

# TRAVELTALK

## Asia

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## Cinnamon Bentota Beach celebrates another year of uncompromised luxury and hospitality

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Celebrating another year of unsurpassed luxury and hospitality, Cinnamon Bentota Beach stands as a testament to the rich history and elegance of its surroundings. Where the iconic Bentota Beach and Bentara River meet, you will find Cinnamon Bentota Beach, a haven for the traveller that seeks relaxation, adventure, and artistic inspiration. This haven for travellers has a story that goes back to 1967 when it was brought to life by the visionary architect Geoffrey Bawa. The resort is one of the best explorations of 'Tropical Modernism,' seamlessly blending architectural design with the surrounding environment. It is also home to priceless works of art from some of the most brilliant artistic minds from Sri Lanka such as Ena De Silva, Laki Senanayake, Barbara Sansoni, and Ismeth Raheem. To preserve the original beauty and elegance envisioned by Bawa, the Resort was fully refurbished in 2019, under the supervision of Channa Daswatte, Chair of the Geoffrey Bawa Trust. Currently known as Cinnamon Bentota Beach, within the portfolio of Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, the Resort continues to be an iconic part of Bentota's beauty.



Originally designed as a governmental initiative within the developing tourism sector, this heritage beach resort stands as a pioneering landmark. Serving as the inaugural planned resort equipped with essential amenities such as a railway station and a police station, it quickly became synonymous with the alias 'hotel junction' or 'hotel handiya'. Nestled amidst the picturesque convergence of the Bentara River and the vast expanse of the ocean, Bentota Beach Hotel boasts a unique advantage. The presence of the 'Maahawaasala', a heritage building, offers a haven of safety from the impact of tsunamis, safeguarded by the protective embrace of the river mouth.

Initially known as the Bentota Rest House during the Portuguese occupation, this historic building was later transformed into the Bentota Beach Hotel, marking the genesis of well-planned resorts in Sri Lanka. Surrounded by the remnants of Sri Lanka's heritage, including a centuries-old Frangipani tree and the enchanting beauty of cinnamon gardens, the hotel has been an integral part of the country's tourism landscape. This resort is not merely a retreat; it embodies both cultural heritage and natural splendour. Adorned by the infamous Frangipani tree that has graced its grounds for over a century, it also houses six 'Sekku gal', ancient mechanisms capable of extracting coconut oil, a testament to the region's rich history.

Surrounded by a tapestry of ancient temples intricately connected by tunnels once traversed by Buddhist priests, Bentota Beach Hotel's roots trace back to the Portuguese era when it served as the Bentota Rest House. Encircled by the enchanting allure of cinnamon gardens, a moonstone mine, puppet and mask museums, a turtle hatchery, and the other two corners of Bawa's architectural triangle, it stands as a beacon of cultural immersion and natural marvel. For nearly six decades, Cinnamon Bentota Beach has been the epitome of a quintessential Southwest coast experience. Whether indulging in artisanal activities, exploring mangrove forests, or partaking in exciting water sports, guests are invited to immerse themselves in the vibrant tapestry of local life. Moreover, cultural excursions to historic temples and landmarks, including the Lunuganga Estate designed by Geoffrey Bawa himself, offer enriching glimpses into Sri Lanka's storied past. At Cinnamon Bentota Beach, luxury knows no bounds.

## Sri Lanka Tourism Roadshow in three Australian cities: A Resounding Success

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau recently concluded a three-city road show down under. The inaugural event took place in Brisbane under the eegis of Her Excellency Ms. Chitranganie Wagiswara, the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Australia, Mr. Sandith Samarasinghe, Sri Lanka's Consul General in Melbourne, and Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu, Chairman of Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB), accompanied by officials from Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) and Sri Lanka Consulate.

Thirty-Two Sri Lankan companies participated alongside sixty Australian Destination Management companies and the Australian media. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, indicating a fruitful exchange of ideas and opportunities. These road shows serve as vital platforms for development partnerships and enhancing collaborations between Sri Lankan businesses and their Australian counterparts. Moreover, they play a pivotal role in revitalizing the tourism sector in Sri Lanka by stimulating interest and engagement from the Australian market. The Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau's adept organization of these events underscores its commitment to promoting tourism and facilitating meaningful connections within the industry.

Sri Lanka Tourism successfully concluded its second roadshow at the Shangri-La Hotel in Sydney. The event garnered participation from over 75 Australian travel trade companies and 25 media representatives and influencers.

The opening remarks at the second roadshow were delivered by Her Excellency Ms. Chitranganie Wageeswara, the Sri Lanka High Commissioner in Australia. Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu provided the keynote address on the new global positioning of Sri Lanka. Mr. Sandith Samarasingha, the Sri Lankan Consul General in Melbourne, also addressed the attendees. Mr. Sakura Wijethunga, the Sri Lankan Airline Manager for Sydney, represented the National.

Notably, a raffle draw was conducted, offering



attendees the chance to win exciting prizes, including six nights and seven days' tour packages from Sri Lankan travel trade, and three complimentary air tickets from Sri Lankan Airlines.



Chalaka Gajabahu  
Chairman SLTPB

Overall, the roadshow served as a platform for fostering collaboration and promoting Sri Lanka as a premier tourist destination among the Australian travelers.

The conclusion of the series of Roadshows in Australia took place at the Sofitel hotel in Melbourne, marking a significant milestone in SLTPB's efforts to promote Sri Lanka as a premier tourist destination in Australia. With the participation of over 50 Australian agents and 35 media representatives, the event was a testament to the growing interest in Sri Lanka's tourism offerings.

The day commenced with productive B2B meetings, facilitating valuable connections between Australian and Sri Lankan businesses. This was followed by an official ceremonial session, featuring a welcome speech from Mr. Sandith Samarasingha, the Sri Lanka Consulate General in Melbourne. Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, provided valuable insights into Sri Lanka's tourism landscape, setting the stage for further discussions.

The highlight of the event was the address by Sri Lanka Tourism Ambassador, Mr. Sanath Jayasuriya, whose presence captivated the audience. A keynote speech by Hon. Minister of Tourism, Land, Sports, and Youth Affairs, Mr. Harin Fernando, emphasized the vast opportunities for leisure and investment in Sri Lanka.







Sri Lanka tourism has achieved a record number of arrivals in the first quarter of 2024 and this has propelled a great deal of optimism in the market. The accolades continue to mount with the latest one being the famed Yala National park being ranked one of the top 10 national parks in the world. This is a very significant endorsement by National Geographic.

The topic of debate continues with the MRR being active in the city of Colombo. While hoteliers feel it has provided a much-needed push to maintain a higher rate as a tool for economic recovery. On the flip side, the Tour operators disagree and feel that it goes against all market economics to demand a price when the destination is at a crucial juncture in terms of regaining traveler confidence and offering competitive rate.

The MICE sector argues that Sri Lanka has lost a considerable amount of potential conferences due to the inability for city hotels to quote flexible rates for the incentive market. This I believe needs to be addressed swiftly as the competition remains strong in the region and Sri Lanka will potentially have to let go of key exhibitions due to lack of flexibility in market pricing.

Nayantara Fonseka (Taru) recently launched her new brand of luxuring villas under "Nyne" hotels which would bring a refreshing boost to the small luxury market in the country. An extremely talented individual, Taru is looking forward to welcoming the discerning traveler to bask in the finest local hospitality in the island.

Sri Lanka tourism continues to make waves as it takes the best of local hospitality to woo travelers from down under. Three successive road shows were recently concluded in the key cities of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Tourism Promotion Bureau chief together with trade partners from Sri Lanka and the Hon. Minister of Tourism, held several national press interviews and were featured on key television programs to reach a greater audience



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## NEWS

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### Sri Lanka Tourism shows its capacity....

TTA BULLETIN

The interactive Q&A session further underscored the attendees' keen interest in exploring business prospects in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's position as a favored destination in the Australian market was heightened by the three road shows. Sri Lankan Airlines facilitated the provision of three tickets for



three cities and twenty-two tour packages for these destinations through the Sri Lankan travel trade. Further, it is important to note that this event was organized in collaboration with the Sri Lanka High Commission in Canberra and the Sri Lanka Consulate General in Melbourne, which contributed immensely to this purpose.

### Dilshan Gnanapragasam elected President of the Travel Trade Sports Club

TTA BULLETIN

The 48th Annual General Meetings of the Travel Trade Sports Club was held recently at the Ramada Colombo. Dilshan Gnanapragasam from Resplendent Ceylon was elected the President and the new committee comprises of Immediate Past President : Anil Hapugoda from Aitken Spence Travels, Vice President Airline : Shan Perera from Aitken Spence Aviation, Vice President Travels : Bandula Withana from Jetwing Travels , Vice President Hotels : Adrian Jansz from Occidental Hotels



General Secretary: Marvan Madanayake from Amadeus Lanka, Assistant General Secretary: Lalin Sumanasinghe from Aitken Spence Travels. Treasurer: Mani Sugathapala from Citrus Hotels and Assistant Treasurer: Nalika Abeyseriya from Walkers Tours/ Whittalls. Social Secretary: Chinthaka Daluwatte from Mt. Lavinia Hotels and Assistant Social Secretary: Vivek Kerkoven from Ramada by Wyndham

Committee Members Representing Travel Agents : Anushka Perera from Connaissance de Ceylan ; Amri Noordeen from DTH Travels ; Murad Mubarak from Classic Travel

Committee Members representing Airlines: Heshan Perera from Air India; Dylan Nonis from Malaysian Airlines ; Prabath Wickramathillake from Sri Lankan Airlines

Dance committee Chairman - Bonita Odayar , Sunethra Blok – Secretary Administration, Eddie Silva – Accountant and Tyrone Perera, Media & Sports Events Co-coordinator

Committee Members Representing Hotels: Kanishka Udawatte from Cinnamon Hotels; Natasha Arumugam from Resplendent Ceylon ; Dhanushka de Alwis from Amaya Resorts

The committee intends to organize 14 events, featuring highlights such as the Travel Trade Ball and the motor rally, aiming to unite hospitality members from across Sri Lanka!

