

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism



MEDIA RELEASE

Delft Island to be Developed as Sri Lanka's First Zero Emission Eco-Tourism Destination

The Government of Sri Lanka has initiated plans to develop Delft Island into the country's first **Zero Emission** eco-tourism destination, with a strong focus on sustainability, environmental conservation, and the preservation of its unique natural and cultural heritage. A special site inspection and stakeholder discussion on the proposed development was held under the leadership of **Hon. Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe, Deputy Minister of Tourism**.

Renowned for its remarkable Dutch-era ruins, numerous archaeological landmarks, and its iconic wild horses roaming freely across the island, Delft Island possesses exceptional tourism potential. The initiative aims to transform the island into a model sustainable tourism destination while safeguarding its rich historical, cultural, and environmental assets for future generations.

Addressing the gathering, Hon. Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe stated that Delft Island is a destination that should be experienced not only by international visitors but also by domestic tourists. Despite its extraordinary attractions, the island has so far made only a limited contribution to Sri Lanka's tourism industry. He emphasized the Government's commitment to unlocking Delft Island's full tourism potential through sustainable and environmentally responsible development.

The discussions focused on identifying the priority infrastructure required to position Delft Island as a premier tourism destination. Key areas of attention included improving water supply, road infrastructure, transportation and accessibility, while also strengthening community participation by enhancing the knowledge and hospitality skills of local residents to enable them to benefit from tourism development.

The Deputy Minister further stressed that environmental sustainability will remain the cornerstone of the development strategy. The Government's vision is to establish Delft Island as a flagship **Zero Emission** tourism destination that showcases responsible tourism practices, promotes renewable and sustainable solutions, and serves as a model for environmentally friendly tourism development in Sri Lanka.

The programme was attended by **Jaffna District Member of Parliament Ilankumaran Karunanathan, Dr. Sribavanadarajah Shanmuganathan, Rajeevan Jeyachandramoorthy**, representatives of local political authorities, the Divisional Secretary of Delft, government officials, and members of the local community, who actively participated in discussions and shared their views on the future development of the island.

Officials from the **Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA)** and the **Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB)** also participated in the visit and discussions.

The proposed initiative marks an important step towards positioning Delft Island as one of Sri Lanka's most distinctive sustainable tourism destinations, where environmental conservation, cultural heritage preservation, and community-based tourism development work together to create a world-class visitor experience.

**Media Team,
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Issued Date : 04/08/2026

Ref: No : MOT/DMO/PR/M2

