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Tourism Advisory Committee Appointed to Drive Sri Lanka's Tourism Growth

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Dileep Mudadeniya Appointed as Chairman of the Tourism Advisory Committee

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment, and Tourism has announced the appointment of Dileep Mudadeniya, Senior Vice President of John Keells Holdings, as Chairman of the newly established Tourism Advisory Committee. Tasked with providing strategic direction, this committee will guide the government in shaping policies and initiatives that promote sustainable tourism development in alignment with national objectives.

Hon. Vijitha Herath, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment, and Tourism, appointed the committee members, ensuring representation from a diverse group of industry leaders and experts. Their collective insights and experience will be instrumental in advancing Sri Lanka's tourism sector.

The Advisory Committee members comprise of Mr. Buddhika Hewawasam – Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority & Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, Mr. Dheera Hettiarachchi – Chairman, Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism & Hotel Management and Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, Mr. Richard Nuttall – CEO, SriLankan Airlines, Mr. Nihal Muhandiram – Vice President, EKHO Hotels and Resorts, Galle Face Hotels Group, Mr. Dharshana M. Perera – Senior Director General, Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment, and Tourism, Mr. Donald Rajapaksha – National Coordinator, Chamber of Tourism and Industry, Professor D.A.C.

Suranga Silva – Coordinator, Sustainable Tourism Unit (STU), Faculty of Arts, Department of Economics, University of Colombo, Mr. Lasantha de Fonseka – Managing Director & Founder, Tiesh (Pvt) Ltd

Mr. Chandra Wickramasinghe – Chairman/MD, Connaissance de Ceylon & Thema Collection, Mr. Gerard George Ondaatje – Deputy Chairman/Managing Director – Nuwaraeliya Hotels Company (PLC), Mr. Ajith Perera – Designer, Owner, Craft Tunnel, Mr. Dharshana Munidasa – Chef, Founder & Owner, Nihonbashi, Ministry of Crab and Prof. Sarath Munasinghe – Senior Lecturer, Department of Tourism Management, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

With a distinguished career spanning over 30 years in the tourism and hospitality sector, Mudadeniya's role as Chairman will be to offer strategic direction, share industry expertise, and propose policy recommendations that will contribute to a resilient and competitive tourism industry in Sri Lanka.

The Tourism Advisory Committee will work in collaboration with government agencies and private-sector stakeholders to address key priorities such as destination branding, tourism infrastructure, foreign investment, and regulatory reforms. The committee's initiatives will emphasize public-private partnerships and responsible tourism practices to enhance Sri Lanka's standing in the global travel market.

Sri Lanka Showcases Year-Round Tourism Appeal at ITB Berlin 2025

DINUSHKA

Sri Lanka has made a significant impact at ITB Berlin



2025, the world's leading travel trade show, where 5,800 exhibitors from over 170 countries gathered to shape the future of global tourism.

Under the theme "The World of Travel Lives Here," ITB Berlin serves as a platform for industry professionals, buyers, and media to explore emerging trends and opportunities in travel.

Renewed Interest in Sri Lanka as a Premier Destination Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Germany, HE Varuni Muthukumarana highlighted the renewed interest in Germany as a key source market for Sri Lanka, emphasizing the country's potential in wellness tourism. Ayurveda and traditional healing practices, including 'Hela Wedakama'—one of the oldest indigenous wellness treatments in the world—continue to attract European travelers seeking authentic and holistic experiences.

Growing German Market and Tourism Targets Buddhika Hewawasam, Chairman Sri Lanka Tourism noted that Germany remains one of Sri Lanka's leading inbound markets. With 136,000 German visitors recorded in 2024, Sri Lanka aims to reach at least 200,000 German arrivals in 2025, positioning Germany among its top tourism source markets. Increased charter flights and strategic marketing investments are set to bolster this growth. Additionally, Sri Lanka received significant recognition at ITB Berlin, including the prestigious Green Destination Award for Sigiriya, reinforcing the nation's commitment to sustainable tourism.

A Diverse and Accessible Tourism Offering Sri Lanka's tourism portfolio spans luxury resorts, boutique villas, heritage properties, eco-lodges, and homestays, catering to travelers across various budget ranges. The country also stands out as an inclusive destination, welcoming LGBTQ+ travelers and ensuring accessibility for all.

Known for its year-round appeal, Sri Lanka offers a unique 365-day travel experience, thanks to its microclimates. While the eastern coast enjoys optimal conditions for nine months, the western coast thrives during the remaining period, making Sri Lanka a non-seasonal destination. Within just a few hours, visitors can experience varying climates, from cool highland retreats to tropical beaches.

SriLankan Airlines Strengthens European Connectivity and Chinthaka Weerasighe, Regional Manager Europe and the Americas of SriLankan Airlines, underscored the importance of the European market, with six of Sri Lanka's top ten source markets being from the region. As the only direct scheduled airline connecting Sri Lanka to London, Paris, and Frankfurt, SriLankan Airlines remains committed to expanding its European footprint. The airline currently operates three weekly flights from Frankfurt, with a 35% growth trajectory. Germany's key feeder cities for SriLankan Airlines include Frankfurt (48%), Munich (22%), and Düsseldorf (17%).

To enhance connectivity, SriLankan Airlines is working with Deutsche Bahn (DB) to integrate train and flight services, allowing passengers to book seamless travel from over 5,600 rail stations across Germany. A potential codeshare agreement with DB Rail is under discussion, which will further improve accessibility for German travelers. Additionally, SriLankan Airlines has strengthened its global partnerships with codeshare agreements via Abu Dhabi and Doha and its latest partnership with Air Canada, facilitating travel to North America via Frankfurt and Paris.

With a strong presence at ITB Berlin 2025, Sri Lanka continues to reinforce its status as a top-tier destination, offering an unparalleled blend of cultural heritage, natural beauty, adventure, and sustainability-driven travel experiences.



As the first quarter of the year comes to a close, Sri Lanka's tourism industry is celebrating a strong start, welcoming over half a million visitors in just three months. This steady influx highlights the country's growing appeal as a travel destination and the increasing confidence of global travelers. Airlines, too, have reported a significant rise in passenger arrivals, reinforcing Sri Lanka's position as a preferred hub in the region.

In a move to further strengthen the sector, the government has formed a tourism advisory committee comprising esteemed professionals from both the public and private sectors. This initiative signals a proactive approach to steering the industry forward, ensuring sustainable growth and strategic decision-making. Travel Talk extends its best wishes to the newly appointed committee as they work toward shaping a resilient and competitive tourism landscape.

Adding to Sri Lanka's tourism accolades, the Pekoe Trail—a breathtaking 300km walking route through the country's scenic tea country—has been named one of the world's best places to visit by TIME Magazine. This recognition underscores the trail's potential to become a global trekking hotspot, offering travelers an immersive experience that blends nature, culture, and heritage. As Sri Lanka continues to diversify its tourism offerings, the Pekoe Trail stands out as a remarkable addition to its adventure portfolio.

Meanwhile, International Women's History Month was celebrated across multiple sectors, shining a light on the urgent need for greater female representation in tourism. With women making up only 8% of the industry's workforce, the push for advocacy, inclusion, and empowerment has never been more critical. Creating opportunities for women will not only enrich the sector but also pave the way for a more inclusive and diverse future.

Further enhancing connectivity, Emirates has introduced its state-of-the-art A350-900 aircraft on the Colombo-Dubai route. This game-changer features the Premium Economy cabin, offering travelers an elevated level of comfort and setting a new benchmark for air travel to and from Sri Lanka.

With strong visitor numbers, new tourism products, and enhanced airline offerings, Sri Lanka's tourism story is unfolding with promise—setting the stage for an even more dynamic year ahead



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NEWS

Travel Trade Sports Club 49th AGM; Dilshan Gnanapragasam Re-Elected as President

TTA BULLETIN

The Travel Trade Sports Club (TTSC) successfully hosted its 49th Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 12th March 2025 at Ramada Colombo by Wyndham. The event saw the participation of past presidents, key industry partners, and club members, all of whom played a role in ensuring its success.



During the AGM, Mr. Dilshan Gnanapragasam from Resplendent Ceylon was unanimously re-elected as the President for the year 2025 following a proposal by Mrs. Bonita Odayar, the pro-tem chairperson. His continued leadership is expected to further the club's mission of fostering camaraderie, sportsmanship, and professional networking within Sri Lanka's travel and tourism industry.

TTSC has long been committed to organizing sports events, social gatherings, and industry-related activities that serve as a platform for members to connect, collaborate, and share experiences. The club remains a vital pillar in strengthening community ties within the country's travel trade sector, supporting industry initiatives, and promoting goodwill among its members and stakeholders.

The newly appointed committee for 2025/2026 comprises:

- President: Dilshan Gnanapragasam, Resplendent Ceylon
- Vice President – Hotels: Adrian Jansz, EKHO Hotels & Resorts
- Vice President – Airlines: Shan Perera, Singapore Airlines

- Vice President – Travels: Bandula Withana, Jetwing Travels
- Immediate Past President: Anil Hapugoda, Aitken Spence Travels
- General Secretary: Kanishka Udawatta, Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts
- Assistant General Secretary: Lalin Sumanasinghe, Aitken Spence Travels
- Treasurer: Mani Sugathapala, Citrus Hotels
- Assistant Treasurer: Nalika Abeysingha, Walkers & Whittalls
- Social Secretary: Vivek Kerkoven, Ramada Colombo
- Secretary Administration: Sunethra Blok

- Committee Members: Prabath Wickramathilake (SriLankan Airlines), Rakith Perera (Connaissance de Ceylan), Tahanie Yu (Resplendent Ceylon), Anujon Yogendran (Esna Holidays), Amri Noordeen (DTH Travels), Marvan Madanayake (Amadeus Lanka), Ravindra Dassanayake (Hayleys Leisure), Chinthaka Daluwatte (Mt. Lavinia Hotels Group), Heshan Perera (Air India), E. B. Silva (Accountant), Tyrone Perera (Media & Sports Events Coordinator)

Sri Lanka Tourism Showcases Wedding Destination Potential at the 14th Edition of EWPC 2025 in Ras Al Khaimah

TTA BULLETIN

In a collaborative effort to position Sri Lanka as a premier wedding and events destination, the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB) and the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) participated in the 14th edition of the prestigious Exotic Wedding Planners Conference (EWPC) 2025 in Ras Al Khaimah- UAE. Accompanied by six key industry partners including event planners and accommodation providers, this marked Sri Lanka's second consecutive year at the event, reinforcing its appeal in the global wedding market.



industry advancements that elevate the wedding and events experience worldwide.

