

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism



MEDIA RELEASE

“After the Storm, Sri Lanka Shines Again – Luxury Cruise Brings 2,000 Tourists to Colombo”

Colombo, December 2, 2025 – In a powerful symbol of resilience and recovery, Sri Lanka today welcomed the luxury cruise ship **Mein Schiff 06**, operated by TUI Cruises, carrying more than **2,000 international passengers** to the **Colombo Port**. This marks the first major tourist movement since last week’s natural disaster, sending a clear message to the world: Sri Lanka is safe, open, and ready to embrace visitors once again.

Passengers, predominantly German nationals, expressed admiration for Sri Lanka’s hospitality and praised the personal engagement of Hon. **Vijitha Herath, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism**, who visited the ship to meet guests and hear their impressions. Many passengers shared that they plan to return to Sri Lanka soon, and several pledged to act as **ambassadors for the island nation**, spreading the word that Sri Lanka remains a welcoming and beautiful destination.

Out of the 2,300 passengers on board, more than **1,600 guests ventured out on one-day and half-day excursions** across the island. These tours highlighted Sri Lanka’s diversity and charm, taking visitors to destinations such as **Galle, Madu Oya, Kalutara, and Colombo**, where they enjoyed city tours, tuk tuk rides, bustling market visits, food tours, cooking classes, and visits to temples and religious sites. To accommodate this large movement, over **72 coaches and 30 small vans** were mobilized, reflecting the strength of Sri Lanka’s tourism infrastructure and its ability to host international travelers at scale.

The **Mein Schiff**, sailing from Cape Town to Singapore, will continue its journey to **Hambantota Port** for a one-day excursion, offering passengers the chance to explore more of Sri Lanka’s diverse attractions.

Local operations were managed by **Aitken Spence Travels**, the appointed local tour operator, with **Hapag-Lloyd Lanka Pvt Ltd** serving as the port service agent.

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Several distinguished officials and industry leaders joined the event to mark the arrival of *Mein Schiff 6* at Colombo Port. Among them was **Mr. Buddhika Hewawasam, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) and the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB)**, whose leadership has been pivotal in steering the industry through recent challenges. Also present was **Mr. Nihal Muhandiram, senior tourism advisor**, who has long contributed his expertise to shaping tourism policy and guiding recovery strategies. **Mr. Nirmal de Silva, Harbour Master of the Sri Lanka Ports Authority**, ensured smooth port operations and facilitated the safe docking of the vessel.

Speaking on the occasion, officials emphasized that while challenges remain, Sri Lanka is determined to rebuild stronger. “With courage and unity, and with the support of the international community, we will restore normalcy. Every visitor who chooses Sri Lanka contributes to our recovery, strengthens our people, and inspires hope,” the statement read.

This successful cruise call is more than a tourism milestone — it is a **living testament to Sri Lanka’s resilience**, its hospitality, and its readiness to welcome the world.

**Media Team,
Sri Lanka Tourism**

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