

Experience Colourful Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka being home for people with different ethnic and religious groups offer fantastic opportunities for visitors to explore and experience through different festivities spanned throughout the year. Buddhism being the major and the oldest religion practiced in Sri Lanka has the biggest influence in moulding the cultural heritage and festivities. Additionally the South Indian culture influenced Sri Lanka with Hinduism and western colonists from Portugal, Netherlands and England spread their religious and cultural landmarks in Sri Lanka in colonizing the island. Apart from those, commercial travelers from Eastern and Arabic countries also left their landmarks in Sri Lanka.



Among many other vibrant traditions, religious festivals are one of the unique elements to experience the colourful customs and rituals that prevail in Sri Lanka. One of the most attractive and the world famous festivals in Sri Lanka is Esala /Dalada Perahara in Kandy, “the pageant of elephants and light”, taking place every year in the month of August. The pageant is held annually to pay homage to the Tooth Relic of Buddha. Historically the Esala Perahara, dating back to 3rd Century BC, was held during the month of “Esala” as a ritual to request gods for rainfall.

This year the pageant starts on 16th August with the 1st Kumbal Perahera after Ceremonial planting of “Kap” on 12th August. After 9 days of procession, one per day, the final pageant called “Maha Randoli Perahara” takes place on 25th August 2018.

“Kumbal Perahara” is held on the first five days and remains as a semi – procession. It is considered good to show the Kumbal Perahera to infants to drive away Evil Spells and Illwill. The procession taking place in the next five days is called Randoli Perahara and is considered as the most beautiful and spectacular Perahera with “Randoli” (golden palanquin). The Maha Randoli Perahara, the fifth Randoli Perahera, is the final procession and is the grandest event of the festival. The Tuskers decorated ceremoniously parade with garlands and the Diyawadane Nilame (Chief lay custodian of Temple of the Tooth) wears a newly stitched costume on this day.

After the final Randoli Perahara, four Peraheras from the four ‘Devalas’ head towards the steppingstones of the Getambe Mahaveli River near Peradeniya to mark the end of the ceremony by completing the ‘Diya Kepeema’ (Water cutting ceremony). After the water cutting a new pot of water is taken from the river, the processions get back to Ganadevi Kovil in Katukelle where the customary ceremonies will be performed.

Kandy Esala Perahera is the only procession in the world which is held for ten days along with more than fifty Elephants and Tuskers, hundreds of drummers, dancers, singers and elegantly dressed pilgrims and spectators.

Tourists from all over the world and also Sri Lankans in spite of their religious differences travel to Kandy for this unique religious and cultural icon which symbolizes Sri Lanka’s rich diversity and harmony. As the Esala Perahera in Kandy is about to begin, we invite you to visit Sri Lanka to witness and enjoy this grand procession.



Ambassador Attends the Solar Conference in Munich



Attending the Solar Conference in Munich on 3rd July 2018, Ambassador Karunasena Hettiarchchi delivered a keynote speech on the topic “self-supply of building with solar energy in Sri Lanka”. The Conference was organized by the German Asia-Pacific Business Association in the framework of the German Energy Solution initiated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. It provided a platform for experts to discuss how Germany could support Sri Lanka in achieving its energy related goals.

Thailand Prime Minister Visits Sri Lanka

On an invitation of H.E. the President Maithripala Sirisena the Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-Cha of the Kingdom of Thailand paid an official visit to Sri Lanka from 12th to 13th July 2018. During the visit both presidents had bilateral discussions on political, economic, technical, agricultural, fisheries, cultural, religious, tourism as well as regional and multilateral cooperation. Both leaders declared the launch of the Thailand-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement negotiations and signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Economic Partnership between the two countries.



Government Launches Five-Year National Export Strategy



Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe launched the National Export Strategy on 19th July 2018. The initiative is to increase the capacity of the local export sector, improve trade performance and competitiveness and

ensure different sectors of the economy evolved to grab a share of the global market in reaching the Government’s goal of \$28 billion in export revenue by 2020. According to the strategy plan the Government officials would meet exporters every six months for discussing with the exporters and monitoring the progress of the Strategy. The trade adjustment introduced through the strategy is supposed to assist the export industries to adjust to new trading environment and the tax incentives introduced are for them to become more competitive.

The National Export Strategy was designed and managed by the Development Strategy and International Trade Ministry and the Sri Lanka Export Development Board. Technical support has been provided by International Trade Center within the framework of EU-Sri Lanka Trade –Related Assistance project funded by the European Union.

Department of Commerce Launched Sri Lanka Trade Information Portal



Trade information Portal on Sri Lanka supported by World Bank was launched by the Department of Commerce on 20th July. The Trade Portal on Sri Lanka provides information that traders need to know in the importing and exporting goods, including information on permits, laws and taxes leading to lower trade costs and improved predictability. It is a key objective of the international agreement World Trade Organization’s Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Ayurveda Expo 2018 Concludes Creating Platform for Indigenous Sector



The three-day Ayurveda Expo 2018 was held in Sri Lanka from 13th to 15th July 2018. The seventh edition of the

show contained several stalls with medicine and other related equipment on treatment on how to prevent or cure non-communicable diseases like diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, and even cancer. Herbal product manufacturers, buyers and sellers of Ayurveda medical products, hospitals, clinics, meditation and yoga centers, Ayurveda holiday resorts from Sri Lanka and overseas were present at the Ayurveda Expo 2018.

