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VOL 25 NO 07 2026 20 PGS



EME Level Up: AI Hospitality Connect Draws Over 200 Industry Leaders to Shangri-La Colombo

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

EME Level Up: AI Hospitality Connect, Sri Lanka 2026 concluded successfully at the Shangri-La Colombo on 14 July 2026, welcoming over 200 delegates from Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Malaysia and Thailand — exceeding the event's initial projection of 180 delegates. The conference brought together more than 80 hospitality brands, and was hosted by eMarketingEye, Asia's leading digital marketing agency specialising in the hospitality sector, under the theme “Think. Innovate. Elevate.”

The one-afternoon conference brought together a stellar line-up of speakers for curated sessions, panel discussions and case studies exploring the forces reshaping hospitality marketing — from AI-driven guest engagement and generative search visibility to direct booking strategy, social media performance and data-led decision-making. The programme closed with a dedicated networking session that gave delegates the opportunity to build new industry connections.

“EME Level Up: AI Hospitality Connect has given us the opportunity to place AI right at the heart of the conversation for the hospitality industry,” said eMarketingEye CEO Rajitha Dahanayake. “It was heartening to see the energy and curiosity from our delegates and the strong backing of our partners, all coming together around one shared goal: understanding how AI can genuinely move the needle for hospitality brands. This conference is part of our ongoing commitment to equip the industry with the knowledge and tools it needs to stay competitive in a rapidly changing digital landscape.”

Among the day's highlights was a fireside chat, “Reimagining Destination Marketing: How AI Is Rewriting the Path to Discovery,” which brought together senior tourism and industry leaders to examine how artificial intelligence is transforming the way travellers discover, evaluate and decide — from destination selection through to accommodation and experiences. The conver-

sation explored the new opportunities this shift creates for tourism boards and hospitality brands to shape inspiration and engagement across the traveller journey.

Panellists were Buddhika Hewawasam, Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority & Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, Abdulla Ghiyas, Chairperson, Visit Maldives Corporation (National Tourism Board), Rajitha Dahanayake, Chief Executive Officer, eMarketingEye and Moderated by Glen A. Grosic, Managing Director – Asia, HSMAI

A second session, “Turning Guest Data Into Revenue with AI: Benchmarking Colombo's Guest Sentiment Against APAC's Key Destinations,” powered by TrustYou's guest sentiment intelligence, benchmarked Colombo's hotel performance against Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok through the lens of real guest feedback. Drawing on large-scale review and sentiment data, the session unpacked the drivers behind guest satisfaction, reputation shifts and competitive positioning across these key APAC destinations — and translated the insights into practical commercial strategy, showing how Colombo's marketing, operations and revenue teams can own their guest data to sharpen guest experience, strengthen pricing power and grow total profitability which was presented by Jonathan Abel, Key Account Management Director, APAC, TrustYou

A third session, “Running the AI Race: Speed, Strategy, and What Actually Moves the Needle,” looked at how Lighthouse has built an AI-native commercial platform from the ground up, embedding AI into the core of its products to help businesses make faster, smarter and more profitable decisions.

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VietJet Bridges Colombo and Ho Chi Minh City with Direct Flights from 18 August

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA



New route opens a seamless gateway between Sri Lanka and Vietnam — and to destinations far beyond

Vietnam's dynamic new-age carrier VietJet is set to connect Colombo and Ho Chi Minh City with direct flights commencing 18 August, marking a significant milestone in air connectivity between Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

The route will operate three times weekly — on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays — catering to both leisure and business travellers and establishing the first direct air link between the two countries.

For Sri Lankan travellers, the new service offers far more than a single destination. Ho Chi Minh City serves as VietJet's bustling hub, opening onward connections to Hanoi and points throughout Vietnam, as well as North East Asia, South East Asia, Australia and beyond. For Vietnamese and international travellers, the route brings Sri Lanka — with its beaches, heritage and celebrated hospitality — closer than ever before.

Built on a foundation of operational efficiency, a diversified offering and a mission to make travel accessible to more people with flexibility, VietJet today operates a modern fleet of 140 aircraft and approximately 500 flights per day, spanning an extensive domestic network and international services to 17 countries and territories through its hub in Vietnam.

Partnership at the Heart of the Launch

Introducing the airline to Sri Lanka's travel trade at a seminar in Colombo, VietJet emphasised that lasting success on the route will be built hand in hand

with local partners.

"Airlines alone can't do it. We need our partners who understand the local customers. Your support is essential to making this a sustainable market route," the airline told the gathering of travel agents.

The seminar went beyond a route introduction, opening a dialogue on long-term cooperation. VietJet invited the trade to jointly develop packages attractive in both directions, and to actively promote the route to business, leisure and family travellers. In return, the airline pledged comprehensive product information, training, commercial support and market development insights.

With both countries offering the diverse, authentic experiences today's travellers seek, the cross-promotional opportunities between Sri Lanka and Vietnam are seen as virtually endless — from culinary and cultural trails to wellness, beach and adventure tourism.

"We see long-term potential, and we believe Ho Chi Minh City-Colombo is the first step in our journey together," the airline noted.

A High-Profile Seminar

The trade presentation was followed by a meet-and-greet, with the event graced by the Hon. Minister of Tourism Vijitha Herath and Deputy Minister Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe — a strong signal of the importance both nations place on this new bridge between South and Southeast Asia.

The EME Level UP Summit in Colombo concluded on a resounding high, drawing over 200 participants from across the travel and tourism sector. The energy in the room was unmistakable — hoteliers, travel professionals, and industry leaders coming together to share knowledge, forge partnerships, and chart a course for the future. Events of this calibre remind us that Sri Lanka is not merely a destination; it is fast becoming a hub for meaningful industry dialogue in the region.

Equally exciting is Vietjet's entry into Sri Lanka, with the first-ever nonstop link between Colombo and Ho Chi Minh City taking off this August with four weekly flights. This historic air bridge opens Southeast Asia to Sri Lankan travellers while welcoming a promising new source market to our shores which is a clear win for trade, tourism, and cultural exchange on both sides.

These successes come at a time when the global picture remains complex. Geopolitical tensions, economic headwinds, and shifting travel patterns continue to test destinations worldwide. Yet travel has proven remarkably resilient, and travellers are increasingly seeking places that offer authenticity, value, and restoration.

Herein lies Sri Lanka's advantage. Recognised among the world's finest destinations for wellness with our centuries-old Ayurveda heritage, serene landscapes, and holistic retreats, the island is perfectly positioned to capture this growing segment. Add to that our standing as one of Asia's fastest-growing tourism markets, recently named among the region's top destinations and crowned the world's best island, with arrivals crossing 1.2 million by mid-year, and the trajectory is clear.

The pieces are falling into place. Our task now is to sustain the momentum and work towards a combined, singular message. Sri Lanka is a destination with a myriad of offerings, 365 days of the year. Strategic marketing, understanding market trends and demands and catering to the discerning traveler will further strengthen our position as one of the most sought after destinations in Asia.



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Traveltalk Asia is a Monthly publication
of Doubledee Publications Private Limited

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NEWS / MOVEMENTS

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EME Level Up: AI Hospitality Connect....

The session examined the complementary roles of Generative AI — transforming productivity, automating workflows and creating richer customer experiences — and Predictive AI, which enables organisations to anticipate demand, forecast outcomes, identify opportunities and make proactive commercial decisions ahead of competitors. Through practical, real-world examples, the discussion set out what separates AI experimentation from AI execution, why speed alone is not enough, and how businesses can build an AI strategy that delivers lasting competitive advantage was presented by Javed Bongso, Market Manager – India, Sri Lanka and Maldives, Lighthouse



EME Level Up: AI Hospitality Connect, Sri Lanka 2026 was hosted by eMarketingEye in collaboration with supporting partners Aven Hospitality, TrustYou and

Lighthouse. Travel Talk Asia served as the event's Official Trade Media Partner, with Daily FT as Official Print Media Partner.

Erik Billgren Takes the Helm at Luxury Anantara Koh Yao Yai Resort & Villas

TTA BULLETIN

Minor Hotels has appointed seasoned hotelier Erik Billgren as General Manager of Anantara Koh Yao Yai Resort & Villas. The multi-award-winning resort, a member of The Leading Hotels of the World, is set on Koh Yao Yai, one of Thailand's last truly unspoiled islands. Erik brings extensive experience from across Asia, with a strong focus on service excellence, luxury hospitality and sustainable operations.



showcase Koh Yao Yai's diverse beauty and culture.

He will also focus on the resort's commitment to its partners in the industry, strengthening relationships with trade partners, travel advisors, corporate clients, MICE and wedding organisers. An open-door approach and dedication to creating new opportunities promises to drive mutual business growth and expand the resort's presence in key markets.

"I am humbled to be given the opportunity to lead one of Anantara's flagship properties in Southern Thailand," says Erik Billgren. "Anantara Koh Yao Yai Resort & Villas is truly unique and has an exceptional team in place. The combination of nature and culture, combined with a world-class product and commitment to total guest satisfaction, is the foundation of what will make the resort continue to grow in success in the years ahead."

"Erik brings a unique vision to hospitality, as well as a proven track record of success," says Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO of Minor International. "We are delighted he takes the helm of one of our most high-profile Thailand properties, and look forward to seeing him take it to even greater heights."

Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts Appoints Shavinda Jinadasa as Commercial Director for Sri Lanka Resorts Sector.

TTA BULLETIN

Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts announced the appointment of Shavinda Jinadasa as Commercial Director for the Sri Lanka Resorts sector. In this newly elevated role, Shavinda will assume overall strategic direction and performance for the sector, bringing the Sales, Marketing and Revenue functions together under a single commercial directorate across all nine resorts in Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts Sri Lanka Resort portfolio.



Sales, Marketing and Revenue under a single directorate vision will sharpen how we position all nine Sri Lanka properties, and we are confident that Shavinda is the right fit to lead that integration."

Shavinda brings over 15 years of experience with Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, having built an accomplished track record across both the Colombo Hotels and Sri Lanka Resorts sectors. Beginning his journey as a Sales Executive with Keells Hotel Management Services, he has steadily progressed through a series of senior sales and marketing leadership roles, most recently serving as Director – Sales & Marketing for the Sri Lanka Resorts sector prior to his new appointment.

Throughout his tenure, Shavinda has played a pivotal role in strengthening the commercial performance and market positioning of the resorts portfolio. He was instrumental in establishing and growing the Luxury & Lifestyle segment within the Sri Lanka Resorts sector, helping expand the portfolio's appeal to high-value traveller segments while driving strategic sales initiatives and enhancing the brand's presence in key international markets.

Commenting on the appointment, Johan Aschan, Area Vice President of Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, Sri Lanka Resorts commented; "Shavinda has been instrumental in strengthening the Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts Sri Lanka Resort sector commercial performance across some of our most competitive markets, and this appointment reflects the trust we place in his ability to lead at sector level.



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.



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ATM research partners forecast resilient future for tourism as industry looks beyond challenges in the Middle East

TTA BULLETIN

The global travel industry is entering its next phase of growth, according to new research from Arabian Travel Market's (ATM) Official Research Partners, STR and Euromonitor International, which indicates that consumer demand for travel remains fundamentally resilient despite the challenges facing the Middle East this year.