### Marlon Abeyakoon Appointed as General Manager at NH Collection Maldives Havodda

TTA BULLETIN

Minor Hotels, a leading global hotel owner and operator, has announced the appointment of Marlon Abeyakoon as the General Manager of NH Collection Maldives Havodda, effective from 25 January 2024. The luxury all-villa resort marks the debut of the NH Collection brand in a non-urban destination, introducing its renowned European flair to the Maldives.



& Golf Club, Reethi Beach Resort in the Maldives, and Hilton Colombo Residences in Sri Lanka. His earlier career was shaped by roles in London with Hilton and GLH Hotels, and the One & Only Royal Mirage Hotel in Dubai, UAE.

Stuart De San Nicolas, Cluster General Manager for Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas, Avani+

A luxury hospitality and rebranding expert, Abeyakoon has over a quarter-century of industry expertise. He has a formidable track record of exceptional operational leadership with prestigious global brands such as Kerzner, Hilton and Marriott in diverse locations, including the UK, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Fiji and the UAE.

Fares Resort and NH Collection Maldives Havodda, commented, "Marlon is a distinguished figure in the hospitality industry, with a 25-year track record of operational excellence in high-end beachfront and urban hotels. We are thrilled to have such a seasoned professional join our Maldivian team at a time when Minor Hotels enters the new phase of accelerated growth in the region."

In early 2020, Abeyakoon commenced his journey with Minor Hotels as General Manager designate for Avani+ Fares Resort before moving to the role of General Manager at Minor's Oaks Ibn Battuta Gate hotel in Dubai. His tenure there was marked by surpassing gross operating profit targets by 136% and 125% for 2022 and 2023, respectively, significantly contributing to the hotel's strategic repositioning.

Abeyakoon shared his excitement about the new role, "It is an honour to lead the team at the inaugural NH Collection property in the Maldives. The recently refurbished resort more than does justice to the beauty of the Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, and I look forward to collaborating with the team to deliver extraordinary experiences for our guests."

Abeyakoon's extensive background in managing luxury resorts includes senior positions at the Sheraton Fiji Resort

Abeyakoon, a UK national, earned his Bachelor's degree in Business Management with Hospitality from Edinburgh Napier University.



## Arabian Travel Market's sold-out Travel Tech area sees 56% year-on-year growth as leading brands prepare to showcase latest innovations in Dubai

### TTA BULLETIN

More than 100 of the world's leading travel technology companies will be exhibiting at Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2024, which will take place at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) in the UAE from Monday 6 to Thursday 9 May.

ATM 2024's sold-out Travel Tech space will be 56% bigger than last year with 33% more exhibitors participating this year, thanks to unprecedented demand from companies looking to showcase their innovations in front of a global audience.

Sponsored by Sabre, the ATM Future Stage – formerly known as the Travel Tech Stage – will host over a hundred expert speakers from across the global travel and tourism industry, plus a diverse selection of cutting-edge innovations designed to improve efficiency and profitability within the sector. Delegates will explore how advanced tech can be leveraged to drive improvements across a range of segments, including payment, professional development, accessibility, sustainability and more.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: "My colleagues and I are delighted to introduce the ATM Future Stage, which will harness the ever-increasing levels of innovation our industry is witnessing while building on the long-standing success of our Travel Tech offering."

The global travel technology market was valued at \$9.4 billion in 2022 and is projected to reach \$21 billion by 2032, according to Allied Market Research. The ATM Future Stage will host a selection of presentations and sessions designed to highlight opportunities within this space.

These include; Navigating the Future: A Futurist's Prediction, Strategic Capabilities and Implications of AI within Business, Putting the Traveller First with AI and Unlocking the Value of Travel: Harnessing Technology for Enhanced Traveler Journeys, which will be held in association with Amadeus.

This year's show will see the return of the ATM Start-up Pitch Battle, which will be

held in association with Intelak. The third edition of the competition will see a number of the region's most promising startups take to the Future Stage to showcase a range of innovative and potentially industry-changing solutions in front of expert judges.

Several Travel Tech exhibitors also plan to get involved in other areas of ATM 2024. Tech giant Huawei, for instance, will sponsor this year's Capitalising on China's Predicted Tourism Surge summit on the ATM Global Stage.

Confirmed tech exhibitors include Hotelbeds, TBO.com, WebBeds, Moonline Travel and Trade, Trip.com, HeyTrip and Verteil Technologies, plus returning brands such as Travelport, The Travelbook Group, HotelRunner, gtbeds, iTrip, Techno Heaven, QuadLabs, Cover Genius, Fly



Today, Traveazy, Multireisen, City Travel DMCC and Illusions.

First-time exhibitors include ExploreTECH, iClick bedsopia.com, OneVasco, GP Solutions, WegoPro, Mondee, Triple-A, Typsy, Nativex, Tour Review and SophiOutsourcing.

"With an exciting combination of ambitious startups and well-established brands, this year's Travel Tech space is perfectly aligned with ATM 2024's theme, 'Empowering Innovation: Transforming Travel Through Entrepreneurship'," added Curtis.



## PITCHES ARE READY; ARE YOU?

Aitken Spence Travels has been appointed as an Official Travel Agent (OTA) for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup West Indies and USA 2024 from 1<sup>st</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
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## ITB China Conference 2024: Elevating China Travel Business with Tailor-Made Forum Sessions

TTA BULLETIN

From 27 to 29 May, China's travel think tank will run concurrently with ITB China, the leading B2B exclusive travel trade show focusing on the Chinese travel market. Both events will be held at the Shanghai World Expo Exhibition and Convention Center.

ITB China announces first details of this year's ITB China Conference 2024 in partnership with TravelDaily, the leading conference organizer for the Chinese travel industry. The three-day B2B exclusive event will feature a variety of topics and forum sessions customized to address industry hotspots within the Chinese travel landscape, aimed at providing valuable insights to businesses operating in this space. Conference themes encompassing "China Outbound Travel", "MICE", "Business Travel", "Travel Technology", and new this year, "China Inbound Travel", will be presented and discussed through numerous keynote speeches, industry dialogues, executive interviews, and panel discussions at this year's ITB China Conference. With two distinct stages, the "Conference Room" and the "Presentation Hub", attendees can anticipate insights and experience sharing from key travel professionals and experts from around the globe and across China.

Highlights of the conference also include insights into China outbound travel data provided by Trip.com, as well as discussions on "Boosting outbound travel through industry up- and downstream collaboration", "Exchanges on leveraging new media to attract young travelers" and an exploration into "Adventure travel and sustainable development".

As a driving force behind the travel industry, "Travel Technology" plays a crucial role in the global travel industry, improving efficiency, convenience and customization for travelers. Topics such as "How can new technologies enhance personalized travel experiences?" and "How online payments help travel platforms boost order conversions?" provide a deeper understanding of how technology facilitates seamless booking processes, provides interactive experiences, enables real-time information access, and supports sustainable practices.

Strong partnerships with prominent organizations including the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE), the China Business Event Industry Committee (CBEIC), and the Purchasing and Supply Chain Coalition will enrich sessions on "Business Travel" and "MICE". Together with CBEIC, a panel discussion will delve

into the overseas expansion strategy and development of Chinese associations from a global perspective. And Purchasing and Supply Chain Coalition will host a session on the topic: "Enterprise Procurement Strategies for Corporate Travel, Conferences, and Incentive Travel", while SITE will facilitate a roundtable discussing on the current status and future development of the global and Asian MICE tourism industry.

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Nitin Sachdeva, President-elect of SITE Global, stated: "The global MICE industry has experienced rapid development and transformation, with a continuously expanding market size, but faced also many challenges. We now look forward to persistent innovation in the industry, improving service quality, and achieving sustainable development in the future. At the same time, we are excited about the deep cooperation with ITB China to jointly promote the progress and prosperity of the global MICE industry."

For the very first time, the conference program features sessions on "China Inbound Travel", addressing recent visa policy changes and their impact on the inbound travel recovery. Mr. Dave Goodger, Managing Director EMEA, of



Tourism Economics, an Oxford Economics Company, will kick-off with a keynote under the heading "Opportunities for Chinese Inbound Growth to Keep Pace with Outbound and Domestic". The keynote will cover the resurgence of tourism in post-pandemic China, covering inbound growth, international projections, key markets and risks, and provide an outlook on domestic and outbound tourism, including key city destinations. "Oxford Economics is looking forward to attending ITB China and sharing insights on the outlook for inbound tourism to China. We have always valued our participation at ITB events, including the shows in Singapore and Berlin, as vital opportunities to connect with industry stakeholders and network with new potential partners. We are eagerly anticipating more of this at ITB China as we will discuss the outlook for travel to, from and within China, including trends in key source markets and competitor destinations", said Dave Goodger.

## Sri Lanka shines through Ferien Messe Wien 2024, giving a glimpse of Sri Lanka's Vibrant Tourism and Culture

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka Tourism made its valued participation at Austria's premier trade fair for holidays, travel, and leisure, the Ferien Messe Wien 2024, once again proved itself as the ultimate platform for holiday and adventure enthusiasts. The event took place from 14th to 17th March 2024 in Vienna, Austria, this international event is renowned as the leading public access tourism trade fair in Austria. Key stakeholders from the Tourism Sector, as well as representatives from the Gem and Jewelry and Tea Board, will be participated at this event. The Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) was represented by Marketing Officer Mr. Jagath Perera, alongside the Sri Lanka Mission in Vienna.

