

# TRAVEL TALK

## Asia

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VOL 22 NO 09 2023 24 PGS



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## Sri Lanka Tourism makes a strong comeback at IFTM Paris

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Sri Lanka made a strong comeback at the recently concluded International French Travel Market (IFTM) Top Resa with 27 representatives from the tourism industry exhibiting over a period of 3 days. The focal point of the event was the new destination branding 'You'll come back for more'.



France is among the top seven tourists generating market for Sri Lanka with over 44,000 tourist arrivals recorded during the first nine months of this year. This number comes in just behind the arrival figures from the UK and German markets represented from Europe. "Sri Lanka Tourism is on the fast track to recovery and in less than a year, the industry together with the support of the Ministry of Tourism have regained visitor confidence and worked tirelessly to increase arrivals" said Chalaka Gajabahu Chairman Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau.

"We launched our first phase of campaign titled "Seeing is Believing" which stressed on the message that Sri Lanka is back to normal and we are ready to welcome visitors. The next phase of the campaign with the apt tag line "Sri Lanka - You'll be back for more" was presented to the trade at IFTM with the official kick off planned for early November" added Chairman Gajabahu

The Sri Lanka pavilion at IFTM was inaugurated by H E Manisha Gunase-

keru, Ambassador to Sri Lanka in France by lighting the traditional oil lamp which was also followed by members of the trade comprising of representative from Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, Sri Lankan Airlines, Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) and Tourist Hoteliers Association of Sri Lanka (THASL) participating in the opening.

Sri Lanka was able to attract a high level of attention from the trade and travel visitors attending the show as the strategic location of the pavilion and colorful presentation made is interesting for those interested in the Asian subcontinent. The Sri Lanka pavilion highlighted many aspects of its culture, beauty, Ayurveda and diverse attractions on offer to visitors as a tourism destination. The Sri Lanka stand optimized the "Sri Lanka - You'll come back for more" signage and colorful creatives to attract the varied potential visitor segments. Ceylon tea which is served from the pavilion is a highlight at all trade shows and this too was a crowd enhancer while also promoting Ceylon Tea in the French market.



## Jetwing Yala recognised as Sri Lanka's Leading Family Resort 2023 by World Travel Awards

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Jetwing Yala, a sanctuary nestled between the Indian Ocean and the edge of Sri Lanka's most popular wildlife park, has once again clinched the prestigious title of "Sri Lanka's Leading Family Resort" at the esteemed World Travel Awards in 2023. This remarkable recognition marks the third triumph for Jetwing Yala, having previously received this accolade in 2015 and 2016, while maintaining its status as a constant nominee since 2017.

The award acts as a testimony to Jetwing Yala's unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional warmth and hospitality to its cherished guests. Renowned for its comprehensive family-friendly offerings, the resort offers an unparalleled holistic experience that caters to guests of all ages. From traveler comforts, engaging in excursions to being a part of responsible tourism, this property is in perfect unison with the natural world. Jetwing Yala boasts a refreshing 75-meter-long swimming pool, a blissful spa, and a coastline protected by professional lifeguards. Given its proximity to the park, the resort is no stranger to the countless wild animals that roam the area, a haven for avid safari-goers and wildlife enthusiasts.

Jetwing Yala also stands as a testament to sustainable living, housing several of Jetwing's pioneering sustainability initiatives. Among them is one of the largest privately owned solar installations in the sector, a 300-kilowatt capacity system which generates clean energy to fulfill 40% of the hotel's daily electricity requirements. The resort's cooling system operates efficiently through a vapour absorption chiller, sustainably powered by steam generated from a biomass boiler using responsibly sourced cinnamon wood. Further, Jetwing Yala provides hot water entirely through



renewable energy sources, utilises 100 percent energy efficient LED lighting, and diverts zero waste to landfill.



Dmitri Cooray

Established in 1993, the World Travel Awards has consistently celebrated excellence across the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors. Today, it stands as a globally recognized hallmark of industry distinction. The year-long, worldwide voting process is online with the votes coming from qualified executives working within travel and tourism and the consumer travel buyer.

Jetwing Yala continues to set the standard for family resorts in Sri Lanka, captivating the hearts of travelers with its unparalleled blend of luxury, nature, and sustainability. This latest accolade reaffirms its dedication to providing an unforgettable experience amidst the serene beauty of Yala National Park, with the legendary Sri Lankan hospitality that is synonymous with Jetwing Hotels.

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.



The new marketing campaign by Sri Lanka Tourism is due to be launched in November this year and a sneak preview was highlighted at the recently concluded International French Travel Market in Paris. Under the egis of the Chairman Sri Lanka Tourism, more than 25 industry stakeholders, the national carrier and members of the media were privy to a glimpse of the new campaign titled 'Sri Lanka - You'll be back for more'

A destination marketing campaign has been on the cards for more than a decade. The industry eagerly anticipates this launch with hopes to regain lost momentum and drive arrivals aimed at the upcoming winter season.

Congratulations to the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB) on bagging several accolades as one of the most promising MICE destinations in South Asia. The MICE market has great potential and Sri Lanka has the capacity to deliver a number of products and services to enhance the MICE offering.

With new properties soon to be opened, Sri Lanka with emphasis on Colombo as a city will have many options as MICE venues and several interesting options for hosting theme events and excursions.

World Tourism Day was celebrated this year under the UNWTO theme of Sustainable Tourism and it was stressed that while investment was important there is a vital need to step up investments that deliver for the People, the planet and for prosperity.



deliver for the People, the planet and for prosperity.

*Dinushka*

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## NEWS

# Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB) continues to scale up training regional hoteliers in MICE industry

TTA BULLETIN

SLCB has conducted a series of MICE tourism training sessions for the regional hoteliers including Kandy and South regions and the latest was conducted in the Cultural Triangle area on the 05th September 2023. The aim of these training sessions was to reestablish and enhance the awareness of the importance of Sri Lanka's MICE industry.

Mr. Krishantha Fernando – General Manager SLCB, by delivering the inaugural and welcome speech elaborated in a nutshell how to make optimal use of environmental resources in cultural triangle to constitute a key element in tourism development focusing at biggest markets of India, China and Europe.

Prominent personalities from the hospitality and event Industry comprising Mr. Trevin Gomez-senior hotelier, former president of Ceylon Hotel School Graduate association, focusing on Business events and Incentive Travel from a hoteliers perspective, Mrs. Paddy Paul Managing Director of Golden Isle Pvt Ltd Entrepre-



neur & member of SLAPCEO on Reshaping of MICE Tourism - Technology and HR and Mr. Gihan De Silva – Corporate Facilitator, trainer, coach & mentoring specialist & member of SLAPCEO on experiential Marketing were present.

Panel discussion on current status of Business Events , Incentive Travel and new trends was conducted with the Participation of Mr. Trevine Gomez Mr. Asela Wavita General Manager Heritance Kandalama, Mr. Kasun Wijerathne Resident Manager Aliya Resort & Spa accompanied Mr. Krishantha Fernando General Manager SLCB, Moderated by SLAPCEO President Mr. Imran Hassan.

Participants from leading hotels in cultural triangle joined the training and actively carried out group work and presentations. All participants were issued with certificates of participation followed by a group photograph.

SLCB will continue to conduct these training programs in all regions in order for all hoteliers to be fully geared up to serve MICE travelers in the upcoming seasons.

## IT&CM Asia and CTW Asia Pacific 2023 In-person Event Wraps up Successfully

TTA BULLETIN

The 31st IT&CM Asia and 26th CTW Asia-Pacific 2023 delivered an unforgettable edition, bringing back the in-person event with more buzz on the show floor. Aside from business and knowledge components, this year's programme featured a wide array of activities, in and outside of booths, including targeted networking and knowledge sessions.

