

TRAVEL TALK Asia

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

VOL 22 NO 04 2023 24 PGS



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TRAVEL TALK

Asia

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World leaders to shape the future of sustainable tourism at ATM 2023

ATM 2023 will focus on 'Working Towards Net Zero' from 1-4 May at DWTC

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Travel professionals and policymakers from across the globe will explore how the tourism sector is 'Working Towards Net Zero' at the 30th edition of Arabian Travel Market (ATM), which will take place at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from Monday 1 to Thursday 4 May 2023.

The four-day event will feature over 150 speakers across 63 sessions, as policymakers and industry figures from around the world outline how they are working to drive decarbonisation within the sector. Ministers from the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan, Jamaica and Spain will join a host of senior figures from the private sector to showcase sustainable innovations, share knowledge and best practice, and explore opportunities and challenges along the road to net zero.

Exhibitor participation in ATM 2023 will be 27% higher than last year, with growth across all show sectors. These include regional upticks for the Middle East (15.1% larger), Europe (30.9% larger), Asia (18.6% larger) and Africa (44.7% larger), as well as representation from Travel Tech and hotels, which has expanded by 57.9% and 23.5%, respectively.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: "We intend to use the 30th edition of ATM to address one of the most significant challenges facing our sector, in line with our theme of 'Working Towards Net Zero'. Increased participation in this year's show not only reflects the seriousness with which global tourism professionals and policymakers are taking sustainability, but also rising demand for leisure and business travel across the Middle East and beyond."

ATM 2023 will host an array of regional policymakers, including HE Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, UAE Minister of Economy; Hoor Al Khaja, Associate Vice President of International Operations at Dubai's Department of Economy and

Tourism (DET); Mahmood Khaleel Ahmed Al Sayed Alhashmi, Director General of Ajman Department of Tourism Development; Sujit Mohanty, Chief of UNDRR for Arab States; HE Fatima Al Sairafi, Bahrain's Minister of Tourism; HE Salem bin Mohammed Al Mahrooqi, Oman's Minister of Heritage and Tourism; and HE Nayef Al Fayez, Jordan's Minister of Tourism and Antiquities.



Danielle Curtis

This year's show will also feature a raft of private-sector leaders, including Sir Tim Clark KBE, President of Emirates; Kim Hardaker, VP Loyalty & Partnerships at Etihad; Brian Moran, Vice President – Global Sustainability Policy & Partnerships at Boeing; Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi, Group CEO of Miral; Jerry Inzerillo, CEO of Diriyah Gate; Robert Willock, Director MENA & Regional General Manager at The Economist Intelligence Corporate Network; Jochem-Jan Sleiffer, President, Middle East, Africa & Türkiye at Hilton; Haitham Mattar, Managing Director of IHG Hotels & Resorts; Sandeep

Walia, Chief Operations Officer – Middle East at Marriott; Timothy James Cordon, Chief Operating Officer – Middle East & Africa at Radisson Hotel Group; Guy Hutchinson, President and CEO at Rotana Hotel Management Corporation; and others. Speakers will address a broad range of sector-critical issues throughout the four days of the event, exploring a variety of approaches, policies and technologies with the potential to shape an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable travel sector for future generations.

"We are delighted that such a diverse selection of ministerial and industry speakers will be joining us for the 30th edition of ATM 2023," said Curtis.

Tourism industry confident with implementation of IMF program

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

The Tourism industry in Sri Lanka have a renewed sense of confidence post IMF bailout and implementation of the economic restructuring as inquiries are steadily on the rise and confidence in the destination is visible.

President of the Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka (THASL) M. Shanthikumar commented recently that President Wickramasinghe's success in securing the IMF funding will give the country a much-needed boost in the aftermath of one of the worst economic situations faced by the nation in 2022.



M. Shanthikumar

"The long-awaited bailout package we believe will prompt a growth in tourist arrivals as holiday travellers will now have the confidence to book a holiday to Sri Lanka. The news of the IMF funding will to a large extent negate the perception created by the extensive publicity given by local and foreign media during the crisis period which impacted the recovery of tourism post the pandemic," said M. Shanthikumar.

He stressed that over 3 million Sri Lankans are dependent on tourism and the direct and indirect employment exceeds 500,000. Tourism is a key foreign exchange earner to the country. Unlike most other export industries, over 80% of the money earned from tourism is retained in the country. The industry will certainly be a catalyst in the country's recovery process.

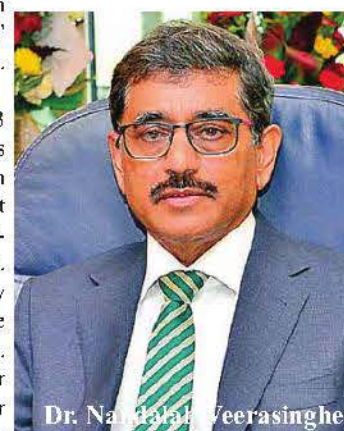
Central Bank Governor Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe recently expressed confidence that Sri Lanka can outperform the set targets by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the \$ 2.9

billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF), at the launch of the ADB annual economic publication the Asian Development Outlook (ADO). However, he stressed that this is subject to the strong commitment to staying the course without being complacent

Dr. Weerasinghe said "In my view, we can outperform and we have the capacity to reach a 3% primary fiscal surplus. Many thought Sri Lanka will's economy will crash, but with the tight fiscal and monetary policy we were able to prevent hyperinflation and higher economic contraction. Thus, I believe we can go on a steady medium to a long-term growth path," while stressing again that in the event Sri Lanka deviates from the IMF program as it had in the past, it will have disastrous economic consequences.

According to Shanthikumar, THASL also strongly believes that there is a need to bring about complete transparency in all transactions and other matters of importance for the larger benefit of all citizens. "We are hopeful that the Government will make every effort to curtail inflation, reduce excess expenditure in the public sector, introduction of stringent anti-corruption laws combined with a strategic plan to rebuild the nation to new heights in the coming years," Shanthikumar said.

The Central Bank Governor echoed the same while indicating that the new pillar of the IMF program is that it addresses the governance and corruption aspects. "These measures will certainly enhance the investor confidence," said Dr. Weerasinghe.



Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe

Cont on Pg 2

The much-awaited IMF program coming through is a significant breakthrough for Sri Lanka and one that the tourism sector hopes would bring about the desired economic stability the country has been missing since the first quarter of 2022. Confidence in the destination is on the rise and many accolades and positive international publicity is bringing in the desired positive attention for Sri Lanka Tourism.

The inaugural MICE Expo was held recently with over 150 international buyers visiting the island to scout possible venues and locations for large scale events. Organized by the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau in collaboration with the national carrier SriLankan airlines, the expo was facilitated by SLAPCEO and leading city hotels who hosted both buyer's accommodation and social events during the three-day program. With great potential for large scale events, the industry is looking forward to hosting the TAAI (Travel Agent Association India) annual convention later this year with over 500 participants from the Indian subcontinent.

Raide Amazone, the largest Women-only adventure tourism group in the world concluded an 8-day tour of adventure activities in the central highlands organized by Connaissance de Ceylan. Participants experienced first-hand the diversity of Sri Lanka and international coverage on French Television and press has given the destination the much-desired boost in Europe. This group of adventure seekers experienced activities along the Pekoe Trail (Sri Lanka's newest tourism offering and experiential travel activity) together with a variety of competitive events.

Unity is the key to success. The month of April hosts multi-religious festivities starting with Easter followed by Sinhala and Tamil New Year and lastly Eid Fitr. Sri Lanka is home to a diverse ethnic and religious society which is the wealth of the nation.

On behalf of the Travel Talk Family I wish all our readers, partners and friends, New year blessings and all success in the future.



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Dinushka

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NEWS

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World leaders to shape the future....

"We look forward to learning how they are working to achieve net zero within their respective tourism markets, as our industry comes together to showcase the cutting-edge innovations and solutions that are driving the next generation of sustainable travel in the Middle East and beyond."



In total, ATM 2023 will feature more than 2,000 exhibitors and in excess of 34,000 attendees from over 150 countries. To mark the 30th edition, Curtis and her team will unveil a dedicated sustainability pledge that has been designed to reinforce RX's commitment to the delivery of sustainable events. In addition to setting out the ATM's journey towards net zero, this pledge will be supplemented by a new playbook that will offer participants a framework within which to mitigate their environmental impact before, during and after the show, while offering an operational guide for ATM as it works towards net zero by 2030.