The latest forecasts suggest that while geopolitical developments have temporarily impacted traveller confidence and disrupted aviation and hospitality markets across parts of the region, the long-term outlook for tourism remains positive. As stability returns, destinations with strong tourism infrastructure, established global connectivity and continued investment are expected to recover quickly, creating fresh opportunities for destinations, hospitality providers, airlines and tourism businesses worldwide.

One of the strongest indicators of this confidence comes from Euromonitor International, a market intelligence company, whose latest research, Travel in an Age of Poly-Crisis, forecasts that travel spending across the Middle East and Africa will grow by 47.7% between 2025 and 2030, adding more than US\$50 billion to the regional travel economy. The findings reveal that travellers continue to prioritise experiences despite inflationary pressures, with global travel expenditure now exceeding pre-pandemic levels and growing faster than GDP in many markets.

Together, the research from STR and Euromonitor highlights three trends expected to shape tourism's next chapter. Demand for travel has not weakened but evolved. Rather than cancelling trips, consumers are increasingly adapting their travel behaviour, favouring regional destinations, seeking greater flexibility and placing even greater value on meaningful experiences. According to Euromonitor, experiences continue to outperform traditional tourism spending, while digital engagement has become an essential part of the traveller journey.

Confidence will determine the pace of recovery. STR's latest hospitality outlook shows that as safety perceptions improve, air connectivity returns and destination marketing resumes at full strength, hotel performance across key Middle East markets is expected to strengthen steadily. Markets supported by diversified demand, established tourism ecosystems and long-term investment are forecast to recover most rapidly as traveller confidence returns.

Finally, innovation is becoming one of the industry's greatest competitive advantages. Euromonitor's research highlights AI-powered customer journeys, predictive support, seamless digital experiences and hyper-personalisation as essential differentiators, while hospitality businesses are increasingly focusing on revenue optimisation and experience-led strategies to respond to changing traveller expecta-

tions.

These findings closely reflect ATM 2026's theme, Travel 2040: Driving New Frontiers Through Innovation and Technology, which explores how resilience, innovation and changing traveller expectations are redefining the future of global tourism.

Danielle Curtis, Regional Portfolio Director – UAE, RX Global, said: "Periods of uncertainty often accelerate change, and today's travel industry is already adapting faster than many anticipated. What is particularly encouraging from the latest research is that traveller confidence has not disappeared; it has evolved. Consumers continue to prioritise travel, destinations are responding with greater agility, and technology is enabling businesses to become more resilient than ever before."

The exclusive findings from both organisations will be presented during ATM's conference programme.

On the Global Stage, Euromonitor International will present The State of Travel: Inflation, Polycrisis & the New Travel Reality, examining how inflation, geopolitical uncertainty and changing consumer priorities are reshaping travel demand and creating new opportunities for destinations and businesses.

STR will contribute two sessions during ATM 2026. Decoding Hospitality Growth – What Do Today's Travellers Want?, taking place on the Future Stage, will explore the evolving expectations of today's travellers and how hospitality brands can respond through experience-led strategies.

The team will also host the Hospitality Roundtable: Rebooting Hotel Revenue, Where to Start? in the Experience Hub, bringing together hospitality professionals for an interactive discussion focused on practical commercial strategies, operational resilience and revenue recovery.

"At ATM, our role extends beyond bringing the industry together. We are committed to providing the insights, research and strategic conversations that help destinations and businesses navigate change with confidence. By welcoming leading research organisations such as STR and Euromonitor International, alongside thousands of industry decision-makers, ATM creates a platform where the global travel community can move beyond responding to today's challenges and begin shaping tomorrow's opportunities," added Curtis.

INSPIRING JOURNEYS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ACORN GROUP

POORNAKA DELPACHITRA'S JOURNEY WITH INTREPID TRAVEL AND PLACING THE ISLAND AT THE HEART OF THE WORLD'S BIGGEST ADVENTURE TRAVEL COMPANY



There are careers that follow a straight line, and then there are journeys winding, character-testing, and all the richer for it. Poornaka Delpachitra's belongs firmly in the second category. Long before he was steering one of Intrepid Travel's largest country operations anywhere in the world, Poornaka was a young corporate travel executive in Colombo who happened to also be playing rugby for Sri Lanka.

His path took him to the United Kingdom for higher studies, where he didn't simply study the travel industry; he worked in it, taking on part-time roles with a UK-based tour operator. When he returned home, he did so with a mandate: to establish that operator's operations office in Sri Lanka. Over the next twelve years he rose steadily through the ranks, ultimately serving as General Manager for both the UK and Sri Lanka offices a rare dual-market leadership role that gave him an instinctive understanding of what international travellers seek and what Sri Lanka can so brilliantly deliver.

The Intrepid Chapter

In 2022, Poornaka took on his boldest challenge yet, joining Intrepid Travel the world's largest adventure travel company as Country General Manager for Sri Lanka. His remit was formidable from day one: leading both the Destination Management Company and Intrepid's Shared Services Centre in Colombo, a combined operation of more than 250 people that stands today as Intrepid's largest country office outside its Melbourne headquarters.

What has happened since is one of the most compelling growth stories in Sri Lankan tourism. In 2023, some 1,200 Intrepid travellers explored the island. By 2024, that figure had surged past 4,500 customers growth of over 375 per cent surpassing even the DMC's best pre-pandemic year in 2019. And the ambition doesn't stop there: under Poornaka's leadership, Intrepid Sri Lanka has set its sights on welcoming 15,000 travellers to the island by 2030, feeding directly into the global company's target of carrying over 600,000 travellers worldwide by the end of the decade.

The numbers tell one story. The recognition tells another. In 2024, the operation was honoured with the Best Destination Loyal Partner award in the Travel and Tourism Operator category at the Sri Lanka Tourism Awards, and the team has been named among Sri Lanka's Best Workplaces by Great Place to Work.

Leading with Purpose

Yet what truly distinguishes Poornaka's journey is not the scale of the growth, but the character of it. Under his stewardship, Intrepid Sri Lanka has become a national benchmark for climate-conscious, community-based and inclusive tourism.

He has championed the Women in Tourism programme in partnership with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority and the Market Development Facility, breaking down barriers for women across the sector – and, in a moment of quiet symbolism, supporting Sri Lanka's first female cycling tour leader into the industry. Through The Intrepid Foundation, he has driven a partnership with the ZeroPlastic movement to change behaviours around single-use plastic, including investment in a ZeroPlastic Impact Centre.

On the climate front, Poornaka introduced Sri Lanka's first electric vehicle tour in support of Intrepid's global decarbonisation goals and this year, he has taken that commitment further, launching a decarbonisation initiative working hand-in-hand with accommodation suppliers across the island, supported by Intrepid's Climate Impact Fund, which directs AUD 2 million each year into practical emissions reductions in destinations worldwide. For Poornaka, it is about moving from ambition to action on climate responsibility.

A Face of the Future

In 2025, the industry took notice in the most emphatic way possible. Poornaka was named a PATA Face of the Future awardee the Pacific Asia Travel Association's highest honour for young tourism professionals as one of just four emerging leaders recognised across the entire Asia Pacific, and the winner in the Sustainability Initiatives category.

Characteristically, he deflected the spotlight onto his team, describing the recognition as deeply humbling and expressing pride in leading people who believe in creating positive change through the joy of travel.

As the island's tourism story enters its most promising chapter in years, it is leaders like him grounded, purposeful and quietly relentless who are ensuring the world doesn't just visit Sri Lanka, but falls in love with it responsibly.

And his journey, by every indication, is only just beginning

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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 matchmaking, 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."

SATTE Among the First Travel Trade Exhibitions in India to Introduce an AI-Powered Visitor & Buyer Qualification Framework

TTA BULLETIN



SATTE (South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange), South Asia's leading travel and tourism exhibition, has announced the introduction of its AI-Powered Visitor & Buyer Qualification Framework, making it among the first travel trade exhibitions in India to leverage artificial intelligence to enhance visitor qualification, buyer intelligence and business matchmaking.

As the business events industry evolves, exhibitors are increasingly looking beyond visitor numbers and focusing on meaningful business outcomes. Responding to this shift, SATTE has introduced an intelligent visitor qualification framework that will help create more relevant business connections and improve the overall quality of engagement across the exhibition.

The AI-powered framework intelligently analyses visitor profiles to better understand business relevance and buyer intent, enabling more meaningful exhibitor-buyer interactions while supporting a smarter, more personalised event experience.

Integrated with SATTE 365, the initiative extends the value of the exhibition beyond the show floor by enabling year-round engagement, stronger business networking and continuous relationship building across the travel ecosystem.

The introduction of the AI-powered framework reflects SATTE's commitment to creating a more intelligent business ecosystem where technology enhances the quality of conversations, strengthens buyer relevance and enables exhibitors to maximise every business opportunity.

Rather than simply increasing visitor numbers, SATTE is focused on ensuring exhibitors meet the right people, engage in more meaningful conversations and generate stronger commercial outcomes.

Pallavi Mehra, Senior Group Director, Informa Markets in India, said: "For over three decades, SATTE has connected the global travel industry with the Indian market.

Classic Destinations Successfully Concludes Four-City Roadshow Across North India

TTA BULLETIN



Classic Destinations, one of Sri Lanka's leading Destination Management Companies (DMC), has successfully concluded an extensive four-city roadshow across North India, covering the key markets of Delhi, Chandigarh, Jalandhar and Amritsar. The roadshow, conducted under the Classic Sri Lanka banner, brought together leading travel professionals and tour operators for a series of destination knowledge sessions and B2B networking engagements.

The roadshow was hosted by Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu, Head of Classic Destinations, Sri Lanka, and organised by Mr. Rajiv Verma, Consultant for Classic Destinations in India, in association with support partner SriLankan Airlines.

Each city event featured an insightful destination knowledge session, offering the travel trade comprehensive information on Sri Lanka's tourism offerings, emerging travel experiences, connectivity, hospitality infrastructure, and the full suite of services offered by Classic Destinations as a trusted destination management partner. The B2B

networking sessions that followed enabled direct engagement between the Classic Destinations team and prominent tour operators across the region.

The roadshow witnessed enthusiastic participation from the North Indian travel fraternity, with each leg attracting leading tour operators, industry veterans and stalwarts of the regional travel trade. Participants gained valuable insights into Sri Lanka's diverse tourism products and expressed strong commitment to promoting the island as a preferred destination for Indian travellers.

Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu, Head of Classic Destinations, Sri Lanka, said: "The objective of this roadshow was to strengthen our engagement with the North Indian travel trade and showcase the diverse and rewarding experiences that Sri Lanka offers. The response from the travel fraternity across all four cities has been truly encouraging, and it reaffirms the immense goodwill Sri Lanka enjoys in this market."

