition and hospitality. Guests will also enjoy special personalised amenities designed to make each stay feel more intimate, thoughtful, and unique.

The suites have been designed to complement Avani Kalutara's distinctive location, where the Kalu River meets the Indian Ocean. With bright interiors, natural tones, bold artistic details, and a relaxed west coast mood, the suites offer a fresh take on modern resort living for couples, families, and leisure travellers looking for a stylish

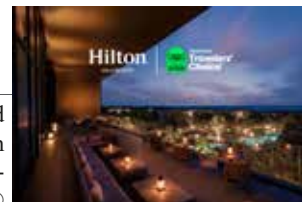
The refreshed suite experience is part of Avani Kalutara Resort's continued commitment to enhancing guest stays through thoughtful design, authentic local touches, and warm, easy-going hospitality. From refreshed interiors and handcrafted details to personalised amenities and cultural rituals, the suites offer guests a more immersive and memorable way to experience Kalutara.

Located where the Kalu Ganga Estuary meets the Indian Ocean, Avani Kalutara Resort is a lifestyle west coast escape near Colombo, offering 105 rooms and suites with a relaxed, contemporary spirit. Inspired by its tropical modernist setting and the architectural legacy of Geoffrey Bawa, the resort blends laid-back coastal living with colourful local character and easy-going hospitality. Guests can enjoy restaurants and bars, lagoon and ocean adventures, the adventure tower, archery, poolside relaxation, and shared access to Anantara Spa, the kids' club and family-friendly experiences at neighbouring Anantara Kalutara Resort. With flexible spaces for meetings, weddings and celebrations, Avani Kalutara Resort is an ideal destination for relaxed coastal getaways, social gatherings and memorable stays near Colombo and Bentota.

Hilton Yala Resort Named TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Awards Winner for 2026

TTA BULLETIN

Hilton Yala Resort is pleased to announce that it has been recognised in TripAdvisor's® Travelers' Choice® Awards for 2026. TripAdvisor's Travelers' Choice Award winners are among the top 10% of listings worldwide, celebrating businesses that consistently deliver exceptional experiences and receive outstanding traveller reviews.



Further reinforcing its position as Sri Lanka's leading wildlife resort, Hilton Yala Resort has been

ranked #8 Best Value of 3,232 places to stay in Sri Lanka on TripAdvisor. Most notably, Hilton Yala is the highest-ranked hotel in Yala, outperforming all other hotels and resorts within the destination and firmly establishing itself as the preferred choice for travellers visiting Sri Lanka's most celebrated wildlife region.

The award marks the third consecutive year that Hilton Yala Resort has been recognised with TripAdvisor's prestigious Travelers' Choice distinction, reflecting the resort's continued commitment to delivering exceptional guest experiences in one of Sri Lanka's most extraordinary natural settings.



Understand what AI says about **Your Brand**

Discover How Your Brand Shows Up Across AI Platforms

aeypulse

aeypulse.emarketingeye.com

Request a Demo →



Developed by eMarketingEye, an Award-Winning Digital Marketing Agency
For the Travel & Hospitality Industry

19+

Years of
Excellence

300+

Awards

1200+

Clients

45+

Countries

Digital

AI Marketing Suite

Web Solutions

Measurement
& Monitoring



WEBSITE
www.emarketingeye.com

CONTACT NO
+94 112 151200

SALES / INQUIRIES
sales@emarketingeye.com

DOWNLOAD
CASE STUDIES

HOTELS

Nüwa at City of Dreams Sri Lanka Celebrates Prestigious 5-Star Recognition

TTA BULLETIN

Nüwa at City of Dreams Sri Lanka, the luxury flagship hotel within South Asia's first fully integrated luxury resort, marked a significant milestone with a special press conference and celebration honouring its prestigious 5-Star recognition, further reinforcing its position as one of the leading luxury hospitality destinations in the region.

Held at the elegant Crystal Lounge at Nüwa, the exclusive evening brought together key figures from Sri Lanka's tourism and hospitality sectors, media representatives, and senior leadership from City of Dreams Sri Lanka to celebrate a moment that reflects the country's growing prominence on the global luxury travel map.