The conference will also feature a sustainability category at its annual exhibitor awards for the first time. Exhibiting organisations will be recognised based on the extent to which they have considered the environmental impact of their stands, as well as their efforts to reduce their carbon footprint.

To supplement ATM 2023's sustainable theme, the Global Stage will host a range of sessions focused on pivotal industry issues such as hotels and hospitality, aviation and transport, MICE and business travel, investment, responsible tourism, workforce diversification, and emerging sectors such as attractions, cruises, wellness and cultural tourism. This year's show will also see the return of the ATM Travel Tech Stage, which will showcasing how cutting-edge innovations including artificial intelligence, the metaverse, cryptocurrency and big data are driving environmentally responsible tourism.

Asian destinations "hot" for Chinese travelers

TTA BULLETIN

With the resumption of outbound travel, Asian countries are among the most sought-after destinations for Chinese travelers.

More than 50% of international travel bookings led to Asia during this year's Chinese New Year holiday and the most recent travel buyer survey conducted by ITB China revealed that South-East Asia was among the "hot" destinations for Chinese once outbound travel would resume (76%), followed by Japan and Korea (66%).

Moreover, Chinese travel agencies are now reintroducing group tours to 20 countries starting from February 6, with Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, The Maldives, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Laos being among them and more expected to follow soon.

China's leading exclusive B2B travel trade show - ITB China - will be held in Shanghai from September 12-14, providing back-to-back business meetings with quality buyers from China for every exhibitor. Secure your booth by March 15 and receive a 10% discount on your stand



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Three days purely focused on business, covering the entire travel trade spectrum! ITB China is the perfect platform to meet your partners from China again and to generate new leads after the shake-up of the entire market with precise matchmaking and

pre-scheduled appointments.

Make your time count by talking to decision-makers: Over 86% of attending buyers are company founders/partners, C-level management, directors, and seniors managers from leading Chinese travel agencies and companies.

ITB China brings together leaders and experts from China and around the world to discuss and share insights on how the new demands and behaviors of Chinese travelers are changing the Chinese and global travel landscape.

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Journalists and bloggers across the globe join hands together to promote Sri Lanka

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka Tourism welcomed, by far the biggest international travel influencers and journalists group arrived in 2023 to promote the destination. Representing the key source markets for Sri Lanka, this delegation arrived from the United Kingdom, France, Russia, India, Italy, Netherlands, Australia, Spain, USA, and Indonesia. Overall, the group of travel influencers and media carried a global audience of 5.5 million via mainstream social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok, etc.), travel news websites, and traditional media publications. The total advertising value expected to be gained from this earned media promotion will be over LKR 71 million.



Prior to starting the 10-day Destination Promotional Press Trip Series covering some of the most exciting tourism highlights on the island, this media delegation was warmly welcomed by the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, followed by a reception organized by The Mount Lavinia Hotel to mark their arrival, under the patronage of Hon. Minister of Tourism, Harin Fernando, Chairman, Sri Lanka

Tourism Promotion Bureau, Chalaka Gajabahu, and their SLTPB officials. The tour kicked off on 21st March to 29th March 2023 covering Colombo, Seethawaka, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Ella, Udawalawa, Galle, and Kosgoda. This timely important destination promotional project was organized by the SLTPB, under the Visiting Journalist & Blogger Programs 2023 (VJP/VBP-2023) with the focus to promote the island as The Ideal South Asian Tropical Holidaymaker for 2023. During this destination, a promotional Familiarization Tour, current situational updates about Sri Lankan economic recovery, and progress made within the tourism industry were also given to the media delegation in order to share with their millions of travel audiences.

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Sri Lanka becomes Cynosure at MITT Travel Show in Russia 16th to 18th March 2023

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka impressed the Russian travel and trade community by showcasing its galore of holiday opportunities to make the Russian travelers to consider about having a different experience in a different destination, at the Moscow International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (MITT) held in Moscow from March 16th - 18th 2023, for the 29th successive year. The Sri Lankan pavilion at the exhibition was organized in collaboration with the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Russia, and the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau.

Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau attended MITT 2023 in an area of 63 sqms with 12 travel industry participants representing travel companies and hotels. They are Aitken Spence Travel, Exotic Holidays International, Deluxe Vacations, Tangerine Tours, Ceylon My Dream, Deluxe Holidays, Walkers Tours Ltd, Lanka sportreizen, Galle Face Group, RIU, Madul-kelle Tea & Eco Lodge and Anantara Peace Heaven Resort.

This Sri Lanka stand located in Pavilion number 1 was officially opened by H. E. Prof. Janiatha Liyanage Sri Lanka Ambassador for Russia on the 16th March 2023 followed by Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu, Ms. Sasika Jayaweera from the Sri Lanka

Tourism Promotion Bureau and Mr. Chamila Jayarathne, Mr. Tishan De Silva, Ms. Olessya Romanova and Ms. Anna Makarovskaya from Embassy also participated at the opening ceremony among other travel industry participants and distinguished guests. Total number of visitors this year has increased from 61% compare to 2022 MITT event held in Russia. The event enhanced business programme was packed with exciting new events and helped to attract a target audience of travel industry professionals. 14,830 visitors, 750 exhibitors from 20 countries and 57 regions of Russia.

A VIP Networking reception was held on the 16th March at 10:30 am to 11:45am where H. E. Prof. Janiatha Liyanage and Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu chairman of SLTPB address the forum.

On the final day of the event 18th March Sri Lanka won the prestigious accolade of Most Welcoming stand at the year at MITT 2023 by the official fair organizer.

On the 17th evening Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau organized a networking session along with the media briefing in



Chalaka Gajabahu

collaboration with the Sri Lanka Embassy in Russia which commence at 16:00 hrs and followed by the dinner. H. E. Prof. Janiatha Liyanage and Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu address the audience. They have briefed about how Russian arrivals has increased the last few months and what Sri Lanka as a destination has to offer and what sort of support can be done to continue the arrivals. Also, Ms. Alexandra Sukneva, Head of Currency Control Department at National Investment Industrial Bank, Russia also gave a brief introduction to the tour operators who were gathered regarding the payment issues that are faced by the Russians who are travelling to overseas countries due to the sanctions imposed in Russia and what sort of methods has been taken by the above mentioned bank joining with the People's bank in Sri Lanka.

On the sidelines of MITT 2023, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau and the Sri Lanka Embassy in Russia, held discussions with Russian Airlines, to increase the frequency of their commercial flights for boosting tourism. A Live interview was held on this topic on RT TV, Russia, with H.E. Prof. Janiatha Liyanage and Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu, Chairman of SLTPB to generate publicity for this initiative among

the Russian tourists. Despite of the prevailing situation in Russia, their national carrier Aeroflot resumed the operation. Azur Air charter flights operates from 04 main cities in Russia (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krasnoyarsk and Novosibirsk). Further, the Red Wings Airline operates to Mattala Airport. All these flights commence their operation at the beginning of the winter 2022 & 2023.

Sri Lanka Tourism continues to proceed with its promotional activities in Russia with the support of the industry, bringing foreign media, bloggers, influencers, travel agents and also attending key promotional events overseas. Further a 06 months PR campaign activity and a two week's short-term social media campaign is in the pipeline to be implemented as a tactical measure to increase the influx of tourists from Russia.

Sri Lanka Tourism is resilient and ready to welcome visitors to enjoy the best of local hospitality coupled with some of the finest products and services to satisfy even the most discerning traveler. Participating at a leading travel show such as MITT 2023 is vital in order to take the message that the island is safe, secure and fully equipped to offering the best travel experience in South Asia.

ASEAN Tourism Ministers Approve Professional Standards to Strengthen MICE

TTA BULLETIN

ASEAN's 10 Tourism Ministers have agreed to establish a common professional standard for MICE professionals and event professionals with the goal of enhancing ASEAN's competitiveness as a destination for MICE. The ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals (ASEAN MRA on TP) for MICE Professionals and Event Professionals was approved during the 26th Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Implementation of the approved standards will begin later this year.

Mr. Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya, President, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), said: "ASEAN member countries have long prioritised professional development in tourism. Since its establishment in 2012, the ASEAN MRA on TP has guided ASEAN countries in the development of their tourism workforce in two areas: 1) Hotel Services and 2) Travel Services. In 2021, the scope of the MRA was expanded to include two new categories: 1) MICE Professionals and 2) Event Professionals. The move was aimed at fostering cooperation and promoting mobility among ASEAN's MICE professionals. Each category was assigned a host country whose task was to formulate a set of professional standards specific to that category.

