



WiB MEMBERS' TRIP TO SRI LANKA An Island of Astonishing Diversity

The WiB travel group with the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Germany, H.E. Varuni Muthukumarana (front row, fourth from left), and the Ambassador of Germany to Sri Lanka, H.E. Dr Felix Neumann, and his wife (standing next to Ambassador Muthukumarana)

The journey began in Colombo, at the futuristic City of Dreams, which rises in striking contrast to the city's traditional heritage buildings. It was expertly organised by a local travel agency and, to our great honour, accompanied by Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Germany, WiB member H.E. Varuni Muthukumarana.

From the capital, the programme led us north to the Dambulla Cave Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its remarkably preserved rock paintings and Buddha statues dating back to the 1st century. We explored the country's rich history by cycling through the ancient ruins of Polonnaruwa, visiting Kandy's Temple of the Tooth, and walking through the Galle Dutch Fort. We climbed Sigiriya, the 5th-century rock fortress rising above the plains like a monumental sculpture, and rode the iconic mountain train through Ceylon's tea plantations. Observing elephants at close range in Minneriya and

spotting monitor lizards among cinnamon trees on the Maadu River will remain unforgettable experiences.

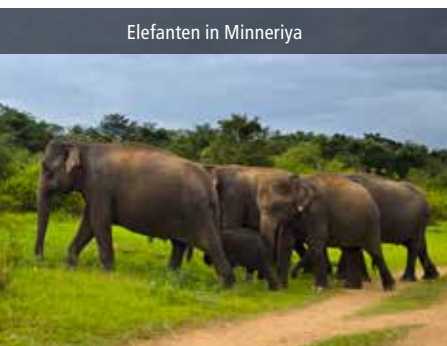
At the Kandalama Hotel, Geoffrey Bawa's masterpiece, the infinity pool blended seamlessly into the surrounding jungle. Birds and monkeys provided a natural soundtrack, creating a wonderful experience. Equally memorable was Sri Lanka's warm hospitality and cuisine, ranging from village simplicity to the historic elegance of Nuwara Eliya. A gracious reception at the German Ambassador's residence concluded the journey.

Everyone left with the firm intention of returning to this beautiful island, where rainforests fade into arid plains, mist-covered highlands descend towards beaches, and the sea feels almost thermal.

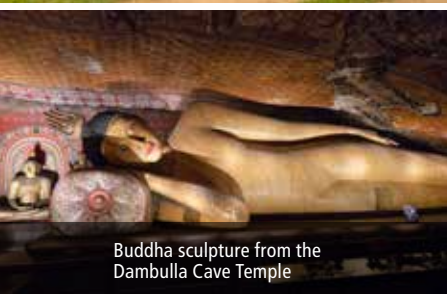
TEXT Dr. Gundula Beyer-Zouboulis

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Elefanten in Minneriya



Buddha sculpture from the Dambulla Cave Temple



The WiB travel group in Sigiriya



Ambassador H.E. Varuni Muthukumarana presenting a cinnamon stick