Sri Lanka, a pearl in the Indian Ocean, is increasingly capturing the attention of Austrian travelers, with rising arrival numbers year by year. Austria stands as one of the top source markets for tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka Stand at the event commenced with a grand Opening Ceremony on March 14th, 2024. The ceremony was honored by the



esteemed presence of the Sri Lanka Mission in Austria, along with representatives from SLTPB and key stakeholders in Sri Lanka Tourism. The lighting of the Traditional oil lamp and a delightful spread of traditional sweets including Kaum, Kokis, and Athiraha were offered to refresh the invitees. Sri Lanka Tourism also arranged a Sri Lanka Kottu seminar, in order to highlight the destination's much loved spicy snack, featuring experienced chefs to showcase the authentic flavors of Sri Lankan cuisine to Austrian audiences.

The Promotional activities carried out by Sri Lanka Tourism during the Ferien Messe Wien 2024 gained a major interest, as the visitors were able to experience and taste the tantalizing flavours of Sri Lankan cuisine and beverages, providing a taste of the destinations culinary richness, and not to mention the world renowned Sri Lankan hospitality. The Sri Lanka Stall attracted the Austrian visitors with its captivating video presentations, highlighting the beauty and charm of Sri Lanka. Throughout the event, live cultural

performances & demonstrations enthralled the visitors to ask for a further "encore" as they enjoyed Sri Lanka's traditional music, dance & crafts. A mesmerizing display of Sri Lanka's diverse attractions and offerings was also included, with exited fair goers participating in destination related contests and raffles, offering enticing prizes such as free trips, hotel stays or tours.

Along with this Promotional activities, The Sri Lanka Embassy in Austria organized cultural and tourism promotional events in Vienna from 14th March to 16th March 2024, coinciding with the travel fair. Those events were at one of the prestigious venues/Shopping malls in the heart of Vienna, namely Lugner City Vienna, Designer Outlet Pandorf, and Westfield Shopping City – Sud.

This Programme showed Sri Lanka dancing/cultural performances together with promoting Sri Lanka Tea and Sri Lankan cuisine.

In summary, the Ferien Messe Wien 2024 created a firsthand experience, in discovering the wonders of



this tropical paradise and immerse oneself in its rich culture, warm hospitality, and breathtaking landscapes. Austria can be highlighted as an emerging market for Sri Lanka Tourism, which has the potential of bringing more tourists to the destination, given the necessary promotion.







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## "Advocate, Engage, Achieve": Tourism Alliance and Australia's MDF partner to promote women's participation in tourism revival

The Sri Lanka Tourism Alliance (SLTA), together with Australia's Market Development Facility (MDF), hosted the 'Women in Tourism: Advocate Engage Achieve' event to engage with tourism industry leaders on co-creating solutions to increase women's participation in the tourism industry.

The discussion centered on the findings of a study, conducted by MDF in collaboration with The Tourism Alliance, that assessed the barriers to women's employment in tourism. MDF shared key insights from the

study, including provincial-level differences in factors influencing women's decisions.

The event brought together industry experts and key stakeholders to discuss the identified barriers to women's employment in tourism and explore business models that enforced inclusive recruitment practices and advocacy programs.

Dr. Paul Zeccola, First Secretary (Political and Economic) to the Australian High Commission in Sri Lanka, was

the Guest of Honour.

The event featured a panel discussion examining challenges and solutions for integrating more women into the industry. The panel comprised Shiromal Cooray, Managing Director Jetwing Travels; Manesh Fernando, General Manager Hilton Colombo; Chandi Dharmaratne, Chief People Officer Dialog Axiata PLC; and Mathi Thayanan, Tourism Country Team Coordinator, MDF Sri Lanka







# Bawa Design and Authentic Experiences

Uncover the architectural brilliance of Geoffrey Bawa as you witness his final masterpiece, Anantara Kalutara Resort. The resort is fringed with open spaces that allow the tropical sunlight to cascade into the rustic hallways adorned with colonial trimmings.

Experience genuine hospitality and the warmth of local people from check-in to check-out while they create unforgettable moments featuring authentic Sri Lankan culinary journeys and exciting experiences.



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# HOTELS

## Nyne Hotels: Redefining Hospitality with an All-Encompassing Sensory Experience

### TTA BULLETIN

Lake Lodge – Colombo: A Contemporary Retreat in the City

Secluded from the buzzing streets of Colombo, Lake Lodge is imbued with a heritage tracing back to 1967, the country's first registered and officially recognised 'Guest House', the words used back then to describe this genre. Discover a contemporary retreat infused with Sri Lankan brogues intimately nestled amidst verdant finger palms and blossoming bougainvillea.

Lake Lodge is a welcome respite from the bustling city with ten attentively composed rooms. Expect top-tier service and privacy at all times. Dining at Table by Nyne promises a unique culinary journey, with a marriage of Sri Lankan and international cuisine that attracts a loyal local and cosmopolitan fanbase of diners. Slow-sip signature cocktails at a cheery little bar. Skål, kanpai, cin cin, prost, santé, proost, cheers!

Meanwhile, the discreet gallery of public and private spaces within the Lake Lodge property offers a feast for the eyes, showcasing over 50 works of art by renowned artists, including Priyantha Udagedara and Kingsley Gunatillake.

Rock Villa – Bentota: Tropical Bungalow by the Sea

Surrounded by three acres of frangipani and meticulous rows of coconut trees, Rock Villa's serene sanctuary encompasses



a 180-year-old Walauwwa, the name given to ancestral heritage homes. The oft-imitated welcome popsicle, our blend of fresh mint and tangy passionfruit, sets the tone for an indulgent stay where every detail matters.

Filled with Sri Lankan collectables and a palette of white, beige and pops of turquoise, Rock Villa's sprawling property is a laid-back tropical indulgence. Laze in an unspoiled beach beyond the single-track railway line, dip in one of the azure-blue pools, meander through the cooling mangroves, enter bliss in the spa or retreat into one of nine varied, well-appointed rooms.

Artfully-plated gastronomy and antique hand-carved wooden trellises for discretion elevate your stay from start to finish. An astounding display of over 90 pieces of work by celebrated local artists grace the walls of this silent art exposition. Rock Villa epitomises comfort in abundance for a cherished family holiday or a quiet getaway.

The Muse – Bentota: Tranquil Seclusion with Artistic Flair

Tranquil and captivating, The Muse is where generous Sri Lankan hospitality enters absolute contentment. With nine divinely comfortable rooms and breezy open-plan living, it promises picture-postcard corners for an unforgettable family staycation or a quiet hideaway for two.

In this one-of-a-kind escape, step over the single gauge railway track and stroll across the powder-soft sea sand, feel quietness amongst mangroves, dip in the aquamarine pool or deep-dive into tantalising food.

The artwork calmly resonating within and in the frangipani fragranced garden are creations of reputed names such as Pala Porhupitiya, among others, adding a little

extra magic to this design oasis. Be soothed and captivated by the simple, artistic beauty of The Muse.

Leela Walauwwa – Induruwa: A Heritage Haven of Serenity

Narrow winding roads snake through dense foliage to transport you to this rural manor house dating back two centuries. Its charming heritage promises to entice with colonial architecture, secret gardens and a gazebo made for meditation or reflection. Antique four poster beds in four supremely comfortable rooms and intricately-carved furniture give you more than a hint of the splendour of its past, immaculately restored to modern comfort.

Peace and seclusion set the mood for a haven of bucolic calm and quietude. An immersive dip in the pool, nearby beach exploration or dinner under the stars, it promises delightful gastronomy and tailored service.

Do take the opportunity of an art class led by the Villa Guardian, a well-known artist, to release the creativity in you. You'll find it effortless, with the numerous works of art and sculpture surrounding you.

You may book the entire Walauwwa for unforgettable memories.

Mayur Lodge – Yala: A Hidden Gem Within Nature

Off the beaten track, hidden away in the rural hinterlands on the outskirts of Yala National Park, Mayur Lodge is a four-acre retreat surrounded by nature. You will enjoy frequent sightings of the abundant birdlife and foraging peacocks and peahens after whom this lodge is aptly named: Mayur means peacock in Sanskrit.

Be cosseted in two sublimely spacious villas with their own private pools, stylish-



ly touched with heritage accents. Perfect for families or couples alike. Unwind and forget the world in a peaceful book-reading nook or a dip in the pool and an afternoon siesta for the less jungle-inclined. The property's naturalist will gladly reveal the secrets of the surrounding fauna and flora and walk you to the graceful, centuries-old tamarind tree under which you could request a barbecue dinner at sundown, surrounded by fireflies.

Landesi – Galle: A Stately Retreat Steeped in History

Landesi is Sinhala for 'of Dutch origin'. Fitting, as this manor house graces the vicinity of a fort fortified by the Dutch in the 17th century, now a UNESCO World Heritage site. This stately house was designed and built by renowned architect Ashley de Vos, a conservationist of the Galle Fort who expertly retained the classic features of the period. Reclaimed wood handcrafted into intricate trelliswork across the property, doors and 18-foot pillars from an old colonial home, transpose you in a blink of an eye back to the spirit of the Dutch era of Ceylon.

Four plush bedrooms overlooking colonnaded gardens give a view to the Groot Kerk now known as the Dutch reformed church.

Inside, art by famous local artists including Laki Senanayake and several lithographs by Donald Friend enhance this house's unique and special character. All around outside, are the feats of the mastery of culture and history to engage with.