"On behalf of Thailand, TCEB accepted the role as host for the Event Professionals category. We worked with partner agencies such as Thailand's Department of Tourism,



the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, MICE-related associations, and educational institutions to draft a professional standards proposal for 11 job roles – 1. Project Manager, 2. Production Manager, 3. Show Manager, 4. Event Coordinator, 5. Marketing Coordinator, 6. Event Registration Supervisor, 7. Event Administration Supervisor, 8. Event Registration Staff, 9. Event Transportation Staff, 10. Liaison Officer, and 11. General Support Staff. We value the input we received from industry and tourism authorities from all ASEAN member countries in the process and are glad that TCEB's proposal was approved at the 26th Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers."

At the same meeting, ASEAN's Tourism Ministers also approved the proposal by Indonesia for the category of MICE Professionals which covered 21 job roles.

Mr. Chiruit added that with the approval of ASEAN MRA on TP for MICE Professionals and Event Professionals, TCEB has begun promoting the idea of certification for event professionals. For that reason, a forum was organised on 2 March 2023 at The Sukosol Hotel, Bangkok. It attracted more than 500 participants and brought to life the newly developed professional standards as private- and public-sector industry players discussed the mechanics of organising an international event and the specialist roles involved.

Sabre data indicates significant outbound travel rebound despite high air fares, as China begins to re-open to the world

TTA BULLETIN

With more than 166 million international trips booked by Chinese travelers in 2019, contributing over \$245 billion to global tourism in the process, it is no wonder that the world has been watching, and waiting, for China to re-open its borders, after nearly three years of Covid-19 closure.

Now that China has started to finally ease travel restrictions, Sabre has sifted through its extensive shopping and booking data to examine the impact of the reopening through February 9, 2023 on tourism in China, and globally.

Sabre's shopping insights revealed that interest in inbound and outbound China routes surged in the week of 26 December, when China first announced plans to drop quarantine for overseas visitors, and again when mainland China reopened sea and land crossings with Hong Kong on 8 January.

Weekly searches for China-related routes (including the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau) have been increasing steadily after the announcements, and average weekly searches in the first 5 weeks of 2023 through to February 5, 2023 have been 78% higher compared to average weekly searches in Q4 2022.

Interest rose immediately after the announcement at the end of last year that China would re-open its borders. On January 8, China then opened sea and land crossings with Hong Kong, and ended a requirement

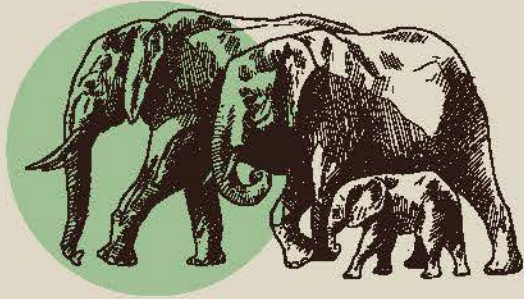


for incoming travelers to quarantine, leading to another immediate increase in search and shopping requests, as travellers in China, many of whom hadn't been able to visit family for years as a result of China's previous zero-Covid policy, rushed to make bookings.

Another key factor, which has accelerated travel interest in the region, was the celebration of the first Chinese New Year without travel restrictions, with high levels of outbound, inbound, and domestic travel indicating strong travel demand and confidence in China.

On January 20, it was announced that the ban imposed on group travel would end on February 6. Bookings began to rise significantly, especially between January 30 – February 5, with bookings increasing 60% from average bookings in the previous 2 weeks.

The re-opening of China is already proving to be a key win for tourism recovery, and potentially providing economic growth, within the Asia Pacific region. In general, outbound travel has rebounded faster than inbound travel to the region, with Sabre data showing outbound bookings making up 43.5% of 2023 overall travel through February 9, compared to 37% for the same period in 2019.



Heritage Kandalama

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Heritage Ahungalla

Explore local art and culture at this five-star resort by the beach.



Turyaa Kalutara

Immerse in the rhythmic beat of the ocean waves while you experience Southern coastal adventures.



Heritage Tea Factory

Enjoy a blissful sleep or scrumptious meal at the highest elevation in Sri Lanka, at the 'Tea Destination'.



Heritage Negombo

Join the call of the fishermen in the morning and explore seafood galore at the city hotel by the beach.



Earl's Regency

Discover stories of royalty from our Kandyan era as you experience locality and culture at its best.



Amethyst Resort

Experience clear blue water with a walk along one of world's longest shallow coastal lines that surrounds the resort.

Sri Lanka Tourism at ITB Berlin 2023

The Ministry of Tourism, Industry stakeholder, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau and the National carrier Sri Lankan airlines showcased the best of Sri Lanka at the world's largest tourism exchange, ITB in Berlin recently.





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Sri Lanka Welcomes PATA Nepal Chapter for Tourism Exchange and Support

TTA BULLETIN

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Sri Lanka Chapter recently hosted their Nepalese counterparts as a part of PATA's drive to improve cross-Chapter exposure and communication. The visit aimed to strengthen bilateral relationships between the two countries' tourism sectors and explore avenues where Sri Lanka and Nepal can join hands in developing travel and tourism of both nations.

The delegation from PATA Nepal Chapter consisted of 12 executives and members representing senior stakeholders in the industry, including travel agents. Touching down in Negombo, the delegates engaged in an 8-day tour of the country, traveling to Dambulla, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Yala,

Galle, and Colombo to experience the incredible diversity of culture, landscapes, nature, and cuisines within the island. Speaking during the tour, the PATA Nepal Chapter expressed their delight at the potential Sri Lanka has for tourism and assured that PATA Nepal Chapter will extend their full support for tourism and business exchange between the two countries.

PATA was founded in 1951 as a non-profit association to act as a catalyst to promote and develop travel and tourism within the Asia Pacific region. Operating as a membership-based organization, PATA has been instrumental in bringing together public and



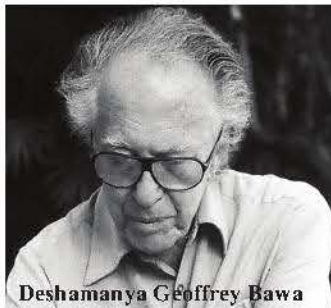
private partners to form productive and sustainable relationships for the growth of the travel and tourism industry. PATA also provides advocacy, research and insights to its members as well as conducting innovative events to its members which include government entities, private sector hospitality and travel partners, airlines, educational institutes, as well as young tourism professionals across the world.

The PATA Sri Lanka Chapter is currently a 65 member-strong organization, comprising key stakeholders in the travel and tourism industry, including hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators etc. In line with PATA's goals of empowering tourism, the Sri Lanka Chapter works closely with private and public parties to develop Sri Lanka's potential as a tourism destination.

Aitken Spence's Heritance Kandalama takes spotlight at Delhi's first Bawa archive show in India

TTA BULLETIN

Premier hospitality company Aitken Spence Hotels iconic resort Heritance Kandalama is at the centre stage at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) Delhi at the 'Geoffrey Bawa: It is Essential to be There' architectural and photographic installation, in its first of its kind exhibition drawing inspiration from Bawa's archives and practice.



Deshamanya Geoffrey Bawa

The world-renowned architect Deshamanya Geoffrey Bawa acknowledged as 'father of tropical modernism' was responsible for reviving the Sri Lankan architectural space with suave lines and modern sensibilities whilst encompassing local traditions and its vibrancies. The exhibition hosted at NGMA until 7 May 2023 is a celebration of the 75th anniversary of Indo-Lanka Diplomatic Relations and features over 120 documents from the Bawa archives, most of which have never been shown publicly previously.

On board as a primary sponsor, Aitken Spence Hotels' Heritance Kandalama will host an exclusive invitees-only event on 7 April at The Claridges featuring an intimate conversation between Indian photographer

Dayanita Singh and leading Sri Lankan architect and student of Bawa, Channa Daswatte. Both heavily influenced by the work and practices of Sri Lanka's most prolific and influential architect, the conversation will take a deep dive into ephemeral yet stoic qualities that make Bawa design what it is revered for today. Daswatte was also heavily involved in the work of Heritance Kandalama and will share first-hand insights into the thought process behind the world's first LEED certified and Asia's first Green Globe certified hotel for sustainable design and practices.

"We are honoured to partner with the Bawa Trust in taking the work of our legendary architect Deshamanya Geoffrey Bawa to the world in an exhibition of this caliber. Among his most formidable creations, Heritance Kandalama is an iconic masterpiece given its unique amalgamation of nature and modern comforts. We hope this exhibition will inspire a new generation of architects to think innovatively to address current and future needs of the world, while preserving our inherent traditions and values, symbiotically," commented Ms. Stasshani Jayawardena - Aitken Spence PLC Director, Head of Tourism and Leisure, and Chairperson of Aitken Spence Hotel Management.

