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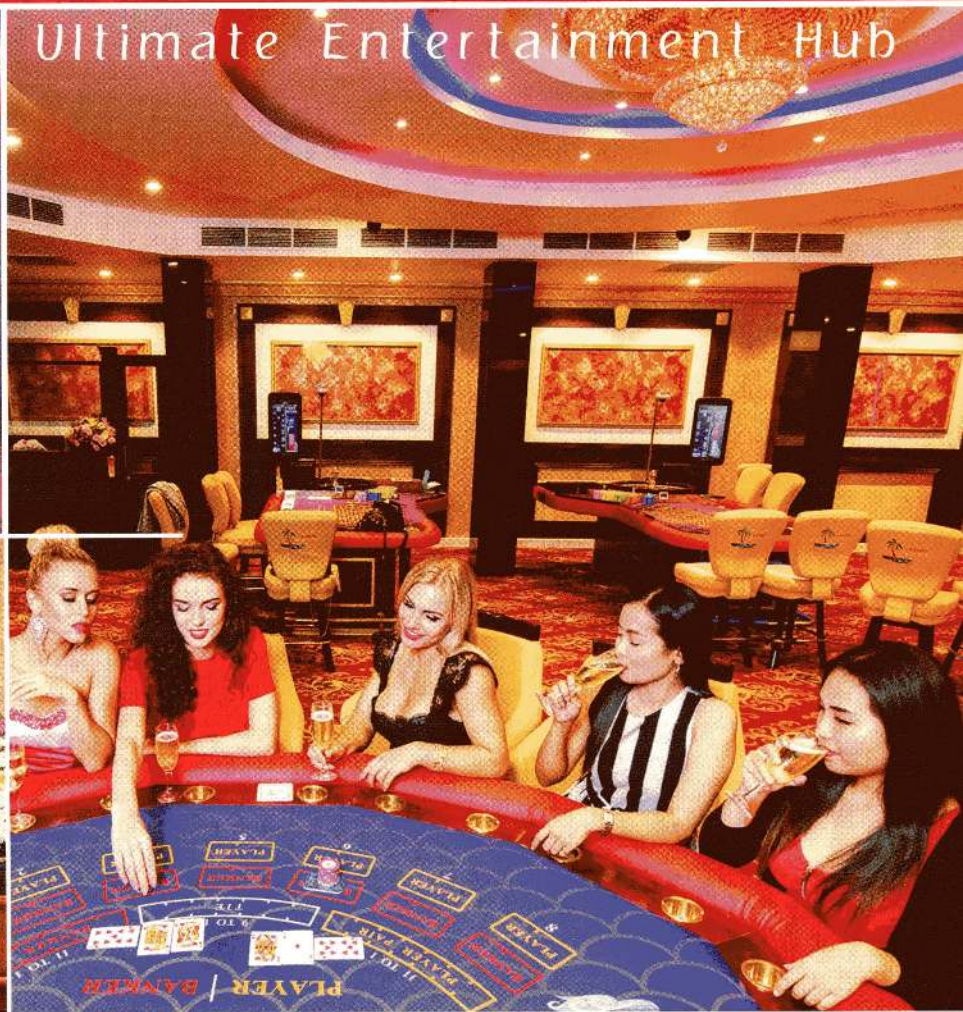
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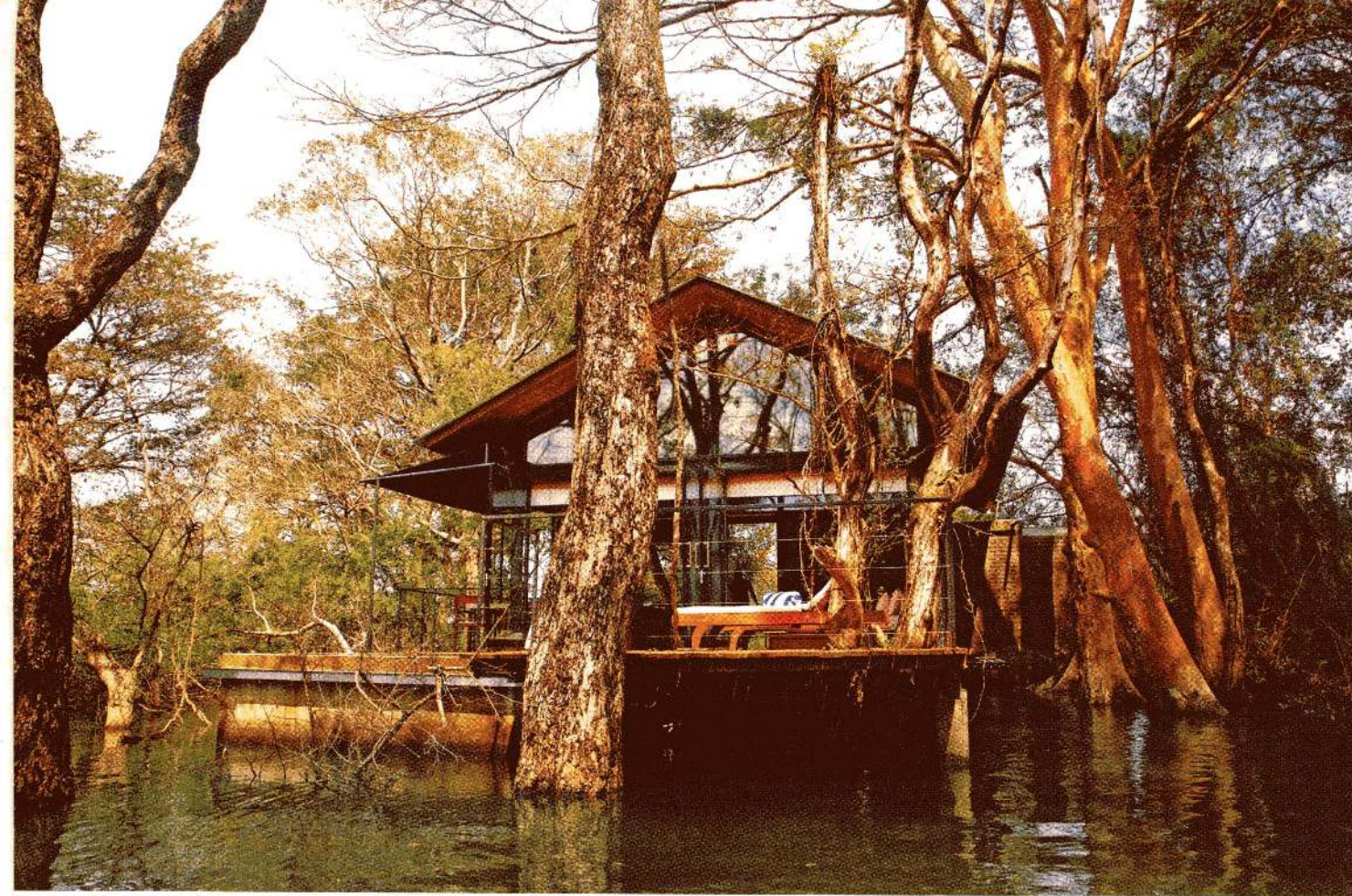
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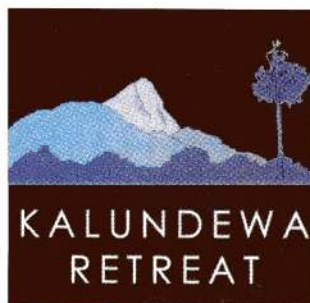
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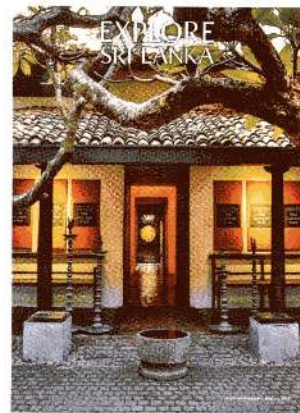
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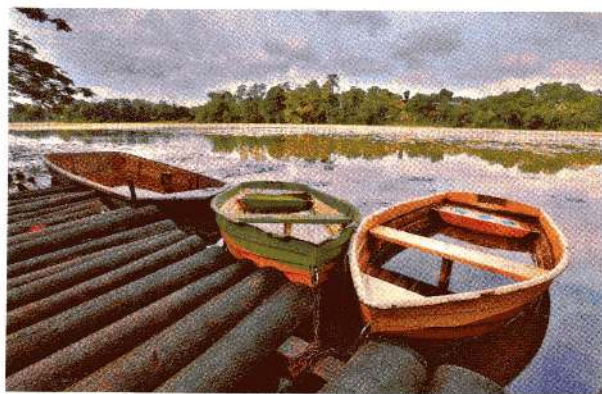
Spiritual Temple Art and Architecture of the Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya

Kelaniya temple contains intricate art and architecture that dates back to the Kandyan era and early 20th century.



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Thalangama Tank A Paradise for Birds

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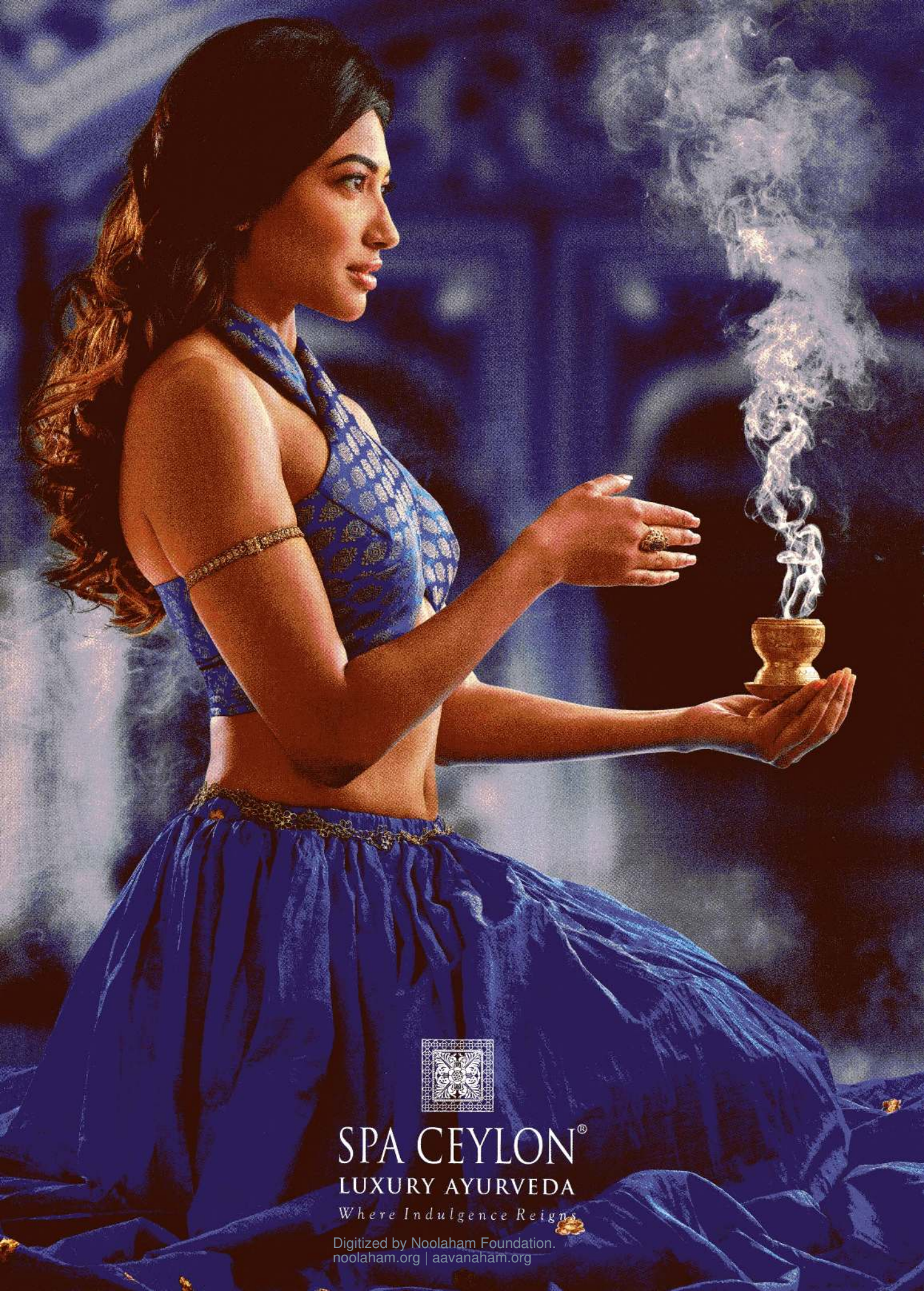
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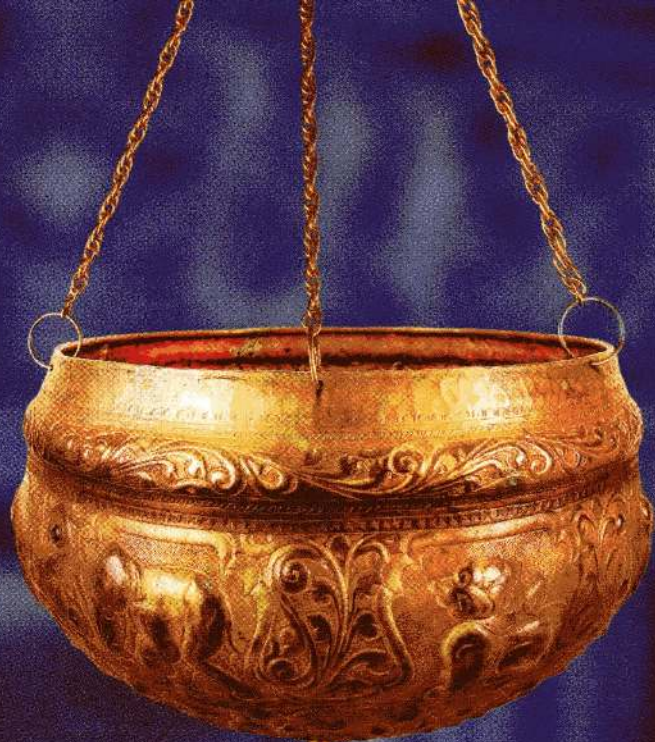
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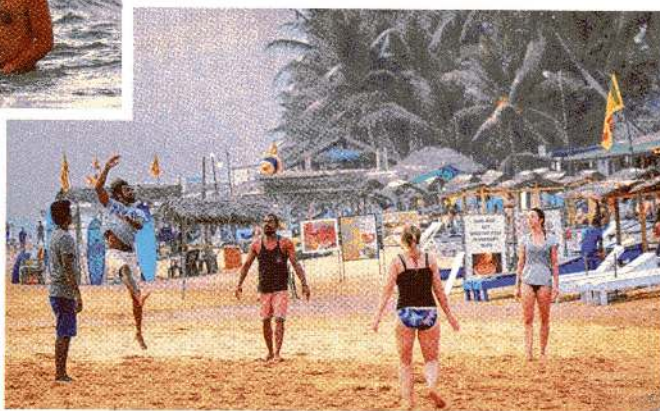
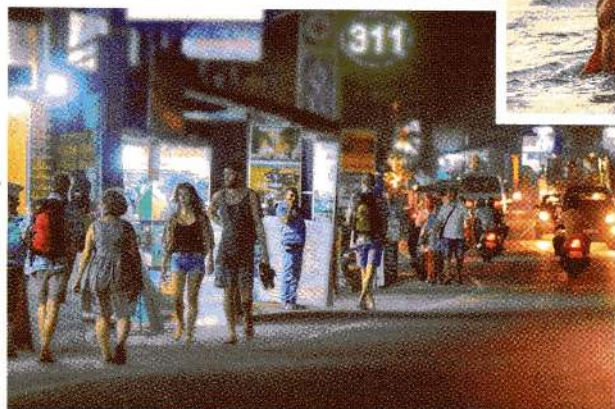
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Back to Hikkaduwa

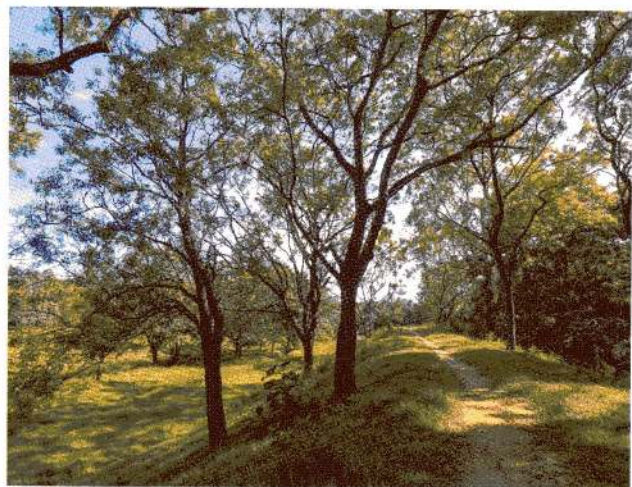
Hikkaduwa exudes a tropical vibe and attracts visitors from around the world. While the afternoon transitions into evening, the golden beach is warm and pleasant.



