

TRAVEL TALK

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Sri Lanka Welcomes Its One Millionth Tourist of the Year

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA



Sri Lanka celebrated a landmark achievement marking the arrival of its one millionth tourist of the year. Mr. Paul Roy, an Irish national, along with his wife who arrived on Sri Lankan airlines recently. They were both honored at a special event held at Bandaranaike International Airport.

The event, organized by Sri Lanka Tourism in collaboration with Airport & Aviation Services Sri Lanka highlighted the growth of Sri Lanka's tourism sector and its dedication to providing exceptional experiences for international visitors. The celebration featured a traditional Sri Lankan welcome showcasing the rich cultural heritage that continues to attract tourists from around the globe.

Minister of Tourism, Lands, Sports and Youth Affairs, Hon. Harin Fernando, expressed his sentiments on reaching this milestone saying "welcoming our one millionth tourist this year is a testament to Sri Lanka's growing appeal as a premier travel destination. Our diverse landscapes, rich history, and warm hospitality make Sri Lanka a unique and unforgettable experience for all visitors. We are committed to further enhancing our tourism infrastructure and services to ensure that every guest leaves with lasting memories."

This milestone comes as Sri Lanka continues to recover and rebuild its tourism industry, which has faced numerous challenges in recent years. The government's strategic initiatives and partnerships with private sector stakeholders have played a crucial role in revitalizing the sector and positioning Sri Lanka as a top destination for international travelers.

The achievement of welcoming one million tourists not only reflects the effectiveness of these efforts but also signals a positive outlook for the future of Sri Lanka's tourism industry. With ongoing promotional campaigns and improvements in infrastructure, Sri Lanka is poised to attract even more visitors in the coming years, contributing to the country's economic growth and global reputation.



Heritage Kandalama Celebrates 30 Years of Iconic Hospitality and Sustainability Excellence

Heritage Kandalama, the celebrated flagship property of Heritage Hotels and Resorts by Aitken Spence Hotels, recently celebrated its 30th Anniversary

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Designed by Deshamanya Geoffrey Bawa, the resort holds the distinction of being the first LEED certified resort and the first Green Globe 21 certified resort in Asia, a testament to its commitment to environmental stewardship and Sri Lanka's longest-certified ISO 14001 Environment Management System.

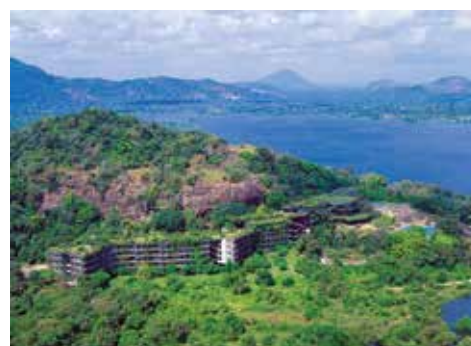


Stasshani Jayawardena

Commenting on this milestone celebration Stasshani Jayawardena, Jt. Deputy Chairperson and Jt. Managing Director of Aitken Spence Hotel Holdings, stated, "Reaching this milestone fills us with profound pride and gratitude. Heritage Kandalama is not just a hotel; it is a living testament to our unwavering commitment to sustainability, the environment, and exceptional guest experiences. For three decades, we have nurtured a delicate balance between conservation and community support, ensuring that our presence enriches both the natural world and the lives of those around us.

Constructed amidst initial community resistance and misinformation in the early 1990s, Heritage Kandalama opened its doors in 1994, overcoming significant environmental and cultural concerns. Criticisms primarily focused on potential disruptions to wildlife habitats and perceived impacts on local culture and community. In response, Heritage Kandalama implemented robust measures in its architectural design. Elevated on columns, the design was specifically crafted to facilitate natural replenishment of the lake by rainwater and to enable wildlife to thrive freely, thus minimizing environmental disturbance

Since its inception, Heritage Kandalama has collaborated closely with villagers, embracing a sustainability ethos of mutual growth. In the 1990s, the resort supported the community by providing electricity, paving roads, and ensuring access to drinking water through tube wells and deep wells. This collaboration extends beyond



employment and procurement to supporting local initiatives such as schools and temples. In terms of supporting the community, Heritage Kandalama employs over 60% of its workforce from within a 20-kilometer radius.

"By sourcing locally and predominantly employing our workforce from nearby villages, we strengthen the bonds of our

community and uplift local farmers and small businesses. Our transparent and consistent practices have earned us the trust and respect of the public. As a cherished icon in Sri Lanka's cultural triangle, we renew our heartfelt pledge to preserve the pristine beauty of Kandalama and to inspire future generations with our dedication to environmental stewardship and architectural wonder" added Jayawardena



The resort also sources supplies, including fruits and vegetables, from local farmers, allocating over 70% of its procurement budget to local purchases.

The resort has launched several sustainability initiatives. The key initiative was adding 13 acres to its biodiversity forest, now spanning over 211 acres with recorded 128 species of native flora, 64 butterfly species, 183 bird species, 19 reptile species, and 17 mammal species, nurtured by 11 protected natural streams.

Sustainability remains at the heart of its operations. The resort will continue to enhance its eco-friendly practices, from energy conservation to waste management, ensuring its environmental footprint is minimal.

The main challenge the resort has faced is creating awareness about the importance of sustainability and educating stakeholders that sustainability, environmental initiatives, and good governance affect the well-being of everyone.

Cont on Pg 2



Sri Lanka's tourism industry is basking in a remarkable achievement, welcoming one million tourists in the first half of the year, surpassing targets and setting a positive trajectory for the future. This milestone is a testament to the island's resilient recovery and its appeal as a premier travel destination. The nation's lush landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and pristine beaches continue to captivate travelers worldwide, reinforcing Sri Lanka's position on the global tourism map.

A significant boost to this growth comes from Qatar Airways, which has announced an increase in its flight frequency to six flights a day starting in July. This enhancement in connectivity and capacity is poised to make Sri Lanka more accessible to international tourists, fostering further growth in visitor numbers. Such strategic moves are crucial for the tourism sector, ensuring that the influx of tourists is matched with the necessary infrastructure and convenience.

Adding to the celebratory mood is the 70th anniversary of SKAL International Colombo. This milestone underscores the enduring commitment and contribution of the organization to the hospitality and tourism industry in Sri Lanka. For seven decades, SKAL International Colombo has played a pivotal role in promoting tourism, fostering professional relationships, and advocating sustainable practices. Their efforts have undoubtedly been instrumental in achieving the recent surge in tourist arrivals.

Moreover, the Ministry of Crab, a culinary jewel of Sri Lanka, has expanded its horizons by opening a new outlet in Singapore. This move not only showcases the global appeal of Sri Lankan cuisine but also promotes the country's rich culinary heritage on an international stage. The Ministry of Crab's success story exemplifies the unique experiences that Sri Lanka offers, from its vibrant gastronomy to its welcoming hospitality.

As Sri Lanka celebrates these significant milestones, the future of its tourism industry looks brighter than ever. The collective efforts of airlines, hospitality organizations, and culinary ambassadors are paving the way for continued success and growth, ensuring that the island remains a beloved destination for travelers worldwide.



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NEWS / MOVEMENTS

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Heritage Kandalama Celebrates 30 Years...

To keep pace with evolving travel trends, the resort is investing in cutting-edge technologies to enhance the guest experience. This includes smart room technologies, personalized services powered by AI, and seamless digital interactions. The resort aims to blend technology with our signature warm hospitality.

The future of travel leans heavily towards wellness. Heritage Kandalama will expand its wellness offerings, incorporating holistic health practices, bespoke wellness retreats, and state-of-the-art spa facilities. The serene natural surroundings will continue to provide the perfect backdrop for rejuvenation.

Heritage Kandalama will continue to innovate in our culinary offerings, focusing on farm-to-table dining experiences. The very own culinary artists of Heritage Kandalama will work closely with local farmers to source organic, sustainable ingredients, creating menus that celebrate

local flavors and promote health and sustainability.

In an ever-changing global landscape, adaptability is key. Heritage Kandalama will remain agile, ready to embrace new travel trends and preferences. Whether it's through virtual reality tours, eco-adventures, or curated travel experiences, the resort will continue to set the benchmark for excellence in hospitality.

Our vision is to harmoniously blend our storied past with a forward-thinking approach, ensuring that Heritage Kandalama remains a cherished destination for travelers worldwide. Together, we will continue to create unforgettable moments and a legacy of sustainability for years to come."

In celebration of its 30th Anniversary, a special journey gallery will be displayed at Heritage Kandalama, narrating its 30-year journey and the voices of Heritage Kandalama.



Jens Fehlinger to be named CEO of Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS)

TTA BULLETIN

Jens Fehlinger will be the new CEO of Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS). He will assume his new role on 1 October 2024 and succeed Dieter Vranckx who will become a member of the Lufthansa Group Executive Board as of 1 July 2024.

Jens Fehlinger (43) started his professional career at the Lufthansa Group in 2006, where he held various management positions. Among other things, he was in charge of strategy and business development at Lufthansa Airlines and the operational performance management for Lufthansa Group. During the Covid pandemic, he was responsible for the Group's crisis management office and subsequently headed the ReNew restructuring project.

In recent years, Jens Fehlinger has been Co-Managing Director of Lufthansa Cityline and at the same time

established as managing Director the new airline Lufthansa City Airlines. Jens Fehlinger holds a commercial pilot's license for the Airbus A320 and is currently an active pilot for Lufthansa Cityline.



Jens Fehlinger

Fehlinger holds a graduate degree (Dipl.-Ing.) in Aviation Systems Engineering and Management from the University of Bremen, Germany, and a master's degree (M.Sc.) in Traffic and Transport from the Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany. He also received an Executive MBA from the IE Business School in Madrid, Spain.

Jens Fehlinger is married and father of two children.

Acorn Travels Unveils Newly Refurbished Office and Milestone Event

TTA BULLETIN

Acorn Travels, a leading corporate travel agent in Sri Lanka, recently opened its newly refurbished office space and celebrated 50 years in the industry. This milestone was celebrated with two distinct events, reflecting the company's longstanding success, strong industry partnerships, and commitment to providing unparalleled outbound travel services.