## Cinnamon Nature Trails Redefines Urban Adventure with Ecotourism Expansion in Colombo

### TTA BULLETIN

Cinnamon Nature Trails, the wildlife and nature-based tourism arm of Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, unveils its eco-excursion expertise in the heart of Colombo to introduce the true essence of the destination. A collection of five carefully crafted experiences by in-house naturalists aims to unveil the city's natural diversity and marvels while championing sustainable tourism practices.

Cinnamon Nature Trails brings years of experience in the field, collaborating with prestigious production organisations such as BBC Natural History Productions, Nat Geo Wild, and most recently with BBC Studios for BBC Planet Earth 3 for wildlife documentaries. This expansion into Colombo signifies a milestone in redefining Colombo's identity from a transit point to a vibrant exploration hub. Chitral Jayatilake, Vice President of Cinnamon Nature Trails, commented, "We are truly grateful to bring our expertise in enriching the

Colombo experience to the bustling metropolis of Colombo. Through our carefully crafted excursions, we aim to redefine urban adventure, inviting travellers closer to our natural habitats in and around Colombo, allowing them to admire and appreciate the beauty and charms of our surroundings in Colombo."

"We are excited to launch these hand-picked curated excursions that promise an unforgettable experience through the heart of Colombo, from vibrant markets to serene nature reserves. Whether a guest or a traveller is on a historical exploration, unveiling the city's diversity or discovering off the beaten path, these unique experiences will showcase the essence of Colombo than a mere transit destination. With tourism on the rise and much of the international travellers craving for new experiences, these curated experiences will not only elevate guest stays but will also support in positioning Colombo

as a destination that has so much more to offer for a traveller – and through the eyes of our in-house team of naturalists." comments Area Vice President of Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts for Colombo Hotels, Kamal Munasinghe.

The five urban ecotourism experiences offered by Cinnamon Nature Trails include:

**Zookeeper for the Day:** Delve deep into the inner workings of the zoo with an exclusive experience that transcends the ordinary visit. Engage closely with the zoo's residents and gain invaluable insights into their daily lives.

**Birding in the Wetlands:** Explore the rich avian diversity thriving in the nearby waterways and marshlands, just moments away from Colombo city's hustle and

bustle. Spend serene hours in the company of our feathered friends.

**Tree Walk in the Heart of the City:** Uncover hidden gems within the gardens of a prominent cathedral, boasting a remarkable collection of rare and valuable trees. Embark on a tranquil stroll amidst nature's abundance, a mere stone's throw away from the urban milieu.

**Spiritual Colombo:** Immerse yourself in the serenity of iconic religious sites nestled amidst Colombo city's core, reflecting Sri Lanka's diverse religious tapestry. Find solace and tranquillity in the sacred surroundings of these places of worship amidst the hustle and bustle of city life.







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## Middle East region first to recover Chinese tourism numbers, boosting participation at Arabian Travel Market 2024

ATM 2024 expecting to double number of Chinese participants that exhibited in 2019

### TTA BULLETIN

According to research by Oxford Economics, outbound travel from China is estimated to almost double this year, compared with 2023 and will only be 22% below its peak pre-pandemic numbers of 155 million tourists in 2019, who spent over \$250 billion overseas.

Full recovery is expected to materialise in 2025, with the Middle East being the first region globally to recover its Chinese inbound market.

Underscoring that prediction, Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2024 which takes place at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from 6-9 May, is set to welcome twice the number of Chinese exhibitors and travel professionals, compared with its 2019 show.

China lifted its covid-related travel restrictions on 8th January 2023, allowing Chinese tourists to travel abroad, without having to quarantine upon their return. Bookings for overseas travel during Chinese New Year, soared by 540%

compared with the same period in 2022, according to data from the Chinese travel site Trip.com.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market commented, "Last year, some analysts were predicting that the Chinese outbound market would recover to around six million per month by the summer of 2023, driven in part by the pent-up demand especially from young, affluent Chinese.

"However, that rebound wasn't as great as many tourism professionals had hoped for and now analysts are confident that this year, we could see Chinese visitor numbers double year-on-year, with major destinations in the Middle East recovering quicker than any other internationally, especially for luxury travel.

"That sentiment has also been borne out by the latest spending data for the 2024 Chinese New Year. According to Chinese payment platform Alipay, the number of Chinese overseas transactions were 7%

higher than those recorded in 2019.

"The most popular Middle East destinations include Dubai, Saudi's AIUla, Egypt and Jordan - Dubai alone welcomed more than one million Chinese visitors in 2019," said Curtis.

Chinese participation at ATM 2024 is expected to more than double compared with ATM 2019, with new exhibitors that include private sector companies such as Heytrip International, Jiangsu Intelligence Equipment Co, Flightroutes24 Travel Company Ltd, Feeyo Technology and anticipated destination representation from Macao Government Tourism Office, China Cultural Centre in the UAE and the Hong-kong Tourism Board.

ATM is also organising a dedicated conference session on this key market in its Global Stage, entitled 'Capitalising on China's Predicted Tourism Surge', in association with Huawei. This session, which takes place on Monday 6th May from 15:10 to 15:50, will explore the

changing trends, cultural preferences and the role of mobile marketing and tourism predictions in the Chinese tourism market.

In line with this year's show theme 'Empowering Innovation: Transforming Travel Through Entrepreneurship', other highlights at the 31st edition of ATM include entrepreneurship-focused sessions as well as dedicated sessions for other key source markets such as India and the Americas. As well as showcasing a range of event features based around the theme, informative content will be delivered across the Global Stage and the new Future Stage at ATM 2024, led by respected industry keynote speakers, and thought leaders.

Held in conjunction with Dubai World Trade Centre, ATM 2024's strategic partners include the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), Destination Partner; Emirates, Official Airline Partner; IHG Hotels & Resorts, Official Hotel Partner and Al Rais Travel, Official DMC Partner.

## Jetwing Hotels' Second Careers initiative recognized at Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Awards 2023

### TTA BULLETIN

Jetwing Hotels was adjudged a winner of the Best Project Sustainability Awards 2023 at the recently concluded Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability (BCCS) Awards organised by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, in recognition of their innovative women empowerment and inclusive recruitment initiative 'Second Careers.'

Launched in 2021, during one of the most challenging times for Sri Lanka and the hospitality industry, 'Second Careers' is a pioneering project initiated by Jetwing Hotels to provide an opportunity for women aged 45 and above from economically challenged backgrounds, to enter the workforce. The Second Careers programme targets homemakers aged 45-55 who have completed childcare responsibilities but now face unemployment due to age-related perceptions and skill gaps. Through capacity building programmes, Jetwing bridges these barriers, equipping participants with the

necessary tools for seamless integration into the professional world; by augmenting the existing skills of these women in the areas of housekeeping, kitchen, and garden. The primary objective of this initiative is enhancing the accessibility of skilled employment in hospitality by offering comprehensive capacity development, onboarding processes and mentorship programmes. Through these efforts, Jetwing Hotels aims to diversify and break cultural barriers in the industry by actively engaging an untapped pool of talented women.

Sri Lanka has a significant gender gap in labor force participation, with women only making up 33.1% despite comprising 52% of the population. The tourism sector is particularly unequal, with less than 10% of the workforce being female. Second Careers has thus far proven to be an effective and sustainable solution to the difficulty in attracting female talent to the industry while ensuring local communities benefit economically from tourism operations.

Initially, the programme offered employment to women from the localities of Jetwing Jaffna and Jetwing Kaduruketha, changing the trajectory to attract more women into the workforce through employment of the most economically marginalised in our communities. Following the success of this initiative, the concept was rolled out at various properties, such as Jetwing Yala, Jetwing Vil Uyana and Jetwing Lake. Jetwing Hotels has enabled over 50 middle-aged women from rural regions such as Tissamaharama, Sigiriya, Dambulla, Wellawaya, and Jaffna to join this global industry, through the



imbuing of technical skills needed to engage in their operational roles. Collaborating with local authorities and religious leaders, the initiative has enhanced the livelihoods in rural communities fostering a supportive learning culture for women seeking gainful employment in the tourism industry. This influx has not only uplifted women and their communities but is also shattering misconceptions about the tourism sector. By creating opportunities for mature women, Jetwing is paving the way for younger generations to see tourism as a viable and empowering career path.

The BCCS Awards celebrate businesses that champion sustainability alongside their business goals. Innovative sustainability projects are recognised through the Best Sustainability Projects Award. This year's record-breaking 61 applications in the category showcase the growing commitment to sustainable practices among Sri Lanka's private sector.

The initiative has also earned recognition at the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold awards 2022 for celebrating women in tourism and hospitality. Jetwing Hotels champions community wellbeing by integrating sustainable practices and cultural

preservation into hotel operations. The latest accolade exemplifies this focus, with initiatives like the "Second Careers" programme empowering women to enter the tourism sector.

With a legacy spanning over half a century in the tourism industry, Jetwing Hotels has established itself as a pioneer in curating unique experiences and offering authentic Sri Lankan hospitality. As a family-owned brand, Jetwing continues to be a leading advocate for sustainability and responsible tourism, with ongoing initiatives focused on community upliftment, environment conservation, and resource efficiency. The brand's diverse portfolio includes a range of luxury hotels and villas, each offering a unique perspective on Sri Lanka's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty.

