

# Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Press Briefing – Sri Lanka Tourism

Colombo, December 5, 2025 – Sri Lanka Tourism, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Employment, and Ministry of Tourism, issues the following update after the recent severe weather event.

#### National Recovery

Sri Lanka faced challenges due to adverse weather, but the country is steadily returning to normal. Utilities, transport, and essential services have been restored, and communities are resuming daily life. Tourism attractions and accommodations are reopening, reaffirming resilience and readiness to welcome visitors.

#### Tourism Attractions

Most sites are open:

- Wildlife: Bundala, Udawalawa, Kumana, Horton Plains, and Yala (Gate 5, Gate 6 – Lunugamwehera, Entry 1 – Palatupana).
- National Parks: Wilpaththuwa, Minneriya, Kawudulla; Wasgamuwa reopening soon.
- Marine Tourism: Mirissa Whale Watching, Pigeon Island, Kalpitiya, Hikkaduwa Coral Park.
- Forests: All open except Knuckles.
- Cultural Sites: All sites and museums under the Central Cultural Fund are open.

#### Weather and Occupancy

Tourism zones report sunny weather, calm seas, and strong hotel occupancy in Negombo, Kalutara, Passikudah, Hikkaduwa, Bentota/Beruwela, Ella, and Arugambay. Electricity supply is stable, roads cleared, and Ella is accessible via Wellawaya, while coastal resorts operate at full capacity.

#### Road and Railway Access

- Major roads to tourism zones are open, ensuring connectivity:
- Colombo – Kurunegala
- Colombo – Katugastota (to Kandy)
- Kurunegala – Padeniya (to Anuradhapura)
- Kitulgala – Hatton/Nuwara Eliya
- Ella – Wellawaya

#### Foreign Guests – Status Update

The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) reports 289 foreign guests were affected as of December 4, 2025.

#### Symbol of Recovery – Cruise Arrivals

- Sri Lanka's resilience is powerfully demonstrated by the back-to-back arrivals of luxury cruise liners in Colombo and Hambantota. From 30 November to 2 December 2025, the Celebrity Millennium called at both ports, bringing hundreds of international passengers as part of a regional voyage from Mumbai to Singapore. Just days later, on 3 December 2025, the country welcomed Mein Schiff 06, operated by TUI Cruises, with more than 2,300 passengers, over 1,600 of whom joined excursions across the island and praised Sri Lanka's hospitality.

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- Together, these arrivals send a clear message to the world: Sri Lanka is safe, open, and ready to welcome visitors. Successfully handling two major cruise ships in one week highlights the strength of the nation's tourism infrastructure and reinforces global confidence in Sri Lanka's ability to host large-scale international travel.

### Institutional Updates

- **Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC):** Most national parks and sanctuaries have reopened, ensuring eco-tourism activities resume safely.
- **Central Cultural Fund (CCF):** All cultural sites and museums remain open, with heritage conservation projects continuing uninterrupted.
- **Disaster Management Centre:** Reports confirm that while over 1.15 million people were affected nationwide, recovery efforts have stabilized utilities, transport, and community services. International assistance is reinforcing resilience.

### Social Media Campaign

Sri Lanka Tourism has launched a nationwide campaign to promote recovery, highlight hotel resilience, and deliver a clear message: Sri Lanka is safe, open, and ready to welcome travelers.

Hotels and operators are sharing real-time updates, guest experiences, and destination highlights, reaching global audiences and reinforcing confidence among international visitors and partners. Special focus is on Down South and other unaffected areas, promoted as vibrant, safe destinations for immediate travel.

### Addressing False Narratives

Sri Lanka Tourism recognizes that false and negative news has circulated internationally, creating challenges. While some areas need more time to recover, this is an opportunity to restart and rebuild stronger. By promoting unaffected regions and resilient communities, Sri Lanka aims to restore global confidence in its tourism sector.

### Appeal to Media and Journalists

Sri Lanka Tourism sincerely appreciates the support of local and international media. Your role is vital in amplifying the message that Sri Lanka's tourism sector is back on track. By sharing stories of resilience, reopening attractions, and safe visitor experiences, you help reassure communities and inspire confidence among travelers worldwide.

### Media Team

### Sri Lanka Tourism

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