







James McGuire’s journey through Sri Lanka was going amazing but it took just one traffic jam to make it into the best trip ever! It was the day when he had one of the best adventures in Sri Lanka. This picture summed up his trip as he watched the herd calmly crossing the street while the traffic policeman did his best to let them cross without any hassle!

FRAMED

## OUT FOR AN EVENING STROLL!

**Location:** Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka



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## WILDERNESS OF SRI LANKA - WRAPPED IN THE MILLION SHADES OF GREEN

# CROSSING CULTURES

Take a travel plunge into the land of unforgettable wildlife encounters. While the amalgamation of traditions, cultures, history, and architecture amazes you, the incredibly unique wildlife of Sri Lanka will sweep you off your feet. Sri Lanka's national parks are a wildlife enthusiast's dream come true, the abundance of exotic wild species and the eccentric experiences leaves you delighted. While you are indulging in exclusive adventures of Sri Lanka, whale watching in Mirissa will add a charm to your trip to the country! Embark on a signature journey through the wilderness of Sri Lanka with us!

### Minneriya National Park

Nuzzled in the northeast of Colombo in the north-central plains, closest to Polonnaruwa, Minneriya National Park offers a thrilling spectacle to remember for a lifetime! Known as "The Gathering", more than 300 Sri Lankan elephants come to Minneriya National Park's reservoir, well-known for being the largest meeting of Asian elephants anywhere in the world.

### Yala National Park

Settled in the south-east corner of Sri Lanka, Yala National Park is home to the greatest number of wildlife including one of the big games – the majestic leopards. It's also an adored hotspot for bird watching! Catch the glimpse of roaming elephants, herds of sambar deer, crocodile and buffalo. A visit to this serene park is incomplete without an adventurous safari tour inside the park! Yala National Park won't disappoint.

### Udawalawe National Park

The verdant national park has the perfect setting for that dose of adventure you were seeking in Sri Lanka! One of the finest national parks of the country, Udawalawe National Park is famous for its sheer beauty, and the lack of dense vegetation makes the game-watching easy and exciting. The alluring park, houses Elephant Transit Home, an elephant orphanage which is home to 25 baby elephants who have lost their parents.



Udawalawe National Park promises a truly unforgettable encounter with the wild.

### Gal Oya National Park

Experience the thrill of both boat and jeep safari when in Gal Oya National Park. One of the most unexplored national parks of Sri Lanka, the park mesmerises you with its natural scenery and varied wildlife. It is a sight to see the elephants swimming across Senanayake Reservoir to the islands in the lake in search of food. Besides wildlife, Gal Oya is home to Veddha Clans, the indigenous people of Sri Lanka.

### Wilpattu National Park

Wilpattu National Park is known to give you the true sense of wilderness! Located in the dry lowlands of the island's north-west of Colombo close to the city of Anuradhapura, the park is famous for its elusive sloth bears. It's believed that ancient Sinhalese royalty used to live in the area thousands of years ago. Well known for being one of the oldest and the largest national parks in the country, you can spot several mammals and reptiles at Wilpattu, such as the Sri Lankan elephant, sloth bear, spotted deer, Indian python and monitor lizards. With a special historical significance, the park is a must-visit in Sri Lanka!



# *Vil Uyana, Sigiriya* *The Most Exclusive Sanctuary on Earth*



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*Get mesmerised by the charm of Vil Uyana, settled beautifully on the sprawling grounds with reed beds, paddy fields! The best pick on the “Cultural Triangle Tour”, the hotel is the perfect example of the ultimate eco-friendly luxury. Inspired by the local and the rural traditions, the premises blends into the landscape. A strong ‘back to nature’ theme pervades your every moment at Vil Uyana and the uniqueness of the experience is unforgettable.*

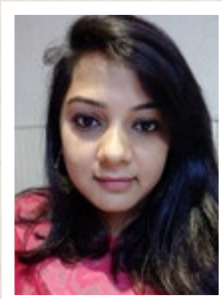
Highlights include:

- Member of Kiwi Collection – the world’s largest and most diverse curated collection of luxury hotels.
- Possibly the first hotel in the world to construct its own wetland system with lakes and reed beds to for a private reserve.
- An affair with delectable traditional Sri Lankan cuisine at Kamatha Dining.
- Exquisite in-house dining options such as Cellar Dining, Tree House Dining and Parker’s Peak Signature Dining Experience.
- A swimming pool for complete relaxation.
- A unique chance to witness the magnificent nature amidst hotel’s own parklands and woodlands.