The show welcomed more than 240 new and returning destinations and brands along with more than 400 MICE, Association and Corporate Buyers from over 50 countries/territories, who took advantage of the bountiful procurement and networking opportunities.

Asia Ability brought the delegates together during the "Say Hi to Everyone" ice-breaking which allowed new meetings and deeper connections.

Delegates also had a chance to view Bangkok with a tour around The Chaopraya Charming and Saneh Bangkok. Pre-registered delegates were also treated to a fun time at Topgolf Megacity.

The Opening Keynote by Mr Bhummikitti Ruktaengam, President of Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation; Adviser of Phuket Tourist Association shared insights on the positive impact of tourism/MICE partnerships help Thai communities. Bringing communities together to support tourism and MICE Partnerships was one of the key foci of the event this year.

The evening of day one culminated with the Opening Ceremony and Welcome Reception, co-hosted with by destination partner, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau. The extravaganza featured a delectable variety of Thai foods accompanied with performances by the



Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) traditional dance troupe and The SwingKings.

"Pattaya City is a world destination that's known for its location and pricing, amazing activities from local to luxury, beautiful beaches, and many more. This clearly means that your MICE trips to Pattaya City would not only be a business trip because visitors can enjoy the city anywhere anytime in their own way." PATTAYA MICE CITY, Thailand.


Destinations and organisations also displayed experiential elements at their booths with activities, giveaways, and entertainment. The highlights included food tasting from MEET TAIWAN; a Lion Dance Performance, destination showcases and lucky draws by Macao Trade And Investment Promotion Institute & The Economic Development Bureau of Hengqin; Augmented Reality by Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB); and a Lucky draw by The Mulia Hotel & Resort Bali.

Initial delegate feedback indicated that the multiple networking and education opportunities combined with targeted scheduled meets were a key highlighted for many. The expanded appointment sessions allowed delegates greater flexibility and time to visit the different conferences, knowledge sessions, brand engagements, and showcases, as well as the various booths.



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## Sri Lanka Takes Centre Stage at the Embassy Festival 2023

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka once again showed its full potential as a world renowned travel destination at the Embassy Festival 2023, held in the Beautiful city of Hague, Netherlands. Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Embassy in the Netherlands, made this participation a success by creating an attractive Sri Lanka Pavilion which was definitely a crowd pleaser. The Sri Lanka pavilion was a major attraction and one of the most popular stalls at the event, where it had the opportunity to showcase its rich and vibrant culture, delectable cuisine, and warm hospitality to more than 50,000 international visitors. They were simply amazed by the warm hospitality and the various travel opportunities the paradise Island had to offer. Sri Lanka Tourism took

the maximum advantage of this opportunity to highlight Sri Lanka as a compact destination which is blessed with all the natural resources, picturesque locations and sunny beaches, including the best of Ayurveda and traditional Sri Lankan cuisine to tantalize your taste buds. The embassy Festival created colorful atmosphere as it brought together all the nations across the world with their respective cultures.

The event was a sensory delight as the air was filled with the tantalizing aroma of Sri Lankan spices and teas, accompanied by the enchanting sounds of traditional music and dance, all wrapped in the genuine warmth of Sri Lankan hospitality. Our very own Sri Lankan culinary artisans worked

their magical hands, whipping up mouth watering dishes that included spicy Koththu, crispy hoppers, and the famous Polos



cutlet and Parippu wade, leaving festival goers craving for more.

The mesmerizing Sri Lankan dance and music with its unique artistic and traditional style, throughout the whole event added more color and excitement to the Sri Lanka pavilion, offering visitors a unique experience to explore the breathtaking beauty of this Island and its people, renowned across the whole world for their warm smile.

The Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, together with the Sri Lanka Embassy in the Netherlands wishes to thank all those who visited the Sri Lanka Pavilion, indulged in the Unique Sri Lankan food and shared in the joy of the vibrant culture of Sri Lanka. The smiles, curiosity, and the active

engagement of the guests truly brought the Sri Lankan pavilion to life. This amazing Sri Lankan wonder was made possible with the tireless efforts of the SLTPB, Sri Lankan Embassy staff and the dedicated team of volunteers.

The Embassy Festival 2023 served as a bridge between cultures, fostering connections, and effectively showcasing the beauty of Sri Lanka to the world. Up to the month of September 2023, Sri Lanka received 2,391 tourist arrivals from the Netherlands, which was a considerable change compared with the same period in 2022. Netherlands can be a crucial market for Sri Lanka Tourism, given the necessary recognition and especially since it has a historical connection with Sri Lanka as well.



## Winston Duke Appointed As United Nations Ambassador For Responsible Tourism

TTA BULLETIN

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has announced the appointment of acclaimed actor Winston Duke as its newest Ambassador for Responsible Tourism. Recognized for his exceptional talent and commitment to global philanthropic efforts, Duke will advocate for sustainable tourism practices and raise awareness about the transformative power of travel, in support of UNWTO's latest campaign, "Tourism Open Minds."

Duke, renowned for his captivating performances in critically acclaimed films such as "Black Panther," "Us," and "Nine Days," has consistently demonstrated his dedication to social causes, making him an ideal choice for this prestigious role. As UNWTO Ambassador for Responsible Tourism, Duke will actively support UNWTO's mission to promote responsible and sustainable tourism practices. He will work closely with the Organization to advocate for the importance of tourism in fostering economic growth, preserving cultural heritage, and protecting the environment.

The "Tourism Open Minds" campaign, launched by UNWTO on the occasion of World Tourism Day on 27 September, aims to promote inclusive and sustainable tourism by fostering dialogue, understanding, and respect among travelers and local communities. It encourages travelers to embrace diverse cultures, traditions, and perspectives, while also highlighting the positive impact of tourism on local economies and the environment.

Expressing his enthusiasm for the new role, Winston Duke stated, "I am deeply honored to join the United Nations World Tourism



Organization as an Ambassador. To journey, to travel is the act of confronting the truth...in that truth, we see that we are so much more alike than we are different, and without knowing it, we build bridges. If travel is a bridge, then tourism is the engineer. Tourism is the globe's lifeblood of our global economy. It is the most human sector of our economies. With it, we can engineer mutual respect amongst nations as it is a reminder that, though we are individual spaces, what we have in common are a bounty of beautiful people and experiences."

UNWTO Secretary-General, Zurab Pololikashvili, welcomed the appointment, saying: "UNWTO is honored to welcome Winston Duke as our Ambassador for Responsible Tourism. As an actor, he is a master storyteller and capable of showcasing the power of tourism to open minds and transform lives, and as a humanitarian, he lives tourism's values of empathy, delivering opportunity for all and going the extra mile for the common good. UNWTO looks forward to an exciting and fruitful relationship with Duke."

Winston Duke will actively participate in various initiatives, campaigns, and events organized by the UNWTO across the world to promote responsible tourism practices and advocate for the sector's recovery. His influential voice and global reach will undoubtedly contribute to raising awareness and inspiring positive change within the tourism industry.

## Louis Theroux revealed as Closing Keynote at World Travel Market London 2023

TTA BULLETIN

Internationally recognised documentary-presenter Louis Theroux has been revealed as the Keynote Speaker wrapping up World Travel Market London, on day three of the world's most influential travel & tourism event.

Louis, famed for series such as *Weird Weekends*, *When Louis Met...* and his lockdown podcast, *Grounded*, will appear on the Elevate Stage in a session entitled "An Audience with Louis Theroux" on Wednesday 8 November, 15:30-16:30.

Throughout his career, Louis has taken audiences on unforgettable journeys around the globe, exploring different cultures, unusual phenomena, and the human experience in ways the audience would not have imagined.

During what promises to be a fascinating hour-long session, Louis will be interviewed by Marcus Murphy – founder and CEO of 5ive, about his incredible career, the people he has met and the countries he has visited.