A key highlight of the event was the compelling presentation by Dheera Hettiarachchi, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, which captivated an audience of approximately 400 participants from across the globe. The Sri Lanka pavilion also generated significant interest during the business-to-business (B2B) sessions, attracting numerous wedding planners eager to explore the island's breathtaking venues and unique offerings for destination weddings.

Renowned for fostering networking, education and business opportunities in the international wedding industry, EWPC 2025 brought together a diverse array of stakeholders, including leading destination wedding planners, event organizers and suppliers. This year's conference focused on emerging trends, innovations and

Thailand Looks to Thai Restaurants Abroad to Expand Soft Power

TTA BULLETIN

Thailand is tapping into its global network of Thai restaurants to drive an ambitious campaign aimed at amplifying the country's creative soft power industries. A joint initiative between Thailand's public and private sectors seeks to establish a new international platform for cultural promotion. The "Taste of The Very Thai Fest" campaign is at the forefront of this effort, using the reach of Thai restaurants overseas to introduce international audiences to Thailand's vibrant festival scene and creative industries.



With an impressive festival lineup featuring both world-renowned events and niche cultural experiences, the initiative seeks to cement Thailand's status as a premier destination for creative and cultural festivals. By leveraging its expansive network of Thai restaurants abroad, the campaign will invite global audiences to experience Thailand's dynamic cultural landscape in a novel and engaging way.

The Thailand Creative Culture Agency (THACCA) and the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (Public Organization) or TCEB, are spearheading this strategic initiative. Partnering with key organizations—including the Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP), Thai Airways International, the National Food Institute, and leading festival organizers—Thailand aims to showcase 13 creative industries through this global campaign.

"Soft power is a strategic priority for the government, crucial to our goal of generating 4 trillion baht in revenue within four years," said Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee, chairperson of the National Soft Power Development Committee. "By establishing a worldwide network of Thai restaurants as a platform for promoting our culture, we can showcase Thai soft power across all facets.



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Arabian Travel Market 2025 to host expanded global participation as international tourism reaches 1.4 billion arrivals

TTA BULLETIN

Arabian Travel Market, the leading global event for the travel and tourism industry, is set to welcome a diverse international presence at its upcoming edition, which takes place at the Dubai World Trade Centre from 28 April to 1 May.

This year's show will see notable growth in participation from key regions including Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa and the Americas, reflecting continued recovery and rising demand across the global tourism industry.

According to recent data from the World Tourism Barometer by UN Tourism, an estimated 1.4 billion international tourists were recorded globally in 2024, an 11% increase from the previous year. In addition, total export revenues from tourism, including passenger transport, reached a record USD1.9 trillion last year.

The report also indicated that the Middle East was the best-performing region compared to 2019, with international arrivals rising by 32% last year from pre-pandemic levels. The outlook is promising for international tourist arrivals in 2025, which are anticipated to grow by three to five per cent.

"Asia is the fastest-growing region at ATM 2025, with a projected 27% year-on-year increase in exhibitors this year. This growth is largely attributed to enhanced regional connectivity and stronger links with international markets, driving expansion opportunities. It's not only national tourism organisations that are contributing to this growth but also regional and city-level destinations, with private sector participation on the rise," said Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market.

Countries such as Japan, Macao, the Maldives, Mauritius, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, China, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and India are playing a pivotal role. India is anticipated to witness a remarkable 41% increase in participation at ATM this year, which includes a stronger presence from the Ministry of Tourism and major national airline carriers, among other stakeholders.

Regional tourist boards, including Rajasthan Tourism, the Government of Goa, Andhra Pradesh Tourism, the Phuket Tourist Association, Hong Kong, and the Jakarta Provincial Government, are also contributing to Asia's growing presence at ATM.

Reflecting the region's continued infrastructure growth and appeal to both business and leisure travellers, participation from Middle East exhibitors at the event has grown by 17%. Saudi Arabia's

participation continues to rise at ATM, where the country's giga projects and many prominent private sector companies from the Kingdom will be showcased to an international audience.

With its cultural diversity and historical tourism appeal, Europe is on track for steady growth of 12%, with participants from across the continent participating in the upcoming edition of ATM. Meanwhile, exhibitor participation from Africa and the Americas remains in line with last year's edition.



Danielle Curtis

ATM 2025 will centre on the theme "Global Travel: Developing Tomorrow's Tourism Through Enhanced Connectivity," underscoring the importance of connectivity in shaping the industry's future. The event is set to attract over 47,000 attendees and feature over 2,600 exhibitors from more than 161 global destinations.

Across three main stages, which include the Global Stage, Future Stage and the all-new Business Events stage, attendees will have the opportunity to gain insights from more than 200 high-profile speakers across 60 conference sessions. The ATM Conference programme will explore key international regions, including specialised sessions on important source markets such as Asia-Pacific (APAC), Latin America (LATAM) and India.

Euromonitor International will lead the Global Market Insights: APAC session, revealing the latest trends influencing travel in the region and providing insights on the profiles of travellers in the APAC market. Attendees can discover market insights, investment opportunities, and strategies to tap into the high-potential LATAM region during Score Global Growth in LATAM. Meanwhile, a regional expert will discuss India's Next Gen Traveller and the country's rising tourism market.

Curtis concluded: "ATM 2025 presents a unique opportunity for stakeholders in the travel and tourism industry to engage with influential players from across the globe. Participants can stay informed about emerging industry trends, connect with key decision-makers, and establish valuable partnerships. These collaborations aim to drive innovation and shape the future direction of global travel and tourism."

Held in conjunction with Dubai World Trade Centre, ATM 2025's strategic partners include Dubai's 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.

Tourism Malaysia London Gears Up for Visit Malaysia Year 2026 with New Director Appointment

TTA BULLETIN

London is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Sulaiman Suip as its new Director. His leadership comes at a crucial time, as 2025 serves as a build-up year to the highly anticipated Visit Malaysia Year 2026 (VM2026) - a national initiative aimed at revitalising Malaysia's tourism industry and showcasing the country's diverse cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and immersive travel experiences to the world.



this, with its eco-tourism initiatives, sustainable tourism efforts, and enriching homestay experiences that allow visitors to truly connect with our communities and nature. As we prepare for Visit Malaysia Year 2026, I look forward to further strengthening Malaysia's appeal among UK travellers and inspiring even more visitors to discover our beautiful country."

With an impressive career spanning key roles at Tourism Malaysia offices in India, Japan, and Thailand, Mr. Suip brings extensive experience in international tourism promotion. In his new role, he will spearhead Tourism Malaysia London's marketing and PR efforts, strengthening Malaysia's presence in the UK market and driving visitor numbers in the lead-up to VM2026.

"The UK is a vital market for Malaysia, with British travellers consistently drawn to our contrasting experiences - from vibrant cities and lush rainforests to pristine beaches and immersive cultural encounters," said Mr. Sulaiman Suip, Director of Tourism Malaysia London. "Today's travellers seek meaningful, experiential holidays, and Malaysia is uniquely positioned to deliver

With the UK being one of Malaysia's largest European markets, Mr. Suip is dedicated to building on the current momentum by strengthening partnerships with the UK travel trade. A focus will be on enhancing collaborations with tour operators, travel agents, and key industry players to further elevate Malaysia's presence - especially with Visit Malaysia Year 2026 on the horizon.

As a key pillar of Malaysia's National Agenda, VM2026 aims to boost tourism revenue, enhance Malaysia's global competitiveness, and position tourism as a major contributor to the country's economy. The campaign aspires to welcome 35.6 million international visitors and generate RM147.1 billion in tourism receipts, benefiting not just the travel industry but also hospitality, retail, transport, and local communities.

Intrepid Travel Flagship Global Summit

TTA BULLETIN



Intrepid Travel, the world's largest adventure travel company, successfully hosted its largest and most impactful Global Summit event (24-27 February) in Sri Lanka, bringing together 200 international team members representing over 50 nationalities, alongside 300 local Sri Lankan team members, for a week of collaboration, connection and celebration.

This marks only the second time the company has hosted the event outside its headquarters in Melbourne, Australia. Intrepid's team in Colombo is its largest worldwide and they support significant travel operations in Sri Lanka, as well as shared services for the global business.

The summit is estimated to have injected more than Rs 50m into the Sri Lankan economy.

The week-long gathering including Intrepid's Board, co-founders, and core management team culminated in a full-day conference held at BMICH, a landmark venue in Colombo on 27 February, with 2,500+ additional office staff and leaders from across the globe being invited to tune in via livestream and locally hosted office events. Further the week activated around Intrepid's purpose commitments through championing in fundraising, community

engagement, and advocacy to reduce single-use plastic and promote recycling in collaboration with the Intrepid Foundation's local partner, Zero Plastic Movement.

The Summit Day was structured around Intrepid's new brand positioning and more than 45 speakers on stage including tour leaders. It was emceed by two members of Intrepid's global team recognised as 'top talent', Peru General Manager Fernando Rodriguez and local Sri Lankan based Destination Product Manager, Pramali Fernando.

As part of the marking the summit first time in Sri Lanka, the "Hello Zero" elephant sculpture made from plastic waste was unveiled by Zero Plastic Movement & The Intrepid Foundation, serving as a wakeup call about the devastating impact of plastic pollution on Sri Lanka's cultural heritage and wildlife which will be placed permanently at the entrance to BMICH.

"I'd like to thank our team in Colombo, Sri Lanka for putting on a world-class event. They are such an important part of our company and our customers also love visiting this incredible and vibrant country," said James Thornton, CEO.



