

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

Most Sri Lankans gulp down a morning mug of Kenda, a veritable magic potion that gives the drinker strength to face the day.



Gotu Kola, Mukunuwenna and Hathawariya kenda.

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Kola Kenda, as it is popularly known throughout the countryside, can be made from various green leaves, each famed for its intrinsic nutritional values, but the process is the same for all. While Kenda may not have the power to cure you of any illness, it is wholesome enough to prevent many of them, which is always better.

Every morning, a mug of kola Kenda will help you keep the body beautiful, detoxify physical impurities, and create the necessary equilibrium. This is done by maintaining, according to the humoralist and ayurvedic system, the four humors or elements at work, namely earth, wind, water, and fire, functioning at their optimum.

### **Brewing a mug for yourself**

First, take a bundle of the recommended leaves of your choice. Wash it, chop it, blend it and extract the juice. Then strain it. Put a cup of rice into a pan and boil it with more water than you would use if you were making only rice. Boil the rice until it is cooked. Add the blended juice. Add a cup of coconut milk and salt. You can add a clove or two or garlic and a tablespoon of peppercorn. To make it more palatable, a piece of jaggery will come in handy when serving.

Sri Lanka's herbal soups are consumed mainly in the morning during breakfast. Unless one has acquired a cultivated taste for it, this is usually gulped down, followed by a bite of jaggery to reduce its bitterness. It can be made thick or watery thin depending on one's taste. But whatever the leaves used for the Kenda, they share two common traits: they are deep green in color and come crammed with nutrients that promise wonders for overall health.

### **Gotu Kola**

Gotu Kola, *Centella Asiatica* is the most popular herbal soup and the most hailed for its nutritional value. Called the herb of enlightenment in Chinese medicine, it is commonly found in Sri Lanka.

Gotu Kola is known for its anti-inflammatory and rejuvenating properties. It improves memory, aids concentration, promotes healthy skin, nails, and hair, and increases efficient blood circulation. It keeps the nervous system in balance and helps with meditation.

### **Hathawariya and Wel-penela**

Hathawariya or the wild asparagus is a shrub while Wel-penela is a climber. Its properties are known to promote healthy energy levels and boost the immunity system. It also promotes digestion and bowel movement, beats sleep disorders, and enhances kidney function. Hathawariya and Welpenela are also known to increase sexual libido.

Welpenela is a leaf found mainly in the wetlands and one that boasts properties to beat rheumatism and provides relief to those suffering from hemorrhoids. It is also used to allay nervous disorders and fight chronic bronchitis.

### **The 'joy weed' also known as Mukunuwenna**

The energy drink in the leafy world is Mukunuwenna, power-packed with a mocktail of vitamins, proteins, iron, and fiber. Known as sessile joy weed, it is probably the most consumed leafy veg in Sri Lanka and helps restore digestive disorders while promoting stamina and strength.

The curry leaf, Karapincha, is both a stimulant and a relaxant and works as a mild laxative. It promotes clearer vision and reduces blood sugar and cholesterol levels. It also helps to purify the blood and is a good source of vitamins A, C, and K, calcium, and iron.

Apart from these, kola Kenda can be made from a host of other leaves, including Erabadu for dysentery, Polpala for kidneys, and the urinal tract. Neeramuliya for blood circulation, Kohila for piles, Eramusu for skin, and Olinda for heart. Rarer herbal soups are made of wild Kothamalli to reduce blood sugar, Kohomba (neem) to purify the blood, and Yati Narang to cure cough and phlegm. Although not a green herb, a special mention must be made for Kurakkan (finger millet) Kenda, popular and sought after for its fat-burning properties.

An ideal morning mocktail that helps you work, rest and play better.

Kola Kenda not only nourishes and rejuvenates the entire system but also fortifies the body's immunity to defy the onslaught of infection.

At a cosmetic level, a regular cuppa also produces smoother skin, a clearer complexion, and boosts hair growth. It is an ideal morning mocktail, an energy drink that helps you work, rest and play better.

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Enjoy a glass of nutritious kenda with a piece of jaggery.

By Udeshi Amarasinghe and Prasadini Nanayakkara

Photography by Menaka Aravinda



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



**From the busy streets of Colombo I enter into the lobby of Cinnamon Grand Hotel and walk past the Coffee Stop, I venture downstairs and through the Cheers Pub and onto the gravel path outside. I see a bamboo stick gate and a wooden sign informing me that I had arrived at Nuga Gama - back to our roots.**

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I curiously walked along the dimly lit path wondering what to expect. I felt as if I had travelled through time as I passed a bullock cart or *Karatte* which was used to transport people and goods during a time when vehicles were a luxury. I am enveloped in a distant past; a weary traveller seeking refuge. Soon I am greeted by the Ambalama - a resting place complete with utensils for whipping up a quick meal and a large pot of water or *pintaliya* placed at the entrance reminding us of our altruistic forefathers.

I took a step further and I could not believe my eyes, revolving around a central 'Maha Nuga' tree was a traditional Sri Lankan village - a Gama. The Arachchi or Village Head greeted me with a warm 'Ayubowan' while young lads dressed in blue and white sarongs and white vests scurried busily. Created by Cinnamon Grand Nuga Gama is not just a restaurant it is much more. It is a return to the roots of Sri Lanka where both locals and tourists can savour cuisines, experience the ambience and listen to music of a simple and traditional past. With the vision to propel Cinnamon Grand to become a tourist icon in Sri Lanka Rohan Karr, General Manager of Cinnamon Grand says, "with the end of war came a new and positive outlook and we felt the need to actively contribute towards tourism in the country.

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**Ambalama**



**The *Pokuna* or pond**

We want to be the best five- star hotel but it doesn't mean we have to be a western-oriented one, instead we want to offer the best of both worlds." Thus dawned the idea of creating something innovative and uniquely Sri Lankan. In effect arose Nuga Gama, faithfully true to all the elements of a typical traditional village. On to one side is the Gama Gedara or a typical village house, snuggled humbly in its simple bearings with clay walls and a thatched roof. Within its cosy interior are a welcoming antique armchair and other household objects. "It's a nice place to come and read books and I've seen visitors sitting under the shady part of the Gama Gedara to have a cup of tea. It's a place to relax, wander around and escape the hustle and bustle," says Rohan adding, "I've even seen people coming to simply take pictures." Nearby stands a well and the house can be approached along-side a 'Pokuna' or the pond where Nil Manel blooms; the national flower of Sri Lanka, nods from its surface. A little bridge also runs across this pond painting a quaint picture of simplicity.



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Close by is a patch of vegetation or a home garden that provides a source of organic food. To the far corner stands a 'Bissa'; an inventive structure used to store the paddy harvest. The servings for the taste buds at Nuga Gama are also authentic traditional village dishes prepared by the seasoned hands of the *Ammes*, (women folk of the village) recruited from different parts of the country. "We want you to say, this reminds me of my child-hood, this is how we ate, washed our hands and cooked. We are proud of it so why not share it?" says Rohan.

Accordingly the food is prepared in clay pots and the *Ammes* in the kitchen blow to kindle the fire of this traditional stove. Even the egg hoppers are made with village eggs instead of the farm eggs, to provide an experience of how life was once led back in the day.

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Refreshments offered at Nuga Gama include a variety of vegetable and fruit juices such as *amberella* and *sepathilla* and home made ginger beer. In the evenings one can buy crispy snacks of manioc or Bitter Gourd chips off the mini *karrata* near the village shop and relax and rejuvenate in the many 'hangout spots' in the surroundings. With Sri Lankan tea and home made sweet-meats such as 'Naran Kevum', 'Kiri Dodol' and 'Aluwa' to name just a few, visitors can enjoy a complete tea session with friends. The 'Kamatha' where the harvest is laid out to be threshed, offers a place for evening entertainment including harvest dances, drama troupes and performances by traditional drummers. Engulfed in the serenity of the surrounding I am lulled by dulcet tones of an oriental band playing at the 'Salawa' or the village hall. It is also a gathering area and serves as a place for indoor dining as well. "On Poya days we wish to have a meditation session in the mornings under the tree, conducted by a professional guru. Visitors can meditate, have a healthy breakfast and leave refreshed. We also have a variety of educational classes for children every Saturday on arts, culture, crafts, history and traditions. It's going to be more than just a place to dine," says Rohan. The 'Kade' is another characteristic feature of Nuga Gama.

A traditional Sri Lankan shop, it is the pulse of village life selling 'bulto' sweets, *wade* and roast pan (bread) among other goodies that sweep you with a sense of nostalgia. Adding to the authenticity of this atmosphere is a village fowl that roams about the premises much to the astonishment of the visitors. Nuga Gama has already captured the attention of many, from heads of state, to ministers, to CEOs and tourists. "They're full of praise and are very positive about it. You can easily get addicted to this life style," says Rohan. The gallery is another feature at Nuga Gama, exhibiting work that embodies Sri Lankan art and culture. The paintings are by the art association artistes and add to the experience of the visitor. I stand now, dwarfed under a shade of a 200-year old banyan tree, after which the village is christened. Having weathered many storms it stands a silent witness of the many changes over its long existence. "It conveys our experience, we've gone through a lot of hard times and emerged from them. What a way to celebrate our success or peace, underneath this tree," says Rohan Karr poignantly. As I gaze through the boughs of this wizened tree I catch a surreal glimpse of the tall buildings of the city skyline and I feel I am a world away...