He is focused on exploring the unexplored; his unique style of investigation has revealed the personalities, lifestyles, loyalties, and beliefs of those often misunderstood, written off or ignored.

Louis started his career in print journalism, then moved into television as a correspondent on *TV Nation*, the ground-breaking documentary series by renowned US filmmaker Michael Moore.

He then joined the BBC and produced his *Louis Theroux's Weird Weekends* series, where, among other experiences, he trained



with American wrestlers, mixed with gang members, and spent time with others on the fringes of society, including travelling to Bangkok to meet western men looking for Thai brides, South Africa to meet white extremists and India to discover the meaning of life.

World Travel Market London Exhibition Director, Juliette Losardo said:

"We're thrilled to announce Louis Theroux as our Closing Keynote – the way he navigates the world and the people he meets along the way, is intriguing.

"He joins a long list of well-known faces that have graced the stage at World Travel Market London over the last four decades, each of whom has inspired audiences with their thought-provoking words and entertaining anecdotes.

"He's one of the most influential documentary-presenters on the planet and his inimitable style has won him many fans.

"He sees a different side to the world when he travels, making unusual documentaries - his Keynote will be sure to entertain the audience, with stories of what he has uncovered, as well as reminding us of the importance of finding unique experiences.

"His calm, non-confrontational approach is very different to many journalists and documentary-presenters and is proof that there is more than one way to get to the bottom of the issue.





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## WTM London showcases diversity initiatives to mark National Inclusion Week

TTA BULLETIN



World Travel Market London 2023, the world's most influential travel & tourism event, is showcasing its diversity and inclusion credentials to mark National Inclusion Week (September 25-October 1).

Founded by Inclusive Employers, National Inclusion Week (NIW) is dedicated to celebrating inclusion and taking action to create inclusive workplaces.

The theme for National Inclusion Week 2023 is 'Take Action Make Impact', calling for people in organisations to think about what actions they can take and what positive impact these actions could and should have for marginalised colleagues.

The show will feature its first Diversity and Inclusion Summit (November 7), supporting WTM's belief that the travel sector has the power to deliver positive change in the world.

Juliette Losardo, Exhibition Director at World Travel Market London, said:

"Diversity is in our DNA – from the first World Travel Market, back in 1980, where we hosted 9,000 visitors from 40 countries, to 2023 where we're set to welcome over 40,000 professionals from 184 countries – and this is just the start.

"This year, WTM have carved out ambitious plans to drive positive change within the travel industry as well as land event initiatives to ensure WTM is a welcoming space for all, considering ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, and disability.

"We're delighted to be launching the inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Summit, which, like WTM Responsible Tourism will form part of our foundations.

"As part of our commitment to inclusivity, WTM pledge to ensure that 50% of its speakers within the conference programme come from under-represented groups ensuring broad perspectives and knowledge are passed on to WTM attendees."

Sessions taking place on Day One of WTM include 'Spotlighting Hidden Disabilities: Successful Strategies for Inclusive Travel'; 'Putting the S in ESG'; and 'Empowering Women to Change Travel', all of which will be on the Innovate Stage.

Day Two of WTM London will see four discussions on the Elevate Stage as part of the Diversity and Inclusion Summit, including 'The Economic Value of True Inclusion'; 'Addressing Adversity in the Travel Industry'; 'Redefining the Accessibility Narrative'; and 'Empowering Workforces through Representation and Cultural Understanding'.

As well as providing education programmes to support community growth, WTM has worked closely with its venue, ExCeL London, to include a WTM Reset Room, offering a place for those with neuro-diverse needs to take time away from the busy

crowds, as well as a WTM Multi Faith Room providing a quiet space for prayer and reflection.

In addition, there are a broad range of services for those with mobility needs. Guide and assistance dogs are welcome, and ExCeL recognises the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme, supporting venue visitors who are living with non-visible disabilities and choose to wear the Sunflower.

Plans are under way to subtitle many WTM conference sessions, including the influential Ministers' Summit at World Travel Market in association with UNWTO and WTTC, allowing more participants to take part than ever before.

World Travel Market's commitment to inclusivity forms part of WTM's sustainability pledge – which is guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Ray Rhodes, Head of Inclusion & Diversity at RX, commented:

"We've spent the past few years building a strong foundation of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging at RX, supported by our Executive Leadership Team, and a colleague network of over 180 ERG leaders, global diversity committee members, and RX Global Inclusion Council members.

"We have placed an intense focus on launching our Psychological Safety program, with a mission to ensure our employees feel safe to bring their authentic selves and experiences to their work, challenge the status quo, take risks, and make – and learn from – mistakes.

"We are also entering a new phase of our DEI&B strategy, which is directly impacting our customers and communities we serve. Many RX events are setting new standards for accessibility and inclusive content.

"In early-2024, we'll release a Guide to Inclusive Events at RX, which will showcase the outstanding DEI&B programming in place at our shows and serve as inspiration for our events across the globe. These rich insights will inform and advance our inclusion strategies for our events in the future."

Losardo concluded: "As we mark National Inclusion Week (September 25-October 1), we're proud to shine a spotlight on the progress we have made as an employer and an event organiser – but we're also keen to learn more. I'm eager to see what the sessions on diversity and inclusion can teach us, so we can build on this years' improvements and continue to make strides in 2024 and beyond.

"The motto for National Inclusion Week 2023 is 'Take Action Make Impact', so we're doing just that – taking action in order to have an impact and improve the experience for colleagues, delegates and business partners as we prepare to welcome the global travel community."

## TCEB pushes for Thailand to become a high value-added MICE destination combining maximum satisfaction and future business opportunities

TTA BULLETIN

In a bid to build up Thailand's image as a high value-added destination, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) seeks out opportunities that enable event owners and organisers to tap into high-potential future industries while also making it easier to discover more authentic and localised activities that meet the demands of a new generation of MICE visitors.

TCEB's new focus on future opportunities is supported by insights from a recent study "MICE Foresight" that revealed the future-oriented opportunities and authentic experiences to be among the top buying criteria.

TCEB President, Mr. Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya, said: "As an advocate for Thailand's MICE industry, TCEB keeps a close eye on how Thailand stands out. Guided by insights from our latest market study, we have developed a more holistic vision – to be a high value-added destination. This leads us to include the future success of our customers so that Thailand can contribute to their personal, professional and business growth. For meeting and incentive visitors, we will continue to invest in product development so that there is always a good mix of activities that are not only engaging but also meaningful to be found in Thailand."

Towards this end, TCEB is drawing on its experience in promoting MICE Cities as well as its collaboration with the Office of the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) who is in charge of driving the country's strategic industrial sectors.

The following projects illustrate TCEB's pivot towards future opportunities and authentic experiences:

- Promoting Pattaya as the business hub of the EEC

TCEB teamed up with the Office of the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) in organising a recent EEC Cluster Fair 2023 at the high-profile industrial subcontracting trade show MIRA/Subcon 2023 in Pattaya. The aim was to promote investment in robotics and automation sector in Thailand. Looking ahead, TCEB is planning an event called EEC Expo 2025 in Pattaya that will spotlight the 12 strategic industries of the EEC.

In addition, TCEB has also collaborated with the City of Pattaya to create a special "City Package" for MICE which was launched at IT&CMA 2023 during 27-28 September.



Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya

- Promoting the gastronomy of Phuket

TCEB is building on Phuket's status as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy and the city's own gastronomy promotion campaign to

create a fine-dining experience called "Food for Faith" as part of TCEB's Festival Economy initiative. Inspired by the island's Vegetarian Festival and co-created with some of Phuket's most celebrated chefs. A showcase of creative ideas and a fusion of wellness wisdom curated from the island's culture, "Food for Faith" will introduce visitors to a new side of Phuket and help establish it as an island paradise par excellence for MICE.

