Sri Lanka Tourism with Pro-Am Serendib I Ironman active sports tourism

Sri Lanka Tourism and Pro-Am Serendib I Pvt Ltd are all set to launch a multi-sport event brand Ironman Sri Lanka.

The Ironman 70.3 Colombo is a qualifying round for triathletes to participate in the upcoming World Triathlon Championship 2018 in South Africa. The event is scheduled to be held on February 25, 2018, with a 1.9-km, 90-km sea swim, 21.1-km bicycle ride and a 10-km run—all to be completed by a triathlete within an 8.5-hour period.

The Ironman Triathlon Series of events, the largest participation sports platform in the world, is recognized for excellence through developing the world’s leading athletes and quality products. Ironman has a history of over 31 years and is the largest-attended user-based sports brand in the world. The World Series with over 260 events across 44 countries. However, there are none in the South Asia region and it is a great pride for Sri Lanka being the only country in the region to host this event in the sport of Ironman.

The brand being a multisport event and the road infrastructure for cycling with the need for precision in timing and measuring has been a key to the desired positioning of brand Sri Lanka in the market. Sri Lanka is witnessing an emerging trend in Sri Lanka, which requires a strategic thrust. Regular triathletes participate in cycling events held on a smaller scale around the market is ripe for an event of this scale and magnitude in Colombo- 70.3 Colombo.

"We are excited about this announcement as we are expanding our portfolio of races—especially in Southeast Asia along with the national market. Ironman athletes are growing every year and I would like to thank the event Managing Director Geoff Meyer for making this happen," said Hemalatharai Muthukumar, managing director of Pro-Am Serendib I Pvt Ltd.

"We have been looking for the right brand and_finders in South Asia and we are excited to offer the Ironman 70.3 Colombo (Pvt) Ltd to organise a great race in Colombo," said over 470 athletes have registered, with 1,200 families and friends confirmed from 55 countries. An estimated 600,000 minimum of 300 liaison officers (ambassadors) will be trained in Colombo to contribute to their experience in the event. It will be trained to officiate and thus will receive training from experts for creating a list of locals.

It will provide the opportunity to build local hosts and support local tourism. Sri Lanka’s tourism revenue will contribute to Sri Lanka’s tourism revenue and beyond. It is a truly international product for the “affluent traveller” market therefore, contributing to the economy. It can become the single most important event in Colombo city hotels and urban lifestyle businesses in 2020. This event is primarily for the affluent tourists for five days. It is to occupy 1,000 rooms per night, connecting to 5-star and 4-star star-class hotels along with another 5,000 rooms in Colombo, focused towards the eight strategic product pillars of Sri Lanka.

It is estimated that during the event, Sri Lanka’s economy will directly incur an estimated ten million dollars by these travellers with as much as US $ 4 million, in addition to the economic activities through increased employment and activities in local industries including local cottage industries.

Ironman 70.3 Colombo will also position Sri Lanka as a ‘Hub for active sports tourism’ in South Asia by 2025, endorsed by and

Tourism Minister John Amaratunga and Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation address a gathering on sport tourism

Julian Bolling and Yohsi Hashimoto

Associated with the prestigious Ironman brand, the world’s largest user-based sports brand. It will bring the sport into Sri Lanka by creating content for sport’s tourism marketing, capacity for event infrastructure, competency in terms of event management, brand recognition and confidence with user and stakeholder endorsements and strategic associations.

Pro-Am Serendib is hopeful that the new 70.3 Colombo will become an annual event while putting Sri Lanka on the global map. It plans to hold a number of activities to promote the sport in Sri Lanka in order to eventually achieve at least 30 percent local participation.

The goal is to make Sri Lanka the destination of choice for Ironman events in Asia. Sri Lanka’s tourism events presently fall below, but this is all set to change. The country can host by building a memorable race experience. This is a historically unique opportunity for Sri Lanka.

Pro-Am Serendib is looking towards tapping into the exponential growth of sports tourism globally. The term “affluent sports mad” – sport is considered a destination, while sports travel is a trend for both sports and sport tourism. Tourists influenced by sports and sport tourism. This discipline falls under active sports tourism, where individuals primarily participate in outdoor activities in sports-related travel as a form of leisure. Others are sport tourists (AIS, World Cup Rugby, Cricket, Soccer, WTA) and nostalgia sports tourism, while sports travel is sport-related travel.

The event will also offer a unique Sri Lanka experience, which will have a four-day duration which will also include cultural activities that will be part of the event to enhance brand Sri Lanka to the world. This expo will showcase Sri Lanka handicrafts, gourmet food, new and unique products, spices and tea. It will also have the capacity to promote environmentally sustainable tourism as Ironman events are supporting local tourism initiatives and leave little or no carbon footprint as they are fully powered by hydrogen.

Ironman 70.3 Colombo has the capacity to transform Sri Lanka into a destination for sports tourism destination as hosting such an event will allow Sri Lanka to differentiate itself from other Asian destinations while the rugged natural environment has the potential to position Sri Lanka as the adventure capital of Asia. The official print media partner of the event is Wijeya Newspapers (WNL).