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The Gushing Sounds of Deduru Oya

The Deduru Oya is one of the largest rivers in the island nation, and its reservoir provides water for irrigation and agriculture to the Kurunegala and Puttalam districts.



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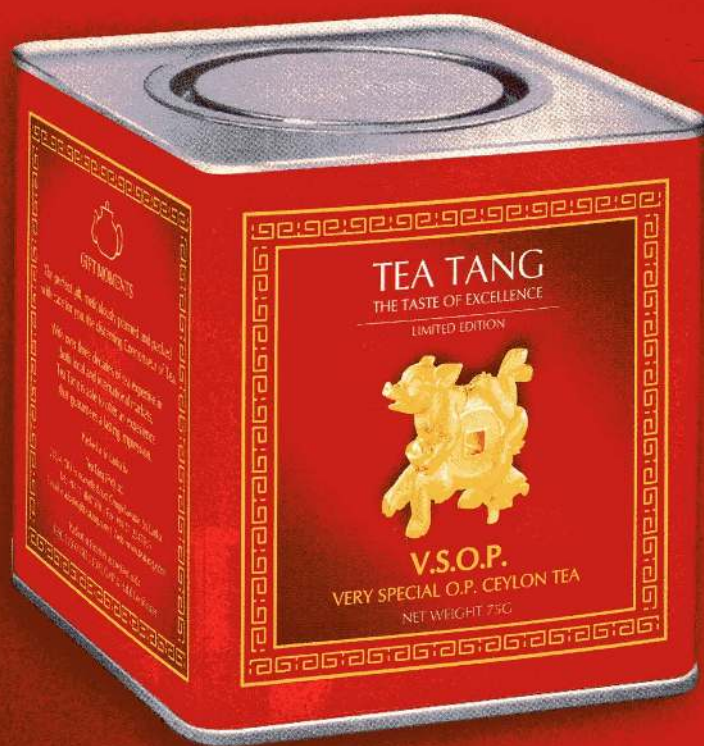
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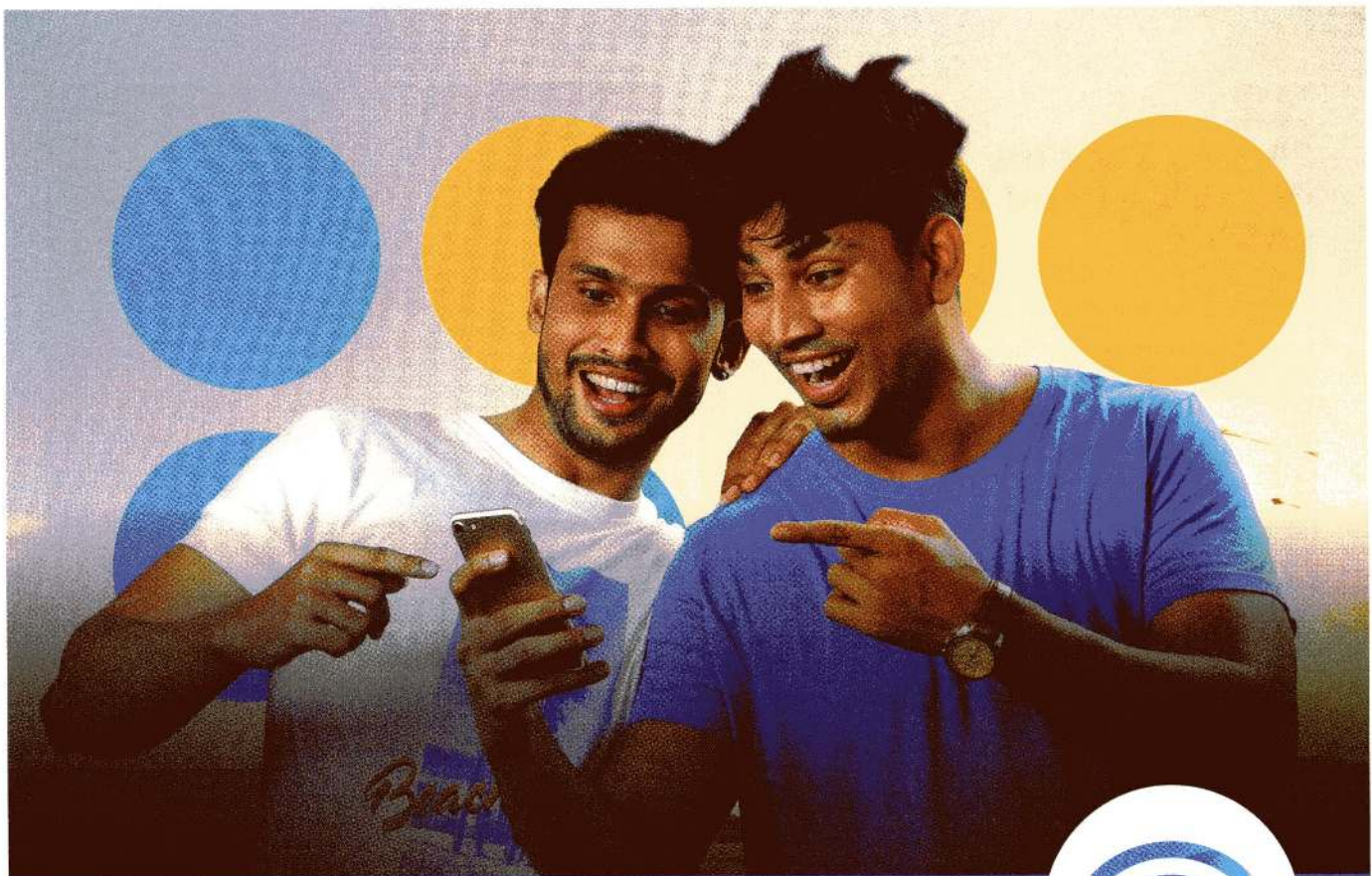
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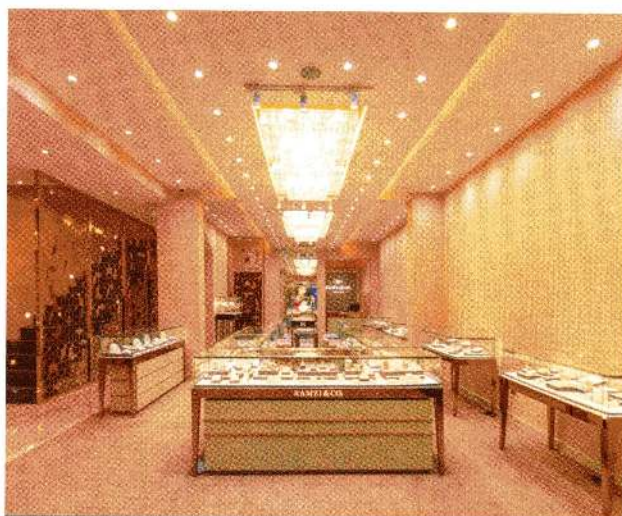
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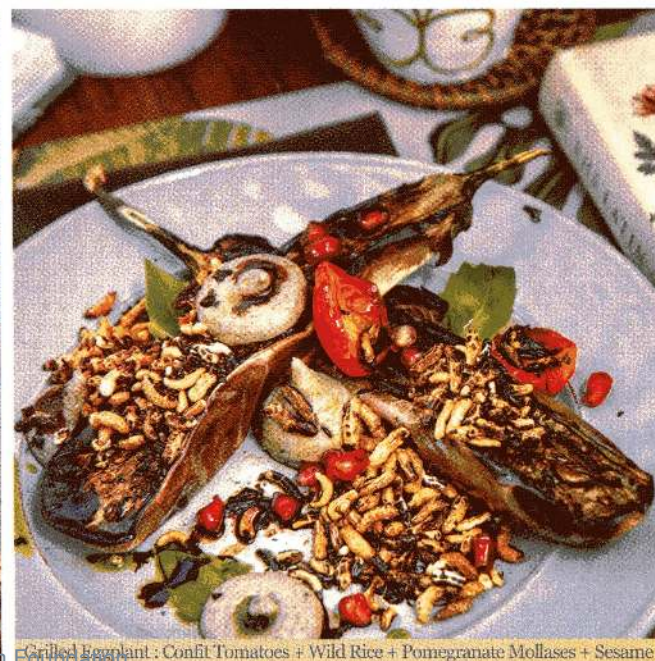
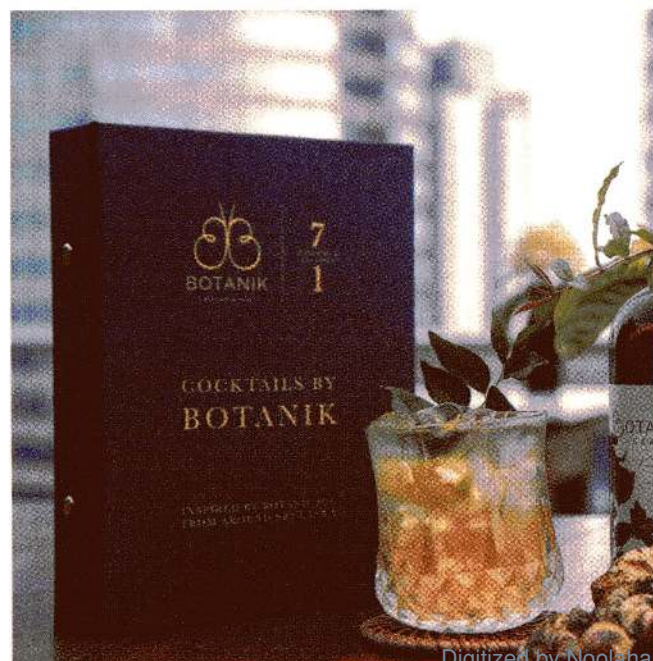
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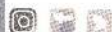


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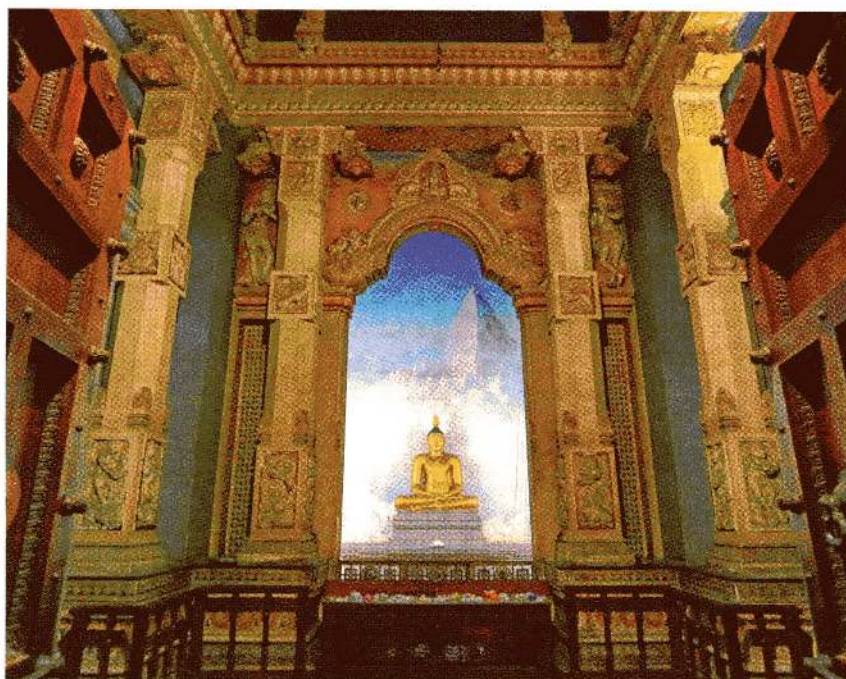
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Spiritual Temple Art and Architecture of the Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya



Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya evokes a sense of reverence



The intricate detailed work of the inner shrine

Upanda sita karapu pawu netha warak wandoth Kelaniye (the sins of a lifetime disappears if you worship once at the Kelaniya Temple), describes a Sinhala poem. Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya is a centre of spirituality and also continues to protect the cultural and traditional values of this island nation.

Words Gayathri Kothalawala
Photographs Menaka Aravinda

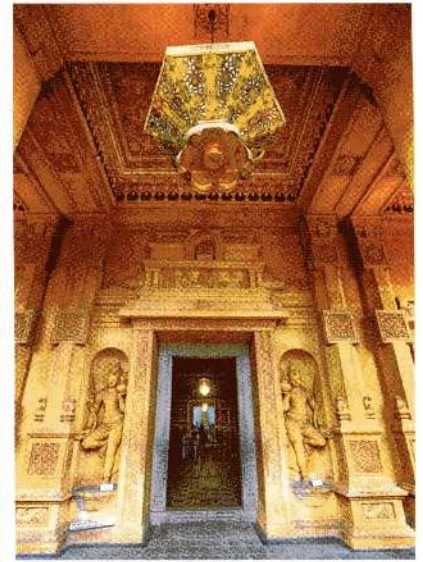
Kelaniya Temple is undeniably a spiritual place of worship. In sixth century BC, the Buddha arrived in Sri Lanka on his third and final visit and at the invitation of Maniakkika, a Naga King, he visited Kelaniya, where he preached the *Dhamma* while seated on a gem-studded throne. The throne is said to be enshrined within the stupa at the temple premises, designed in the shape of a heap of paddy. Since then, Buddhists have regarded Kelaniya as a hallowed ground. Within the temple premises, visitors find tranquility and serenity, regardless of differences in culture, nationalities, race or faith.

However, the importance of the Raja Maha Viharaya is manifold. Not only is it a place of deep reverence, it is also a centre where Sri Lankan art and architecture prosper. On a visit to the Kelaniya Temple, we immersed ourselves in the temple paintings, murals and the architecture.

"Kelaniya is not just an important religious place," Ven K Mahinda Sangharakkhita Thero, Chief Incumbent of Kelaniya Temple explained, "It is also significant for its arts and architecture. If you wish to discover the culture and traditions of Sri Lanka, Kelaniya is an ideal learning place. Here, traces of the Polonnaruwa and Kandyan era can be found".



The elaborate murals in the main shrine dating back to the Kandyan era



Entrance to the main shrine flanked by the guardian deities

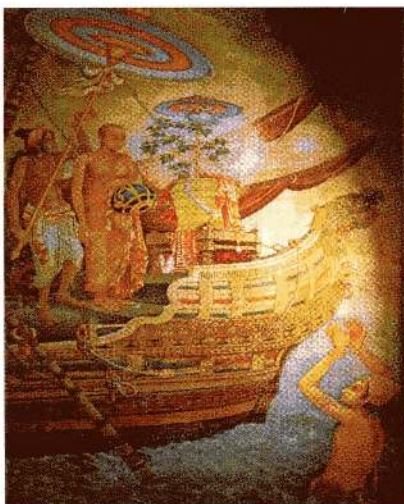
Throughout its history, Kelaniya Temple has been destroyed, renovated, neglected and rediscovered once again. It has experienced periods of turbulence from Kalinga Maga of South India in the 13th century to the Portuguese, Dutch and British. And yet, devout Buddhist Kings from centuries ago to modern-day philanthropists have helped the Kelaniya Temple to overcome adversities and remain strong. Following the defeat of Kalinga Maga, King Valgamba III repaired the damages to the temple. In 1767, King Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe of Kandy renovated the temple, neglected since the

arrival of the Dutch. The temple experienced a period of tranquility before it again succumbed to disrepair. Lady Helena Wijewardena took the initiative to restore the temple to its former glory in 1927. Periods of destructions have erased much of the original structures. What we observe now can be traced back to the Kandyan era and the early 20th century. Nevertheless, the architecture and art narrate a compelling tale.