The event was graced by Professor Ruwan Ranasinghe, Deputy Minister of Tourism, and Buddhika Hewawasam, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), whose presence underscored the significance of Nüwa's achievement for the national tourism industry.

As the ultra-luxury crown jewel of City of Dreams Sri Lanka, Nüwa offers 113 exquisitely designed rooms and suites perched atop the resort, delivering unparalleled privacy, bespoke service and panoramic views of Colombo's skyline and the Indian Ocean. From exclusive dining experiences and private wellness offerings to highly personalised butler services, Nüwa has redefined the meaning of contemporary



luxury hospitality in Sri Lanka.

The highlight of the evening was the formal 5-Star Award presentation, where dignitaries joined leadership and department heads on stage to commemorate the achievement, followed by a celebratory photo opportunity marking the occasion.

Speaking at the event, Michael Habashi stated, "This recognition is a proud milestone not only for Nüwa, but for Sri Lanka's luxury tourism landscape as a whole. It reflects our commitment to delivering world-class experiences that meet the expectations of the global luxury traveller while showcasing the warmth and excellence of Sri Lankan hospitality. Nüwa was designed to be more than a hotel—it is an experience of elevated living."

The celebrations continued with a live orchestra performance, curated cocktails, an exclusive buffet experience and a dance performance, creating an evening that reflected the sophistication and elegance synonymous with the Nüwa brand.

As City of Dreams Sri Lanka continues to redefine hospitality in the region, Nüwa's 5-Star recognition stands as a powerful symbol of Colombo's emergence as a destination for global luxury travel.

Hilton Yala Becomes Sri Lanka's First Hilton Property to Achieve Agoda Luxe Recognition

TTA BULLETIN

Hilton Yala Resort has achieved a significant milestone in its journey of excellence, becoming the first and only Hilton property in Sri Lanka to be recognised under Agoda Luxe, Agoda's exclusive collection of luxury stays rated 'Exceptional' by guests.

The prestigious distinction places Hilton Yala among a select group of hotels that consistently deliver outstanding guest experiences and exceptional levels of satisfaction. Within Yala as a destination, the resort is also one of only three properties to receive Agoda Luxe recognition, further cementing its position among the region's most distinguished luxury hospitality experiences.

The achievement reflects a broader shift taking place across the global travel landscape. Increasingly, luxury travellers are seeking more than beautiful accommodations—they are searching for meaningful experiences, authentic connections, and memorable stories that remain with them long after their journey has ended. Few destinations embody this evolution of travel, particularly such as Yala, where extraordinary wildlife encounters, untouched landscapes, and immersive



experiences combine to create one of Asia's most compelling safari destinations.

Positioned within the buffer zone of Yala National Park and overlooking the Indian Ocean, Hilton Yala Resort has redefined what luxury hospitality can look like in the wild. Here, guests can experience one of the world's most celebrated leopard habitats while enjoying the comforts of contemporary luxury, personalised service, exceptional dining, wellness experiences, and expertly guided adventures.

At the heart of the experience is Hilton Yala's internationally trained FGASA-certified and CyberTracker-qualified Rangers' Crew, whose interpretation-led safaris allow guests to connect with the destination on a deeper level. From tracking elusive wildlife and observing migratory birdlife to understanding ecosystems and conservation efforts, each safari is designed to be both immersive and educational.

Kulu Safaris Earns Place on Wanderlust Magazine's Prestigious Travel Green List™ 2026

TTA BULLETIN

Kulu Safaris is proud to announce its official selection for The Travel Green List™ 2026, an annual recognition programme by Wanderlust Magazine that spotlights the world's most impactful and responsible travel initiatives. This prestigious accolade places Kulu Safaris among a distinguished group of global operators leading meaningful change across the travel and tourism industry.

Wanderlust Magazine, the UK's longest-running travel publication, curates The Travel Green List™ each year to celebrate operators, destinations, and initiatives that are redefining what it means to travel consciously. Being included in this showcase is a mark of genuine commitment to environmental stewardship and community-centred tourism.

