

## Celebrating world tourism day in a special way



**By Nirmala Kannangara**

Sri Lanka celebrated World Tourism Day on September 27 to promote tourism in the country, which has declined for the past several months due to the ongoing conflicts in the north and east.

It is the responsibility of the tourist promoters in the country to promote tourism using the available infrastructure facilities. Holding internationally acclaimed sports events also would be a great idea to attract more tourists to the country at a time when leisure travelers are reluctant to visit the island.

In this backdrop, the country hosted the seventh 'BUDO International Martial Arts Camp 2006,' at the Blue Water, Wadduwa, a Jetwing hotel.

A BUDO camp is a martial arts training camp, where all kinds of international martial arts styles come together, where they train and learn from each other. This also includes black belts, who train together with other participants. "Everybody will always remain as student and good instructor, where learning never stops," said Olaf van Ellen, the chief organiser of the International Martial Arts Camp. This camp was not only for Black belts, but to all martial Artistes of all schools and styles, ranging from beginners to advanced levels.

A total of 19 instructors of whom seven are from Sri Lanka were able to teach different martial arts styles to the participants. They are Aikido, ATK, Hapkido, Jiu-Jitsu, Judo, Karate, Kickboxing, Modern Arnis, Shaolin-Kempo, Taekwondo, Tai Chi, Tako-ryu-Bushido, Wushu and WonHwaDo. One of the many highlights of this camp was the participation of Soke Andy McGill from England who holds the tenth Dan Kenpo Karate title.

The camp was held from October 2 to 8, with many a local and foreigner taking part enthusiastically. Participants from Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, China, Canada and England arrived in the country and Budo lovers from all over the world also visited Sri Lanka to witness the event and also to gain first hand experience through the instructors about Budo, which is acclaimed to be one of the finest arts of combat skills, fitness, self defense, sport, self-cultivation (meditation), mental discipline, character development and building self-confidence.

Throughout the world, there is a great diversity of martial arts with a common goal, which is to defeat a person physically or to defend oneself from a physical threat.

Managing Director Jetwing Hotels, Hiran Cooray reiterated the need of reviewing the leisure industry. He told the gathering at the opening ceremony that it is the responsibility of the tourist promoters of the country to promote tourism.

"With many places of tourist interest, which we are fortunate enough to have in the country, we could exploit the market by holding globally acclaimed sports events that brings thousands of fans into the country. Once the foreign tourists visit here, they would definitely take back the wonderful experiences they receive through the hands of the Sri Lankans. This is the best way for promoting tourists. This could bring thousands of tourism to the country. Apart from these events, we at Jetwing hope to give more opportunities to the residents in and around Wadduwa, to further build up their skills in this game," added Cooray.

The Sri Lanka Tourist Board in Frankfurt, Germany, with Jetwing Hotels, Jetwing Travels and Jet Asia sponsored this event, which indeed was a success.