*Nuga Gama, Cinnamon Grand Colombo*

*77, Galle Road, Colombo 3*

*Tel: (+94) 11 243 7437*

*cinnamonhotels.com*

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## What's On

JULY

### Cinnamon Grand, Colombo

Fourth person dines free for lunch/dinner; Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday; Plates (Reservation: +94 112 437437/+94 765 604972)  
Party @ Plates; lunch/dinner 10 pax - 10% discount with a complimentary cake (15 pax - 15% discount with complimentary cake, 20 pax - 20% discount with a complimentary cake (Reservation: +94 112 437437/+94 765 604972)  
Birthday dinner free offer; lunch/dinner; Plates (Reservation: +94 112 437437/+94 765 604972)  
Team building activities with dinner buffet; Nuga Gama; 3pm-10.30pm (Reservation: +94 112 437437/+94 765 604972)  
Enjoying personalized area for your business lunch; weekdays; 12.30pm-3pm; Plates (Reservation: +94 112 437437/+94 765 604972)  
Early bird offer; 6.30pm-8.30pm; 9pm-11pm; (Reservation: +94 112 437437/+94 765 604972)  
Weekend rush - sawan offer; 20% off on all sawan orders including both veg and non-veg options; 10am-10pm (Reservation: +94 112 437437/+94 765 604972)  
25% off on all type of birthday cakes; Coffee Stop; 7am-midnight (Reservation: +94 112 437437/+94 765 604972)  
Special discounts on cakes; Coffee Stop; 7am-midnight (Reservation: +94 112 437437/+94 765 604972)  
Cheers to the ladies - A cocktail on us; Wednesday; 7pm-8pm; Cheers Weekly Cheers Guide (Monday - A gin celebration, Tuesday - Rum Rush, Wednesday - raise a glass to whisky, Thursday - sip the tequila, Friday - vodka vibes, Saturday & Sunday - beer lover's tasting night (20% on imported bottles); Cheers (Reservation: +94 112 437437/+94 765 604972)  
**July 7**  
World Chocolate Day - 10% off on all 16 & 25 pieces, chocolate boxes, buy 9 chocolates, and get 1 free, special cold chocolate beverages to celebrate the day; Coffee Stop; 10am-10pm (Reservation: +94 112 437437/+94 765 604972)



### Amaya Beach, Pasikudah

Create unforgettable memories with private parties at Amaya Beach (Reservation: +94 774 856 087)  
High Tea - Enjoy the gentle sea breeze, golden shores and calming rhythm of the waves as you indulge in one of the best High Tea experiences in Pasikudah at Amaya Beach; 3pm-6pm (Reservation: +94 774 856 087)  
Say I Do by the Shores of Pasikudah - Coastal Dreams Wedding Package (Reservations: +94 774 856 087)  
Day Outing Package - The Ultimate Beach Escape Awaits! Enjoy a welcome drink, a sumptuous lunch buffet, and evening tea with snacks, all while soaking in the stunning coastal views. Dive into relaxation with swimming pool and beach access, and make it a day to remember with friends, family, or colleagues (Reservations: +94 774 856 087)  
Party Package - Celebrate in paradise at Amaya Beach, Pasikudah, where golden shores, breathtaking ocean views, and tropical elegance set the stage for unforgettable memories! (Reservations: +94 774 856 087)



### Grand Oriental Hotel, Colombo

Happy Hour; Daily; 6pm-8pm; Harbour Room Restaurant  
Executive Lunch Buffet; Harbour Room Restaurant (Reservations: +94 77 600 1951, +94 76 113 5186)  
International Dinner Buffet; Friday and Saturday; 7.30pm-11pm (Reservations: +94 77 600 1951, +94 76 113 5186)



### Harpo's Colombo Fort Café

Stir-fry wok promotion - chicken, prawn, pork and vegetable; Daily; 9am-11pm, Friday-Sunday till midnight  
Happy hour cocktails; Monday-Friday; 5pm-7pm  
New deal: Buy Large Pizza and a Lion Pitcher - Enjoy 25% discount  
Sat/Sun - Enjoy a 25% discount on 2 Large Pizza plus a Sangria pitcher



### Amaya Lake, Dambulla

High Tea at the Lake - Cradled by nature's finest landscapes in Sri Lanka's cultural triangle, Amaya Lake offers one of the best high tea experiences in Dambulla; 3pm-6pm (Reservation: +94 77 417 8352)  
Escape to nature with a Day Outing at the Lake! Relax and unwind at Amaya Lake, nestled amidst lush greenery by the tranquil waters of Kandalam Lake. Enjoy a refreshing welcome drink, indulge in a delicious lunch buffet, and sip on evening tea & coffee with snacks. Make the most of your day with swimming pool access, fun team-building activities, and complimentary changing rooms (Reservations: +94 770 608 474)



### Colombo Lakeside, Colombo

Brew & bite family lunch; Weekends; Dining Room; (Reservation: +94 112 491 000)  
BYOB; Weekdays; 10am-10pm; Pool Bar  
In room dining; buy any local spirit get free bite and 3 soft drinks; Dining Room  
Mix it up weekend cocktail experience; Lobby Lounge; 3.30pm-5.30pm (Reservations: +94 112 491 956)  
Taste of Long Feng; Lunch; Long Feng Five course dining; Lunch; Royal Thai Snap and savor - share to win; lunch; Royal Thai  
Pool Paradise; Monday, Tuesday; Pool Bar; 6pm-10pm  
Ayurvedic Energy Boost; Daily; Goodies; 7am-10am  
Business 3 course set lunch/unlimited tea and flavored ice tea; Daily; 12pm-3pm; The Library  
Vino for four; Lunch; Royal Thai & Long Feng (Reservation: +94 112 491 949)  
Taste of Korea; Thursday; Dining Room (Reservation: +94 112 491 000)  
Corporate dining package; Dining Room; Royal Thai, Long Feng  
Pouring brands offer; Long Feng and Pool Bar  
Events at Long Feng. Private event promotions, Colombar, Monday and Tuesday  
**July 13**  
Pool bar chill and grill getaway; Pool Bar; 11.30am-3.30pm  
**July 26 and 27**  
Dragon and Lotus feast; dinner; Long Feng, Royal Thai and part of Pool terrace (Reservation: +94 11 249 1945)  
**July 27**  
Wine Buffet; The Lounge; 6.30pm-10pm



### Best Western Elyon, Colombo

Breakfast buffet  
Lunch or snack (free milkshake with every order, free wi-fi and workstation)  
High Tea for two; 3pm-6pm (12 hours prior notice required - reservation +94 117 527 527)  
Cocktail pitchers  
Live music with Shehara George; Friday; VU Resto-Bar; 7.30pm



### Commons Coffee House, Colombo

20th anniversary launch - mid-July with new menu; 10am-11pm (Kotte), 8am-12am (Colombo 7)



### Cinnamon Red, Colombo

Surf and Turf; Wednesday; 7pm-10.30pm-Flavoured (Reservation: +94 703 145 176/+94 712 145 145)  
Feast for four, pay for three; Flavoured; 7pm-10.30pm (Reservation: +94 703 145 176/+94 712 145 145)  
Come with five, pay for four; Weekend; 3.30pm-5.30pm; Flavoured (Reservation: +94 703 145 176/+94 712 145 145)  
Hours of Happiness- 50% off on selected beverages; Daily; 5pm-7pm; Cloud Red



### Harpo's Pizza and Pasta, Colombo

Gigantic (19") Party Pizza Deal: Buy Any Gigantic pizza (19") Get 1 chicken wings + Soft drink (11) for free  
Only Square (22") Pizza Deal: Buy any Square Pizza (22") and get 1 Garlic bread, chicken wings, and 1 Mega soft drink (1L) for free.  
Hot deals: Buy one large (12") Harpo Pizza and get the 2nd with 50% discount  
2 Regular (9") Harpos Pizzas for special offer





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## ITC Ratnadipa, Colombo

Catch the islander vibe - Daily  
Sundowners - where sunsets meet  
sips. Level up your night with  
exclusive bottle deals, perfectly  
paired with Islander's culinary magic  
(Friday and Saturday with live beats  
by DJZ); Islander (Reservations:  
+94 117 856 500)  
Immerse yourself in Skyline  
Evenings - where artisan cocktails  
meet breathtaking views. Live  
entertainment along with bottle  
deals and snack pairings; Daily;  
(Friday & Saturday with live jazz);  
Ahaa (Reservations: +94 117 856 500)



## Piano Bar and Music Room at The Bayleaf, Colombo

Live entertainment (featuring Daniela  
& Dilip, Mayanthi & Yohan and Q &  
Dilip); Thursday-Friday: 8pm-11pm  
(Reservations: +94 112 695 920)  
DJ Music: Wednesday-Saturday;  
7pm onwards  
Tapas bar menu with signature  
cocktails, premium liquor  
Special offers: Daily; 5pm-7pm  
(Reservations: +94 112 695 920)

## The Kingsbury, Colombo

Business Lunch; Monday to  
Friday: 12pm-3pm; Kings Steakbar  
(Reservations: +94 112 421 221)  
Single Malt Hour - 50% off on single  
malt; 6.30pm-7.30pm; Daily; Steakbar  
(Reservations: +94 112 421 221)  
Crab Fest - Embrace a succulent,  
spicy and irresistibly rich celebration  
of flavor, starring premium Sea or  
Lagoon Crab, crafted for the true  
seafood enthusiast; Daily; Lunch  
12pm-3pm, Dinner 6.30pm-11pm;  
Ocean Seafood Restaurant  
Sri Lanka's First Seafood Boil  
Experience! Enjoy a delectable  
medley of Sea Crab, Lagoon Crab,  
Shoe Lobster, Green Mussels,  
King Prawns, Clams, Squids and  
Snappers, all cooked together in  
either Louisiana Cajun Mix or Asian  
Spice; Lunch - 12pm-3pm, Dinner  
- 6.30pm-11pm; Daily; Ocean Seafood  
Restaurant  
New Menu available for Lunch  
12pm-3pm, Dinner 6.30pm-11pm;  
Tenku Japanese restaurant  
Banquets - Wedding offer - Sunday  
and Poya Day Wedding Package,  
specially curated for couples seeking  
to mark their special day with style  
and splendor.



## Lords Restaurant Complex, Negombo

Live music; Daily; 7pm-11pm  
Lunch menu packed with great value  
poke bowls, English & Continental  
breakfasts, pancakes, tacos,  
flatbreads, burgers, loaded fries, fresh  
seafood, panninis and curry platters  
Indoor and outdoor dining for Lunch  
12pm-5pm, Dinner 5pm-11pm  
(Reservations: +94 77 285 3190)  
Happy Hour; Daily; 5pm-7pm,  
9pm-11pm



## SHOULDERS by Harpos, Colombo

New range of cocktails  
Introducing new dishes for the lunch  
and dinner menu, a cocktail bar with  
signature cocktails  
Special offer on cocktails; Daily;  
5pm-7pm  
All day Beer deals; 11am-11pm,  
Friday-Sunday till Midnight  
Entertainment; Friday-Sunday;  
7pm onwards  
Lunch 12pm-3pm (Reservations:  
+94 762 911 144)



## The Bayleaf, Colombo

Authentic Italian Specials and Harpos's  
Pizza menu; 11am-11pm, Friday -  
Sunday - 11am-midnight  
Italian Pasta and Meat Specials  
Happy Hour; 5pm-7pm



## Mañadha Colombo

A la carte seafood selections;  
Royal Code restaurant  
Staycation (Reservations:  
+94 70 654 3223)  
Breakfast buffet; 7am-10am;  
Royal Code restaurant  
(Reservations: +94 70 654 3223)  
BBQ party; Sunday; 3pm-10pm  
(Reservations: +94 70 654 3223)  
Happy Coffee Hour; Daily; 4pm-7pm  
(Reservations: +94 70 654 3223)  
Exclusive wedding package,  
Birthday celebrations (Reservations:  
+94 70 654 3223)  
Swirl into summer with new Lassi  
magic and coffee deals; Healing Café  
(Reservations: +94 70 654 3223)  
Happy Hour; Daily; 5pm-7pm  
(Reservations: +94 70 654 3223)  
Colonial Pot Lamprais (Reservations:  
+94 70 654 3223)  
Biryani offers; (Reservations:  
+94 70 654 3223)  
Business travel better value (spacious  
room, 24-hour service, wi-fi, rooftop  
bar & lounge, wellness spa, rooftop  
pool) (Reservations: +94 70 654 3223)  
Ladies Night; 5pm-8pm; Thursday; Sky

