
Beach Fest warms up Hikkaduwa economy

Tuesday, 12 August 2008

Last Updated Tuesday, 12 August 2008

(Forimmediaterelease.net) Sri Lanka Tourism Promotions Bureau led an initiative to revive tourism and, through it, the economy of Hikkaduwa paid off with over 10,000 people converging in the one-time popular coastal resort town.

The overwhelming response to the five-day Hikkaduwa Beach Fest that featured a jam-packed itinerary of day and night events, provided Hikkaduwa with the much-needed financial infusion that has been scarce in recent years. Both the Hikkaduwa Hoteliers Association and the Hikkaduwa Tourist Service Providers Association commented that the Beach Fest had definitely renewed interest in Hikkaduwa and provided some much needed financial relief to local businesses.

The small- and medium-scale businesses were the biggest beneficiary, as demand for food and beverages and other amenities rose significantly due to the massive influx of people.

“We received very positive feedback from many of the local businesses, and they are already looking forward to next year’s event,” managing director of Sri Lanka Tourism Promotions Bureau Dileep Mudadeniya said.

Accommodation in the coastal town was also running a full guest registry, with a number of establishments, that had closed down due to the slump in recent years, having to dust off the cobwebs and open their doors for business.

“This is the first time in over 20 years that all the hotels have registered 100 percent occupancy; even the small businesses with one and two rooms were fully booked up,” president of the Hikkaduwa Hoteliers Association Siri Gunewardene said.

“It has been estimated that the carnival has pumped in 100 million to the local economy, based on the calculation Rs. 20,000 for a room x 5,000 people for five nights.

The event can also be considered a massive success, given that the inaugural Beach Fest was organized by a small group of volunteering university students coming home for their vacation, together with the team at Sri Lanka Tourism, the Ruhuna Tourism Bureau and the support of the Hikkaduwa Hoteliers Association, the Hikkaduwa Tourism Service Providers Association and Real Radio.

In addition, most of the communications for the event was carried out using popular social networks on the web including Facebook, YouTube and other blogs.

“The move to entrust some of the responsibility of organizing the event to the volunteers directed by the SLTPB team and promoting the event through traditional channels, has saved millions of rupees that would have otherwise been paid to an event manager to coordinate this event and for advertising,” chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism, Renton de Alwis said adding that, “I think this is a significant achievement for a state institution and should be the way forward.”

Plans are already underway for a bigger and more diversified Beach Fest for 2009, with some ideas on including more late evening entertainment for the mature audience, while the Beach Rave rocks the trance and techno fans.

While this year’s event attracted more locals as was expected, the interest and hype created is expected to attract more visitors from overseas next year, particularly from India, the Maldives and other Asian countries.

For more information contact: Sulochana, Media Coordinator, SLTPB, 2946589 (Courtesy : Forimmediaterelease.net)