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IMEX responds to industry changes with senior level appointments

TTA BULLETIN

IMEX, which organizes two of the world's largest trade shows for the business events sector, has created two new roles within its business to respond to industry changes and reach new audiences.



Kelly Grant



Natalie Gestetner

Kelly Grant becomes Marketing Director bringing over 15 years of experience in the global events industry. She now heads up the 16-strong marketing, content, social media and digital team, taking a customer-first approach with marketing campaigns and content which are personalized for various audiences. Kelly will lead the rollout of a program of year-round content that's underpinned by strategic use of data to enable a measurable and highly targeted audience reach and attendee conversion.

Natalie Gestetner becomes IMEX Brand Ambassador. Based on the west coast of the US, she'll work within the new Impact team. Natalie will work closely with brand-side executives and senior level marketers to introduce them to IMEX and explore how the shows can support their strategic objectives and KPIs.

Significant strides have already been made with the introduction of a dedicated event

for Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) and senior marketing professionals at IMEX America 2024, with plans to develop this further in the year ahead.

IMEX CEO Carina Bauer explains: "We've invested in our team and business so that we're equipped to respond and flex to changes in the industry. Looking at research and speaking to our colleagues and friends around the world, there are many instances now where the event planning role sits within the marketing function and these new roles help us respond to that shift.

"We want to welcome this new audience of marketers and use our shows to demonstrate the true value of live events. These two senior level appointments signal our intention to advocate for live events as an important and measurable part of the marketing mix."

PATA Achieves Full Carbon Neutrality in 2024

TTA BULLETIN



Barista, Sri Lanka's largest café chain, opens its 50th outlet, Barista Nawam Mawatha, marking a significant milestone in the company's journey of brewing happiness across the island. This achievement highlights Barista's commitment to delivering the finest coffee and exceptional customer service to communities nationwide.

Barista's journey began in 2002 with its first outlet at the World Trade Center in Colombo, when coffee culture was still emerging in Sri Lanka, a country traditionally known for tea. With a vision to introduce authentic Italian coffee, Barista created a space for people to enjoy expertly brewed coffee in a warm, inviting atmosphere. What began as a single outlet in Colombo has now expanded to locations ranging from the bustling streets of the capital to the serene hills of Kandy, and to diverse regions including Jaffna in the north, Nuwara Eliya in the central highlands, and Matara in the south. Barista's presence in these key areas reflects its commitment to bringing premium coffee and exceptional service to every corner of Sri Lanka.

"As we celebrate the opening of our 50th outlet, we remain committed to serving customers from all walks of life, ensuring that everyone enjoys a personalized, high-quality coffee experience. Our focus has always been on delivering the finest coffee, unparalleled customer service, and building strong brand equity, which sets us

apart in the competitive market. We are not only dedicated to providing exceptional value to our customers but also to fostering sustainable practices that benefit both the environment and the community. With every new outlet we open, we bring the joy of expertly brewed coffee to more Sri Lankans, solidifying Barista's role as a beloved and integral part of local communities" said Dilupa Pathirana, CEO of Barista Sri Lanka.

The chain's success is attributed to its unwavering commitment to quality. The skillful and qualified baristas consistently deliver expertly crafted beverages, ensuring a memorable experience for every customer. Using only the finest beans and state-of-the-art equipment, Barista brings a true taste of coffee to Sri Lanka. Whether it is a rich espresso or a creamy cappuccino, the café's diverse menu caters to every coffee lover's preference, ensuring an enjoyable experience with every visit.

Barista's appeal goes beyond just serving great coffee. The company places a strong focus on delivering exceptional customer service, believing that the overall experience from the warm greeting to the inviting atmosphere is what truly makes a visit special.

Sri Lanka Tourism receives prestigious Green Destination Award at ITB Berlin 2025

TTA BULLETIN



Sri Lanka Tourism was honored with the Green Destination Award at ITB Berlin this year for its many years of efforts in the field of sustainable tourism. The country was honored for its efforts in implementing sustainable environmental practices in and around the Sigiriya rock fortress. This important historical fortress, dating from the fifth century, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site as early as 1982. The historic site, located on a rocky monolith in the center of the island and surrounded by tropical vegetation, is one of the country's most important tourist attractions.

After completing a comprehensive evaluation process, the jury decided to honor Sri Lanka Tourism's efforts for Sigiriya with the Green Destination Bronze Award. This award recognizes outstanding achievements in sustainable fields such as nature and monument protection, waste management, energy efficiency and climate adaptation and risk management. The prestigious award also recognizes the efforts of the South Asian country to further enhance the destination's attractiveness for tourists in the years to come. Not only visible criteria such as natural heritage are assessed and evaluated, but also political strategies and management plans, which must comply with the principles of sustainable development.

Participating organizations undergo a demanding and comprehensive qualification program: Destinations are required to implement a sustainability management system, with independent reviews of performance and progress, as well as recommendations for improvements, taking place every two to three years. After extensive preparation and reporting, 97 sustainability criteria and indicators are examined during an independent on-site audit.

"This award is an important milestone for tourism in Sri Lanka, especially at a time when sustainable tourism is becoming increasingly important to travelers around the world," said Buddika Hewawasam, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, at the award ceremony on March 4 at the ITB in Berlin. The award is an incentive for the country's tourism industry to adopt more sustainable practices and to further strengthen Sri Lanka as a leading sustainable destination of global excellence, emphasized Hewawasam in Berlin.

The Green Destinations Award & Certification Program encourages communities, counties, regions and protected areas to continuously and sustainably promote responsible destination management and encourage the tourism sector to adopt environmental practices. With the support of regional partners and representatives,

more than 160 destinations in 60 countries have received awards and certifications to date. The Green Destinations certification has been recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) since 2018.

The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority played a crucial role in receiving this award with their hard work and dedication, working continuously to get this achievement for almost two years, complying with the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, issued by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). These criteria include 4 main levels as bronze level, silver level, gold level and platinum level. "Even to achieve this target is a high task," said Mr. Upali Rathnayake, Deputy Director General, SLTDA, who was the main force of inspiration in leading his team to gain this opportunity.

In parallel with these efforts, there was a large list of highly supportive stakeholders such as the Central Cultural Fund (CCF), Divisional Secretariat, Archaeological department, Provincial Council Dambulla, Forest Department, to make this happen. SLTDA was the main coordinator for this project, along with a dedicated and a motivated team led by Mr. Upali Rathnayake (Deputy Director General, SLTDA), Mr. Deepan Sinharasan, Ms. Dinushka Peiris, Ms. Sandhapaba Kathriarachchi, and Mr. Muditha Abeysinghe. Mr. Chinthana Dumiduhewa did a massive contribution as the country coordinator for Green Destinations, while the project was funded by UNDP and ADB. The UNDP spent for studies and side development including guide training while ADB supported for the destination management plan and ready for infrastructure development. Solidarity helped for awareness, cleaning and self-assessment portal for Sustainable certification.

In general, this was the ultimate result of team work done in collaboration of SLTDA together with SLTPB and other key stakeholders, industry representatives and the Tourism community to highlight Sri Lanka in the global map as a sustainable tourism destination, further to its continuous line of international endorsements.

Regarding the process of this popular concept, there are around 350 countries certified as sustainable tourism destinations. The regulatory body to overlook the sustainability and certify all these countries is the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). The UNWTO is considered as a sister organization in contributing with this procedure. Sustainable Tourism is considered as a market trend, and also a subject which is carried out by other destinations.

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ITB China Launches MICE Meeting Point in Beijing

TTA BULLETIN

ITB China, the B2B-exclusive trade show for the Chinese travel industry, introduces a brand-new event – MICE Meeting Point China – taking place from September 11-12, 2025, in Beijing. This high-profile event is designed to cater to the evolving needs of China's rapidly changing MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) industry. The confex-style event will be co-located with the ITB China Business Travel Conference, offering its attendees a dynamic platform for networking, knowledge exchange, and business development.

To further enhance engagement, a post-event Fam trip will be organized from September 13-14, providing participants with first-hand experiences of China's top MICE destinations and offerings.

MICE Meeting Point will feature a dynamic conference stage where leading experts and innovators will present cutting-edge insights, trends, and first-hand updates shaping the future of MICE and business travel. The event will also host a dedicated business mart area, enabling sponsors to showcase their products, solutions, and services to a highly targeted audience at branded sponsor booths and tables. Additionally, exclusive networking events will offer valuable opportunities to connect with key industry players and decision-makers, fostering meaningful business interactions.

This event is proudly supported by the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism. "Beijing has always played a significant role in advancing the development of China's MICE industry. As a supporting unit for this event, we are deeply honored to host such an international MICE gathering in Beijing. We look forward to fostering innovation and growth in China's MICE industry through



ITB CHINA this event and further deepening cooperation both domestically and internationally", commented Sun Jian, Deputy Director, Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism.

According to the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), China ranked first with \$372.5 billion in business travel spending (a 9% increase) among the top fifteen countries in 2023. By 2028, it is projected to exceed \$2.0 trillion, highlighting a robust outlook for the global business travel sector in terms of the global business travel spending. According to Trip.Biz data, cross-border business travel is also surging, with figures as of October 2024 already 34% higher than in 2019 and a 72% increase compared to the same period in 2023, setting a new historical record. This growth highlights China's expanding influence in the global business travel sector.

Beyond financial growth, the industry is also undergoing a structural transformation, shaped by advancements in artificial intelligence, sustainability initiatives, digitalization, and hybrid meeting technologies. The demand for customized, tech-driven, and flexible MICE solutions is rising, with businesses prioritizing efficiency, personalization, and sustainability in their event planning strategies.

"The launch of MICE Meeting Point in China's capital Beijing is a significant step in providing a tailor-made platform for China's MICE and business travel industry, with the prospect of facilitating communication between domestic and international industry professionals, fostering innovation and creating new business opportunities. We look forward to contributing to the development of a more efficient, smarter, and globally connected MICE landscape in China", said Lydia Li, Director of ITB China.

"Thailand Summer Festivals" Unveils '7 Months 7 Wonders'

TTA BULLETIN

Running from March to September 2025, this spectacular celebration features over 70 events across seven categories, aiming to drive tourism, culture, and economic growth.