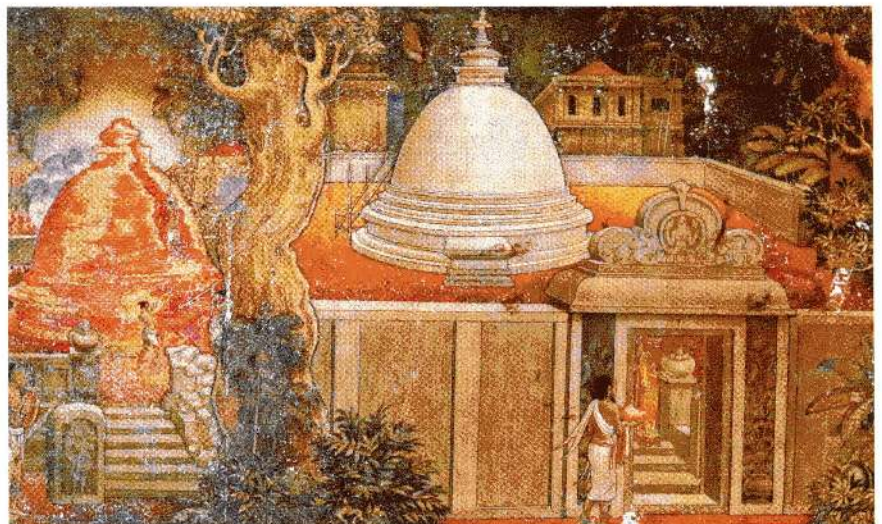
The temple art painted on the walls of the Image House of the Kelaniya Temple are therefore influenced by the artistic styles of the 18th and 20th

century. Built by Helena Wijewardena in 1927, the façade of the Image House contains murals of gods, animals and traditional designs. Inside, it contains four chambers.

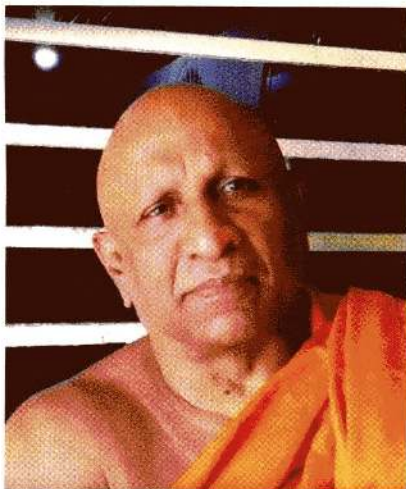
The two halls of the King's Image House dates back to the Kandy era. Here, the scenes depict *Jathaka* stories, Arahants and Gods. The Kandyan era paintings were done by a team of artists known as the *Gorana Guru Kulaya*. The limited colours available at the time had been used to paint the various figures, deities, and traditional designs while the ceiling features astrological signs and other protective



Solias Mendis's painting illustrating the arrival of Sangamitta Theri with the sacred Bo sapling



The painting depicts the invasion of the Kelaniya Temple by Kalinga Maga and its restoration by King Valagamba III



Ven K Mahinda Sangharakkhita Thero, Chief Incumbent, Kelaniya Temple



A painting inside the temple premises portray Helena Wijewardena's contribution to the temple

symbols. The New Temple House section contains a separate hall and a shrine room and was built in 1927. The paintings are the work of artist Solias Mendis, who painted the history of the temple, the three visits of the Buddha, *Jathaka* stories and scenes of religious importance on the walls.

In the Image House, visitors can find some of the most recognised Buddhist images such as the first visit of Buddha to Sri Lanka where he preached *Dhamma* to the *Yaka* (indigenous tribe) in

Mahiyanganaya, the arrival of Sangamitta Theri with the sacred Bo sapling and the arrival of the Sacred Tooth Relic, hidden in the coiffure of Indian Princess Hemamala who was accompanied by Prince Dantha.

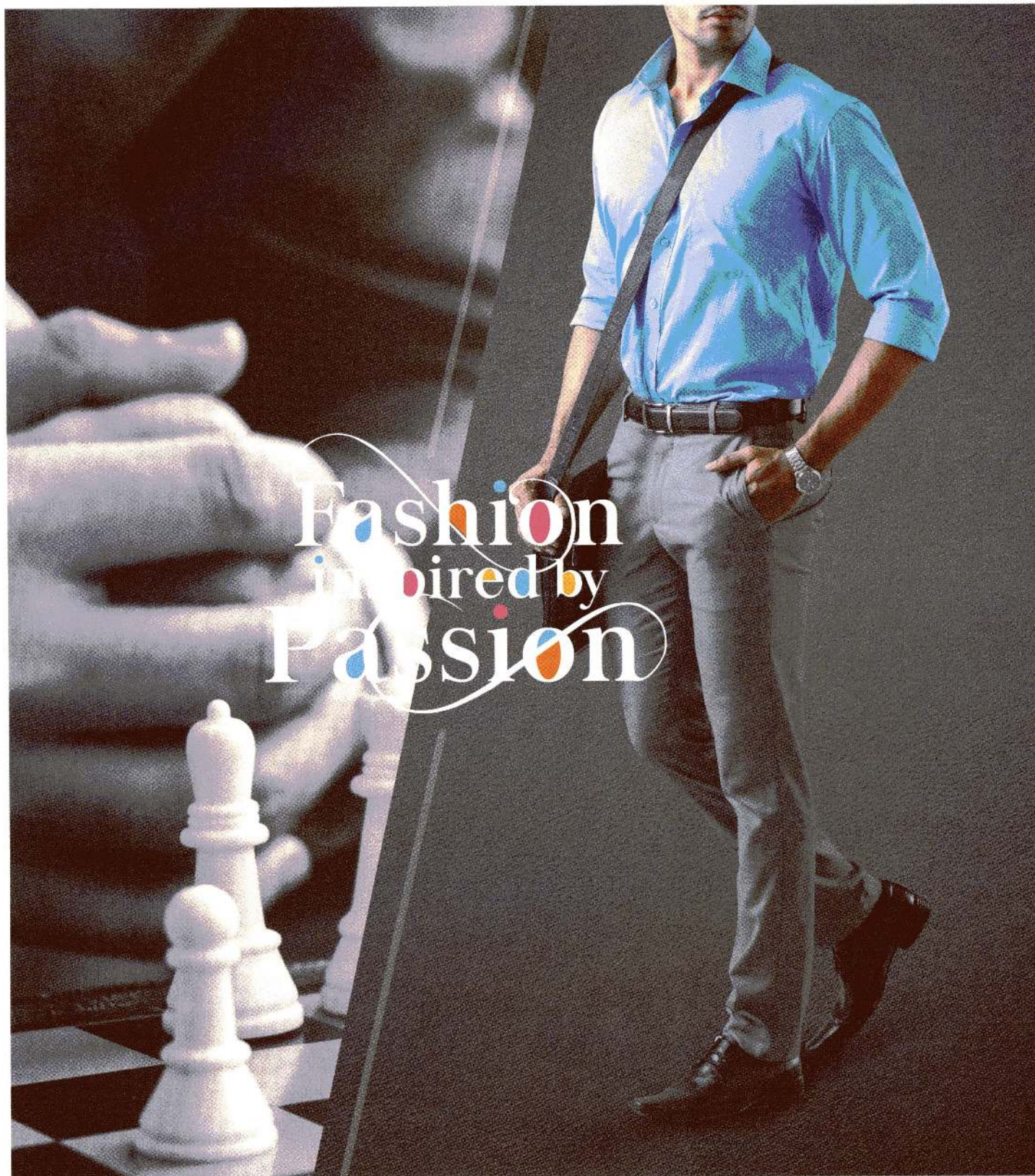
A statue of Avalokiteshvara stands near the white stupa. The beautiful bell donated by Japan is located in front of the Bo tree. As we slowly walked towards the area allocated to lighting oil lamps, the soothing chiming of the bell serenaded us.

Ahead of the Duruthu Perahera in January, the temple conducts a series of 72 sermons which will be held until January 12, followed by unceasing pirith chanting until January 15th. The perahera will take to the streets on January 19th, accompanied by the processions for the guardian deities Vibishana, Vishnu and Kataragama.

A visit to the Kelaniya temple can be a spiritual experience. It is also ideal to discover intricate temple art and architecture of Sri Lanka. 🙏



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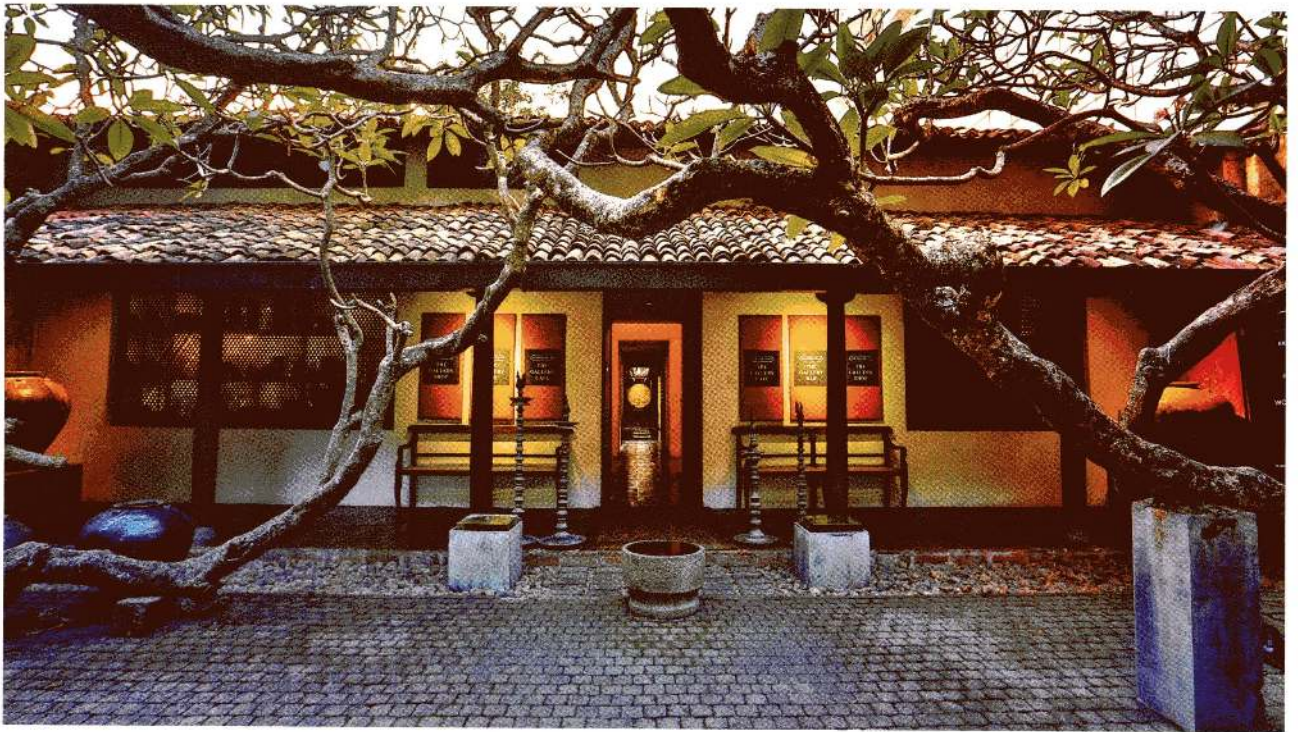
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of its bold founder,
Shanth Fernando.

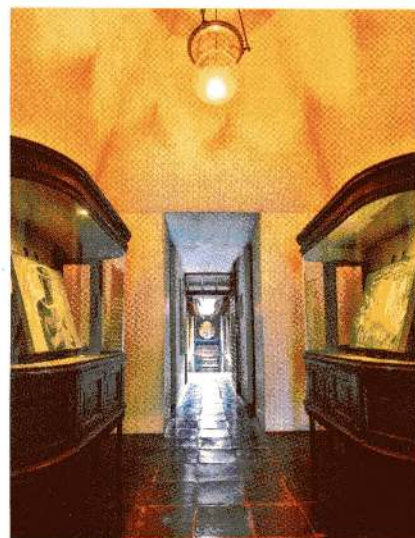
Words Udeshi Amarasinghe
Photographs Mahesh Bandara and
Menaka Aravinda

“**G**eoffrey Bawa entrusted his beloved property, which was his office in my care and I promised that I would create something to his credit. I have succeeded in keeping my word,” says Shanth Fernando. While remaining true to the renowned architect’s style, the building was transformed into a chic gallery and restaurant that is unique and which set the standard for others to follow. The identity of Paradise Road that is inherently Shanth Fernando is visible throughout the space, and the ambience created is one of timelessness that has remained so for the past 20 years.

Today, Paradise Road The Gallery Café, is an internationally recommended must visit place in Sri Lanka for the sophisticated traveller that appreciates the exquisite essence of this uniquely curated designer space. As Shanth Fernando explains, The Gallery Café is the most visited Geoffrey Bawa building in Sri Lanka. Interestingly, the clientele are repeat patrons who continue to enjoy the delicious menu that has been specially created with some of Shanth Fernando's favourite dishes and from the experiences he has garnered from his many travels overseas.

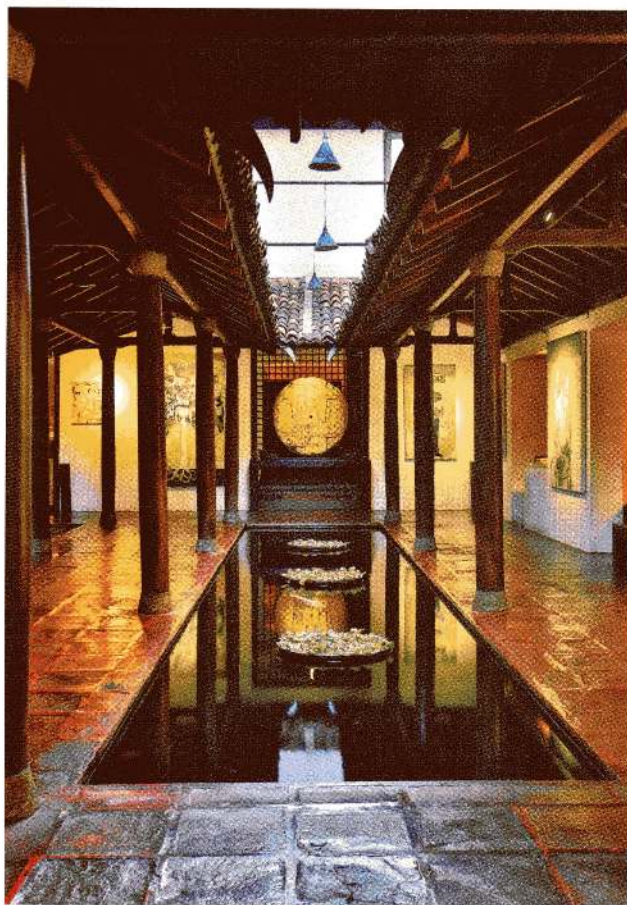
"We incorporate new things but we do not change the character of the space. If I redecorate or add a

new dish to the menu, the change is minimal. I do not alter the ambience or feel of the place", explained Shanth Fernando. The menu features an eclectic blend of international and Sri Lankan cuisine that is sophisticated in terms of taste as well as presentation. The extensive dessert menu includes over 30 delicious preparations that are specially created by Shanth Fernando's wife, Angelika. "We do a lot of research to enhance what we are doing. It is all about living and doing things in a particular way. We have our own style and identity. The Gallery Café has never competed with any other restaurant," he further elaborated.

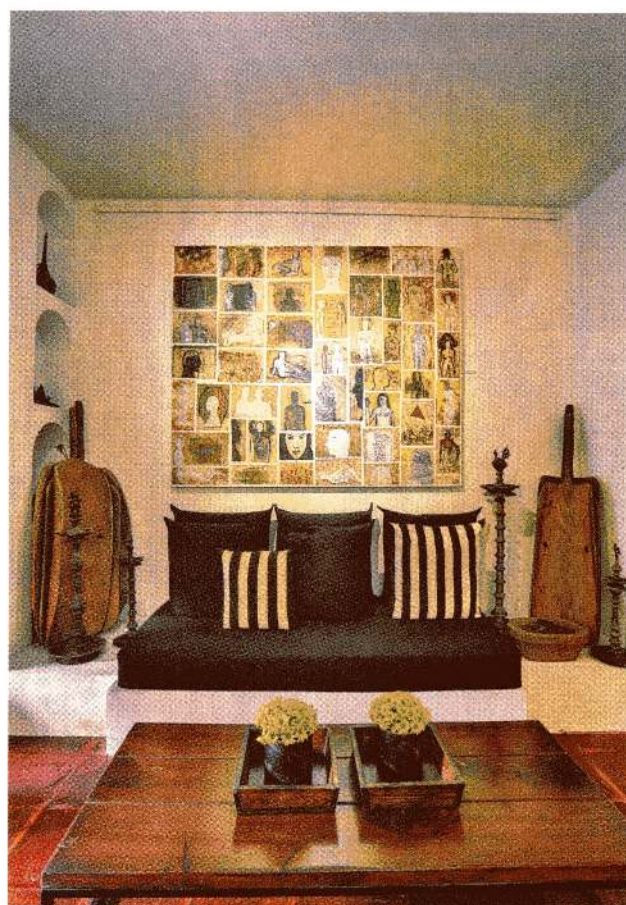


It is the first space to have both a restaurant and art gallery

"We incorporate new things but we do not change the character of the space. If I redecorate or add a new dish to the menu, the change is minimal. I do not alter the ambience or feel of the place."