FACETS Sri Lanka 2027: 34th Edition of a dazzling legacy

TTA BULLETIN

The 34th Edition of FACETS Sri Lanka organized by the Sri Lanka Gem & Jewellery Association, will take place from the 4th to 6th January 2027 at the iconic Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams Colombo. The landmark event will bring together over one hundred exhibitors representing the finest gem and jewellery companies in the country. Buyers from the USA, Europe, the Middle East, India, China, Thailand and other key markets will converge in Colombo to experience Sri Lanka's unmatched craftsmanship and gemstone excellence.

A press conference to announce the 34th edition brought together key stakeholders from across the public and private sectors, with several distinguished guests sharing their views on the significance of the exhibition and the continued growth of Sri Lanka's gem and jewellery industry. Among them were Chairman of the National Gem & Jewellery Authority (NGJA) Prof. S. P. Chaminda, Chairman of the Export Development Board (EDB) Mangala Wijesinghe and Hotel Manager of Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams Roshan George, who reaffirmed their respective organisations' commitment to supporting Sri Lanka's premier international gem and jewellery exhibition.

The 34th Edition of FACETS Sri Lanka will include dedicated sections that



showcase the island's world-renowned sapphires and contemporary luxury jewellery, while a series of special events — including Sapphire Night, Story Corner, Power Breakfast, Mine Tour and Port City Tour — will create opportunities for networking, knowledge-sharing and collaboration.

The success of FACETS Sri Lanka continues to be strengthened by the support of the Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB) and the National Gem & Jewellery Authority (NGJA). As long-standing partners of the exhibition, the EDB plays a key role in connecting Sri Lanka's gem and jewellery industry with international buyers and markets, while the NGJA works to uphold industry standards and support the sector's sustainable growth. Together with the Sri Lanka Gem & Jewellery Association (SLGJA), they have helped establish FACETS as the country's premier international gem and jewellery exhibition.

The SLGJA unveiled the FACETS 2027 theme and promotional teaser video during the media conference while also announcing the event dates for the next three years, reinforcing the exhibition's role as a cornerstone of Sri Lanka's gem and jewellery calendar.

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Where the first sunrise of Sri Lanka's East Coast paints the sky, a different kind of escape begins.

Set along the tranquil shores of Pasikuda, home to one of the world's longest stretches of shallow reef coastline, The Calm Resort & Spa by Browns Hotels & Resorts invites you to experience a beachfront sanctuary where golden mornings, barefoot moments, and endless ocean horizons become part of your everyday.

Discover the wonders of the region with adventures to Kayankerni Reef, Elephant Rock, ancient kovils, cultural landmarks, and unforgettable coastal excursions. Unwind by the pool, indulge in rejuvenating Ayurveda spa experiences, and savour signature cocktails and oceanfront dining at Bello Beach Bar, as the waves create the perfect soundtrack to your getaway.

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World Environment Day – 5 June 2026

TTA BULLETIN

In celebration of World Environment Day on 5 June 2026, the team at Pegasus Reef Hotel organized a beach and roadside clean-up campaign around the hotel premises.

This initiative reflects the hotel's ongoing



commitment to maintaining a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. Through regular clean-up activities, Pegasus Reef Hotel continues to promote environmental responsibility while encouraging staff to contribute to a greener community.



Sri Lanka Ranked World's No. 1 Trending Wellness Destination for 2026

TTA BULLETIN

“The ranking is a powerful endorsement of Sri Lanka's growing global reputation for authentic, heritage-based healing” said Asoka Hettigoda, President of the The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka (THASL)

While many destinations offer wellness, Sri Lanka's point of difference lies in “Ayurveda” and “Hela Wedakama” the island's indigenous system of medicine, which predates modern health-care by millennia and is attributed in legend to King Ravana, the mythical ruler and master physician credited with authoring foundational medical texts such as the Arka Prakashaya.

This recognition is no accident. It reflects decades of hard work and commitment by Sri Lankan hotel operators, through international travel fairs, exhibitions, road shows, digital marketing and social media promotions that have carried the destination's wellness story to the world. It is also important to note that a high percentage of properties in the wellness accommodation sector are members of THASL.

A World-Class Wellness Ecosystem
Sri Lanka today hosts over 100 registered Ayurveda resorts, beachfront, hill country and rainforest sanctuaries that pair ancient healing traditions with high-end luxury hospitality. Treatments do not follow a generic spa menu: certified physicians customise every oil, decoction and therapy to each guest's individual constitution. Signature offerings include:

- Panchakarma — the crown jewel of Sri Lankan wellness, a five-stage detoxification programme targeting



longevity, immunity, sleep therapy and rejuvenation, with guests reporting measurable improvements in bio-markers;

- Healing cuisine — gut-restoring menus built on organic estate-garden produce, medicinal rice, native ingredients such as gotu kola, moringa and green jackfruit, and fresh fish prepared with anti-inflammatory spices;

- Mind-body alignment — daily yoga and mindfulness meditation in open-air pavilions overlooking misty mountains and calm ocean waves, accelerating the healing effects of traditional therapies.

The achievement is all the more remarkable given the strength of global competition, with specialized agencies now connecting travellers seamlessly to trusted specialists, modern facilities and personalised care. High-spending travellers increasingly view health as the ultimate luxury and are moving away from quick-fix wellness trends towards time-tested heritage treatments, a shift that positions Sri Lanka strongly.

Industry leaders note that “Ayurveda” and “Hela Wedakama” now warrant greater focus within destination promotion and marketing, ushering in stronger tourist flows, building the country's image and boosting foreign exchange earnings. For business leaders, investors and hoteliers, Sri Lanka's rise offers a clear template: fuse cultural authenticity, measurable outcomes and premium guest experiences while protecting people and place.

TTM+ 2026 Pattaya - advancing sustainable and wellness-led tourism

TTA BULLETIN



Thailand's largest travel trade event connects global buyers and Thai sellers through “Healing is the New Luxury” with responsible tourism, wellness and sustainability at its core

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) hosted Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+) 2026 from 10 to 12 June at the NICE Pattaya Convention and Exhibition Center in Chon Buri, under the theme “Amazing Thailand: Healing is the New Luxury”. This year highlights quality tourism, wellness-led travel, and regional tourism development, with the Eastern region presented as a showcase for “Travel with Care”, Thai wellness, and coastal sustainability.

Mr. Surasak Phancharoenworakul, Minister of Tourism and Sports, said, “TTM+ 2026 reflects the Thai Government's commitment to tourism as a key driver of national growth. The event connects Thai tourism businesses with high-potential buyers, media, and partners from around the world, while strengthening ASEAN connectivity and wider regional cooperation. It also creates opportunities for business, innovation, and partnerships that strengthen the tourism industry, generate economic value, and distribute benefits to local communities.”

Now in its 23rd edition since launching in 2001, TTM+ remains Thailand's largest travel trade event and TAT's annual platform linking Thai suppliers with international markets. The 2026 edition welcomes 429 high-quality international buyers, 428 Thai sellers, and over 100 international media representatives, with more than 15,400 business appointments expected.

Ms. Thapane Kiatphaibool, TAT Governor, said, “TTM+ 2026 enables TAT to bring Amazing Thailand: Healing is the New Luxury into a global trade setting, showing how Thai tourism can meet demand for wellness, meaningful experiences, and responsible travel. The event reflects our commitment to sustainable growth through the BCG model, Zero Waste to Landfills, and Zero Food Waste, while creating the connections and shared commitment needed to move Thai tourism forward with quality, responsibility, and confidence.”

The 10 June programme began with seven

pre-tour routes in Chon Buri, showcasing the province's strengths. Afternoon sessions include the Thailand Tourism Update, a TTM Talk under the theme “Thailand: Your Source of Healing Vitamins”, and business appointments. The opening ceremony brought the 5R approach — Retreats, Rituals, Reels, Rhythms, and Relations — to life through cuisine, immersive art, cultural performances, music, and networking by the sea.

Across the three days, the Thailand Pavilion presented wellness routes from Thailand's five regions through sensory and experiential activities designed to translate “Amazing Thailand: Healing is the New Luxury” into market-ready products. Sight, taste, scent, sound, and touch are used to highlight regional identities, from Thai fruits and one-bite gastronomy to herbal aromas, soundscapes, and interactive demonstrations.

The pavilion also highlighted region-specific wellness experiences include herbal relaxation from the North, traditional body balance from the Central region, salt and herbal therapies from the Northeast, aromatherapy from the East, and sea-and-salt therapy from the South. Gastronomy wellness is presented through local ingredients in contemporary one-bite formats, while Tomorrowland Thailand 2026 is promoted to support event-led tourism, boost spending, extend night-time tourism activity, and create new business opportunities for travel related sectors.

Sustainability is embedded across TTM+ 2026, building on last year's carbon-neutral approach. TAT is reducing printed badges, carbon tracking with the Provincial Electricity Authority, waste separation, recycling, surplus food donation, and the reuse or donation of event materials, supporting Thailand's move towards responsible event management and Net Zero Tourism.

Post-event tours will take buyers and media across five regional routes covering Rayong–Chanthaburi, Prachin Buri–Nakhon Ratchasima, Nakhon Pathom–Kanchanaburi, Chiang Rai, and Surat Thani–Nakhon Si Thammarat. These routes are designed to extend business opportunities beyond the trade floor, support new saleable itineraries, and disperse tourism income nationwide.

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TAT Drives Sustainability at TTM+ 2026 through “Zero Waste to Landfills,” Transforming Resources into Community Value

TTA BULLETIN



At Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+) 2026, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) reinforced its commitment to sustainable tourism by implementing a comprehensive waste management programme under the “Zero Waste to Landfills” concept. The initiative reflects TAT’s ongoing efforts to reduce the environmental footprint of major tourism events while advancing responsible resource management and supporting the development of carbon management standards across its activities.

Throughout the three-day event, TAT worked with local partners and waste management specialists to ensure that all waste generated on-site was properly separated and directed to the most appropriate recovery and utilisation channels. The approach focused on maximising resource value, minimising environmental impacts, and preventing waste from being sent to landfill.

Recyclable materials, including plastic bottles and aluminium cans, were collected separately and sent for recycling through collaboration with Recycle Day and Na Jomtien Municipality. Food scraps and organic waste were diverted for composting and converted into organic fertiliser through partnerships with Fertilizer Plant “Recycle Din” and the Huai Yai community. Non-recyclable materials were processed into Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF) with support from Rungjareon Environmental Services Company Limited and the Na Jomtien Subdistrict Municipality, transforming waste into an alternative energy source.

The initiative delivered measurable results throughout the event. On Day 1, a total of 201.16 kilograms of waste was generated and successfully diverted from landfill. On Day 2, a total of 354.88 kilograms was collected and managed through the same resource recovery process, while Day 3 generated 375.71 kilograms. In all three days, 100 percent of the waste was diverted from landfill, ensuring that no waste was sent to disposal sites.

Across the entire event, a total of 931.75 kilograms of waste was successfully managed through waste segregation and

recovery systems, achieving 100 percent landfill diversion. The waste stream comprised 145.78 kilograms of food waste, 344.23 kilograms of food waste liquid, 354.64 kilograms of general waste, 24.33 kilograms of plastic bottles, 36.28 kilograms of glass bottles and aluminium cans, 4.11 kilograms of mixed plastics, 7.83 kilograms of mixed paper, and 14.55 kilograms of cardboard boxes, all of which were directed to appropriate recovery and utilisation pathways.