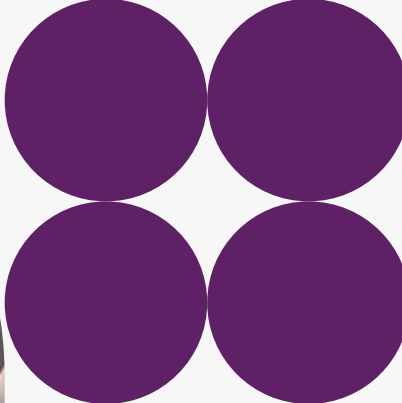






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# HOTELS

## Mount Lavinia Hotel transforms into your “Avurudu Maha Gedera” this April

TTA BULLETIN

Mount Lavinia Hotel, is thrilled to announce their grand offerings for the Sinhala & Tamil Avurudu this April. At the heart of



this celebration is the esteemed Chef Publis, regarded as amongst the most famous chefs in Sri Lankan cuisine. With his culinary expertise, passion for authentic flavours, and dedication to preserving and honouring local traditions, Chef Publis together with his team at Mount Lavinia Hotel has lined up a spread of iconic, homemade sweetmeats for the festivities, allowing you to make the most of a hassle-free Avurudu season.

Elaborating further, Anura Dewapura, Chief Operating Officer of Mount Lavinia Hotel Group stated: “Mount Lavinia Hotel has long been considered the epitome of tradition and warmth, and we are proud to continue to offer an atmosphere this Avurudu that echoes the familiarity of home, making all our guests feel cherished and welcomed, whether they are staying with us or just dropping in to sample the sweetmeat spread.”

Opening on the 7th April, by Chief Guest Mr. Ratnapala Samaraweera - Chairman of Maliban Group of Companies, Mount Lavinia Hotel’s Avurudu Maha Gedera Kavili Kade at the Hotel courtyard promises a mouth-watering homemade spread of sweetmeats. Operating daily from 7th to 13th April from 10 AM to 8 PM, the Kavili

Kade invites guests to revel in traditional Avurudu games and indulge in a special drinks menu from 4 PM to 8 PM. Whether it is sipping on refreshing herbal concoctions or participating in nostalgic games, Kavili Kade offers an authentic taste of Avurudu festivities.

For those unable to join the celebrations in person, Mount Lavinia Hotel offers the convenience of delivering Avurudu straight to your doorstep. With three meticulously curated packages, guests can choose from a variety of traditional delights which include, Kokis, a range of Kevum, Kalu Dodol, Pani Walalu, Milk Toffees and Asmi among other treats. Orders should be placed by the 10th of April 2024, and delivery is available only within the Colombo city limit for a nominal fee.

On the auspicious day of Avurudu - 14th April, Mount Lavinia Hotel will host a grand National Buffet accompanied by live traditional music & dancing. This extravagant spread caters to every Sri Lankan palate, embodying the spirit of inclusivity and togetherness.

Anura Dewapura concluded, “We are thrilled to welcome guests to Mount Lavinia Hotel for a truly memorable Sinhala & Tamil Avurudu celebration. With our rich cultural heritage, renowned culinary offerings, and heartfelt hospitality, we aim

## Sentido Heritage Negombo: A Summer Adventure in the Heart of Vibrant Culture

TTA BULLETIN

Amidst the breezes and the tropical sun lies Sentido Heritage Negombo, an exquisite summer resort that captures the essence of Negombo’s rich culture, a Must-Travel City according to the New York Times.



This season, we invite you to immerse yourself in the unique allure of a city that’s a melting pot of Sri Lanka, nature, and gastronomy.

Sentido Heritage Negombo stands as a beacon of comfort on the edge of one of Sri Lanka’s most beloved beachfronts. Our resort is not merely a place to stay; it is the gateway to an array of cultural experiences that define Negombo.

The Negombo Beach is the focus of the city, renowned for its wide-open spaces and serene atmosphere. A sunrise walk along this pristine stretch is an encounter with the rhythmic dance of the ocean. The sunset, seen over the water with a crisp beverage, paints the sky with beautiful colours.

Moreover, culinary pursuits at Sentido Heritage Negombo are a voyage through the flavours that make Sri Lankan cuisine exquisite. Each dish has a story - whether it’s the locally famed Lagoon Prawn dish, simmered and paired with roast bread and coconut sambal, or the sumptuous Mutton Babath curry that is the essence of local spice gardens. This summer, experience culinary specials that extend beyond our shores, offering international palettes from

the aromatic herbs of the Mediterranean to the intricate balance of Japanese dishes. High Tea at sunset becomes an elegant affair, where the world’s teas meet our chef’s inspired creations.

A little away from the Hotel, the city beckons with its local craftsmanship and fashion. A short walk unveils a curated selection of local products, from vibrant batiks to intricate handlooms. Shopping here is more than an activity, offering a connection to Sri Lanka’s artisanal heritage.

In the mood for adventure? Nature enthusiasts will find comfort in the tranquillity of the Muthurajawela Wetlands, a biodiverse sanctuary where the air is filled with birdcalls and the incredible nature. For the historically inclined, the Dutch Fort stands as a symbol to the past, its structure a testament to centuries of colonial heritage that shaped the city’s current tapestry.

Sentido Heritage Negombo is not just a resort; it is an experience that captures the soul of the city. Our guests are not just travellers; they are storytellers, collecting moments that weave together to form their unique narratives.

## Alhambra Hotels celebrates 50 years in Hospitality Excellence

TTA BULLETIN

Alhambra Hotels commemorates five decades of unwavering dedication to hospitality excellence today. What began as a visionary endeavor by founding Chairman Mr. Jabir A. Cader, a prominent businessman, has evolved into a cornerstone of Colombo’s hospitality landscape.

Originally envisioned as a modern cinema, the venture transformed with the changing tides, capitalizing on the burgeoning tourism industry generated by the ‘Tourism Development Act’ and in 1974, a pivotal partnership with the Holiday Inn group propelled Alhambra Hotels into the international spotlight, becoming only the second International Hotel Chain in Sri Lanka to do so at that time.

This was also the introduction of first ever North Indian restaurant, Alhambra that serves up the most tantalizing and delicious Moghul Cuisine in the city to this date and is renowned for its famous Mutton Biryani, Thalys and much more

In 2009, Alhambra Hotels transformed into Ramada by Wyndham Colombo, marking a new era. This partnership with Wyndham Hotels brought modernization and luxury. Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, a subsidiary of Wyndham Destinations since 1981, operates globally with over 9000 hotels across 95 countries.

affiliating with Wyndham brands, especially in marketing and loyalty programs like Wyndham Rewards. Sustainability is a key focus for Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, with initiatives to reduce energy consumption and support local communities.

Looking back during his time and one of the most significant times he can remember, Managing Director Mr. Imthiaz Cader adds, “the period of 2005 to 2009/10, the hotel industry was more devastating, because even though the 30-year-old civil war came to an end in 2009 May, there was low occupancy (4-stars were selling at \$20 a night). There was no assistance given at that time by the government compared to what we are getting now or during the Covid-19 period. In 2006, it was one of the worst periods we have ever gone through in the economy and what we are going through now is nothing compared to that time. Today we have the occupancy and the minimum rates imposed”.

Mr. Imthiaz Cader stepped in as the third General Manager of Holiday Inn in 1977 and was also the youngest General Manager in the Far East Region for Holiday Inn.



father Mr. Jabir A Cader wanted him to start at the bottom and put him in charge as the Purchasing Manager (as according to him, the organizer is one of the most important positions with regards to run a profitable business) and from there worked his way up to Director Sales and now serving in the Board of Directors and current Chairman. Mr. Fahmy was also responsible for most of the refurbishment that was done for Alhambra Hotels.

As Alhambra Hotels celebrates its golden jubilee, it looks towards the future with renewed optimism and a steadfast commitment to excellence. With a rich tapestry of history woven into its fabric, Ramada by Wyndham Colombo stands poised to continue its legacy of hospitality innovation for generations to come.

Adding to this, Director Mr. M. Shanthikumar veteran in the hospitality and tourism second said, “From its very inception 50 years ago, the hotel has been renowned for its hospitality and of offering a delectable culinary experience to guests from near and far. Located in the very heart of Colombo city, the hotel has shown great resilience to withstand the challenges of a 3-decade civil war and many natural and man-made

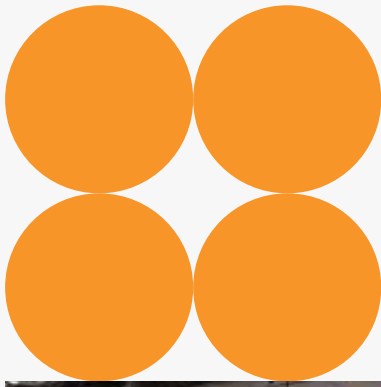
disasters the country faced. The property stands today as a landmark hotel in Colombo patronized by holiday travellers, businessmen, and our own Sri Lankans.”

Beyond its architectural splendor and culinary delights, Ramada by Wyndham Colombo is a testament to the enduring values of its founder and his descendants. Known for their unwavering loyalty to employees and commitment to fostering a nurturing work environment, the Cader family has created a legacy of camaraderie and dedication that resonates throughout the hotel.

Taking the reins forward, the current General Manager Mr. Wasim Cader had the following to say about the 5 decades of Alhambra Hotels. “Alhambra Hotels has been through a challenging period of 50 years, operating during the 30-year civil war and facing various political and economic issues in the recent past. The effects of Sri Lanka’s economic crisis have caused severe drain in manpower and we’re currently facing one of the most difficult recruitment crises we have faced in the past 50 years.

“Our staff is our greatest asset and enduring legacy to hospitality. We meticulously cultivate them to excel in their roles, fostering strong bonds with patrons, employees, and suppliers. Generations have cherished our services, with Ramada being a favored





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# HOTELS

## Hilton Colombo Reveals Renovated Rooms Infused with Sri Lankan Heritage

TTA BULLETIN

Hilton Colombo proudly unveils its newly refurbished rooms and suites, designed to embrace the rich tapestry of Sri Lanka's heritage, and are a testament to the country's vibrant culture and renowned craftsmanship.