The distinctive courtyard and pond reflecting Geoffrey Bawa's unique style



The interior subtly features black and white stripes amidst objets d'art



Paradise Road The Gallery Café fosters a timeless and chic ambience



Black Pork Curry, a signature dish



Flavoursome Nasi Goreng with chicken and prawn



A sweet delight, the Chocolate Nemesis



The café is a perfect fusion of eclectic charm

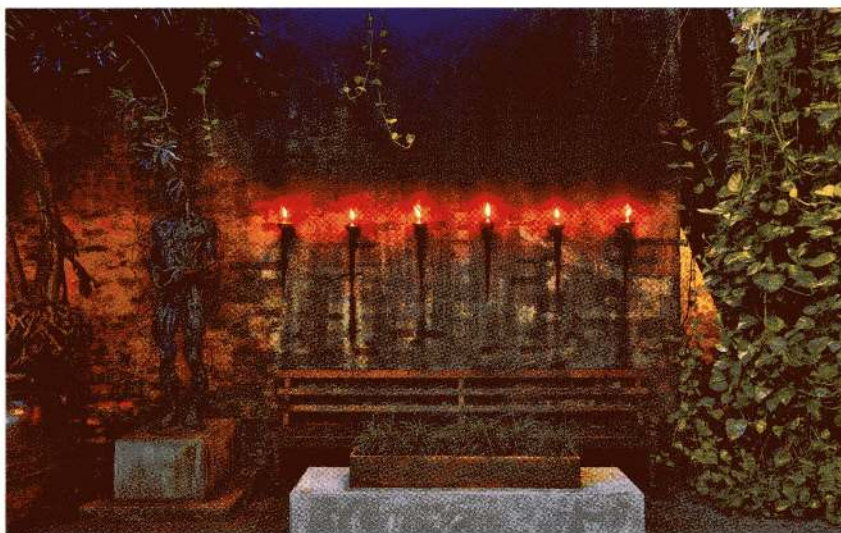
The exterior and interior maintain the vernacular architecture. Together with the characteristic Paradise Road black and white stripes that adorn the various features of the restaurant and subtle yet exquisite furnishing, the perfect fusion of the old and contemporary has enabled the timeless ambience

of the Paradise Road The Gallery Café. The open courtyards and dining areas provide a unique tropical vibe.

Paradise Road The Gallery Café is also special for another reason, as it was the first to have an art gallery and restaurant within the same space that essentially complemented each other. "In terms of the art gallery, I choose



The open courtyard provides a unique tropical elegance



Sophistication and creativity. Shanth Fernando has created a platform that encourages artists in Sri Lanka.

the art that will suit the space,” explained Shanth Fernando. Exhibitions are held and artists are selected with great thought and sensitivity, as this is not a commercial property but a heritage of the country. Through his endeavour in encouraging artists in Sri Lanka, Shanth Fernando created a platform for them to receive the

required experience and exposure through the Paradise Road The Gallery Café that would propel them to an international level. “We have given them the space to exhibit in a professional manner. We were the first to introduce previews and exhibition catalogues. We were able to establish the standard and level of

professionalism that was required for artists to develop and create”, he elaborated.

20 years on Shanth Fernando reminisces, “We have wonderful memories and we have made our mark. People know what we are doing. That is what is important. We will do what we do best in the future as well. My children Annika and Saskia who have their own successful businesses, too have my vision and appreciation for design and art.”

Paradise Road The Gallery Café continues to be an icon that is special and reflects the identity of the country. It is in a league of its own that no one can surpass. Shanth Fernando has indeed created a ‘paradise’ for posterity.

Opening hours; 10am to midnight daily

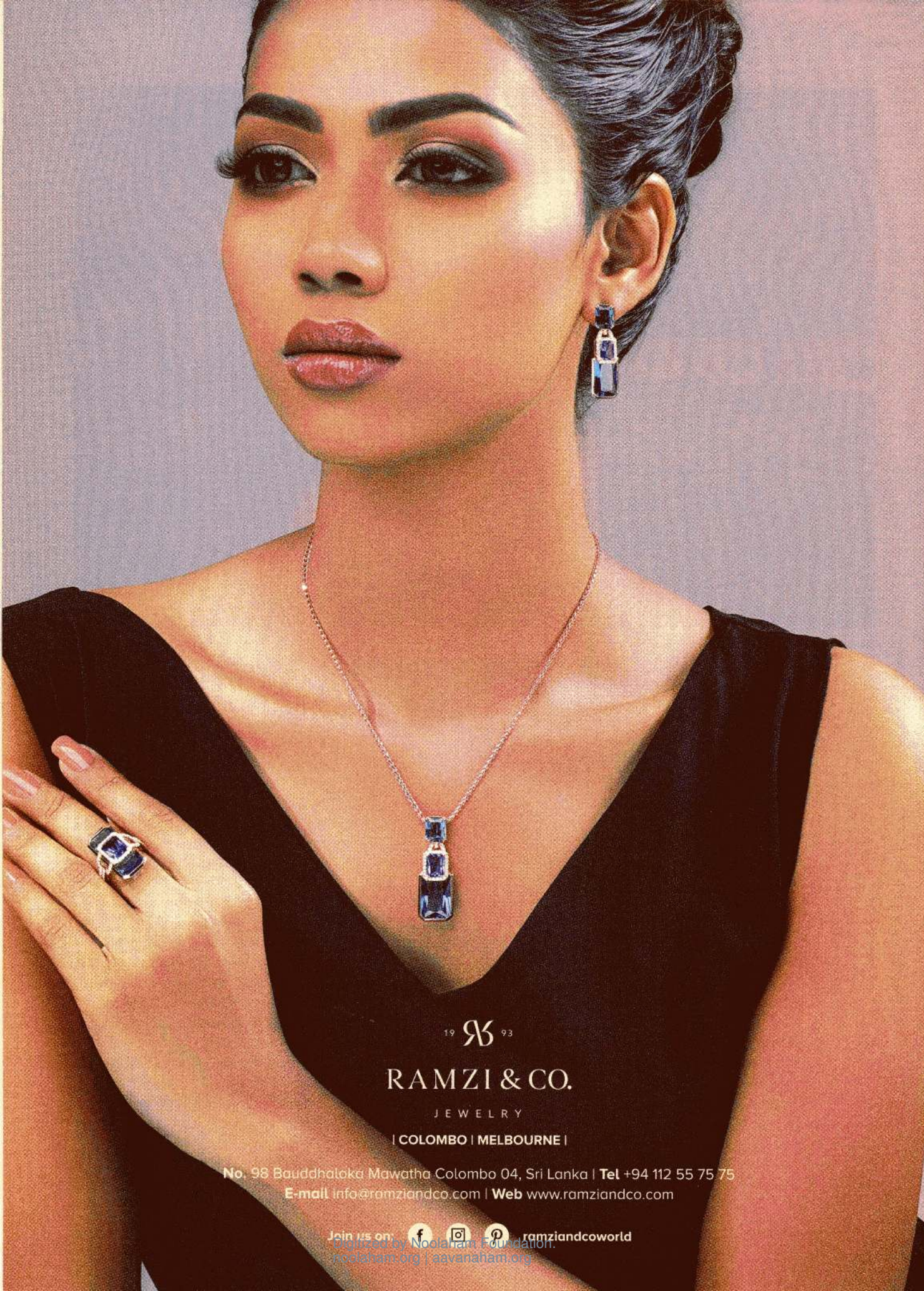
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THALANGAMA TANK

A PARADISE FOR BIRDS



The spillway removes excess water from the tank, while adding to its charm

In a residential suburb of Colombo is a reservoir bordered by greenery and enriched with avifauna: Thalangama in Pelawatte is an oasis of calm.

Words Roomini Wijayarathne

Photographs Vishwathan
Tharmakulasingham

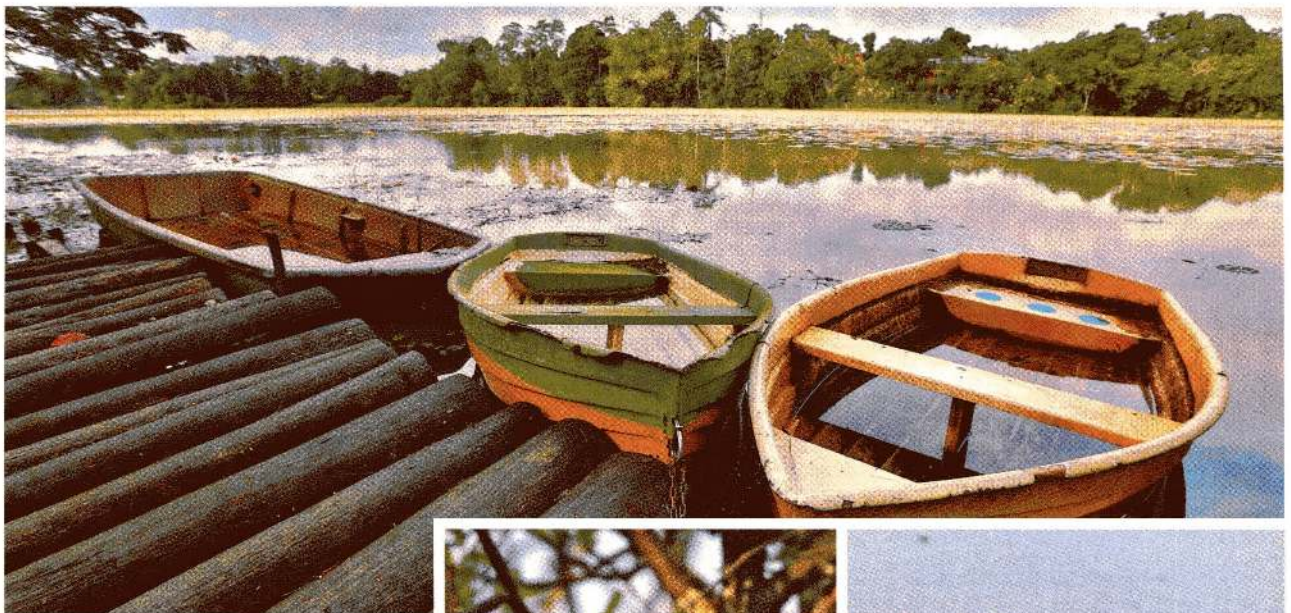
The drizzle that recurrently impeded the Colombo mornings was absent on that day at dawn. The sky was steely grey, with a patch of pale gold illuminating the eastern horizon. The world was still slumbering, but an orchestra of bird songs permeated the crisp air. It was 45 minutes past five, and we were at the Thalangama Tank, slightly shivering in the cool morning breeze that blew our way, rippling the quiet waters.

We were standing at a small islet that was barricaded at the outer edge by a weather-beaten sluice gate. When open, the sluice gate provided water to the vast expanse of paddy fields beyond our line of sight.

Our focus was on a pole that stood tall, several feet from the bund, in the



Enjoy the grace of red lilies and whistling ducks



The docked boats lend a nostalgic air to the Thalangama Tank

shallow water of the tank. Its presence was puzzling, but what drew our attention was a common kingfisher sitting atop, its azure wings glistening in the pale morning light. We guessed, correctly, that it was waiting for a prey, but what we did not expect was for another kingfisher to swoop in to the same spot. What ensued could only be described as a fight for the best hunting spot. Both took flight soon after, and we decided to take a walk on the gravel road that encircled the tank.

The surface of the tank was covered in deep green lily pads. Dew glittered on the circular leaves, creating a sight that was simply enchanting. Red water lilies bloomed sporadically, and flocked around them were many whistling ducks, gliding gracefully. Along the bank, among the weed that grew,



A Kingfisher on its hunting spot



An island for amphibians; a tortoise balances itself on the mossy trunk

a pair of dragonflies, elusive adjutants, flew about, their flimsy golden wings fluttering in haste.

We stood awhile at the semi-circular spillway of the tank, relishing the loud monotony of water splashing down the miniature levee.

Our attention was yet again diverted to a jacana, which was swiftly darting across the surface of the water. In the centre of the tank, in an oasis of lily pads, an entire colony of jacanas

could be observed, some gliding, some walking on the water. Among them we spotted a few pond herons, little grebes, white-breasted water hens, impressing us with the diversity of the avifauna.

A lone yellow-billed babbler took off in flight as we approached the residential quarter of the beautiful neighbourhood.

We met a few joggers, and a couple of vehicles passed by. However,



Elusive adjutant, a dragonfly with golden wings



Black-headed oriole



The greenery is the perfect cover for a water monitor



The nearby trees were a playground for a leaf monkey



Whistling ducks fly over the tank in elegant formation

mostly, the area was devoid of any human presence.

To the southeast of the tank was an island entirely overgrown with aquatic flora: mangroves, poison nut and *katu ikili* (holy mangrove). Crowning the greenery of the mini-island was a large colony of open-billed storks. There were adults feeding the young chicks, and some basking in the sunrays that filtered through the mounds of heavy clouds. Their call was a cacophony rather than music to our ears, but we appreciated it; the call of the wild was always preferable to man-made noise. We noticed a water monitor stealthily gliding across the water towards the island; its morning hunt was probably due.

As the water body morphed into a wetland to the south of the tank, we

spotted a moorhen carefully shifting its way through, and a cormorant flew across the marshland towards the tank. The diverse wetland was abundant with mangroves, brindleberry (*Kana Goraka*), as well as malabar melastome (*Bovitiya*) that bore violet flowers.

A rustling sound above alerted us to the presence of a leaf monkey which loped over the branches of a *kumbuk* tree, possibly sensing our gaze. A lone tortoise that was lounging on a solitary log in the middle of the water whisked off at an unbelievable speed that we barely managed to snap a picture.

On the grassland, a purple heron stood tall and vigilant, and a purple moorhen treaded carefully, looking for its breakfast, we assumed. In the tank, a spot billed pelican was gliding

smoothly across the water; a rare sight indeed, since this particular species is Near Threatened.