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports has launched the Thailand Summer Festivals, a seven-month celebration under the theme '7 Months 7 Wonders', running from March to September 2025. Featuring over 70 events across seven categories—Songkran, Pride, Cultural Festivals, Music, Sports, Food, and Arts & Creativity—the festival is part of the Amazing Thailand Grand Tourism and Sports Year 2025, aiming to position Thailand as a premier global travel destination.

Prime Minister H.E. Ms. Paetongtarn Shinawatra stated: "Tourism is a key driver of Thailand's economy, contributing over 14% of GDP. Our goal is to establish Thailand as a year-round travel destination, reducing the low-season impact with vibrant festivals and cultural experiences. The Thailand Summer Festivals will showcase diverse events across all regions, boosting local economies while attracting global visitors. With this initiative, we aim to achieve a record breaking of 3.5 trillion Baht in tourism revenue."

Ms. Paetongtarn presided over the Thailand Summer Festivals press launch held today at Government House, joined by Tourism and Sports Minister Mr. Sorawong Thienthong, Culture Minister Ms. Sudawan Wangsuphakhajkosol, and other Cabinet members. Also in attendance was Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee, Deputy Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister and Chairman of the National Soft Power Development Committee of Thailand.



Tourism and Sports Minister Mr. Sorawong Thienthong said: "With 2025 designated as the Amazing Thailand Grand Tourism and Sports Year, we are proud to invite travellers to experience Thailand's rich cultural heritage. The Thailand Summer Festivals will be a Grand Festivity, bringing together traditional Thai celebrations and world-class events to create a vibrant and engaging atmosphere. This initiative aims to elevate Thai traditions on a global stage and strengthen Thailand's appeal as a year-round travel destination for visitors from around the world."

A key highlight of the Thailand Summer Festivals is the Maha Songkran World Water Festival 2025, set to take place at Sanam Luang from 11-15 April, celebrating Songkran in Thailand, a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. This grand event not only honours Thailand's rich traditions but also strengthens its position as one of the world's top 10 festival destinations. Additionally, the nationwide 'Grand Songkran Festival' will showcase Thailand's vibrant cultural traditions across 17 provinces and four key locations in Bangkok. To engage international audiences, an official Songkran Thai New Year theme song has been introduced in 20 languages, including Thai, English, French, Chinese, German, and Japanese.

Aitken Spence Institute of Hotel Management Strengthens Hospitality

Workforce with Latest Graduates

TTA BULLETIN

Aitken Spence Institute of Hotel Management, a key initiative of Aitken Spence Hotels' Learning and Development arm, held its latest graduation ceremony at Heritance Ahungalla, marking another milestone in its mission to develop skilled professionals for the hospitality industry. Established in 2007 as part of the company's strategic Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, the institute operates with the support of the TUI Care Foundation, ensuring students receive world-class training and career opportunities.

With Hotel Schools in Ahungalla and Dambulla, the institute offers training in Food & Beverage, Housekeeping, and Professional Cookery through a five-month program that integrates classroom learning with practical industry experience. Since its inception, over 800 students have graduated, many securing employment within Aitken Spence Hotels

or furthering their studies.

The 2025 graduating class comprised 90 students, with those from Ahungalla specialising in Food & Beverage and Housekeeping, while Kandallama graduates focused on Food & Beverage and Professional Cookery. The event was attended by graduates, their families, and senior representatives from Aitken Spence Hotels, including Mr. Susith Jayawickrama, Joint Managing Director of Aitken Spence Hotel Managements (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Suresh Muttiah, Group Chief Human Resources Officer, and Mr. Maheesha Ratnayaka, COO of the Sri Lanka Hotel Sector.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Susith Jayawickrama emphasised the programme's role in shaping the industry's future workforce. "By equipping young professionals with the necessary skills and real-world



exposure, we are not only enhancing their career prospects but also strengthening Sri Lanka's hospitality sector," he stated.

A notable highlight of the ceremony was the presence of Ms. Dagmar Wöhr, Member of the Board of Trustees at the TUI Care Foundation, an organisation that has played a pivotal role in supporting the initiative. With assistance from the TUI Academy in collaboration with the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, students receive comprehensive support, including accommodation, meals, uniforms, and a stipend during their training. The TUI Care Foundation is an independent charitable

organization founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses and is dedicated to harnessing the positive impact of tourism to protect the natural environment and empower communities in travel destinations

More than 75% of graduates are expected to transition into roles within Aitken Spence Hotels, reinforcing the institute's commitment to bridging the skills gap in the hospitality industry. This year's ceremony once again highlighted the institute's dedication to providing structured career pathways for aspiring hospitality professionals in Sri Lanka.

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HOTELS

Discover Sri Lanka's Southern Coastal Escape, Dickwella Resort: From Surf to Serenity

TTA BULLETIN

You haven't truly experienced Sri Lanka until you've visited Dickwella. Here, jade-blue waves meet golden shores, while the salty breeze carries the aroma of freshly grilled seafood. The locals, renowned for their warmth and hospitality, greet you with a heartfelt "Ayubowan", making you feel instantly at home. Located along Sri Lanka's southern coastline, Dickwella is famous for its immaculate beaches and coral reefs beneath the turquoise waters. Just minutes away from



Point Dondra, Dickwella Resort & Spa by Browns Hotels & Resorts offers an idyllic escape where the rhythm of the ocean blends with luxury and local charm.

The resort offers a selection of elegant accommodations, including deluxe, family and suite rooms designed for ultimate relaxation. With soothing coastal colours, contemporary furnishings and panoramic ocean views, each room invites you to unwind in style. Whether lounging by the window with a book or gazing at the endless horizon, the rooms create a serene atmosphere, making you feel at home by the sea.

The lush greenery complements the turquoise waters and you might even spot local chefs cycling along the seaside stretch with the catch-of-the-day in tow, while offering a friendly wave. For adventure enthusiasts, the resort features a diving centre and access to renowned diving and snorkelling spots, guided by a PADI Master. The Ayuwasa Spa provides a variety of Ayurveda treatments with expert therapists, ensuring a rejuvenating experience for you.

At Dickwella Resort, you can immerse yourself in nature, culture and adventure



through exciting excursions. Turtle watching at Batheegama village, where you can feed sea moss to turtles, is a must-do. The Hummanaya Blow Hole, one of the largest in the world, offers a thrilling spectacle as waves shoot up into the air with a mighty roar. Hiriketiya Beach, just a short drive away, offers pristine shores and great surf, making it a hidden gem for surfers. The Dickwella Arts and Crafts village showcases the region's rich cultural heritage with beautifully crafted paintings and wood carvings.

For those who appreciate fine dining, the Bay Watch Restaurant at Dickwella Resort provides an array of seafood dishes, while the Sea Spray Restaurant serves a variety of local and international cuisine, all complemented by stunning ocean views. For your next trip, Dickwella Resort & Spa offers the perfect opportunity to discover the beauty of Sri Lanka's southern coastline and enjoy a truly unforgettable experience.

Embark on a Culinary Journey with Chef Riza Bhatti at Cinnamon Grand's Ithar Promotion

TTA BULLETIN

Cinnamon Grand Colombo is thrilled to welcome the celebrated Pakistani chef, Chef Riza Bhatti, for an exclusive Ithar promotion at Cinnamon Lakeside. From 10th to 30th March 2025, guests are invited to indulge in a gastronomic adventure that showcases the rich and diverse flavours of Pakistan.

Chef Riza Bhatti, renowned for his culinary prowess, brings with him a treasure trove of traditional Pakistani recipes, each dish crafted with passion and precision. The Ithar promotion promises to be a feast for the senses, offering a sumptuous buffet that highlights the essence of Pakistani cuisine.

A Symphony of Salads: Begin your culinary journey with an assortment of vibrant salads. The Bulgur with Avocado and Chickpeas Salad offers a refreshing start, while the Roasted Beef Pasta Salad provides a hearty option. The Cucumber Feta Salad with Sumac and the Seafood Salad with Mango are perfect for those seeking a burst of flavour. For a touch of tradition, try the Chicken Tikka Salad or the Grilled Paneer with Corn Salad. The Beetroot Salad and Lentil with Ham Salad add a unique twist, while the Egg Spinach Salad and Roasted Pumpkin with Tomato Coriander round out the selection.

Achar and Chutneys: No Pakistani meal is complete without a variety of pickles and chutneys. The Achar Counter features tangy options like Lemon, Mango, Carrots,

Chilli, Garlic, and a mix of flavours. Complement your meal with chutneys from the Chutneys Counter, offering Mint, Raita, Mango, Plum, Imly, Garlic, Tomato, Pineapple, and Coconut.

Hearty Soups and Biryani: Warm up with a bowl of Chicken Shorba, a traditional Pakistani soup. The Biryani selection is a highlight, featuring Mutton Sindhi Biryani, Mutton Yakhni Pulao, and Vegetable Biryani, each dish bursting with aromatic spices and rich flavours.

Delectable Main Courses: The main course offerings are a testament to Chef Bhatti's expertise. Savour the Chicken Jalfrezi, Mutton Joint Masala, and Kozi Chicken Haleem. The Chicken Black Pepper and Karela Pyaz provide a delightful contrast, while the Saag Spinach and Maki Roti offer a taste of traditional Pakistani comfort food. Don't miss the Dall Masar (whole), Achari Baigan, Beef Paya (trotters), and Chicken Ginger, each dish a masterpiece in its own right.

BBQ Delights: Experience the succulent flavours of the BBQ section, featuring Chicken Tikka, Boti, Mutton Khoya Kabab, and Chicken Haryali Boti. The Taka Tak section offers Mutton Tawa Qeema and Beef Chapli Kebab, cooked to perfection.

Sweet Endings: No meal is complete without dessert. Indulge in Shahi Khree, Firmi Thuthi, and Sheer Khurma, each



dessert a sweet symphony of flavours.

Channa Chat and Samosa Stations: The Channa Chat Counter offers a variety of chaat, including Channe Chat, Creamy Chat, Pani Puri Fruit Chat, and Dahi Bara. The Samosa station features Vegetable Samosa and Qeem Samosa (Beef), perfect for a quick bite.