## Sofia Colombo City Hotel, Colombo

Treat for Two - Fusion Fiesta  
Spaghetti Biryani - We've meticulously  
blended classic Italian spaghetti with  
aromatic traditional biryani spices to  
create a dish that truly offers the best  
of both worlds (Reservations:  
+94 77 298 0599, +94 764 108 901)  
High Tea platter for two; Daily;  
Seascope Restaurant; 3pm-6pm  
(Reservations: +94 77 298 0599,  
+94 764 108 901)  
High Tea platter for four; Daily;  
Seascope Restaurant; 3pm-6pm  
(Reservations: +94 77 298 0599,  
+94 764 108 901)  
Create unforgettable memories  
with Dreamscape views. Imagine  
witnessing this breathtaking city  
transformation with your loved one  
from your room! (Reservations:  
+94 11 222 5225 or +94 74 368 1710)



## Yard (Reservations: +94 70 654 3223)

Hoppers (cheese, milk, plain, egg,  
nuts, devilled chicken, devilled  
prawn) and Roti Combo  
(Reservations: +94 70 654 3223)  
Tower and treats combo - Ikon beer  
tower with seafood platter (prawns,  
cuttlefish, whitefish, crabs, regular  
chicken BBQ platter); Sky Yard  
(Reservations: +94 70 654 3220)  
High Tea Buffet; Friday; 3.30pm-  
5.30pm (Reservations: +94 70 654 3223)  
BYOB; Royal Code Restaurant;  
(Reservations: +94 70 654 3223)  
Deep tissue and sports massages;  
Swasthya Wellness Spa (Reservations:  
+94 70 654 3270)  
Ladies Spa day with Signature High  
Tea Platter; Saturday (Reservations:  
+94 70 654 3270)



## The Thinnal, Jaffna

July 29-August 24  
Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil Festival -  
Sri Lanka's longest-running festival  
begins on July 29th and concludes  
on August 24th. Special suite  
and dining promotions will be  
available throughout this period  
(Reservations: +94 76 640 2151)  
July 1-31  
Website Exclusive Offer - Enjoy 25%  
off on all suite categories and all  
meal plans for bookings made  
through our website: thethinnal.com  
(Reservations: +94 76 640 2151)  
Day Outing package - Includes a  
variety of exciting perks  
High Tea for two - Jaffna Style High  
Tea; Courtyard Garden (Reservations:  
+94 76 523 4035/+94 76 137 7144)  
July 19  
Authentic Jaffna Style Dinner Buffet;  
7.30pm-9.30pm (Reservations:  
+94 76 523 4035/+94 76 137 7144)



## Sports

### Cricket

#### Bangladesh Tour of Sri Lanka



#### July 2, 2025

1st ODI

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 2.30pm

#### July 5, 2025

2nd ODI

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 2.30pm

#### July 8, 2025

3rd ODI

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 2.30pm

#### July 10, 2025

1st T20

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 7.30pm

#### July 13, 2025

2nd T20

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 7.30pm

#### July 16, 2025

3rd T20

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 7.30pm



# The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

## Art and Music

### Art

Till July 7

#### Depths of Silence

Manaram Gamage presents his solo exhibition. Depths of Silence is a sustained inquiry into the solitary human figure—explored not as an idealised subject, but as a vessel shaped and moulded by lived experiences. Through a deeply intuitive sculptural practice that blurs the boundaries between figuration and abstraction, Gamage harnesses the raw resistance of materials, such as resin and cement, to give form to intangible emotional states.

Paradise Road Saskia Fernando Gallery.



July 26 and 27

#### Fairway Colombo Art and Jazz on the Street

Every last weekend of the month, Fairway Colombo hosts Art and Jazz. Enjoy live jazz music with stunning local art displayed along Hospital Street.

Fairway Colombo. Time: 10am onwards.



Till July 17

#### Freedom Search

Sarath Gunatill Perera's exhibition is a continuation of the artist's exploration into the emotional terrain shaped by conflict, displacement, and personal reckoning. Through vibrant abstraction and layered fragmentation, the works on display evoke a sense of rupture and renewal.

Paradise Road Gallery



July 1–August 31

#### Lake Diyawanna

The Bayleaf Art

Gallery features

Susil Senanayake's

Lake Diyawanna.

Curated by Sadev

Wittachy.

The Bayleaf Art Gallery



Till July 20

#### Served to you with a dash of lime

A group show bringing together artists from Sri Lanka and the diaspora, with the intention of disarming and delighting. Using humour as a way to reflect on the serious issues of our time, the exhibition is a playful yet thoughtful invitation to look at the world a little differently. The presentation will include works by Muvindu Bindi, Hashan Cooray, Arjuna Gunaratne, Kawishara Jayasekara, Mayun Kaluthantri, Mahesha Kariyapperuma, Sangeeth Madurawala, Murugiah, Anupa Perera, Gayan Prageeth, Firi Rahman, Mika Tennakoon and Pradeep Thalawatta.

Paradise Road Saskia Fernando Gallery



Till August 17

#### Cinnamon Life Artist Spotlight:

##### Firi Rahman

PRSG in collaboration with Cinnamon Life, presents Artist Spotlight featuring Firi Rahman. The presentation showcases pieces from his most recent solo exhibition, Swept Away Like Leaves, along with a series of new works. Firi Rahman's work documents the contentious relationship between mankind and the natural realm, examining the interactions of the urban environment and the creatures that inhabit it.

Level 23, Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams



### Music

July 9

#### Hadawataka Geethaya

Ranjith Premawera's collection of music of Amarasinghe Peris, Sashika Nisansala, Raween Kanishka, Thanura Madugeeth, Himasha Manupriya, Apoorwa Ashawari, Sashika Madushani, Janani Peris, Roshani Kahadawala, and Disha Amarathunga.

Venue: Bishops College Auditorium. Time: 7pm. Tickets: Rs. 10,000, Rs. 7,500, Rs. 5,000, Rs. 3,000, Rs. 2,500



July 26

#### Romantic Masterworks

Featuring Conductor: Dushyanthi Perera and Soloist: Dhiren Fernando (Piano) in a delightful evening of music.

Venue: Lionel Wendt Theatre. Time: 7pm. Tickets: Rs. 10,000, Rs. 7,500, Rs. 6,500, Rs. 5,000, Rs. 4,000, Rs. 2,000



August 11

#### CMSC presents Cello and Piano Recital by

##### Avishka Edirisinghe and Danushka Edirisinghe

The Chamber Music Society of Colombo (CMSC) presents Avishka and Danushka Edirisinghe, two wonderful young professional musicians from London who will be making their long overdue Colombo debut as a piano-cello duo.

Venue: Goethe-Institute Hall. Time: 7.30pm. Tickets: Rs. 2,500



# The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

## Drama and Theatre

July 5

**Lawrence Manamali**

A comical script by Hemantha Prasad and directed by Sujeeva Priyal. Venue: Nani Mahini Punchi Theater, Borella. Time: 3.30pm, 6.45pm.



July 5

**Nani Bena samaga jasaya saha lanchima**

One of the greatest stage play written and directed by Dayananda Gunawardena. Venue: Elphinstone Theater, Colombo 10. Time: 3.30pm, 6.45pm



July 5

**Sokari**

'Sokari' is a new version of an old Sri Lankan folk drama that has been adapted from the rural traditions of Shanikarmas, performed to the goddess Paththini to seek fertility and prosperity. Venue: Elphinstone Theater, Colombo 10. Time: 3.30pm. Tickets: Rs.3,000, Rs.2,500, Rs.2,000



July 6

**Pandora**

Written and directed by Mihira Sirithiaka, this play will keep its audience engaged and amused. Venue: Nani Mahini Punchi Theater, Borella. Time: 3.30pm, 6.45pm.



July 11

**Sadaya Maaral Salli Hamaral**

Directed by Dharmapriya Dias, the Sinhala adaptation of Ray Cooney's Funny Money revolves around a Sri Lankan couple living in England for the past 30 years. Venue: Lionel Wendt Theater, Colombo 7. Time: 7pm. Tickets: Rs.4,000, Rs.3,500, Rs.2,500, Rs.2,000, Rs.1,500



July 19

**Sinhabahu**

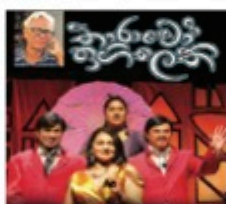
A renowned play by the celebrated dramatist Prof Ediriweera Sarachchandra, Sinhabahu is based on the legend of King Sinhabahu, the son of a lion and a royal princess—Suppa Devi. Venue: Elphinstone Theater, Colombo 10. Time: 3.30pm. Tickets: Rs.3,000, Rs.2,500, Rs.2,000



July 26

**Tharawa Igithehi**

A Sinhalese stage drama by Lucien Bulathsinghala, based on the story of the twin brothers in Singapore. Venue: Elphinstone Theater, Colombo 10. Time: 3.30pm, 6.45pm.



July 27

**Sihina Rangahala**

Comprising five short dramas, written and directed by Dananjaya Karunaratne. Venue: Elphinstone Theater, Colombo 10. Time: 3.30pm, 6.45pm



## Festivals

Till July 10

**Annual Festival of Kataragama Devalaya**

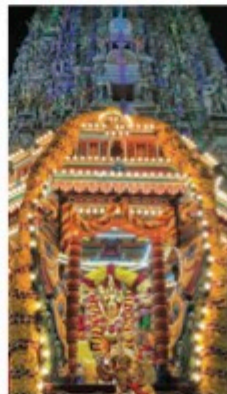
The annual festival of the Kataragama Devalaya is celebrated with great grandeur, drawing devotees who eagerly participate in numerous religious rituals throughout the festival period. It reaches its apex with the Maha Perahera on July 10, coinciding with the full moon poya day. The festivities conclude with the remarkable 'diya kapeema' or water-cutting ceremony on 11, held along the banks of the Menik Ganga.



July 7

**Aadi Vel**

The grand, elaborate chariot procession begins from Samangodu Sri Kathirvelayutha Swamy Kovil, Pettah, and takes place along the Galle Road in Colombo, ending at Sri Manika Vinayagar Kovil, Bambalapitiya.



July 29 – August 24

**Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil Festival, Jaffna**

The Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil festival is one of the longest-running festivals and begins on July 29, concluding on August 24. During this period, magnificent chariots are showcased alongside cultural performances and rituals. Devotees gather in large crowds to seek blessings throughout the festival.