**TOP  
SPOT**







KANIKA CHOPRA

# Footloose in Sri Lanka

Cultural Triangle - The Ruins of Elegance

There are always some places in the world which give you a spark of wanderlust. Sri Lanka looks like a few lines from the pen of a wordsmith, Leo Tolstoy, which says “In the name of God, stop a moment, cease your work, and look around you”. The staggering beauty of Sri Lanka is wrapped in million shades of blues and greens, and are perfect to spark that wanderlust in you.

If the countries of the Indian-Sub Continent were a deck of cards, Sri Lanka would be their Queen of Hearts. To revel in her indelible charm, one has to play their game with patience. The true glory of Sri Lanka can only be explored with serenity. Shrouded by elegant history lies the ancient cultural capitals with its Sinhalese royalty are Anuradhapura, the first capital to the north, Polonnaruwa, the second to the east, and Kandy, the third capital to the south-west, often called as the Cultural Triangle of Sri Lanka. It’s always a pleasure to take a plunge in intriguing tales of a country, and you will be delighted to know more about this beautiful and vibrant island country.

How about we go offbeat this time and take the quirky experiences to explore this paradise?



*Seek Peace and You Shall Find It!*

Start your journey through the spiritual path and spend some quality time learning the art of meditating with the monks at the ancient Jetavana Stupa, nuzzled in the ruins of Jetavana monastery in the world heritage city of **Anuradhapura**. While you are seeking peace, there’s no greater blessing than serving alms to a Buddhist Monk. It’s believed to foster a spiritual connection between monks and giver. As you empty your cup of sustenance into a monk’s bowl, you receive spiritual blessing from the monk. That furthers a Buddhist’s journey towards true enlightenment. Known for its tranquil



ambience, **Polonnaruwa’s** archaeological treasures takes you back in time. A visit to monasteries of Polonnaruwa will undoubtedly take you on the path of Nirvana!

*Stumble Upon a Cycle*

There’s no better way to explore the beauty of these ancient capitals than cycle around the marvellous ruins! Once the playground of the royals of Sri Lanka, the ancient city of **Polonnaruwa** was the centre of an empire and now is a majestic ruin of the second-largest kingdom. Paddle around the ruins of the old tooth relic temple and soak in the



ancient history of Sinhalese culture. Escape the bustling streets and head for cycling adventure through serene vistas in the consequential towns of **Dambulla, Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa, and Kandy**. While Sigiriya is renowned for its dramatic natural rock fortress, Dambulla is famous for the 2000-year-old Dambulla Caves. If you love the company of history and lush nature, the experience of cycling around these towns of UNESCO world heritage sites will be a moving one.

A great way to meet the locals is by cycle through a village in **Giritale** to a village home in **Habarana**, a picturesque town overflowing with culture and

authentic encounters, and indulge in intriguing stories of the country! Before heading out for your next adventure, cycle in the shade of the marvellous Buddha statue in **Aukana**, into the paddy fields, stop to listen to the birds chirping and rejuvenate by the **Kalawewa Lake** while sipping the local tea.

*Cook with the locals*

Start from buying curd and honey from the local market and gifting it to the family, a traditional Sri Lankan way of wishing happiness and prosperity to the house members. The perfect way to dive into the lifestyle and exotic local cultures is through



their kitchen. Go shopping in the local market, bargain and buy those beautiful fresh vegetables! Cook with the family members and take snapshots of local life as they unfold the secret ingredient of their scrumptious cuisine. End the experience with a delicious lunch with the family and the fascinating stories of the villages around during the war.