Pakoras and Beverages: Enjoy a selection of Mix Pakora, including Chilli, Capsicum, Potato, Eggplant, and Spinach. Quench your thirst with Rooh Afza, Rooh Afza with Milk, and Nimbu Pani. For a sweet finish, try the Stuffed Dates with Almonds and Kaj.

Join us at Cinnamon Lakeside to experience the rich and diverse flavours of Pakistan, brought to you by the esteemed Chef Riza Bhatti. For reservations and

enquiries, contact us at +94 11 249 1000. Do not miss this unique culinary event!

Located in the heart of the city, Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo offers tranquil getaways in its unique offering of a 'Resort in the City' with expansive lakefront and garden views. Unveiling elegance and grandeur is Colombo's most luxurious, modern, and truly 'grand' city hotels, Cinnamon Grand Colombo, located near Colombo's Galle Face Green, overlooking views of the majestic Indian ocean and upcoming Port City. Completing the Colombo city collection is the first of its kind in South Asia, Cinnamon Red Colombo. Walking distance to shopping centers, historical sites and nightlife precincts of Colombo, this pioneering addition to the Cinnamon Colombo Hotel collection embodies the 'Lean Luxury' concept.

Discover Unforgettable Escapes with Serendipity Retreats: Where Luxury Meets Adventure

TTA BULLETIN

In a world where travel has become more about experiences than mere sightseeing, Serendipity Retreats redefines hospitality by offering exclusive, experiential stays in Sri Lanka's most captivating destinations. Each property is a masterpiece—seamlessly blending luxury, nature, and culture—to create unforgettable journeys for the discerning traveller.

Whether you seek serene lakeside solitude, a historic fort hideaway, birdlife havens, or an off-the-grid cave retreat, Serendipity Retreats crafts immersive experiences that go beyond the ordinary.

From a luxury cave hotel to a flamingo-fronted sanctuary, each of our six retreats is designed to immerse guests in Sri Lanka's diverse landscapes.

Perched in the misty Hanthana Mountain range, Dendrobium House is a six suite hill country boutique hotel, with breathtaking views of Sri Lanka's Highlands. Thoughtfully designed in a contemporary colonial style with interiors by renowned architect Channa Daswatte, this luxurious house is a home away from home.

Guests are treated to an exquisite farm to

table culinary experience, with homegrown three course menus and a signature high tea to die for.

A property unlike any other, The Cavern is built into a cave within a high-elevation 50-acre forest in Agarapathana. Once an abandoned tea plantation, the replanted cloud forest now houses a luxury three bedroom villa set into the cave. The villa features balconies, modern amenities, and stunning interiors. Guests enjoy full board stays with curated menus showcasing seasonal local produce.

The only luxury hotel in Mannar, Palmyrah House is hidden amidst nature in the middle of Mannar island, the gateway to the North. The 14 bedroom hotel is well appointed with a full suite of facilities for the whole family including a swimming pool, gym, library, bicycles, conference centre and breezy restaurant that specialises in Northern cuisine. The locally hired and long-standing team is always on call to take care of all your needs with attention and care.

A classic home offering a genuine flavour of Sri Lanka's culture and heritage, 32 Middle Street a three bedroom villa is enveloped within the vibrant Galle Fort; combining

historic charm with modern luxuries. Take meandering walks through cobblestoned streets and rediscover the picturesque Galle heritage city, shop for the day's freshest seafood or explore the bustling restaurant, bar and cultural scene of the fort.

Along the South Coast, Villa Thuya is located in the coastal town of Balapitiya. Featuring a captivating ocean backdrop, an outdoor pool with a natural rock formation and sweeping ocean views, this three bedroom luxurious villa offers private access to a boulder beach. End a perfect day with evening tea or drinks on the boulders as the sun sets.

Lying between the main Northern and Southern Bolgoda lakes, Lilypod is only a short drive south of the capital city, making it the ideal getaway spot for families, groups and hosting special events. This tranquil home is built to flawlessly blend in with its surrounding environment; featuring expansive lake and garden views, a swimming pool and luxurious living spaces.

For those looking for a unique event venue, Dendrobium House in the hills and Lily Pod by the lake are ideal locations for weddings, special occasions and executive retreats.

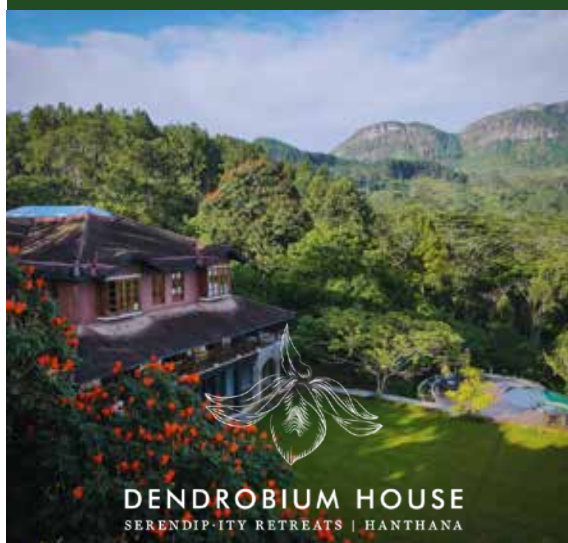
The Cavern has been crafted into a natural cave hotel within a Rolex Award winning cloud forest surrounded by tea plantations. Providing the perfect environment for a flourishing eco-system featuring abundant birdlife, native and highland flora, reptiles, fishing cats and roaming leopards. Guests can experience close encounters with these stunning creatures through estate tours, nocturnal tours and highland hiking around the property.

Within The Cavern guests can also relax into the serenity with a naturally heated spa pool, sauna and massage therapy room. Evenings are most often spent sharing adventures from the day around the stylish feature living room fireplace or around the outdoor fire pit.

Dendrobium House is located just 3 kilometers from the start of The Pekoe Trail, a 300km trek through highlands and tea plantations, recently named one of Time Magazine's World's Greatest Places of 2025. The inhouse naturalist is on hand to navigate guests through the trail and to the best view points, the walk culminating with a scenic picnic and a Defender return journey.

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HOTELS / FAMILY ALBUM

Minor Hotels Continues China Expansion with Anantara Thousand Island Lake Resort

TTA BULLETIN

The new lakeside project blends Anantara's lifestyle and luxury expertise with the natural beauty of Qiandao Lake for an unparalleled vacation experience

Minor Hotels, a global hospitality leader with a network of more than 560 hotels across six continents, and its Chinese joint venture, Funyard Minor, have partnered with YouChao International Tourism Hotel Co. Ltd. to develop Anantara Thousand Island Lake Resort. Scheduled to open on the banks of Qiandao Lake in Hangzhou City in October 2027, the 160-key resort is poised to bring a fresh perspective to the popular holiday destination in Zhejiang Province.

Spanning a total construction area of 36,000 square metres, Anantara Thousand Island Lake Resort will honour Qiandao's fame as the world's most island-rich freshwater lake. Holidaymakers familiar with the area's charm as well as new generations of vacationers will be immersed in the tranquil beauty of the reservoir and the lush surrounding forest. On their doorstep, they

will find abundant natural and cultural attractions, such as the rich culture of Xin'An, once a major trade centre on the Silk Road, picturesque mountain villages and fishing adventures at Longchuanwan National Fishing Centre.

The property is designed to accommodate a wide range of guests, from solo travellers seeking solitude to families looking for in-nature activities to business travellers with the resort's multifunctional banquet and meeting space. In addition to guest rooms ranging in size from 62 to 340 square meters, dining outlets at Anantara Thousand Island Lake Resort will include all-day dining, specialty and Chinese restaurants. The hotel will offer a variety of recreational facilities to enhance the guest experience including a fitness centre, swimming pool, spa, tennis court, tea garden, and a forest oxygen bar.

"We are honoured to collaborate with YouChao International Tourism Hotel Co. Ltd. to bring Anantara to Qiandao Lake," said Mr. Eddy Tiftik, Vice President of

Development for Greater China at Minor Hotels Group and a board member of Funyard Minor China. "This cooperation marks another significant milestone in our expansion in the Yangtze Delta Region, while also showcasing our deep commitment and confidence in the Chinese market. We look forward to this project bringing positive economic impact to the local community and promoting the sustained development of the tourism industry."

"We are delighted to join hands with Minor Hotels," said Ms. Tang Wenyi, Chairman of YouChao International Tourism Hotel Co. Ltd. "We look forward to working closely with Minor Hotels to promote the development of the hotel industry in the area, create

more commercial and social value, and leverage Qiandao Lake's immense potential as a world-class tourism destination."

Anantara Thousand Island Lake Resort is located 22 kilometres from Qiandaohu Railway Station that links it to tier one cities such as Hangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing and Nanjing, and 150 kilometres from Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport. Minor Hotels currently operates four properties in China and plans to grow to 15 properties within the next three years.



Pipinya Negombo and Jetwing Hotels Inaugural Pickleball Tournament in Negombo

Pipinya Negombo & Jetwing Hotels successfully hosted the city's first ever pickleball tournament on the weekend of February 15th and 16th. Players and spectators from across the city and around Sri Lanka congregated at the new courts on Negombo's beach road for a weekend of activity, merriment, and sporting celebration. Over 50 players entered, enabling a whopping 145 matches to be played over the two days, with some truly epic encounters showcasing how quickly the sport is advancing in the country.

The tournament included a variety of categories split into intermediate and advanced divisions. The courts in Negombo only opened in December of last year, so it was a great achievement for many local players to battle their way into the medals. Pickleball is one of the

fastest growing sports in the world and 2025 promises to be another year of rapid expansion for the game in Sri Lanka as more courts open up, more big tournaments are held and more players discover the joys of this fun and inclusive racket game.

