

# Over 700 to contest Iron Man Triathlon

By  
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The Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau has made arrangements to welcome the So-Sri Lanka Iron Man 70.3 Triathlon that is set to project Sri Lanka as a tourist destination.

Participants from overseas are expected to arrive in Sri Lanka for the event scheduled for February 24 in Colombo.

This event comprises of three segments in swimming (1.1 km), cycling (90 km) and running (21 km) in a total distance of 112.1 kms.

This year's event will see over 700 foreign participants competing alongside over 250 locals. Last year two local visually handicapped competitors were in action but only one will be in action this year as the other has fallen sick during practices.

The competitors will start off with swimming from the sea at Gale Face and the finish too will be at the same point after the completion of cycling and running.

These details were disclosed by Rajan Thananayagam, director of the event, at a media briefing held on Friday at the Tourism Promotion Bureau. Minister of Tourism John Amaratunga said that this is an event that will help to promote Sri Lanka's tourism industry as it will bring in not only the participants



**Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau Kishu Gomes (left) receives the official competitor's jersey from Pro-Am and Event Director Tanjan Thananayagam in the presence of Director Pro-Am Yasas Hewage. (PICTURE BY SAMANTHA WEERASIRI)**

but their families and supporters.

"When an event of this nature is held on a grand scale, they are sure to spread the news that Sri Lanka is a place to visit not only as sportsmen but also as holiday makers. This could help our country gain foreign exchange for people in all sectors," said Minister Amaratunga. Thananayagam said that last year over 800 competitors were in action. He claimed that with their commendations the event received top ranking from the world which stands at 90.2% well ahead of the

other countries. Chairman of the Tourism Promotion Bureau Kishu Gomes stated that within a short period of time after taking office in the tourism industry he was set with a tough task of handling a major sporting event to promote the industry.

"I will deliver the goods to the best of my ability to make it a success," said Gomes.

There will also be a Kid Iron Man event to be held in Bentota on February 23 organized to educate children from a tender age.