- Promoting Chiang Mai as the gateway to Thailand's best coffees and teas

Fresh from celebrating Chiang Mai's win as a "World Festival and Event City" from the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA) in 2022, TCEB has embarked on a new project with Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai to develop a multi-faceted coffee-and-tea route for MICE visitors. It will be an immersive experience that takes in the region's mountainous coffee and tea plantation and production to deliver a deeper appreciation for Thailand's best coffees and teas. Two Thai brands that have been conferred Geographic Indication (GI) status in Japan will be featured. Some hill tribes of the North took up coffee farming initiated by the Royal Project as a cash crop to substitute old tradition of opium plantation. Over time, some of their descendants became successful coffee entrepreneurs.

Established in 2004, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (Public Organization) or TCEB – the government agency under the supervision of the Prime Minister – has been assigned a role to promote, support and develop business events industry – corporate meetings, incentive trips, conventions, exhibitions,

mega events and world festivals. Serving as a strategic partner, TCEB helps deliver creative ideas and solutions to bring success and fulfill the requirements of business events. The overarching goal is to drive Thailand to become a global MICE and mega events destination that can drive the country's strategic industries and national economy.





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## Shangri-La Colombo and Shangri-La Hambantota's Ethos of Obsessing over Customer Experience Wins Top awards at the World Travel Awards 2023

TTA BULLETIN

Shangri-La Colombo and Shangri-La Hambantota have achieved outstanding recognition at the prestigious World Travel Awards 2023, reinforcing their position as leaders in the hospitality industry. Shangri-La Colombo was honored with the titles of Sri Lanka's Leading Hotel 2023, Sri Lanka's Leading Business Hotel 2023, and Sri Lanka's Leading Hotel Suite 2023. Meanwhile, Shangri-La Hambantota was awarded the coveted title of Sri Lanka's Leading Beach Resort 2023.

Herve Duboscq, General Manager, Shangri-La Colombo, expressed his thoughts over the awards, stating, "We are honoured to have won this recognition and I thank my colleagues and our guests from all over the world. This undoubtedly reinforces our quest to be the best-loved hospitality group, while pioneering new horizons and setting new benchmarks. We obsess over customer experience, inviting our guests to revel in the colorful joys of life in a sustainable manner. Every day, we

strive to bring our core values to life by serving guests with respect, humility, courtesy, helpfulness, and sincerity. All these ideals combine to make Shangri-La's brand of hospitality truly unique."

Refhan Razeen, General Manager of Shangri-La Hambantota, elaborated further stating, "Our heartfelt service at the core of our distinctive Asian hospitality ensures that our valued guests keep returning to us year after year. Through our imaginative and nature-inspired design, delightful culinary and cultural experiences, and our sincere and thoughtful service, we enable guests to find their own Shangri-La with us. Our focus on wildlife conservation, strategic natural resource management along with our constant innovation is at the heart of everything we do. I take this opportunity to thank our loyal clientele and the team that is the beating heart of our resort."



Herve Duboscq



Refhan Razeen

experience combined with innovation and sustainability. With its luxurious accommodations, stunning waterfront views, and an unwavering commitment to exceptional service, Shangri-La Colombo invites travelers to indulge in a memorable journey filled with elegance and style.

Nestled on the picturesque southern coast of Sri Lanka, Shangri-La Hambantota is a paradise for nature enthusiasts and golf lovers and offers guests an unmatched blend of natural beauty, world-class amenities, and genuine hospitality. Surrounded by lush landscapes and pristine beaches, Shangri-La Hambantota is home to an exquisite 18-hole golf course, making it the premier golfing destination in the country. Whether guests seek relaxation in the spa, adventure in the great outdoors, or the perfect swing on the golf course, Shangri-La Hambantota provides an idyllic escape where luxury meets the natural wonders of Sri Lanka's southern coast.

With these remarkable wins at the World Travel Awards, Shangri-La Colombo and Shangri-La Hambantota continue to set new standards in the hospitality industry, showcasing their commitment to delivering exceptional guest experiences by upholding their vision and values.

Shangri-La Colombo stands as a beacon of luxury and sophistication in the heart of Sri Lanka's vibrant capital. Located in the bustling city of Colombo, Shangri-La Colombo exemplifies the brand's core values, offering guests a warm and diverse

## Radisson Kandy's World Tourism Day Awareness Session

TTA BULLETIN

As the world celebrated World Tourism Day on the 27th of September 2023, Radisson Kandy took a proactive step towards nurturing the future of tourism with a special awareness session aimed at the community. Focusing on the themes of Tourism, Green Investments, and Career Guidance, the event brought together students, educators, and professionals to impart knowledge and inspiration.

The event, hosted by Radisson Kandy, was designed to enlighten and empower the youth. The primary audience comprised 40 students from Rasindev Vidyalaya in Kandy, specifically those in Grade 9 and above. Additionally, four dedicated teachers, including the school's principal, were present to support their students' learning journey.

The session was graced by two notable figures who shared their valuable insights, Mr. Sanjeeva Weerakoon, Divisional Director of the Education Department in Kandy, delivered a captivating presentation on the fundamentals of tourism and the significance of green investments. His expertise shed light on the pivotal role that sustainable practices play in preserving the natural beauty of Kandy & Mr. G.P.C. Perera, Staff Officer at the Education Office in Kandy, brought his extensive experience to the table, further enhancing the event's educational value.

The event also welcomed two esteemed invitees who shared their expertise, Mr. Priyantha Wijesinghe, Career Guidance Officer from NAITA in Kandy, delivered a speech on career guidance, emphasizing the importance of skill development and vocational training & Mr. Rasika Rajapaksha, Inspector of Police, discussed the vital role of the Tourist Police in ensuring the safety and well-being of tourists, highlighting the importance of community development in the tourism sector.

Radisson Kandy's World Tourism Day Awareness Session demonstrated its commitment to nurturing the future of the tourism industry by empowering young minds with knowledge and inspiration. By focusing on sustainability, career guidance, and community involvement, the event has sowed the seeds for a brighter and more responsible future in tourism, not only in Kandy but also for the broader industry in Sri Lanka.

## Anantara Hotels and Resorts Rolls Out 'Dollar for Deeds' CSR Programme Globally

TTA BULLETIN

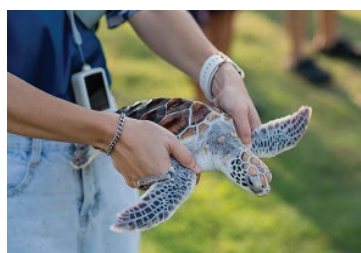
Adding another layer to its sustainability pledge, luxury hospitality brand Anantara Hotels and Resorts is rolling out its signature CSR programme 'Dollar for Deeds' at all of its properties worldwide. First introduced almost a decade ago at select hotels in Thailand, Anantara's home base, the initiative has been integrated into the growth strategies of the brand globally.

Designed as an opt-in programme for guests, 'Dollar for Deeds' encourages travellers to give back to the community by donating to a range of worthy causes, each hand-picked to impact the environment, sustainability and the community in the most effective way. Under this programme, guests can donate one dollar per night of their stay, with Minor Hotels matching their contribution dollar for dollar and donated to CSR partners internationally. By agreeing at the time of check-in, Anantara guests not only enjoy a luxurious stay that is rich in discovery, but leave with wonderful memories of their experiences, knowing that they have made a positive difference to the local environment and community.

In Thailand, funds raised are dispersed equally between three chosen and vetted causes: The Princess Sirindhorn Craniofacial Centre at Chulalongkorn Hospital in Bangkok to provide comprehensive care



for mainly children with craniofacial abnormalities;



The Mai Khao Marine Turtle Foundation that looks after all turtles that nest in Phuket including the critically endangered giant leatherback; and The Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation where rescued street elephants enjoy a peaceful life in Northern Thailand and wild elephants and their habitat are protected.