These efforts resulted in a reduction of approximately 700.75 kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent (kg CO2eq), comparable to planting approximately 80 trees, demonstrating the positive environmental impact that can be achieved through responsible event management.

Beyond waste management, TAT ensured that valuable resources generated from the event continued to benefit local communities. Following the conclusion of TTM+ 2026, business matching tables, event structures, carpets, and other reusable materials were donated to Teacher Boonchoo home for Special Children, Phinchamwichasorn School, and the Nongnooch Pattaya International Convention and Exhibition Center (NICE Pattaya) for continued use and long-term community benefit.

In addition, all of ready-to-eat snack boxes that remained unserved, safe, and suitable for consumption were redistributed to children at Teacher Boonchoo home for Special Children in Chonburi. The initiative helped reduce food waste while ensuring that surplus food was shared with local communities rather than discarded.

Through these efforts, TTM+ 2026 demonstrates how tourism events can serve as a platform for sustainable development by reducing environmental impacts, promoting responsible resource management, and generating positive social outcomes. The initiative reinforces TAT’s vision of advancing Thailand’s tourism industry toward a more sustainable and inclusive future, where resources are not discarded but transformed into lasting value for communities and society.

SLAAR Celebrates 33 Years of Representing Sri Lanka's Aviation Industry

TTA BULLETIN

The Sri Lanka Association of Airline Representatives (SLAAR) gathered its membership, past presidents and industry friends at the elegant surrounds of The Kingsbury, Colombo, for its 33rd Annual General Meeting on June 17, a milestone occasion that reflected both the Association's enduring legacy and its forward-looking agenda for Sri Lanka's aviation sector.

The evening was elevated by the presence of Captain Daminda Rambukwella, Director General of Civil Aviation at the Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka (CAASL), who attended as Chief Guest. Capt. Rambukwella's address resonated strongly with those present, as he reinforced the critical importance of industry-regulator collaboration and expressed confidence in Sri Lanka's potential to emerge as a truly competitive aviation hub within the region.

A highlight of the AGM was the address by newly appointed Chairperson Sudeshinie Jayawardena, who brought a

sense of renewed energy and purpose to the occasion. Speaking to her membership, she called for unity and a shared commitment to the industry, acknowledging the collective responsibility that SLAAR's members hold in shaping the future of aviation in Sri Lanka.

Since its founding in 1993, SLAAR has grown considerably in both scope and influence. What began as a body representing offline airline representatives has evolved into a dynamic association that today also encompasses online General Sales Agents and cargo representation, a testament to the Association's ability to adapt alongside an ever-changing global aviation landscape.

With active engagement across regulatory and industry channels, SLAAR continues to champion the interests of its members through advocacy, operational dialogue and meaningful partnerships all in service of a more efficient, sustainable and growth-oriented aviation sector for Sri Lanka.

Secrets of Ceylon Unites Three Rival Hotels for The Victoria Open DMC Challenge

TTA BULLETIN

In a refreshing departure from convention, three competing hospitality brands around Sri Lanka's scenic Victoria Lake came together on 10th and 11th July 2026 to host The Victoria Open – DMC Challenge, a two-day familiarisation trip designed to showcase the destination rather than any single property.

The Glasshouse Victoria, owned by Shiran and Paul Topping; Ishq Digana, run by Isabel Jamaldeen; and Bougainvillea Retreat, managed by Pi Fernandez, jointly welcomed representatives from some of Sri Lanka's leading destination management companies, including DTH Travel, Jetwing, Sri Lanka Travel Collection, Trip Fusion and Far Out.

Framed as a light-hearted 'challenge', the fam trip divided participants into teams, each based at a different property. Over two days, agents explored the region around the Victoria Reservoir and the celebrated Victoria Golf Resort, an area of outstanding natural beauty within easy reach of Kandy, Gal Oya and Sigiriya, and just minutes from the Cinnamon Air landing point. Highlights included a visit to the 2,000-year-old Bambaragala Temple, the Pettigala hike above it, an introduction to golf on the greens of Victoria, and a closing team quiz to reinforce the destination knowledge gained.

The event was conceptualised and delivered



by Jessica Joseph, Head of DMC Sales and Reservations at Secrets of Ceylon Collection, which handles sales and marketing for The Glasshouse Victoria. Jessica is a mentee of the Women in Travel Collective, and The Victoria Open reflects a growing movement of collaborative, destination-first marketing led by young talent in the industry.

Feedback from participating agents was unanimously warm. Mohamed Insaf, Manager at DTH, described it as a wonderful initiative and thanked the organisers for the effort behind it. Dilini and Nazla of DTH Travel called it a memorable trip that allowed them to get to know the area, the properties and the people behind them, while Ramika and Fayaz of Trip Fusion praised a tour that was 'very well planned and enjoyable from start to finish', noting it gave them valuable ideas to incorporate into their own itineraries. Shash and Rashan of Far Out summed up the spirit of the event: a great collaboration, good fun, and fresh perspective to take back to the work desk.

By pooling their resources and audiences, the three properties have demonstrated that when hotels compete less and collaborate more, the destination wins, and so does Sri Lankan tourism.



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Browns Hotels & Resorts Brings Sri Lanka's Cultural Heritage to Life on the East Coast

TTA BULLETIN

Culture came alive on the shores of Pasikuda as Browns Hotels & Resorts presented the Calm Culture Collective at The Calm Resort & Spa—an immersive evening that celebrated the traditions, flavours, artistry and stories that make Sri Lanka truly unique.

Created as an experience beyond the traditional resort stay, the Calm Culture Collective invited guests to discover another side of the East Coast—one shaped not only by its breathtaking coastline, calm waters and spectacular sunrises, but also by its vibrant communities, heritage and cultural diversity.

Bringing together resort guests, members of the local community, tourism partners, neighbouring hotels and distinguished invitees, the evening transformed The Calm Resort & Spa into a celebration of Sri Lanka's living heritage. Guests were taken on a journey through Sri Lanka's diverse cultural traditions, with each performance introduced through insights into its origins, history and cultural significance, allowing audiences to better understand the heritage and stories behind every art form.

The evening featured a captivating showcase of Sri Lanka's traditional and cultural performances, including the elegance and grandeur of Kandyan Dance, the vibrant rhythms of Thelme (Low Country Dance), the expressive beauty of Bharatha Natyam, the graceful Mayura (Peacock) Dance, the Portuguese-influenced Kapiirigna, the colourful Salu Paliya, and the dramatic Mask and Pandam Paaliya rooted in Sri Lanka's ancient ritual traditions.

One of the highlights of the evening was the reenactment of the Kandy Esala Perahera, bringing the magnificence and



spiritual significance of one of Sri Lanka's most revered cultural festivals to life on stage. Through traditional drumming, movement and storytelling, guests were given insight into the history and symbolism behind this centuries-old celebration.

Adding to the cultural experience was a specially curated East Coast-inspired dining journey featuring authentic flavours and culinary highlights from the region. The dinner buffet showcased Batticaloa and East Coast specialties, offering guests an opportunity to explore the unique tastes and culinary traditions of the area. Complementing the evening was a signature beverage crafted exclusively for the occasion, inspired by the colours, flavours and character of the East Coast.



The celebration also featured local artisans and craftspeople from the

region, showcasing traditional arts, handmade creations and cultural expressions while creating a meaningful connection between guests and the communities that continue to preserve these traditions.

The success of the evening was brought to life through the dedication and efforts of Sujeewa Basnayake, General Manager of The Calm Resort & Spa, and the entire resort team, who curated a memorable experience that reflected the warmth, creativity and hospitality of the East Coast.

By providing a platform to celebrate Sri Lanka's traditional art forms and communities, Browns Hotels & Resorts continues to contribute towards preserving and promoting the island's rich cultural heritage.



With properties located across Sri Lanka's diverse landscapes from coastal escapes and cultural landmarks to the hill country and emerging destinations, Browns Hotels & Resorts continues to showcase the many stories, traditions and experiences that define the island.

CIMX Announces Partnership with Sourcing China to Strengthen Corporate Engagement in Global MICE Procurement

TTA BULLETIN

Taking place from 3-5 November 2026 in Beijing, the China International MICE Exchange (CIMX) has partnered with Sourcing China, a leading corporate procurement network, to bring qualified corporate decision makers to its inaugural edition. The strategic collaboration expands corporate buyer participation and creates new business opportunities between global MICE suppliers and Chinese enterprises.

Developed by Messe Berlin China, CIMX is a new-generation international trade show dedicated to the MICE and business travel sector, connecting global suppliers with qualified buyers in one focused marketplace.

Strategic Partnership to Strengthen Buyer Program

Through the partnership, Sourcing China will bring a curated delegation of qualified corporate decision-makers to CIMX as hosted buyers. Participants will meet destinations, convention bureaus, venues, hotels and MICE suppliers from China and international markets through pre-scheduled one-to-one appointments and curated networking formats tailored to real sourcing requirements.

Sourcing China is one of China's leading professional procurement organizations, dedicated to advancing strategic sourcing, procurement innovation, and supply chain excellence across Chinese enterprises. It connects procurement executives, corporate buyers, and industry experts through conferences, executive forums, training programs, and knowledge-sharing initiatives. Through its extensive corporate network and influence within China's



procurement community, Sourcing China plays a significant role in shaping the future of procurement and supply chain management in China and facilitating international business collaboration

Responding to Evolving Corporate Sourcing Needs

As global MICE sourcing continues to evolve, organizations are increasingly coordinating requirements across events, business travel, meetings, and international engagement activities. This shift is placing greater emphasis on structured supplier access, efficient evaluation processes, and cross-functional alignment within enterprises. Corporate procurement teams play an important role in consolidating internal requirements and engaging external partners in a structured and outcome-oriented way.

CIMX addresses this need by providing a curated environment where global suppliers and qualified buyers can connect through targeted meetings and focused engagement formats.

CIMX will be promoted across the Sourcing China network, extending the event's visibility among senior corporate stakeholders involved in business event planning, travel coordination, and global sourcing activities.

Interdepartmental Volleyball Tournament

TTA BULLETIN

The Pegasus Reef Hotel Interdepartmental Volleyball Tournament was held on 23 June 2026 at the North Lawn, bringing together colleagues for an exciting day of teamwork and friendly competition.

In a thrilling match against the Kitchen Department, the Food & Beverage Department emerged victoriously, showcasing

excellent teamwork, determination, and sportsmanship.

Congratulations to the Food & Beverage team on their well-deserved win, and thanks to all participants for making the tournament a memorable and enjoyable event.





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Chef Thushan Fernando Appointed Director of Culinary at Ramada by Wyndham Colombo

TTA BULLETIN

Ramada by Wyndham Colombo has announced the appointment of Chef Thushan Fernando as Director of Culinary. Strategically located in the heart of Colombo, the hotel continues to strengthen its position as a preferred destination for business and leisure travellers alike.



engineering, HACCP implementation, and culinary team development, contributing to the success of several renowned hospitality brands including Aitken Spence Hotels, Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, Hayleys Leisure, The Kingsbury Colombo, and Galadari Hotel Colombo.