The office opening was a gathering by the Acorn Group Executive committee and staff which commenced with a religious blessing, followed by the lighting of the traditional oil lamp and a keynote speech by Suranjith De Fonseka, Managing Director of the Travel Sector, Acorn Group. The event was also graced by Imtiaz Esufally, distinguished and esteemed guest.

In his speech, De Fonseka emphasized the critical importance of a well-designed physical environment for organizational success. He highlighted the newly refurbished office of Acorn Travels as an investment in its people, designed to inspire, support collaboration, and enhance productivity. Mr. De Fonseka stressed that a conducive environment is crucial for achieving outstanding outcomes, urging the team to utilize the new space effectively, nurture their talents, and strive for excellence, thus ensuring the company's continued growth and success.



In a follow up event, representatives from the airlines, Global Distribution Systems (GDS), and insurance companies, underscoring Acorn Travels' extensive network of industry partners gathered to raise a glass to Acorn Travels. Hosted by Malinga Arsakularatne, Group CEO of the Acorn Group, during his welcome address expressed his profound pride in celebrating Acorn Travels' 50-year milestone. He reflected on the company's remarkable achievements over the past five decades and shared his excitement for its promising future.

Mrs. Chamila Wijethunge expressed heartfelt gratitude to the airlines, Global Distribution Systems (GDS), and insurance companies for their invaluable services over the years. She acknowledged that the strong and enduring partnerships with these key stakeholders have been instrumental in Acorn Travels' success.

Launch of The Curious Experience – A new way to explore Sri Lanka

TTA BULLETIN

The Curious Experience (TCE) has recently launched, targeting conscious travellers committed to exploring Sri Lanka with a purpose. TCE transforms typical tourism into meaningful exploration, inviting travellers to delve deeply into Sri Lanka's rich culture, vibrant communities, and innovative practices.

Founded by Mathi Thayanan, Dulanga Witharanage and Yasas Nanayakkara, TCE is focused on presenting 'everyday Sri Lanka' in its raw form, offering an experience that encourages travellers to connect with the true essence of Sri Lankan life.

"Embracing a philosophy of slow travel, TCE believes in a less is more approach" said Dulanga. The company supports travellers who wish to deeply engage with their destination, learning, unlearning, and relearning along the way. Through collaborations with local, non-traditional tourism stakeholders, TCE curates experiences that go beyond mere sightseeing, transforming them into immersive experiences that foster genuine connections. "The goal is to transform travellers into contributors who leave a positive impact" said Mathi.

TCE provides purpose-driven travel

services, where travellers embark on a collaborative learning journey centered around co-creation. Emphasizing slow travel, TCE encourages visitors to deeply experience Sri Lanka, savouring its nuances and forming lasting connections with locals. With locally rooted expertise, travellers interact with passionate Sri Lankans who share their knowledge and stories, offering unparalleled insights. Another key pillar is positive engagement, as travellers contribute to Sri Lanka's growth through responsible travel practices, leaving a lasting impact on local communities and the environment.

Taking a look at the strengths of its founders, Thayanan is a travel enthusiast championing sustainable tourism; Witharanage, is an environmental scientist and naturalist; and Nanayakkara, a seasoned travel expert. Together, they bring a wealth of experience and a shared passion for responsible tourism. "At TCE, responsible tourism is not just a tagline but a core value" said Yasas.

The company collaborates with travellers who are conscious of global issues and aspire to be part of the solution. TCE's vision is to build a vibrant travel community that promotes exploration, cultural exchange, and the spread of positive ideas.

Sri Lanka Tourism Hosts Travel Agents for Buddhist Pilgrim Tours and Buddhist Influencers for Vesak 2024

TTA BULLETIN

In a bid to boost pilgrim tourism, Sri Lanka Tourism invited prominent outbound travel agents and ten leading Buddhist media influencers from India to participate in an exclusive B2B networking session and immersive cultural experience during the Vesak celebrations. The event commenced on the 22nd of May 2024 at the Hotel Ramada Colombo, aiming to strengthen ties between local and international travel agents and to showcase the spiritual and cultural richness of Sri Lanka.

The delegation's visit kicked off with a comprehensive networking session designed to foster collaboration and enhance the network between Sri Lankan travel agencies and their counterparts. This initiative is a strategic move to promote pilgrim tours, highlighting Sri Lanka as a premier destination for Buddhist travelers.

On May 23rd, the delegation participated at the revered lighting ceremony at the iconic Gangaramaya Temple. This event was a cornerstone of the Vesak celebration, offering a profound insight into Sri Lanka's spiritual heritage and cultural traditions. The lighting ceremony is a visually stunning and spiritually uplifting event that symbolizes enlightenment and peace, providing the guests with a firsthand experience of the island's vibrant Vesak festivities.

Following the Vesak celebration, the delegation embarked on a Familiarization Tour starting from May 24th. This tour covered the significant Buddhist temples across the country, allowing the guests to

explore and appreciate the historical and spiritual significance of these sacred sites. Key stops on the tour included the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy, the ancient city of Anuradhapura, and the Dambulla Cave Temple.

The primary objective of this program is to showcase Sri Lanka's rich cultural heritage and spiritual ambiance, thereby encouraging an increase in pilgrim tour arrivals. By providing an immersive experience of the Vesak celebration and the country's revered Buddhist sites, Sri Lanka Tourism aims to highlight the unique offerings that make the island a must-visit destination for Buddhist pilgrims.

Sri Lanka Tourism believes that this initiative will not only enhance the visibility of Sri Lanka's cultural and spiritual treasures but also foster stronger business relationships and collaborative opportunities between travel agents from both countries. The collaboration is expected to result in a significant boost in tourist arrivals, contributing to the growth and development of the country's tourism sector.

Sri Lanka stands ready to welcome international visitors, showcasing its timeless traditions and unparalleled hospitality. This initiative marks a significant step towards positioning Sri Lanka as a leading destination for Buddhist pilgrimage and cultural tourism.

Jetwing Kaduruketha, the serene haven of Wellawaya, earns a prestigious spot on Wanderlust UK's "The Travel Green List 2024"

TTA BULLETIN

Jetwing Kaduruketha, a pioneering agro-eco luxury hotel that mirrors a traditional Sri Lankan village, has proudly earned a place on the Wanderlust Travel Green List 2024. This prestigious accolade underscores



Dmitri Cooray

the resort's steadfast commitment to sustainability and environmental conservation, establishing its position among the world's foremost green destinations.

The Wanderlust Travel Green List 2024 is an annual recognition of exceptional sustainable travel efforts. It highlights realistic, impactful improvements in everyday practices, celebrating those who embrace sustainability. Evaluated by a panel of experts, entries are assessed on carbon reduction, local employment and education, and biodiversity support. Featuring diverse global projects, the list aims to inspire travellers and communities to make powerful, positive changes for a sustainable future.

Set amidst lush paddy fields in the quiet village of Wellawaya, Jetwing Kaduruketha is an eco-resort that celebrates Sri Lanka's traditional way of life. Guests enjoy curated experiences that celebrate local culture and the environment. Guided paddy walks, Sri Lankan culinary demonstrations with locally sourced ingredients, spice trails, and traditional fishing expeditions are just some of the enriching experiences on offer.

With a focus on reviving traditional heirloom rice varieties using organic and regenerative practices, the high-quality crops grown in the property's 50-acre estate foster a healthy ecosystem by promoting biodiversity and mitigating climate change. Designed sustainably, Jetwing Kaduruketha reflects a traditional home garden, brimming with native and endemic plants. The property is a haven for diverse wildlife as well, including the elusive fishing cat, flying squirrel, baya weaver, and over 130 bird species, both native and migratory.

Going beyond environmental sustainability, the resort integrates socio-economic sustainability into its operations. Jetwing Kaduruketha collaborates with 30 farming families, providing them with seed money at the start of the cultivation season. Farmers are not required to repay this working capital post-harvest; instead, they share 50% of the harvest with the hotel while retaining the remainder for profit. This approach helps

prevent farmers from falling into debt during poor harvests, ensuring their financial stability.

Rooted in its ethos is a deep commitment to supporting local artisans and fostering community involvement. Each stay not only brings meaningful experiences but also uplifts the well-being of the surrounding local community, ensuring your journey is as enriching for you as it is for those who call this place home.

Dmitri Cooray, Managing Director at Jetwing Hotels, states, "Jetwing Hotels has always been a pioneer in sustainable tourism, a vision that began with our founder over half a century ago. We are immensely proud that his enduring legacy propels us to innovate and garner global acclaim for Sri Lanka. Our heartfelt thanks go to the esteemed panel for recognizing Jetwing Kaduruketha as a leader in eco-friendly hospitality in Asia. This accolade inspires us to redouble our commitment to providing our guests with an unforgettable and impactful stay."

Jetwing Kaduruketha continues to pioneer agro-eco luxury tourism in Sri Lanka, constantly innovating and expanding its sustainable practices. Upcoming projects include enhancing renewable energy usage with a 120-kilowatt solar photovoltaic system and introducing new eco-friendly guest experiences. These initiatives deepen the resort's commitment to sustainability, offering unique and responsible travel options.

This latest accolade reaffirms Jetwing Kaduruketha's dedication to providing an unparalleled guest experience amidst the serene beauty of rural Wellawaya, together with a masterful blend of legendary Sri Lankan hospitality synonymous with Jetwing Hotels.

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



Hahnair underscores future-directed strategy with the appointment of Rachel Pascall as Vice President New Distribution

TTA BULLETIN

To underscore its commitment to the distribution landscape of the future and to strengthen and expand its product portfolio, Hahnair appoints Rachel Pascall as Vice President New Distribution.

In this capacity, she spearheads an international team of developers, IT specialists and account managers. Her responsibilities encompass steering the development of Hahnair's new distribution channels, from both a commercial and technical perspective, and fostering seamless collaboration between the Hahnair teams and the connected partners. In addition, she supports the acquisition of new partners and oversees their implementation.

"Moving forward, New Distribution will be a crucial pillar of Hahnair's future strategy, next to the GDS distribution", comments Hahnair's CEO Kirsten Rehmann. "Rachel Pascall brings extensive experience in strategic programme management as well as travel retail and a broad network of relevant relationships in various fields of distribution technologies and in travel management. With her in-depth expertise in API-based technologies and NDC solutions and her proven track record from similar roles at Travelport and British



Rachel Pascall

Airways, we are confident that she will drive the development of new distribution technologies and successfully onboard new solutions and all related processes."