Kulu Safaris extends special thanks to travel writer and advocate Karen Edwards (@travelmadmum) for championing the company's work and bringing it to the attention of a wider audience. Edwards is

widely recognised for her dedication to promoting authentic and responsible tourism, and her support reflects the shared values that define Kulu Safaris' approach to every journey it creates.

Sustainability is not an afterthought at Kulu Safaris, it is embedded in every aspect of the operation, from conservation partnerships and low-impact travel practices to direct support for local communities and ecosystems. The company continues to walk alongside the communities and landscapes it brings guests to experience, ensuring that travel has a net positive impact.

Kulu Safaris expresses deep gratitude to its guests, partners, and team members whose collective passion and dedication have made this recognition possible. The company looks forward to continuing its path of conscious exploration and raising the bar for responsible travel in the years ahead.

Sun Siyam Pasikudah Launches the Only Floating Ocean Dining Platform on the Waters of Pasikudah Bay

TTA BULLETIN

Sun Siyam Pasikudah, part of the Privé Collection under Maldivian-owned Sun Siyam Resorts, has officially launched its floating dining platform on the open waters of Pasikudah Bay, the Aqua Lounge. It is the only floating ocean dining platform on the bay, the only solar-powered floating dining platform on Sri Lanka's east coast, and the only floating fine-dining experience on the open Indian Ocean in eastern Sri Lanka—a meaningful distinction from the lake and river venues that exist elsewhere on the island. There is nothing else like it on this coastline.

The platform spans 400 square feet and is reached by catamaran directly from the resort's shore. It is built from sustainable timber and recyclable barrels, and runs entirely on solar energy. Both choices reflect the resort's wider commitments under Sun Siyam Cares, the group's Travelife Gold-certified sustainability programme covering renewable energy, ocean conservation, waste management, and community engagement across all Sun Siyam properties.

What makes the platform stand out is not just where it sits but the thinking behind it. The structure uses sustainable timber and recyclable barrels, runs on solar energy, and reclaimed greywater principles guide the resort's wider operations on land. The floating platform is a natural extension of that philosophy, applied, quite literally, to the ocean the resort is working to protect.

The dining experience centres on a seven-course menu drawing on the freshness and flavours of the eastern coast. Evenings begin with sunset cocktails as



the light shifts over the bay, and the platform stays open through the night for guests who want to linger over a meal with the sound of the water beneath them. For those who want something quieter, a champagne breakfast on the platform is available on request, a more private way to begin the day out on the water.

Beyond the guest experience, the platform carries a genuine community purpose that the team considers just as important. School children from nearby villages are brought out to the platform regularly as part of the resort's CSR programme, not as a sightseeing trip, but as a hands-on conversation about the bay they have grown up beside, the coral reef beneath it, and what it means to look after both. It is one of the ways Sun Siyam Pasikudah extends its values beyond its own grounds.

"Pasikudah Bay is extraordinary, the curve of it, the shallow water, the way the evening light falls across it," said Arshed Refai, General Manager of Sun Siyam Pasikudah. "We wanted to put guests right at the centre of that. Not looking at the ocean from the shore, but actually sitting on it. And the menu tells the story of this coast, the ingredients, the fishermen who supply us, the techniques that belong here."

INSIGHT RESORT

A H A N G A M A

Experience Sri Lanka's authentic way of life with the comfort of modern, upgraded features

ROOM CATEGORIES



Premium Sea View Room



Deluxe Room Sea View



Standard Room Non-Sea View



Budget Room Non-Sea View



Youth Fame

Booking.com

8.5/10

agoda

8.6/10

Tripadvisor

4.1/5

Expedia

8.6/10

HolidayCheck.com

5.4/6

Trip.com

8.6/10

airbnb

5/5

ATTRACTIONS

WITHIN A 30-MINUTE DRIVE TIME

Rumassala
16Km

Talpe Rock
Pool beach
8Km

Turtle Hatchery
5Km

Stilt
Fisherman
3.7Km

Marshmallow
Surf Point
Right Opposite



Whale
Watching
Mirissa
14Km

Dondra head
26Km

Galle Fort
19Km

Koggala lake
Boat Ride
4.6Km

Coconut
Tree Hill
15Km

HOTELS

Minor Hotels Celebrates 25 Years of Experiential Luxury with Anantara Hotels & Resorts