His contribution to the culinary profession extends beyond hotel operations. Chef Thushan is a member of the Chefs Guild of Lanka, holds Senior Membership with the Chefs Guild UAE, and is a Worldchefs Certified Regional Judge, reflecting his commitment to maintaining international culinary standards while mentoring the next generation of hospitality professionals. He has also actively participated in numerous local and international culinary competitions, earning multiple Gold and Silver medals in recognition of his creativity and technical excellence.

At Ramada by Wyndham Colombo, Chef Thushan will lead the hotel's overall culinary strategy, overseeing its restaurants, banqueting operations, and food and beverage experiences. His extensive experience in luxury hospitality, combined with his passion for innovation and quality, is expected to further strengthen the hotel's culinary identity while introducing fresh dining concepts and enhancing guest satisfaction.

Chef Thushan's appointment reflects the hotel's continued focus on enhancing its culinary offerings, elevating guest experiences, and strengthening its reputation as one of Colombo's leading dining and banqueting destinations.

With over three decades of experience in the hospitality industry, Chef Thushan is recognised as one of Sri Lanka's most accomplished culinary professionals. His distinguished career spans luxury hotels and resorts across Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, where he has led culinary operations, developed award winning dining concepts, and managed large scale banquet and restaurant operations.

Throughout his career, Chef Thushan has built a strong reputation for culinary excellence through innovative menu development, international cuisine, kitchen leadership, food safety standards, staff training, and operational excellence. His expertise extends across fine dining, buffet concepts, banquet catering, menu

Why Global Rankings Position Sri Lanka as the Next Great Ayurveda & Wellness Destination

TTA BULLETIN

Travellers today are seeking more than beautiful destinations. They are looking for experiences that restore balance, improve wellbeing, and create lasting transformation. Across the globe, wellness tourism continues to grow as people prioritise health, mindfulness, and meaningful travel.



It is therefore encouraging to see Sri Lanka receiving international recognition as one of the world's emerging wellness destinations. The country's centuries-old Ayurveda heritage, abundant biodiversity, tropical climate, medicinal plants, and spiritual traditions create an ecosystem naturally suited for holistic wellbeing.

Unlike destinations where wellness has been commercially developed in recent decades, Sri Lanka's healing traditions have been woven into daily life for generations. Ayurveda here is not a trend; it is a living practice passed down through centuries.

This growing recognition reinforces Sri Lanka's position as one of Asia's most authentic wellness destinations and signals exciting opportunities for the country's wellness tourism sector.

What Makes Sri Lanka a Globally Recognised Wellness Hub? Several factors make Sri Lanka uniquely positioned within the global wellness landscape: over 2,500 years of authentic Ayurvedic heritage, qualified Ayurvedic

physicians and traditional healing expertise, indigenous medicinal herbs and natural remedies, tropical forests, lakes, and coastal environments that support holistic healing, mindfulness, meditation and spiritual traditions, locally sourced wellness-focused cuisine, and a growing focus on sustainable and responsible tourism. Together, these elements create wellness experiences that cannot easily be replicated elsewhere.

Amuna's Role in Sri Lanka's Wellness Story At Amuna Ayurveda & Wellness Retreat, these qualities come together in carefully designed programmes that focus on lasting wellbeing rather than temporary relaxation.

Each wellness journey begins with a personalised consultation by experienced Ayurveda physicians before progressing into customised therapies, herbal treatments, therapeutic nutrition, yoga, meditation, breathwork, and restorative experiences inspired by nature.

NÜWA at City of Dreams Sri Lanka Celebrates One Year of Reimagining Luxury Hospitality in Sri Lanka

TTA BULLETIN

A year ago, Colombo welcomed a new expression of luxury. Rising above the city as part of City of Dreams Sri Lanka, NÜWA arrived with a distinct ambition: to create a hospitality experience that was not simply defined by its surroundings, but by the art of anticipation, personalisation and an intimate understanding of what today's luxury traveller seeks.

Twelve months on, NÜWA at City of Dreams Sri Lanka celebrates its first anniversary as one of Sri Lanka's most distinctive luxury addresses, having helped redefine expectations of refined hospitality in the country. From its arrival as the flagship luxury hotel of City of Dreams Sri Lanka, the 113-room property has established a reputation built on exceptional service, thoughtful experiences and a philosophy where every guest journey is designed around individuality.

The past year has marked a series of significant milestones for NÜWA. Among its most notable achievements was receiving the prestigious Five-Star Classification from the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), recognising the property's commitment to delivering international standards of luxury while contributing to Sri

Lanka's evolving position as a destination for discerning global travellers.

The hotel's growing international presence has also been reflected through recognition from leading global travel publications, including Travel + Leisure, placing NÜWA among the new generation of luxury hospitality experiences shaping Sri Lanka's tourism landscape. Over the past year, the hotel has welcomed an impressive portfolio of guests, including international travellers, business leaders, diplomats, celebrities and luxury leisure seekers, further establishing Colombo as a destination capable of delivering world-class experiences.

At the heart of NÜWA's offering is a personalised approach to hospitality. From dedicated butler service and bespoke guest itineraries to curated dining experiences and wellness journeys, the hotel is designed around the belief that true luxury lies in the details that often go unnoticed, but are deeply remembered.

Yet, NÜWA's identity is not built solely on global standards. The hotel's spaces and experiences reflect the character of Sri Lanka through locally inspired design elements, culinary storytelling and collabo-

rations with local artists and creators. It is a balance between international sophistication and a genuine sense of place, offering guests an experience that feels both globally connected and distinctly Sri Lankan.

As part of City of Dreams Sri Lanka, NÜWA also forms the centrepiece of an integrated luxury destination that brings together premium accommodation, exceptional dining, luxury retail, entertainment, wellness, events and the country's premier gaming experience. Together, these offerings have contributed to Colombo's emergence as a regional hub for leisure, business and lifestyle experiences.

Reflecting on the first anniversary milestone, Michael Habashi, Vice President & Property General Manager, City of Dreams Sri Lanka, said: "The first year of NÜWA has been an extraordinary journey of bringing a new vision of luxury hospitality to life in Sri Lanka. From the moment we welcomed our first guests, our focus has been on creating experiences that feel personal, authentic and memorable. Receiving our Five-Star Classification and gaining recognition from the international travel community are important milestones, but what matters most is the trust our guests



have placed in us and the memories they have created here. As we enter our next chapter, we remain committed to continuously elevating the NÜWA experience through innovation, meaningful collaborations and a relentless pursuit of excellence."

Looking ahead, NÜWA's second year promises a new collection of experiences, including exclusive culinary collaborations, enhanced wellness offerings and curated guest journeys designed to further position the property among Asia's most compelling luxury hospitality destinations.

The Cauldron Marks Nine-Year Milestone, Enters Next Phase of Thoughtful Expansion

TTA BULLETIN

The Cauldron, the café that helped bring Pol Roti Koththu into Colombo’s café culture, celebrates its ninth anniversary this year, reflecting on a journey shaped not by rapid expansion, but by steady, intentional progress.



Founded nine years ago by a husband-and-wife team, CAULDRON & Co. began with a simple idea: to create genuine experiences through quality coffee, honest food, and warm, consistent hospitality. From the outset, the focus was never on becoming the biggest name in the market, but on doing the small things well, every single day.

Over the years, the business has grown through thousands of incremental decisions rather than dramatic leaps. Refining recipes, improving service, training team members, and responding to challenges one step at a time have all contributed to shaping what The Cauldron is today.

That steady philosophy has carried the brand through some of the most testing periods for the hospitality industry, including economic uncertainty and shifting consumer behaviour. Through it all, the approach remained unchanged: keep

things simple, stay grounded, and prioritise quality over everything else.

“We’ve resisted the temptation to chase every trend or expand before we were ready,” the founders said. “Instead, we invested in our people, refined our craft, and stayed true to what mattered most. Every year has left us stronger than the last.”

A significant part of that strength, they note, has come from the people behind the brand. The consistency and loyalty of the team has played a quiet but critical role in both survival and growth, helping sustain standards and culture through changing times.

Now, as The Cauldron reaches its ninth year in October, the company is preparing for its next chapter. Over the coming months, it will expand beyond its café roots through strengthened capabilities in coffee roasting under Ground Theory Coffee Roasters, alongside the development of an artisan baking division.

Goldi Sands Hotel Proudly Hosts International Muaythai Asian Games 2026

TTA BULLETIN

Goldi Sands Hotel, Negombo, proudly served as the official venue for the prestigious International Muaythai Asian Martial Arts (ITMA) Games 2026, bringing together athletes, officials, and martial arts enthusiasts from across Asia and beyond in a remarkable celebration of sportsmanship, culture, and international friendship.



☒ *Muaythai Semi-Professional*
☒ *Muaythai Boran*

Organized by WMO Muaythai Lanka* and sanctioned by the World Muay Boran Federation (WMBF), World Muaythai Organization (WMO), and **Union Boxing Federation (UBF)*, the tournament showcased world-class martial arts competition while positioning Sri Lanka as an emerging destination for international sporting events.

The event was graced by distinguished guests, including Mr. Chinawut Sirisompan (SGM Woody), President of the International Muaythai Association, and Hon. Sunil Kumara Gamage, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, whose presence highlighted the significance of the tournament to both the local and international sporting community.

Nearly 90 athletes representing 12 countries gathered at Goldi Sands Hotel to compete in three exciting disciplines:

☒ *Muaythai Professional*

Teams from Russia, Philippines, Australia, Hong Kong, South Korea, and several other nations arrived in Negombo to participate in this prestigious championship, creating an atmosphere of unity, friendship, and healthy competition.

Throughout the event, Goldi Sands Hotel transformed into a vibrant international sporting hub, welcoming athletes, officials, coaches, and supporters from around the world. The venue provided an ideal setting for high-level competition while offering participants the renowned hospitality and coastal charm of Negombo.

The tournament delivered thrilling contests, inspiring displays of determination, and unforgettable moments that celebrated the true spirit of martial arts. Beyond the competition, the event strengthened international relationships and promoted cultural exchange among participating nations.

Goldi Sands Hotel is honored to have played a key role in hosting this landmark event and remains committed to supporting international sporting initiatives that contribute to the growth of sports tourism in Sri Lanka.

The Kingsbury Joins Gothatuwa Wetland Restoration Effort to Mark World Environment Day

TTA BULLETIN



To commemorate World Environment Day 2026, team members from The Kingsbury, Colombo, joined the Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation's (SLLDC) Wetland Management Division at Gothatuwa Wetland Park for a hands-on conservation initiative focused on the removal of invasive plant species from one of Colombo's most important wetland ecosystems.

Often referred to as the city's natural flood buffer, urban wetlands such as Gothatuwa perform a remarkable range of ecological functions. They absorb excess rainwater during periods of heavy rainfall, naturally filter pollutants, store carbon, and provide habitats for countless species of birds, fish and other wildlife. However, invasive plant species continue to threaten these fragile ecosystems by restricting water flow, displacing native vegetation and reducing biodiversity. Working alongside environmental specialists, The Kingsbury team contributed directly to restoration

efforts while learning about the long-term management required to preserve these landscapes.