Other projects around the world include holistic coral reef protection in the Maldives; vulture nest monitoring, raptor protection and humpback whale monitoring in Oman; gibbon, peacock and otter releases in Cambodia; providing care & vocational training for disabled children in Vietnam and Indonesia; supporting local farmers and local fishing communities in Africa and reforestation projects in China and Malaysia.

According to John Roberts, Group Director of Sustainability & Conservation for Minor Hotels, Anantara's parent company, "Sustainability has long been a key pillar of our operating philosophy and, increasingly, it is not only a global need but also a requirement from both our investors and guests. By making 'Dollar for Deeds' accessible globally, we can support more worthy causes around the world while encouraging individual sustainability journeys and changing the definition of purposeful travel in our neighbouring communities and ecosystems. For the expansion I am particularly proud of the way our properties outside Thailand have embraced the spirit of the programme and chosen amazing local causes to support"





## Skal International Colombo World Tourism Day meeting

Skal International Colombo Celebrated World Tourism Day on the 26th of September at the Ramada Colombo. The guest speaker for the event was Chairman of Sri Lanka Tourism Promotions Bureau Chalaka Gajabahu who gave members and guests a preview of the soon to be launched Destination Marketing campaign.

Skal Colombo also felicitated Sk Sarada De Silva on completing 25 years with the club.





## Yaal Virindu - Jaffna Food Festival Returns To Ramada Colombo, October 12th - 15th

### TTA BULLETIN

Ramada Colombo is thrilled to announce the much-awaited return of the "Yaal Virindu - Jaffna Food Festival" from October 12th to 15th, 7pm onwards. This year marks the event's third consecutive year, promising an immersive experience into the rich culinary heritage of Jaffna, brought to you by My Sister's Kitchen founders, Thushara Innasithamby & Danu Innasithamby, in collaboration with the hotel's Director Culinary Chef Mangala Arunashantha.

Yaal Virindu, in the vibrant Tamil language, translates to the "Joy of Jaffna." Jaffna cuisine is a tapestry of flavours, drawing from the region's historical influences. Characterized by bold spices, fresh seafood, and a harmonious blend of ingredients, Jaffna dishes reflect the essence of the region's cultural diversity.

Thushara Innasithamby, the passionate founder of My Sister's Kitchen, embarked on a culinary journey ten years ago, focusing on preserving and promoting Jaffna cuisine. Leaving her 9-5 banker's job behind, Thushara dedicated herself to My Sister's Kitchen, where she meticulously grinds spices and crafts authentic Jaffna dishes, connecting the diners with the true essence of Jaffna's culinary legacy.

"What I try to bring here, is the complete authenticity of flavours and how we used to cook at home in Jaffna. There's always a way, in how we cook and how we mix curries so that you get that actual flavour you are meant to get. When it comes to a buffet, people try everything at once and it's hard to get the right combinations of flavours. At this upcoming Jaffna Food Festival, we want to give some tips by colour coding the tags and allowing the guests to pair various dishes and give them an idea of what goes well with one another", My Sister's Kitchen Co-Founder,

Thushara Innasithamby stated at the press conference held to recently to announce the launch of Yaal Virindu - Jaffna Food Festival at Ramada Colombo.

And to support her through all this will be, Ramada Colombo's Director Culinary, Chef Arunashantha Mangala (a first time experience involving Jaffna cuisine, as he was working abroad for the past 20 years) and his team, making sure that Thushara has a seamless time in prepping all the amazing dishes.

Adding to this, Thushara said that they are mostly known for the Red Rice Pittu which is called the Pol Pittu and the way they would combine it at their home would have three options. Option one, have it with a Crab curry and Gingerly OmeletteD, Option two is have it with Kiri Hodi that includes Eggs & Prawns along with a Pol Sambol which also has a lot of prawns ground into a thick paste. The third option, is just Pittu and a Gingerly Omelette (for this, you allow the Gingerly Oil to come to a smoking stage and you put your egg inside it, and then the Gingerly Oil creates so much bubbles in it and the outcome is something similar to a fluffy pancake). These are small things that have been forgotten along the way by the people. People also eat Pittu with Mango, Jack Fruit, Bananas, and also Jaggary.

"One thing we have understood is that Jaffna Food has history that is very old in terms of where it was originated from. Our family history ties very much to the food that we have. The family that we come from; history has recorded because of the fact that they were into Ayurvedic Medicine from 1752 (the time when they came to Sri Lanka from Kerala). So, the



food that we have from Jaffna is very much attached to the Kerala type of cooking. Its less gravy based, it's more pickle and it's more flavourful. Meat is always cut small, so the flavours are infused into the meat. So, there are so many nitty-gritty details that we were also able to discover as we went on with time."

"If we take something for example, one of the signature dishes that Jaffna is known for is the Kool dish. The Kool itself has so many stories to it and what is there is now is a fusion of all the stories put together. Kool was known to be the poor man's meal at one time, which was full of all the nutrition and fibre one needed. Lot of people old school Jaffna will know what all these are. Unfortunately, this has become a dying culture as a lot of people are prone to the modern food there and you tend to not enjoy it as much", Danu added.

"As always, I am very happy to collaborate with Thushara & Danu. It's a beautiful event with a lot of teamwork from both sides. Every year this buffet is held, there's so many different things to eat. And adding to what Thushara said, if you try to everything on the buffet on to a single plate, it won't be the best experience. That's why this time we are giving a wide variety of Jaffna delights and giving an SOP to how to approach the buffet with either a colour code method on the tags or a little instruction note on the tables, simply so that your experience with the dishes is even greater. I recommend going at least 3 or 4 rounds or occasions to the buffet to try everything in the right way", General Manager Mr.

Wasim Cader stated.

To complement these authentic flavours, our Food & Beverage Director Asange Amarasekera and his team have crafted an exquisite selection of beverages such as the refreshing Orrey Adi, Jaffna Lagoon, among other delightful options starting at just Rs.1800/- Nett.

Thushara also added that there are many clients she knows who have come down from Jaffna to settle down here and the older generation, always tell her that "this is how my mother used to cook" or "what my grandmother used to cook", because they have lost their touch and getting their ingredients to recreate those flavours. And it is these same people who come to just events to relive their childhood. We also have a lot of people from abroad who contact her and going all the way to as much as know the specific dates of when the Yaal Virindu - Jaffna Food Festival will be held at Ramada Colombo, so they can book their plane tickets accordingly and not miss this event.

Launching the first ever Jaffna Food Festival in 2002, Ramada Colombo has been one of the first city hotels to benchmark Jaffna Cuisine in the heart of the city. Therefore, we ask you not to miss this opportunity to embark on a gastronomic adventure through the flavours of Jaffna. Join us at Ramada Colombo from October 12th to 15th and experience the essence of Jaffna's culinary heritage for just Rs.5950/- Nett per person.

## Dusit Thani Kyoto redefines Thai fine dining with Ayatana: a one-of-a-kind multisensory culinary journey with Japanese influences

### TTA BULLETIN

Dusit Thani Kyoto, a new luxury hotel managed by Dusit International, one of Thailand's leading hotel and property development companies, officially celebrated its grand opening on 1 September unveiling Dusit's unique brand of Thai-inspired gracious hospitality and a range of exciting dining and wellness experiences - including the hotel's signature fine-dining restaurant, Ayatana.

Conceived exclusively for the hotel by acclaimed Thai chefs Duangporn 'Bo' Songvisava and Dylan Jones, who earned global recognition, including a Michelin Star, at their former Bangkok restaurant, Bo.Ian, Ayatana offers a sensory journey unlike any other.