TTA BULLETIN

Global luxury hospitality brand launches anniversary campaign celebrating the people, places and experiences that have defined a quarter-century of immersive travel

Anantara Hotels & Resorts, the experiential luxury brand of Minor Hotels, marks its 25th anniversary with the launch of a global campaign: 25 Years of Unforgettable Journeys. From a single resort in Thailand to a global portfolio spanning over 50 hotels and resorts across 24 countries, the milestone celebrates the destinations, team members and guests who have shaped the brand since its creation.

The Anantara brand was founded in 2001 by William Heinecke, Chairman and Founder of Minor International, parent company of Minor Hotels, to address the need for a luxury hotel brand offering immersive, experience-led stays. He envisioned a brand that enables cultural discovery through indigenous design, local cuisine and unique destination experiences. The name Anantara comes from the Sanskrit word meaning 'without end', evoking discovery, new horizons and the celebration of life's journey.

"Creating Anantara remains one of my proudest professional accomplishments," explains Mr Heinecke. "Building the brand from the ground up gave us the opportunity to apply what we learned from operating hotels in Thailand for more than 20 years and satisfy the growing demand from discerning travellers who want memorable local experiences and adventures while having luxurious accommodations to come back to each evening."

The first Anantara resort, Anantara Hua Hin Resort, opened to guests on 4 March 2001 in the seaside town of Hua Hin, three hours from Bangkok, Thailand's capital city. Its design, inspired by a traditional Thai village, draws architectural heritage into

tropical gardens, embodying Anantara's ethos of cultural immersion from the outset.

From Hua Hin, the brand extended across Thailand, with Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort in the north and Anantara Bophut Koh Samui Resort in the south, each shaped by landscape architect Bill Bensley, whose eye for locale gave the early portfolio its distinct continuity.

International expansion followed in 2006 with Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort, the brand's first venture outside Thailand and the proof of concept that opened the door to the Middle East, Africa, Asia and, in later years, Europe. The 2015 rebranding of a landmark Bangkok property as Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel was a personal milestone for Mr Heinecke and a strategic one for the brand, signalling its evolution from resort brand to a hospitality brand equally at home in the world's great cities. In recent years, Minor Hotels has expanded Anantara into iconic European cities, adding new properties in Amalfi, Amsterdam, Budapest, Dublin, Nice, Rome and Vienna.

Anantara's expansion into extraordinary destinations continues with upcoming debuts in Australia, Japan, Egypt, Croatia, Argentina, Turks & Caicos and the United States. The brand will also introduce Anantara Tented Camps in 2026, beginning with Anantara Tented Camp Kafue River in Zambia, adjacent to Kafue National Park, the country's largest and oldest reserve.

"Anantara has played a defining role in shaping Minor Hotels' luxury portfolio over the past 25 years," said Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO of Minor International. "Our focus remains on thoughtful, disciplined expansion that stays true to Anantara's foundations, with immersive experiences, a strong sense of place and genuine cultural connection guiding how and where the brand evolves."

Trio of Anantara Hotels & Resorts Earn Condé Nast Traveller Triple Crown in Brand's 25th Anniversary Year

Year

TTA BULLETIN

Anantara Hotels & Resorts is proud to announce that three of its flagship properties have been named to the inaugural Condé Nast Traveller Triple Crown Collection, a prestigious new distinction recognising hotels that have achieved the rare feat of appearing on all three of the publication's most influential awards programmes: the Hot List, Gold List, and Readers' Choice Awards.

The three Anantara properties recognised are, Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort, Oman, Anantara Chiang Mai Resort, Thailand and Royal Livingstone Victoria Falls Zambia Hotel by Anantara, Zambia.

