

Jetwing Jaffna Opens its Doors



(L-R) Maithripala Sirisena, president, Hiran Cooray, chairman, Jetwing Hotels; John Amaratunga, Minister of Tourism Development and Christian Affairs; Reginald Cooray, Governor of the Northern Province

President Maithripala Sirisena declared open 'Jetwing Jaffna', a 55-room hotel that has changed the skyline of Jaffna.



Front entrance of Jetwing Jaffna

Following the grand opening of Jetwing Jaffna, President Maithripala Sirisena said he was happy to take part in the ceremonial occasion, as the hotel project demonstrated investor confidence in the Northern Province and Jaffna in particular, as well as the resilience of the people in the peninsula. He was accompanied by John Amaratunga, Minister of Tourism Development and Christian Affairs; Faiszer Musthapha, Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government; Lakshman Yapa Abeywardena, State Minister of Finance and Milinda Moragoda, founder of MMBL-Pathfinder group of companies. Among

others who graced the occasion were, Reginald Cooray, Governor of the Northern Province; Vijayakala Maheswari MP and K Ganesh, Divisional Secretary, Jaffna.

The state-of-the-art Jetwing Jaffna with its 55 standard and family rooms is a welcome addition to Jaffna, which is displaying its vibrancy and taking commendable strides to regain its former glory as the capital of Tamil culture. The hotel, consisting of eight floors and a basement, boasts of an airconditioned restaurant on its second level that can accommodate over 100 guests and a rooftop sky lounge with a bird's eye view of the fast developing city, from Kilali Lagoon in the east to the islands in the west and a host of other buildings of religious and cultural significance.

Jetwing Jaffna stands tall in the heart of the city on Clock Tower Road and will provide comfortable and modern accommodation to visitors to the Northern Peninsula. In addition to recreational facilities, the hotel is also fully equipped for banquets and meetings.

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Marshaling investment of over one billion rupees for Jaffna is a commendable achievement by Jetwing Hotels, MMBL-Pathfinder Group, Regency Teas and several others, who had placed their confidence in the project. Among the institutional investors is Leon Holdings, headed by a Sri Lankan expatriate hailing from Jaffna, who is a partner in a successful business venture in Europe. The project also provides employment for over 80 youths from Jaffna, who were provided with training in hospitality by Jetwing Hotels.

It has been a long and arduous journey for Yarl Hotels to witness the successful culmination of the project. The land on which the hotel was constructed purchased in 1975 by the late Deshamanya N U Jayawardena, the first Sri Lankan Governor of the Central Bank, who noted the potential of Jaffna over 40 years ago. Jetwing Hotels and MMBL-Pathfinder Group took the decision to go ahead with the project in July 2010 and former Prime Minister D M Jayaratne laid the foundation stone for the hotel in February 2012. It took four years for the project to come to fruition, overcoming numerous obstacles.

Speaking at the event, John Amaratunga, Minister for Tourism said that as there were others interested in investing in Jaffna, the Ministry of Tourism

Development was planning to open a hotel school in the peninsula. Hiran Cooray, chairman - Jetwing and Governor Reginald Cooray meanwhile invited the Tamil diaspora to return to Sri Lanka and make use of the investment opportunities in the Northern Province. The chairman highlighted that it was a long and a difficult journey to realize the dream of having a Jetwing operated hotel in Jaffna. "Despite initial difficulties we faced, I was convinced that Jaffna was ready for a modern hotel, and youth in the peninsula would be eager to choose hospitality industry as a career option," he said.