Taking inspiration from the rich cultures of both Thailand and Japan, every element of the restaurant has a story to tell, starting with the name - Ayatana - a Sanskrit word, which, in Buddhist philosophy, refers to the six senses: sight, sound, scent, taste, touch, and mind.

Ayatana's unique multisensory culinary journey integrates all of these senses to deliver dining experiences that excite and delight on multiple levels - delivering a symphony of sensations from start to finish.

The journey begins the moment a guest arrives at the hotel. Upon entering the property, each diner is warmly greeted and presented with a traditional Japanese fan infused with essential oils (representing scent). They are then gracefully guided through the hotel's peaceful courtyard garden (body, mind), before taking part in a traditional handwashing ritual with water infused with offcuts of organic Thai herbs that will be featured in the dining experience to come (touch, scent, sound, mind).

The gastronomic journey then begins in the restaurant's open kitchen with a first bite that pays respect to the amazing bounty of



Chefs Duangporn 'Bo' Songvisava and Dylan Jones

Kyoto - specifically kyo-yasai (the prefecture's famous vegetables) - with a tasty morsel of vibrant kyo-yasai aubergines and a pepper relish inspired by a Northeastern Thai speciality.

Guests are then seated and the story of Ayatana further unfolds with the serving of five amuse-bouches that reference Shojin Ryori, the traditional dining style of Buddhist monks in Japan, which focuses on seasonal vegetables and wild mountain plants, believed to bring balance and alignment to the body, mind, and spirit.

The amuse-bouches also pay homage to the five elements of nature - Water, Fire, Air, and Ether (Space) - through five cooking techniques (grilled, smoked, steamed, boiled, raw), five distinct flavours (sweet, salty, bitter, sour, umami), and five colours (green, red, black, yellow, white). Ayata-

na's talented chefs curate various combinations based on the season and the availability of fresh produce, ensuring a dynamic and ever-evolving sensory experience.

The dining journey then continues with a fine-dining homage to the typical Thai-style family dinner, with six flavour-some Thai dishes arriving at the table, comprising organic rice, salad, traditional curry, a stir-fry, a steamed dish, a soup, and assorted relishes. In the spirit of authenticity, the spice level of dishes cannot be altered. However, a non-spicy selection of dishes is available for those seeking minimal heat.

Highlights of this season's menu include Nashi pear and sweet prawn; Southern style rice salad; Peneang curry of short ribs; and Coconut soup of Hirame and vermicelli.

To complement its dishes, Ayatana takes pride in presenting more than just beverages; it offers a purposeful beverage experience.





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SCAN TO REGISTER





## Cricket fever is back with Emirates as Official Airline Partner of ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023

TTA BULLETIN

As Global Partner of the International Cricket Council (ICC), Emirates is once again in full swing as Official Airline Partner of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, taking place across India and running from 5 October to 19 November.

Kicking off the 13th edition of the tournament, Emirates is sharing its excitement for the game with a playful video featuring Indian wicket-keeper batsman, Dinesh Karthik. In the clip, the famous cricketer is seen enjoying the action of the matches live in the air on Emirates' inflight entertainment system, while seated in the comfort of Premium Economy. Seats in Emirates Premium Economy will be available on its routes to Mumbai and Bangalore from 29 October.

Hosted across ten cities in India, the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup will bring together ten teams from across cricket-playing nations, including 2019 defending champions, England, to battle it out for the coveted Cricket World Cup Trophy. The silver and gold trophy has already made its way to India ahead of the tournament.

The first 45 matches are scheduled across Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Dharmshala, Delhi, Chennai, Lucknow, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Pune, and Mumbai in the run-up to the semi-finals, taking place in Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai and Eden Gardens in Kolkata. The final will be played on 19 November at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, deemed to be the largest sports stadium in the world with a seating capacity of 132,000 spectators.

As Official Airline Partner of the 2023 Men's Cricket World Cup, fans of the sport travelling onboard Emirates flights during the tournament can tune in to Sport 24 and Sport 24 Extra and never miss the action. At the 48 matches taking place across India, Emirates will enjoy a strong presence at the stadiums, with hospitality and ticketing rights, in addition to select in-stadium activations to build on the excitement.

Cricket lovers can follow #CWC23 as well as the ICC's Instagram and Facebook pages to see a new and exciting Emirates Fly Better Moment of the Day, capturing the

best catches, hit and runs outs and more after each match.

The Men's Cricket World Cup is held every four years and is the most popular global cricket event on the sporting calendar. This edition will be the first to be held solely in India and will feature Dinesh Karthik making his commentary debut in a World Cup.

Emirates has a long-standing association with the ICC and all its major events including the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, ICC Women's Cricket World Cup, ICC Men's T20 World Cup, ICC Women's T20 World Cup and the ICC World Test Championship.

The ICC partnership also sees Emirates featured on the official kit of the ICC Elite and International Panels of Umpires, having been the main sponsor of the Emirates Elite and International Panels of ICC Umpires since 2002, when the panels were formed to officiate Test Matches and One Day Internationals around the world. Alongside the Umpires, Emirates sponsors the Elite and International Panels of ICC Match Referees. Together with branding and media exposure to cricket fans around the world, Emirates also transports umpires and referees to international events as the Global Partner of the ICC.

Emirates is committed to supporting cricket worldwide, connecting with fans and communities across Asia, Australasia and the UK. Besides its major partnership with the ICC and associated events, Emirates also engages with cricket lovers through its long-standing partnership with Durham County Cricket Club in the UK, since 2010, and as title sponsor of the Durham Lancashire Emirates Trophy. The airline also began a ten-year naming rights sponsorship in 2013 for Emirates Old Trafford, one of England's most historic and premier cricket grounds also home to Lancashire County Cricket Club.

Emirates launched its services to India in 1985 and since then has grown its India operations to serve a total of nine destinations across the country. Emirates currently operates 167 flights per week from Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai, and Thiruvananthapuram.



## SriLankan Airlines' Pioneering Aviation Workshop for Journalists a Runway Success

TTA BULLETIN

SriLankan Airlines wrapped up a successful, pioneer two-day workshop on airline operations for local journalists from 13 – 14 September 2023 in Katunayake, laying the groundwork for a new breed of aviation journalism. A first by an airline, the programme illustrated key operational functions including flight operations, engineering, inflight services, ground handling, aviation safety and civil aviation regulations for a 50-strong audience of news and business journalists from English, Sinhala and Tamil language press, radio, TV and digital media organizations.



Capt. Jayaska Baranage, on Flight Operations; Instructor, Evangeline Lappen, on Inflight Operations; Training and Capability Development Manager of SriLankan Engineering, Amila Fernando, on Engineering; and Airport Service Manager – Training & Development, Thereka Thilakawardena, on Ground Handling.



Day two commenced with a session on Safety and Crisis Management by Flight Safety Manager, Capt. Shavantha Pedris, and Crisis Management Manager, Prasadini Perera. Manager People Engagement and HR Support Services, Niroshan

The workshop was hosted at the SriLankan Aviation College in Katunayake, with the support of the college and close to a dozen internal and external resource persons representing the airline and aviation industry themes that were covered in the programme. The inauguration of the event was attended by the senior management of the airline including Chief Executive Officer, Richard Nuttall, who shared his thoughts on the present and future of aviation in the region.

Day one launched with a welcome and introduction speech by Manager Corporate Communications, Deepal Perera, which was followed by a virtual session on safety in aviation by Assistant Director, Operations, Safety and Security, Asia-Pacific, Capt. Jose Fernandez, and Head of Corporate Communications, Albert Tjoeng, from the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The rest of the day's sessions were delivered by internal resource persons Technical Pilot,

Ranawake, and Marketing & Business Development Manager, Jayani Senanayake, and Deputy General Manager, Kalinga Hiranya, of the SriLankan Aviation College also spoke on their areas of work. The in-class sessions rounded off with presentations by Deputy Director General (Air Transport & Security Regulation) of the Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka, Rayhan Wannappa, and Head of Marketing and Corporate Communications of Airport and Aviation Services (Sri Lanka), Dr. Sumith de Silva.



