
Sri Lanka offers "Ramayana Tourist Package"

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Sri Lanka tourism has designed a 'Ramayana tourist package' for the benefit of the travellers, especially from India, to visit more than 50 sites associated with the Ramayana epic in Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan High Commissioner to India C.R. Jayasinghe said. The package was officially launched in New Delhi in January this year. The enumeration of Ramayana sites in Sri Lanka is expected to spur thousands of Indians to visit Sri Lanka this year, especially since the Ramayana tourist package is an attractive travel package for such tourists. Sri Lanka is developing some of these places to narrate to the world the story of the revered epic and attract tourists from abroad, especially India, as Sri Lanka is the proud custodian of more than 50 sites related to the epic Ramayana.

The package includes visits to sites from the place of Sita's captivity to the battlefields and to the ultimate theatre of war where Lord Ram is said to have killed Ravana, King of Lanka. Sri Lankans believe that King Ravana ruled the country and the Ramayana has it that he brought Sita from India in a 'Pushpakavimana' also known as the 'Dandu monara yantraya'. The envoy said that the government has developed infrastructure in the areas and is promoting the 'Ramayana sites' through an aggressive advertising campaign. 'Seetha Kotuwa', a palace where Sita is believed to have been kept until she was moved to 'Ashoka Vatika' and Sita Amman Temple, a temple built for Lord Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman, have been developed and included in the package. Other sites which are being developed are Ravana Cave-Ravana Falls, Divurumpola, Ishtripura and Chariot Path and Seetha Tear Pond. Nearly 200 tourists from India took part in a special 'puja' at the Sita Amman temple in Sita Eliya, at the beginning of this year. High Commissioner Jayasinghe said this will go a long way in promoting people-to-people contact between India and Sri Lanka, which share warm and friendly relations. Sri Lanka's inspiration to promote the sites associated with Valmiki's Ramayana came from India, which has a large number of Buddhist sites. "A large number of Sri Lankans come to India to visit the historical sites associated with Buddha and Buddhism. So, we thought we should promote the Ramayana sites too," Indian media reported quoting the High Commissioner. High Commissioner Jayasinghe said the Government also plans to promote Hindu sites located in the Eastern and Northern parts of the country once normalcy returns to these areas. "People will visit a place only when there is peace. Now, the East is a free area and Sri Lanka Tourism will start developing sites there," Mr. Jayasinghe said. (Courtesy : News LK)