The programme also offered participants a deeper understanding of how environmental stewardship extends beyond awareness into action. By engaging directly with conservation professionals, associates gained valuable insight into the importance of wetland ecosystems and the role businesses can play in protecting the natural environments that support both communities and biodiversity.

For The Kingsbury, sustainability is built through meaningful participation as much as responsible operations. Supporting initiatives such as the Gothatuwa Wetland restoration reflects the hotel's ongoing commitment to environmental responsibility and its belief that lasting change is achieved through collaboration and collective action.

Melco Resorts & Entertainment brings a global legacy of luxury hospitality to Sri Lanka through City of Dreams Sri Lanka

TTA BULLETIN

Melco Resorts & Entertainment, a globally recognised leader in luxury integrated resorts, continues to redefine destination hospitality through a portfolio that spans Asia and Europe. With six landmark integrated resorts across Macau, Manila, Cyprus and Colombo, Melco has built a reputation for world-class design, exceptional service, elevated dining and immersive entertainment experiences.



Also in Macau, Studio City brings together cinema, entertainment and hospitality in a Hollywood-inspired setting. Known for its bold Art Deco architecture and immersive guest experiences, Studio City is anchored by signature attractions including the iconic Golden Reel, the world’s first figure-eight Ferris wheel, standing as one of Macau’s most recognisable entertainment landmarks.

For Sri Lankan travellers and regional audiences, this global legacy now has a home in Colombo through City of Dreams Sri Lanka, South Asia’s first integrated resort and Melco’s newest destination in the region.

At the heart of Melco’s portfolio is City of Dreams Macau, the company’s flagship integrated resort and one of Asia’s most distinctive luxury destinations. It is home to Morpheus, the iconic architectural landmark designed by the late Dame Zaha Hadid, and the reimagined House of Dancing Water, a spectacular live entertainment production that has become synonymous with Macau’s appeal as a global leisure capital.

Altira Macau reflects Melco’s commitment to refined luxury and service excellence. A 17-time Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star hotel and spa, Altira is home to Ying, the Michelin-starred Cantonese restaurant, and Tenmasa, the Forbes Five-Star Japanese restaurant. Together, they represent Melco’s pursuit of exceptional hospitality, wellness and culinary craftsmanship.

In the Philippines, City of Dreams Manila has elevated the country’s luxury hospitality landscape since opening in 2014. Overlooking Manila Bay, the dynamic urban resort brings together premium accommodation, curated dining, entertainment and leisure experiences, strengthening Manila’s position as a leading lifestyle and tourism destination in Southeast Asia.

HOTELS

The Wedding Show 2026

TTA BULLETIN

From 10th to 12th July 2026, Pegasus Reef Hotel proudly participated in The Wedding Show 2026, showcasing its elegant wedding venues and exclusive wedding packages to prospective couples and visitors.

The event provided an excellent platform to highlight the hotel's beautiful beachfront setting, exceptional hospitality, and personalized wedding services. Our team warmly engaged with visitors, offering

expert guidance and sharing creative ideas to help couples plan their dream wedding at Pegasus Reef Hotel.

The exhibition was a great success, strengthening the hotel's presence in the wedding market while creating valuable connections with future clients. We thank everyone who visited our stall and look forward to celebrating many memorable weddings at Pegasus Reef Hotel.



Salt Theory presents Sundown by the Reef

TTA BULLETIN

On July 31, 2026, the ocean breeze won't be the only thing stirring up excitement. Pegasus Reef Hotel is turning up the heat as Salt Theory presents the ultimate twilight experience.

Starting from 6.30 p.m. onwards, guests can enjoy a vibrant beachfront experience featuring an exciting Vronsky Bar takeover, electrifying beats by Skillz Jay, and high-energy live percussion perfor-

mances. With great music, refreshing drinks, and the stunning reef side atmosphere, the event promises the perfect way to welcome the weekend.

Whether you're coming to dance, unwind, or just soak in the scene, this is the place to be. Passes are available at LKR 2,500 Net per person, which includes one complimentary beverage to kick off your night.



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.

Beyond the wilderness, guests are invited to discover a culinary journey that has helped establish Hilton Yala as one of Southern Sri Lanka's leading dining destinations. From destination-inspired menus and award-winning Asian-fusion cuisine to thoughtfully curated local flavours, every dining experience is crafted to celebrate the rich cultural and culinary heritage of the region. Combined with the globally recognised service standards synonymous with the Hilton brand, these experiences have contributed significantly to the resort's exceptional guest satisfaction scores and growing international reputation.

"This recognition is particularly meaningful because Agoda Luxe is driven by the voices of travellers themselves," said

Sanoj Perera, Director of Marketing & Communication, Hilton Yala Resort. "Today's luxury traveller seeks more than a beautiful room or a scenic destination—they seek experiences that inspire, educate, and create lasting memories. At Hilton Yala, we have built our guest journey around those expectations, combining exceptional hospitality, world-class dining, immersive safari experiences, and genuine connections with the destination. To become the first Hilton property in Sri Lanka to receive Agoda Luxe recognition is a proud achievement for our team and a testament to the trust our guests place in us."

As Hilton's only wildlife resort globally, Hilton Yala occupies a distinctive position within both the Hilton portfolio and Sri Lanka's luxury hospitality landscape. The resort offers a rare combination of world-class hospitality and immersive wilderness experiences, allowing guests to seamlessly transition from wildlife encounters in Yala National Park to refined dining, wellness experiences, and contemporary luxury within a single destination.

The Agoda Luxe recognition reflects the consistency with which Hilton Yala delivers these experiences. From personalised service and thoughtfully curated guest journeys to destination-inspired culinary offerings and expertly guided safaris led by FGASA-certified and CyberTracker-qualified rangers, the resort continues to set new standards for luxury travel in Yala while reinforcing its reputation as one of Sri Lanka's most exceptional places to stay.

As travellers continue to seek deeper, more meaningful journeys, Hilton Yala remains committed to creating experiences that go beyond the expected—inviting guests to discover, connect, and immerse themselves in the extraordinary landscapes, wildlife, and culture that make Yala one of the world's most remarkable destinations.

Hilton Yala Resort is part of Hilton Honors®, the award-winning guest loyalty program for Hilton's 24 world-class brands. Hilton Honors members who book directly through preferred Hilton channels have access to instant benefits, including a flexible payment slider that allows members to choose nearly any combination of Points and money to book a stay, an exclusive member discount that can't be found anywhere else and free standard Wi-Fi. Members also have access to contactless technology exclusively through the industry-leading Hilton Honors mobile app, where Hilton Honors members can check-in, choose their room and access their room using Digital Key.

Anantara Enters Top 5 Hotel Brands inTravel + Leisure World’s Best Awards 2026

TTA BULLETIN

Minor Hotels is celebrating one of its strongest performances to date in the Travel + Leisure World’s Best Awards 2026, with Anantara Hotels & Resorts achieving its highest-ever ranking among the world’s best hotel brands, and four of the group’s properties named among the 100 Best Hotels in the World.

Published annually and based on a global readers’ survey, the Travel + Leisure World’s Best Awards are a trusted barometer of the places and companies that resonate most with passionate, discerning travellers. This year, they named Anantara Hotels & Resorts one of the Top 5 Best Hotel Brands in the World, rising to No. 5 from No. 8 last year, as the brand continues to strengthen its position in experiential luxury hospitality.

Minor Hotels’ global standing was further strengthened by the inclusion of four properties in the 100 Best Hotels in the World, up from three last year.

“To see Anantara recognised among the world’s Top 5 hotel brands, and four of our properties included in the World’s Top 100 Hotels, is a strong endorsement of the guest experiences our teams deliver every day,” said Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO of Minor International, parent company of Minor Hotels. “These results reflect the strength of our brands and our continued focus on delivering meaningful experiences for travellers around the world.”

Two elevated safari lodges in Tanzania led



Minor Hotels’ performance in the Top 100 rankings. The refined country-house retreat Elewana The Manor at Ngorongoro placed at No. 14, while luxury tented camp Elewana Serengeti Migration Camp came in at No. 21, both offering immersive wildlife encounters and dramatic landscapes.

In Minor Hotels’ home base of Thailand, Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort, renowned for its award-winning ethical elephant experiences, landed at No. 37, while Anantara Layan Phuket Resort, a tranquil beachfront wellness retreat on Phuket’s northwest coast, secured the No. 81 spot.

Minor Hotels continued to shine across regional categories. In Africa, The Royal Livingstone Victoria Falls Zambia Hotel by Anantara ranked No. 2 Best Resort in Africa, reaffirming its status as a premier gateway to the world-famous falls. In Asia, Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort was named No. 2 Best Resort in Thailand and No. 13 Best Resort in Asia, while Anantara Layan Phuket Resort secured No. 4 Best Resort in Thailand. In Europe, Anantara Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky Amsterdam ranked No. 5 Best Hotel in Amsterdam.

Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort Introduces Panoramic Ocean View Rooms, Elevating Luxury on Sri Lanka’s Southern Coast

TTA BULLETIN

Set along Sri Lanka’s southern shores, Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort announces the introduction of its new Panoramic Ocean View Room, an enhanced accommodation category designed for travellers seeking refined comfort, refreshed interiors, and uninterrupted views of the Indian Ocean.



The launch responds to growing demand for spacious coastal retreats that bring guests closer to nature without compromising on luxury. Positioned to capture some of the resort’s most inspiring ocean vistas, the Panoramic Ocean View Room offers a fresh perspective of Tangalle’s coastline, where endless blue horizons, gentle sea breezes, and the soothing rhythm of the Indian Ocean become part of the stay.

Floor-to-ceiling glass doors invite natural light into the room, while a private balcony opens out to sweeping Indian Ocean panoramas. Inside, refreshed interiors blend contemporary elegance with subtle Sri Lankan touches, creating a tranquil sanctuary for guests to slow down, reconnect, and savour the serenity of the island’s southern coast.

“At Anantara, we believe luxury is constantly evolving through thoughtful enhancements that elevate our guests’ experiences,” said Mr. Frederik Van den

Borre, General Manager of Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort. “The Panoramic Ocean View Room reflects our commitment to continually refining the guest experience while celebrating the extraordinary natural beauty that surrounds us. Every detail has been carefully considered to enhance comfort, creating a space where guests can truly unwind and feel connected to the unique spirit of Tangalle”.

Nestled within a lush coconut plantation overlooking a secluded stretch of beach, Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort is also home to the largest collection of luxury pool villas in the region. This distinctive accommodation offering gives guests an exceptional choice of stays, from spacious ocean view rooms to expansive private pool villas. Together with award-winning wellness, destination dining, surfing, wildlife encounters, and authentic cultural discoveries, the resort invites guests to experience the richness of Sri Lanka’s southern coast at their own pace.