Rachel Pascall comments: "Hahnair has been a leading player within the travel industry over the past 25 years and had a pivotal role in transforming and shaping airline distribution. I look forward to working with my team to build upon the company's success, add to their distribution capabilities and increase the revenue potential for all partners."

With its New Distribution products, Hahnair will give partner airlines access to additional distribution channels as well as the world of NDC without having to develop their own solutions. At the same time, travel agents benefit from access to Hahnair's extensive network of partner airlines and can use their preferred forms of payment in more than 190 markets, including credit card and BSP/ARC Cash.

Hahnair will share details on new developments soon. For more information about Hahnair, visit www.hahnair.com.

IBTM launches Exceptional Experiences programme at Cannes Lions

TTA BULLETIN

IBTM has introduced an exciting new addition to its flagship IBTM World event taking place in Barcelona from 19-21 November. The new programme, called Exceptional Experiences, has been developed as a direct response to the challenges faced by in-house event professionals and marketers, and will showcase innovative strategies to help this community create event experiences that fuel business growth.

Exceptional Experiences was launched at a pop-up event at Cannes Lions. The session, which took place on Friday 21 June, assembled trailblazers from the creative and media industries to explore the most exceptional concepts and activations from the week. Participants included Jimmy Knowles, Global Head of Experiential at Canva; Judy Lee, Senior Director, Global Brand Experiences at Pinterest; Shauna Little, Vice President, Advertising Solutions and Marketing at The Washington Post; and Claudia Hall, Event Director at IBTM World.

Claudia Hall, Exhibition Director, IBTM World, said: "The Exceptional Experiences workshop at Cannes Lions celebrated the hard work of event planners and marketers to create incredible activations and stories during the week. We discussed the different ways to bring our communities together and build long standing partnerships, including



the everyday challenges event planners face, such as the use of AI to increase efficiency without losing the authenticity our events should provide."

Evolving from the hugely successful corporate event marketers programme at IBTM World 2023, Exceptional Experiences is designed to develop the future roadmap for the event industry. It will comprise an exclusive invite-only workshop at IBTM World in Barcelona for senior executives, VPs and influential leaders from different sectors on day one of IBTM – 19th Nov 2024.

On day two – 20th Nov 2024, IBTM's Exceptional Experiences Forum will take place on the Main Stage. This dedicated content stream will provide education sessions on subjects such as how to harness AI and technology, build your community and leave a lasting, positive impact on attendees.

Minor Hotels Announces Key Management Promotions on the Islands of Koh Samui and Koh Phangan

TTA BULLETIN

Minor Hotels, one of the world's fastest growing hospitality companies, with over 550 properties across more than 56 countries, announces two key promotions in Thailand at its Koh Samui and Koh Phangan properties. Effective from February 2024, Ahmed Asim is the new General Manager of Anantara Rasananda Koh Phangan Villas, and Frederic Kolde assumes the role of General Manager of Anantara Lawana Koh Samui Resort from June 1st.

Ahmed Asim takes up his first General Manager posting after serving over a year as Resort Manager at Anantara Riverside Bangkok Hotel, where he was managing the operations of the 376-room resort and the F&B division with 10 outlets, banquet operations and dining boats. Asim joined Minor Hotels in 2019 as Director of Rooms at Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort. He then got promoted to Hotel Manager for the first time at Avani+ Riverside Bangkok in 2021.

A passionate and hardworking professional, Asim started his career in hospitality in 2005 as a butler at Soneva Fushi in the Maldives and held various operational roles in the Maldives and Thailand.

A Maldivian national, Asim holds a BTEC National Diploma in Hotel Catering and

Institutional Operations, Maldives College of Higher Education, Maldives.

Luxury expert Frederic Kolde joins Anantara Lawana Koh Samui Resort from Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel where he has held the position of Hotel Manager since 2023. His primary responsibilities included overseeing the eight award-winning restaurants and 354 guest rooms, banquet operations, and a luxury spa & IV drip bar. In his new role Frederic can fully play on his strengths to make personalisation and customisation central to the guest experience.

Frederic stepped into his first leadership role shortly after graduating from Swiss Hotel Management School (SHMS) as pre-opening Assistant Manager at the signature steakhouse at Grand Hyatt Hong Kong. He would remain on the Hyatt Hotels leadership roster until 2016, relocating to Japan in 2012 to manage The Oak Door steakhouse at Grand Hyatt Tokyo, then returning to Grand Hyatt Hong Kong in 2014 as Assistant Director of Food & Beverage.

The next chapter brought Frederic first to Thailand, where he worked as Director of Food & Beverage at Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok, and later to China. In his role as



Ahmed Asim, General Manager of Anantara Rasananda Koh Phangan Villas & Frederic Kolde, General Manager of Anantara Lawana Koh Samui Resort

Executive Assistant Manager in charge of Food & Beverage at Hyatt Regency Beijing Wangjing, he honed his leadership skills during the challenging pandemic years.

A German, French, and Brazilian national, Frederic holds a Certificate in Hotel Revenue Management from eCornell University.

"It gives me great pleasure to announce these two key promotions within Thailand," said Vice President of Operations for Bangkok, Samui, Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, Mark O' Sullivan. "Both Asim and Frederic have always demonstrated their strong leadership skills at both our flagship properties in Bangkok and I am confident that they will continue to thrive in their new managerial roles at our two stunning properties in the Gulf of Thailand."

Minor Hotels is a global hospitality group

operating over 550 hotels, resorts and residences in 56 countries, pursuing its vision of crafting a more passionate and interconnected world. As a hotel owner, operator and investor, Minor Hotels fulfils the needs and desires of today's global travellers through its diverse portfolio of eight hotel brands – Anantara, Avani, Elewana Collection, NH, NH Collection, nhow, Oaks and Tivoli – and a collection of related businesses. Minor Hotels is rapidly accelerating its global growth ambitions, aiming to add more than 200 hotels by the end of 2026.

Minor Hotels is a proud member of the Global Hotel Alliance (GHA), the world's largest alliance of independent hotel brands, and participates in the GHA DISCOVERY loyalty programme.

For more information, please visit minorhotels.com and connect with Minor Hotels on Facebook and LinkedIn.

A POCKET OF *wonder* IN THE MISTY HILLS



A name that resonates with over 150 years of heritage and elegance, Broomfield by Jetwing is a charming bungalow that once stood as the montane home of the prominent Bandaranaike family. Nestled in the heart of Nuwara Eliya, it gazes out over the serene Gregory Lake, and just beyond its doors lies a mist-laden city, waiting to be explored.

Featuring six lavishly decorated bedrooms, each a sanctuary of timeless luxury and comfort, a welcoming lounge to unwind, and a verdant lawn that invites you to breathe in the crisp mountain air, Broomfield by Jetwing is the perfect hill country getaway to experience the warmth of our authentic Sri Lankan hospitality in the misty hills.



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FAMILY ALBUM

Skal International Colombo 70th Anniversary celebrations

Skal International Colombo recently celebrated its milestone 70th Anniversary recently at the Cinnamon Grand Colombo.

Hotels.

Jetwing Kaduruketha was awarded the prestigious Skal Asia Sustainability award which was presented at the Asian Congress in Bahrain and was collected by Skal Colombo President Ahintha Amarasinghe who presented it to Hiran Cooray, Chairman Jetwing

Past Presidents of Skal Colombo were felicitated and the members and guests were given a glimpse of what Skal Colombo has achieved over the past 70 years by Skal Asia President Keethi Jayaweera.





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HOTELS

Nyne Hotels is recognised by the National Sustainable Tourism Certification Scheme

TTA BULLETIN

Nyne Hotels is proud to announce that it has been recognised by the National Sustainable Tourism Certification Scheme for its outstanding sustainability initiatives. This prestigious certification, awarded by the NSTCS in collaboration with the UNDP and the Sri Lankan Ministry of Tourism, acknowledges Nyne Hotels' commitment to promoting sustainable practices within the tourism industry. Several Nyne Hotels properties, including Rock Villa, The Muse in Bentota, Lake Lodge in Colombo, Mayur Lodge in Yala, and Leela Walawwa in Induruwa, have been commended for their holistic approach to sustainability. These properties have demonstrated excellence in environmental conservation, waste management, and community support.

Nyne Hotels is dedicated to ensuring the well-being of its guests, employees, suppliers, and the communities and environments in which it operates. The company's sustainability efforts include environmental conservation projects such as tree planting,

mangrove and coral protection, sea turtle conservation, beach cleaning campaigns, and the preservation of local natural habitats. Waste management is a key focus area for Nyne Hotels, with practices in place to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste.

The company has eliminated single-use plastics and implements composting to manage food waste sustainably. Energy and water conservation measures, such as LED lighting, solar heating panels, and low-flow water systems, are also implemented to minimize environmental impact. Nyne Hotels is committed to supporting local communities through initiatives that promote education, female empowerment, entrepreneurship, and local employment.



greener future for generations to come.

Nyne Hotels encourages other hospitality services to adopt sustainable practices and contribute to a more sustainable planet. For more information on Nyne Hotels and its sustainability initiatives, please visit nynehotels.com/sustainability.

The NSTCS, established in 2018 in alignment with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council guidelines, recognizes and promotes destinations in Sri Lanka that are committed to environmental, social, and economic sustainability. The scheme is part of the overall strategy of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority in partnership with the UNDP.

The company prioritises sourcing ingredients from Sri Lankan farmers and fishermen, supporting local agriculture and celebrating local cuisine. The certification of Nyne Hotels by the NSTCS is a testament to the company's dedication to sustainability and its efforts to create a

Phuket Emerges as a Global Medical Wellness Hub With Unveiling of Cutting-Edge Facility

TTA BULLETIN

Minor Hotels announces Layan Life by Anantara, a world-class medical wellness concept within the grounds of Anantara Layan Phuket Resort that is set to uplift Phuket's reputation as an international destination for medical wellness.



The new purpose-built facility, set across 1,767 square metres, is scheduled to open in Q3 this year and will offer a blend of modern medical technologies and 'Rajasannak' (royal style) Thai healing traditions.

Drawing on more than two decades of pioneering wellness expertise from Anantara Hotels & Resorts, Layan Life by Anantara is grounded in the four elements at the core of Thai Traditional Medicine (TTM): earth, water, wind, and fire.