July 30 – August 9

**Kandy Esala Perahera**

The Kandy Esala Perahera, also known as the Dalada Perahera, is a magnificent festival in Kandy that captivates all who witness it. The Kandy Esala Perahera Casket, revered as a living embodiment of Lord Buddha, parades through the streets, drawing admiration from both spectators and participating elephants. Recognized as one of the oldest cultural celebrations in the world, this vibrant event showcases unparalleled grandeur and cultural richness, offering an extraordinary, truly unforgettable experience.

July 30: 1st Kumbal Perahera

July 31: 2nd Kumbal Perahera

August 1: 3rd Kumbal Perahera

August 2: 4th Kumbal Perahera

August 3: 5th Kumbal Perahera

August 4: 1st Randoli Perahera

August 5: 2nd Randoli Perahera

August 6: 3rd Randoli Perahera

August 7: 4th Randoli Perahera

August 8: Final Randoli Perahera (The Grand Randoli Procession)

August 9: Diya Kapeema (The water cutting ceremony) and Dahawal Perahera (Day procession)





## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

The annual celebration of Lord Murugan at the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple in Jaffna is more than a religious event — it is a living cultural epic, a month-long spectacle of devotion, tradition, and sensory richness. Held this year from July 28 to August 24, 2025 the festival transforms the temple grounds and surrounding streets into a vibrant tapestry of faith and fervor.

**Words** Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.

**Photography** Varnan Sivanesan and Ingaran Sivashanthan.



This is not a festival of moderation. It is an overabundance — of color, sound, scent, and spirit. Towering chariots, intricately adorned, are pulled through the streets by throngs of bare-bodied men. Pilgrims flood the precincts in a tidal wave of saffron, gold, and white. The air pulses with the chant of “Haro Hara,” drums echo, and rituals unfold with piety and spirit.

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

Daily celebrations mark a new spiritual theme in honor of Murugan, also known as Shanmuga, Karthikeya, Skanda, and Kataragama Deviyo in the island's south. The deity's power is so profound that this northern celebration parallels the famed Kataragama festival in the south, connecting two geographically distant traditions through a shared divine thread.

The Nallur festival is Sri Lanka's longest religious celebration, drawing thousands of devotees from across the island, India, and the Tamil diaspora around the globe. It is a spiritual homecoming, a reunion of families, and a rediscovery of identity.

It is a festival of profound devotion — evident in its most striking acts: bodies pierced with skewers, devotees rolling along the temple floor, and countless coconuts shattered in prayer.

Equally captivating is the celebratory atmosphere that blooms around the sacred. Streets overflow with Jaffna cuisine, laughter, and community spirit. It is a festival of extravagance. Every gesture and display is a tribute to a god who is a warrior and protector.

The grand Mahotsavam — the great festival in honor of Lord Murugan — begins with the Kodietram, the ceremonial flag hoisting. This ritual, rich in symbolism and continuity, is made even more meaningful by the centuries-old tradition upheld by the Sengunthar Mudaliyar weaver lineage. To this day, the sacred cloth is handwoven by descendants of this family and brought to the temple in a ceremonial procession on a chariot from the weavers' home.

The flag is lifted into the sky, accompanied by “Haro Hara” chants and a cascade of fresh flowers from the gathered devotees. Murugan's divine spear — the Vel — is ceremoniously placed upon a peacock chariot, followed by representations of his two consorts, Valli and Theivanai. At the same time, his brother Ganesha is carried on a silver rat chariot. The vibrant hue of auspicious red adorns every detail — from priestly robes to temple garlands — heralding the beginning of a sacred season.

The Nallur festival is Sri Lanka's longest religious celebration, drawing thousands of devotees from across the island, India, and the Tamil diaspora around the globe. It is a spiritual homecoming, a reunion of families, and a rediscovery of identity.

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



As Lord Murugan emerges from the inner sanctum, a vibrant shower of flower confetti from the devotees greets him in celebration.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



Devotees break coconuts in a powerful ritual of devotion.

This flag-hoisting marks the official start of a nearly month-long spiritual journey. The following ten days are filled with intense religious observances — sacred rituals, daily Abhishekam (the ritual bathing of the deity with water or milk for purification), Yagam (fire offerings), and special Poojas, each deepening the people's connection to the divine.

Each day brings a fresh outpouring of devotion, first within the temple's inner sanctum and then in exuberant processions that spill into the surrounding streets. The deity, flanked by his consorts, is paraded through the crowds on an ever-changing series of sacred mounts, or Vahana — the peacock, bull, horse, swan, and cobra — each mount reflecting a unique facet of Murugan's divine nature.

One of the key highlights of the festival is Manjam, held on the tenth evening. During this sacred procession, Murugan, in his Muththukumaraswamy form, is taken out of the temple in a majestic, brightly lit chariot, accompanied by his consorts Valli and Theivanai. The term Manjam means bed in Tamil, and true to its name, the chariot moves slowly and gracefully around the temple. Men walk to the left, women to the right, as devotees join in silent reverence. Unlike other processions, this grand chariot— depicting vivid scenes from the

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

Puranam stories—is too heavy to be carried and is instead pulled with devotion by worshippers.



As the nadaswaram echoes, the Kailasa Vimanam in the background.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



During the Manjam festival, Lord Murugan and his consorts are carried in a solemn procession.

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



Lord Murugan, along with his two consorts, Valli and Theyvanai, is carried atop a five-headed cobra-shaped Vahanam.

The Arunagirinathar Uthsavam, on the seventeenth day, brings to life the story of the Tamil Saiva poet Arunagirinathar, who, according to legend, transformed into a parrot to fulfill his sacred mission of composing hymns to Murugan. On the eighteenth day, the Karththigai Uthsavam features Murugan riding a grand chariot divided into three compartments—the central one for the deity himself, flanked by his two consorts. The following morning, the Soorya Uthsavam honors the Sun God with a chariot drawn by seven horses. On day twenty, the Santhanagopalar Uthsavam celebrates Vishnu's infant avatar, Baby Krishna, depicted sucking his toes and seated on a chariot shaped like a five-headed cobra. The day concludes with the breathtaking Kailasa Vimanam Festival— an evening procession featuring a magnificent chariot representing Mount Kailasa, the sacred Himalayan home of Shiva and his family.

On the twenty-first day, Kajavalli Mahavalli honors the fierce goddess, Durga, while the Vel Vimanam showcases Murugan riding a radiant golden chariot drawn by golden horses. The following day's Thandayuthapani Uthsavam, known as the Mango Festival, reenacts the tale

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

of Murugan's famed race with his brother Ganesha. After losing, he retreats to Palani Hill as a sadhu, clad simply in a loincloth and bearing his Vel. That evening, the Orumuga Thiruvila depicts Murugan's hunt, riding a horse-drawn chariot, with priests carrying weapons instead of traditional pooja items, adding a striking intensity to the ritual.

On the twenty-third day, Murugan is paraded around the temple on the towering Sapparam—one of the tallest mobile structures in the country. This temporary, illuminated flat chariot is a festival highlight, its immense size matched only by the devoted throng pulling it.

The twenty-fourth day features the grand Ther Thiruvila, the Chariot Festival, where thousands chant and draw Murugan's colossal six-headed, twelve-armed image through the streets. Drums, Nadaswaram, and temple bells blend into a powerful symphony of devotion. Devotees roll on the ground in acts of physical mortification while Murugan sits resplendent, showered by a cascade of flower confetti.

On the twenty-fifth day, the Theertham—a sacred ritual bath—cleanses Murugan's image in the temple tank. That evening, the head priest ceremoniously lowers the flag (Kodiyerakkam) and returns it to the Sengunthar Mudaliyar family, marking the festival's close.

Yet the celebrations continue on the twenty-sixth day with Poongavanam, the playful and heartwarming re-enactment of Murugan's marriage to Valli. Sung in joyful conversation, the legend depicts Theivanai, Murugan's first spouse, locking the newlyweds out of the sanctum, sparking a divine family drama filled with love and forgiveness.

The festival concludes as Murugan's image returns to the inner sanctum—resting until the following year's emergence.

The Nallur Kandaswamy Festival is a vessel of continuity—it carries forward centuries-old customs, preserves oral histories and affirms a collective cultural memory. It reminds us that in devotion, there is both beauty and belonging—a shared reverence that transcends time, geography, and generations.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



The tall and impressive sapparam is beautifully adorned with decorations.

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



Lord Murugan, the six-faced, twelve-armed warrior, symbolizes strength and is celebrated during the Ther Thiruvila, or Chariot Festival.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



The Nallur Kandaswamy Temple is an iconic destination for the celebration of Kanda Sashti. The event reaches its peak on the final day with Soorasamharam, a moment that draws countless devotees. This photo was taken in December 2024.

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



Devotees united in devotion surround the Vel Vimanam, featuring lord Murugan on a radiant golden chariot pulled by golden horses.

Ishq Colombo is more than a tale of architecture and design — it's a relaxed, indulgent home away from home, offering privacy and seclusion just steps from the bustling street beyond.

**Words** Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



Some of the most beautiful places are hidden in plain sight, revealing themselves slowly—each space a thoughtful composition of a designer’s vision and a patron’s passion. Ishq Colombo is enchanting in precisely that way. Tucked into one of Colombo’s most refined suburbs, its modest façade gives little away. A long cobbled path leads to this artistic sanctuary—once a private family residence, now a boutique hotel— where every detail reflects the creative sensibility of its owner and the architectural finesse of Channa Daswatta. Echoes of Geoffrey Bawa resonate through the villa’s courtyards and verandahs, where open-plan spaces embrace natural light, cross-ventilation, and passive cooling. Verdant views and seamless indoor-outdoor transitions create a tranquil retreat that feels worlds apart. With its understated design and quiet luxury, Ishq Colombo is a masterclass in elegance and restraint.

The L-shaped residence seamlessly blurs the boundaries between indoors and out. Designed with an open floor plan, the home invites nature in, creating a harmonious flow between its interior spaces and the surrounding environment. The often-used phrase oasis in the city

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

finds its true meaning at Ishq Colombo, where there is no hidden “back-of-house”—every corner of the property is designed to be part of a unified whole, built around a central courtyard that serves as its heart.

This courtyard becomes the villa’s focal point, anchoring an expansive open sitting area—a long hall evocative of the grand audience chambers of Sri Lanka’s Kandyan Kingdom. Flanked by a serene swimming pool on one side and the courtyard on the other, the space is framed by stately timber pillars and a rich timber ceiling that lend it warmth and solemnness. The owners intentionally used kabok—a natural, unburnt earth material—for its authenticity and environmental sensitivity. Timber accents enhance the villa’s charm, from the floors and structural details to an upper level lined with louvered timber windows, where antique and contemporary furnishings live in elegant harmony.

The interior décor truly brings Ishq Colombo to life. Carefully curated by its owners, every corner tells a story through an eclectic mix of collectibles, curios, and refined furnishings that reflect the spirit on which this sanctuary was created. Rich with personality, the interiors embrace Moroccan artistry and craftsmanship, showcasing deep-rooted cultural traditions and an appreciation for the handmade.