The exhibition is jointly organized by the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi, the High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi and the Geoffrey Bawa Trust.



Among Bawa's most visionary designs, encompassing eco-aesthetics with operational efficiencies, marrying nature with the need of travellers, Heritance Kandalama resembles the outspread wings of a bird, following the line of the cliff from which it seems to emerge. The hotel is an incredible 1 km from end to end, and rises up seven floors, yet appears to be an effortless natural extension of the mountainside. The flat roof and timber pillars provision a screen of vegetation that attracts local wildlife, whilst the entire building is festooned with longwinded plants, blending it further into its natural setting. The nature theme is continued within with a classy 'eco' aesthetic with interiors benefiting from Bawa's signature vast open windows, which let in natural light abundantly and allowing wildlife-watching from wherever you stand.

Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts Colombo and SriLankan Airlines commemorate International Women's Day with Knowledge Sharing Programme

TTA BULLETIN

International Women's Day 2023 calls on all stakeholders to #EmbraceEquity focusing on the fact that all women should be recognized and celebrated for their diversity and uniqueness. In keeping with the theme, Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts Colombo sector and SriLankan Airlines embarked on a unique project to share knowledge while also recognizing and developing the skills of its female associates.

During Phase 1 of the multi-phased project, three female chefs from Cinnamon Grand Colombo, Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo, and Cinnamon Red Colombo, and three female chefs from SriLankan Catering, a fully owned subsidiary of SriLankan Airlines, were selected to swap places at their respective entities for a period of two days. The ladies were taken through a walk-through of the processes of food preparation for the aviation industry, and at hotel buffets respectively. On day two they

were a part of food prep and creating dishes together with the culinary teams. On International Women's Day the dishes prepared by the Cinnamon team were served onboard Business Class on SriLankan Airlines' flight UL 503, which departed to London. Similarly, dishes prepared by the SriLankan chefs were featured on buffets at the three Colombo properties.

Speaking on the project Area Vice President Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts Kamal Munasinghe noted, "We are privileged to be joining hands with Sri Lanka's national carrier to celebrate the diversity and strength of our female associates this International Women's Day. Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts is commemorating International Women's Day under the theme #PurpleisTheNewPink where we are focusing on looking at the role



of women in hospitality in a new light. The diversity that women bring to any organization should not be just celebrated on one day, which is why this project will be an ongoing one where we incorporate different functions that are common to both entities. In future, we will have female, and even male associates from different functions swap roles and learn from each other for the furtherment of the entire hospitality industry".

Also commenting on the project, Chief Executive Officer of SriLankan Catering Mangala Wijesekera said, "We are excited to partner with Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts to empower women in travel and tourism. Our collaboration will provide employees of both organizations the unique opportunity to trade places with their counterparts and gain a broader insight into the hospitality trade.

As an equal opportunity employer, SriLankan Airlines and SriLankan Catering value the women in its workforce and endeavour to create an environment of opportunity and fairness. We have women contributing to all areas of SriLankan Catering and the airline today including in jobs typically held by men such as chefs and aircraft pilots and engineers. I hope that this project will pave the way for greater professional growth for the participating female staff members and future inter-company collaborations committed to the shared goal of women's empowerment."

The second phase of the project will involve female operations associates at the Colombo hotels who will swap roles with ground handling staff at SriLankan Airlines for a period of two days, while phase three involves a swap between front office staff and in-flight crew.

Dusit Hotels and Resorts makes its grand debut in Europe, opens Dusit Suites Athens in Greece's beautiful capital

TTA BULLETIN

Dusit Hotels and Resorts, under Dusit International, one of Thailand's leading hotel and property development companies, has continued its global expansion with the opening of Dusit Suites Athens – the first Dusit-branded property in Europe – in Greece's stunning capital.



Gilles Cretallaz

Bringing Dusit's unique brand of Thai-inspired gracious hospitality to one of Europe's most popular tourist destinations, Dusit Suites Athens puts guests in the heart of Glyfada, a picturesque suburb in the Athens Riviera renowned for its beautiful sandy shores, vibrant shopping and dining scene, trendy bars and cafes, and great location just 30 minutes by car from the city centre and only 20 minutes from Athens International Airport.

Set over four floors and offering stunning views of the sea and distant mountains, the luxury low-rise property is designed to meet the needs of business and leisure travellers seeking a highly comfortable base for short or extended stays.

Decorated with inspiring artworks and featuring high-end fixtures and fittings, each well-appointed suite boasts a private balcony, a king-size bedroom, a living room or seating area with kitchenette, and a marble bathroom with a walk-in rain shower. The larger suites also have a bathtub and plush sofa bed ideal for guests with children.

Alongside Dusit's highly personalised service, guests will find a wide range of five-star facilities to enhance their stay. This includes, amongst others, a stylish rooftop Mediterranean restaurant and bar with a stunning panoramic sea view

called O Live; a distinctive pan-Asian restaurant named DAO; a heated Vitality Pool with adjoining sauna and steam room; and a signature Namm Spa, with six elegant treatment rooms. All guests receive one complimentary massage treatment per stay.

Designed to become must-visit destinations for food lovers, the hotel's restaurants work with top local suppliers to source the finest and freshest ingredients, and they aim to delight the eyes as well as the palate with exquisite presentation and atmosphere. A carefully curated selection of the finest Greek wines adds to their distinct appeal.

Dusit Suites Athens' location in the heart of Glyfada, close to the beach and marina, is another major draw. Numerous bistros, bars, cafes, and shops are all within walking distance from the property, and trips to nearby attractions, such as Piraeus Port, Glyfada Golf Course, Lake Vouliagmeni, the world-renowned Acropolis Museum, and other iconic sites, can be easily arranged, with recommendations from Dusit's expert concierges.

"We are delighted to bring Dusit Hotels and Resorts' Thai-inspired, gracious hospitality to Athens, Greece, and officially make our debut in Europe," said Mr Gilles Cretallaz, Chief Operating Officer, Dusit International. "With its gorgeous rooms, atmospheric restaurants, bespoke wellness offerings, excellent location, and exceptional service, we are confident that Dusit Suites Athens will leave guests with lasting memories and a deep appreciation for the community we serve."

ESG, technology and affordability top travel trends at ITB Berlin, says TIME Hotels CEO

TTA BULLETIN

According to the CEO of UAE-based TIME Hotels, Mohamed Awadalla, ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance), technology and affordability were the key travel trends at this year's ITB trade exhibition, which took place earlier this month, in Berlin, Germany.

Speaking with hundreds of travel professionals during the three-day show, the team from TIME Hotels found that climate change, social responsibility, ethical management, technology and affordability were particularly prominent with Gen Z and Millennial travellers.

"Climate change was clearly the most important issue. Being media savvy generations, we found that they wanted to see tangible evidence that hotels were making a concerted effort to reduce their carbon emissions, whether that is eradicating single use plastics and toiletries, installing LED lighting, water diffusers, recycling efforts, air conditioning

modulators or solar panels," said Mohamed Awadalla, CEO, TIME Hotels.

"Some even went as far as checking if hotels were participating in carbon offset programmes and employing net zero strategies. If hotels want to compete for market share from this demographic, addressing their impact on the environment is essential," he added.

According to TIME's executives at ITB, another issue that was very important to Gen Z and Millennial travellers was diversity and inclusion in the workforce. They felt that hotel staff representing different cultures and a management strategy that empowered women, offered guests an enriched experience.

"Obviously, the health and welfare of employees was also of great interest to



them, as well as support for local community programmes and charitable donations," said Awadalla.

Affordability was also a key issue. Although traditionally, the German outbound travel market predominantly has one winter and one summer holiday, younger travellers would rather have more shorter breaks, which are better suited to their work-life balance.

"The younger travellers we spoke to were also more inclined to choose value options, such as a four-star hotel, rather than five-star luxury beach resorts, to stretch their annual holiday budget further," added Awadalla.

The show which attracted over 90,000 participants is one of the largest travel trade events in the world and is considered a key indicator of European traveller trends. Germany is a key source market for Dubai,

Minor Hotels Announces Expansion of Tivoli Brand in Middle East With Upcoming Debut in Oman

TTA BULLETIN

Minor Hotels, a hotel owner, operator, and investor, currently with a portfolio of 530 hotels and resorts in 56 countries across Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Africa and the Indian Ocean, announces the expansion of its Tivoli Hotels & Resorts brand in the Middle East region, with the upcoming addition of a property in Oman. The 180-key Tivoli Muscat Hotel & Residences will begin development in the Omani capital later this year, with the property slated to launch in 2026.

