

## **Sri Lanka eyes USD 4 billion tourism revenue in 2026 with interim global PR campaign**

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**Dhaka: Sri Lanka has set a target of generating over USD 4 billion in tourism revenue in 2026. The island nation has sharply focused on higher yield and value-driven growth, rather than just record visitor arrivals, to achieve this goal.**

Addressing the media, Deputy Minister of Tourism Professor Ruwan Ranasinghe said the country has regained and exceeded its pre-crisis visitor volumes and is now prioritizing revenue enhancement and product quality.

In 2025, Sri Lanka welcomed more than 2.36 million tourists, breaking the previous record of 2.33 million in 2018. As of February 15, arrivals reached 436,666, marking over 13% growth compared to the same period last year.

“We have achieved the volume as planned. Now the target is to go beyond that by improving products, targeting high-value segments, and increasing revenue,” Ranasinghe said.

The Deputy Minister noted that ongoing international events have strengthened pricing power. During the ICC World Cup T20 tournament in Colombo, city hotels reported 100% occupancy, with five-star room rates rising from around USD 300 to nearly USD 500.

He attributed the renewed international confidence to improved political and economic stability, as well as recovery measures following Cyclone Ditwah.

As part of its strategy, Sri Lanka will launch an interim global PR and digital campaign in April 2026, backed by LKR 2 billion, equivalent to USD 6.4 million. The eight-month campaign will target 12 to 15 key source markets, including India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the UK, Germany, the Benelux region, Austria, Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and the Middle East.

Authorities said the campaign will act as a bridge until a comprehensive global strategy, being developed with consultancy support from the Asian Development Bank, is finalized.

Sri Lanka’s current average daily tourist spend stands at around USD 148. Officials aim to raise revenue per visitor by expanding Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE); promoting wedding tourism, particularly from India; and strengthening sports, wildlife, wellness, and luxury offerings.

High-end investments are also being encouraged, with room rates positioned in the USD 300–500 range. Premium properties are emerging beyond Colombo in destinations such as Yala and Badulla.

Tourism Chairman Buddhika Hewawasam said digital and PR agencies are being appointed in major source markets to ensure sustained visibility, alongside participation in major travel exhibitions and international roadshows to stabilize year-round demand.