**Delhi to enter list of world's top 10 most popular cities with global tourists**



Delhi, the national capital of India, is all set to enter the list of world's top 10 most popular destinations in the world, according to the recent data published by Euromonitor International. Currently, the city ranks at the 11th position in the list of world's top 100 destinations and is forecast to be hold the 8th place in 2019. With soaring popularity health and wellness tourism across the world, the national capital has been witnessing rapid development in the tourism industry. The amalgamation of enriching history and various cultural traditions makes Delhi one of the favourite places among the international tourists. A world class airport and connectivity to most of the locations in the northern part of India has helped Delhi to increase its position in the list of top 100 most popular cities. Delhi has witnessed an average growth of over 25% in terms of international tourists this year. India has emerged as the strongest emerging destination with seven cities in the top 100 popular cities this year, according to Euromonitor report.

Despite political unrest and protests in the last few months, Hong Kong remained No.1 destination this year. However, the number of vistors arriving to Hong Kong declined in 2019. Asia posted fastest growth in the number of international arrivals globally. There are 43 cities from the Asia in the "top 100 City Destination" ranking. Developed infrastructure, government's focus on tourism and digitisation of travel facilities like e-visa are some of the reasons behind Asian countries' popularity among global tourists.

**NEWS&VIEWS**



**New museum to come up at Purana Qila in Delhi by April 2020**



In a new collaborative effort, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the Government of India are ready to establish another museum in Purana Qila aka the Old Fort in Delhi. The museum will display objects excavated throughout India that have been kept in the Central Antiquities Collection (CAC) at Purana Qila. According to the reports, the museum will be set up in April 2020 as announced by the Minister of Tourism, Government of India. Reportedly, the reason behind opening a new museum is to exhibit antique items such as tools, terracotta, pottery, sculptures, beads of semi-precious stones, architectural fragments and other objects for research scholars, the masses and students. The museum will be made in the arched cells of Purana Qila. The Central Antiquity Collection Section is a place for safekeeping the antique items unearthed by the Archaeological Survey of India. These items belong to the Prehistoric period and even to the post-Independence time. Purana Qila is the oldest fort in Delhi dating back to the pre-Mauryan era. It has seen the rise and fall of empires over several centuries, and hence, a very important site from a historical perspective.

**A 5-star hotel to come up at Delhi's Pragati Maidan**

The India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), which manages the Pragati Maidan, will undertake a mega project to redevelop the land into a world class International Exhibition and Convention Centre. The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved monetisation of land at Pragati Maidan in the heart of the national capital for building a five-star hotel. ITPO will transfer 3.7 acres of land at Pragati Maidan on a 99-year fixed lease for developing the 5-star hotel.

A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) will be formed by the Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) and the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) for development and operation of a five-star hotel with modern amenities.

**Telangana tourism has developed tourism facilities in Somalisa**



Telangana Tourism is taking new initiatives to promote eco-tourism and tourism in general in the state. The state tourism body has opened an air-conditioned two-storey ferry, and ten three-star cottages at the backwaters of Krishna River towards this initiative. Located in Somasila, Kollapur, which is about 250 km away from Hyderabad, these tourist facilities were inaugurated by Srinivas Goud, Tourism and Culture Minister of State. Somasila was once a Naxal zone, and hence it was off the tourism map. But now, the tourism department of Telangana is planning to transform it into a world-class eco-tourism destination. As it is, Somasila is surrounded by lovely forests, and of course, River Krishna adds to the charm here. The three-star cottages have splendid views of the river, and have been constructed in room and dormitory-style. The air-conditioned ferry, on the other hand, has an open-air cafe and an air-conditioned restaurant on the upper deck, so it is set to attract tourists. According to reports, the tourism body is soon going to start a package service from Somasila to Srisaillam.