The new-build property will be located in LA VIE, Muscat Hills, a prominent established mixed-use community strategically located within 10 minutes' drive of Muscat International Airport. Featuring an 80-key hotel and 100 branded residences, the mixed-use development will overlook the re-opened 18-hole golf course managed by Troon Golf, also including a Toptracer facility, the fourth in the region and first in Oman. The new Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre, Oman Automobile Association and several Ministries are also located close by.

In addition to multiple accommodation options, facilities at the new hotel will include a swimming pool and gym, an Anantara spa, a ballroom and four meeting rooms. The property will also offer multiple dining options, including a rooftop bar and restaurant, a lobby lounge café, a sports bar and an all-day dining restaurant.

With this upcoming debut in Oman, Tivoli Hotels & Resorts continues its expansion in the Middle East, where Minor Hotels currently operates three Tivoli properties in Qatar, with a further new-build property under development in Bahrain to launch in 2024. In addition, the brand made its Asia



debut in 2022 with the launch of Tivoli Chengdu at Cultural Heritage Park in China and is expanding its footprint in Europe this year adding properties in The Netherlands, Portugal and Tenerife in Spain.

Tivoli Muscat and master project LA VIE are being developed by Oman Real Estate Investment Services LLC (ORIS), the real estate arm of Oman International Development and Investment Company SAOG (OMINVEST), an Oman-based company founded in 1983 and listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange since 1998. OMINVEST is one of the region's largest investment companies with over US 1.8 billion of total assets.

Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO Minor International and CEO Minor Hotels, parent company of Tivoli Hotels & Resorts, commented, "We are thrilled to announce this exciting future addition to the Tivoli portfolio and the brand's upcoming debut in Oman. With a fantastic location in Muscat, this new property will offer exceptional facilities to both business and leisure guests, with a world-class golf course on its doorstep and easy access to the many cultural attractions the city has to offer. We look forward to working with the team at ORIS to bring this exciting property to fruition."

With a history that dates back to 1933 in Lisbon, Portugal, and celebrating its 90th anniversary this year, Tivoli Hotels & Resorts stands out for its cultural heritage and authentic connection to each destination.

422,000 tourists arrived from Germany last year, making it one of the emirate's top ten source markets. As such, Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) supported a large contingent of the emirate's hospitality companies at ITB, including TIME Hotels.

"Technology was another area of great interest, but not at the expense of personalised service. They like the convenience of technology especially mobile applications, which can digitalise their journey seamlessly, from the initial reservation right through to check out and their flight home. But they also wanted to engage with members of staff and other guests, to make their stay as enjoyable and informative as possible," said Awadalla.

TIME Hotels was established in Dubai in 2012 and initially launched with six properties in Dubai and Sharjah, before expanding its portfolio into Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and most recently Morocco.

HOTELS

Legendary Grand hotel secures the highest rating

TTA BULLETIN

As you drive into the Hotel, you will be welcomed amongst a vivid array of flowers and magnolias, in gardens that hide exotic plants. The Hotel has Eight Food and Beverage Outlets to offer varied choices of food and drinks to the different palates.

The 154 tastefully decorated rooms including Three Presidential Suites and three Junior Suites which exudes colonial charm. The spacious Barnes Restaurant extending to an outer terrace offers the possibility of enjoying a rich breakfast buffet on the splendid outdoor terrace where guests may continue to enjoy frequent sunny days and mild temperature, even during the winter months. The Magnolia – All day Dining open 24 hours offers variety of dishes. The Barnes Fusion Grill is yet another novel experience for those who love to savour wood-fired pizzas, mouth-watering steaks, sandwiches and wraps etc. The much talked about and world recognized Tea Lounge is serves the most delectable High Tea and patronized by visitors from all over the

world. Our Specialty Cuisines ranging from Thai to Indian, Fusion to International cuisines captures the true spirit and flavours of its origins. This authenticity secures the Grand Hotels' legendary reputation as the pinnacle of exquisite dining in the hills.

Whether travelling for leisure or business, guests can relax and enjoy the temperature-controlled swimming pool surrounded by the magnificent gardens, while for those guests looking to unwind through active recreations our state-of-the-art Gymnasium and complete even with yoga and other stimulating exercises is a dedicated revival zone. In addition, the guests could even unwind by indulging in a wide range of luxury Spa and beauty treatments.

What has led to the success of the Grand Hotel is its conscious and conscientious effort to upgrade, innovate and resonate exceptional guest experience. The refurbishment of the Grand Coffee Bar, which will now be termed as "The Grand Café" would

provide an even better space and ambience for a light refreshment, while the new Cocktail lounge "The Library" would serve as an exclusive limited-edition Cocktail Bar.

As the Hotel receives this accolade it pauses to thank and appreciate the uncountable number of loyal guests who have patronized it from the inception, that has enabled the Grand Hotel to strengthen and enhance its offerings.

Succeeding from its inception in 1891 as a Hotel, has been due to the sheer passion, commitment and strategic vision of Managers and General Managers who have worked tirelessly over the centuries to bring Grand Hotel to what it stands today and the present team beckons to salute and thank these individuals and the former team members too



The present General Manager, Mr. Suresh Abbas was appointed in August 2022, who himself is a passionate and ardent hotelier with the zeal and enthusiasm for growth.

Mr. Abbas along with the dynamic team is working relentlessly to continue

its tradition and maintain the old-world charm whilst working on the mantras of storytelling, theatre and magic. Their commitment is to extending limitless luxury with impeccable service to each and every guest who walks into the Grand Hotel

What draw guests to this colonial palace is not only the architecture and well-preserved beauty, but the hospitality extended by each member of the team, who abide by the credo of 'Regally Serving you, our Royalty'

Aitken Spence's Heritage Hotels receive Travelife Gold certification

TTA BULLETIN

Premier hospitality chain, Aitken Spence Hotel Managements' Heritage brand of properties has been endorsed for its sustainable tourism efforts by the prestigious international recognition - Travelife Gold.

Heritage Kandalama, Heritage Ahungalla, Heritage Negombo, Heritage Tea Factory and Heritage Ayurveda have been recognised and certified for their continued efforts in enhancing their sustainability footprint in operations, services, awareness creation and guest satisfaction.

Travelife – the international sustainability certification scheme – assesses a hotel's performance in managing its social, environmental and economic impacts, and in supporting sustainability as part of its hotel marketing and operational strategies. Travelife sustainability certification is a non-profit flagship programme that supports tourism destinations, businesses and travellers in implementing innovative solutions for the continuous development of sustainable tourism.

To gain Travelife Gold Certification, the resorts met all criteria with an independent auditor inspection which includes sustainability management systems – the likes of business policies, legislation, community programmes, human and financial resources as well as environment management across energy, water, solid waste, pollution, erosion and wildlife. The resorts are also assessed on labour and human resources, community integration, suppliers, and guests.

"As an advocate of responsible tourism, we are proud to announce that Heritage Hotels and Resorts in Sri Lanka are Travelife Gold certified," said Stasshani

Jayawardena Executive Director Aitken Spence PLC, Head of Tourism and Leisure, and Chairperson of Aitken Spence Hotel Managements. "This is a reiteration of our longstanding commitment to curate a memorable holiday experience for our guests while ensuring that the impact of our property on the community and planet is a positive one." Heritage Hotels and Resorts originally received the certification in 2017 and has continued to be recertified over the years. "The recertification confirms our collective dedication to minimizing environmental impact, improving economic and social impacts for people in our community, respecting and protecting human rights and fair labour practices and safeguarding animal welfare and biodiversity."

She further noted that this reflects the ethos behind sustainability that is ingrained into the management and operations of the Aitken Spence Hotels which is driven by a value creation model revolving around strategic pillars, identified by the Company based on long-term aspirations.

Aitken Spence Hotels is part of the Sri Lankan blue-chip conglomerate Aitken Spence PLC and operates 18 hotels and resorts across Sri Lanka, Maldives, Oman, and India. The Company's owned hotels are reflected under the Heritage, Adaaran and Turyaa brands, popular around the world for their exceptional service and curated lifestyle experiences. The Company's portfolio includes nine hotels and resorts across Sri Lanka, five in the Maldives, four in Oman, and one in India.



Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo Welcomes Prestigious Webb Ellis Cup & Legendary Springbok Bryan Habana

TTA BULLETIN



Courtesy of Mastercard, Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo had the privilege of displaying the prestigious Rugby World Cup Trophy, known as the Webb Ellis Cup during its special 6-day tour of Sri Lanka. Making history, the most sought-after trophy in the Rugby world was first brought to Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo on Saturday 18th February 2023 by Mastercard's Country Manager, Sri Lanka and Maldives Sandun Hapugoda. It was received by Area Vice President, Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts Kamal Munasinghe and General Manager, Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo Darsh Gallage.

Thereafter, Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo also welcomed former Springboks legend Bryan Habana who was a part of the special Webb Ellis Cup tour. The coveted trophy returned to the hotel premises on the 23rd of February for a full-day display where guests and ardent rugby fans could catch a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be photographed with the prestigious trophy.

Speaking on the momentous occasion Kamal Munasinghe noted, "Sri Lanka is extremely privileged to have such a prestigious trophy tour our island nation at a time when we are looking at avenues to revive tourism. The tour sheds new light on Sri Lanka's capabili-

ties of hosting not just large scale M.I.C.E. events, but also prestigious tours of this nature. Further since the country is now gearing up to showcase Sri Lanka as a viable destination for Sports Tourism and Outdoor Recreation, this was a great boost to that potential avenue. We are extremely grateful to Mastercard for choosing Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo as their preferred choice to partner in this endeavour and look forward to many more collaborations and such global events on our shores".

Also speaking during the display of the Webb Ellis Cup and Bryan Habana's stay at Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo, Darsh Gallage said, "Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo has an illustrious history of hosting international celebrities and personalities from around the world. Having a legend like Bryan Habana stay with us, adds another feather to our cap. As a resort in the city, we constantly strive to strike a balance between a luxurious getaway and modern conveniences. I strongly believe that this is a key selling point for Lakeside. Further, Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo is also well-known for our curated events, and this is an area that we would like to enhance and showcase as well".

THE CLARKS

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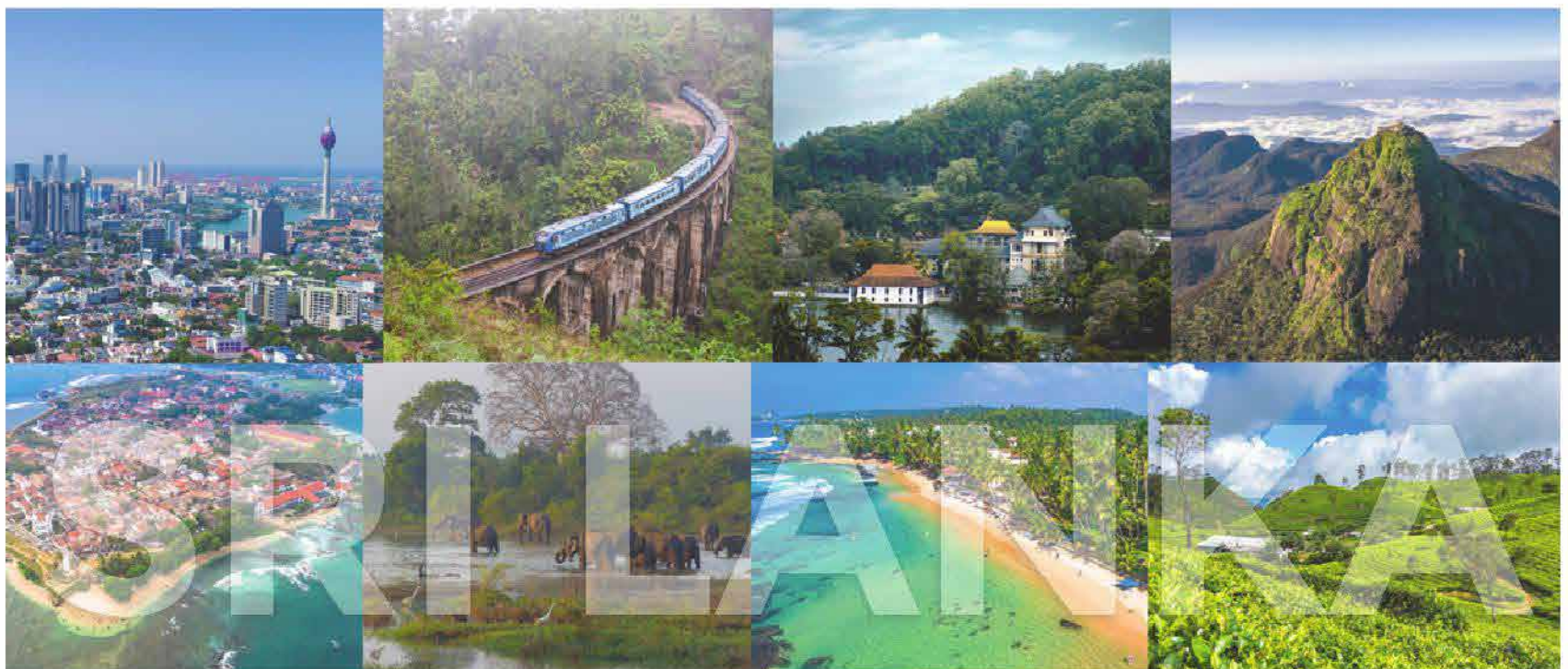
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Emirates' Sir Tim Clark to discuss rapid growth within Middle East aviation at Arabian Travel Market 2023

TTA BULLETIN

Sir Tim Clark, President of Emirates Airline, will participate in an in-depth discussion on the Global Stage of Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2023, which will take place at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from 1-4 May. In conversation with John Strickland, Director of JLS Consulting, Sir Tim will reflect on Emirates' long-term strategy as it begins to ramp up aircraft deliveries from 2024 while balancing growth and tackling broader issues like climate change.



Sir Tim Clark

The news comes amid reports of significant gains across the Middle East's aviation sector, which saw year-on-year traffic almost double in January 2023 according to figures released by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). This growth is especially evident in the UAE where Dubai International Airport (DXB) catered to more than 66 million passengers in 2022, a 127% rise compared to the previous year.

Over the longer term, analysts from Mordor Intelligence predict that the Middle East's aviation market will record a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of more than 6% during the period 2022-27, meaning regional passenger numbers are likely to continue to rise for the foreseeable future.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: "It's encouraging to see that air traffic in the Middle East is once again beginning to soar, especially following such a turbulent period during and after the global pandemic.

"We are looking forward to welcoming Sir Tim to our Global Stage for the 30th edition of ATM," Curtis added. "Emirates has firmly established itself as an innovative trailblazer within the global aviation industry, so I cannot wait to hear how Sir Tim and his colleagues are

working to build a futureproofed and sustainable airline sector."

The leading role that Gulf airlines are playing in the decarbonisation of the aviation industry will represent a key focus during the upcoming edition of ATM. Earlier this year, Emirates announced that one of its Boeing 777-300ERs had successfully completed a demonstration flight powered by 100% sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). Etihad Airways, meanwhile, has teamed up with carbon-net-zero solutions specialist, World Energy, as part of a long-term strategic partnership that will result in dramatic emissions reductions.

The 30th edition of ATM will feature in-depth sessions dedicated to air travel on day two. Following the conclusion of Emirates Returns to Growth: President of Emirates Airline in Discussion with John Strickland, experts from Boeing, Etihad and SimpliFlying will assemble on ATM's Global Stage to discuss The Net-Zero Future of the Aviation Industry. A broad range of regional carriers will also be participating in ATM 2023 in addition to Emirates and Etihad, including flydubai, flynas, Saudia Airlines, Saudi Amad for Airport Services and Air Transport, and Cham Wings Airlines.

ATM 2023 is anticipating a 7.5% year-on-year uptick in both participation and exhibition space occupied by the aviation sector, building on the excellent levels of engagement witnessed during last year's show. On a broader level, the conference will explore the future of sustainable travel in line with its theme of 'Working Towards Net Zero'. Having officially initiated its journey to net zero, the conference programme will explore how innovative sustainable travel trends are likely to evolve

Singapore Tourism Board & Singapore Airlines partner with Sri Lankan Travel Trade & Media to reignite outbound travel to Singapore

TTA BULLETIN

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and Singapore Airlines (SIA) joined hands to reignite travel amongst trade partner-friends and media in Sri Lanka through a myriad of engagement activities which took place between 29th - 31st March 2023.



Built around the theme 'Deepening Connections, Achieving Together!', STB and SIA hosted 130 travel agency professionals over two evenings of networking, had a round-table luncheon with representatives from 9 media outlets, and participated in in-depth discussions with industry partners.