A love for carpets is unmistakable—vibrant tapestries and handwoven rugs infuse each space with warmth and texture. No two are alike, yet all share a quiet elegance that adapts effortlessly, whether under a coffee table, in a lounge corner, in a suite, or anchoring a formal drawing room. Lampshades—each thoughtfully chosen—add intimacy and charm. At the same time, elements of Sufism appear in subtle yet powerful ways, from the imposing pillars to evocative paintings and wall hangings, merging artistic expression with spiritual depth.

The villa’s courtyards are sanctuaries—where privacy and serenity intertwine. Designed to shield against the outside world, the villa exudes a rare stillness; its architecture absorbs and softens external sound, enhancing the atmosphere of peace. Above the courtyard, a lush roof terrace connects to the three upper suites—two Master bedrooms and a Corner Suite—each with its own private escape nestled in greenery. These terraces invite solitude, shaded reading, or simply sipping warm Ceylon tea beneath the sun-dappled foliage.

Verdant views and seamless indoor-outdoor transitions create a tranquil retreat that feels worlds apart. With its understated design and quiet luxury, Ishq Colombo is a masterclass in elegance and restraint.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



A tranquil courtyard bathed in gentle sunlight, exuding serenity and peace.



Timeless design. Curated detail. Ishq Colombo is where architecture becomes art.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



The Lounge on the upper floor and the open hall on the ground floor showcase design, detail, and a luxurious use of space.

The suites are airy and expansive, continuing the villa's open concept and filled with natural light. The guest pool suite on the ground floor opens directly to the tranquil pool. Every suite is fitted with modern comforts and luxurious bath amenities, yet each remains distinct—furnished with individual flair, personal book collections, and a style that's both tropical and deeply comforting.

With no defined back-of-house, Ishq Colombo invites guests to feel completely at ease—free to wander through its serene spaces, linger in the pantry, watch the chef craft a fragrant dhal curry, or sink into a book in the quiet of the library or one of the villa's tranquil courtyards. This open, unpretentious spirit defines the way Ishq is run: a place where hospitality flows effortlessly, every amenity is close at hand, and every meal is just a thoughtful request away.

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

At Ishq, service comes straight from the heart. It is deeply personal—rooted in the fact that Ishq is more than a hotel; it is also home to the team that lovingly runs it. Their pride in what they offer is palpable, and it shows in the warmth and authenticity extended to every guest. The goal isn't just comfort but connection—to offer a taste of Sri Lankan culture wrapped in the embrace of a home where service is sincere and deeply felt.

The villa also features a beautifully intimate private dining room for fourteen, available for small gatherings or private events. In-house guests and visitors can indulge in English High Tea or choose from curated Sri Lankan delicacies. The culinary experience is a highlight—thanks to a skilled team of chefs, guests can savor everything from traditional home-style cuisine to indulgent seafood platters and perfectly grilled steaks.

What makes Ishq especially unique is the unobtrusive nature of its service. Staff are always present and attentive, yet never intrusive, respecting the peaceful, private atmosphere that defines the villa. Ishq Colombo is for those who value true seclusion, quiet luxury, and the feeling of being gently enveloped in comfort, far removed from the rush of the outside world.

“The ethos behind Ishq is to run it as a home,” says Isabel Jamaldeen, Head of Villas. To her and her team, Ishq Colombo is far more than a boutique hotel—a living space designed to make guests feel instantly at ease, embraced, and connected. It's about creating a sense of belonging within a two-story haven that gracefully revolves around a tranquil central courtyard, where hospitality is heartfelt and togetherness is woven into every detail.

This harmony mirrors the spirit of Colombo itself—Sri Lanka's dynamic capital, rich in layers of history shaped by kings, colonists, merchants, and migrants.

At Ishq, service comes straight from the heart. It is deeply personal—rooted in the fact that Ishq is more than a hotel; it is also home to the team that lovingly runs it.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



Master Suite 1.



Master Suite 2.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



A radiant inner courtyard, illuminated by the warm embrace of natural light.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

Golden light blending with tranquility as you relax in a jacuzzi—your oasis in nature's beauty



The library is a cozy corner to relax with a book and a cup of tea.

A city that pulses with the vibrancy of tradition and the rhythm of modern life, Colombo is a melting pot of culture, cuisine, and community. It tells the story of a nation through its bustling streets, colonial relics, vibrant markets, and the daily lives of its multi-ethnic, multi-religious inhabitants. To experience Colombo is to understand the island's soul.

Ishq Colombo captures this essence while offering curated experiences beyond the ordinary. Guests are invited to explore the city's landmarks and markets, indulge in tea tastings and food pairings, unwind with a yoga session, or visit the spa. Situated just minutes from Colombo's top attractions, Ishq is an ideal sanctuary for those wanting to immerse themselves in the city's many layers without sacrificing peace and privacy.

And for a truly local experience? Hop into a tuk-tuk—the island's most iconic mode of



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

transport. It's fast, fun, and guaranteed to reveal hidden corners of the city you might otherwise miss. At Ishq Colombo, you don't just stay in the city— you feel, taste, and carry it with you.

*Ishq Colombo*

*17/2 Alfred Place, Colombo 3*

+94 761 671 676

*reservations@ishqvillas.com*

*ishqvillas.com/ishq-colombo/*



A private dining room for fourteen. Designed for unforgettable gatherings.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



The Guest Pool Suite offers a perfect blend of poolside views and refined comfort.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

A serene escape – the garden terrace at Ishq Colombo



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past





## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

The striking yellow Ehela blooms beautifully.

Esala flowers bloom in July (Esala māsaya in Sinhala), while Erabadu flowers bloom in April (Bak māsaya in Sinhala), blessing each month in a similar manner.

Both months have been named after relevant flowers. The biological name for Esala, Ahala, or Ehela is *Cassia fistula*, which is known for its striking, clear yellow color and typically features four or five flower petals, stamens, and carpels. A single bunch may contain between five and fifteen flowers. However, I am not sure about its fragrance.

If we look at the Wikipedia article on the Esala flower, we can find valuable information. *Cassia fistula*, also known as the golden shower, *purging cassia*, *Indian laburnum*, *kani konna*, or pudding-pipe tree, is a flowering plant in the *Fabaceae* family. This species is native to the Indian subcontinent and adjacent regions of Southeast Asia. It is recognized as the official state flower of Kerala and the National Capital Territory of Delhi in India, as well as Thailand's national tree and flower. Additionally, it is a popular ornamental plant used in herbal medicine.

Wikipedia lists various names for the flower in different languages. In Hindi, it is called Amaltas; in Sanskrit, Aragvadha; in Tamil, Konrai; in Urdu, Amaltas; and in Sinhalese, it is referred to as Ehela, which is also spelled Esala (weye< fyda wei<).

On the other hand, if we view this subject from a religious perspective, we can identify many events associated with it. In Kerala, India, these flowers are traditionally used during the Vishu festival, and some people even incorporate them into their meals. Additionally, the leaves are commonly used to supplement the diets of cattle, sheep, and goats that are fed low-quality forages.

In Laos, the flowers, known locally as 'dok khoun,' are linked to the Lao New Year. People use these flowers as offerings at temples and hang them in their homes during the New Year, believing that they will bring happiness and good luck.

In Sri Lanka, the Esala tree is cultivated in Buddhist temples, where it is referred to by its Sinhala name, Ehela. It is also widely considered the provincial tree of the North Central Province in Sri Lanka.

This strong and durable tree has been used as a pillar called 'Ehela Kanuwa' along the path to the top of Siri Pāda (a sacred mountain in Sri Lanka). That's why it is mentioned in an old Sinhala song that, 'Ehela Kanuwa langa newatī piruwata Endalā'. So, how does this sweet

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

song start?

“Munī nandana Siri Pāda vandim Samanala kandē vihidenā mōha sugandē... Ehela Kanuwa langa nevatī piruwata andalā. Ahas Gawwa pasukaramin sādu kiyālā...” – (Here, ‘Ehela Kanuwa langa nevatī piruwata andalā’ ... means, before one reached to Ahas gawwa, he has to wear white clothes at the ‘Ehela Kanuwa or Ehela pillar.’)

Today, we observe Esala as a religious festival, known as the “rainy season retreat ceremony” or the Vas observance ceremony. In July, Esala flowers bloom abundantly, especially in rural areas of Sri Lanka.

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



Listen to the full song - 'Muni Nandana Siripada Wadim' - Wasantha Sandanayaka', (sung by Greta Janet de Silva & party, copy: U.D. Perera.)

In addition to its religious and social significance, the Ehela tree also has medical value.

In Ayurvedic medicine, the golden shower tree, known as Ehela, is referred to as 'aragvadha,' which translates to 'disease killer.' According to Wikipedia, "The fruit pulp is considered a purgative," and it is strongly advised against using it without medical



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

supervision, as stated in Ayurvedic texts. Although it has been utilized in herbalism for thousands of years, there has been little research conducted in modern times. Nevertheless, it is an ingredient found in some commercially produced herbal laxatives.

The term “Esala” is very ancient, and numerous Esala festivals were celebrated in ancient India, with the participation of kings, ministers, and the common people, as recorded in Indian history.

Today, we observe Esala as a religious festival, known as the “rainy season retreat ceremony” or the Vas observation ceremony. In July, Esala flowers bloom abundantly, especially in rural areas of Sri Lanka.

These flowers serve as an additional decoration for the Vas observation ceremony, which Buddhist monks worldwide celebrate in a serene atmosphere during the rainy season.

As the Buddha completed the first sermon at Isipathana, in India, the rainy season began. Regardless of the discomfort in the rainy season, He continued the work on the Dhamma preaching. A few years later, when the Buddhist monks began to grow, He declared that all Bhikkhus should practice the rainy retreat or observe Vassa for this reason. This practice coincided with the monsoon in North India. So, it was a period when the monks ceased traveling to teach the Dhamma. However, while indoors, the monks continue to practice, preach Dhamma, and teach meditation to people in all communities. It is crucial for all communities to focus on developing their own spirituality during this important period. Especially today, it is said that most of young people live with inconvenience or dissatisfaction. Because, they aren't used to looking into their mind or their annoying thoughts, they face many unfortunate troubles, even as social troubles, and suicides.

To lead a fulfilling life, individuals can engage in psychological Dharma practice and meditation during this season.

The laypeople who generously support the needs of the monks during this period of seclusion do so with great dedication. However, there is no strict requirement for the laity to invite monks to observe the Vas retreat. Regardless of whether they are invited, monks have been observing Vas since ancient times. The rain-retreat tradition is a voluntary practice for the monks. Whether or not the monks receive an invitation, the act is performed by a Buddhist monk and is done in solitude. The Vas period is relatively short, lasting only three months. Following this period, there is the Cheewara month, or Robe Offering month, for monks who observe the Vas continuously, in accordance with the rules of Vas observation. This Robe Offering ceremony is known as the Kathina ceremony, which is

## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

considered to be more auspicious than other religious ceremonies.