The 192 refreshed rooms, including 80 fully renovated Superior Rooms, 96 Deluxe Rooms and 16 Suites feature a refined aesthetic that exudes elevated comfort and a strong sense of place with modern touches, thoughtful design, and expansive views of famous landmarks such as the Colombo Harbor and the Galle Face Green.

"We are thrilled to unveil the next phase of Hilton Colombo's transformation. Our newly renovated rooms, each designed with our guests' comfort and satisfaction in mind, reflects our commitment to providing exceptional experiences, merging modern elegance with touches showcasing Sri Lanka's richly storied heritage. We invite guests to enjoy these refreshed rooms, which not only elevate the aesthetic appeal but also enhance the overall stay experience," said Manesh Fernando, General Manager Hilton Colombo & Area General Manager Hilton Sri Lanka.

Designed by Singapore-based interior



design consultancy FBEYE Singapore and brought to life by local architect Nuwan Dias from NUSTudios, the rooms pay homage to the country's culturally rich heritage with Dumbara-inspired motifs, a nod to the country's traditional weaving craftsmanship, and blends rich teak wood with sleek bronze for a contemporary finish. Closet doors are outfitted with timber veneers, inspired by the island's lush forestry, and most furniture are carefully curated from local furniture maker Don Carolis.

Drawing inspiration from vast blue skies, deep blue hues are prominent throughout the fabric of the drapery, capturing the majestic beauty of Sri Lanka's natural landscapes. Each room tells a story of collaboration with indigenous Kandyan artisans and craftsmen. Even the smallest details pay homage to the country's abundance of resources, with a box of tissues crafted from coconut tree wood, reflecting the rich heritage found within the shores of Sri Lanka. For hi-res images of the rooms, please download them here..

Amidst the bustling capital, Hilton Colombo invites guests to immerse themselves in an oasis of modern sophistication, where every corner tells a story of heritage and innovation. Experience the fusion of tradition and grandeur at Hilton Colombo – where history meets contemporary elegance.



## Reef Garden Hotel Polhena

TTA BULLETIN

Reef Garden Hotel Polhena, Polhena Beach, Matara nestled amidst a lush, tropical garden, the Hotel boasts a magnificent private sea front, Ideal for affordable holidays both Sri Lankan and overseas visitors, the hotel consists of 20 rooms, 2 bars and a Fusion restaurant with a beach cafe now offers a special rate for all Staycations.

The Resort also has a large indoor banquet and convention facility with its own bar lounge with the capacity to accommodate 300 guests with banquet style seating and up to 500 persons for cocktail style for weddings, events and corporate functions and is focused on providing personalized and excellent service with attention to detail to make events memorable and flawless from start to finish.

Reef Garden Hotel has the largest freshwater swimming pool in Matara, AC rooms with private balconies and



ensuite bathrooms, hot & cold water and equipped with satellite TV offering 160 channels, Wi-Fi and tea/coffee making facilities.

'Offering competitive rates for both rooms and Food & Beverage facilities our aim is to cater for the holiday makers and Sri Lankans in Matara to experience a difference on the same rates with facilities available for an unforgettable experience' said Director Operations Madhushan Perera.

The resort has marine-life and stunningly vibrant corals, a snorkeler's ultimate paradise and is just minutes away from Mirissa,

## Immerse Yourself in a Serene Summer Retreat at Heritage Tea Factory

TTA BULLETIN

As summer unveils the splendour of Sri Lanka's highlands, Heritage Tea Factory stand amidst tea plantations and within its walls is an intricately transformed 19th-century tea factory, offering a distinct blend of historical elegance and modern comfort surrounded with breathtaking landscapes. Our property is not just a stay but a narrative of tea's rich legacy, inviting guests to a summer retreat unlike any other.

This summer, delve into the heart of tea country with our curated and immersive experiences. Don the traditional attire of local tea pluckers and learn the art that has defined this region for centuries. Participate in cultural tea tasting sessions that explore the diverse flavours and stories behind each blend.

Beyond our tea-centric activities, immerse yourself in the legendary Ramayana Trails through a special tour exploring pivotal locations from this epic narrative, enriching your understanding of Sri Lanka's mythological heritage or embark on the Pekoe Trail, the country's first



long-distance walking route, named one of National Geographic's 20 Coolest Travel Destinations for 2024.

Embark on enchanting expeditions across Horton Plains, marvel at its vast biodiversity and experience the idyllic beauty of Ella, decorated with historical and natural wonders.

As a proud recipient of numerous awards such as the 2023 SATA award for Leading Designer hotel and the 2023 Trip Advisor Traveler's Choice award, Heritage Tea Factory is at the forefront of eco-friendly hospitality. Our initiatives, from solar energy utilization to comprehensive material management, reflect a deep commitment to conserving the environment for future generations.

## Mount Lavinia Hotel Hosted Slow Food Sweden with Swedish Chef Mats Pettersson

TTA BULLETIN

Mount Lavinia Hotel hosted its third Slow Food event of the year, titled "Slow Food Sweden by Chef Mats Pettersson," on March 22, 2024, at the Horizon Rooftop. The event, attended by esteemed guests including the Cuban Ambassador, Mr. Andrés Marcelo González Garrido, corporate leaders, local food producers and media partners, served as a platform to showcase Swedish culinary delights to both local and international patrons.

Guests had the pleasure of indulging in an exclusive culinary experience curated by Chef Mats Pettersson, featuring fresh, locally sourced ingredients. As the Director of Culinary Affairs at the hotel, Pettersson's culinary expertise shone, while also highlighting the cultural affinity between Sweden and Sri Lanka.

The gathering provided an extraordinary opportunity for gourmands and food enthusiasts to immerse themselves in the finest Swedish cuisine, thereby introducing Sri Lankan palates to the rich culinary

heritage of Sweden.

Anura Dewapura, Chief Operating Officer of MLHG, underscored the deeper significance of Slow Food, stating, "Slow Food is not just about savoring a meal; it's a movement that celebrates local traditions, sustainability, and the pleasure of sharing a good, hearty meal prepared with locally grown, fresh ingredients." This sentiment resonated with all attendees, fulfilling the promise of a meaningful culinary experience.

The event celebrated culinary excellence, cultural exchange, and the core values of Slow Food embraced by both the hotel and its guests. Mount Lavinia Hotel remains dedicated to

continuing the Slow Food tradition, inviting guests to embark on a journey through this globally cherished concept while spreading its true essence throughout Sri Lanka.







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## Emirates' lounge at BIA joins premium class passengers in celebrating 'Avurudu'

Airline to lay out a table of traditional Sri Lankan festive fare for premium passengers from 13 to 14 April

TTA BULLETIN

Traditional Sri Lankan culinary treats that evoke the essence of festive occasions on the island will greet Emirates' premium passengers visiting the airline's lounge



at the Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) on 13 and 14 April. Emirates' special lounge offering in Colombo coincides with the country's celebration of Sinhala and Tamil New Year.

Marking the observance of 'Avurudu' when Sri Lankans celebrate the turn of the year and pay tribute to the sun for its role in a bountiful harvest, Emirates will lay out a table of uniquely Sri Lankan sweetmeats for departing First and Business Class passengers, enabling them to experience some of the classic confectionaries and dishes associated with a festival steeped in age-old customs and traditions.

The spread will include special menu items such as milk rice or 'kiribath,' 'kokis,' 'mung kevu,' 'aluwa,' 'welithalapa' and 'peni walalu' – all celebratory staples at auspicious events in Sri Lanka. A piquant Sri Lankan hot meal will also be served to passengers visiting the lounge at lunch time.

Emirates' premium 5,778 square-foot dedicated lounge at the BIA opened in June 2012 for the use of First Class and Business Class passengers as well as members of select tiers of Skywards, the airline's award-winning frequent flyer programme. The lounge can accommodate up to 118 passengers, providing a comfortable and relaxing setting for travelers to enjoy themselves

before their trip. Featuring comfortable leather armchairs, a spacious dining area and Business Centre to catch up on work before flights, the Emirates Lounge also has a dedicated prayer room, shower facilities, and washrooms for the convenience of passengers.

Emirates operates 39 of its own airport lounges worldwide, including seven in Dubai and 32 at major airports worldwide, all of which are furnished with the same attention to detail and offer exceptional service. These airport lounges are one of the many 'Fly better' benefits that Emirates Premium Class customers can enjoy before flights.

Emirates launched operations to Sri Lanka in April 1986, and has over the past 38 years carried more than 12 million passengers to and from Colombo. The airline currently provides two direct daily flights to Colombo utilising the Boeing 777-300ER as well as an additional daily service via Male. It is the only international carrier to serve the country with First Class services – offering passengers world-class products and superior comfort in air and on-ground.

For more information, visit [www.emirates.com/lk](http://www.emirates.com/lk)

## Qatar Airways Announces the Launch of Summer Flights to Tashkent, Uzbekistan

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways announces the latest addition to its summer schedule, launching four weekly flights to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, starting 2 June 2024 and bookable now. Tashkent is located at the heart of Central Asia, a region known for its rich history and diverse cultures shared with the neighbouring countries of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.



Asia."

The destination is the second city served by the national carrier of the State of Qatar in the Central Asian market following Almaty, Kazakhstan. With the new service operated by an Airbus A320 aircraft, passengers can enjoy seamless global connectivity to Tashkent through the Best Airport in the Middle East, Hamad International Airport, to over 170 destinations worldwide.