Men's Singles (Intermediate) Winner - Nishendra Ekanayake and Runner Up - Enon Croos

Women's Singles (Intermediate) Winner - Aneesha Lahir and Runner Up - Amani Haniffa

Women's Doubles (Intermediate) Winners - Aneesha Lahir & Amani Haniffa and Runners Up - Mehenaz Zaveer & Loushanie Ranatunga

Men's Doubles (Intermediate) Winners - Enon Croos & Enrique Engman and Runners Up - Rajeev Fernando & Dilran Fernando

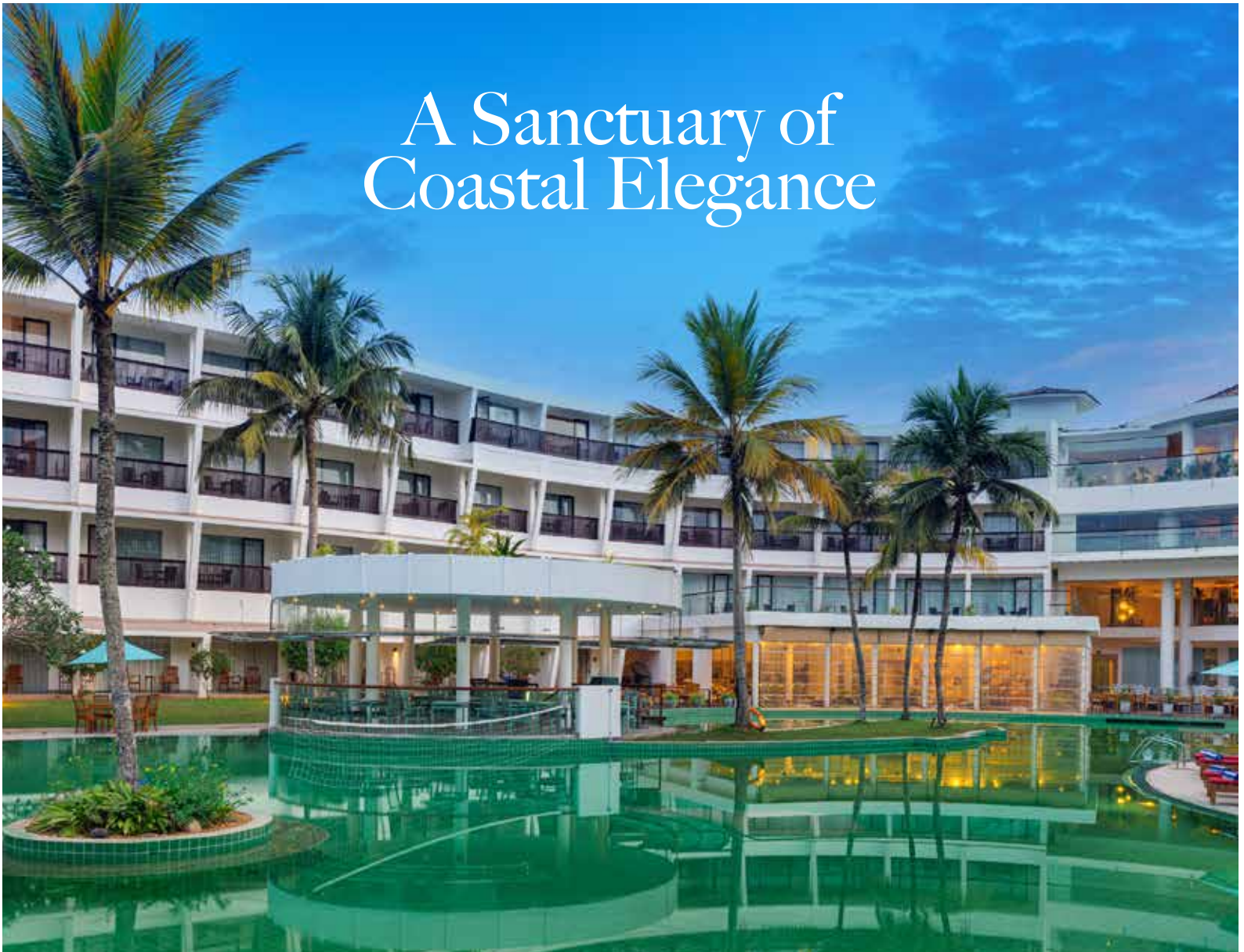
Men's Singles (Advanced) Winner - Sankha Atukorale and Runner Up - Janith Perera

Mixed Doubles (Advanced) Winners - Sankha Atukorale & Mehenaz Zaveer and Runners Up - Sahan Attygalle & Aneesha Lahir

Men's Doubles (Advanced) Winners - Janith Perera & Abishek Augustine and Runners Up - Tom Armstrong & Sankha Atukorale



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HOTELS & RESORTS

HOTELS / FAMILY ALBUM

ONYX Hospitality Group Hosts British Airways Holidays UK Agents on FAM Trip Featuring Amari and OZO Resorts in Thailand

TTA BULLETIN

ONYX Hospitality Group, the prominent management company in Southeast Asia specialising in hotels and resorts, serviced apartments and luxury residences, recently welcomed a select group of British Airways Holidays sales agents from the UK on an exclusive familiarisation (FAM) trip to Thailand, offering them first-hand experiences at Amari Phuket, Amari Koh Samui, and OZO Chaweng Samui.

The trip was designed to provide agents with in-depth knowledge of these popular resorts, allowing them to confidently recommend the best stays for their high-end clientele.

ONYX Hospitality Group curated an immersive itinerary, allowing agents to explore various room categories, key public spaces, dining venues, and leisure facilities. This first-hand experience provided valuable insights into the distinctive hospitality, signature offerings, and standout experiences that define both the Amari and OZO brands.

The Amari brand is renowned for its warm and contemporary Thai-inspired hospitality. With a strong focus on elevated service, locally inspired design, and world-class

amenities, Amari properties provide modern-contemporary spaces for guests to connect and relax in some of Asia's most sought-after destinations. OZO is designed for travellers who value comfort, convenience, and connectivity. Known for its stylish yet practical accommodation options and vibrant service culture, OZO hotels offer a seamless stay with thoughtful touches, including premium sleep-centric rooms, energising breakfasts, and prime locations that allow guests to easily explore their surroundings.

Amari Phuket – Offering an unparalleled beachfront experience on the pristine sands of Patong Beach. A highlight of the resort is the TreePods: providing a secluded and intimate dining experience, elevated and hidden amongst matured trees, offering stunning views of Patong Bay. After a day of relaxing at the pool or exploring, spectacular sunsets can be enjoyed from Amari Phuket's renowned hotspots The Jetty and Samutr Bar. Image below: British Airways Holidays Sales Agents at Amari Phuket, hosted by Alexandre Huet, Resort Manager, Amari Phuket.

Amari Koh Samui – Located on the beautiful Chaweng Beach, Amari Koh Samui

blends traditional Thai elegance with modern comfort. The resort now features three swimming pools, including a newly opened pool in the Garden Wing, offering a serene space that enhances the resort's family-friendly appeal. Guests can also enjoy spacious accommodations and exceptional dining at Prego, one of the island's top Italian restaurants.

In addition to the new pool, the resort has updated its Garden Wing with new room categories, including Superior Pool Side, Superior Pool View, and Superior Garden View rooms, all offering easy access to the pool and lush gardens. Launching in May 2025, the Tropical Pool Side Connecting Rooms offer a perfect balance of privacy and togetherness for families, with connecting doors and balconies that overlook the pool and gardens for ultimate relaxation. Image below: British Airways Holidays Sales Agents at Amari Koh Samui, hosted by Ruud Hulscher, General Manager, Amari Koh Samui

OZO Chaweng Samui – A vibrant and stylish beachfront hotel designed for modern travellers, featuring sleek rooms and an unbeatable location in the heart of



Chaweng, perfect for those looking to explore the island's rich culture, nightlife and attractions. OZO Chaweng Samui features a free-form beachfront swimming pool designed for guests to relax and cool off after a busy day of exploring. Additionally, there is a dedicated children's pool adjacent to the main pool, providing a safe and enjoyable space for younger guests. Image below: British Airways Holidays Sales Agents at OZO Chaweng Samui, hosted by OZO Chaweng Samui representatives including Mr. Andrias Ananta (General Manager).

Through this first-hand experience, ONYX Hospitality Group reaffirmed its commitment to exceptional stays in Thailand's top destinations. Hosting the British Airways Holidays team ensures industry partners can confidently recommend tailored experiences to discerning travellers, while ONYX continues to strengthen its travel trade partnerships.

Sri Lanka makes a sensational appearance at OTM and SATTE 2025 in India

Starting its promotional work for 2025, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) added another feather into its cap of endorsements, by being recognized as the most innovative Tourism Board promotion in Outbound Travel Mart (OTM). In parallel to that, several other sub events were held. The OTM was held in Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai—India, from 30th January to 01st February 2025. Before OTM, the Global Village – Global Exchange & Trade Exhibition was held at the Surat International Exhibition & Convention Centre, Sarsana, Surat (Gujarat - India), from 25th to 27th January 2025. This travel fair was organized by Southern Gujarat Cham-

ber of Commerce and Industry (SGCCI).

Sri Lanka participated in both OTM and South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange (SATTE), held from 19th – 21st Feb 2025, in New Delhi, India. This was an excellent opportunity for Sri Lanka to promote its potential as a unique travel destination, especially for the Indian counterparts, as SLTPB has identified India as the number one source market for Sri Lanka, tourism bringing the largest number of tourist arrivals to the destination.

SLTPB has been a regular member of both OTM and

SATTE trade fairs in India, thus as a regular participant SLTPB has many Trade and Industrial experiences with the Indian community. Sri Lanka participated in the 26th OTM travel and trade fair 2025, making it a long-lasting relationship with its neighbor in this segment. OTM is the largest travel trade show in India, connecting the global travel fraternity for more than two decades and also the only travel show in India with a balanced mix of travel trade and corporate sector. It is also considered as a platform to expand MICE Tourism and lure more International Industry stakeholders under its wing. OTM is the leading travel trade show in the Asia-Pacific as well.



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HOTELS

Vichitra Vivah 2025 – A Spectacular Wedding Exhibition That Celebrated Romance and Elegance

TTA BULLETIN

The Vichitra Vivah 2025, a grand wedding exhibition, unfolded as a magnificent celebration of love, luxury, and culture at Pegasus Reef. This event, held from February 22nd to 23rd, captivated attendees with an array of stunning bridal showcases, culinary delights, and fashion spectacles that set the tone for an unforgettable wedding season.