The programme laid bare the basics of an airline and the aviation industry, and journalists heard it first-hand from the very experts that run things behind the scenes. For a pioneering effort, the workshop turned out to be a runway success with the participants commenting on how insightful the experience was.

SriLankan Airlines' first Aviation Workshop for Journalists did not go without a tour of SriLankan's 747 aircraft hangar, which also turned out to be a first for some of the participants, who enthusiastically snapped up photos. The day wrapped up with a closing session and all the journalists were awarded certificates of participation.





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## SriLankan Airlines Partners with Virgin Australia and Expands in Australia

TTA BULLETIN

SriLankan Airlines has entered into a first-ever interline partnership with Virgin Australia that will



strengthen the airline's network in Australia and offer customers extensive connections across the land down under and beyond. The new partnership reaffirms SriLankan's commitment to Australia and will present customers the convenience of adding select Virgin Australia domestic or international connections to their SriLankan Airlines booking and managing a multi-airline itinerary under a single ticket.

Dimuthu Tennakoon, Head of Worldwide Sales & Distribution of SriLankan Airlines commented on the partnership by stating, "Australia has one of the largest Sri Lankan diasporic communities, which makes our Australian routes incredibly popular all year around and particularly with people travelling to visit friends and relatives or in pursuit of higher education. This partnership will help us make further inroads in the Australian market through improved connectivity and a range of other benefits for our valued customers."

SriLankan Airlines currently operates daily from Colombo to Melbourne and from Colombo to Sydney on a thrice-weekly basis. The partnership will enable passengers flying SriLankan to Melbourne or Sydney to connect to the Australian cities of Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Cairns, Darwin, Hobart, Hamilton Island, Launceston, Gold Coast and Perth with

Virgin Australia. Passengers will also have the option of flying beyond Australia to New Zealand, Samoa and

Fiji. It is a win for Sri Lankan and Indian Australians living in these cities too as they can now fly out from their local city to Sri Lanka or India with a single SriLankan Airlines' booking. What's more, passengers can enjoy a seamless journey with a single check-in, including for baggage, at the departure airport and beat transit check-in queues.

The introduction of domestic and international interline flights options with Virgin Australia would improve the accessibility to Sri Lanka for Australian outbound tourists as well. An important customer group for SriLankan, the partnership will unquestionably help develop Australian leisure travel to Sri Lanka. It will also provide easy connections for SriLankan Airlines' passengers flying to Australia via Colombo from the Maldives, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Since relaunching flights to Melbourne in October 2017 and Sydney in June 2020, close to a million passengers have travelled with SriLankan Airlines to Australia. The new partnership will enhance SriLankan Airlines' service to Australia as the airline prepares to cruise to new altitudes above the land down under. For more information on SriLankan's Australian operations visit [www.srilankan.com](http://www.srilankan.com)

## Hahn Air's sister companies bring 100 partner airlines to GDSs worldwide

TTA BULLETIN

Air Mediterranean from Greece is the 100th partner airline that will be available in all Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) through a single contract with a sister company of distribution specialist Hahn Air. The products H1-Air by Hahn Air Systems and X1-Air by Hahn Air Technologies enable airlines to offer their flights in Amadeus, Sabre, Travelport and further major GDSs under the codes H1 and X1, respectively, thereby reaching 100,000 travel agents in 190 markets.

The portfolio of partners sub-hosted under the codes H1 and X1 includes airlines from 67 countries and six continents. Among the 100 partners are low-cost carriers such as fastjet, regional carriers such as TAR Aerolineas and innovative start-ups like Aerus. Together, Hahn Air Systems and Hahn Air Technologies add 1,000 routes between 487 destinations and nearly 140,000 flights to the GDSs airline content available to travel agents worldwide.

Among the H1-Air and X1-Air connections offered are routes as short as 75 kilometres (Bonaire to Curacao served by Divi Divi Air) and as long as 7,900 kilometres (Madrid



Adriana C. Carrelli

to Cancun served by World2Fly) in distance. Low-cost airline Volaris from Mexico boasts the largest route network with 228 routes and 68 destinations. Passengers traveling with an H1-Air or X1-Air partner may find themselves boarding any size of aircraft – from the Airbus A350-900 holding 350 seats operated by World2Fly to a Cessna C208 with nine seats operated by Safarilink and ideal for landing on the dusty airstrips of the safari parks.

"We are proud that our solutions H1-Air and X1-Air are in great demand among airlines and make a huge difference in their distribution by delivering incremental revenue", says Adriana C. Carrelli, Vice President Airline Business at Hahn Air. "Whether our partners want to reach secondary markets, expand their target groups or even outsource their entire GDS distribution to Hahn Air, our products perfectly complement every airline's distribution strategy. For travel agents, this is a huge advantage as H1-Air and X1-Air allow them to conveniently book flights in their GDSs that were previously inaccessible."

## Emirates crowned as 2024 APEX World Class Airline, with additional award for Economy Class amenity kit

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates has recently been crowned as a 2024 APEX World Class Airline winner for mastering guest experience and delivering outstanding customer service, at the 2024 APEX/IFSA Awards held in Long Beach, California. Evaluated through a comprehensive audit of quality of service, safety, and health control initiatives, Emirates is one of just eight airlines globally to achieve this accolade. Emirates also received a 2024 IFSA award for 'Best Onboard Amenity,' in recognition of Emirates Sustainable Economy Class amenity kit - filled with useful amenities to enhance passenger comfort whilst being composed of more sustainable materials designed for reusability.



Recognising Emirates commitment to ensuring passengers 'Fly Better,' Emirates was awarded the World Class accolade for demonstrating the highest global standards of safety and well-being, sustainability, and service-guest experience. Celebrating a year of record profits, a successful first year of Premium Economy Class, sizeable investments into enhancing onboard services, and notable steps in the journey towards a more sustainable future, Emirates was lauded by the aviation industry for its innovation and commitment to excellence.

APEX CEO Dr Joe Leader commented; "Tonight, we did more than merely acknowledge the prowess and passion of the airline industry, we paid tribute to 2024 APEX World Class trailblazers like Emirates, who have unequivocally etched a golden chapter in the annals of air travel beyond five stars. I had the privilege of spending invaluable moments with President Sir Tim Clark at APEX's FTE EMEA event in Dublin earlier this year. The insights, the vision, the sheer audacity of Emirates' approach to revolutionizing the skies carried in every word he shared. Emirates is not just an airline; it's a symphony of innovation, ambition, and undying commitment to excellence."



Emirates' Economy Class range of amenity kits are complimentary for customers on long-haul flights, and feature designs that represent the four essential elements of nature – fire, water, earth, and air. The pouches are reusable and made from washable kraft paper with bespoke art printed in non-toxic soy-based ink. The contents include a selection of durable travel essentials made from materials that are more environmentally friendly than single use plastic. The toothbrush is made from a combination of wheat straw and plastic, and the socks and eyeshades are made from recycled plastic, in this case, rPET (recycled polyethylene terephthalate).

To compliment the reusable amenity kits onboard, Emirates has several other initiatives in Economy Class which focus on using sustainable materials where possible, including cosy blankets made from recycled plastic bottles, where each blanket is made from 28 recycled plastic bottles – an initiative which has prevented over 95 million plastic bottles from going to landfill over the last 6 years.