Qatar Airways Chief Commercial Officer, Mr. Thierry Antinori, said: "The launch of the new route to Tashkent is a testament to our commitment to continuously growing our network and expanding to new corners of the world. Tashkent provides our passengers travelling from Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas, with the opportunity to visit Uzbekistan and the Central Asian region, and explore the cultural wonders these destinations offer. Travellers flying with Qatar Airways can now avail the option to fly to Tashkent as their gateway to the region, and we look forward to future opportunities of growth in Central

Uzbekistan offers a unique travel experience with its historical sites, stunning architecture and vibrant cultural experiences. Famous for its historical cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, travellers can explore and marvel at the Uzbek landscapes. This beautiful destination offers an authentic taste of hearty Uzbek cuisine, warm and welcoming local hospitality, and a unique blend of modern and traditional experiences.

Tashkent's connectivity to Central Asia plays a vital role in strengthening cultural and economic ties between countries in the region and beyond. This expansion further solidifies Qatar Airways' commitment to offering passengers as many seamless direct connections as possible.

Qatar Airways Privilege Club members will collect Avios on flights and can benefit from greater savings when paying for flights with a combination of cash and Avios, or Avios Max, when paying 100 per cent of the fare using Avios. Members can also spend Avios on shopping and dining at Qatar Duty Free, packages with Qatar Airways Holidays, cabin upgrades, and more.

## Splash into the Fun: Unforgettable Songkran Experiences Await at OZO Hotels, Thailand

TTA BULLETIN

OZO Hotels invites guests to splash into the jubilant spirit of Songkran, immersing themselves in Thailand's beloved cultural extravaganza brimming with exhilarating water-filled festivities. Songkran, also referred to as the Thai New Year, stands as one of Thailand's most revered festivals, symbolising fresh beginnings and community bonds. Traditionally observed from 13th – 15th April, it heralds the commencement of the Thai lunar calendar.

At the heart of Songkran festivities lies the exuberant water fights, where locals and visitors joyously drench each other as a form of cleansing and renewal. The spirit of the festival permeates across the nation, fostering unity and merriment. Originally centred around the gentle sprinkling of water infused with blessings for prosperity, Songkran's origins were more serene. Over time, this tradition has metamorphosed into the spirited water battles witnessed today, yet the essence of communal joy and spiritual rejuvenation remains unchanged, whilst also being a great way to cool down and beat the heat of the balmy Thai

temperatures.

OZO is the fun and playful hotel brand, with properties in popular spots in Thailand: Pattaya, Phuket and Koh Samui. To arrive at OZO is to unpack good vibes and enjoy the excitement of the destination, meaning there's nowhere better to embark on an unforgettable Songkran experience. From exhilarating water fights with all the staff and guests getting involved, to nights filled with endless festivities and dining experiences, Songkran is the ultimate memory-making adventure. Local temples also offer blessings for those looking to experience more of the serenity side of the tradition.

After a long day of merriment, guests can step inside their cosy, welcoming room to discover functional design, practical layouts, space to reunite and play, and sleep-inducing beds to ensure a deep slumber. Guests will wake revitalised for the next day, wherever that may take them.



OZO North Pattaya offers modern and stylish accommodation nestled in the heart of Pattaya, with easy access to the beach, shopping, dining, and entertainment venues. With comfortable rooms, vibrant dining options, and thoughtful amenities, OZO Pattaya ensures a memorable stay for every guest. Ensuring the water fun is present throughout Songkran and beyond, OZO Pattaya features a large pool and thrilling slide. In celebrations of Songkran, OZO North Pattaya is hosting a "Songkran Grill & Chill Buffet" evening on 13th and 14th April, featuring a fun and flavoursome of buffet with mouth-watering delights including fresh seafood. The buffet starts

from £16 per person.

Situated just a 5-minute walk from Kata Beach, OZO Phuket offers 255 guest rooms and suites designed for ultimate comfort and restful nights. The resort features two outdoor pools, including a dedicated children's pool, and an EAT restaurant serving delicious cuisine. Its prime location near Kata Beach and the vibrant night market provides easy access to nearby attractions, making it an ideal choice for families seeking a beachfront retreat with ample amenities.

Located along Chaweng Beach Road, the beachfront resort offers proximity to both the vibrant energy of the town and the tranquillity of the beach. Just a 15-minute drive from Samui International Airport and a leisurely stroll to central Chaweng, guests find themselves perfectly situated for exploration. With a fun outdoor pool catering to both adults and kids, a fitness centre, and two restaurants, the resort provides an ideal balance of convenience and relaxation.



## Qatar Airways Raises the Curtain on the Future of Travel at ITB Berlin 2024

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways commenced this year's ITB Berlin with the announcement of its increase in flight frequencies to 15 global destinations through the summer and winter seasons, and the introduction of its second-generation virtual MetaHuman cabin crew, Sama.

Sama 2.0 is an advanced AI cabin crew enhanced to interact with passengers for curated experiences in the airline's immersive platform, QVerse. Qatar Airways' reveal of Sama was held with a stunning holographic display at the airline's new and innovative stand. Powered by conversational AI, Sama showcased her knowledge on the diverse facets of Qatar Airways' operations in an effortless manner. The airline's new booth also offers a sensory pod where visitors can experience the award-winning Qsuite when onboard Qatar Airways' Business Class.

The national carrier of the State of Qatar also marked this year's ITB event with growing its flight frequency to Berlin, increasing it from 14 weekly flights to 18 starting winter 2024. The increase in flight frequency, along with Qatar Airways' upcoming inaugural flight to the city of Hamburg on 1 July 2024, is a testament to the airline's commitment to serving key destinations in Europe.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Officer, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer, said: "As a long-standing exhibitor at ITB Berlin, Qatar Airways understands what excites our audience, and is proud to bring something new to the trade show. Innovation is a vital cornerstone of our mission, and with the new and improved



Sama, we are taking another defining step towards enhancing our digital experience. The multiple flight increases in our existing destination network emphasise the surge in demand for air travel, bridging together countries and people for better tourism and trade opportunities."

Qatar Airways Chief Commercial Officer, Thierry Antinori said: "We are delighted to be back at ITB Berlin to share our announcements with industry partners. The expansion of our German market to Hamburg demonstrates our continuous commitment to our passengers by offering them even more choice to connect to Qatar Airways' network of over 170 global destinations. We are pleased to be the only airline in the Middle East, which will soon fly to five cities in Germany, and connect our passengers to the world through Doha's Hamad International Airport – recognised as Skytrax's Best Airport in the Middle East for nine consecutive years. We look forward to welcoming all our commercial and trade partners to our stand over the next few days to commemorate our new milestones, and interact with our innovative products and services."

With Hamburg as a recent addition to the German market, Qatar Airways will now serve five destinations in Germany with a total of 71 weekly flights, including the increased frequency to Berlin, connecting through the airline's award-winning hub, Hamad International Airport.

## Emirates wins 'Best Inflight Entertainment Award' globally at the 2024 Airline Excellence Awards

TTA BULLETIN

This week Emirates was crowned the global winner of the 'Best Inflight Entertainment Award' in Airline Ratings 2024 Airline Excellence Awards, announced online.

Emirates scooped the top award for inflight entertainment from an extensive finalist list of global airlines, due to its whopping 6,500 channels of high quality and acclaimed content, the world's largest entertainment library in the sky - making it a clear winner for the Best Inflight Entertainment award.

Emirates continually updates its inflight content every month, adding hundreds of movies, TV shows, podcasts, and music channels each month to its extensive entertainment library and securing exclusive partnerships with the best content providers. Customers can also curate their own ice experience before their flight, simply by browsing and pre-selecting movies or TV shows on the Emirates app, which can then be synchronised to ice the moment they board, maximising the seamless travel experience.



Emirates inflight entertainment journey began almost 30 years ago, when it was one of the first airlines to introduce seat-back videos for economy-class passengers. Emirates is also committed to setting industry standards and accessibility for people of determination and was the first airline in the world to introduce Audio Descriptive soundtracks and Closed Captions on movies on an inflight entertainment system.

Airlineratings.com Editor-in-Chief Geoffrey Thomas commented on the award; "Our editors were unanimous in their praise for Emirates ice system as a step above. That early investment in inflight entertainment has paid off for Emirates and just when you think it can't do it better – it lifts the bar once again."

## AVIAREPS India favours Sri Lanka for team offsite and flies SriLankan Airlines

TTA BULLETIN



AVIAREPS India was happy to choose Sri Lanka as the ultimate destination for their 2024 offsite trip. The 3-day adventure took off with a flight on SriLankan Airlines, giving the team an early experience of the vibrant culture and delectable cuisine that awaited them in Sri Lanka. On arrival, they explored the thrilling world of water sports, serene beaches, bustling streets and many other experiences that make Sri Lanka vividly special. Every moment of the itinerary was crafted to foster bonding and create unforgettable memories for the

team as well as ignite a sense of camaraderie amidst breath taking landscapes.

AVIAREPS India is a prominent aviation and tourism representation company that serves over 250 esteemed clients with offices in more than 70 locations across 60 countries worldwide. Notably, it acts as the PR agency for SriLankan Airlines, managing public relations activities in India.



## Heritage Ayurveda named 'Best Ayurveda Resort Sri Lanka' at the FIT Health & Wellness Awards

TTA BULLETIN

Heritage Ayurveda, a leading wellness destination renowned for its authentic Ayurvedic experiences, is thrilled to announce its recent accolade as the 'Best Ayurveda Resort Sri Lanka' at the prestigious 9th FIT Health & Wellness Awards held in Berlin. The award ceremony was organised by Fit Reisen and held in conjunction with ITB trade fair (the world's largest tourism trade fair).

Heritage Ayurveda is part of Heritage Hotels and Resorts brand, the flagship brand of the premier Sri Lankan hospitality chain Aitken Spence Hotels.

