



What you need to know about

The So Sri Lanka IRONMAN triathlon 70.3 2019

BY PAVANI JAYASINGHE MUNAGAMAGE

The biggest challenge yet to hit the beaches of Colombo will reach Sri Lanka on 24 February, 2019. Along with the support of the public and private sector in Sri Lanka, this event is organised for the second time by Pro-Am Serendib and is sponsored by the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau which will oversee the participation of over 700 athletes, 600 of whom are from over 56 countries around the globe. The top six participating countries for "So Sri Lanka IRONMAN" this year are India, UK, Australia, France, US, and Japan.

The triathlon consists of a 1.9-km swim which starts at the sandy beach adjoining Galle Face Green, followed by a bike ride on a smooth course placed exclusively for IRONMAN competitors by the hardworking committee that made IRONMAN 70.3 possible, and concludes with a 21.1-km run alongside scenic country views of Sri Lanka ending towards the front of Galle Face Green in completion of the three-part marathon.

The press conference was graced by the presence of Minister of Tourism Development John Amararatunga, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau Chairman Kishu Gomes, Pro-Am Serendib Director and Event Director Rajan Tharanayagam, along with many others at the head table.

Amararatunga stated: "During 2018, there was tremendous enthusiasm, not only among the participants but the general public as well, concerning this event. Hundreds and thousands lined the streets to witness the event, and that is one great achievement. This triathlon is a major event for tourism and the ministry is sure to give their full support and cooperation in order to make this event a success.

"The benefits of this event for Sri Lanka are manifold, such as the number of tourists that will arrive in Sri Lanka due to the triathlon, the sum of foreign exchange collected, and the publicity offered. And this year too, this event is bound to be a success."

Kishu Gomes, making his first media appearance after he was appointed Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism

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Promotion Bureau, said: "I've only still been in the office for two days. I have very little time to understand the procedure of events, but with what I've seen, the process the bureau has in place to assess the value of events are as good as the best I've seen in the private sector. This event is an example of where the public sector meets the excellent standards of the private sector. Even though the numbers in participants have dipped a bit since 2018, in time to come, I trust that this will be a bigger and more successful event in the future.

"Sports tourism is so important for Sri Lanka, learning from countries like Singapore, in developing the infrastructure and everything surrounding Sri Lanka."

IRONMAN is a competition initially formulated by a naval officer, John Collins, during an awards banquet along with his wife Judy in Hawaii who decided to fuse three of the most vigorous challenges to form a nerve-shattering experience for both men and women.

IRONMAN is not only a competition but also an attractive brand that many travellers follow from across the world, and thereby draws many tourists to Sri Lanka.

This year, apart from the triathlon, distinctive guest Julie Moss, the Ironwoman who crawled her way to the finish line in 1982, will not only take part in the triathlon with the aim of getting more female competitors to join the sport, but will also be part of a morning talk session titled "Sip and Share with Julie Moss". This is an event that should not be missed on 21 February at the Kingsbury Hotel, followed by the triathlon on 24 February.

PHOTOS INDIKA HANDUWALA