The Condé Nast Traveller Triple Crown is reserved for an elite group of hotels that have earned acclaim from industry experts, Condé Nast Traveller editors and discerning travellers alike.

Drawing from nearly 40 years of editorial authority and audience trust, the accolade recognises properties that have consistently set the benchmark for excellence in luxury hospitality.

The recognition comes during a landmark year for Anantara as the brand celebrates its 25th anniversary, marking a quarter-century of creating meaningful journeys and connecting guests with the world's most remarkable destinations through authentic local experiences and heartfelt hospitality.

Anantara Chiang Mai Resort has long been celebrated as one of Northern Thailand's most sophisticated urban resorts. Set along the banks of the Mae Ping River, the property combines contemporary design with rich cultural heritage, offering immersive experiences that connect guests with the art, cuisine



and traditions of Chiang Mai.

Perched 2,000 metres above sea level in Oman's dramatic Green Mountains, Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort has redefined luxury in the Middle East since opening. Renowned for its spectacular canyon views, exceptional wellness experiences and deep connection to Omani culture, the resort remains one of the region's most iconic destinations.

Located on the banks of the Zambezi River and within walking distance of one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, Royal Livingstone Victoria Falls Zambia Hotel by Anantara offers an unrivalled gateway to Victoria Falls. Combining timeless elegance with extraordinary wildlife encounters and immersive destination experiences, the hotel has become one of Africa's most celebrated addresses.

"This recognition is particularly meaningful because it reflects excellence from every perspective; industry experts, trusted editors and travellers themselves," said Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO Minor International and CEO Minor Hotels, "To have three Anantara properties included in the inaugural Triple Crown Collection during our 25th anniversary year is a testament to the passion of our teams and our ongoing commitment to delivering exceptional journeys in extraordinary destinations."

Pegasus Reef Hotel Celebrates Vesak with Inter-Department Lantern Competition and Bakthi Geetha Performances

TTA BULLETIN

In celebration of the sacred Vesak season, Pegasus Reef Hotel organized a vibrant Vesak Celebration, bringing together team members from all departments to embrace the values of unity, creativity, and spirituality.

A highlight of the event was the Inter-Department Vesak Lantern Competition, where employees showcased their artistic talents by creating beautifully designed lanterns, transforming the hotel premises into a colorful, festive environment. The competition encouraged teamwork and innovation while celebrating Sri Lanka's rich cultural traditions.

Adding to the spiritual atmosphere was a heartfelt Bakthi Geetha performance presented by team members from various departments. The devotional songs reflected

the essence of Vesak, spreading messages of peace, compassion, and harmony, and were warmly appreciated by colleagues and guests alike.

The celebration gave employees an opportunity to come together beyond their daily responsibilities, strengthening bonds and reinforcing a shared commitment to preserving Sri Lankan cultural and religious traditions. Pegasus Reef Hotel extends its gratitude to all team members who contributed to making the occasion a memorable reflection of togetherness, respect, and unity within the Pegasus Reef family.





MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS
AND TOURISM VIETNAM



HO CHI MINH CITY
PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE



VIETNAM NATIONAL AUTHORITY
OF TOURISM



HO CHI MINH CITY
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM



C.I.S VIETNAM ADVERTISING
& EXHIBITION JSC

THE 20TH INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL EXPO HO CHI MINH CITY

HỘI CHỢ DU LỊCH QUỐC TẾ THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH LẦN THỨ 20



VIBRANT CONNECTIONS GLOBAL DESTINATIONS

KẾT NỐI SỐNG ĐỘNG, ĐIỂM ĐẾN TOÀN CẦU

27 ▶ 29.08.2026

SAIGON EXHIBITION & CONVENTION CENTRE (SECC), HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM
TRUNG TÂM HỘI CHỢ VÀ TRIỂN LÃM SÀI GÒN (SECC), TP. HỒ CHÍ MINH

www.itehcmc.travel



Qatar Airways Returns to Philadelphia with Daily Flights

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways has announced the resumption of daily flights between its Doha home base and Philadelphia (PHL), effective 1 August 2026. The reinstated service expands the airline's North American network to 14 destinations, further strengthening its connectivity for travellers across the region.