Stay at the World's Top Trending Wellness Destination for 2026: Discover Sri Lanka with Ayugiri Ayurveda Wellness Resort, Sigiriya

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka is rapidly emerging as one of the world's most sought-after wellness tourism destinations. According to the BookRetreats.com State of Retreats 2026 Report, Sri Lanka has been recognised as the world's top trending wellness destination for 2026, recording a remarkable year-on-year increase in traveller interest. This recognition reinforces the island's growing reputation as a destination where authentic Ayurveda, nature, spirituality and luxury come together to create transformative wellness experiences.

Unlike many destinations where wellness has become a modern travel trend, Sri Lanka's wellness heritage spans over 3,000 years. Ayurveda on the island combines classical Ayurvedic knowledge with indigenous Hela Wedakama (traditional Sri Lankan medicine), creating one of the world's oldest living healing traditions. Today, Ayurveda remains deeply embedded in Sri Lanka's culture and healthcare system, making the country one of the most authentic destinations for an Ayurveda wellness retreat.

Beyond its healing traditions, Sri Lanka offers an extraordinary natural environment that supports physical, mental and spiritual

wellbeing. Tropical rainforests, ancient kingdoms, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, sacred temples, abundant wildlife, pristine lakes and diverse ecosystems create an atmosphere where wellness extends far beyond the spa. Yoga, meditation, herbal medicine, personalised nutrition and mindful living are naturally woven into the Sri Lankan experience.

As global travellers increasingly seek preventive healthcare, longevity, digital detox retreats, stress management and immersive nature experiences, Sri Lanka is uniquely positioned to meet the evolving demands of luxury wellness travel.

Recognising this opportunity, Browns Hotels & Resorts has invested in creating one of the country's most distinctive luxury Ayurveda wellness resorts—Ayugiri Ayurveda Wellness Resort in Sigiriya.

Located within Sri Lanka's famous Sigiriya Cultural Triangle, Ayugiri has been thoughtfully designed as an intimate sanctuary



where authentic Ayurveda, untouched wilderness and contemporary luxury exist in perfect harmony. Spread across more than 60 acres of pristine natural forest, the resort features only 22 exclusive suites, each with its own private plunge pool, allowing guests to experience privacy, tranquillity and complete

immersion in nature.

Every wellness journey begins with personalised consultations conducted by Ayugiri's resident Ayurvedic doctors. Through a comprehensive assessment of each guest's dosha (body constitution), lifestyle and wellness goals, bespoke healing programmes are developed, integrating Ayurvedic medicine, therapeutic treatments, personalised nutrition and sustainable lifestyle practices.

These personalised journeys are delivered through Ayugiri's signature Swastha Wellness Programmes, designed to support preventive health and long-term wellbeing. The programmes focus on longevity, weight management, stress relief, digital detox, skin

rejuvenation, skeletal and mobility wellness, lifestyle balance, and Ayurvedic support for lifestyle-related health conditions. Combining herbal medicine, authentic Ayurvedic therapies, yoga, meditation and nutrition, each programme is carefully tailored to restore harmony between body, mind and spirit.

At the heart of the resort lies Ayuwasa – The Home of Life and Healing—Ayugiri's purpose-built Ayurveda treatment centre. The facility features seven specialised treatment rooms, Ayurveda-specific steam and sauna facilities, and the traditional Beheth Oruwa, where time-honoured healing rituals are delivered in a serene and luxurious setting.

Wellness at Ayugiri extends far beyond treatments. Guests practise sunrise yoga and meditation surrounded by nature, enjoy personalised Ayurvedic cuisine overlooking a tranquil lake, and embark on spiritual excursions to Kaludiya Pokuna and Pothana Raja Maha Viharaya, two of the Sigiriya region's most peaceful and culturally significant heritage sites. These experiences encourage mindfulness while connecting guests with Sri Lanka's rich spiritual heritage.

HOTELS / AIRLINES

Shangri-La Colombo Presents an Exclusive Sommelier Curated Dining Experience at Capital Bar & Grill

TTA BULLETIN

Wine lovers and discerning diners are invited to an evening where exceptional cuisine and world-class wines come together at Capital Bar & Grill, Shangri-La Colombo's signature steakhouse.

On 24 July 2026, guests will enjoy A Sommelier Curated Dining Experience, an exclusive one-night event featuring a specially crafted set menu expertly paired with distinguished Frescobaldi wines. Guiding guests through the evening will be renowned sommelier Bruno Butragueño, who will share insights into each pairing, offering a deeper appreciation of the craftsmanship behind every



glass and every course.

Designed to elevate the dining experience beyond the plate, the evening celebrates the harmony between food and wine, with each pairing carefully selected to enhance flavours, textures and aromas throughout the menu.

Whether a seasoned wine enthusiast or someone looking to discover the art of wine pairing for the first time, guests can expect an intimate culinary journey that showcases the timeless traditions of one of Italy's most celebrated wine producers alongside Capital Bar & Grill's contemporary dining experience.

Experience the Kandy Esala Perahera with Amaya Hills

TTA BULLETIN

As the city of Kandy prepares to host the magnificent Kandy Esala Perahera from 18th to 28th August 2026, travellers have the opportunity to experience one of Asia's most spectacular cultural celebrations while enjoying the tranquillity of Sri Lanka's hill country at Amaya Hills, Kandy.



Recognised as one of the oldest and most revered festivals in the world, the Kandy Esala Perahera honours the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha through ten nights of magnificent processions featuring traditional Kandyan dancers, fire performers, drummers, whip crackers and centuries-old rituals that have been preserved for generations. The Grand Randoli Perahera, taking place on 27th August, is regarded as the highlight of the festival and attracts thousands of local and international visitors each year.

Located just a short drive from Kandy city, Amaya Hills offers guests the perfect balance between cultural immersion and peaceful refuge. Inspired by the architectural heritage of the Kandyan Kingdom, the hotel sits high above the city, overlooking the surrounding mountain ranges while providing easy access to Sri Dalada Maligawa and the Perahera route.

Guests can spend the day exploring Kandy's cultural landmarks or simply unwinding amidst the cool mountain air before heading into the city to witness the evening procession. After experiencing the pageantry of the Perahera, they can return to the serene ambience of Amaya Hills, where panoramic views, refined hospitality and the calm of the hill country provide a welcome contrast to the vibrant festivities below.

For visitors who may not require an overnight stay, Amaya Hills also offers a Day Outing Package, allowing guests to enjoy the property's facilities before attending the Perahera. The experience includes access to the swimming pool, a sumptuous lunch, refreshments and the opportunity to relax in the resort throughout the day, making it an ideal way to refresh before an evening immersed in one of Sri Lanka's greatest cultural spectacles.

Whether planning a cultural holiday, a family getaway or a memorable weekend in the hills, Amaya Hills provides an exceptional base from which to experience the Kandy Esala Perahera while enjoying the comfort, heritage and hospitality for which the property is renowned.

Amaya Resorts & Spas is the epitome of unparalleled hospitality, offering exceptional experiences across Sri Lanka's most scenic locations, including Kandy, Dambulla and Pasikudah. Renowned for its blend of modern luxury and natural beauty, Amaya provides guests with unforgettable stays, whether they are seeking romantic getaways, vibrant celebrations or serene retreats. Committed to sustainability and outstanding service, Amaya Resorts & Spas ensures each visit is a memorable journey.

Discover the New SriLankan Holidays Website

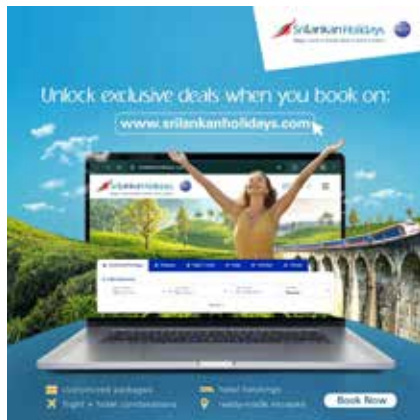
TTA BULLETIN

New online platform brings flights, hotels, holiday packages and more together in one seamless booking experience

Planning your next getaway has never been easier. SriLankan Holidays has launched its brand-new website, bringing all your travel needs together on one seamless platform.

The new site allows travellers to easily book Flight + Hotel packages, hotels, customised holiday packages, airport transfers, activities and much more — all at unbeatable, exclusive prices. Designed with the modern traveller in mind, the platform offers a simple, convenient booking experience, helping customers plan their perfect holiday in just a few clicks.

From effortless flight and accommodation



bookings to fully customised itineraries, the new SriLankan Holidays website is designed to make holiday planning faster, more intuitive and more rewarding — putting exclusive deals and a wide range of travel options within easy reach of every visitor.

Visit now and book your next holiday with ease: <https://srilankanholidays.com/>

Emirates to double its A350 operations in Colombo from August

TTA BULLETIN



Emirates will introduce a second daily A350 service between Dubai and Colombo from 8 August, further elevating the travel experience for customers with more options to experience the airline's latest-generation aircraft and its highly sought-after Premium Economy cabin. The A350 aircraft will replace the current Boeing 777 aircraft operating the flight.

The deployment of the additional A350 on flight EK648/649 will double the number of Premium Economy seats on the route, reinforcing Emirates' commitment to delivering enhanced comfort for travellers to and from Sri Lanka. Emirates currently operates four daily flights to Colombo with a mix of Airbus A350 and Boeing 777 aircraft.

Emirates' second A350 service departs Dubai International Airport at 16:10hrs daily and arrives at Bandaranaike International Airport at 22:10hrs. The return flight EK649 departs CMB at 02:55hrs and reaches Dubai at 05:50hrs. All times are local.

Emirates' A350 offers bright, airy cabins with more space in every class, alongside the airline's latest innovations: ultra-responsive 4K and 4K HDR inflight entertainment touchscreens, faster Wi-Fi and wider aisles, among other meticulous touches across each cabin.

At the heart of the A350 experience is Emirates' award-winning Premium Economy cabin which is already one of

the airline's most sought-after offerings. The spacious 2-3-2 layout features cream leather seats with elegant woodgrain finishes. Each seat is 19.5 inches of width, with a 40-inch pitch, an 8-inch recline, and a six-way adjustable headrest, while a 13.3-inch screen delivers immersive entertainment. From a welcome drink and seasonal menus to an exclusive amenity kit, a sustainably made blanket and a generously sized pillow, every detail of the Premium Economy experience is thoughtfully designed. On the ground, customers enjoy priority boarding, a dedicated check-in area at Dubai International Airport and a baggage allowance of up to 35kg.

The introduction of a second daily A350 service builds on the successful debut of the aircraft on the Colombo route in March 2025, when Emirates launched its Premium Economy experience in Sri Lanka. The enhanced deployment underscores the airline's continued investment in the market.

Emirates offers three non-stop daily flights on the Colombo-Dubai route with a range of timings in addition to one daily service via Male.

Marking 40 years of operations to Colombo this year, Emirates connects Colombo to almost 140 destinations across its global network, supporting tourism and trade while offering customers its signature "Fly Better" experience.