Vendor Briefing Meeting: Setting the Stage
The event kicked off on February 19th with a detailed vendor briefing meeting, where participants were given an overview of the exhibition and the key highlights to expect. The meeting served as an opportunity for vendors to clarify any queries they had, ensuring smooth execution on the big days ahead. A networking session, paired with high tea, followed the discussions, allowing vendors to connect and build relationships in a relaxed environment.

The Grand Opening Ceremony: A Traditional Start

Saturday, February 22nd marked the grand opening of Vichitra Vivah 2024. The event began at 9:00 AM with the arrival of VIPs, media, and distinguished guests, followed by the melodious beats of traditional drummers and vibrant dance performances.

The official inauguration ceremony commenced with the lighting of the oil lamp, signifying the beginning of the festivities.

Guests were welcomed by the Pegasus Reef management, General Manager Mr. Renuke Coswatte delivered an inspiring speech before the ribbon-cutting ceremony, officially declaring the event open. Keynote addresses from distinguished guests added a touch of prestige to the ceremony. The press conference and media interactions followed, providing valuable insights into the event's purpose and the exciting experiences that lay ahead.

Saturday (22/02) & Sunday (23/03) opened its doors to the public from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM, inviting guests to explore the magnificent stalls set up by top vendors. From bridal wear and accessories to venue decorators and photographers, the exhibition offered an all-encompassing glimpse into the wedding industry's latest trends.



picturesque backdrop into a runway of bridal glamour. Guests were seated in front of the ocean, enjoying a unique and breathtaking view while witnessing the elegant pieces that dominated bridal fashion for the year ahead.

The fashion show, which ran from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM, was a blend of haute couture and modern wedding trends, giving guests a sneak peek into what would dominate wedding

fashion for the year.

In Conclusion: A Timeless Wedding Experience

Vichitra Vivah 2025 set a high benchmark for future wedding exhibitions, creating a space where couples, vendors, and industry professionals could converge to celebrate the beauty and intricacies of wedding planning. With its combination of cultural richness, innovative showcases, and interactive sessions, Vichitra Vivah not only presented an exciting platform for vendors but also created a memorable experience for all attendees, ensuring that 2024 will be a year full of breathtaking weddings.

Pegasus Reef Hotel Hosts a Vibrant Holi Splash Celebration in Colombo

TTA BULLETIN

The Pegasus Reef Hotel in Wattala brought color and excitement to the evening of March 16, 2025, as it hosted its very first Holi Beach Splash celebration from 6:00 PM into the night. The event was a lively mix of Bollywood beats, delicious food, and a vibrant atmosphere, creating an unforgettable evening for all who attended.

DJ Iman took center stage, spinning high-energy Bollywood tracks that kept the crowd on their feet. Guests danced and enjoyed the colorful splashes, fully embracing the spirit of Holi under the

evening sky.

A variety of food stalls offering mouth-watering Indian street food added to the festive spirit, and each ticket came with a complimentary beer, ensuring everyone stayed refreshed throughout the night.

Set against the backdrop of the beach and with a cool sea breeze, the Holi Splash at Pegasus Reef Hotel provided the perfect setting for an exciting celebration. The event, though new, quickly became a highlight for many, with guests already looking forward to future editions.



Anantara Chiang Mai Resort Launches New Luxury Pool Suite

TTA BULLETIN

Chiang Mai's most luxurious riverfront resort becomes now ever more luxurious with the unveiling of its new Kasara Pool Suite, with spacious terrace, a cabana and a private pool.

Anantara Chiang Mai Resort boasts a privileged setting on the banks of the Mae Ping River, the lifeline of this ancient city. Spread across verdant lawns, its 84 rooms and suites enjoy a cool breeze, dappling sunlight and all-encompassing peace.

Now unveiled is its most luxurious suite yet, the new Kasara Pool Suite. One of a kind, and at 140 sqm, it is unrivalled in space and exclusivity. In keeping with the design of the resort by famed architects Kerry Hill, the aesthetic is Zen, with indigenous teak, muted tones and natural fabrics ode to Chiang Mai's earthy way of life.

Open-plan living unfolds in the interior, with different areas in which to sleep, work and relax. The bathroom is also notable, with a partition that can be slid open so that guests can enjoy the tranquil views from the tub.

Most spectacular of all is the outdoor courtyard, screened away from the world by lush greenery. In this sanctuary, guests



may float in their heated plunge pool, soak in the jacuzzi, and nap in the shaded cabana.

They can also enjoy a signature Anantara floating breakfast here, complimentary with each stay, or Designer Dining under the stars, with a chef on hand for the evening to prepare a spectacular meal, and a butler to see to all other details.

All suite guests at Anantara Chiang Mai Resort enjoy Kasara privileges, including a personal welcome by management and in-suite check-in, welcome bottle of sparkling wine, breakfast in bed, savings on dining and spa, social hour cocktails and canapes, and a late check-out on their day of departure.

The Kasara Pool Suite experience starts at THB 25,000++ per night. For reservations, or more information, call +66 53 253 333, email chiangmai@anantara.com or visit anantara.com

Emirates' A350 debuts in Sri Lanka, offering airline's unique Premium Economy experience

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates' latest aircraft, the Airbus A350, has made its debut in Sri Lanka, introducing an exciting new dimension in air travel to and from the popular destination of Colombo.



generous recline. Each seat has a 13.3-inch screen, in addition to in-seat charging points and a wood-finished side cocktail table.

The roll out of Emirates' A350 aircraft to Sri Lanka featuring the airline's latest interiors, industry-first technologies and innovations, reinforces the airline's commitment to a market it has served for 39 years, and offers exceptional levels of comfort onboard.

The Premium Economy dining experience includes a welcome drink served in fine glassware, and a selection of meals made with seasonal ingredients, served on Royal Doulton china tableware with stainless-steel cutlery. Premium Economy customers are also offered an extended beverage list.

Presenting the first experience of Emirates' sought-after Premium Economy cabin on the Colombo – Dubai route, the A350 now operates flight EK654/655 six days a week.

The Emirates A350 aircraft offers three cabin classes, with 32 next generation Business Class seats, 21 seats in Premium Economy, and 259 generously pitched Economy Class seats. The A350 aircraft are earmarked to serve short to medium haul cities on the Emirates network, and Colombo is among the first nine destinations to be served by one.

EK654 departs Dubai International Airport (DXB) at 10:45hrs (every day except Wednesdays) and arrives at Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA), Katunayake at 16:50hrs (all times are local). The return flight, EK655 departs BIA at 22:05hrs and reaches DXB at 00:55, the following day on Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays and at 01:05hrs, the following day, on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Emirates' A350 showcases the latest in cabin innovation and has been designed to maximise customer comfort. Standout features include a newly-designed, more comfortable Economy Class cabin; upgraded Business Class and Premium Economy cabins; the best image quality on any aircraft with 4K and 4K HDR ultra-responsive touchscreens; extra-high ceilings with wider aisles in all classes; and faster Wi-Fi with uninterrupted global connectivity across all A350 destinations.

Emirates' Premium Economy customers can experience quiet luxury with cream-coloured leather and wood panel finishing similar to Business Class. Each 19.5-inch seat is designed to provide optimal comfort and support, with 6-way adjustable headrests, a footrest and a

Sabre announces new distribution agreement with Vietjet Air

TTA BULLETIN

Sabre Corporation (NASDAQ: SABR), a leading global travel technology company, today announced a new distribution agreement with Vietjet Air, Vietnam's new-age airline with an expanding flight network across the Asia Pacific region. This alliance marks an important milestone, as Vietjet content will now be available through Sabre's global travel marketplace for the first time.



beyond."

"We're thrilled to partner with Sabre, a leader in travel technology and distribution," said Nguyen Thanh Son, Vietjet Vice President. "By making our content available through the Sabre distribution network, we are reaching more travellers globally. The agreement will enhance our ability to offer competitive fares and extensive route options to more passengers around the world."

With the agreement, Vietjet will be able to distribute its fares and offers globally through Sabre's Global Distribution System (GDS). This will enhance the breadth of content available to Sabre-connected agencies, enabling them to better serve their customers with more flight choices and competitive pricing from one of Southeast Asia's most dynamic airlines.

Vietjet currently flies to around 100 destinations, as well as having codeshare partnerships with other leading airlines. The airline currently has orders with leading aircraft manufacturers worldwide and is continuously receiving new aircraft to expand its global flight network. With this new agreement, Sabre-connected travel agencies can now seamlessly book Vietjet flights, providing their customers with greater access to a carrier that continues to redefine low-cost travel in the region.

"We're very excited to welcome Vietjet into the Sabre distribution network," said Brett Thorstad, Vice President of Sabre Travel Solutions, Agency Sales, Asia Pacific. "The integration of Vietjet's content into Sabre's platform is set to provide significant benefits for the carrier themselves as well as travel agencies and travellers, fostering greater connectivity and contributing to the continued growth of the travel industry in Southeast Asia and

Qatar Airways Launches Off-Airport Check-in Service in Makkah for Hajj and Umrah Passengers

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways, the World's Best Airline as voted by Skytrax 2024, has introduced off-airport check-in service in Makkah, providing Hajj and Umrah passengers with a seamless and hassle-free travel experience. Launched in partnership with Saudi Ground Services (SGS), this service enables passengers to complete check-in formalities, receive their boarding passes, and the baggage to be collected from the city, ensuring a smooth journey to the airport.



Effective 1 March 2025, Qatar Airways passengers departing from Jeddah can take advantage of a new off-airport check-in service at Makkah Clock Royal Tower, a Fairmont Hotel. Conveniently located at the hotel entrance from the ring road on L2, this service streamlines the check-in process, reducing airport wait times and allowing pilgrims to focus on their spiritual journey with ease and comfort.

solutions in collaboration with our partner Airlines ensuring we fulfil our commitment to serve all Hajj & Umrah passengers. Our partnership with Qatar Airways reflects our shared dedication to deliver seamless and Innovative travel experiences enabling pilgrims focus on their spiritual journey while we take care of their travel needs with convenience, efficiency, and peace of mind."