Qatar Airways will resume the direct flights to the largest city in Pennsylvania operating Airbus A350-900 aircraft which is equipped with the airline's award-winning Qsuite business class and Starlink, the fastest Wi-Fi in the sky. More than 140 Qatar Airways aircraft are equipped with Starlink, making it the world's first and largest Starlink-equipped widebody fleet.

The resumption of flights reflects the airline's deep commitment to the U.S. market and will provide seamless connections to destinations across Africa, Asia,



and the Middle East via its award-winning hub, Hamad International Airport. In the U.S., the resumed flights will provide enhanced onward connectivity through Qatar Airways' oneworld partner, American Airlines.

Since launching its inaugural U.S. service to New York in 2007, Qatar Airways has steadily expanded its presence across North America, offering passengers increased flexibility, premium travel experiences, and seamless connectivity to more than 160 destinations worldwide.

Qatar Airways flights to Philadelphia (PHL)

Emirates crowned 'Best Overall Airline in the Middle East' at 2026 APEX Awards

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates has been named 'Best Overall Airline in the Middle East' at the 2026 APEX Best in Airline Awards, further cementing its reputation as one of the world's leading travel brands. The accolade was announced at a ceremony in Dublin, Ireland, where the airline was recognised for consistently delivering exceptional customer experience.



Based on verified passenger feedback, Emirates achieved outstanding scores across five pillars - seat comfort, cabin service, food and beverage, entertainment, and connectivity.

Whether travelling on an Airbus A380, A350 or Boeing 777, Emirates customers consistently praise the airline's commitment to comfort. Thoughtfully designed cabins, generous personal space and ergonomic seating combine to create an environment where passengers can relax, work or sleep with ease, even on the world's longest routes.

As part of Emirates' ongoing fleet retrofit programme, every cabin continues to be enhanced with the latest generation of seating and onboard features. From October onwards, Emirates Economy Class customers will benefit from the introduction of new lightweight Safran Z400 seats, specifically designed for comfort and convenience, featuring an adjustable eight-way headrest for enhanced neck and head support.

The award-winning Emirates Premium Economy cabin offers spacious cream leather seats with generous recline, full leg and footrests, and a six-way adjustable headrest designed for long-haul comfort. Customers also enjoy integrated charging ports, side cocktail tables and a 13.3-inch personal entertainment screen.

Emirates Business Class continues to

evolve with sophisticated new seating inspired by Safran's luxurious S Lounge design, already featured on the airline's A350 fleet. Each seat creates a greater sense of privacy and converts into a fully lie-flat bed complete with a dedicated mattress and pillow. Wireless charging, customisable mood lighting, enhanced storage, minibar amenities and multiple charging options further elevate the onboard experience.

Emirates First Class continues to set the benchmark for luxury air travel, with fully enclosed private suites described by travellers as a 'hotel room in the sky'. Designed to maximise privacy and wellbeing, the suites feature electronically controlled doors, personalised climate settings and ambient mood lighting. The seat reclines seamlessly into a lie-flat bed and can be adjusted to the airline's signature 'zero gravity' position for optimal rest and relaxation.

Hospitality remains at the heart of the Emirates experience. Representing more than 140 nationalities and speaking over 70 languages, Emirates cabin crew convey a hospitality philosophy that is built around 4 pillars - excellence, attentiveness, innovation and passion. Behind the service is an extensive training programme inspired by world-class hospitality standards, including principles drawn from Michelin-starred dining. Crew members are equipped with technical expertise, as well as the skills to anticipate customer needs and deliver meaningful moments of care throughout the journey.

Emirates unveils a striking new UAE flag livery on its A380

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates has unveiled a striking livery of a large UAE flag emblazoned across the fuselage of its iconic Airbus A380 aircraft, the world's largest commercial passenger aircraft. The new livery on A6-EVG, is an extension of the airline's iconic tail design, and a powerful tribute to the spirit, ambition and unity of the UAE.



than to fly it with pride."