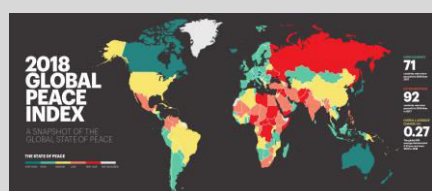
EU Recognizes Sri Lanka's Progress in Protecting and Enhancing Human Rights



The third meeting of the Working Group on Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights under the European Union-Sri

Lanka Joint Commission was held in Brussels on 5 June 2018 and the European Union has reiterated its readiness to continue supporting the Government in advancing national reconciliation process. An statement of EU says "A number of important measures have been taken, including the operationalization of the Office on Missing Persons, the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the passing of the Right to Information Bill. The EU drew attention to the importance of Sri Lanka making prompt and concrete progress in fulfilling international commitments on human rights and labor rights as well as environmental protection."

Sri Lanka Ranks 67th in 2018 Global Peace Index



Passing 13 notches Sri Lanka bagged 67th place out of 163 countries in the 2018 Global Peace Index becoming the second most peaceful nation in South Asia and the second

largest riser in the region last year.

International Mental Health Nursing Conference in Sri Lanka



21st July at the National Institute of Mental Health in Angoda. This is the first International Mental Health Nursing Conference held in Sri Lanka.

World Health Organization, Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine and National Institute of Mental Health held the International Mental Health Nursing Conference from 19th to

Sri Lanka Gets Ready for Huge Wildlife Conference

Sri Lanka is getting ready to host nearly two weeks long international conference on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora in 2019. The two weeks conference will be from 23rd May to 3rd June 2019 at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall in Colombo and expects nearly 4,000 delegates, officials, international and national non-governmental organizations and media personalities from 183 member countries to take part at the conference. During the event there will be art installations, competitions, street drama, mascot designs and national product markets around the conference venue.



See You
in Sri Lanka
at CoP18

NDB secures Loan up to \$75 with Commerzbank Germany

National Development Bank (NDB) of Sri Lanka signed an agreement with the Commerzbank Germany on 12th July at Dubai International Financial Centre for a loan up to \$75 million from Commerzbank Aktiengesellschaft Germany. The expected loan from the Commerzbank is to be mobilized in NDB's general banking business, without restrictions on specific sector.

Germany's Obo Bettermann Launches Sri Lankan Subsidiary



Pioneer German global manufacturer in the field of electrical and building installation technology launched its subsidiary recently during Night Annual Event for its customers in Sri Lanka at the Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo with the participation of the German Ambassador to Sri Lanka Jörn Rohde. OBO

Bettermann has been in Sri Lanka since the mid 90s and is spread across 60 countries and 40 subsidiaries in Europe and overseas.

Sri Lanka Bags the 1st Place in Civil Aviation Safety in South Asia



Sri Lanka has been ranked the first in aviation safety in the region South Asia according to a Continuous Monitoring Assessment conducted by International Civil Aviation Organization. In this monitoring process Aviation Legislation, Organizational Arrangements, Personnel Licensing, Aircraft Operations, Airworthiness, and Air Navigation Services were taken into consideration.

State Minister Senanayake Presents the Freudenberg Book to the Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Sri Lanka



State Minister for Foreign Affairs Wasantha Senanayake handed over Freudenberg book to the Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Sri Lanka at the presence of the German Ambassador Jörn Rohde on 26th July. Freudenberg book is a historical book consisting information on the long-

lasting German-Sri Lankan business relations with the example of Mr. Philip Freudenberg, who founded the Freudenberg and Company in 1873 and was appointed as Consul of the German Empire in Ceylon to represent German interests in Colombo. In 1953 the Freudenberg & Co. (Ceylon) Ltd. was founded by Robert P. Senanayake, the second son of the first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka D.S. Senanayake.

The current German Sri Lankan business relations as recorded in 2017, marks a 13% increase of exports from Sri Lanka to Germany and 81% growth in German exports to Sri Lanka, respectively 654 million Euro and 571 million Euro creating a bilateral trade volume of 1.25 billion Euro.

UN World Food Programme Signs Agreement with Sri Lanka



The UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government of Sri Lanka have signed a letter of understanding to strengthen their partnership to develop

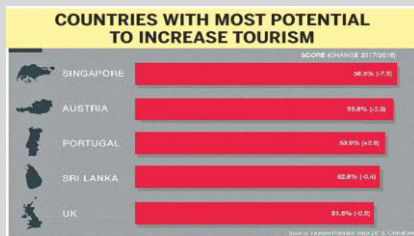
food security and nutrition in Sri Lanka. The established partnership is expected to assist the efforts of the government in Vision 2025 and sustainable Development Goals and will be carried out under WFP's new Country Strategic Plan 2018-2022. WFP expects to improve the productivity and incomes of smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities, especially women, ensure that children receive a vital nutritious meal at school, tackle the underlying causes of high and chronic malnutrition rates, and assist the government to prepare for and respond to climate shocks.