**India to develop water villas in Lakshadweep, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

The Indian Government's think tank, Niti Aayog, along with UT administration has issued Rest for Qualification documents regarding plans to develop



water villas at India's popular island destinations, such as Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. According to reports, new infrastructure would also be included, such as airports, sea places, floating jetties, and even helicopter services. These will aid the newly-built water and land villas, making it a complete tourist destination. According to the proposal by Niti Aayog, the water villas are to have 125 rooms, and they will be constructed on Minicoy, Suheli, and Kadmat Islands of Lakshadweep. On the other hand, 460 rooms have been proposed for land villas in the Aves Island, Smith Island, Long Island, and Shaheed Islands in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, along with the Lakshadweep Islands are pristine island destinations that provide an opportunity to experience a different side of India.

**Sri Lanka's Sigiriya clinches top slot as winter getaway**



The USA Today has ranked Sri Lanka as the top destination, among 20 countries, for winter travel. "Jetsetters looking for something off the beaten tourist path should consider Sri Lanka," USA Today said. "An overlooked gem, this exotic island in the Indian Ocean seduces everyone who steps foot with its stunning unspoiled wilderness, colorful history, and flavorful cuisine." Due to the proximity and a lack of crowds, it's possible to pack a lot into a trip to Sri Lanka, it added. Between December and February, it's not so much a cold snap as a long, extended freeze with a solid chance of precipitation.



## Jewar Airport, India's largest airport, to be built as world-class transit hub by Switzerland's Zurich Airport International AG

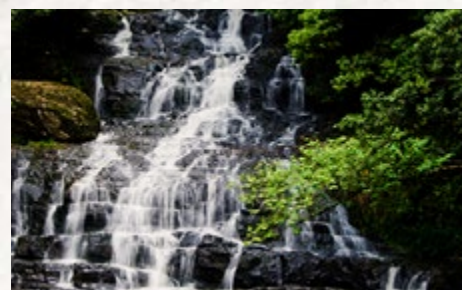


India's largest airport, the upcoming Jewar Airport in Uttar Pradesh, is all set to be developed as a world-class facility by Zurich Airport International AG. Apart from the Swiss company, Adani and GMR-led Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) and two other firms took part in the financial bidding to build Delhi-NCR's third airport. Jewar Airport, which is touted as India's biggest airport when it is fully built, will come up in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddh Nagar district, as per a PTI report. Delhi-NCR already has two airports- the Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL) in Delhi and Hindon Airport (VIDX) in Ghaziabad.

Zurich Airport AG stated that during the first phase, the capital investments are expected to be worth CHF 650 million or around Rs 4,657 crore. The first phase of the airport will be constructed in four years. During the first phase, the airport will be spread over 1,334 hectares. During the first phase, 12 million passengers per year will be accommodated, the report said. Zurich Airport AG is currently constructing as many as eight airports in South America. Among them, four airports are in Brazil, two in Chile, one each in Bogotá and Curaçao.

Uttar Pradesh government has entrusted the NIAL as the nodal authority. The NIAL floated a global tender for constructing Jewar Airport on May 30, this year.

## Shillong: Mattilang Amusement Park is fast becoming a favourite among visitors



Shillong gets a new tourist spot that has been garnering a lot of attention from the people. It is the Mattilang amusement park located in Upper

Shillong, which is surrounded by lush greenery and picturesque landscape. One of the primary attractions of this spot is the magnificent views of Elephant Falls, one of the major tourist places in Shillong. The falls, located at the outskirts of the main city, attract tons of visitors from all around the world because the unique two-tier waterfall makes for a great view and photographs. Also, these curved falls have an alluring beauty and the surrounding green vegetation makes it a perfect picnic spot. The Mattilang Amusement Park has been developed on the other side of the Elephant Falls, and has been developed by a religious self-help group of the area. Then, there is a hut in the midst of the park, adorned by rippling waterfalls, which further enhances the beauty of the spot.

