

## Sri Lanka looks to boost tourism ties with Belgium

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Sri Lanka is stepping up efforts to promote tourism and trade ties with Belgium, highlighting its economic recovery and appeal as a travel and investment destination during a reception at the Press Club Brussels Europe on October 13.

Ambassador J.A.D.S. Weerasena told attendees the country had made a “remarkable” recovery since 2022, with inflation under control and GDP growth exceeding expectations. He also described Sri Lanka as “one of the safest countries in the world,” pointing to political stability and neutrality as key assets for investors.

Upcoming business events include the Embassy’s Belgium and Luxembourg Business Council in November and the Sri Lanka Economic and Investment Summit in Colombo from December 2-3.

Officials also highlighted Sri Lanka’s strategic Indian Ocean location

between India and China, its role as a logistics and tech hub, and preferential market access through the EU's GSP+ and other global partners.

Tourism leaders noted strong growth in arrivals, with over two million visitors in 2024 and a target of five million by 2030. Sri Lanka was named a top destination by Lonely Planet, Conde Nast Traveller, and BBC Travel, praised for its diverse experiences, UNESCO heritage sites, and rich biodiversity.

From October 15, online travel authorisation is recommended prior to arrival, though approvals will still be available on arrival. "It's a five-minute process," said Ambassador Weerasena, aiming to make travel smoother for tourists.

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