Its range of three- to 10-day programmes, each created by specialist medical doctors and Thai medicinal experts, infuse this ancient wisdom with advanced medical assessments and diagnostics, tailored wellness nutrition and guided fitness. The result is a highly bespoke, full-circle approach to holistic wellbeing that spans a variety of goals such as weight management, de-stress, fitness and anti-ageing.

Designed using biophilic architectural principles that blend with nature, Layan Life by Anantara connects to its tropical surroundings through neutral tones, airy spaces and an abundance of natural light.

Split across two storeys, the lower level includes a 220sqm gym, 60sqm yoga studio, 35sqm Pilates studio, meditation rooms, and a hydrotherapy area with vitality pools, saunas, and steam room. The upper floor houses medical and holistic facilities, rooms for consultations, physiotherapy, TTM, aesthetic treatments, IV procedures and medical treatments such as an Icepod, hyperbaric chamber, and hydro colonic therapies. There is also a Thai herbal dispensary where personalised remedies are prescribed.

Outside, the Active Zone spans tennis courts, a Muay Thai ring, climbing wall, outdoor fitness area with water sports, and a selection of immersive cultural excursions.

Weatherproof Colombar by the lake.

TTA BULLETIN

Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo is excited to announce the grand relaunch of ColomBar, our premier restaurant and bar that celebrates the vibrant culture and heritage of Colombo and Sri Lanka. This event marks an exciting new chapter for ColomBar, with enhanced features that promise to elevate our guests' experience.

Inspired by the charming ambiance of a railway station in Slave Island, ColomBar is the ultimate destination where everyone can unwind relax and entertainment after a hectic day. From 4.00 to 7.00 PM, guests can unwind to the rhythm of live DJ music, setting the perfect tone for a relaxing evening. As the night progresses, from 7 PM onwards, ColomBar transforms into a vibrant stage featuring live performances by Sri Lankan artists and bands. This includes not only popular English tunes but also the enchanting beats of Sinhala Baila music. Baila, a genre cherished by Sri Lankans, is essential for any celebratory night, weaving the threads of English hits with the heart-touching rhythms that resonate deeply with our Sri Lankan culture. Guests arriving before sunset can indulge in ColomBar's signature cocktails while enjoying the serene and picturesque views of Beira Lake, surrounded by lush greenery and a tranquil ambiance. Through ColomBar, we proudly promote the rich heritage of Sri Lankan food and entertainment, offering a truly immersive experience that highlights the best of what our beautiful island has to offer.

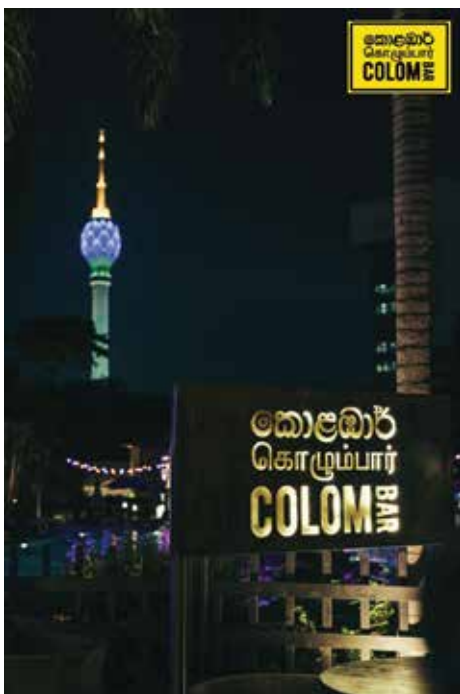
Guests at ColomBar can now revel in their experiences without a worry about the weather, thanks to the brand-new roof that elegantly covers the entire seating area. Designed to provide complete protection from the rain, this innovative feature allows the party to continue unabated, regardless of any sudden showers. ColomBar's



commitment to offering a reliable and enjoyable environment means all the guests can come in confidence to get a seamless and uninterrupted experience, come rain or shine.

In addition to the enhanced musical ambiance and weatherproof seating, ColomBar proudly introduces its new VIP seating area. This exclusive section offers an elevated level of luxury and privacy, catering to our distinguished guests who seek a more intimate and upscale setting. The VIP area promises a sophisticated atmosphere with personalized service, ensuring a memorable and exclusive experience that truly sets ColomBar apart.

ColomBar has been conceptualized to showcase the city and the island's vibrant culture through a unique fusion of food, drinks, and music. "We are excited to welcome our guests to the newly renovated ColomBar," commented Mr. Nazoomi Azhar, The General Manager of Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo. Mr. Azhar further said "Our goal was to create a space that not only highlights the cultural richness of Colombo but also provides a comfortable and enjoyable environment for our guests. With the new roof covering and VIP seating area, we believe ColomBar will set a new standard for dining and entertainment in Colombo."



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Occidental Eden Beruwala's Sippi: Serving Up Gastronomy with a Slice of Paradise

TTA BULLETIN

Set against the backdrop of the sun-kissed southern shores of Sri Lanka and vast expanse of turquoise ocean, Occidental Eden Beruwala recently launched its latest culinary innovation 'Sippi,' a refined a la carte restaurant. Deriving inspiration from the Sinhala words 'sippi katu,' meaning sea shell, 'Sippi' combines the synergy of the sea with local gastronomic delights paired with the epitome of refined luxury.

The evening unfolded with tantalising offerings, where fragrant island spices mingled with hand-crafted premium cocktails and wines, accompanied by the lilting melody of jazz tunes under open skies. The unveiling of 'Sippi' was attended by an exclusive group of in-house guests, special invitees, well-wishers and staff from Occidental Eden. Every visitor had the choice of choosing a dish from the extensive menu, inviting each one to partake in a truly bespoke culinary journey.

While dining at 'Sippi,' guests are offered a choice of both outdoor or indoor options with all-encompassing views of Occidental Eden's infinity pool and the shimmering sea, while choosing from an authentic collection of local specialities and international favourites. A modern take on dining culture, rooted in experimental dishes with a global flair and bursts of island flavour, patrons are invited to explore Sri Lanka through a variety of inspiring cuisines.

Eksath Wijeratne, Chief Executive Officer of Browns Hotels and Resorts, shared his vision of enhancing local food and beverage offerings for leisure travellers. He underscored the significance of highlighting 'Sippi' as the go-to choice for artfully curated dishes paired with a thematic ambience, reminiscent of Occidental Eden's beachfront ethos.

Channa Ekanayake, General Manager of

Occidental Eden Beruwala, noted that designed to be delicious and sustainable at the same time, the hotel takes a conscious approach by sourcing home-grown ingredients and working with local suppliers in the neighbouring areas. Mastering regional flavours, while blending Sri Lankan tradition with Western techniques is the thinking behind Sippi's Corporate Chef, Deepal De Alwis' thought process. He described the dining space as a way for guests to travel through time with the power of taste and be inspired by a fusion of a la carte dishes curated to discover and inspire.

Operating around-the-clock, visitors to 'Sippi' can indulge in bespoke meals of choice, from polos cutlets with curry-infused mayonnaise, creamy butter chicken masala with a side of fragrant rice and buttery lemon grilled prawns, to citrusy mousse paired with tangy mango compote and more.



With its sleek modernism, turquoise accents and recurring palm motifs, be it a medley of flavours, a spark of conversation or a touch of island spice, 'Sippi' offers guests a chance to soak in the details...where culinary excellence is savoured and each dish weaves a story.

Browns Hotels & Resorts, operating as the leisure arm of LOLC Group, boasts a portfolio of exquisite properties across Sri Lanka: Club Hotel Dolphin, The Calm Resort and Spa, Hotel Sigiriya, Thaala Bentota Resort, Dickwella Resort, Reveal Boutique Collection of which Occidental Eden Beruwala and Occidental Paradise Dambulla are associate hotels.



Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort Unveils Fully Refurbished Over Water Villas Featuring a Brand-New Category with Larger Pools

TTA BULLETIN

Set on a stunning natural island in the South Malé Atoll, surrounded by crystal-line lagoon waters, Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort reintroduces its Over Water Villas with a full facelift following four months of extensive renovations. With an overhaul in the interiors, plus the installation of four new pools, the Maldivian playground is all set to cradle couples and families into vacation mode.

Drawing inspiration from the forms of a Maldivian boat and its journey over the serene Maldivian waters, the design concept for the over water villas revolves around the theme of "Sailboat Serenity". Stephen O'Dell from the award-winning architecture and interior design firm, SODA (Thailand) Ltd., together with his team translated the concept into the interior design by reflecting the fluid lines and soothing ambience of a boat journey, creating a space that blends the beauty of the surrounding water inside a villa that aims to offer relaxation and comfort to the guests.

Suspended over the crystal-clear lagoon surrounding a stunning natural island, the



interior of the 40 over water villas is adorned in a colour scheme that creates a natural feel to the villas. Warm neutral tones used to set a soothing sense for guests are balanced with subtle accents of blue in the furnishing to reflect the water. On the outside, a fun yet clever play of space is defined with the addition of over water hammocks in the Sunrise and Sunset Over Water Villas.

Achieving a balance between functionality and design for a resort villa is a unique challenge for interior designers, but Stephen and his team have managed to provide spaces of practical comfort and ensure the villas serve as a Maldivian sanctuary for guests to unwind, unplug, relax, and rejuvenate in the island paradise.

The relaunch of Anantara Dhigu's over water villas also sees the introduction of four new Deluxe Sunset Over Water Pool Villas. The transformation of the existing Sunset Over Water Villas with an addition of a much larger infinity pool increases the inventory of its much sought-after sunset-facing pool villas. The most exclusive of Anantara Dhigu's over water villa categories, each of the villa offers 129 square metres of luxurious space, with direct access into the crystal blue waters of the lagoon.

Following the completion of the Over Water Villa refurbishments, Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort has several renovations in the pipeline for the year, including the addition of an exclusive bar, The

Yellow Fin Club. The new bar will add to the resort's numerous dining venues, where guests can enjoy the finest cuisines from across the globe while learning about old and new world wines from the resort's Wine Guru. From expertly grilled meats, and fresh fish and seafood from the local waters at Sea.Fire.Salt. to a wholesome Italian fare at Aqua, as well as breakfast and themed dinner buffets at Fushi Café, guests are spoiled for choices.