Our morning stroll ended at the edge of the marshland, which spread over a vast expanse and made a home to scores of Sri Lankan and migrant birds. A must-visit for nature lovers and bird enthusiasts, Thalangama Tank and the encompassing wetland are an ideal escape from the bustling city life, conveniently located a 30-minute drive away from Colombo. The blissful serenity, the solitude and the charisma of unspoilt nature draw visitors to the Thalangama Tank. We headed back to the city, taking back the memories of pleasant solitude, vivified by the symphony of bird songs. ☺



The lush green fields that stretches to the horizon are irrigated by the tank's water supply

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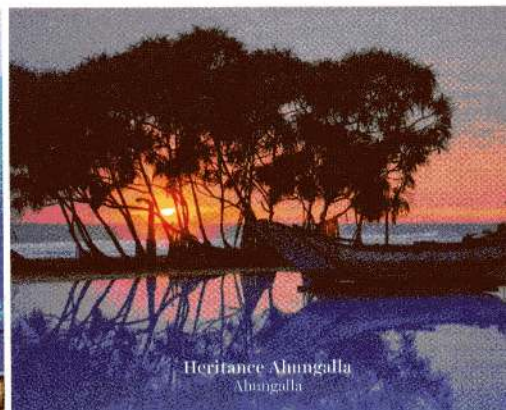
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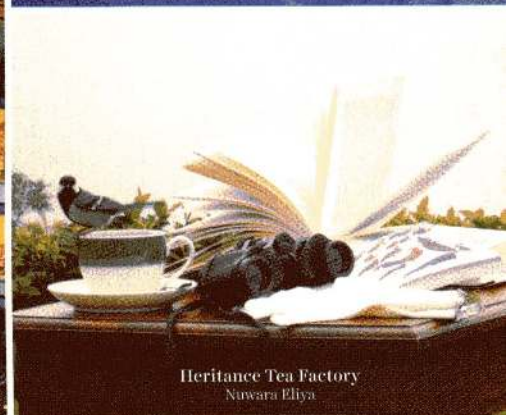
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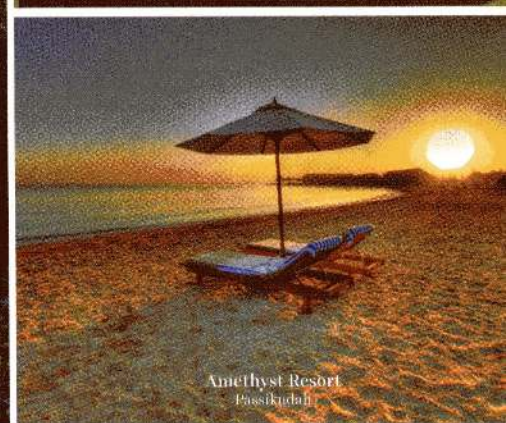
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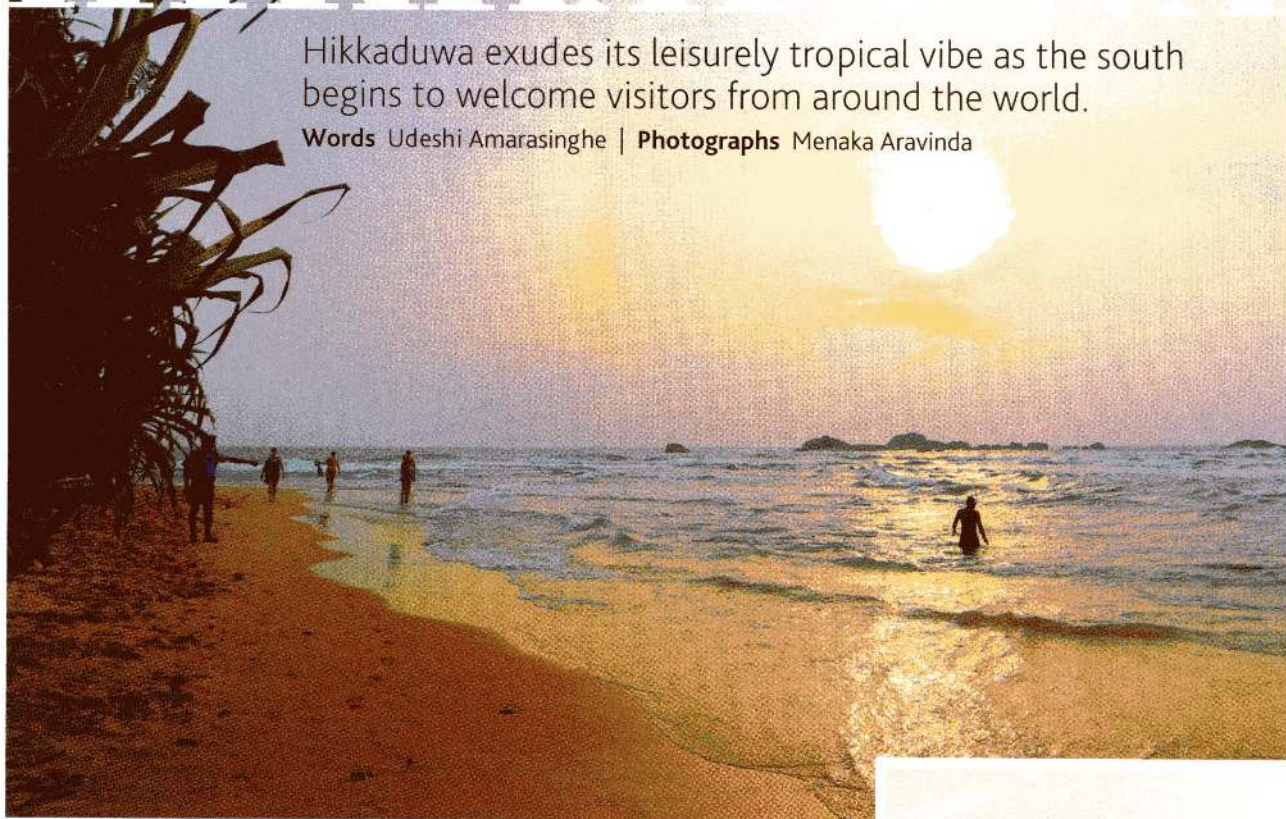


Back to

HIKKADUWA

Hikkaduwa exudes its leisurely tropical vibe as the south begins to welcome visitors from around the world.

Words Udeshi Amarasinghe | Photographs Menaka Aravinda



As sunset approaches, the waves soften into a soothing whisper

As the late afternoon sun began its transition turning day into evening, the golden sands of Hikkaduwa were welcoming and bright. The beautiful blue ocean in the south lapped against the shoreline as waves rolled in one after the other.

Numerous boats docked nearby bobbed up and down to the rhythm of the waves. Further down along the coast, families, couples and children were enjoying the beach, sunbathing and simply relaxing in each other's company. The water was pleasant and it provided respite in the heat, therefore many were having a sea bath,

screaming in delight as the waves splashed on them.

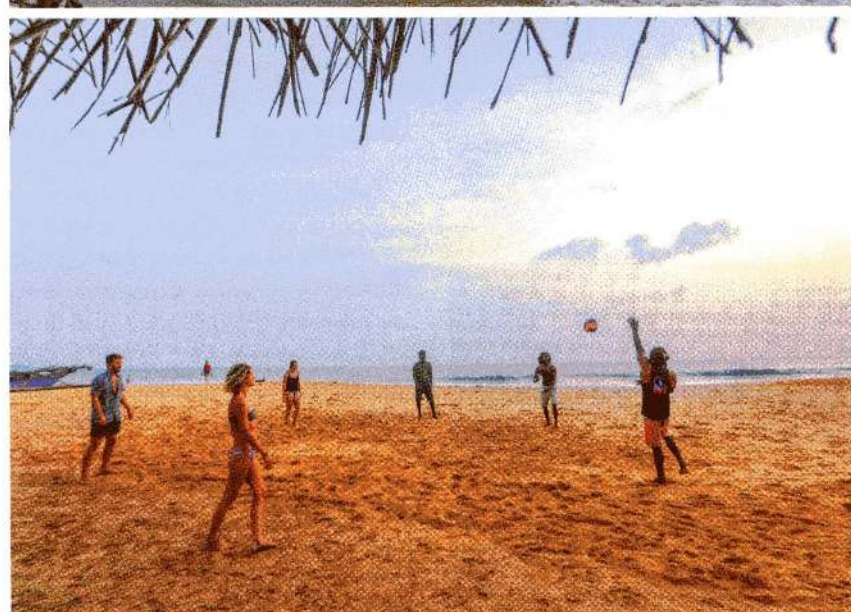
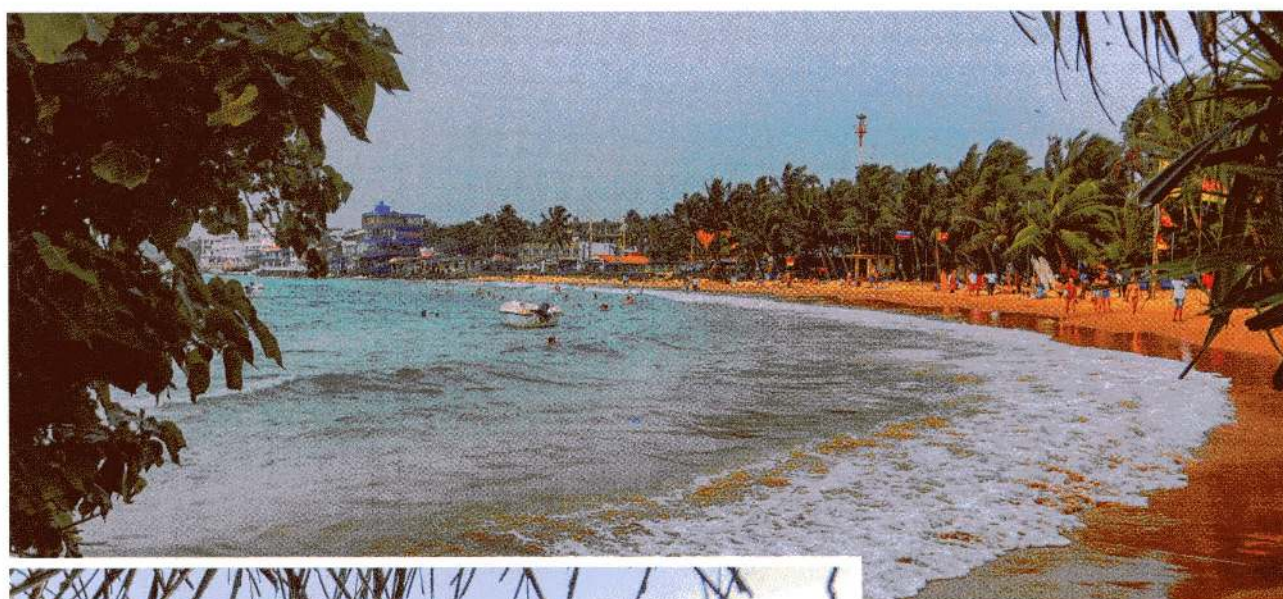
King coconuts (*thambili*) and green coconuts (*kurumba*) were on sale to quench the thirst from the seaside sun. The entire beach was a place to gather and relax in the evening. Hikkaduwa is known for turtles swimming along the coral reef, and at times they do come on to the land. However, though we were able to discern their shadows underwater, these turtles did not come out to play. Snorkelling is another activity to discover the beauty underwater and on this particular day, a lone snorkeller



Hikkaduwa is ideal for snorkelling and to discover the beautiful sea life



Visitors can embark on a thrilling boat ride over the turquoise waters



Enjoy your evenings with a game of volleyball in Narigama

Unwind amidst the laidback atmosphere of the tropics

was wading through the waves to see beneath.

Coconut trees swayed in the evening breeze, a characteristic feature of the south. We headed towards Narigama in Hikkaduwa, where the beach was wider and the many restaurants and small-scale hotels were preparing for the season. Visitors from around the world were already present, enjoying the laid-back vibe that Hikkaduwa offers.

There were families with children playing, sand and sun making a good combination to keep the little ones occupied. Others were simply walking along the beach or seated on the sand



Families and young ones enjoy themselves on the Narigama beach

enjoying the surrounding beauty and tranquility. The ocean was a resplendent blue, and the sky reflected the various hues of the setting sun. The sounds of music flowed towards us, adding charm to the overall atmosphere. There were groups of young

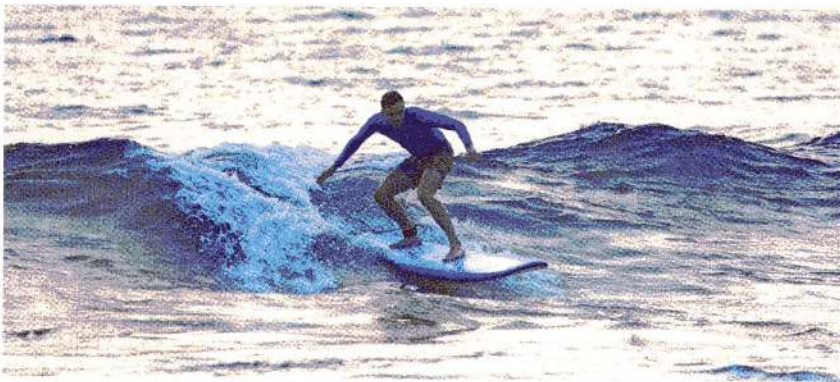
people playing volleyball, cheering as they scored.

Hikkaduwa is the ideal place for surfing during the months of November to April. Waves can reach up to a height of three to ten feet. Surfboards were arranged at various points, as if

indicating that Hikkaduwa was a place to surf. Beginners were practicing on land, balancing themselves on rope, a skill they would need when using a surfboard. Generally, surfers who ride the waves in the east coast during May to October, move towards the south from November to April. Though light was fading, there were surfers waiting for the perfect wave. Balancing on their boards they patiently watched and as soon as a wave rose, they would paddle and instantaneously stand to surf the waves with great skill, balancing and moving to the rhythm.

The evening light was turning to dusk as the sun set in the southern sky. As if being called by the whispers of the ocean, those on the beach walked almost in unison towards their respective abodes. Lights twinkled on, creating a lovely atmosphere. From Hikkaduwa, passing through the town we proceeded along the Galle Road towards Bentota. The view from the bridge, across the lagoon, of the glittering illuminations was mesmerizing in the night sky.

The southern breeze blowing from the ocean was in perfect synchrony with the lulling waters. The lively and bright atmosphere in the south of the island exudes an electric vibe that is ideal for a wonderful holiday. ☺



From November to April, Hikkaduwa attracts surfers to ride the waves



Twinkling lights create a lively and electric atmosphere in Bentota

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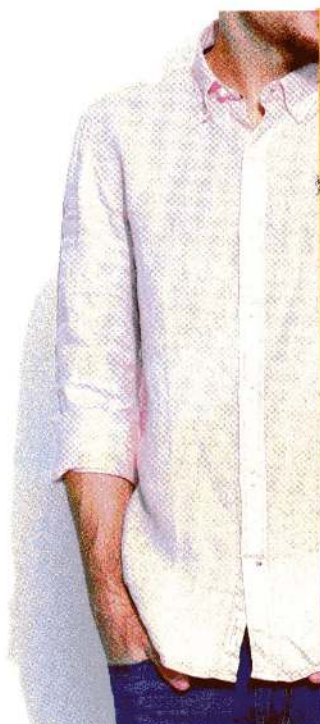
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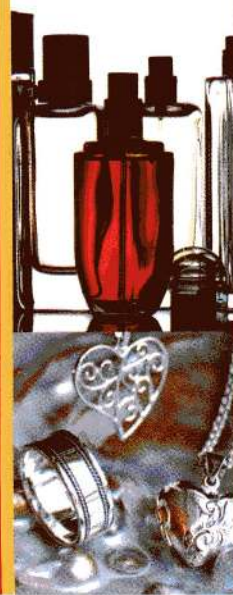
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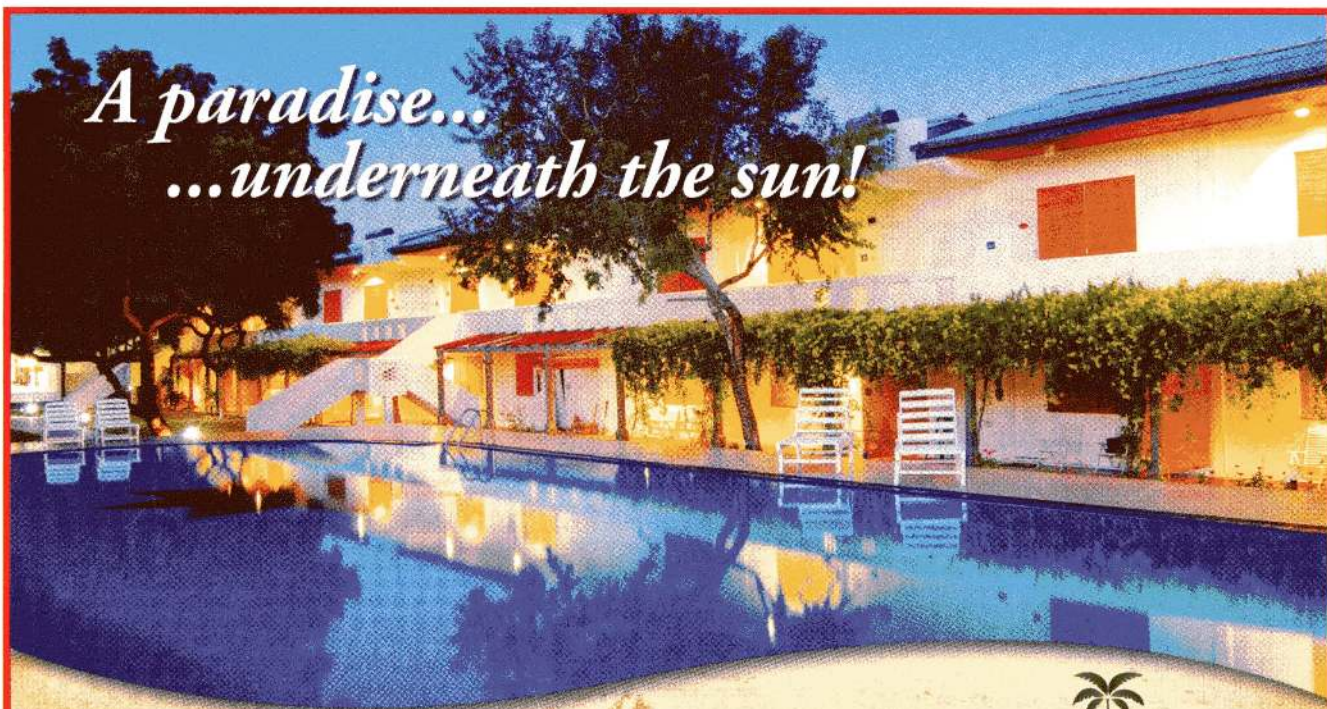
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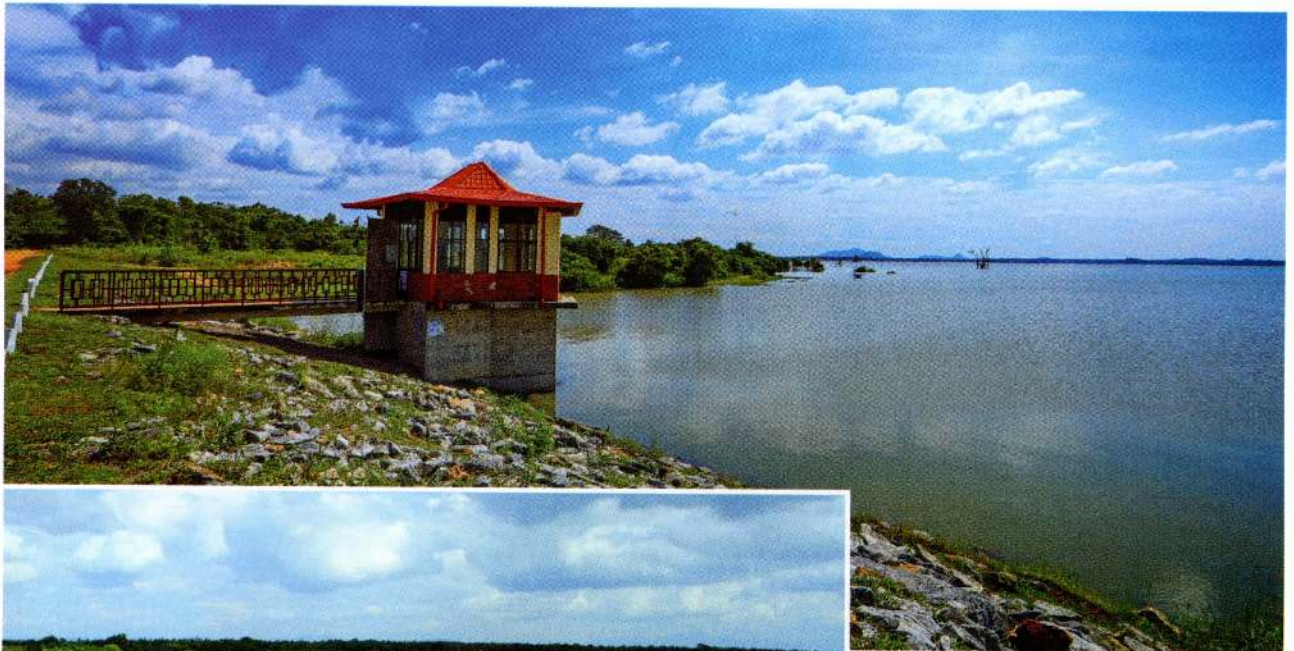
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The Gushing Sounds of DEDURU OYA