Today, travellers are far more open and discerning in their preferences particularly when it comes to selecting travel experiences; Singapore offers Sri Lankan travellers a wide range of experiences to choose from while visiting the destination. Adding to this vibrant repertoire, the country has announced the soft opening of Bird Paradise on 8th May 2023.

Popular amongst Sri Lankan fans as a resort destination for leisure and family friendly experiences, Sentosa has transformed through the years to become a vibrant destination with hidden gems to be discovered by every generation of travellers. The iconic Singapore Cable Car is launching Pokémon-themed cabins from 1st May onwards, as a part of its 50th year celebrations. The island will also unveil Sentosa Sensoryscape, a multi-sensory experience in 2023, the first milestone of the Sentosa-Brani Master Plan, which will transform Sentosa into a game-changing leisure and tourism destination. Sentosa is also buzzing with options from marquee festivals to popular restaurants, attractions, and spa retreats.

In a move to encourage visitors to explore more during their travel to Singapore, the STB has recently launched the SingapoRewards, a new programme that offers complimentary experiences in Singapore for international visitors. This will run through 2023 and provide visitors with an opportunity to try one of nearly 40 new or "off-the-beatenpath" experiences in Singapore for free. On 3rd April, Changi Airport Group (CAG), SIA and STB re-launched the Free Singapore Tour for transfer and transit passengers with refreshed itineraries and a new Changi Precinct tour.

Pre pandemic, in 2019, Singapore welcomed 98,000 visitors from Sri Lanka and in 2022, 35,500 visitors made their visits to the city. Sri Lanka is recognized as a key visitor source market within the South Asian region. With direct connectivity between Colombo and Singapore, visa-free travel for Sri Lankans and a host of new and improved attractions and activities in Singapore, the city continues to be a prime travel destination.

On 27th March 2023, SIA introduced the launch of Boeing B787-10A on Colombo-Singapore route. This longest variant of Boeing's Dreamliner range offers large electronically dimmable windows, low cabin altitude, generous headroom, and a quiet and smooth ride. With exceptional operating efficiency and advanced technology, the B787-10 aircraft is also environmentally friendly with a small carbon footprint.

Qatar Airways Extends Partnership with Sydney Swans

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways has announced it has extended its partnership with Australian Football League (AFL) club, the Sydney Swans. The new agreement means that Qatar Airways will remain Official Airline Partner of the team for a multi-year term.

The partnership was first announced in 2016, marking the airline's first foray into the AFL. As part of the agreement, Qatar Airways receives prominent branding at Sydney Swans home games and training, while supporters continue to receive special offers and giveaways throughout the season.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker, said: "Qatar Airways is pleased to announce our partnership with the Sydney Swans is being extended. We have long supported some of

the best sports clubs and events in the world and we strongly believe in connecting with our global travellers through their passion for sports.

"Since we first started serving Australia in 2009, Qatar Airways has received tremendous support from the Australian community. This partnership with the Sydney Swans, one of the country's best-supported and most elite sporting teams, marked our debut in the world of high profile Australian sports sponsorship. The extension of this partnership reflects our ongoing commitment to Australia. We look forward to continuing to share in our travellers' love for AFL and supporting their commitment to the Sydney Swans."

Qatar Airways as a brand is committed to supporting global sports, helping fans travel

to their favourite events wherever they may be. The airline is a leading global football supporter, with partnerships including FIFA, Paris Saint-Germain, FC Bayern Munich, The Royal Challengers Bangalore and Concacaf. Additionally, Qatar Airways is the Official Airline of Formula 1®, the Ironman and Ironman 70.3 Triathlon Series, United Rugby Championship (URC), Global Kitesports Association and multiple other disciplines including equestrianism, padel, squash and tennis.

Sydney Swans CEO, Tom Harley has thanked Qatar Airways for its continued commitment to the club. "We are grateful to Qatar Airways for their continued support, with this announcement taking our partnership to a decade," Harley said.

"We know our members have been eager to



return to travel after several years of disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and we look forward to being able to continue to bring our members special offers in partnership with Qatar Airways."

The Australian market continues to be an area of strong growth for Qatar Airways, with the airline recently expanding services across the country. Qatar Airways currently operates 42 weekly flights to Australia, across five destinations including Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth, and Sydney.

Emirates ramps up operations across continents

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates has boosted operations by 31% (total Available Seat Kilometres) since the start of its financial year and has announced plans to further ramp up seat capacity in its latest published northern summer schedule starting 26 March 2023.

In the past months, the airline has planned and executed the rapid growth of its network operations - reintroducing services to five cities; launching flights to one new destination (Tel Aviv); adding 251 weekly flights onto existing routes; and continuing the roll-out of service enhancements in the air and on the ground.

Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Chief Commercial Officer said: "Emirates continues to expand its global network and deploy its capacity to meet travel demand across the world. Our financial year started relatively quietly as we held back our ramp up until the planned northern runway rehabilitation program at Dubai International airport was completed in June. From July 2022 onwards, it's been non-stop expansion."

He added: "Customer demand has been very strong, and our forward bookings are also robust. Emirates is working hard on several fronts - to bring back operating capacity as quickly as the ecosystem can manage, while also upgrading our fleet and product to ensure our customers always enjoy the best possible Emirates experience. So far, four of our A380 aircraft have been completely refurbished with our new cabin interiors and Premium Economy seats, and more will enter service as our US\$ 2 billion cabin and service enhancement program picks up pace."

In the coming months, established routes to Europe, Australia and Africa will be served with more Emirates flights, while in East Asia, more cities are seeing route restarts. The strengthening of the airline's network and increased flight frequencies are set to boost Sri Lanka's connections to the rest of the world, especially to and from cities such as London, Amsterdam, Venice and Cairo, and to Melbourne from Singapore.

Emirates said it will continue to scale up its A380 operations with the reintroduction of the iconic double-decker across its network, covering Glasgow from 26 March, Casablanca from 15 April, Beijing from 01 May, Shanghai from 04 June, Nice from 01 June, Birmingham from 01 July, Kuala Lumpur from 01 August, and Taipei from 01 August.

Emirates is also planning to enhance its route network with a range of new destinations and increased frequencies in various regions. In Europe, Emirates will increase its flights to Amsterdam from 14 to 19 weekly flights, effective from 02 April. Additionally, a daily seasonal service will be added to serve the summer demand in Athens, operating between 01 June to 30 September. Emirates will also be upgrading its Bologna route, from five



flights a week to a daily service, starting 01 May. Budapest will also experience an increase in flights, from five flights a week to a daily service by 01 June. Furthermore, Emirates is starting a second daily service to London Stansted on 01 May, taking its London operations to 11 daily flights, which includes six times daily to London Heathrow and three times daily to Gatwick. The airline will also increase flights to Venice from five to six flights a week, effective from 26 March, with further plans to increase to a daily service from 01 June.

In Africa, Emirates will increase flights to Cairo from 25 to 28 weekly flights effective from 29 October, offering travellers greater connectivity and convenience. Additionally, Emirates will increase flights to Dar es Salam from five flights a week to daily flights, starting from 01 May. It will also upgrade its Entebbe route, from six flights a week to daily flights, starting 01 July.

Meanwhile, Emirates' non-stop Australia flights will return to pre-pandemic levels to Sydney from 01 May, Melbourne from 26 March, and Brisbane on 01 June. An additional daily service starting from 01 June will take Emirates flights to Brisbane to 14 flights per week. It will also restart its daily service to Christchurch from Dubai via Sydney, effective from 26 March and will add a third flight to Melbourne from 26 March via Singapore. This adds capacity to Melbourne and re-establishes connectivity between Singapore and Melbourne. The other two daily flights from Melbourne fly non-stop to Dubai. Further, a third daily non-stop service to Sydney will be added from 01 May.

The Airline is also expanding its services in East Asia with new and increased flights. Starting from 01 August, a fifth daily service will be added to Bangkok. Emirates will also commence a daily non-stop Boeing 777-300ER service to Beijing on 15 March, which will be upgraded to an A380 effective from 01 May. Furthermore, a second daily service with an A380 will commence from 01 September. Hong Kong will also see an addition of a daily non-stop flight from Dubai from 29 March, bringing Emirates' operations to 14 weekly flights, including its existing daily Dubai-Bangkok-Hong Kong service. Additionally, from 01 June, Emirates will add a third daily service to Kuala Lumpur. It will also resume services to Tokyo Haneda with daily flights from 02 April, taking Emirates' Japan operations to 21 daily flights, including a daily A380 service to Tokyo-Narita and a daily Boeing 777 service to Osaka.