## Imphal Mandalay sector under International UDAN soon

Ministry of Civil Aviation, GoI has assured Manipur government that the State Government's proposal for including Imphal - Mandalay sector under International UDAN will be taken up on a priority, acknowledging the State's importance in Act East Policy. The commencement of scheduled flight service, in the Imphal - Mandalay sector, under International UDAN will not only fulfil the expectations of the people in the State to have low cost, regular, uninterrupted,

cost effective flight service between Imphal and Mandalay, but will also give a major boost to tourism, investments, economic growth and job creation in the State and the region as a whole. Regrettably, instead of a scheduled flight service, the Ministry of Civil Aviation gave permission for chartered flights for a limited duration of time. Accordingly, the Passenger Chartered Mandalay - Imphal - Mandalay Flight Service by M/s AIR KBZ Ltd., Myanmar that was launched on 23rd November, 2019, with M/s KB enterprises Imphal, as the tour operator, was only for a period up to 7th December, 2019 as permitted by Ministry of Civil Aviation.

## Sarovar expands in Bengaluru with Shravanthi Sarovar Portico



This year, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts entered Madhya Pradesh market with an 88 room property, announced the 90-keys Estuary Sarovar

Portico in Kerala, opened Nirvana Sarovar Portico at Gorakhpur, expanded in Ahmedabad by signing a 49-rooms property, signed a new hotel in Faridabad, launched Seasons Sarovar Portico in Udaipur, announced Sarovar Portico Dindi in the Godavari Delta, Geeta Sarovar Portico in Panipat, Bellevue Sarovar Portico at Junagadh and Sobit Sarovar Portico at Palolem, Goa. To add to its expansive portfolio, Sarovar launches Shravanthi Sarovar Portico in South Bangalore. This is Sarovar's sixth hotel after Davanam Sarovar Portico Suites, La Marvella Sarovar Premiere, Radha Homestay, Radisson Blu and RBD Sarovar Portico in Bangalore. Shravanthi Sarovar Portico is a midscale hotel that offers 80 newly renovated guest rooms, an all-day dining restaurant, club bar, fitness center

and conferencing facilities. The redecorated lobby is spacious and comprises of a coffee lounge, just the perfect setting for relaxation or business networking. The hotel has different decorative themes on each of the four floors. From Scandinavian to Spanish county to Manhattan to the Royal, the hotel's theme floors and rooms will leave the traveler with a signature experience akin to none.

## Newly Renovated Tourist Information Centre Opens in Kandy



The newly renovated Tourist Information Centre (TIC) operated under the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) was

ceremonially opened to the public recently, by Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) Chairman Kishu Gomes, along with Kandy Hoteliers Association President Samantha Rathnayake, and his key members, Central Province Department of Trade, Commerce and Tourism Director W.M.A.H. Bandara, and his staff.

Director PR Madubhani Perera, along with other SLTPB staff, two foreigners from Spain and Slovakia who visited the counter at that time seeking information also joined in this simple yet charming ceremony to mark the occasion.

The new Tourist Information Centre is located at No. 13, Colombo Street, Kandy, within a close proximity to the temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, which is a major tourist attraction of Kandy which draws thousands of tourists each year. Tourists as well as the locals will find it very useful to get information and useful tips from this new Information Centre as it is located within easy access from any location in Kandy.

# NEWS&VIEWS





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Indo Asia Tours will be participating in the below mentioned upcoming Travel events. You can schedule an appointment at [marketing@indoasiatours.com](mailto:marketing@indoasiatours.com) to meet us in person at the show:

- **TITF** – 15 Jan, 2020, Bangkok Thailand
- **Reiselivsmessen** – 04 – 05 Jan, 2020, Oslo, Norway
- **CMT**: 11-19 Jan, 2020, Stuttgart, Germany
- **Destination East**: 13-14 Jan, 2020, Kolkata, India
- **Vakantiebeurs**: 14-19 Jan, 2020, Utrecht, Holland
- **Matka**: 16-19 Jan, 2020, Helsinki, Finland
- **FITUR**: 22-26 Jan, 2020, Madrid, Spain
- **Travel Match**: 23-Jan, 2020, Oslo, Norway
- **ITB Berlin** – 04 – 08 Mar 2020, Berlin, Germany

# IA SAYS

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IA SAYS

## Dear Partners,



**continent.** In this edition of Indo Asia Diaries, we would like to take you through the beauty that Sri Lanka is!

When I first went to the lush country, my first memorable experience was by the lake, fishing and admiring the sunset. All I could think was the sonnet by Rabindranath Tagore “clouds come floating into my life no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add colours to my sunset sky”.