On neighbouring sister island Anantara Veli Maldives Resort, Origami serves modern Japanese fare including teppanyaki and robata-yaki, whilst Cumin offers dishes from Sri Lanka, India and Maldives, and Dhoni Bar specialises in Mediterranean tapas. Poised over water on the edge of a lagoon and outer reef, Baan Huraa delights with coconut curries from Thailand's southern provinces and spicy dishes from the north.

Guests also have the freedom to dine outside the restaurants thanks to Anantara's signature Designer Dining by Anantara experience with a private chef and sommelier.

Whether seeking serenity or reconnection, travellers will find a wide array of water- and land-based activities. Guests can enjoy the thrills of underwater discovery with Aquafanatics, the resort's resident water sports partner, catch a wave during the surf



season with resident experts Tropicsurf, and join the resort in its habitat preservation efforts by adopting a coral as part of Anantara's sustainability programme with the resident marine biologist.

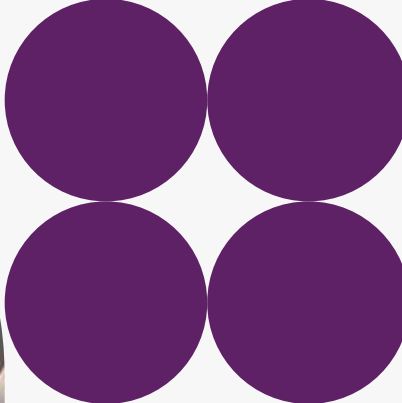
A tennis court and dedicated spaces for volleyball, badminton, table tennis, chess and Pétanque, plus a fully equipped fitness centre keeps guests occupied on land. Guests can also book fitness sessions with a personal trainer or try their hand in the boxing ring. Holidaymakers looking for quieter pursuits can book a Spice Spoons by Anantara cooking class, rejuvenate in the overwater Anantara Spa, or lounge by the infinity pool.

Located 21 kilometres south of Velana International airport, Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort is only 30 minutes by speedboat, available 24 hours a day. For more information or to make a reservation, call +960 664 4100, email dhigumaldives@anantara.com



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Experience the Thrill of Adventure at Occidental Paradise Dambulla

TTA BULLETIN

Located amidst the breathtaking landscapes of Dambulla, Occidental Paradise Dambulla is a true hidden gem that offers a captivating experience like no other. As soon as guests set foot into this enchanting resort, they are instantly enveloped by its serene ambiance and the feeling of being one with nature.

For adventure enthusiasts, Occidental Paradise Dambulla presents a wide range of thrilling activities designed to push limits and ignite a sense of adventure. Experience the exhilarating adrenaline rush of soaring through the skies on a 90-meter-long zipline, where one will be treated to breathtaking views of the hotel's beautiful surroundings. Zipping along, visitors can take in the stunning sights of the flowing waterways and immerse themselves in natural surroundings, leaving them breathless and yearning for more.



Adventure seekers can push their limits even further and conquer new heights with the exciting sport of wall climbing, test their courage as they navigate the thrilling Burma Bridge suspended high above the ground, or take a leap of faith and feel the exhilaration while swinging from one point to another on the Tarzan rope, building self-confidence and conquering fears. There's more to be experienced with zip lining which is similar to the act of toddy tapping; where strength, balance and coordination are put to the test as one makes their way along the line, surround-



ed by lush greenery.

When it comes to Occidental Paradise Dambulla, we have meticulously crafted adventure activities to provide our esteemed guests with curated experiences while ensuring the highest levels of safety. Our team of adventure specialists is dedicated to accompanying guests during their stay and guiding them through thrilling activities. Embark on an exhilarating journey that promises 1 hour and 30 minutes of nonstop fun and excitement. The resort's adventure activities cater to both individual travellers and groups, offering a wide range of adventure-based activities for adults and kids, making it an ideal destination for families seeking thrilling experiences. As guest, Miguel Matoes shared from his recent family vacation, our hotel provides curated adventures suitable for beginners, ensuring a safe and enjoyable time for all. With

no prior experience required, visitors can immerse themselves in the excitement and create unforgettable memories, which is a testament to Occidental Paradise's commitment to delivering exceptional adventure sports experiences.

Occidental Paradise Dambulla not only offers thrilling adventures but also provides a serene retreat for those seeking relaxation. Guests can unwind by the poolside, indulge in rejuvenating spa treatments or simply immerse themselves in the tranquility of the surroundings. The resort is an ideal destination for individu-



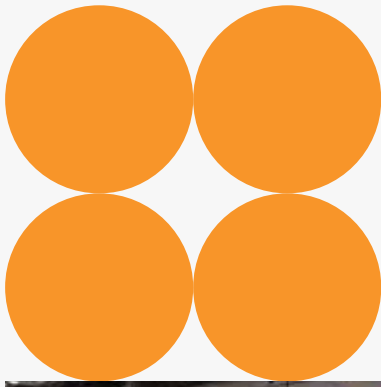
als looking to take a respite from their demanding schedules and reconnect with nature. Additionally, each culinary creation on the menu is meticulously prepared with the utmost care and attention to detail, providing guests with a delightful gastronomic experience that fosters a deeper appreciation for the exotic flavours of the island.

Beyond the adventure and culinary delights, Occidental Paradise Dambulla is a place where one can truly unwind and rejuvenate. The resort's duplex family rooms are designed to offer a comfortable and enjoyable experience for families with

capacious accommodation spread across two floors, providing plenty of space for everyone to relax and unwind. Guests can enjoy stunning views of the lush greenery that surrounds the hotel, creating a serene and tranquil atmosphere.

Come, immerse in the essence of Dambulla, where adventure meets serenity and where flavours create unforgettable memories. Occidental Paradise Dambulla invites you to experience the magic of this remarkable destination and create lasting impressions that will stay with you long after your visit.





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HOTELS

Minor Hotels Triumphs with 22 Accolades at T+L Luxury Awards Asia Pacific

TTA BULLETIN

Minor Hotels, a leading global hotel owner and operator, secured an impressive haul of 22 accolades at the Travel + Leisure Luxury Awards Asia Pacific 2024. The awards ceremony, held on the evening of 13 June 2024, celebrated excellence across the luxury travel sector, showcasing the very best in hospitality throughout the region.

The awards, determined through an extensive online survey conducted by Travel + Leisure, recognise outstanding achievements in the travel and hospitality industry, with readers from around the world voting for their favourite luxury hotels, resorts, and experiences.

Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas emerged as a standout, securing multiple awards, including second place for Best Resorts in the Maldives, second place for Best House Reefs, and third place for Best Hotel Pools. Additionally, the resort was featured in the categories of The Most Outrageous Villas, solidifying its reputation as a premier destination in the Maldives. The Crescent at

Niyama Private Islands Maldives, a cluster of secluded overwater villas with private pools and dedicated butlers, was also awarded, ranking fourth in its category, as well as earning nods for Best Resort Spas and Best General Managers.

In Thailand, Anantara Chiang Mai Resort and Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort were celebrated among the best upcountry hotels, placing third and fifth, respectively. The BDMS Wellness Clinic Retreat at Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort also earned a spot in the Best Hotel Spas category, demonstrating the brand's commitment to holistic wellness.

The Avani+ Luang Prabang hotel in Laos continued its tradition of excellence, earning accolades in Best Hotels, Best Hotel Pools, and Best Hotel Spas. Similarly, Anantara Angkor Resort and FCC Angkor by Avani were selected among the top city hotels in Cambodia, while Anantara Desaru Coast Resort & Villas in Malaysia was honoured in the Best Beach, Island +

Up country Hotels category.

Properties in Vietnam, Anantara Hoi An Resort and Anantara Quy Nhon Villas, also received significant recognition, underscoring Minor Hotels' diverse portfolio and its ability to excel in various aspects of luxury hospitality.

Minor Hotels is a global hospitality group operating over 550 hotels, resorts and residences in 56 countries, pursuing its vision of crafting a more passionate and interconnected world. As a hotel owner, operator and investor, Minor Hotels fulfils the needs and desires of today's global travellers through its diverse portfolio of eight hotel brands – Anantara, Avani, Elewana Collection, NH, NH Collection,



now, Oaks and Tivoli – and a collection of related businesses. Minor Hotels is rapidly accelerating its global growth ambitions, aiming to add more than 200 hotels by the end of 2026.

Minor Hotels is a proud member of the Global Hotel Alliance (GHA), the world's largest alliance of independent hotel brands, and participates in the GHA DISCOVERY loyalty programme.

Celebrating Culinary Excellence at Pegasus Reef Hotel

TTA BULLETIN

Pegasus Reef Hotel's culinary team has made a significant mark at the prestigious Chef Guild Cookery Championship of Sri Lanka, securing 3 bronze medals and 6 silver medals. Out of 11 participants, 9 chefs from our hotel proudly brought home medals, showcasing their dedication and exceptional skill.

Under the guidance of Sous Chef Abeysekera, our chefs skillfully combined traditional flavors with innovative techniques, impressing judges and earning well-deserved accolades. "Through rigorous training sessions and meticulous preparation, our team honed their talents to perfection," remarked Abeysekera, highlighting their unwavering commitment to excellence.

This remarkable achievement not only underscores Pegasus Reef Hotel's dedication to culinary prowess but also promises unforgettable dining experiences for our esteemed guests.



Ministry of Crab opens in the Mud Crab Capital of the world, Singapore!

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka's foremost crab institution, Ministry of Crab by chef-restaurateur Dharshan Munidasa together with Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara opened its first restaurant in Singapore on the 3rd of July. Located in Dempsey Hill, the country's premier lifestyle destination, the restaurant showcases the best of Sri Lanka's mud crabs and freshwater prawns, in Ministry of Crab's signature recipes prepared by meticulously combining Sri Lankan ingredients with Japanese culinary philosophies, drawing from Dharshan's dual Sri Lankan-Japanese heritage.

The Singapore restaurant marks the brand's sixth international outpost after Bangkok, Shanghai, Chengdu, Maldives and Mumbai as part of its mission to share the goodness of Sri Lankan crabs with the rest of the world.

"Singapore is the world's 'Mud Crab Capital', and our crabs have always been highly regarded here. The inception of Ministry of Crab dates back to a TV show I filmed in Singapore. Since then, we have always been eager to establish Ministry of Crab in Singapore, but factors such as timing, finding the right location, and the COVID-19 pandemic caused delays. However, as the saying goes it's never too late as we're thrilled to finally be here, plating up our original recipe Sri Lankan mud crab dishes" adds Dharshan.

