



Kishu Goman, Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotions Bureau (3rd from left) with the organizers of the event, Rajan Theanayagam, Yasin Gunawardena, Desabandula Jitlin, Bolling, PDR, HIMAL PADURU

'SO SRI LANKA' IRONMAN 70.3 COLOMBO NEXT WEEK

BY SHANNON NICHELAS

The 'So Sri Lanka' Ironman 70.3 Colombo, one of the country's biggest international sporting events which has benefited the sports tourism industry massively, will kick-off on February 24. The official race route and the presentation of the race details were unveiled at a media briefing held at the Shangri-La Colombo on Thursday (14).

The second edition of the event is slated to increase the engagement and attention to the country.

The competition will see the participation of over 739 athletes from over 58 countries, with another 899 friends and family accompanying the foreign participants to Colombo, which totals it to more than 1638 individuals.

Furthermore, the So Sri Lanka Ironman 70.3 Colombo Expo is scheduled to take place from February 21 - 24 at the Lotus Ballroom of Shangri-La Colombo, where local and international sports, health and wellness products and services will be showcased to the Ironman participants as well as the

general public.

Speaking at the gathering, Yasin Gunawardena, Director, Pro Am Serendib, said, "Our goals in bringing the Ironman franchise to Sri Lanka last year were to establish the country as a viable destination for sports tourism and outdoor recreation, while encouraging Sri Lankans to get more involved in physically challenging activities. We were delighted with how the event unfolded last year, and with the response we received from locals as well as foreign participants, most of whom were travelling to our sunny shores for the first time. This gave us

the motivation and determination to continue with the second edition of the event this year. The team is working tirelessly to make sure that all the participants have a great triathlon, while enjoying true Sri Lankan hospitality."

The top five participating countries in this year's event are India with 84 triathletes, Great Britain with 95, Australia with 40, France with 34 and Japan with 24. Some of the other nations that would be represented at the triathlon are USA, Malaysia, Singapore, Germany, Russia and Malaysia. A significant majority of the participants are male, with women constituting 24% of the total number of athletes. This year Ironman is encouraging women's participation in the sport and have allocated 25 slots from Sri Lanka exclusively for women that finish first, to take part in the 2019 Ironman 70.3 World Championship, Nice, France.

The race begins with a single-loop, 1.9km swim starting at the beach adjoining Galle Face Green, followed by a flat and fast 90km bike course and a 21.1km run. This year, the bike course would be extended to Janadhipathi Mawatha, Sir Baron Jayathilaka Mawatha, York Street and BOC Mawatha. The run course will be extended up to Kollupitiya junction.

The event would be organized by Pro AM Serendib while the title sponsor of the event is Sri Lanka Tourism Promotions Bureau.



The official apparel of the event presented by MAS Kireeda representatives.