World Bank Extends Support to Modernize the Education System in Sri Lanka



Assisting the efforts of Sri Lanka to modernize and strengthen the general education system in the country, World Bank offered USD 100 million worth credit to the Government of Sri Lanka. Representing both parties World Bank Country Director for Sri Lanka Dr. Idah Pswarayi-Rissihough and Secretary Ministry of Finance and Mass Media Dr. R.H.S. Samarasinghe signed the agreement on 25th July 2018. The provided credits is to be utilized for the General Education Modernization Project (GEM), which aims to modernize and diversify the curriculum of general education in keeping with the transformation taking place in the society and economy of Sri Lanka. Through this project student from grade 1 to 13 and vocational and training institute's academic and managerial staff will be benefitted.

Sri Lanka - One of the Top Five Growing Tourism Markets



According to the ranking of GlobalData Sri Lanka is ranked as the fourth fastest growing tourism market in the world. Iceland, Japan, Hungary, Sri Lanka and Chile have been listed among the top five fastest growing tourism markets worldwide for the period between

2017 and 2021. GlobalData's Tourism Potential Index provides a ranking of 60 major developed and emerging markets around the world to assess potential growth opportunities in the tourism sector. The list is compiled in using a ranking based on forecast average annual growth and international arrivals and the forecasts are based on factors such as capital investment, GDP and disposable income in main source markets.

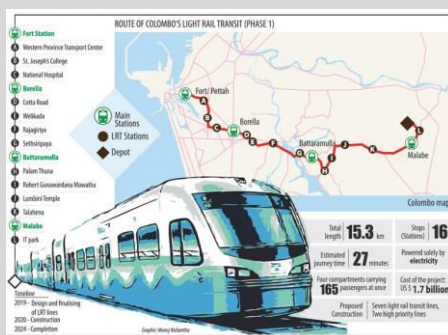
June Tourist Arrivals Grow by 19%



The tourist arrival numbers indicated a growth of 91% for the month of June compared to

the same period of the previous year. 28% of the total arrivals in June are from Europe. United Kingdom and Germany are the highest tourist generating countries in Europe and are among the top five international markets of Sri Lanka Tourism. Germany accounted for 8% increase in the total tourist traffic to Sri Lanka during the month of June.

Colombo to Get Light Rail Transit Project



Revolutionizing Sri Lanka's transport system the Ministry of Magapolis and Western Development announced the commencement of the project of constructing fully elevated Light Rail Transit system to ease the passenger transportation from Malabe to Colombo Fort, which is expected to minimize traffic congestion, reduce travel time, low passenger cost, improved air quality, safe transport and economic development.

It is expected that the first stage of the project will be completed by late 2018 / early 2019 and it is expected to expand the network throughout the planned Western Region Megapolis. The project is funded by the Japan international Cooperation Agency.

US\$ 300m World Class Beach Park from Kollupitiya to Dehiwela

The Cabinet of Ministers have given approval for a project to furnish a world class beach park from Kollupitiya to Dehiwela. The proposed park is supposed to create a world class beach with numerous leisure activities and is expected to attract thousands of visitors for safe bathing. Among many other attractions it is planned to construct a world class aquarium, a sea plane operation unit, water sports and



wreck diving to see shipwrecks around the coast. The entire area will have accommodation facilities for up to 50,000 people at any time and will include a park for 3,000 vehicles. The

Western Province Development Ministry and the Government expects to call international competitive bids for the project by January 2019 to develop the beach project.

A Billion Dollars worth Hotels Under Construction in Sri Lanka



According to the Tourism Authority of Sri Lanka a billion dollars worth hotels have been

approved and now under construction and another 200 million dollars of projects are to start their construction soon. The projects now under construction are expected to add 7,261 rooms and the projects yet to start their operations are expected to facilitate 1,798 rooms. By March 2018 a total number of 36,133 registered rooms are available as accommodation facilities for tourists. Approval has also been granted for 52 projects with 1,3921 rooms in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the country.

InterContinental Establishes Business in Sri Lanka



InterContinental Hotels Group signed an agreement with Sri Lanka's Pearl Grand Tower Hotel to open InterContinental Colombo featuring 307 rooms, including 47 suits. The new hotel will be spread across 480,000 square feet and is expected to be the tallest hotel tower consisting 42 floors in Colombo 03.

SriLankan Airlines Acquires Sixth Airbus A321neo Aircraft from Airbus Company in Hamburg



SriLankan Airlines got the Airbus A321neo aircraft. SriLankan Airlines expects to deploy the new aircraft to short haul routes. SriLankan Airlines has now six Airbus Neo aircrafts and 27 aircrafts in total.