As a result, many devotees take great joy in participating in the Vas or Kathina ceremony, which occurs at only one temple once a year during this month. The rainy season is essential for religious practices and agriculture; without rain, rice fields and water reservoirs would dry up. Ultimately, the rainy season is crucial for both the environment and the well-being of humanity.

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## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



Screenshot

Ven Diyapattugama Revatha Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Siriwardhanaramaya Temple, Kollupitiya.

Each step of the Kataragama Pada Yatra retraces an ancient legend, echoing devotion. This annual foot pilgrimage weaves together thousands in a timeless procession to Sri Lanka's most sacred shrine, honoring the island's revered guardian deity—Skanda, known to devotees as Kataragama Deviyo.

**Words** Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.

**Photography** Yakaduru Yala.



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Pada Yatra, or “journey by foot,” transcends mere physical traveling; it embodies a profound experience that touches both the spirit and the soul.

In god’s country, spirituality is not just a belief but a way of life. Woven deeply into the island’s cultural psyche, faith informs daily rituals, decisions, and dreams. For centuries, pilgrimages and foot journeys in honor of deities have served as expressions of devotion and acts of penance. The Kataragama Pada Yatra is a profound testament to unwavering belief and spiritual endurance.

Beginning in Jaffna in May, this sacred foot pilgrimage snakes along Sri Lanka’s eastern coast, nearly four hundred kilometers, traversing ancient villages, dense wildlife reserves like Kumana and Yala, and sunbaked trails until it reaches Kataragama in time for the vibrant annual festival in July. Pilgrims—saffron-robed sadhus, local villagers, and seekers from afar—walk for months under open skies, sleeping in the wild, sustained only by faith and the generosity of strangers.

Kataragama is no ordinary destination. It is hallowed ground, a place sanctified by centuries of belief in Skanda—also known as Kataragama Deviyo—the island’s warrior deity and divine guardian. The legend of Skanda—his arrival in the southern jungles, his battles, love, and divine mission—imbues the forest shrine with a magnetic spiritual pull.

Pada Yatra, “journey by foot,” is more than just a physical trek. It is an act of surrender, a re-enactment of myth, and a search for redemption. It is believed that this pilgrimage predates the arrival of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity in Sri Lanka, rooted instead in the traditions of the island’s indigenous Vedda people. It is a re-enactment of the Kataragama legend. What is the Kataragama legend?

Valli, the beloved of Skanda, was the reason the god of war forsook Mount Kailasa, the celestial abode of the gods, for the remote jungles of southeastern Sri Lanka. Born of a sacred union between a hermit sage and a doe, Valli was discovered as an infant nestled among yam creepers in the forest—hence her name, Valli Amma, “child of the wild creepers.” A Veddha chieftain chanced upon the girl during a hunt and, moved by her grace and the aura of her mystic parentage, brought her home. He and his wife, who were childless, raised her as their own.

As Valli blossomed into a maiden of extraordinary beauty and virtue, her presence drew the attention of celestial beings. Narada, the wandering sage and divine messenger, encountered her in the forests of Kataragama and was captivated by her radiance. Upon

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returning to Kailasa, he recounted the tale of the forest maiden to Skanda. Seized by a burning desire, Skanda descended from the heavens, searching for Valli.

Steeped in the rich symbolism of the Skanda legend, the Kataragama Pada Yatra is a sacred enactment of devotion. It begins at the island's northern tip—culminating just in time for the grand Kataragama festival.



Clad in vibrant saffron robes, devoted pilgrims embark on a transformative journey, ignited



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by faith and purpose.



After a series of divine adventures and trials—each reflecting the intensity of his love—Skanda won her heart and made her his consort. Together, they made their home on one of the sacred hills that cradle Kataragama.

Thus, steeped in the rich symbolism of the Skanda legend, the Kataragama Pada Yatra is a sacred enactment of devotion. It begins at the island's northern tip—culminating just in time for the grand Kataragama festival. As the first pilgrims set out, they are cheered on by onlookers, marking the beginning of a path that is as treacherous as sacred. The Pada Yatra moves along the eastern coastline. Every group of pilgrims carries the Vel, the lance of Kataragama Deviyo, a symbol of divine power.

The visual poetry of the Yatra is striking. Clad in brilliant saffron—the color of sacrifice and renunciation—swamis and sadhus lead the way. Some wear only a saffron cloth around their waists; others bear wild, matted hair and ash-smeared bodies. They march on with peacock feathers symbolizing the deity's mount, bundles of belongings, and the ever-present Vel. Ordinary devotees, too, may don a touch of saffron, joining the vibrant procession with reverence in their eyes.

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Devotees of all ages walk for many days under open skies.



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Through forest and faith, the path to Kataragama winds on.



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At the end of a day's walk, pilgrims gather, bound by purpose and devotion.



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They walk at least ten kilometers daily, pausing at sacred sites to rest, pray, and enjoy the warmth of local villagers.

To walk the Pada Yatra is to embrace self-denial. Pilgrims carry only the bare essentials, embodying a life of renunciation—wandering recluses dependent on alms and the kindness of strangers. Along the route, entire villages await the pilgrims' arrival. They greet them as servants of Skanda, offering food and blessings and joining in the resonant chorus of Haro Hara—a cry of devotion that unites the giver and receiver in shared reverence.

In this ancient walk of faith, barefoot pilgrims endure blistering heat, torrential rain, thirst,

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hunger, illness, and the unpredictable perils of the wild. They rest beneath trees, in temples and roadside shrines, keeping close company with fellow seekers.

Traveling in groups by night, the route comes alive with the glow of flickering campfires, the buzz of shared meals, rhythmic chants of praise, and the elders' teachings – among them are poets and storytellers, singers and dancers, musicians and mystics—each contributing their gifts to the soul of the pilgrimage.

On foot, they walk at least ten kilometers a day, stopping at seventy-three traditional places of worship to rest, pray, and receive alms from villagers. The journey continues downward along the coast before turning inland, where the test begins—an arduous crossing of nearly a hundred kilometers of jungle. This final stretch leads through the wild heart of the island, where elephants, leopards, and other creatures roam free. Earlier days, this pilgrimage segment was shrouded in danger and myth—stories of pilgrims lost to illness, beasts, or the dense, unforgiving wilderness.

Like all things, the Pada Yatra has evolved with time. As villages modernize and roads become more accessible, today's route is better equipped. Volunteer groups line the path, offering support, and even vehicles now follow, distributing alms to pilgrims. While such changes mark a departure from the raw asceticism of tradition, they are still acts of reverence—tributes to a god who has captured the collective imagination of an island. His story pulses through this pilgrimage, through every chant of Haro Hara, every dust-covered step, and every offering placed in the hands of a weary walker. The Pada Yatra remains a walk of wonder—where the sacred and the everyday merge in a journey that transforms those who dare to take it.

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Stage 20 may not glitter with landmarks, but it holds quiet splendors in nature and history, the essence and magnificence of Sri Lanka.



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**Words** Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.

**Photography** Pekoe Trail Organization.



The trek takes travelers through serene mountainsides, offering many sights to discover along the way.

Stage 20 of the Pekoe Trail begins in the small and spirited town of Lunuwatte. The bustle of daily life, a medley of tiny shops and local chatter, fades quickly behind as the trail turns— the urban hum gives way to paddy fields. Here, the essence of an ancient Sinhala village reveals itself, where generations have lived with the land.

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The trail sets off at an elevation of 1,000 meters and steadily climbs to 1,600 meters over the first nine kilometers—a challenging stretch, no doubt. This ascent takes you up the slopes of Isthripura Mountain, a place steeped in legend and local lore, lending a layer of mystery and historical intrigue to an otherwise serene walk.

As it approaches Udapussellawa, the trail gently descends to around 1,280 meters. The descent is a welcome change, though the sunlit trail—often exposed and dry—demands resilience. The terrain shifts through eucalyptus forests, casting long shadows and releasing a sharp, cleansing scent into the air.

The village of Dodampagala marks the Stage's physically demanding phase. Beginning at 1.5 kilometers, the trail becomes a vertical challenge—a path that seems to test both endurance and will. At the 2.5-kilometer point, a summit, the view, and the sense of accomplishment make it all worthwhile.

At the three-kilometer mark, the trail takes a dramatic turn, leading into the hushed, sun-drenched depths of a eucalyptus forest. From this point onward, the forest becomes a defining feature of the journey, stretching across a significant portion of the trail in a haunting, bone-dry expanse. At an elevation of 1,295 meters, the trail begins its climb—gaining nearly 150 meters more—towards the historical Isthripura cave.

The eucalyptus forest is otherworldly. Arid and stark, it mirrors the parched vastness of the Australian outback, though nestled in Sri Lanka's mountainous Uva Province. There is an eerie stillness here—a silence broken only by the occasional creak of dry bark or the crunch of boots on brittle undergrowth. The dryness is not incidental. These thirsty trees, introduced decades ago to stabilize the cleared slopes, are infamous for their insatiable water consumption, slowly draining the land of life and leaving the forest floor cracked, bare, and starved of biodiversity.

As the trail winds through this austere terrain, it clings to the eastern flank of the forested hill. The incline is demanding—its surface is fragmented by tree roots, narrow ledges, and sudden drops that fall steeply to one side. Where water once trickled through hidden channels, only deep, empty gullies remain. Walkers must move carefully; the path is choppy and often sloping, requiring constant attention underfoot.

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August is the ideal month to attempt this section. Water sources are rare at this time, so carrying a generous supply is essential; unlike in other stages of the trail, there are no gurgling streams or forest springs to be found here.

Through this sunburnt corridor, glimpses of green do appear: tea gardens unfurl across adjoining slopes, a soft contrast to the towering columns of eucalyptus.

At 4.5 kilometers, deep within the eucalyptus forest and hidden from plain sight, lies a mysterious—and mythical— landmark: the Isthripura cave. Whether born of history or legend, its story adds an unforgettable layer to this otherwise quiet stretch of the trail. Unlike many so-called “caves,” which are little more than shallow rock shelters, Isthripura is a genuine underground formation—narrow, deep, and twisting with interconnected passageways. Local lore claims this was one of the secret chambers where the demon king Ravana hid Sita after her abduction from India. A city of women— Isthripura—its name alone stirs the imagination. Some believe it once formed part of a vast network of tunnels leading to places of Ravana’s mythical kingdom.

Stage 20 holds a quiet yet remarkable distinction—it straddles the border between two provinces, Central and Uva, by the subtlest of margins. Just a few inches separate these two regions of Sri Lanka...



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Grace in bloom - the lotus pond shines beautifully along paddy fields at the beginning of Stage 20.

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A sunlit path through highland beauty.