The special livery features the colours of the UAE rendered in a bold, eye-catching 3D design that drapes elegantly across both sides of the aircraft. The moving canvas of national pride has already flown to New York and Brisbane and is scheduled to operate to more A380 destinations in the Emirates network, becoming visible from runways, skies and cities around the world.

Plans are underway to apply the flag design to an Emirates Boeing 777, the next largest commercial airliner in the sky after the A380.

The UAE flag is already a hallmark of every Emirates aircraft, painted across the tails of one of the world's most recognisable fleets, and carrying the nation's colours across continents, time zones and cultures each day.

The special flag livery is one of many that have marked special national events and commemorations in the UAE. In 2017, the airline featured a customised decal of the late HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founding father of the UAE, with a bespoke livery for its 100th A380. The initiative marked the airline's first initiative for the 'Year of Zayed', with 10 aircraft flying the special livery. That same year, the airline revealed the first of 40 aircraft carrying livery designs dedicated to Expo 2020 Dubai.

This initiative is part of Emirates' 'This Flag Will Always Fly' campaign, responding to the nationwide initiative launched by HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai. This initiative called on all citizens and residents to raise the UAE flag as a unifying symbol across society, a shared responsibility and pride in the nation's strength and cohesion during recent challenges.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive, Emirates airline and Group said: "We're proud to respond to HH Sheikh Mohammad's call to raise the flag as a tribute to the UAE's unity and strength. Since our inception, every Emirates aircraft has proudly carried the UAE flag wherever it flies. This new livery is our way of honouring a home that has given us so much, and a nation that stands as proof of what is possible when we collectively choose, every day, to reach higher. There is no greater stage for our flag than in the skies, and no greater privilege for Emirates

VietJet Air Sets Its Sights On Sri Lanka With New Colombo Office

TTA BULLETIN

VietJet Air has made its presence in Sri Lanka official with the launch of its Colombo office recently. This marks growing momentum in air connectivity between Sri Lanka and Vietnam, and opens up exciting new possibilities for travellers across the region.



The office was inaugurated at a special ceremony presided over by Vietnam's Ambassador to Sri Lanka, H.E. Trinh Thi Tam, lending a diplomatic flourish to what promises to be a significant development for both the travel trade and tourism sectors.

Representing VietJet Air's operations on the ground is General Sales Agent (GSA) Andrew The Aviation Company Ltd., chaired by industry veteran Mahen Kariyawan. The Colombo office will function as the airline's operational hub in Sri Lanka, offering dedicated support for passengers, travel agents and trade partners.

The headline news for travellers: a direct Colombo - Ho Chi Minh City service is expected to launch in August 2026, operating four round-trip flights per week. The new route will provide a much-needed direct link between Sri Lanka and one of Southeast Asia's most vibrant and visited cities.

Speaking at the opening, Ambassador Tam underscored the strengthening bilateral ties between Vietnam and Sri Lanka and expressed enthusiasm for VietJet Air's expanded footprint in the market. Chairman Kariyawan echoed this sentiment, noting that the partnership would meaningfully boost travel, tourism and commercial links between the two nations. For the travel trade, the Colombo office represents a direct point of contact for bookings, partnerships and on-ground coordination, a welcome development as demand for Southeast Asian destinations continues to grow among Sri Lankan travellers.

One of Vietnam's foremost low-cost carriers, VietJet Air has been steadily building its Asian network with a clear emphasis on affordability, connectivity and passenger convenience. Sri Lanka is the latest addition to that expanding map.

FROM RECORD-BREAKING HIKER TO SRI LANKA ADVENTURE AMBASSADOR: CATHERINE CRUSE RETURNS

At an age when most people begin slowing down, Catherine Cruse chose to take on one of Asia's newest and most exciting hiking adventures - and made history doing it.

In January 2025, adventurer Catherine Cruse successfully completed all 22 stages of Sri Lanka's internationally acclaimed Pekoe Trail in just seven days, trekking from Hantana to Kandapola across more than 300 kilometers of breathtaking hill country landscapes.