In the Wayamba Province, providing the lifeline of agriculture to thousands of acres of land, the resplendent Deduru Oya glistens in the afternoon light.

Words Udeshi Amarasinghe | Photographs Menaka Aravinda and Geeth Viduranga



The glistening waters of Deduru Oya reflects the beauty of nature



Vast and endless views extend as we drove on the bund



A moment captured – lush green paddy fields

Turning-off from the main road, we drove along gravel paths and canals full of water, lush greenery lining either side. A few more bends and we were scaling a precipice to reach the bund of the vast Deduru Oya reservoir.

Aquatic birds frolicked in the water creating a picturesque setting, while the sun created shadows on the reflecting reservoir. The beautiful shades of green of the paddy fields and trees spread as far as the eye could see.

Deduru Oya is said to be the sixth largest river in Sri Lanka and with the building of a dam across this



The gushing waters through the sluice gates created soothing sounds



The flowing water enriches the surrounding agricultural areas

massive water body, it provides water for irrigation and agriculture to over 27,000 acres of land in the Kurunegala and Puttalam districts. The towers of the sluice gates stand tall similar to guarding sentinels. From the bund, on a small gravel path, we reached the ground level and watched as water poured out of the open sluice gates. The sounds of the gushing waters were soothing and relaxing.

According to the annals of history, it is believed that during the period of King Parakramabahu I (1153-1186 AD), an irrigation system was developed focusing on the Deduru Oya. Remnants of a glorious ancient

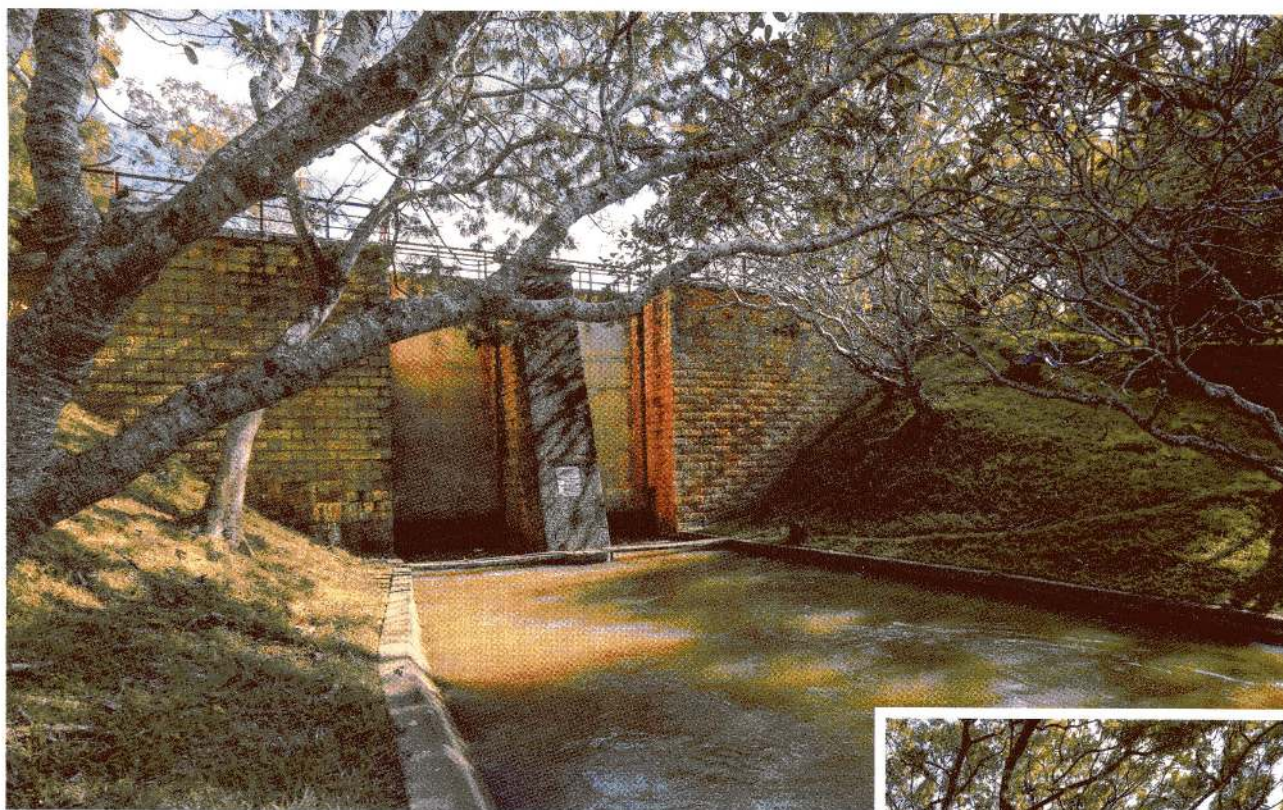
past remain with the archaeological findings of the Katuwannawa Asanagharaya, which is a short distance away from the reservoir and is believed to have been built in the third Century BC.

Another interesting place in the vicinity is the Ridi Bendi Ella Dam. This would be about a 30-minute drive from the Deduru Oya reservoir and takes you through picturesque rural environment with water filled canals running parallel to the road. Amidst a grove of trees, the charming Ridi Bendi Ella Dam stands.

Smaller in size, a short flight of steps takes you to the top. With

beautiful green surroundings, it is peaceful and tranquil. The Ridi Bendi Ella Scheme was initially built during the reign of King Mahasen (277-304 AD) and was thereafter reconstructed by the Irrigation Department during the period of 1937-1942 under the then Minister for Agriculture D S Senanayake. The mechanisms used to this day are from 1939 made in Ipswich, England.

Drawn by the sounds of gushing water, we continued our walk to be momentarily stopped by a monitor lizard lying like a statue across the path. A hop and a jump later, we reached the massive Deduru Oya and



The tranquil environs surrounding the Ridi Bendi Ella Dam

The Ridi Bendi Ella Dam, a 30-minute drive from the Deduru Oya reservoir takes you through picturesque rural environment with water filled canals running parallel to the road.



The path shaded with trees lead to the Deduru Oya reservoir



Standing on the spillway, a fisherman casts a net, expecting a catch

from above we watched mesmerized. The water was moving at a rapid speed over the spillway. Interestingly fishermen were standing on the spillway casting their nets to catch fish in the afternoon light.

Totally away from the busy hub of the outside world, we reflected on the beauty of nature and decided to return on another day to enjoy again the gushing waters of the Deduru Oya. ☺



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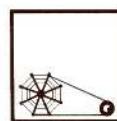
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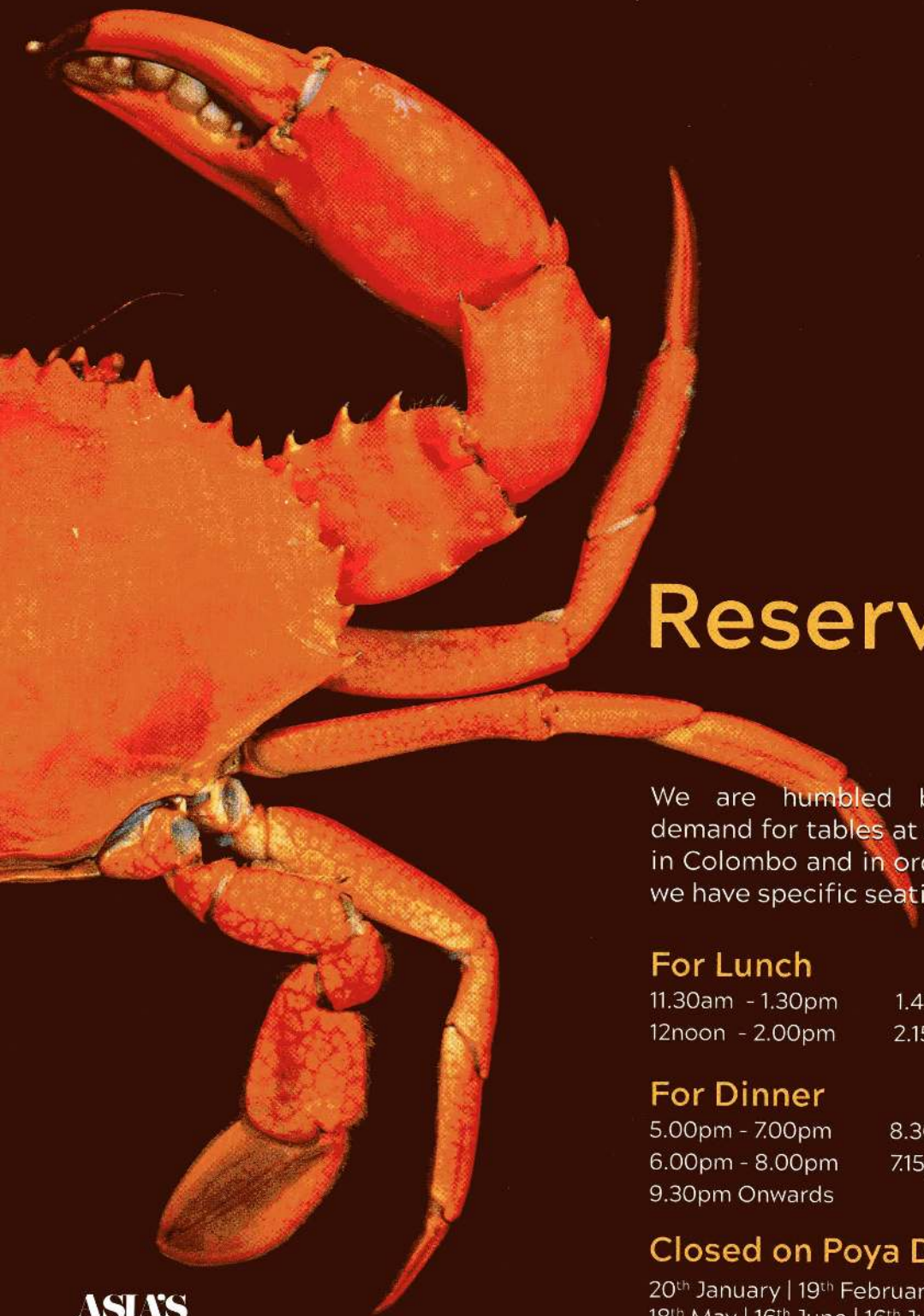
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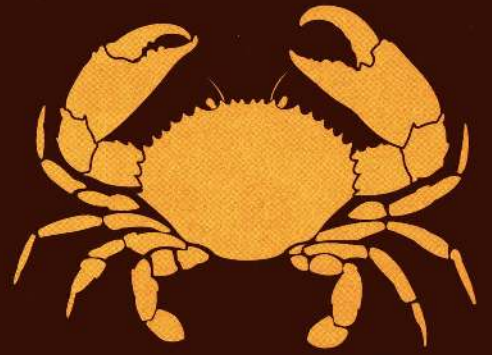
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An oasis of serenity, Hotel Topaz rises resplendently through the mist wrapped emerald mountains of Kandy.

Words Darrshini Partheban | Photographs Menaka Aravinda

Hotel Topaz is tucked away at an altitude that offers a breathtaking view of the historic city of Kandy. It is a charming retreat sheathed in pristine nature that is disturbed only by the chirping calls of birds and thus, ensures that you relax in an environment of tranquility. Swaying blooms in myriad colours whisper greetings and a cool breeze fans across the property as you walk in. Amber hues perfectly fused with light tones fill the interior of the spacious lobby



Dine while enjoying stunning vistas at Sky Lounge



Treat yourself at the cozy coffee shop

and enhance the elegant look of the hotel. A cozy coffee shop lies in the corner of the lobby where guests can enjoy a cup of tea or coffee with a delectable snack in a plush setting.

With 72 rooms, positioned across several levels, Hotel Topaz strives to create a unique getaway for each guest. The first floor is the 'Water Lilly floor', which offers a range of comfortable

twin-bed rooms. The corridors of this floor are furnished with little fish tanks on which a brightly lit tiny oil lamp is kept to add an ornamental charm and this feature extends to the tastefully decorated rooms. The cement wall finishes complement wooden touches and vibrant décor within spacious interiors. Each twin-room features modern amenities and has an en-suite bathroom with a chic marble bathtub.

At the second and third levels are the Green floors where each Deluxe room affords a panoramic view of Kandy, Hantana and the Knuckles mountain range. Guests can either opt for a City or a Mountain View room. The emphasis on light is evident in all the rooms with large glass panels that offers striking views of the hill country. Among the six luxury suites,

the opulent Presidential Suite also occupies the Green floor. In designing the suites, spaciousness is given ample consideration and vibrant shades set amidst timber tones convey a pleasant and relaxing impression.

Designed with dewy-eyed honeymooners in mind, the fourth level is a tribute to the lovers who desire the allure of Kandy. Dazzling red roses are the theme of this floor and thus, aptly named the 'Rose floor'.

The main restaurant of the hotel, 'The Tamarind' serves local and international dishes that tantalise the palate of patrons. The topmost floor accommodates the 'Sky Lounge' where guests can feast on a hearty meal while indulging in the mesmerising views visible through the glass panels. Enjoy your favourite shisha flavours at the adjoining open terrace of the Sky Lounge as the captivating scenery and breezy atmosphere add to the exhilarating experience. The main bar of the hotel serves a range of spirited beverages and cocktails along with scrumptious snacks.

The Tourmaline Spa offers an array of treatments infused with Sri Lankan herbs and oils. Jacuzzi and steam bath facilities are available to calm and rejuvenate the senses. Be rejuvenated by fascinating vistas as you take a leisurely dip or simply lounge by the pool. Enjoy a peaceful escape that will be etched in your memories at Hotel Topaz.