There are several reasons to travel to this majestic country but, I believe the major attractions are, its beautiful culture and traditions, soul-warming people, delicious cuisine and the elusive wildlife. The food culture will melt your heart! I would just have to get the fish and the locals would cook it into a delicious meal just for Rs.100.

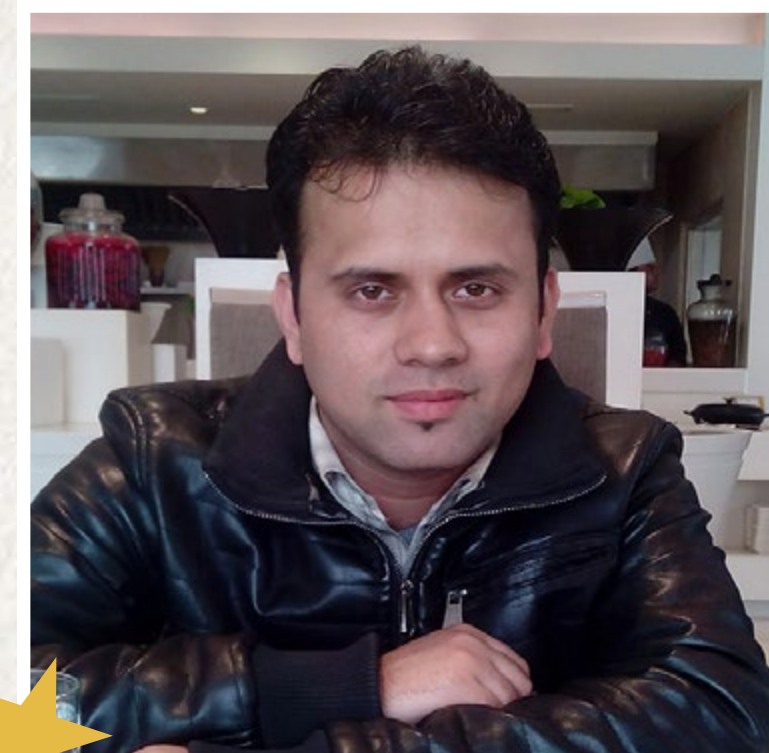
Nature kissed tropical island of Sri Lanka has more to it than meets the eye, I have always travelled to the country to explore beyond the staple attractions. The one that has my heart is the exquisite **Cultural Triangle Tour** of Sri Lanka’s ancient capitals. While this tour takes you through ancient cities such as **Anuradhapura**, **Polonnaruwa** and **Kandy**, and its marvellous ruins, it also lets you meet the lovely Sri Lankan people, taste the scrumptious seafood and the curries made with freshest natural ingredients and veggies, and indulge in the natural beauty of the beaches and mountains.

Believed to be the largest gathering of elephants in the world, Minneriya’s nature event that takes place every July-October left me bewitched with the phenomena. The national parks of Sri Lanka are ideal for the wildlife enthusiast and give you an insight into the rich biodiversity of the region. The best part about these parks are, the access is easy and comfortable, making them a “must-visit” on your list!

Sri Lanka is proud of its natural bounty, with an array of stupendous scenery and an abundance of natural wonders on show, this “Pearl of the Indian Ocean” is absolutely amazing to explore.

Sunirmol Ghosh

## EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH!



**Ravi Sharma** | Senior Tour Executive

It's been 5 years since Ravi Sharma has been part of the Indo-Asia family. He is passionate about travelling, exploring off-beat places and meeting new people. A dynamic person with self-motivated spirit, He believes in turning every improvement into an opportunity. His love for cricket and watching inspiring videos and movies keeps him refreshed. His many qualities make him an integral part of Indo Asia Tours.