Legend also ties the cave to a real historical figure: King Walagamba. According to tales passed down through generations, he concealed 500 of his consorts within this cavernous network— an image as fascinating as it is implausible, given the cave's low ceilings and constricting passages. To move within it demands a bent posture, steely nerve, and a tolerance for discomfort, making it a place best left to seasoned spelunkers.

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Researchers estimate the cave sits at an elevation of approximately 1,390 meters. At this point of Stage 20, its main entrance is a vertical, elliptical shaft over 8.5 meters deep. It's a descent not taken lightly but certainly not without proper equipment and guidance. Exploring it is an adventure for another day.

The landscape softens as the trail rises and bids farewell to the eucalyptus forest. The austere dryness gives way to the lush, manicured order of tea country at the Waldemar Estate.

Stage 20 holds a quiet yet remarkable distinction—it straddles the border between two provinces, Central and Uva, by the subtlest of margins. Just a few inches separate these two regions of Sri Lanka, and along the trail, you'll find yourself quite literally stepping between them, sometimes with one foot in each.

A spectacular viewpoint opens up before you reach this gentle seam in the landscape. From here, the sweeping panorama offers a kind of retrospective—the trail seems to reflect on its own journey. You can spot familiar giants from earlier stages in the Central Province: the misty Horton Plains, the Thotupola Mountain, the twin crests of Udaweriyaya, and the iconic silhouette of Idalgashinna.

At 6.9 kilometers in, the trail reaches Kondagala Estate, and it's here that you arrive at the precise ridge where the two provinces meet. There's something playful and surreal about standing at this point—move a step to the left, and you're in Uva; shift to the right and back in Central.



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Traveling through tea fields and sunshine.

Stage 20 is, in many ways, a trail of transitions—not just of elevation but of ecology, mythology, and identity - here, it marks the crossing of visible and unseen boundaries.

Not long after, the trail re-enters a eucalyptus forest at Alanwick Estate, but the mood is different this time. It's no longer the dry, desolate grove of earlier; now, the walk feels more dynamic. On your right, in Uva, the eucalyptus rises tall and stately; to your left, in Central, sloping tea gardens cascade down the hills, framed by breathtaking mountain vistas.

At 8.3 kilometers, you reach the highest point on Stage 20: 1,613 meters above sea level. This elevated perch opens out onto the spectacular Uva bowl, revealing a triumphant sweep of natural wonders— the dramatic lines of Ella Rock, the vast undulations of the

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Namunukula Mountain Range, and the famous Lipton's Seat.

From here, the descent begins, and the winding Ragala-Udapussellawa Road soon curls into view. At the highest point, you cross once more—from the Uva Province back into the Central—carrying on for the final 4.3 kilometers. The trail flows gently through Waldemar Estate, into Luckyland Estate, and finally down to Udapussellawa, where 12.4 kilometers of Stage 20 ends, resting once more in the Central Province.

Stage 20 is, in many ways, a trail of transitions—not just of elevation but of ecology, mythology, and identity - here, it marks the crossing of visible and unseen boundaries.



Stillness draped in silver - the sun rises through the mist.



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Eucalyptus trees shrouded in a veil of calm.

Words and Photography Foster and Partners.



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The timeless façade has a strong horizontality – with striking textured awnings that shade the interior spaces

City Dynamic – a joint venture between City Realty and Swire Properties – held a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the beginning of construction for two new ultra-luxury residential towers (214 metres and 284 metres) in the heart of Bangkok. Located on Wireless Road, the development is adjacent to the 142-acre Lumpini Park, which is regarded as the first public park in Thailand. Foster + Partners' design extends the experience of the park across the development's ground plane and vertically through the towers.

Luke Fox, Head of Studio, Foster + Partners, said: "We are delighted to have reached this important milestone on this project. Working in collaboration with our client, the design continues our exploration of the regionally responsive architecture, which is adapted for modern city living with overhanging awnings and reimagined vernacular clerestory windows that provide spectacular views across the city."

Each tower is made up of two interlocking square volumes, which are rotated by 45 degrees

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to minimise overlooking and maximise city views of the park and the city's Central Business District. The buildings step down towards the road to reduce their visual impact, with large plates at different intervals to further break down their massing. The timeless façade has a strong horizontally - with striking textured awnings that shade the interior spaces.

The vibrant ground plane is a green oasis in the heart of Bangkok. Each tower has its own entrance and drop-off zones for residents and guests, which enable direct access from tree-lined driveways. Shaded verandas with overhanging canopies wrap around both buildings at ground level, creating indoor-outdoor spaces for socialising and relaxation. A discreet route from the first tower leads to a private pool, a single-storey children's pavilion, and a separate children's pool. The glass pavilion is filled with natural light and provides direct connections with the spectacular natural landscape. Private lifts transport residents to their apartments, where some prime units feature large double-height balconies that offer panoramic views of the city.

Roland Schnizer, Senior Partner, Foster + Partners, added: "This wellness-driven development will achieve the highest standard of luxury park front living and create an intimate garden experience for residents. We are excited to see the project break ground and look forward to the next phase of construction."

The project has been designed by Foster + Partners through its local entity F&P (Thailand).

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Freedom Search I.

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Paradise Road Galleries presents 'Freedom Search,' an exhibition by artist Sarath Gunasiri Perera 'Freedom Search' continues the artist's exploration of the emotional landscape shaped by conflict, displacement, and personal reflection.

The vibrant abstractions and layered fragmentation of the works on display evoke a sense of disruption and renewal. Rich colors—fiery oranges and yellows, soft pastels, and deep ocean blues—intertwine with etched and repeated motifs that mirror the upheavals we experience. Each canvas serves as a field of memory, where forms dissolve and reconstitute, reflecting the turbulent journey of finding meaning in the midst of loss. In this visual exploration, freedom is portrayed not as a destination, but as an ongoing search marked by transformation.

*Paradise Road Gallery*  
*Till July 17, 2025*



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Freedom Search VII.



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past



Freedom Search XII.

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Freedom Search XVIII.



# The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

## What's On

JUNE

### Cinnamon Lakeside

Mix it up (weekend cocktail experience);  
Weekends; Lobby Lounge;  
3.30pm–5.30pm

Brew and Bite Family lunch – weekend  
lunch offer; weekends; Dining Room;  
12noon–3pm

Sunset sips; Monday to Thursday;  
Pool Bar; 10am–10pm

Tropical Pour Pitchers (flavors: passion  
fruit, wood apple, amarella and star  
fruit); Daily; Pool Bar; 10am–10pm

Taste of Long Feng (wine & dine);  
Daily; Long Feng; 12noon–3pm

Pool Paradise (Calypso); Monday and  
Tuesday; Pool Bar; 6pm–10pm

Snap & Savor (share photos of lunch  
experience on social media and stand  
a chance to win complimentary  
set lunch for two); Daily; Royal Thai;  
12noon–3pm

Signature Three (business 3 course  
lunch); Daily; The Library; 12noon–3pm

**June 1–30**

Ceylon Night (Sri Lankan theme night);  
Thursday; Dining Room; 7pm–11pm  
(Reservations: +94 11 249 1000)

**June 14 and 15**

Feast for Father (family of 4  
father dines free); Lobby Lounge;  
3.30pm–5.30pm

**June 15**

Cheers to Dad – Father's Day lunch  
special; Dining Room; 12noon–3pm

**June 27**

Moonlight Melodies – Paduru Party;  
The Library; 7pm–12midnight

**June 29**

Pool Bar Chill & Grilled Getaway; Pool  
Bar; 11.30am–3.30pm



### Harpo's Pizza and Pasta

Enjoy 25% off on large 12" Harpo's  
pizza and pasta flavors

Gigantic 19" party pizza deal – buy  
any gigantic pizza – get 1 chicken  
wings + soft drink free

Buy any Square Pizza 22" – get 1 garlic  
bread + chicken wings + mega soft  
drink free

**June 14 and 15**

Father's Day deal



### Amaya Resorts and Spas

Stay for a minimum of two nights  
and enjoy 50% off your last night at  
Amaya Lake, Amaya Hills & Amaya  
Beach (Reservations: +94 114 767 888)

Stay for a minimum of two nights and  
enjoy 50% off your last night at Tri  
Koggala by Amaya, Oliphant Boutique  
Villa by Amaya & Langdale Boutique  
Hotel by Amaya (Reservations:  
+94 772 953 527)

Exclusive offers at the Villas,  
Wadduwa – family getaway (full  
board), corporate retreat (book 10  
rooms or more on full board basis)  
(Reservations: +94 772 953 527)



### Cinnamon Red

Fourth person dines free; Daily;  
Flavoured; 7pm–10pm (Reservations:  
+94 703 145 176, +94 712 145 145)

Weekend High Tea buffet – fifth  
person dines free; Weekend;  
Flavoured; 3.30pm–5.30pm

Surf & Turf – fourth person dines free;  
Wednesday; Flavoured; 7pm–10.30pm



### Hilton Colombo

**June 15**

Dad's Brunch Fest; Graze Kitchen;  
11am–2.30pm

Dad's High Tea with live  
entertainment by Switch; L.A.B;  
3pm–6pm

Legacy on a plate; Emperor's Wok;  
lunch 12noon–2.30pm, dinner  
7pm–11pm



### Best Western Elyon Colombo

Breakfast buffet

Lunch or snack (free milkshake  
with every order, free wi-fi and  
workstation)

High Tea for two; 3pm–6pm (12 hours  
prior notice required – reservations:  
+94 117 527 527)

Cocktail pitchers

Live music with Shehara George;  
Friday; Vu Resto-Bar; 7.30pm



### Commons Coffee House

Delightful kebabs

**June 15**

Father's Day specials for family



### Fairway Colombo

**June 1**

Art and Jazz on the Street;  
10am–10pm



### Hilton Colombo Residences

**June 15**

Dads by the Poolside; level 3; 12noon–3pm  
(special family rate – free flow of brew,  
complimentary pool access, Cocktail making  
session, exciting games for fathers. Buffet –  
Dad's Seafood Laksa, Fish Wellington, Honey  
Roast Ham, Cointreau Crepes Suzette live  
station, Espresso Kahlua Tiramisu)

### Cinnamon Grand

BBQ Feast for 4; Breeze Bar; Daily;

6pm onwards

Guides dine free; Daily; Plates

(12noon–3pm, 7pm–11pm),

Nuga Gama (7pm–10.30pm)

25% off on every birthday cake;

Daily; Coffee Stop; 10am–10pm

**June 12–15**

Father's Day Specials; Coffee Stop;

10am–10pm

**June 15**

Gentleman's Brunch; Plates;

12noon–3pm

Fathers & Flavors; CG Flavors;

10am–10pm

Cheers to Dad: The Carvery Edition;

Cheers; 12noon–3pm



### Courtyard by Marriott Colombo

**Till June 8**

Yaal Vizhaa – Jaffna Food Festival

featuring Thushara Innasithamby -

Experience traditional Jaffna cuisine,

live stations, and iconic dishes

brought to life by expert hands;

