



**Sri Lanka Tourism –Celebrating the 74th Independence day
with pride and enthusiasm**

As Sri Lanka celebrates its 74th Independence day on the 4th of February, 2022, amidst a most turbulent time, the nation is able to celebrate it with prestige and pride, as Sri Lanka Tourism had done an immense contribution as the National Tourism stakeholder to bring revenue and promote the destination, throughout 2021, by taking part in numerous campaigns, projects and webinars and interviews, and going through great pains to rejuvenate the Tourism sector. As a result of this effort, Sri Lanka Tourism has been able to end the year 2021 on a highly successful note, receiving several global achievements and seeing an increasing number of tourist arrivals by the end of the year. One of the main missions of Sri Lanka Tourism is to bring at least 7 million tourists by 2030. For decades, Sri Lanka has been famous for its hospitality and ancient culture, various tourist attractions, and its wide diversity of locations, offering everything that an enthusiastic traveller will need. It has been known as the “Land of smiles” and “Pearl of the Indian ocean “. It’s uniqueness as an amazing tourist destination is highlighted even in its wildlife, authentic cuisine, and unique Ayurveda medicine system. Thus it’s no wonder why it has always been the “Wonder of Asia” and much loved among travellers all across the globe.

The concerted efforts by Sri Lanka Tourism to promote the Island globally through its integrated and strategic campaign, continues to bring attention to the island. The strategies executed have led to a surge of positive reviews and recommendations from the world’s media, even during the pandemic.

Sri Lanka recorded more than 150, 000 tourist arrivals for the year 2021. Sri Lanka Tourism ‘s main aim is to increase the number of tourist arrivals this year and bring back the Tourism Industry to its normal status which was before the pandemic. The industry saw a considerable damage with the Covid pandemic, and a considerable loss of jobs in the tourism sector was experienced as a result. Though the dire consequences it was going through, concession, loans were given to those employed in the tourism sector as a support to boost their contribution to the sector. As the third highest earner of the country, the tourism sector is a crucial part of the economic process of the country, and there are many cooperate and small medium industry stakeholders who totally depend on tourism to survive. Therefore, it was crucial to do everything needed to rejuvenate the Tourism industry and bring back foreign income. As Sri Lanka opened its borders in January last year, the industry has been able to see a steady growth up to now with its endless efforts and promotions to encourage more tourists to Sri Lanka by strictly adhering to the national health guidelines based on the pandemic situation, and assure travellers of the safe health environment and the responsibility in taking care of the travellers.

There will also be enhanced coordination within the sectors that support the tourism industry including the aviation. A unison approach will help tourists in ensuring that they have a memorable stay in the country.

Another area that is to be developed includes increasing air connectivity with Sri Lanka and other nations with frequent travellers. The government welcome new airlines to operate flights to Sri Lanka in the coming years. Sri Lanka to sign an agreement with Emirates Airlines in order to enhance Air connectivity and boost tourism. Sri Lanka achieved another milestone in 2021, as Sri Lankan Airlines, the destinations national carrier, recorded its highest profit in December 2021, as the result of an excellent performance in bringing in an increased number of tourist arrivals.

During year 2021, though there were limited access to coordinate physically with exhibitions and promotional events, Sri Lanka participated in a series of international virtual webinars, conferences and MICE Events. The destination was highlighted by prominent international Media channels such as the CNN, Despite the ongoing pandemic situation. The iconic Sigiriya rock fortress was featured by Bloomberg Magazine as one of the new 7 wonders of the world. Sri Lanka was ranked as one of the top 25 islands voted by readers of travel + leisure magazine for 2021. These are a few of the international endorsements which Sri Lanka received last year as a positive result of its numerous measures to rejuvenate tourism and bring back Sri Lanka to its former status as one of the best tourist destinations of the world.

This year, in an effort to increase month on month tourist arrivals, promotions will be launched by the tourism ministry and the national carrier Sri Lankan airlines in cities across the globe. Promotions will be carried out through social media, and also at international conferences and exhibitions. It has been also decided that 2022 will be declared as the “Visit Sri Lanka Year”. Thus Sri Lanka celebrates its independence with pride and prestige, with the magnificent results which can be seen at the moment in the Tourism sector. Sri Lanka also has been able to establish its name as one of the main tourism destinations in the world with its colourful culture and heritage being showcased at the Expo Dubai 2020 which will be held till March 2022. H.E President Gotabhaya Rajapaksha also recently visited the Sri Lanka Pavilion which was massive attraction among the participants and other stakeholders. Further in addition, a new National Tourism policy will be introduced too this year, with many more in the pipeline. by 2025, the tourism industry is expected to generate more than 1 million jobs and generate more than 10 billion USD in revenue.

Thus, Sri Lanka Tourism celebrates the 74th Independence day with prestige and pride, as the national tourism organization of the country, content with the gradual progress it has made even throughout the pandemic, as the national flag bearer, promoting the destination cross the globe by representing its rich history and culture and the many travel opportunities for the modern traveller.

Images:



**H.E President Gotabhaya Rajapaksha's visit to the Sri Lankan pavilion at Expo Dubai
2020**



Bloomberg Listed Sigiriya as one of the new Seven Wonders of the World in 2021.



Sri Lanka Tourism Highlighted Once Again by CNN Travel in 2021



Sri Lanka Tourism gears up to promote Colombo as a tourism hub in South Asia