VietJet Agent Seminar – Bridging Colombo and Ho Chi Minh City with Direct

VietJet officially introduced the launch of flights between Colombo and Ho Chi Minh City at the Hilton Colombo. Graced by dignitaries from both the government of Sri Lanka and the government of Vietnam, the launch shed light on the cross promotional success of connecting these two vibrant Asian hubs



World Ticket Appoints AirPark as Their Representative in Sri Lanka

TTA BULLETIN

AirPark (Pvt) Ltd is delighted to announce its appointment as the General Sales Agent (GSA) for World Ticket in Sri Lanka.

Part of the GO7 group, which includes FlexFlight scheduled and charter operations, WorldTicket offers a suite of solutions to the travel industry, to elevate the services offered to travellers. Notably, World Ticket enables travel agents to issue tickets on airlines not normally available or represented in Sri Lanka.

The WorldTicket GSA ticketing solution is available on a total of sixty airlines across the globe, including major carriers, regional and local operators. Some examples include: ITA Airways, Egypt Air, Eva Air, FlyNas, Saudia, Azerbaijan Airlines,

Aegean Airlines, Air Portugal, Royal Air Maroc, Hong Kong Airlines, Bamboo Airways, Air Cairo, Myanmar Airlines, Sichuan Airlines, AirlinK (South Africa) and Air Chathams (New Zealand).

These airlines and many more can be booked as normal, then the ticket issued using the ticket stock of W2-365 World-Ticket. This enables the travel agent to offer more comprehensive travel arrangements and the traveller to depart with all tickets in hand.

Furthermore, W2 ticketing enables agents to issue multiple flights and carriers on one ticket, greatly simplifying connecting journeys between different airlines enabling baggage to be through checked to

their final destination, whereas otherwise the traveller may need to arrange a transit visa to collect and re-check their baggage.

Dougie Douglas, Vice President of AirPark, expressed enthusiasm about the partnership: "We are thrilled to party with World Ticket in promoting their ticketing service to our travel agency partners. By being able to immediately issue tickets on multiple airlines around the world, and particularly to enable transits which would otherwise be challenging, our travel agency partners can offer even more comprehensive services to their customers and make travel less complicated and more enjoyable."

Peer Winter, Chief Distribution Officer of



WorldTicket shared his excitement: "We are delighted to partner with AirPark as our representative in Sri Lanka and to expand our W2 GSA ticketing system to all IATA-licensed travel agents and travellers in Sri Lanka. The ability to issue tickets for airlines not represented locally, including small regional airlines worldwide, provides a tremendous service to travellers."

TTM+ 2026 - Advancing Sustainable and Wellness-led Tourism

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) hosted Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+) 2026 at the Pattaya Convention and Exhibition Center in Chon Buri, under the theme “Amazing Thailand: Healing is the New Luxury”





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A Seasonal Celebration of the Sweet Taste of the British Summer with Emirates

TTA BULLETIN

Following its bespoke Wimbledon menu, Emirates is extending the celebration of the British summer with the return of the popular seasonal strawberry menu, available on flights between Dubai and the UK from 13 to 31 July.

A quintessential highlight of the British summer, strawberries are at the heart of many beloved seasonal dishes, from strawberries and cream to the classic Eton Mess. Inspired by these timeless flavours, Emirates has curated a selection of strawberry-inspired desserts across all cabin classes, bringing the taste of the British summer to customers both in the air and on the ground.

The menu showcases the freshness and versatility of strawberries through thoughtfully crafted desserts. Customers travelling from Dubai to the UK can indulge in Honey Cake served with strawberry compote and clotted cream in First Class, Strawberry Tart with pistachio sauce in Business and Premium Economy Class, and Cream Cheese Mousse with strawberry compote and hazelnut streusel in Economy Class.

Offering something different for passengers on the return leg, flights from the UK to Dubai will offer First Class customers a classic Eton Mess featuring meringue, mascarpone cream and strawberry compote, while Business Class customers can enjoy white chocolate cheesecake with strawberry and basil confit. Premium Economy customers will be served strawberry panna cotta with strawberry coulis, while Economy Class passengers can savour a strawberry cheesecake topped with crumble.

Emirates chefs have handpicked the Monterrey strawberry variety, for the seasonal menu, renowned for its vibrant



colour and naturally sweet, rich flavour. Over 10 KG of

Monterrey strawberries on Emirates flights each day are sourced from Bustanica, the world's largest indoor vertical farm, co-owned by Emirates. A pioneer in sustainable agriculture, Bustanica uses advanced hydroponic and vertical farming technology to produce clean, nutrient-rich produce with significantly reduced water consumption. The strawberries grown in Bustanica are served onboard less than 12 hours after being picked, providing freshness you can taste in every mouthful.

The Emirates A380 Onboard Lounge will also serve seasonal favourites including fresh strawberries and cream, strawberry lemon cake, and a selection of strawberry-inspired mocktails and cocktails, combining strawberries and fresh cut basil for a sharp, refreshing taste.

The seasonal strawberry menu reflects Emirates' continued commitment to celebrating local cultures and seasonal ingredients through thoughtfully curated dining experiences. Throughout the year, Emirates' culinary teams continuously refresh onboard menus to showcase regional flavours, seasonal produce and destination-inspired cuisine, ensuring customers enjoy an experience that is both memorable and authentic.

The airline partners with leading UK strawberry growers, including 'Blush from UK' and Hugh Lowe Farms, a family-run farm in Kent renowned for producing premium-quality strawberries.

Emirates SkyCargo plays a vital role in connecting British strawberry growers with consumers in the UAE and around the world, through its extensive global network and world-class cool chain infrastructure.

SriLankan Aviation College Recognised as IATA ATC Preferred Partner for 2026

TTA BULLETIN



SriLankan Aviation College (SLAC), the training arm of SriLankan Airlines, has been recognised by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) as an IATA Authorised Training Centre (ATC) Preferred Partner for 2026, reaffirming its commitment to excellence in aviation training and further strengthening its position among IATA's leading global training partners. The College, recognised as one of the 10 best-performing IATA Training Centres in the world, has received this award for the second consecutive year.

Awarded globally to high-performing IATA training institutions, the ATC Preferred status recognises training partners that consistently demonstrate excellence in delivering internationally recognised aviation programmes. The recognition is based on several performance indicators, including the number of IATA programmes conducted and student enrolments achieved, reflecting the trust, credibility and strong reputation SLAC has earned as a leading aviation training provider in the region.

SriLankan Aviation College became an IATA Accredited Training Centre in 2008 and was subsequently elevated to IATA Regional Training Partner (RTP) status in 2014. Since then, the College has received numerous accolades from IATA in recognition of its continued excellence and contribution to aviation training and human capital development. Today, SLAC remains the only IATA Regional Training Partner in Sri Lanka and one of only a few

such partners in the wider region, underscoring its leadership in professional aviation education and training.

The quality of training delivered at SriLankan Aviation College, combined with its state-of-the-art facilities and long-standing reputation for excellence, has firmly established the College as a leading provider of aviation training in the region. Its students have consistently achieved outstanding academic results, including island-best performances across a range of IATA programmes over the years, further reinforcing the College's reputation for academic excellence.

As an IATA ATC Preferred Partner, SriLankan Aviation College is entitled to a range of exclusive benefits that further enhance its ability to deliver world-class aviation training. The College currently offers a portfolio of internationally recognised IATA programmes, including the IATA Airline Cabin Crew Qualification, IATA Foundation in Travel & Tourism Diploma, IATA Cargo Introductory Qualification and IATA Managing the Travel Business programme, equipping students with the industry knowledge and professional competencies required to succeed in the global aviation and travel sectors.

This latest recognition further strengthens SLAC's standing as a centre of excellence for aviation and travel industry training, supporting the development of skilled aviation professionals in Sri Lanka and across the region.

One million connections and counting: Emirates customers embrace Starlink Wi-Fi

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates customers have made more than one million connections to Starlink Wi-Fi since the service was introduced across the airline's fleet 7 months ago, marking a major milestone in the evolution of inflight connectivity. More than a Petabyte of data has already been used by customers and feedback on the service has been exemplary - with many commenting that the Wi-Fi is 'better than at home.'

With over 60 Starlink-equipped Emirates flights taking to the skies every day, customers are choosing to connect to high-speed Starlink Wi-Fi to stream content, join video calls, browse social media, game online and stay connected with family and friends throughout their journey.

The one million milestone reflects the rapid adoption of Emirates' next-generation connectivity service, currently available on 33 Boeing 777 aircraft and three Airbus A380s, with installations continuing at pace across the airline's fleet and

more aircraft with Starlink taking flight every week.

Emirates has long been a pioneer in onboard connectivity and was among the first commercial carriers to introduce internet access onboard the Airbus A380, with first-generation systems delivering less than 1 Mbps of total aircraft bandwidth. Emirates' existing inflight Wi-Fi service already enables customers to stay connected throughout their journey, with access to messaging, email, web browsing and social media on most flights. Complimentary access is available for all Emirates customers.

Today, Emirates is setting a new benchmark with Starlink-equipped A380 aircraft capable of delivering more than 2 Gbps of combined bandwidth, so that customers in all classes can enjoy a seamless, complimentary internet experience capable of live calls and streaming at 40,000 feet.



Following the successful rollout of Starlink across the Emirates Boeing 777 fleet, the service has also been introduced to the Airbus A380. As the world's largest passenger aircraft, the A380 features three Starlink antennas, specifically designed to support its double-deck layout and high passenger capacity. The system delivers enhanced coverage, capacity and performance across all cabin classes. Future planned enhancements will include integrating Live TV streaming to Emirates' award-winning inflight entertainment system – ice, which customers can already do on their personal devices.

To support rapid deployment across the fleet, Emirates has already begun Starlink installations at Emirates Engineering facilities in Dubai, accelerating the introduction of next-generation connectivity across more aircraft. With installations

already completed on 33 Boeing 777s and three Airbus A380s, Emirates remains committed to bringing complimentary, ultra-fast Wi-Fi to as many customers as possible, as quickly as possible.

The introduction of Starlink on the Airbus A380 forms part of Emirates' continued investment in elevating the customer experience across every stage of the journey. Alongside one of the aviation industry's most ambitious fleet retrofit programmes, Emirates continues to introduce innovations that enhance comfort, choice and connectivity for millions of travellers worldwide. To date, 128 aircraft have undergone a complete cabin refurbishment, including the introduction of Premium Economy, refreshed Business and First Class products, upgraded Economy cabins and enhanced inflight entertainment systems offering more than 6,500 channels of content.



Deewara
MAWELLA-TANGALLE

A New Beachfront Experience Arrives this August



Deewara was once a collection of traditional fishermen's homes in Mawella, Tangalle. Today, these homes have been thoughtfully restored into a boutique beachfront retreat, preserving their original charm while offering a relaxed stay by the sea.

Surrounded by tropical gardens and overlooking an unspoilt coastline, Deewara invites you to slow down, savour fresh coastal flavours, unwind with Ayurvedic wellness experiences and enjoy the simple beauty of Sri Lanka's southern coast.



Thema
COLLECTION



Aliya
SIGIRIYA



Amba Yalu
KANDALAMA



Mountbatten
KANDY



Scottish Planter
NUWARA ELIYA



Tea & Experience
MANDARAM NUWARA



Waraka
UDAWALAWE



Wild Glamping
GAL OYA



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