Ministry of Crab Singapore is housed in a standalone colonial building at Dempsey Hill, a tranquil hideaway lifestyle destination surrounded by lush greenery, gourmet grocers, art galleries, antique shops, highly acclaimed restaurants, cafés and wine bars. Its architectural style is inspired by the flagship in Colombo, incorporating many elements from Sri Lanka such as the open kitchen, seafood display and the signature heliconia flower centrepieces, as well as designing and making all the dining tables



and floor tiles of the restaurant in Sri Lanka. The restaurant has a seating capacity of 68 inclusive of two private dining rooms.

Ministry of Crab was built on the ethos of serving only the highest quality ingredients in their freshest form, and to reiterate this, the restaurant in Singapore will employ the same no-freezer policy, that has become a benchmark at Ministry of Crab Colombo. In ensuring freshness, all crabs are air-flown from Sri Lanka live three times a week, wild caught in small batches, sustainably obtained via the extensive network of fisherfolk who catch crabs around the island. The mud crabs served range from the ½ Kilo Crab to the Crabzilla that weighs more than 2kg, while the giant freshwater prawns served range from 150g Small Prawn to the Prawnzilla that weighs more than 500g.

The menu will feature the same iconic line-up of dishes as that of the Colombo flagship, including the signature Garlic Chilli Crab, Pepper Crab, Crab Liver Pâté and the Coconut Crème Brûlée, as well as signature Nihonbashi dishes namely, Crab Croquette and Shirunashi Ramen. Dharshan has even found a local bakery to recreate the signature Kade Bread exclusively for the restaurant.

Ministry of Crab Singapore is open for dinner from Wednesday to Monday 6pm to 11.30pm and is situated at 6 Dempsey Road, Singapore.



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Are Sri Lankan Homestays an important category in main-stream tourism?

SRILAL MITHTHAPALA

There has been a remarkable rise in the number of homestay operators in the tourism market today, especially in the Asian region, including Sri Lanka. They are often labelled as 'low end' tourism and perceived to have negative impacts on a tourism destination due to a perception that they lack good hygiene and safety standards. However, an increasing number of tourists are seeking an authentic experience and choosing homestays as their preferred accommodation while on holiday. Sri Lanka boasts over 1,000 homestay units registered with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) with perhaps an even larger number operating without licenses, unregulated.



Srilal Miththapala

Currently, there is a surge of arrivals to Sri Lanka, with all hotels and smaller accommodation units enjoying high occupancy levels. In this context, there are differing views on the importance of homestays in the Sri Lankan tourism portfolio.

While some argue that homestays are a vital component of Sri Lanka's tourism product offering, others contend that certain homestays may damage the reputation and quality.

In an effort to provide a comprehensive perspective on this matter, this study will discuss in detail several of these issues and attempt to arrive at some conclusions.

Homestays are a significant part of the tourism industry, offering travelers an immersive experience in local culture. In Sri Lanka, the SLTDA defines a homestay as "a house occupied by a family with one to four guest rooms, where tourists interact with the family." The goal is to provide tourists with an authentic taste of Sri Lankan cuisine and culture through the hosting family's hospitality.

Internationally, homestays are often seen as transactional, long-term accommodations with little interaction with the host family. There is a clear difference between Western and Eastern homestays. Asian homestays are smaller, more affordable, and focus more on the cultural experience, unlike international homestays, which are more transactional.

This study is necessary due to the lack of literature and reliable data on the subject. Many Sri Lankan homestays fall into the Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE) category and are often informal, with limited registration with tourism authorities. The number of unregulated homestays might be larger than the regulated ones, leading to a lack of data.

To gather data, the study will use strategies and assumptions supported by the authors' experience in the sector. Although homestays operate extensively through OTAs, data from these platforms are not publicly available. SLTDA statistics show 1,080 registered homestays with 3,231 rooms. However, estimating the number of unregistered

homestays is challenging. Based on available sources, about 70% of homestays are unregistered, leading to an estimated 761 unregistered units.

With 1,080 registered and 756 unregistered units, there are approximately 1,836 homestay units in total. Each homestay has an average of three rooms, resulting in about 5,508 rooms in total. The average homestay rate is USD 25 per room, with a 62% occupancy rate. Thus, the estimated earnings from homestays in 2023 are around USD 31,161,510, accounting for 1.51% of Sri Lanka's total tourism earnings.

Homestays, while financially small, play a crucial role in expanding Sri Lanka's tourism portfolio. They offer affordable, authentic experiences that appeal to travelers seeking cultural immersion. Their impact extends beyond finances, benefiting local communities and enhancing the overall tourism ecosystem.

Formalizing homestays is essential, not for taxation, but to support and incentivize operators to meet regulatory standards. Capacity-building workshops, certification programs, and financial assistance can help improve the professionalism and quality of the sector. Formalization also provides marketing opportunities through the SLTDA, increasing visibility and competitiveness.

Effective training programs are needed to improve hospitality skills, covering hygiene, health and food safety, customer service, and cultural sensitivity. Digital marketing training is also crucial, as many homestays lack an online presence. Enhancing these skills can elevate the quality and competitiveness of Sri Lanka's tourism product.

Collaboration between government agencies, tourism stakeholders, private sector associations, and local organizations is vital to address challenges in the homestay sector. Streamlining regulatory processes, promoting best practices, and facilitating access to financial and technical assistance can create a supportive environment for sustainable growth, ensuring homestays continue to positively contribute to Sri Lanka's tourism industry and economy.

Prana: Pegasus Reef Hotel's Ongoing Commitment to Environmental Conservation

TTA BULLETIN

Pegasus Reef Hotel's World Environment Day event, named "Prana," was a significant step towards environmental conservation. This initiative, focused on beach clean-up and tree planting, marks the beginning of an ongoing commitment by the hotel to preserve the environment.



"Prana" signifies the hotel's dedication to sustainability beyond just one day. The beach clean-up brought together staff and guests to remove litter, highlighting the importance of maintaining clean coastlines. This effort will continue regularly to ensure the beach remains pristine.

The tree planting aspect of "Prana" enhances the hotel's green spaces and

promotes biodiversity. This ongoing initiative reflects the hotel's pledge to environmental stewardship and creating a greener future.

"Prana" is more than just an event; it is a symbol of Pegasus Reef Hotel's enduring commitment to environmental conservation. By continuing these efforts, the hotel aims to inspire others to join in the fight against climate change and preserve our planet for future generations.



Emirates announces exclusive fares for Sri Lankan travellers booking trips to Europe and USA

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates has announced special fares exclusive to Sri Lanka, enabling travellers from Colombo to enjoy journeys to Europe and North America while flying better.



fare with Skywards Miles accumulated.

Inclusive of 20 popular destinations, the special fares allow Emirates customers to reap savings while enjoying the airline's world-class services across all cabins. The limited-time only special rates enable passengers to save US\$ 150 (Rs 45,750 at current rates of exchange) over the published fares for Business Class return tickets, and up to US\$ 40 (Rs 12,200) on Economy Class return fares, the airline said. The all-inclusive fares in Rupees are subject to the rate of exchange on the day of purchase.

Subject to availability and terms and conditions, the special fares are available immediately for sale on the Emirates website or through travel agents till 31st July 2024, and will be valid for outbound travel till 31st October 2024, on flights operated by Emirates. No service charges apply when travel is booked and ticketed online.

Exciting destinations applicable to the special fares include London, Manchester, Paris, Milan, Rome, Bologna, Amsterdam, Zurich, Frankfurt, Munich and Moscow in Europe, and New York, Washington DC, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Toronto and Montreal in North America.

Furthermore, members of Skywards, Emirates' award-winning frequent flyer programme, will be able to enjoy further savings with the airline's 'Cash + Miles' option, under which they can pay part of the

Adding further value, the travel period covered by these special fares coincides with a Dubai stopover offer from Emirates. First Class or Business Class return tickets purchased between 1st July and 21st July 2024, for travel to or stopping over in Dubai for more than 24 hours, come with a complimentary two-night stay at the 5-star luxury hotel JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai. On the same basis, Economy Class passengers enjoy a complimentary one-night stay. This special offer is valid for travel dates between 4th July and 15th September 2024.

Additionally, Emirates passengers are eligible for discounts on admission tickets until 30th September 2024 via My Emirates Pass, at Dubai's epic water parks or at Burj Khalifa At The Top, when they present a physical or digital boarding pass and a valid form of identification.

The world's largest international airline, Emirates began operations to Sri Lanka in April 1986 and this year celebrated 38 years of supporting the country's tourism and export industries with passenger and cargo services. The award-winning airline has carried more than 12 million passengers to and from Colombo in this period. Emirates flies to more than 140 destinations across six continents, and currently operates two direct daily flights from Colombo to Dubai as well as an additional daily service via Male.

Saudi Arabian Airlines Facilitates Hajj Pilgrims from the Maldives

TTA BULLETIN

Saudi Arabian Airlines (Saudia) was the exclusive carrier for Hajj pilgrims from the Maldives this year.



Saudia is committed to ensuring a seamless and comfortable journey for all pilgrims embarking on this significant spiritual trip.

Saudia, renowned for its excellence in service and dedication to passenger satisfaction, has made extensive preparations to accommodate the pilgrims with the highest standards of care and convenience. Special arrangements have been made to ensure that all pilgrims have a safe, comfortable, and spiritually fulfilling journey.

The Saudia team is dedicated to providing an exceptional travel experience, allowing the pilgrims to focus on their spiritual journey with peace of mind.

In addition to the dedicated flights, Saudia enhanced its in-flight services to cater to the needs of the pilgrims, including special meals, prayer facilities, and attentive cabin crew trained to assist with any requirements.

Saudia has a long-standing tradition of supporting the Hajj pilgrimage, and this year was no exception. The airline continues to uphold its commitment to quality and service excellence, ensuring that all pilgrims receive the best possible travel experience.

Saudi Arabian Airlines (Saudia) is the national carrier of Saudi Arabia, operating domestic and international scheduled flights to over 90 destinations in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. As a member of the SkyTeam alliance, Saudia is dedicated to providing top-tier service and connectivity to its passengers.