Single use plastic has been reduced with the introduction of wooden tea and coffee stirrers onboard, while paper straws and inflight retail bags are made using wood and paper from responsibly managed forests. For Emirates' youngest customers, the airline's complimentary toy bags, baby amenity kits and plush toys are also made from recycled plastic bottles and other sustainable materials. Emirates also recycles plastic and glass onboard when flights land in Dubai, diverting thousands of kilograms of glass and plastic away from landfill each year.

APEX (Airline Passenger Experience Association), the largest international airline association dedicated to passengers and advancing their experience, is the official ratings body that issues the new WORLD CLASS award and accreditation. The APEX Official Airline Ratings™ were the industry's first validated, verified, and certified industry award where the airline's passengers rate their

overall experience on a scale of 1-5, with Five Star being the highest honour. To be awarded WORLD CLASS airlines must qualify by audit. Audits are conducted by industry professionals from Yates and Partners, aviation's premier guest experience consultancy. Each audit is peer reviewed and validated by Associate Professor Dr Maxwell Winchester of Victoria University and Copenhagen Business School, an expert in qualitative and quantitative customer research methodology. Then further scrutinized by the governing board of APEX. WORLD CLASS is awarded to the qualified few. APEX is the airline association run by the airlines for the airlines. APEX is the official ratings body that issues the WORLD CLASS award and accreditation.



## Air India Announces Non-stop Flights Between Kolkata And Bangkok From 23 October

TTA BULLETIN

Air India, India's global airline, will introduce a non-stop service between Kolkata and Bangkok starting 23rd October 2023. Launched during the festive season in Kolkata, this new flight will cater to the need of a convenient direct connection between the two cities.



Cambodia on the network of Bangkok Airways, with whom Air India enjoys an interline partnership with seamless connections beyond Bangkok.

Air India currently operates a total of 14 flights to Bangkok per week with daily non-stop flights from Delhi and Mumbai connecting the destination.

Building a more robust network is a key element of Air India's transformation journey and the new launch is in line with the airline's commitment to expand connectivity and enhance frequency on its domestic and international sectors as it keeps augmenting the fleet with new aircraft. Bookings for the flights have already opened on all channels, including Air India's website

AI322 will depart Kolkata at 2200 hrs to reach Bangkok at 0205 hrs the next morning. The return flight AI321 will take off from Bangkok at 0305 hrs to land in Kolkata at 0410 hrs (All Local Time). The flight, operated with a narrowbody Airbus family aircraft, will have a two-class configuration of Economy and Business Class and operate six days a week from Monday to Saturday.

Besides lending a boost to tourism and trade in the two cities, the direct service to Bangkok will offer a unique opportunity to Air India passengers to take convenient connections via Bangkok to and from 10 popular destinations in Thailand, Laos, and

## Turkish Airlines and China Eastern Airlines sign MOU of cooperation

TTA BULLETIN

A fruitful meeting between Turkish Airlines and China Eastern Airlines took place in China, Shanghai, and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed, marking a significant progress in the relationship between the two valued airlines.



Chinese carriers' intention to operate flights to Istanbul is one of the major indicators of the post-pandemic recovery of the Türkiye-Mainland China market. China Eastern Airlines joins the airlines that are operating flights between Türkiye-Mainland China. The inaugural flight of China Eastern Airlines was operated on September 28th 2023, on Shanghai-Istanbul route. Turkish Airlines currently operates 7 frequencies on the same route and China Eastern Airlines will operate 3 frequencies weekly.

During the meeting in Shanghai, it was agreed to improve and expand the cooperation between the airlines in line with China Eastern Airlines' flights between Shanghai-Istanbul. In this respect, the efficiency of the existing Special Proration Agreement (SPA) between the two partners will be enhanced and it was indicated that further major steps will be taken once the necessary authorizations are obtained from the relevant authorities.

Both airlines are pleased that the benefits to be obtained from the cooperation will be maximized with the extensive network of both Turkish Airlines and China Eastern Airlines.

On the agreement, Turkish Airlines CEO Bilal Ekşi, stated; "As Turkish Airlines one

of the biggest actors in the world of aviation, we will not limit ourselves to our already world class network and collaborations in order to continue our 90 years journey of success from boutique to the top. Our operations to the People's Republic of China continue with 7 weekly frequencies each in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Beijing. In addition to our direct flights, we will continue to take the necessary actions to ensure our growth in the Chinese market in line with several cooperation with our valued partners in the region. As underlined by the Memorandum of Understanding which we signed today with China Eastern Airlines, Turkish Airlines will continue to be a leading airline that always seeks to push ever upwards."

Li Yangmin, CEO of China Eastern Airlines, declared that; "The opening of China Eastern Airlines air service from Pudong, Shanghai to Istanbul, Türkiye, will further facilitate trade and personnel movement between the two countries. China Eastern Airlines and Turkish Airlines have a good foundation for cooperation. With the opening of this air service and the signing of the memorandum, the space for future cooperation between the two sides will be broader. We look forward to strengthening communication and exchanges between the two sides and cooperating in the fields of domestic and international transit, ground services and networks to jointly create a better future for both sides."

## Qatar Airways Selects Starlink to Enhance In-Flight Experience with Complimentary High-Speed Internet Connectivity

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways is the largest airline to offer Starlink's service on specified aircraft and routes



Qatar Airways is now the largest airline to collaborate with Starlink and roll out a complimentary high-speed, low-latency internet connectivity experience onboard specific aircraft and routes. Starlink's service will be a further enhancement of Qatar Airways' 5-star onboard experience. Once the service is active, passengers will be able to enjoy ultra-fast Wi-Fi speeds of up to 350 Megabits per second which can be used for a variety of internet-based services such as video streaming their favourite entertainment and sports videos, gaming, enriched web-browsing and much more.

As a leading 5-star airline of the world, Qatar Airways remains committed to offering the best passenger experience onboard, and the agreement with Starlink will allow passengers to have a rich seamless Wi-Fi connectivity experience onboard with a simple one-click access. The high-speed and low-latency network is powered by the revolutionary Starlink satellite communications system – the world's largest satellite internet constellation engineered and operated by SpaceX. Qatar Airways and Starlink are currently in the pre-launch phase of the rollout strategy across Qatar Airways fleet.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His

Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker, said: "Qatar Airways is proud to announce its agreement with Starlink to provide seamless and complimentary Wi-Fi to its global passengers. This exciting collaboration is not only in line with our industry-leading approach to technological adoption, but also serves as an unmissable opportunity to connect Starlink to our global passengers. We look forward to our passengers benefitting from this state-of-the-art addition to Qatar Airways' in-flight experience."

"Qatar Airways continues to lead the way prioritizing the passenger experience," said SpaceX's Vice President of Starlink Commercial Sales Jonathan Hofeller: "With Starlink set to support the entire Qatar Airways fleet, passengers travelling between over 150 destinations around the world will be able to stay connected with the most advance high-speed internet service from space. In fact, as soon as passengers step onboard the plane the internet works seamlessly throughout their flight from gate to gate, and all from the comfort of their seats."

## Qatar Airways kicks off the new football season with a branded Paris Saint-Germain livery on Boeing 777 aircraft

TTA BULLETIN

As the Official Airline Partner and the Official Jersey Partner of the Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) team, Qatar Airways showcased its new livery on one of its Boeing 777.



This marks another year of celebrating the strong partnership between Qatar Airways and PSG, creating an even more exciting experience for fans all over the world.

Global fans will be able to fly with Qatar Airways, the seven-time World's Best Airline, to see the 11-time French Champions compete at Parc des Princes Stadium in Paris.

Qatar Airways Holidays is offering flexible packages to attend the matches and witness some of the greatest footballing moments, including the following additional perks including match tickets, flights, accommodation, and more.

Qatar Airways remains committed to supporting sports globally, helping fans travel to their favourite events around the world.



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