

# HIKKADUWA - the place to be

A small coastal town, 98 kms south of Colombo, Hikkaduwa has been a popular tourist attraction for quite a long time till it recently developed into one of the best tourist centers on the southern coastal belt of Sri Lanka.

The beach is lined with cafes and restaurants amidst high class hotels. On either side of the Colombo-Galle main road, which runs through the town, there are many craft shops and boutiques full of ornaments, curios, laces and fancy dresses to cater to the tastes of Western and European tourists, and even the locals. The souvenir shops, selling jewellery with semi-precious stones, masks, batiks and paintings add colour to the already attractive and glittering sight.

Accommodation can be found in cheaper hotels and even in suitable family-homes for the ordinary visitor, including backpackers.

Night life is most extraordinary to dance away the cooler nights in clubs and hotels to the roaring pop and rock music, and explosive baila tunes in between.

The sea, bordering the silvery sandy beaches, gives the surfers the best surfing waves, long and high, than in any other along the sea coast. It is the best for diving and snorkelling, especially during the months of November to March, as the sea becomes clearer and the visibility improves.

Underneath the waves of translucent waters behind the coral reef about 100 yards from the beach is the fascinating and enthralling colourful world, which is the Coral Sanctuary or the Coral Gardens, replete with many species of bright, colourful fish. Besides,



there are well over 50 varieties of corals where countless fish and other sea creatures, including lobsters, take refuge in. Any visitor can explore the area in glass-bottomed boats to watch the attractive corals and the colourful fish at very close range. It will, indeed, be a spectacular sight they will long remember!

Along the beach there are islets with plenty of beautiful coral formations like the Coral Garden Cave created by the boulders of the seabed. They are covered with exceedingly beautiful corals like bright, colourful flowers. The marine life comprises fish of many species such as clown fish, angelfish and snappers, including even turtles.

Another attraction of great significance is the remains of the Ship Earl of Shaftsbury which has a historical significance. It was an English ship that sank in 1847. The area is covered with beautiful corals grown over them over the last few centuries, and with fish like barracuda and rays.

Hikkaduwa has also been a centre of learning and has produced great scholars. Late Hikkaduwa Sri Sumangala Thera takes pride of place. He is considered to be one of those involved in the revival of Buddhism and in the growth of Vidyodaya Pirivena which was granted University status in 1959. Justice M W H de Silva, a Supreme Court Justice and later elevated to the position of Solicitor-General, became under the S W R



**Dr Mathu H. Liyanage**

D Bandaranaike government's first Minister of Justice. M. Chandrasoma, an officer of the former Ceylon Civil Service, functioned long years as the Secretary of the Public Service Commission. Professor M B Ariyapala, a great Scholar in Sinhala, was the Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo. Professor A D V de S Indraratne of the University of Colombo, who is now in retirement, was one of the pioneers who helped the switch over to swabasha and made Sinhala as the medium of instruction and Economics, Sinhala-friendly. He was also instrumental in creating a Demographic Map of Sri Lanka.

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