Air China increases to daily Flights Between Colombo and Chengdu in July 2024

TTA BULLETIN

Air China, the flag carrier of the People's Republic of China and one of the "Big Three" mainland Chinese airlines, will commence daily flights in July between Colombo's Bandaranaike International Airport and Chengdu's Tianfu International Airport. This addition to the frequency marks a significant milestone in enhancing connectivity between Sri Lanka and China, promising to bolster both tourism and business exchanges.



Air China, a member of the Star Alliance since 2007, boasts an extensive route network that spans Asia, the Middle East, Western Europe, America & Africa. In 2017, Air China carried 102 million passengers with an average load factor of 81%, underscoring its position as a major player in the global aviation industry.

Moreover, this addition to its service will significantly impact Sri Lanka's tourism sector. China's growing middle class has shown a keen interest in exotic travel destinations, and Sri Lanka, with its lush landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and pristine beaches, stands out as an ideal destination. The daily flights from Chengdu will make it easier for Chinese tourists to explore Sri Lanka's diverse attractions, contributing to the country's tourism growth.

Poominathan Balanathan (Bala), Sales Manager (GSA) for Air China in Sri Lanka said "Chengdu is also home to the famous Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, a must-visit for tourists. The opportunity to see these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat adds an extra layer of appeal to the new route, attracting wildlife enthusiasts and families alike. This unique attraction, combined with the city's rich history and vibrant culture, makes Chengdu a compelling destination for Sri Lankan travelers as well"

Chengdu, a major economic hub in southwestern China, is known for hosting several key trade shows each year, making this route particularly advantageous for the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) business. By providing direct access to Chengdu, Air China is set to attract a considerable number of business travelers to Sri Lanka, fostering trade relations and investment opportunities.

The daily flights between Colombo and Chengdu is more than just an addition to Air China's route map; it represents a strategic move to enhance bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and China. The direct flights will not only facilitate tourism and business travel but also strengthen cultural exchanges and mutual understanding between the two nations.

Air China is supported in Sri Lanka by Jetwing Air, renowned for its exceptional aviation services and commitment to excellence. This collaboration ensures seamless operations and a superior travel experience for passengers. Jetwing Air role in facilitating this route highlights the shared vision of both companies to promote greater accessibility and connectivity, bridging the gap between Sri Lanka and China.

Emirates powers flights with SAF from Singapore

Activation of agreement with Neste marks airline's first SAF investment in Asia

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates has begun using sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) as part of its fuel agreement with Neste on flights departing from Singapore Changi Airport, marking its inaugural SAF investment in Asia. Approximately 3.3 million litres of blended SAF have been integrated into the fuelling system of Changi airport over the course of the last few weeks.

Emirates is tracking the delivery of SAF into the fuelling systems, accounting for and assigning its environmental benefits through widely used and accepted industry methodologies. Earlier this year, the airline closely collaborated with Neste for the supply of 2.6 million litres of neat SAF in the fuelling systems of Amsterdam Schiphol airport.

The SAF being provided by Neste is produced from sustainably sourced and 100% renewable waste as well as residue

raw materials, including used cooking oil and animal fat waste. SAF used as part of this agreement can be safely used in existing Emirates aircraft and airport fuelling infrastructure, and in neat form reduces lifecycle carbon emissions (CO2) by up to 80%* compared to using conventional jet fuel.

Adel Al Redha, Deputy President and Chief Operations Officer, Emirates said: "Emirates' investment into Neste-produced SAF in Singapore marks a first step forward in our SAF adoption in Asia, a region that is primed to become a leading supplier of SAF, which continues to be in short supply. While the activation of this agreement marks a milestone in our SAF journey in a new region, there's still a lot of work to do. And as we procure SAF for the short term, we've got our sights set on longer-term agreements to help scale up a steady supply of SAF for our operations."

Alexander Kueper, Vice President Renewable Aviation Business, Neste said: "We are excited Emirates has started using our Neste MY Sustainable Aviation Fuel at Changi Airport as the next step in our cooperation. It makes Emirates the first international visiting carrier using SAF at the airport produced at our Singapore refinery and supplied into the airport via our

integrated supply chain. We are looking forward to continuing working together on scaling up the supply of SAF for Emirates' operations."

Emirates' multi-faceted SAF strategy focuses on exploring opportunities to use SAF operationally wherever it is available in its network, share emissions reductions with corporate customers or freight forwarders where feasible, cooperate on longer-term SAF projects with reputable partners and support SAF ventures in the UAE with the potential to supply sustainable aviation fuel at its hub in the future.

Emirates currently operates flights from Amsterdam, London Heathrow, Paris, Lyon and Oslo with SAF. The airline also integrated SAF into the fuelling systems at its Dubai hub late last year. In 2023, Emirates was also the first airline in the world to operate two landmark demonstration flights from Dubai on the Boeing 777 and A380 with 100% SAF in one engine in partnership with Neste and other committed partners, supporting future certification where 100% drop in SAF is approved for commercial airline operations. Currently, SAF is approved for use in all aircraft, but only in blends of up to 50% with conventional jet fuel.



The airline has also committed USD\$200 million for research and development (R&D) projects focussed on reducing the impact of fossil fuels in commercial aviation, and last month became an industrial partner of the Aviation Impact Accelerator (AIA), based at the University of Cambridge. Emirates intends to play an active role in sharing its knowledge and data, as well as insights with AIA to support the development of cutting-edge tools and solutions to reduce the long-term impact of commercial aviation.

The airline is a member of the Solent Cluster in the UK, an initiative focused on low carbon investments with the potential to create a Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) plant that can produce up to 200,000 tonnes (200 kt) per year if operational by 2032.

Emirates is also a founding participant of the UAE research consortium Air-CRAFT, focused on developing, producing, and scaling sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) technologies for the industry.



Emirates makes its grand debut at The Championships, Wimbledon

Airline unveils bespoke A380 "Wimbledon" livery and special inflight service to kick-off the multi-year partnership.

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates steps onto the court for the first time as Official Airline Partner of The Championships, Wimbledon. Taking place from 1 to 14 July at The All England Lawn Tennis Club, the airline is set to serve world-class action throughout The Championships.



To mark its grand debut – the airline has unveiled a special A380 livery featuring the iconic Wimbledon logo placed in between two sporting silhouettes in action. The new livery will rally excitement as it heads to London Heathrow on 1 July, heralding the start of the third Grand Slam of the year.

The special decal will remain on the A380 aircraft throughout The Championships with scheduled services including London Heathrow, Manchester, Washington D.C., Paris, New York (JFK), Casablanca, Zurich, Brisbane, Barcelona and Perth.

Sir Tim Clark, President Emirates Airline, said: "Wimbledon is one of the most prestigious events on the global sports calendar and we're thrilled to celebrate our first year as the Official Airline Partner. We have a unique opportunity to strengthen our enduring connection with tennis fans, including the many amongst our global customers. In our debut year of partnering with Wimbledon, our message to tennis fans will be big and bold. We look forward to showcasing some of the iconic Wimbledon experiences to our customers onboard, and also to bringing our renowned Emirates brand experience to The Championships at The All England Tennis Club."

Serving "fly better" experiences on the grounds

Emirates will showcase its award-winning hospitality throughout The Championships and run a variety of activities to keep fans of all ages entertained. The airline will also be activating its sponsorship rights throughout the tournament with its signature "Emirates Experience" stand at the All England Club's Grounds. Fans can look forward to interactive experiences and exclusive giveaways including a chance to win a memorable holiday to Dubai with Emirates Holidays.*

Younger tennis enthusiasts can get involved in Roblox's 'Wimbleworld' which features Emirates branded tennis courts and obstacle courses.

Taste of The Championships at 40,000 feet Emirates will bring "a taste of The Championships" onboard all its flights to and from the UK in July. Economy and Premium Economy Class passengers will enjoy cream cheese mousse, strawberry compote, hazelnut streusel, and strawberry cheesecake.

First and Business Class passengers are in for a treat with strawberries and cream on offer, delicious pastries, and lemon

strawberry cupcakes featuring a Championships logo dessert topper. Customers will also get into the Wimbledon spirit with bespoke Pimms cocktails served in the iconic A380 Onboard Lounge.

Passengers will also spot branded beverage coasters and headrests across the different cabins. First Class passengers travelling from Dubai to the UK will also be gifted Emirates branded Wimbledon 2024 towels, produced by Christy, the Official Towel Supplier of The Championships.

Fans who want to own a piece of the iconic event can also choose from a range of Christy Towels, A380 "Wimbledon" aircraft models, performance apparel, headwear, and other merchandise available on Emirates Official Store.

Those following The Championships can stay on top of the action as Emirates will screen Wimbledon matches live in its dedicated Emirates Lounges in Dubai and the UK as well as across its fleet on ice – the airline's in-flight entertainment system.

Wimbledon's official film, featuring all the action from last year's event, will also be shown on the airline's dedicated in-flight sports channels, Sport24 and Sport24 Extra, in addition to "Gods of Tennis," "Novak Unmasked," and other tennis movies, including "Silver Servers" and "McEnroe."

Emirates is the Official Airline and Premier Partner of the ATP World Tour. The airline's tennis portfolio includes the highest profile events in the world, including all four Grand Slams, and 60 other tournaments across the year. The airline enjoys on-court branding at all the Grand Slams, including Wimbledon, as well as net branding for all ATP tournaments.

In the UK, the airline is also a proud partner of Arsenal FC, the Emirates FA Cup and Lancashire Cricket Club, in addition to Emirates Old Trafford, and Emirates Great Britain SailGP Team.

Emirates currently serves the UK with 133 weekly flights across seven gateways including London Heathrow, London Gatwick, London Stansted, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, and Glasgow – utilising a fleet mix of Emirates A380 and Boeing 777 aircraft. The airline also recently announced its highly anticipated return to Edinburgh with a daily A350 service starting from 4 November 2024.

Qatar Airways Secures the 'Airline of the Year' Title from Skytrax, Returning to the Top for an Unprecedented Eighth Time

TTA BULLETIN



The 5-star carrier also received three other prestigious awards: 'World's Best Business Class', 'World's Best Business Class Airline Lounge', and 'Best Airline in the Middle East'.

Qatar Airways becomes the first aviation group to win Best Airline, Best Airport and Best Airport Shopping, in the same year in Skytrax history.