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The elegant Presidential suite on the Green floor



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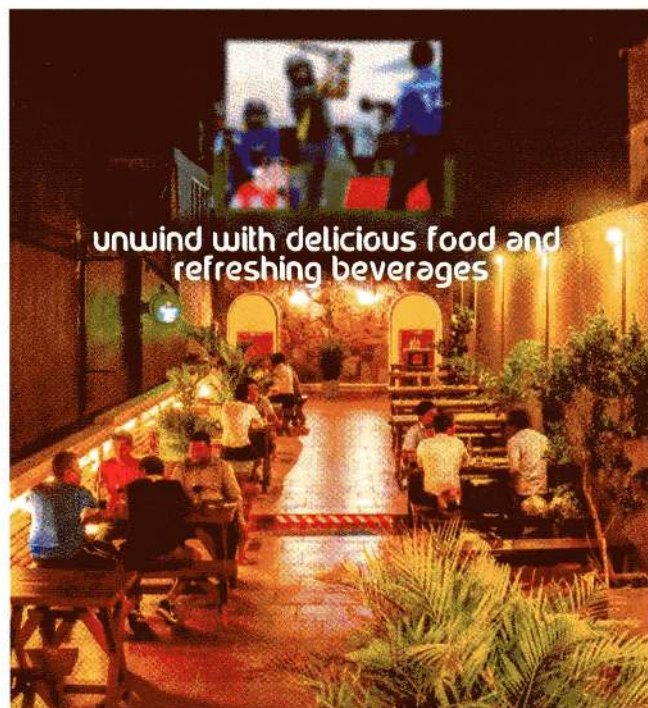
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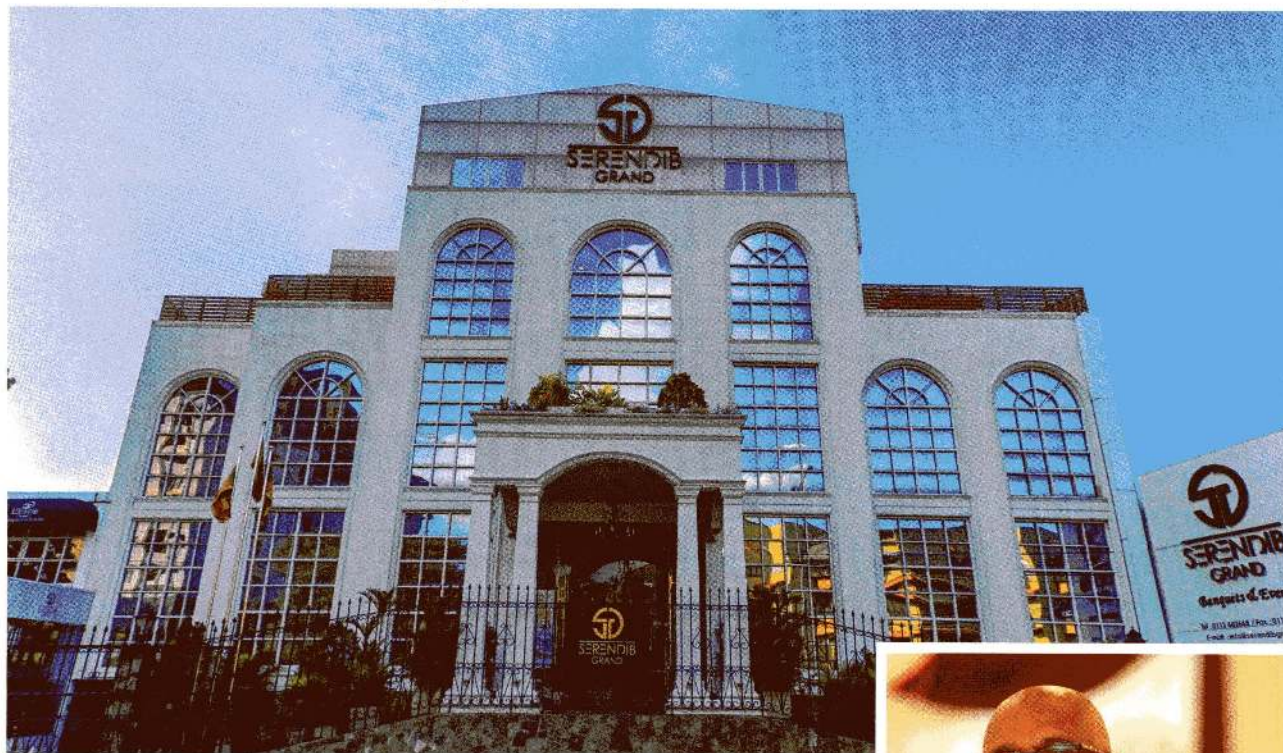
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Serendib Grand for Banquets and Events



The stately façade of the Serendib Grand

Overlooking a busy street in a bustling corner of Colombo 10 is the elegant structure, aptly named 'Serendib Grand'. As a venue partner, this banquet space provides luxury, comfort and excellent service.



Faizel Haddad, Director/Co-Owner,
Serendib Grand

Words Roomini Wijayarathne | **Photographs** Menaka Aravinda and Geeth Viduranga

Serendib Grand is a stately three-storeyed edifice in the urban district of Colombo 10. Gleaming in white, its arched panorama windows glitter with the lights reflected from the interior and attract the eye of the passer-by.

Celebrating five years in the service, Serendib Grand is a star-class venue for social and corporate events. A lofty patio welcomes the visitor, and a flight of stairs leads to the small yet elegant lobby area. Well-lit by the

iridescent light from a beaded chandelier, the lobby leads to the 'Pearl Banquet Hall' on the ground floor and gives access to the upper floors.

The first floor reveals the panoramic view outside, through the high arched windows. The 'Crystal Hall', supplemented with two dressing rooms, is located on the first floor. On the second floor is the high-ceilinged 'Opal Hall', and a rooftop terrace bedecked with canopies, allowing a pleasant breeze to filter through.

Pearl and Crystal Halls are complemented with state-of-the-art amenities including themed interior lighting to suit the ambience of the event, advanced audio-visual facilities and air conditioning. Serendib Grand also provides the opportunity to customise the interior décor, where clients can choose from more than 150 styles. The Pearl Hall accommodates up to 330 guests and the Crystal Hall, 360 guests, which may vary depending on the arrangements.



The ambience of the Crystal Hall adds warmth to social gatherings and events

The Opal Hall on the second floor accommodates up to 200 guests, and the hall is convenient for corporate events, with enhanced audio-visual facilities and space for a cocktail on the connected rooftop terrace that can also accommodate a hot-station.

The banquet choices for any event that is hosted in the venue are three-fold: traditional spread, multi-cuisine buffet and the party menu. Serendib Grand is ready to accommodate the guests' requests in customising the food and beverage menu according to the guests' wishes.

"We have a customer-oriented management," says Faizel Haddad, Director/Co-owner commenting on his skilled staff. "We consider our staff as facilitators or consultants, ever ready to help our clients."

Serendib Grand is the ideal venue for weddings, engagement ceremonies, receptions, parties and other social gatherings, as well as corporate events such as product launches, award ceremonies, seminars, conferences and meetings. Be it a day or night function, guests would be able to recreate the perfect ambience for the event.



Customised décor in the Pearl Hall adds elegance and style



An ideal venue to host corporate events

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The Legend of the Karaththa Curry

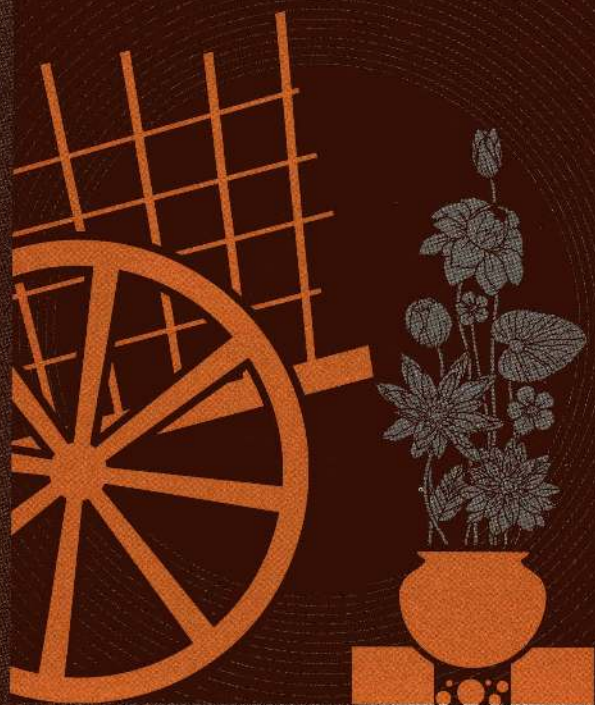
Many people have heard of the Karaththa Curry, but few have ever tasted it.

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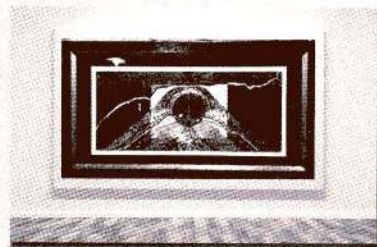
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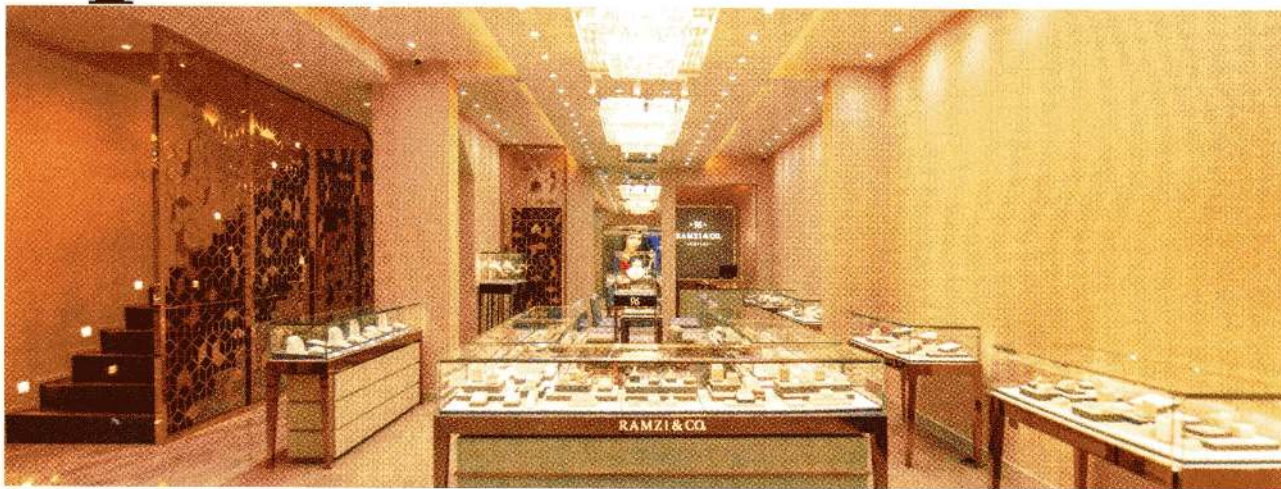


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The chic and sophisticated display of jewellery

Ramzi & Co Jewellery unveiled its flagship store and state-of-the-art Gem Museum in the heart of Colombo. The elegant store is located at 98, Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 4.

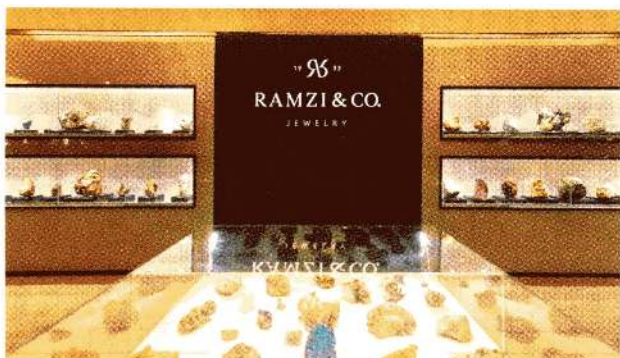
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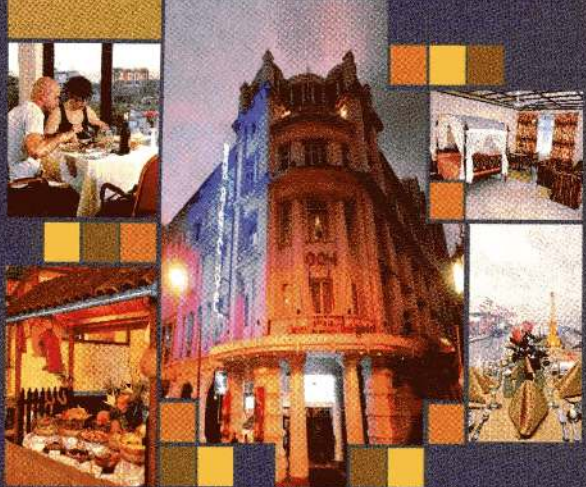


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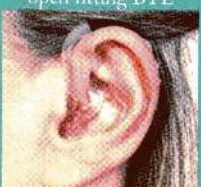

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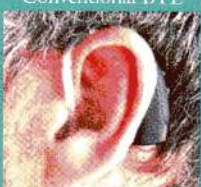

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Royal Artistry Make-up Collection by Spa Ceylon



An exciting range of natural make-up infused with island minerals

Spa Ceylon, the world's largest luxury Ayurveda chain launched a unique range of natural make-up infused with island minerals, caring plant oils and hydrating fruit butters. Available in exotic shades, the collection is inspired by the tropical beauty of Ceylon.

Created to suit Pan-Asian female skin tones, the range includes over 70 shades of fashion colours for face, cheeks, lips and eyes with the option to create more than a 1000 customisable

colour palettes. True to their natural brand promise, all the products are 100 per cent vegetarian, free of paraffin oil, paraffin wax, silicones, animal fats and other chemicals commonly found in synthetic colour cosmetics.

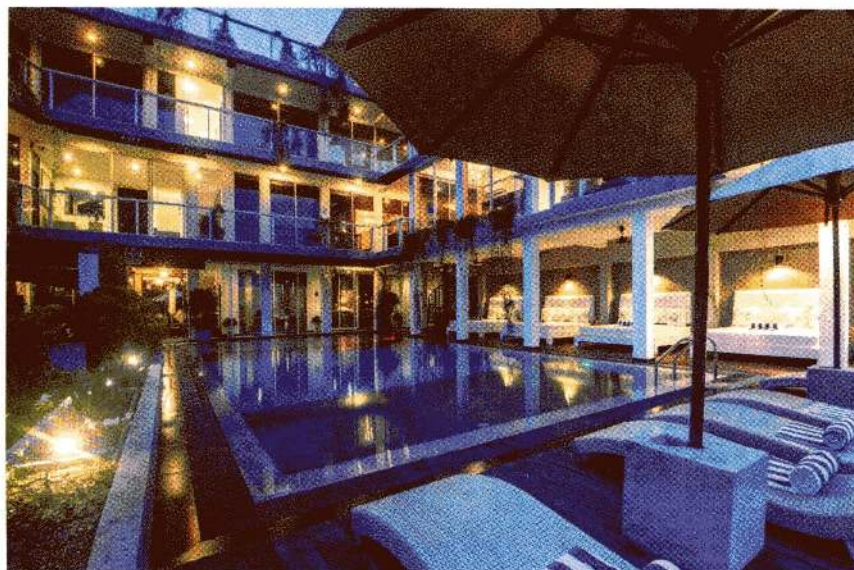
Available in a choice of convenient compacts, Spa Ceylon's Mineral Two Way Cake Face Colour comes in four skin identical shades of pure minerals. Spa Ceylon's Mineral Face Powder is also available in four pure mineral

shades formulated to provide smooth coverage with ease and consistency. The range also includes six exotic Spa Ceylon Mineralised Blush-on compacts enriched with Rice bran and natural minerals in a light-weight formula that glides onto skin and enhances facial contours with sheer colour.

Spa Ceylon's Natural Lipsticks are presented in 14 colour-rich long-stay natural formulae, each blended with Rice bran, Olive, Jojoba, Castor, Natural plant waxes and Pure beeswax to help nourish, moisturise and protect lips while naturally protecting from the sun with an SPF factor of 10+. While the range of all-natural Spa Ceylon Almond Tinted Lip Balms come in six natural shades to colour, care and protect lips prone to extra dryness.

Eyes are all the focus with Spa Ceylon's Mineralised Eye Shadow collection in 30 shades enriched with Rice bran and natural minerals, offering an array of textures from matte to satin to frost to shimmer and perfect for creating a variety of looks for both day and night. The customised colour palettes can also be encased in a choice of luxurious palace art compacts.