Qatar Airways announces Indian Superstar Deepika Padukone as Global Brand Ambassador

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways has launched a new brand campaign in collaboration with world-renowned Indian actor, Deepika Padukone. The campaign launch is the culmination of the airline's endeavour to redefine Qatar Airways Premium experience, particularly through showcasing the world-class Qsuite along with the unparalleled surroundings of The Orchard, which are core to Hamad International Airport's expansion.

The timeless acoustic track 'Ain't Nobody' accompanies the campaign that connects Padukone's journey with Qatar Airways to a new level of luxury and elegance. She encapsulates the premium experience available to customers of Qatar Airways, transiting through the best airport in the world, Hamad International Airport.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker, said: "At Qatar Airways, we constantly strive for excellence. This collaboration brings together refinement and grace, and Deepika showcases beautifully on how Qatar Airways offers award-winning premium experiences both in the sky and on the ground to its customers. Deepika is an obvious choice as she has the right global appeal and charisma for our brand. We are truly delighted to have Deepika on board Qatar Airways as our Global Brand



Ambassador."

A multiple award-winning airline, Qatar Airways was recently announced as the 'Airline of the Year' at the 2022 World Airline Awards, managed by the international air transport rating organisation, Skytrax. The airline continues to be synonymous with excellence having won the main prize for an unprecedented seventh time (2011, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2022), while also being named 'World's Best Business Class', 'World's Best Business Class Lounge Dining' and 'Best Airline in the Middle East'.

Qatar Airways currently flies to more than 150 destinations worldwide, connecting through its Doha hub, Hamad International Airport, currently named the 'Best Airport in the World' by Skytrax World Airport Awards 2022.

Emirates and United Activate Codeshare Partnership to Enhance Connectivity to the US

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates and United have activated their codeshare partnership, allowing Emirates customers to enjoy easier access to an expanded choice of U.S.



subcontinent.

On the flights, passengers can enjoy Emirates' award-winning services and a host of

destinations. Starting today, Emirates customers will be able to fly to three of the nation's biggest business hubs - Chicago, Houston or San Francisco - and connect easily to an expansive network of domestic U.S. points on flights operated by United.

Tickets are available to purchase on emirates.com as well as through trade channels including travel agencies.

With the launch of the partnership, Emirates customers heading to the U.S., can now look forward to access to more than 150 U.S. cities in the United network, via the three gateways.

Similarly, Emirates customers in the U.S. planning trips to Dubai and beyond have a myriad of choices and can utilise United's services to easily connect to Emirates operated flights bound for Dubai, via Chicago, Houston or San Francisco. The world just got bigger for U.S. travelers journeying to Emirates' extensive network beyond Dubai, including many unique destinations across the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia and the Indian

convenient travel benefits afforded by the agreement. Travellers with itineraries on Emirates' codeshare flights can plan their entire trip on a single-ticket and take advantage of the airline's baggage allowance, in addition to convenient bag check-through to the final destination.

Emirates is also enabling its Skywards members to earn and redeem miles on all flights across United's worldwide network.

The partnership unlocks a host of popular destinations accessible from Emirates gateways such as Atlanta, Austin, Denver, Minneapolis and Phoenix. Emirates passengers planning trips to destinations such as Detroit, can fly direct from Dubai to Chicago or Houston, and simply connect on a United flight to the final destination, while enjoying the hassle-free flight benefits. The reciprocal benefits extend to passengers flying out of the U.S. using Emirates services to fly to Dubai, with the same easy access from a vast network of domestic cities and connection at one of the three hubs.

AIRLINES / FAMILY ALBUM

Hit for a Six: Qatar Airways Welcomes Cricket Giants - Royal Challengers Bangalore to its Diverse Sports Sponsorship Portfolio

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways announce their latest partnership with club cricket giants - the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), becoming the Indian Premier League (IPL) team's Official Front of Jersey Partner.

The Indian Premier 2023 season will take place between 31 March – 28 May, with the Bengaluru based cricket team playing their opening match on 2 April against the Mumbai Indians. In the presence of 40,000 fans, RCB's home arena - the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, hosted a special "Unboxing Event" that featured cricket legends, celebrities, team officials and the likes of cricket superstars Virat Kohli, Faf du Plessis and Glen Maxwell. Fans watched the RCB squad train in an entertaining atmosphere, after which the Qatar Airways cabin crew greeted the team during a special jersey unveiling ceremony.

The airline's leisure division - Qatar Airways Holidays, is exclusively launching all-inclusive travel packages, allowing cricket fans to attend an IPL match at the bespoke Qatar Airways hospitality lounge at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium. In addition, the packages will enable fans to partake in exclusive experiences such as viewing practice sessions, signed memorabilia, player meet and greet, photo opportunity with Virat Kohli, and more. The Ultimate RCB Fan packages include return flights with Qatar Airways, premium hotel options, IPL tickets and exciting experi-

ences. To secure packages, customers can visit the dedicated link, qatarairways.com/RCB.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker, said: "We embark on a new journey with the addition of the Royal Challengers Bangalore to our extensive sports portfolio. The team has a passionate fanbase and a well-represented list of cricket legends that have played for the team. Cricket is a global game with a world-wide audience and is a powerful means of uniting people of different backgrounds. From start to end, our RCB packages will take the fan experience to the next level with a seamless journey to witness world-class cricket and entertainment."

"Qatar Airways regards India as an important market where we operate non-stop flights from 13 Indian cities. Our operations from India also serve connections to 13 cities in North America and 35 cities in Europe through our hub - Hamad International Airport, which was awarded Skytrax World's Best Airport award for the past two years. We are excited to partner with RCB over the next three years in what we trust will be a successful alliance."

Chairman of Royal Challengers Bangalore and Chief Commercial Officer of Diageo India, Prathmesh Mishra, said: "We are



thrilled at the potential of the RCB - Qatar Airways partnership. The synergies between both brands serve as a robust platform to build a very strong marketing association over the next three years and beyond. Qatar Airways has a strong demonstrative history of activating world class sports marketing partnerships and we hope the RCB partnership is just as successful. The partnership and its activation will be a benchmark in the Indian sports ecosystem and adds to the aspiration of RCB on its pathway to becoming a global cricketing powerhouse and a lifestyle brand."

The "Unboxing Event" paved the way for several entertainment activities, featuring musical performances from various acts, including international artist - Jason Derulo, who performed live at the stadium. In addition, cricket legends A.B. de Villiers and Chris Gayle's jerseys were officially retired by the team as a mark of honour to

induct them into the club's hall of fame.

Qatar Airways has recently launched a new brand campaign in collaboration with world-renowned Indian actor, Deepika Padukone, who encapsulates the premium experience available to customers of Qatar Airways, transiting through the best airport in the Middle East - Hamad International Airport.

Qatar Airways as a brand is committed to supporting global sports, helping fans travel to their favourite events wherever they may be. The airline is a leading global football supporter, with partnerships including FIFA, Paris Saint-Germain, FC Bayern and Concacaf. Additionally, Qatar Airways is the Official Airline of Formula 1®, the Ironman and Ironman 70.3 Triathlon Series, United Rugby Championship (URC), Global Kitesports Association and multiple other disciplines including equestrianism, padel, squash and tennis.

MICE Expo 2023 a resounding success

Sri Lanka's first ever MICE Expo concluded on a high with over 150 participants from over 10 countries coming together at a business exchange which will see large events and conventions convened in Sri Lanka. Organized by the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau in partnership with Sri Lankan airlines and SLAPCEO, it was held over a period of three days at the Shangri-La Colombo with social events at Cinnamon Life, Taj Samudra Colombo, The Galle Face Hotel and The Lotus Tower.



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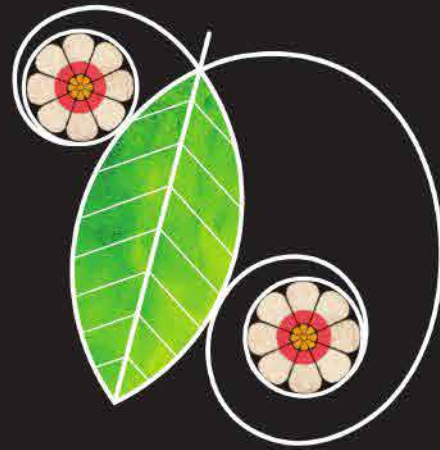
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