What made the achievement even more remarkable was the purpose behind it. Catherine undertook the challenge to raise funds for her brother, who had been affected by the devastating wildfires in the United States earlier that year.

Battling exhaustion, unpredictable weather, steep ascents, and long days on the trail, she pushed through rolling tea estates, mist-covered mountain passes, cloud forests, and remote villages across Sri Lanka's central highlands.

Throughout the journey, Catherine frequently shared moments from the trail on social media, highlighting the warmth of local communities, the beauty of Sri Lanka's tea country,

and the unique experience of hiking through regions untouched by mass tourism. Her story quickly became an inspiration for adventure travelers following the growing global popularity of the Pekoe Trail.

But Catherine's Sri Lankan adventure is far from over.

This June, she returns once again - this time leading a group of 10 international travelers on another immersive Sri Lankan journey curated by Connaissance De Ceylan (Pvt) Ltd.

Cathy will also be accompanied by David Cruse, owner of Spicy Wicket, a well-known Sri Lankan restaurant in Australia and a passionate promoter of Sri Lanka Cricket and Sri Lankan tourism. Over the years, David has brought down numerous cricket and special interest groups to Sri Lanka, continuously promoting the island as a unique travel and sporting destination.



The group will travel across Sri Lanka from 6th - 18th June, combining adventure, nature, culture, and authentic local experiences.



Their itinerary includes hiking selected sections of the Pekoe Trail, including Stage 1 from Hantana to Galaha and Stage 8 from Norwood to Bogawantalawa - two of the trail's most scenic sections through Sri Lanka's tea country.

Beyond the trails, the group will also explore iconic Sri Lankan experiences including Sigiriya, Kandy, Ella, the famous Nine Arch Bridge, Little Adam's Peak, and the untouched wilderness of Gal Oya National Park featuring the Gal Oya Boat Safari and Monkey Mountain Trek.

Catherine's return reflects Sri Lanka's growing reputation as one of Asia's leading adventure and experiential travel destinations. Within a compact island, travelers can experience hiking, wildlife, culture, wellness, scenic train journeys, mountains, beaches, and authentic local interactions unlike anywhere else in the region.

In many ways, Catherine Cruse has become an unofficial ambassador for Sri Lanka tourism - proving that Sri Lanka is not only a destination for relaxation, but also one for transformative adventure.

And perhaps her story proves one thing more than anything else:

Adventure has no age limit - especially in Sri Lanka.

Skal International Asia Congress 2026 in Macau

The 55th Skal International Asia Congress was held at the Grand Lisboa Palace hotel in Macau from 11 to 14 June, the event gathered 198 delegates representing Skål clubs from 18 countries and regions spanning Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America.





Hikka House

HIKKADUWA

Stunning Moments Inspired by Ocean Rhythms and Island Soul



At Hikka House by Thema Collection, life feels a little different by the sea. Set along Hikkaduwa's golden shores, this contemporary beachfront retreat blends tropical vibrance with modern comfort. Wake to sweeping ocean views, spend your days at your own pace, and enjoy the beach just steps from your door. Whether you're chasing waves, exploring Hikkaduwa's vibrant coastline and coral-rich waters, or simply unwinding in a relaxed tropical setting, Hikka House offers a stay designed around the simple pleasures of coastal living. Come for the ocean, stay for the easy rhythm of life by the shore, and discover a refined beachfront experience created for today's discerning traveler.



Thema
COLLECTION



Aliya
SIGIRIYA



Amba Yaalu
KANDALAMA



Mountbatten
KANDY



Tea & Experience
MANDARAM NUWARA



Scottish Planter
NUWARA ELIYA



Waraka
UDAWALAWE



Wild Glamping
KNUCKLES



Wild Glamping
GAL OYA



Hikka House
HIKKADUWA



Parangi
WELIGAMA



Vista Vie
MIRISSA



Kithala
TISSA-YALA



Blue Monk
TISSA-YALA



Maalu Maalu
PASIKUDA



Ayurvie
SIGIRIYA



Ayurvie
WELIGAMA

www.themacollection.com



Different Themes, Authentic Experiences