Passengers using the off-airport check-in service will benefit from an expedited departure process, with baggage securely transported to the airport and minimal waiting times at check-in counters. This initiative is part of Qatar Airways' ongoing efforts to enhance its services for Hajj and Umrah travellers, offering a superior level of convenience and comfort from the moment their journey begins.

Qatar Airways' Group Chief Executive Officer, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer, said: "At Qatar Airways, we recognise the profound significance of Hajj and Umrah and remain committed to enhancing the travel experience for our passengers. By introducing the off-airport check-in service in Makkah, in partnership with Saudi Ground Services, we are ensuring that pilgrims can begin their journey with convenience and peace of mind. This initiative reflects our dedication to delivering world-class services tailored to the needs of our passengers, reaffirming our commitment to seamless and innovative travel solutions."

This service is part of Qatar Airways' award-winning offerings, designed to provide the highest levels of comfort, reliability, and care for those undertaking this sacred journey. As the World's Best Airline for an unprecedented eight times, Qatar Airways remains committed to elevating every aspect of the passengers' travel experience to passengers travelling from Saudi Arabia. With operations to 11 cities across the Kingdom, offering over 120 weekly flights – including 35 weekly flights to Jeddah – Qatar Airways continues to enhance connectivity and convenience, ensuring a seamless and exceptional journey for travellers.

Saudi Ground Service' Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Mohammad Abdul Kareem Mazi, said: "At Saudi Ground Services, we are honoured to continuously expand our innovative Hajj & Umrah off-airport

Gulf Air Announces Direct Flights to Nairobi, Kenya

TTA BULLETIN

Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, has announced the launch of direct flights to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya, further expanding its network in Africa. This service marks Gulf Air's return to Nairobi, re-establishing a vital link to the capital city, which was last served in 2012.



Starting June 2nd, 2025, Gulf Air will operate five weekly flights to Nairobi. Services will be available on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, with two flights offered on Fridays, all operated by the modern Airbus A320neo aircraft. This direct service aligns with Gulf Air's strategy of calibrated expansion and serving new markets, providing passengers with greater choice and convenience for travel between East Africa and Bahrain, and beyond.

Gulf Air Group Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Goh stated: "We are delighted to announce the launch of direct flights to Nairobi, offering convenient flight options to our passengers. The Nairobi route will enhance connectivity for both business and leisure travelers, fostering stronger ties between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Republic of Kenya."

Passengers can book their flights to Nairobi and stay updated on flight timings by downloading the Gulf Air mobile application, visiting the Gulf Air website gulfair.com or through travel agents.

Virgin Australia and Qatar Airways Partnership Takes Off

TTA BULLETIN

Australian travellers are set to benefit after a deeper strategic partnership between Virgin Australia and Qatar Airways Group was given the green light by the Australian Government.



Qatar Airways Group's minority 25 per cent investment in Virgin Australia has now received

Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) approval following the Federal Treasurer's announcement today. This follows the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) Draft Determination on 18 February indicating its intention to authorise the airlines' integrated alliance, with final approval expected in March/April 2025. Together, they help open the door to the airline's return to long-haul international flying.

Virgin Australia now awaits a decision from the International Air Services Commission (IASC) on what is an uncontested allocation of air rights for services between Australia and Qatar, due to commence in June.

Qatar Airways Group's 25 per cent stake will provide Virgin Australia with access to the scale and expertise of a world-leading global airline, strengthening its ability to compete domestically and internationally and driving increased competition in Australian aviation.

Bain Capital, Virgin Group, and Queensland Investment Corporation will retain shareholdings in Virgin Australia.

Subject to IASC approval, Virgin Australia will return to long-haul flying in June 2025, with flights from Sydney, Brisbane, and Perth to Doha. Flights from Melbourne to Doha are scheduled to commence in December 2025. These flights will be operated utilising aircraft wet-leased from Qatar Airways. As well as enhancing competition and placing downward pressure on international airfares, these flights will provide a significant boost to the Australian visitor economy, including the tourism sector, generating an estimated \$3 billion in economic value over the next five years.

Thanks to the airlines' integrated alliance, customers on Virgin Australia's new Doha flights will be able to connect seamlessly to Qatar Airways' global network, including more than 100 new connecting itineraries across Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The expanded codeshare and collaboration arrangement will also provide access to increased points earn and redemption opportunities for members of Velocity and Qatar Airways' Privilege Club.

Following consultation with unions and relevant cabin crew and pilot communi-

ties, there has been an overwhelming response to the expressions of interest for secondment opportunities for Virgin Australia pilot and cabin crew with Qatar Airways. This will also provide promotional opportunities for other team members and new hires through the backfilling of seconded staff.

Virgin Australia and Qatar Airways signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on a range of sustainability initiatives in October 2024. Areas of focus under the MoU include aiming to advance the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel, environmental management including waste and energy management, sustainable procurement, and aviation workforce development.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Officer, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer said: "This latest development is a significant step towards solidifying the strong and enduring relationship that continues to evolve between Qatar Airways Group and Virgin Australia. It is also a huge boost to our shared ambition to create even greater choice and value for all Australian passengers, with healthy competition and world-class service at the very core of our collective offering.

"We are confident in our ability to deliver an alliance between our two airlines that will provide immense benefit to customers, Australian businesses, Australian jobs and the wider economy."

Virgin Australia Group Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Jayne Hrdlika, said: "Today we welcome a new era for Virgin Australia. Qatar Airways' investment is a huge vote of confidence in our business and Australian aviation more broadly. It sets us up for long-term success and adds fuel to our bold transformation agenda.

"Virgin Australia has emerged as a strong and profitable company with an attractive market position, a loyal customer base, and an exciting growth trajectory. Now, through our partnership with Qatar Airways, we're unlocking new areas of cooperation with one of the world's leading airlines. *Subject to final regulatory approvals.

"Bain Capital remains the majority shareholder and is committed to Virgin Australia's long-term success."

Saving Lives in the Skies: Emirates and Parsys design pioneering new telemedicine station for inflight customers

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates has joined forces with Parsys Telemedicine to introduce next generation equipment that will enable customers to receive high-quality, speedy medical care in the air. Emirates has invested more than USD2.4 million in co-designing the new equipment set with Parsys, which will be rolled out to 300 aircraft over the next few years. The groundbreaking 'telemedicine station' has advanced features such as high-definition video conferencing, remote passenger assessment, secure data transmission and 12-Leads Telecardia ECG – enabling Emirates' highly trained cabin crew to save lives in emergency situations.

Emirates has always invested in high quality medical equipment, but the new Parsys kit is the result of a yearlong collaboration between Emirates and Parsys to create a bespoke inflight tool that is more efficient and reliable, more connected, and ultimately safer for Emirates' customers.

The best-in-class new system includes the Parsys Telemedicine Kit for Emirates and the Parsys Cloud. The kit is an integrated, portable telemedicine station designed for cabin crew to gather important information and vital signs, which can then be transmitted to Emirates' Ground Medical Support – a dedicated team of medical professionals who sit in Emirates Group Headquarters in Dubai and are contactable 24/7. The kit includes several medical devices like a pulse oximeter, thermometer, blood pressure monitor, glucometer, and electrocardiogram (ECG). Emirates customers who need medical support onboard flights can now have their vital signs or readings automatically transmitted to the Medcapture© device via Bluetooth, eliminating any need for cabin crew to take notes and relay information manually.

The Medcapture© device is a tablet which contains a new software application, customised to align with Emirates' comprehensive medical procedures. The interface has an intuitive and easy-to-use design so crew members can operate it efficiently, even under challenging conditions. It also allows Emirates cabin crew to have real-time communication with the Ground Medical Support team, ensuring immediate access to expert medical advice while in the air. The tablet enables cabin crew to connect with ground-based doctors for real-time assessment of passenger medical cases. In some instances, it allows doctors to visually evaluate injuries or medical concerns remotely if required.

Linked to the Medcapture© device is the Parsys Cloud, a cloud-based platform for Ground Medical Support to receive inflight data and to communicate with cabin crew. It is safe and reliable and ensures that customer data is handled in compliance with data protection regulations.

The Emirates and Parsys kits are already installed on multiple aircraft and have been



instrumental in several successful medical cases so far.

During a recent flight to Lyon, France, an elderly passenger experienced a medical emergency affecting her cardiovascular system, leading to a significant drop in her oxygen levels and another vital sign. Emirates' trained cabin crew quickly provided oxygen and used the Parsys MedCapture© device to share her vital signs with our Ground Medical Support team on the ground.

The Ground Medical Support team responded immediately via the Parsys Cloud, connecting to the MedCapture© device onboard. With real-time communication and expert guidance, the crew effectively managed the situation, ensuring the passenger received the best possible care. The Parsys system enabled faster, more seamless coordination between the crew and medical team, helping to deliver timely and informed inflight medical support.

Medical training and support for cabin crew is a top priority at Emirates. New joiners undergo 8 weeks of intense 'ab-initio' training to become world-class cabin crew. The ab-initio period includes a myriad of courses from security to service, safety and emergency to hospitality, and the critically important medical response training. Using a combination of practical, in-situ, classroom and online learning, new recruits are taught invaluable lessons to save lives. The new Parsys kit is introduced to cabin crew through a blended approach of e-learning and practical learning.

Emirates cabin crew receive extensive medical training to handle inflight emergencies, from fainting and choking to breathing difficulties, allergic reactions, and sudden illnesses. They are also trained in managing injuries, infection control, and onboard hygiene. Life-saving skills such as CPR, Automated External Defibrillator (AED) use, and even childbirth assistance are taught using advanced simulation technology. This comprehensive training, led by certified aviation first aid instructors, takes place at the world-class Emirates Cabin Crew Training Centre in Dubai.

Cabin crew knowledge and skills are put to the test each year at a recurrent training, and crew are required to complete a 1.5-hour online course, 2-hour practical session for CPR, AED, severe bleeding, and severe allergy management, with assessments for each.



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