Doha, Qatar - Qatar Airways has been awarded the 'Airline of the Year' title by Skytrax, returning to the top for an unprecedented eighth time. This distinction highlights the airline's unwavering commitment to excellence. The 5-star carrier was also recognised with three additional awards: 'World's Best Business Class', 'World's Best Business Class Airline Lounge', and 'Best Airline in the Middle East'.

Recently, Qatar Airways' home and hub, Hamad International Airport, was named 'World's Best Airport' in 2024 by Skytrax for the third time. The airport also received the award for 'Best Airport in the Middle East' for the tenth time, and the airport's retail, Qatar Duty Free, received 'World's Best Airport Shopping' for the second consecutive year. This remarkable achievement is the first time that an airline, an airport, and the airport's retail have been crowned as 'World's Best' in all three Skytrax categories.

This year is the eighth time since 2011 that Qatar Airways has been awarded Airline of the Year. The Skytrax World Airline Awards, widely regarded as 'the Oscars of the aviation industry', represent the pinnacle of excellence in aviation.

Commenting on this achievement, Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Officer, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer, said: "This is a proud moment for Qatar Airways. I am honoured to share this award with my dedicated team. This award is a testimony to our relentless commitment to providing unparalleled service and innovation. We look forward to continuing to serve our customers with the highest level of excellence."

Skytrax Chief Executive Officer, Edward Plaisted, remarked: "Qatar Airways' impressive achievement of winning the Airline of the Year title for the eighth time, alongside three additional top accolades, is a true testament to the airline's high standards and dedication. Qatar Airways was and will continue to be customers' favourite airline."



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AIRLINES

Emirates triumphs with 7 award wins at the Skytrax World Airline Awards 2024

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates was awarded a total of 7 impressive accolades at the 2024 Skytrax World Airline Awards, held yesterday in Fairmont Windsor Park, London. The prestigious titles reflect the airline's commitment to delivering best-in-class products and services across all classes, with accolades including; World's Best Airline Inflight Entertainment, Best First Class Airline Comfort Amenities, Best First Class Airline in the Middle East, Best First Class Onboard Catering in the Middle East, Most Family Friendly Airline in the Middle East, Best Premium Economy Class Airline in the Middle East and Best Premium Economy Class Onboard Catering in the Middle East.

Emirates garnered the awards from the votes of thousands of business and leisure travellers in more than 100 countries. The ceremony was also attended by members of the travel and aviation industry with awards accepted by Graham Pepe, Emirates' Corporate Sales Manager, UK.

Winning 'World's Best Airline Inflight Entertainment' is a testament to Emirates' renowned inflight entertainment system ice, topping the Skytrax charts for the 18th time. Thanks to its diverse content and more than 6,500 channels of on demand entertainment in more than 40 languages - there's something for everyone to enjoy. Customers are spoilt for choice with more than 4,000 hours of movies and TV channels, up to 3,500 hours of music and podcasts, more than 2,000 Hollywood and internationally acclaimed movies, 250 dedicated kids and family channels and hundreds of TV series and full box sets including the latest shows from Paramount+, HBO Max, Discovery+, BBC, Bloomberg Originals and Shahid.

Emirates First Class experience continues to be an industry benchmark for excellence, scooping 3 awards - 'Best First-Class Airline Comfort Amenities', 'Best First-Class Airline in the Middle East' and 'Best First-Class Onboard Catering in the Middle East'. First Class customers can look forward to a seamless door-to-door travel experience with Emirates chauffeur-drive service (CDS) to/from the airport and access to over 39 dedicated premium airport lounges worldwide. First Class customers will



experience the ultimate comfort onboard with fully enclosed private suites, a 'dine on demand' service including unlimited caviar and Dom Pérignon champagne, luxurious hydra-active pyjamas, Byredo skincare and sustainable Voya shower products, as well as Bulgari amenity kits to stay refreshed throughout long haul flights.

Emirates was awarded 'Best Premium Economy Class Airline in the Middle East' and 'Best Premium Economy Class Onboard Catering in the Middle East' for its newly launched product that rivals Business Class on many airlines. Emirates Premium Economy Class features leather seats with a generous pitch of up to 40 inches, a 19.5 inch wide seat with a recline of 8 inches, calf rests and footrests for additional comfort, a 6-way adjustable headrest and many other thoughtful touches such as easily accessible in-seat charging points and a side cocktail table, and a 13.3" TV screen. Customers can get comfortable under sustainable blankets made from recycled plastic bottles, a generously sized pillow, complimentary amenity kits and a globally exclusive sparkling wine- Chandon Vintage Brut 2017. The award-winning catering onboard features a selection of generous meals made with seasonal ingredients and regional influences -all served on chinaware, accompanied by stainless steel cutlery wrapped in a linen napkin. Premium Economy Class is currently available on 15 routes - London Heathrow, Sydney, Melbourne, Christchurch, Auckland, Singapore, Los Angeles, New York, Houston, San Francisco, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Tokyo Narita, Sao Paulo, Osaka and Dubai.

Emirates also took home the Skytrax award for 'Most Family Friendly Airline in the Middle East', for its array of products and services that cater to families and children, from priority boarding for families across all international airports, dedicated and healthy inflight meals for children and fun amenities, a litany of children's entertainment on ice, and extra services for Unaccompanied Minors and accessibility for families with neurodivergent children.

Qatar Airways to increase Colombo-Doha flight frequency

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways will be increasing its Sri Lanka-Doha flights from the current five-daily flights schedule to six-daily flights, starting on July 10, 2024. The increase in flights further demonstrate the award-winning airline's dedication to providing more choices and better connectivity for all passengers flying to and from Sri Lanka.

The additional flights will be served by the Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft, featuring



30 Business Class seats and 281 Economy Class seats. With this network enhancement, Qatar Airways will operate a total of 42 weekly flights to and from Sri Lanka, connecting passengers to nearly 170 global destinations worldwide.

Malaysia Airlines Hosts Inaugural Global Trade Elevation Summit 2024

TTA BULLETIN

Malaysia Airlines successfully hosted the largest airline trade event ever held in Malaysia, the first Malaysia Airlines Trade Elevation Summit 2024, in collaboration with Tourism Malaysia (TM) and the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB). This inaugural event brought together 300 delegates, including over 200 international attendees from 48 cities and 21 countries.

The summit marked a significant milestone for Malaysia Airlines as it advances the goals of Visit Malaysia Year 2026 (VMY2026) and positioned Kuala Lumpur (KUL) as a gateway for Asia and beyond, establishing Malaysia as a true ASEAN tourism and aviation hub.

Key decision-makers from major trade companies worldwide participated in the summit, fostering global collaboration, strategizing future initiatives, and strengthening ties crucial for advancing Malaysia's position in the global tourism landscape. This event underscored Malaysia Airlines' commitment to leveraging its role as the national carrier to support national tourism objectives.

Group Managing Director of Malaysia Aviation Group, the parent company of Malaysia Airlines, Datuk Captain Izham Ismail commented, "This summit transcended the typical conference; it



celebrated partnerships that embody Malaysia Airlines' inclusive spirit as we collaborate globally for mutual growth. We eagerly anticipate showcasing Malaysia's hospitality and advancing tourism objectives through strategic alliances.

We are pleased to collaborate with industry leaders, including travel agents worldwide and local stakeholders like Tourism Malaysia and MyCEB to drive innovation, efficiency and growth in the aviation industry and beyond. We will continue leveraging these partnerships to fuel our expansion, increase our reach and commit our efforts to drive growth both domestically and globally, and look forward to forging strategic partnerships that form a robust network, broadening our market reach."

The summit also featured the prestigious Golden Wau Awards, the first of its kind in the industry to celebrate top-performing sales agents who demonstrated exceptional achievements in driving revenue. These awards not only recognise excellence but also highlight the invaluable contributions of the trade partners to Malaysia Airlines' growth. By introducing this award, Malaysia Airlines aims to set new industry standards and inspire excellence among all trade partners.

Celebration at Bandaranaike International Airport Recognises First Anniversary of Air Seychelles' Operations to Colombo

TTA BULLETIN



Air Seychelles celebrated the first anniversary of its flights to Colombo with a celebration at Bandaranaike International Airport early this morning.

The occasion was marked by cutting a celebratory cake, courtesy of Airport and Aviation Services (Sri Lanka) (Pvt) Limited (AASL), and SriLankan Catering, attended by the pilots and cabin crew operating the flight from Seychelles to Colombo and back. The event was also attended by Mr. Dhanurjaya Samarantunga, Airport Duty Manager AASL, and Mr. R. Dougie Douglas, Vice President of Air Seychelles' representatives in Sri Lanka, AirPark (Pvt) Ltd.

The operating crew were also presented with gift boxes of Ceylon Tea by Mr. Samarantunga on behalf of AASL.

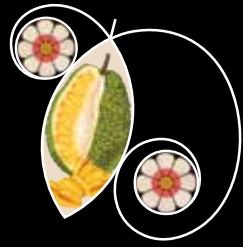
Charles Johnson, Chief Commercial Officer

of Air Seychelles said: "We launched our services to Colombo a year ago and are thrilled to be marking the first anniversary. Colombo has become an integral part of our route network and we look forward to celebrating many more milestones in the years ahead.

"We would like to express our sincere thanks to Airport and Aviation Services Limited for arranging this celebration at the airport to mark this milestone and to Sri Lankan Catering for the delicious celebratory cake."

Since the route started, over 14,500 passengers have travelled between the two island nations, enjoying visa-free travel, with Seychellois visiting Sri Lanka for the historical sights, the highlands and shopping and people from Sri Lanka visiting Seychelles for the Creole hospitality, crystal clear waters and stunning scenery.

INTRODUCING



Waraka

UDAWALAWE

Opening June 2024



Welcome to 'Waraka,' an eco-luxury boutique hotel in Udawalawe, surrounded by lush tropical greenery and offering stunning views of a tranquil waterway. Inspired by the jackfruit, symbolizing abundance and rejuvenation, the hotel offers tranquility and modern comforts. At 'Waraka', guests can indulge in a range of experiences, including canoeing adventures and thrilling safaris, while savoring authentic Sri Lankan and International cuisine. Every moment at 'Waraka' promises genuine Sri Lankan hospitality and unforgettable memories.



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- 
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