Cantaloupe Levels wins Top Luxury Hotel Award 2018



Cantaloupe Levels, the lifestyle and wellness hotel in the Cantaloupe Hotels portfolio, boasts another year of being awarded the World Luxury Hotel Awards for Top Luxury Hotel in the South West Asia region in 2018. This annual awards determine which establishments are committed to upholding high standards of luxury, service and hospitality. Cantaloupe Levels, has consistently aimed to maintain and improve their levels of service and hospitality is honoured to have been recognised in this awards ceremony multiple times since 2015.

Cantaloupe Levels, Unawatuna

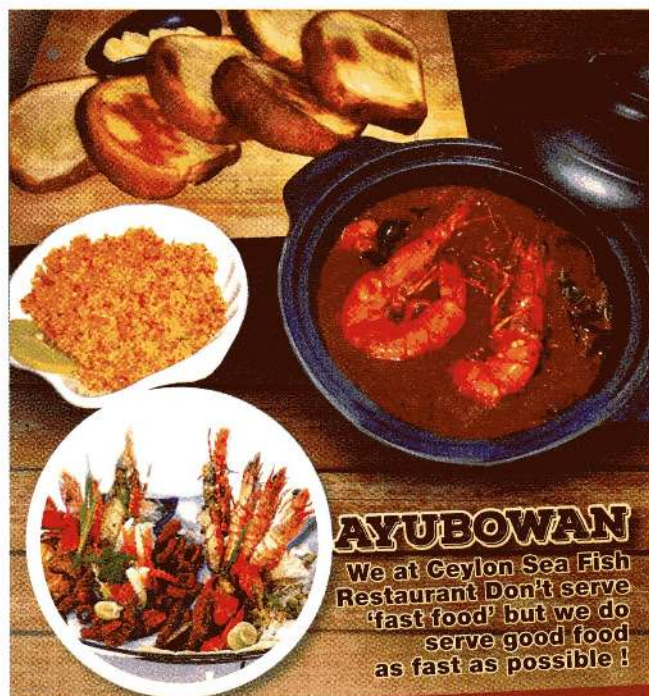


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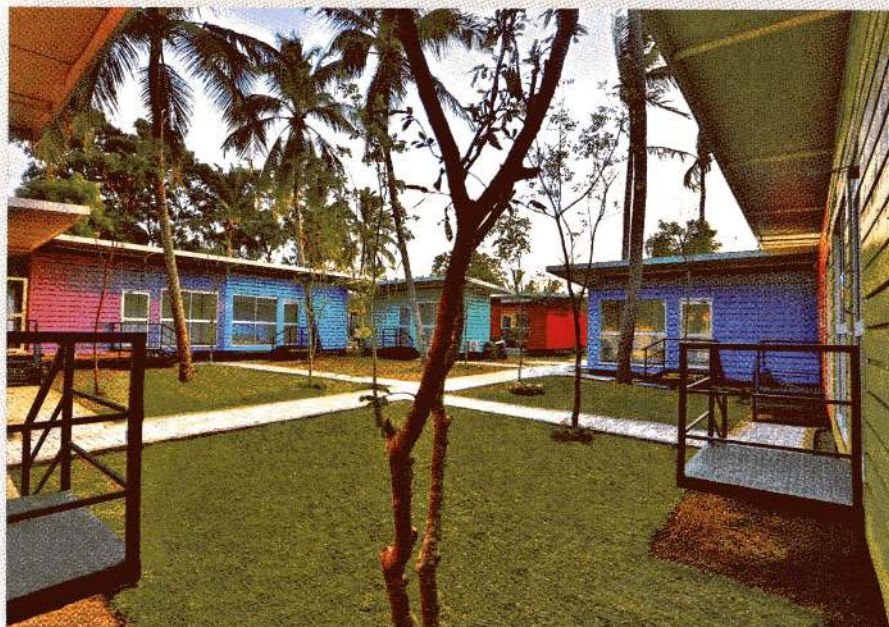
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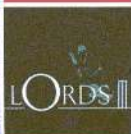
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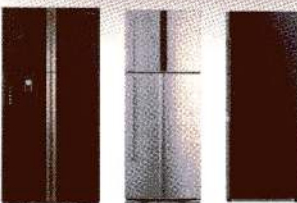
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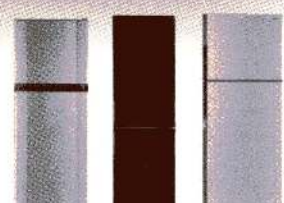
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ODEL Moratuwa relocates to K-Zone Moratuwa



An array of stylish clothing from the ladies section



Visit Odel for a trendy shopping experience

Almost nine years to the day it first opened its doors to customers, ODEL's store in Moratuwa has relocated to the K-Zone complex nearby.

More than doubling in size in the process, the relocated 6,935 square feet ODEL Moratuwa store features popular departments, as well as an exciting range of international brands.

The store was formally opened by Ashok Pathirage, Chairman, Softlogic Holdings.

Commenting on the relocation, Desiree Karunaratne, Group Director Marketing, Softlogic Group said, "We believe that shopping is all about the experience – a combination of location, wide product choice, great brands, exceptional service, value for money and convenience. With its relocation to K-Zone, the ODEL Moratuwa store ticks all the boxes, and will significantly increase footfall to the mall while offering customers

the shopping experience and store ambience they have come to love about ODEL."

As a large retail space at K-Zone, the ODEL store comprises of its principal departments, ladies wear, menswear, Kids, Backstage, Delight, sunglasses, watches, ODEL Sports, and Exclusive Lines as a tenant outlet, and presents an array of international fashion brands coupled with local favourites.

Lion Royal Tourisme wins at the Sri Lanka Tourism Awards 2018



(L-R): Rashmi Perera, Assistant Manager; Nilan Wickramasinghe, Managing Director; Rosi Stronach, Director, Sales and Marketing and Adisha Gregory, Tour Executive, Lion Royal Tourism at Sri Lanka Tourism Awards 2018

Lion Royal Tourisme was awarded as the Major Inbound Tour Operator – Small Category at the Sri Lanka Tourism Awards 2018. Being a well reputed Destination Management Company, the award marks the excellence of the service that Lion

Royal Tourism has provided during the nine years since its inception.

Founded by Nilan Wickramasinghe in 1999, it has been an active player in the field of tourism as an intermediary service provider for visitors to Sri Lanka.

In realising the Lion Royal Vision, 'Affordable Star Class Tourism', the group has found hotels in two of the most-sought after tourism destinations, the cultural triangle and the west coast. The Kassapa Lions Rock in Sigiriya, established in 2007, recently upgraded their luxury accommodation and amenities with 20 additional rooms and a second swimming pool. The Coco Royal Beach Resort established in 2015 offers facilities for a comfortable and an enjoyable stay by the sea.

Lion Royal Group's sustainable growth is a result of satisfactory customer service, and identifying and developing a nature and culture-friendly working environment. Following their motto, "Right Royal Treatment that fits for a King", the Lion Royal Tourisme strives to deliver a value added service to their clients.




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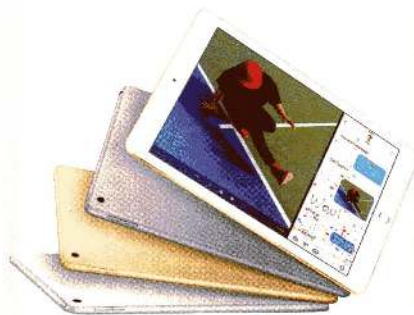
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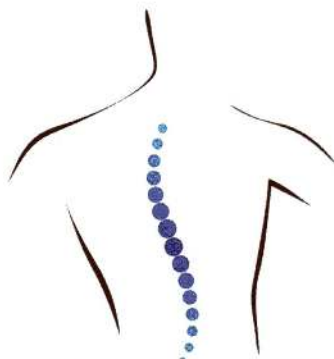
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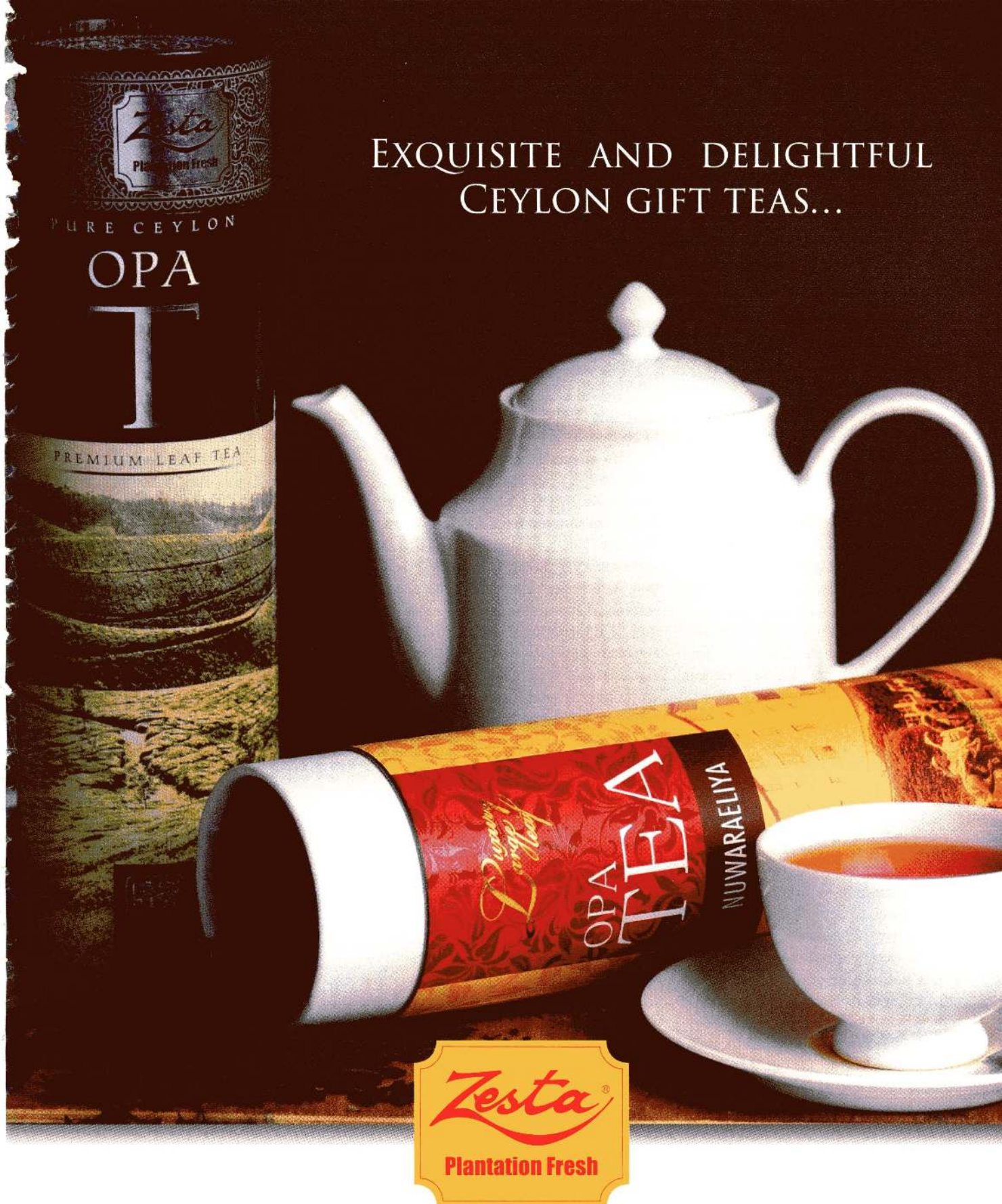
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Sen-Saal Group opens 'Sahal'



Roshan Hettiarachchi, Chairman/ Managing Director, Sen-Saal Group, lighting the oil lamp



Roshan Hettiarachchi, Chairman/Managing Director with his wife Hashini Hettiarachchi, Director and their daughters Seneli and Sanalya Hettiarachchi

Sen-Saal Group opened its newest venture, 'Sahal'. A fine dining restaurant, Sahal is conveniently located at the Arcade Independence Square.

'Sahal', the name of the restaurant meaning rice, reflects its essence; the authentic Sri Lankan tradition, giving the diners the unique experience of traditional Sri Lankan cuisine blended with modern culinary techniques.

Commenting on the new venture, Roshan Hettiarachchi, Chairman and Managing Director, Sen-Saal Group stated, "Sri Lankan cuisine we offer is unique, we aim to represent all the

ethnicities in Sri Lanka when it comes to traditional food."

The elegantly created interior is designed by renowned architect, Shayan Kumaradas, and the batik table linens are sourced from the Aluvihare Heritage Centre, further attesting to the authenticity of the Sri Lankan tradition that 'Sahal' has chosen to reflect. The restaurant features a bar that serves a mix of international and Sri Lankan cocktails and other beverages and it also features a piano that guests are welcome to play. At the opening ceremony, a recipe book compiled by

Sahal, "Acquired Taste" was released. The sale of the book would raise funds for the CSR project by Sen-Saal, 'Food for Food', that provides meals for the underprivileged. The ceremony was graced by Sumedha Rathnayake, Director General, Sarath Chandra, Deputy Director, Nimal Ranasinghe, Director, Urban Development Authority and Shehan De Silva, Manager, Sampath Bank, Thimbirigasyaya, Hemanga Karunasena, Managing Director, Ransara Restaurants and Hangout, Kurunegala and officials from the Sen-Saal Group.

The Outlet Store opens in Pelawatte

The Outlet Store, unveiled its newest branch in Pelawatte. The distinctive store offers an exclusive family shopping experience coupled with greater affordability.

The spacious new store is designed with stunning interior and provides ample parking space for the convenience of its customers. It offers a wide array of local and international fashion brands for men, women, kids and infants. In addition, Outlet Store also provides a range of household items, gift items, accessories, perfumes, cosmetics, watches, toys, footwear and jewellery as well.

Commenting on the opening, Sharhan Mansoor, Managing Director, The Outlet Store stated, "We are delighted to present the next step of our journey, with the second Outlet Store in Colombo. We have received a remarkable success within a short span of time for



The sleek façade of The Outlet Store, Pelawatte

which we are extremely grateful for our customers. We hope to maintain our excellence in quality and affordability as we grow in the future. We also hope to expand our product offering on a daily basis along with attractive discounts." "We have always been driving forward with the tagline 'Get smart for less' and

our effort is to meet this goal. Expanding our presence aims to provide further convenience and availability for our customers. We also hope to expand into more areas of the island in the future, leading the Outlet Store to be the most preferred shopping destination in Sri Lanka", he further added.

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"This award and the accompanying one of Best Condo in Sri Lanka, fully vindicate the faith of all Altair stakeholders and the acclaim of all lovers of ingenious architecture"



Winner - Best Condo Architectural Design - Asia

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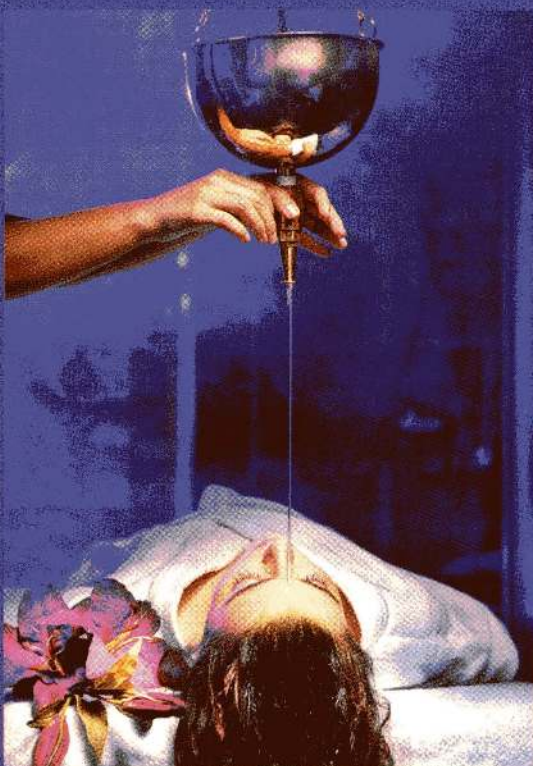
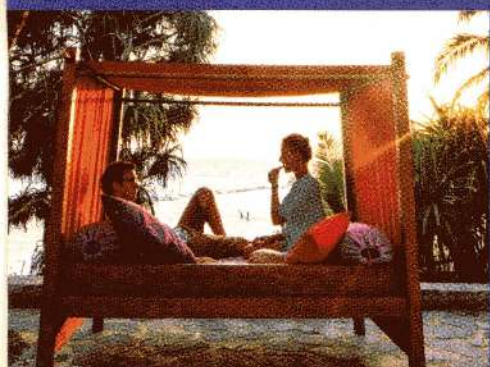



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