4×4 Expedition Along The East Coast

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Venturing along varied terrains

A seven-day long 4X4 Expedition is set to take on uncharted territories of the East Coast, setting off from Point Pedro in Jaffna. An undertaking of the Commando Regiment of the Sri Lanka Army, the planned schedule commences on August 3, inviting all 4X4 adventure lovers.

Words Prasadini Nanayakkara

As a first of its kind to be held in Sri Lanka, the 4X4 Expedition was conceived to encourage more 4X4 adventure lovers in the country. Beyond pure adventure and fun, other objectives of the programme were, to introduce a sporting event to the region and provide exposure to the beauty and livelihoods of the transformed East.

The Expedition kicks-off on August 3, 2014 with a flag off ceremony at Galle Face at 10.00 am. From thereon the journey proceeds to Jaffna along the A9, and the first night will be spent in Jaffna at pre-booked hotels. Day two commences from Point Pedro to Kokkuthuduwai, a fishing village, which makes for a unique camping site.

Camping sites are designed with eco showers and toilet facilities and vehicles too

can be parked close by. The tents with bedding for two to four adults are designed to protect from rain. The route set out is feasible for only 4X4 vehicles such as a jeep, SUV or double cab. For instance, the eight kilometre stretch along the Manalkadu Desert can only be tackled by a 4X4 vehicle. Each vehicle is limited to a maximum of four people and the event is open for families, corporate executives, CEOs and other off road enthusiasts.

> Participants may join at different stages—be it for just two days or the entire stretch that spans 740 km in six days

From day 3–6, the expedition commences as, Kokkuthuduwai to Dehiwatta, Dehiwatta to Thoppigala, Thoppigala to Arugam Bay, Arugam Bay to the Commando Regiment Training School in Uva Kuda Oya. A total distance of 740 km will be covered over the entire expedition. However, participants may join at different stages—be it for just two days or the entire stretch. Each stage is assigned difficulty levels ranging from five percent to 90 percent, all requiring 4X4 engaged. On day seven, a 4X4 extreme challenge will be held for experienced drivers interested in testing their skills. Each day includes activities such as beach volleyball, obstacle crossing, air rifling, surfing and sea bathing amongst a host of others, for participants who wish to challenge their abilities further.

With around 20 participants already registered, the expedition will accommodate a maximum of 75 vehicles, moving in clusters of ten. Each cluster will be accompanied by a navigator taking the lead and tailed by a sweeper to guide participants towards select locations. Throughout the scheduled programmes, an ambulance and a designated medic team for each location will be present at all times in case of an emergency.

The fun-filled endeavour is also geared to support community related projects such as cleaning up of the coastal stretch at major towns such as Trincomalee and Batticaloa. Where camping sites are set up near schools and government institutes, the built toilet or any other facility will be handed over for the use of the public following the conclusion of the expedition. Furthermore, water pumps used for water supply will also be offered to families in need in the vicinity.

While registration for the Expedition is already underway the closing date falls on July 21, 2014.

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