Beira Lake Kitchen & Terrace; 6.30pm

(Reservations: (+94 11 773 4451))



### Harpo's Colombo Fort Café

Go Local Sri Lankan specials

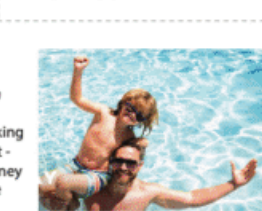
promotion

Happy Hour cocktail; Monday – Friday;

5pm–7pm; Enjoy 25% off on 2 large

pizza and sangria pitcher; Saturday

and Sunday



# The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

## Lords Restaurant Complex,

### Negombo

Live music entertainment; Daily Breakfast and lunch menu with fabulous prices – poke bowls, English breakfast, Sri Lankan breakfast, Continental breakfast, pancakes, tacos, flat breads, burgers, loaded fries, paninis and Sri Lankan curry (indoor and outdoor seating); Daily; 12noon–5pm, dinner 5pm–11pm (Reservations: +94 77 285 3190) Happy Hour promotions – buy one cocktail and get one free; 12noon–11pm



## Ramada Colombo

Buy 1 beer tower, get 1 free; Daily; 4pm–7pm Night Kade – Colombo's hottest midnight craving spot; Friday, Saturday; midnight–4am (Reservations: +94 777 864 864)

**June 1–30** Mutton Kofta Biryani lunch – indulge in a flavor-packed lunchtime special featuring Mutton Keema Biryani, Mutton Kofta Curry, Egg, Raita, and Pickle Colombo Arrack Night; Friday; 4.30pm onwards (Reservations: +94 777 864 864) Secret Ladies Offer – buy 1 get 1 free; Thursday, Friday and Saturday; 5pm–8pm, 10pm–11pm (Reservations: +94 777 864 864)

**June 3** Watch IPL 2025 final – live screening with great food, and special drinks

**June 15** Father's Day BBQ Fusion – for the

Hero who grilled us to greatness (Reservations: +94 777 864 864)

### June 29

Soulful Sunday; BBQ, drinks, family and chill vibes; 4pm onwards. Join us for an unforgettable evening filled with fun for the whole family – while the kids enjoy the pool, you can unwind with chilled beer, fine wine, and a mouthwatering BBQ feast.

Live music will set the perfect Sunday vibe! (Reservations: +94 777 864 864)



## Sofia Colombo

High Tea platter for two; Seascope Restaurant; 3pm–6pm (Reservations: +94 77 298 0599, +94 764 108 901) Special offer 20% off on direct room bookings (Reservations: +94 74 365 33622, +94 764 368 1710) Executive Lunch Buffet – dine with 6 and pay for 5; Monday to Friday; Seascope Restaurant; 12.30pm–2.30pm (Reservations: +94 77 298 0599, +94 764 108 901) Bristo Night Dinner Buffet – dine with 6 and pay for 5; Seascope Restaurant; 7.30pm–10pm (Reservations: +94 762 788 572, +94 764 108 901)



## The Bayleaf

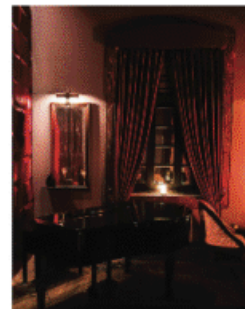
Italian seafood and meat specials; 11am–11pm Monday to Thursday, 11am–midnight Friday to Sunday Authentic Italian Specials and Harpo's pizza menu Happy hour; Daily; 5pm–7pm **June 15** Father's Day special menu



## Piano Bar & Music Room

### at the Bayleaf

Live entertainment; Thursday–Saturday; 8pm–11pm DJ Music; Wednesday – Saturday; 10pm onwards Tapas bar menu – signature cocktails, premium liquor Special offers; Daily; 5pm–7pm



## Shoulders by Harpos

New cocktail menu, lunch and dinner menu, cocktail bar with signature cocktails Special offer on cocktails; Daily; 5pm–7pm All day beer deals Entertainment; Friday and Saturday; 7pm onwards **June 15** Father's Day special cocktail



## The Thinnai, Jaffna

**June 8** Asian Night Buffet; 7.30pm–9.30pm **June 29** Street Food Buffet; 7.30pm–9.30pm



## The Kingsbury

All you can eat Dim Sum; Weekdays; Yue Chuan; lunch 12 noon–3pm (Reservations +94 112 421 221) All you can eat Dim Sum; Weekend; Yue Chuan; lunch 12 noon–3pm, dinner 7pm–11pm Seafood Boil; Ocean (Reservations: +94 112 421 221) Bento Box; Tenku **June 13–15** Goodies; Churros **June 15** Father's Day offer; Sunday Carvery;

Kings Steakbar; 11.30am–3pm (Reservations +94 112 421 221) Brunch – Classic brunch, beer brunch, bubbly brunch; Harbour Court; 11.30am–3pm (Reservations: +94 112 421 221) High Tea Buffet; Churros; 3pm–6pm (Reservations +94 112 421 221)



## Festivals

June 3 – 15

### Feast of St Anthony's Shrine, Wahakotte

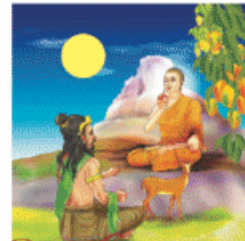
The church's annual feast begins with flag hoisting on June 3, followed by special prayers and services throughout the week, concluding with the feast on June 14 and 15.



June 10

### Poson

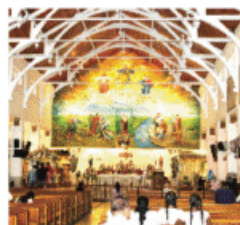
On this significant day, Arahata Mahinda, the son of Emperor Asoka, officially introduced Buddhism to the island in the third century B.C.



June 13

### Feast of St Anthony's Shrine, Kochchikade

The feast dedicated to St. Anthony is a vibrant celebration that features novenas, special prayers, and an impressive chariot procession.



June 26 – July 9

### Annual Festival of Nainathivu Nagapooshani Amman Temple

The temple's chariot festival will be celebrated grandly, with devotees and attendees witnessing vibrant chariot processions and special poojas.





# The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

## Art and Music

### Art

Till June 23

#### Arra Kulamum, Kottiyum, Ampalum

Navigating the reality of impermanence, Logithan Ram's exhibition revisits family archives, exploring personal histories with a sense of tender longing. Haunting images of landscapes adorned with blooming lotuses, accompanied by ritual hymns, serve as profound shelters, emphasizing the lingering ache of memory.

Paradise Road Saskia Fernando Gallery



Till June 30

#### MonkeyScapes

Artist Pulasthi Handunge's solo exhibition featuring attractive art works will be on for display and sale. Pulasthi Handunge is a Sri Lankan architect and artist whose work in painting has been a lifelong pursuit. His practice is both reflective and philosophical, often engaging with the evolving Sri Lankan identity. With each piece, he invites viewers to engage with a quiet yet powerful narrative of self and place.

The Bayleaf Art Gallery



June 6 – 28

#### Mother, Junglefowl and Scarecrow

In his first solo exhibition, Pathum Sameera highlights the vital role of women in southern Sri Lanka's rural agriculture through storybook-like illustrations. Inspired by his childhood and his mother's influence, Pathum's visual narrative reflects the shifting gender roles due to male migration from the village. He aims to portray women as resilient heroes who are reshaping their community.

Barefoot Gallery Colombo



### Music

June 1

#### Lux: A Choral Spectrum of Light and Hope

The Colombo Philharmonic Choir opens its Platinum Jubilee Season with Lux: A Choral Spectrum of Light and Hope. At the heart of the evening stands Morten Lauridsen's sublime Lux Aeterna, a modern cornerstone of choral literature. Framing this centerpiece are radiant works by Johannes Brahms, Randall Thompson, Healey Willan, Eric Whitacre, and Kim André Arnesen—composers who masterfully illuminate timeless texts with music that explores the interplay of light and shadow.

Venue: Ladies College, Flower Road, Colombo.

Time: 7pm.

Tickets:

Rs.1,500



June 14

#### Season Opening Concert

The Gustav Mahler Orchestra of Colombo, led by Srimal Weerasinghe launches its 2025/2026 season with a thrilling program featuring pianist Louis Perera. Experience Beethoven's dramatic, Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor and the long-awaited revival of Lalanath De Silva's 2nd Symphony, "Sigiri" after 46 years!

Venue: Lionel Wendt Theatre, Colombo 7.

Time: 7pm.

Tickets:

Rs.12,000,

Rs.8,000,

Rs.5,000,

Rs.3,000,

Rs.2,000,

Rs.1,000



June 28

#### Amara SiriSara live in concert

An evening of enchanting music by Amarasiri Peiris, Samitha Mudunkotuwa, Madhawa Peiris and Sara Peiris together with Suresh Maliyadde.

Venue: Bishops College Auditorium. Time: 6.30pm.

Tickets: Rs.15,000, Rs.10,000, Rs.7,500, Rs.5,000,

Rs.4,000, Rs.3,500, Rs.2,500



## Sports

### Cricket

#### Bangladesh Tour of Sri Lanka



June 17 – 21, 2025

1st Test

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 9.30am

June 25 – 29, 2025

2nd Test

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 9.30am

July 2, 2025

1st ODI

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 2.30pm

July 5, 2025

2nd ODI

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 2.30pm

July 8, 2025

3rd ODI

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 2.30pm

July 10, 2025

1st T20I

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 7.30pm

July 13, 2025

2nd T20I

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 7.30pm

July 16, 2025

3rd T20I

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh; 7.30pm



## The Kandy Esala Perahera: Stepping into a Colourful Past

### Drama and Theatre

June 7

#### Charithe Horu Aran

Written and directed by Ravindra Ariyaratne, with a host of popular artistes.  
Venue: Namel Malini Punchi Theater, Borella. Time: 3.30pm, 6.45pm.



June 8

#### Kakkutta

A direction of Jagath P Wijeweera's political comedy play featuring Rodney Warnakula, Ferni Roshni, Saman Hemarathana, and many other artistes.  
Written, produced and organized by Jude Simal.  
Venue: Lionel Wendt Theater. Time: 3.30pm, 7pm.



June 8

#### Sihina Rangahala

Written and directed by award winning playwright Dananjaya Karunaratne featuring: Sanath Wimalasiri, Sulochana Weerasinghe, Dimuthu Chinthaka, Ama Wijesekera and more.  
Venue: Namel Malini Punchi Theater, Borella. Time: 3.30pm, 6.45pm.



June 21

#### Lokka Ledawela

Directed by Gihan Fernando, with a host of popular artistes Chamila Peiris, Sarath Karunaratne, Ajith Lokuge, Gihan Fernando, Alok Sampath and other artistes.  
Venue: Elphinstone Theater, Colombo 10. Time: 3.30pm, 6.45pm.