The recognition comes as a testament to Heritage Ayurveda's unwavering commitment to providing unparalleled wellness experiences to its guests. This esteemed award is based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback received from the valued customers of Fit Reisen, who have experienced the transformative benefits of our Ayurvedic treatments and therapies firsthand.

"We are deeply honoured to receive this esteemed accolade, which underscores our dedication to offering authentic Ayurvedic wellness experiences of the highest calibre," said Aitken Spence Hotel Holdings Jt. Deputy Chairperson and Jt. Managing Director of Aitken Spence Hotel



Holdings Stasshani Jayawardena. "This award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team, who continually strive to exceed the expectations of our guests and provide them with rejuvenating experiences that nurture both body and soul."

Nestled amidst the serene surroundings of Sri Lankan coastal belt Beruwala, Heritage Ayurveda offers a tranquil retreat where guests can embark on a holistic journey towards rejuvenation and wellness. From personalized Ayurvedic consultations to traditional treatments and yoga sessions, every aspect of the guest experience is carefully curated to promote holistic healing and inner balance.

At Heritage Ayurveda, every practice and process are centred on the belief of Ayurveda as a lifestyle to restore harmony and vitality. This recognition serves as validation of the company's unwavering commitment to excellence in wellness hospitality.



## Qatar Airways Announces Flights Resumption to Lisbon, Portugal

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways announces the resumption of flights to Lisbon, Portugal as part of its 2024 network expansion of over 170 destinations. The four weekly flights will be served on a Boeing B787-8 aircraft commencing Thursday, 6 June 2024.



As the capital of Portugal, Lisbon offers the perfect starting point for travellers eager to delve into the rich tourism offerings of the country. With countless historical sites only a day trip away, adventurers can embark on a journey to the medieval town of Sintra and its UNESCO World Heritage Site, Quinta de Regaleira palace. A train ride away, the National Palace of Pena is adorned with colourful tiles inspired by the exotic plants surrounding it, creating a captivating ambience.

Qatar Airways Chief Commercial Officer, Mr. Thierry Antinori, said: "As we continue to expand in the European market, we celebrate the resumption of our flights to the beautiful city of Lisbon. Qatar Airways passengers can now enjoy very efficient ways to travel between Qatar and Portugal, as well as connect between Portugal and Asia, Africa, Middle East and the Indian subcontinent, through the Best Airport in Middle East which offers customers the best duty free and best lounges in the region."

Travellers wishing to escape the city life can venture to Cascais, also known as the "Portuguesa Riviera". With several beautiful beaches, Cascais is the ideal destination for water sports enthusiasts, especially surfers and windsurfers. Cascais is also the perfect beach destination with delectable seafood and stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean.

Qatar Airways passengers in Portugal can now uncover new corners of the world through the award-winning Hamad International Airport (DOH). This latest addition to the summer schedule opens up new entry point for international travel from Europe, through Lisbon, to the

continents of Africa and Asia, as well as the subcontinent of India.

Travellers can also avail of the option to turn one holiday into two with incredible stopover packages to Qatar, offered by Discover Qatar. The packages offer five exciting options for travellers embarking on their journey on Qatar Airways' network of over 170 destinations:

- Standard: choice of 4-star hotels
- Premium: choice of 5-star hotels
- Premium with Beach Access: choice of 5-star hotels with access to Doha Sands Beach, West Bay
- Luxury: choice of 5-star luxury hotels including breakfast
- All-Inclusive Beach: choice of 5-star hotels including breakfast and all-inclusive beach access to Doha Sands Beach, West Bay.

All stopover packages include 24-hour check-in facilities so guests can make the most of their time in Qatar, and can be tailored for add-on options including airport assistance, transfers and a range of tours and experiences to enhance their stay, including City and Desert Tours.

Qatar Airways Privilege Club members will collect Avios on flights and can benefit from greater savings when paying for flights with a combination of cash and Avios, or Avios Max, when paying 100 per cent of the fare using Avios. Members can also spend Avios on shopping and dining at Qatar Duty Free, packages with Qatar Airways Holidays, experiences with Privilege Club Collection, cabin upgrades, and much more.

## Emirates Awarded Certified Autism Center™ Designation for all Check In Facilities in Dubai

TTA BULLETIN

Furthering Dubai's commitment to accessible travel and in time for World Autism Awareness Day on 2 April, Emirates has achieved a Certified Autism Center™ Designation for all of its Dubai Check In facilities - Emirates City Check-in & Travel Store in DIFC, Emirates Cruise Check In - Port Rashid, Emirates Cruise Check In - Dubai Harbour and Emirates City Check-In Ajman, in addition to the Emirates' dedicated hub in Terminal 3 at Dubai International Airport (DXB).



The certification, awarded by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) ensures that all Emirates facilities in Dubai have taken a significant step towards making travel more inclusive and accessible to neurodiverse customers, meeting criteria required for a comfortable and supported travel experience.

As part of the designation, Emirates employees at the various facilities underwent specialized training on autism and sensory awareness, to equip them with the understanding and skills to address needs of autistic travellers or those with sensory sensitivities, along with their families. Comprehensive facilities audits were conducted across the locations, measuring all sensory inputs in public areas such as sound levels, lighting, and potential sights and smells to develop sensory guides, empowering travellers to make informed decisions and choose the environment that best suits their needs and preferences.

This achievement builds on the recent recognition of Dubai International Airport as the first international airport to earn the designation from IBCCES and aligns with the Department of Economy and Tourism's (DET) vision of becoming the first Certified Autism Destination™ (CAD) in the Middle East.

Emirates' City Check-Ins across Dubai offer a seamless and stress-free pre-airport experience in convenient and easily accessible locations, where Emirates customers can check in for flights up to 24 hours in advance, drop off luggage between four and 24 hours before departure, and choose between agent-assisted check-ins, robot-assisted check-ins, or self-service kiosks, allowing a more relaxed travel experience.

"As a global airline, Emirates is committed to providing a seamless travel experience for everyone. We recognize the challenges customers with autism and sensory sensitivities face in airport environments. That's why we've proactively partnered with Dubai's DET and IBCCES to certify all our city check-in locations across the UAE. This initiative is a crucial step forward in our ongoing mission to make travel inclusive and accessible for all."

"Emirates is known worldwide for its exceptional guest service. Checking in for a flight is one of the most stressful segments of the whole travel experience. With the completion of the facilities, audit and the addition of the new sensory guides, the check-in procedure at the Check-in facilities will be more accommodating for people of determination, and especially those with sensory challenges."

By working together - Emirates, Department of Economy and Tourism and Dubai Airports in collaboration with the General Directorate of Residency and Foreign Affairs, Dubai Police and Dubai Customs, are making travel more inclusive and accessible for all, reflecting Dubai's

## SriLankan Airlines and Korean Air Announce New Codeshare Partnership

TTA BULLETIN

SriLankan Airlines and Korean Air have officially activated a new codeshare partnership effective 15 March 2024, presenting enhanced travel options and connections for customers of both airlines travelling between Colombo and Seoul.

Richard Nuttall, Chief Executive Officer of SriLankan Airlines stated: "We are delighted to launch our first-ever codeshare partnership with Korean Air, and boost the connectivity between Colombo and Seoul. The passenger traffic between the two cities continues to exceed our expectations, and the partnership will only help us grow our presence in this route in a manner that is fast and economical for the airline, and give more reasons for customers to choose SriLankan Airlines."

The new partnership enables SriLankan Airlines to codeshare on flights operated

between Singapore and Seoul Incheon by Korean Air, making it possible for passengers to travel on a single, SriLankan Airlines' ticket between Colombo and Incheon via Singapore. At the same time, Korean Air will codeshare on flights operated by SriLankan Airlines between Colombo and the cities of Seoul Incheon; Singapore; Chennai in India; and Male in the Maldives.

SriLankan Airlines currently operates a twice-weekly direct service between Colombo and Incheon. With SriLankan Airlines tapping into Korean Air's extensive Far Eastern network through codeshare collaboration, passengers of SriLankan now have the choice of daily flights between Colombo and Seoul via Singapore.

Passengers of Korean Air also gain access to SriLankan Airlines' high-powered network

in the Indian Subcontinent. SriLankan Airlines has India and the Maldives covered coast-to-coast. The airline operates nearly 100 flights a week across nine Indian cities and 23 flights a week to the Maldives. This includes triple daily plus flights between Colombo and Chennai and triple daily flights between Colombo and Male.

The codeshare flights are available for sale through the online reservation systems and sales offices of SriLankan Airlines and Korean Air, and external online and offline travel agencies. Customers of both airlines can take advantage of the multiple flight options as well as seamless connections afforded by the convenience of a single ticket on multi-sector journeys, which includes through check-in and baggage transfer.

The commencement of the codeshare



partnership between SriLankan Airlines and Korean Air marks a milestone in enhancing connectivity between Sri Lanka and South Korea. With increased flight choices, streamlined connections, and improved market presence, both airlines are poised to deliver an enhanced travel experience for passengers while fostering stronger ties between the two nations.



## Sri Lanka Tourism at ITB Berlin 2024

The Tourism industry stakeholders together with the Ministry of Tourism, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau and Sri Lankan Airlines attended the world's largest international trade show in Berlin recently. ITB

Berlin put a clear focus on shaping the future and once again underlined its role as the leading international platform for business, innovation and networking.

The ITB Buyers Circle with its 1,300 senior buyers served as an industry barometer and underlined the importance of this Travel Trade Show as a leading business platform.







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NUWARA ELIYA



Kithala  
TISSA-YALA



Ayurvie  
SIGIRIYA



Parangi  
WELIGAMA BAY



Ayurvie  
WELIGAMA



Wild Glamping  
KNUCKLES



Tea & Experience  
MANDARAMNUWARA



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