



SRI LANKA'S LARGEST SPORTS TOURISM EVENT

'SO SRI LANKA IRONMAN 70.3 COLOMBO' UNVEILS ITS' SECOND EDITION

THE LARGEST SPORTING EXPO AT SHANGRI-LA COLOMBO FROM THE 21 TO 24 FEBRUARY 2019

OVER 730 ATHLETES FROM 58 COUNTRIES

EXPECTED REVENUE FOR SRI LANKA OVER US \$ 3.5 MILLION

The country's biggest international sporting event, So Sri Lanka IRONMAN 70.3 Colombo, is ready to unveil its locally the second anniversary year in Sri Lanka on 24 February 2019 at Shangri-La Colombo, a media release stated.

The competition will take the participation of over 730 athletes from 58 countries, with another 500 friends and family accompanying the foreign participants to Colombo. So Sri Lanka IRONMAN 70.3 Colombo Expo will take place from 21 to 24 February 2019 at the Lakeside Mall of Shangri-La Colombo. The Expo will showcase local and international sports, health and wellness products and services to the IRONMAN 70.3 participants and to the general public.

"Our goal in bringing the IRONMAN Expo to Sri Lanka last year was 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," said Piv Arin Senarathna Director, Visas & Immigration. "We were delighted to have the event unfolded last year with the response we received from locals and the foreign participants, most of who 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 hard to make sure that all participants have a great experience, while enjoying the Sri Lanka hospitality."

According to the release, last year saw a majority of the athletes travelling to Sri Lanka with friends and family and reports show that over 70 per cent of them stayed back to tour the country after the race. Over 90 per cent of foreign participants and their travel companions stayed at either four or five star hotels, while the rest opted for non-traditional accommodations such as Airbnb. The average annual spend in Sri Lanka by each of foreign athletes on food, accommodation, travel and leisure activities was US \$45,000 per athlete.

The top five participating countries in So Sri Lanka IRONMAN 70.3 Colombo are India with 94 Sri athletes, United States with 85, Australia with 43, France with 38 and Japan with 24. Other countries represented at the event are USA, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Germany, Russia, Maldives and Sri Lanka. The average

age of this year's athletes is 36, with the oldest participant being 75 years and the youngest being 18 years. A significant majority of the participants are male, with women constituting 24 per cent of the total number of athletes. This year IRONMAN is a social sport and women's participation is the sport and have allocated 25 slots from Sri Lanka exclusively for women that mean Sri Lanka to take part in 2019 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship, Hirt, Pierre.

Director, Piv Arin Senarathna, Department of Visa & Immigration, said "With the IRONMAN 70.3 Colombo, we want to encourage the athletes to get out and explore the beauty of Sri Lanka. We have a lot of physical challenges that we have to mark. Organising endurance sporting events such as So Sri Lanka IRONMAN 70.3 Colombo not only creates awareness for the country on a global level, but it also gives our people the opportunity to push themselves and feel the true rewards of physical achievement. Having realised that the number of female participants needs to increase for future events, we are organising an in collaboration with IRONMAN's sister club, Asexual & Bisexual, on 21 February to encourage and inspire more women to get involved in endurance sports."

As stated on the release, the race begins with a single loop, 1.9 km swim starting at the beach adjoining Galle Face Green, followed by a flat and fast 90 km bike course and a 11.1 km run course that offers scenic beauty views and a fantastic finish in front of Galle Face Green.

This year the bike course will be extended to Jambhri Park, Alawatta, Sri Riven Jayawickrama Mawatha, New Street and BCC Mawatha. The run course will be extended up to Kollupitiya Junction by making it more spectacular. The highlight of this year's event is to have an IRONING station and sponsor experiences with a special family course area.

"An event of this magnitude requires the support and coordination of a large number of partners both from the public and private sector to be a success. We are grateful to all organisations that have come forward to make So Sri Lanka IRONMAN 70.3 Colombo a reality, the Ministry of Tourism Development, Wildlife & Christian Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Telecommunications, Digital Media & Information Services, Foreign Employment and Sports, who have been pillars of strength to

IRONMAN 70.3 Colombo throughout the history of Colombo for their support, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority for opening up one of Asia's busiest ports for the race, and the Colombo Municipal Council ensuring Colombo hotels be available for all coming down for the race," said Piv Arin Senarathna, Director and Chief Director, visas & Immigration.

"We are also grateful to 500 event volunteers and 300 police force who will take part to ensure the event takes place properly and safely. The event is a great opportunity for Sri Lanka to showcase the world's hospitality for international sports and for ability to host large scale international events of this nature."

According to the release, So Sri Lanka IRONMAN 70.3 Colombo is organized by Piv Arin Senarathna. The title sponsor of the event is Sri Lanka Tourism Promotions Bureau. Partner organisations include Shangri-La Colombo, M&S, Sri Lanka Airlines, Ceylon, MTVNMC (Swire), Havelock Tours, Adventure, A&A, Wilton Group, Sri Lanka LMB, Emerging Media, Releaseit, Strategy, Havelock, Red Bull, Vogue X, Bernard's, Robinson, Spinners, the Triathlon Club Colombo and ZSL.

