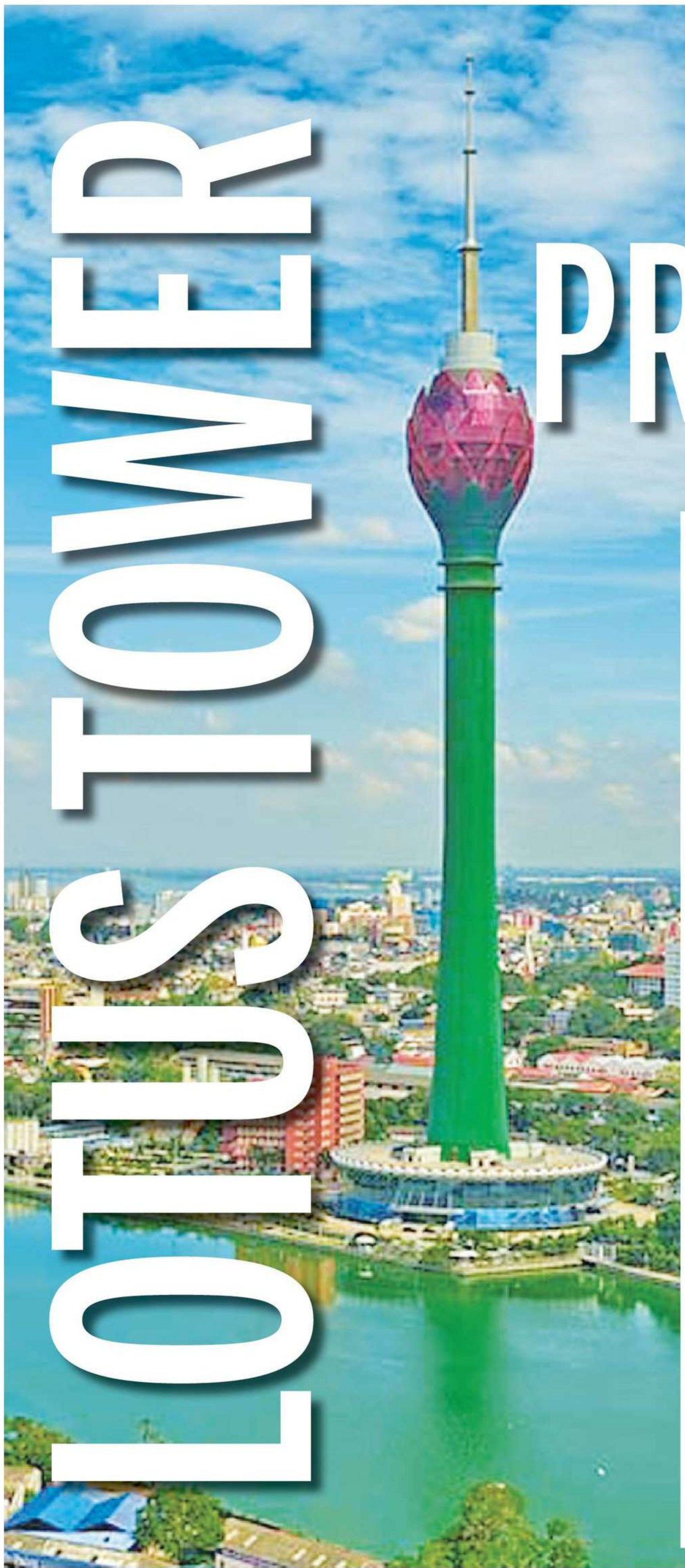


a Symbol of PROSPERITY

LOTUS TOWER



ISHARA JAYAWARDANE

Throughout history leaders have used symbols to inspire and unite the masses. These symbols are most often animals, like the eagle – which was a symbol of the Roman Empire and associated with military victory. The eagle is a powerful predator and for this reason its image was used to display power. Lotus Tower too, is a symbol. The Lotus is the people of Sri Lanka. It is a symbol of hope. A symbol of growth. It is a symbol of prosperity. Just being near the Lotus Tower, gives one a sense of a new beginning. The *Daily News* attended a Media Tour of the Lotus Tower last Monday, where we saw first-hand the beginning of a new chapter in the lives of the people of Sri Lanka.

The commercial activities/business activities of the Nelum Kuluna will begin today. In other words, Nelum Kuluna will be opened to the public today. The Nelum Kuluna will be a centre of entertainment and commerce, where people can experience a new dimension to Colombo life. The observation deck that the media was taken to, was really magnificent. You could see Colombo in a way you have never seen before.

"This place will soon become a hive of activity, with musical programmes, cultural shows, exhibitions, food festivals and so much more. There will also be Innovation Centres, E-Sport Arena, Digital Art Museum and Digital banks. It will also have 9D cinema facilities and a revolving restaurant. We also aim at having a water show at the Beira Lake. So our target is next March. By then we want this facility to be fully functioning," said **Ministry of Finance, Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, R.M.P. Rathnayake.**

He pointed out that the original idea, was to give the spaces at Nelum Kuluna to shops. We know that today there are many shopping malls and hotels appearing all over Colombo. So

then decision makers looked at using these spaces for economic development.

"Basically we want to create an economic hub. We want to transform the surrounding area into an economic development zone. What really stands out about the Nelum Kuluna is its technology. That is an important feature. So we are going to develop our business model in concert with technology. We also have a focus on leisure and entertainment. So we want to transform this facility into a dynamic centre for technology, business, leisure and entertainment," said Rathnayake.

The Nelum Kuluna is going to be a huge tourist attraction. It will bring in foreign exchange into the country. Because that is how Sri Lanka is going to rise up from muddy waters. Sri Lanka is the Lotus.

"We are also planning on starting some adventure sports like SkyDiving and Bungee Jumping. The Lotus Tower is the tallest self-supported structure in South Asia. We hope this facility will become a major tourist attraction. This will be a novel experience for people in this country."

CEO of Colombo Lotus Tower Management, Major General (Retd.) Prasad Samarasinghe pointed out that the Colombo Lotus Tower must not be a burden on the State. It must generate its own income. It must be an entity that can stand on its own two feet when it comes to maintenance.

"There is no point in delaying. We must use it as soon as possible and open it to the public. Tickets are priced at Rs 2,000 and Rs. 500. We also aim at bringing in school children. They, the school, must make a special request from us. They can have tickets at a lower price. So we want to encourage schoolchildren to come as a group," said Samarasinghe.

He also stated that now it is time to see how events will take place. All the hard work has been done. All the planning has taken place. Now it is time to reap what has been sown.



Ministry of Finance, Deputy Secretary to the Treasury
R. M. P. Rathnayake



CEO of Colombo Lotus Tower Management, Major General (Retd.)
Prasad Samarasinghe

FEATURES OF THE LOTUS TOWER

- The basement/kitchen can prepare food for around 1,500 people.
- There are eight elevators, and among them there are three elevators which are the fastest elevators in the country. You can reach the observation deck from the ground floor in 49 seconds.
- They have state of the art facilities.
- Food court and souvenir shop (you can take your pictures from up and collect it from down).
- There is an exhibition gallery.
- Second floor has office spaces.
- Banquet halls (same concept)
- 6 luxury suites on the 6th floor.
- Fifth floor has a revolving restaurant.
- Observation deck is located on the 7th floor.
- At the start they will have physical tickets, but after that they will be having paperless tickets according to a QR code system (a paperless eco-friendly concept).

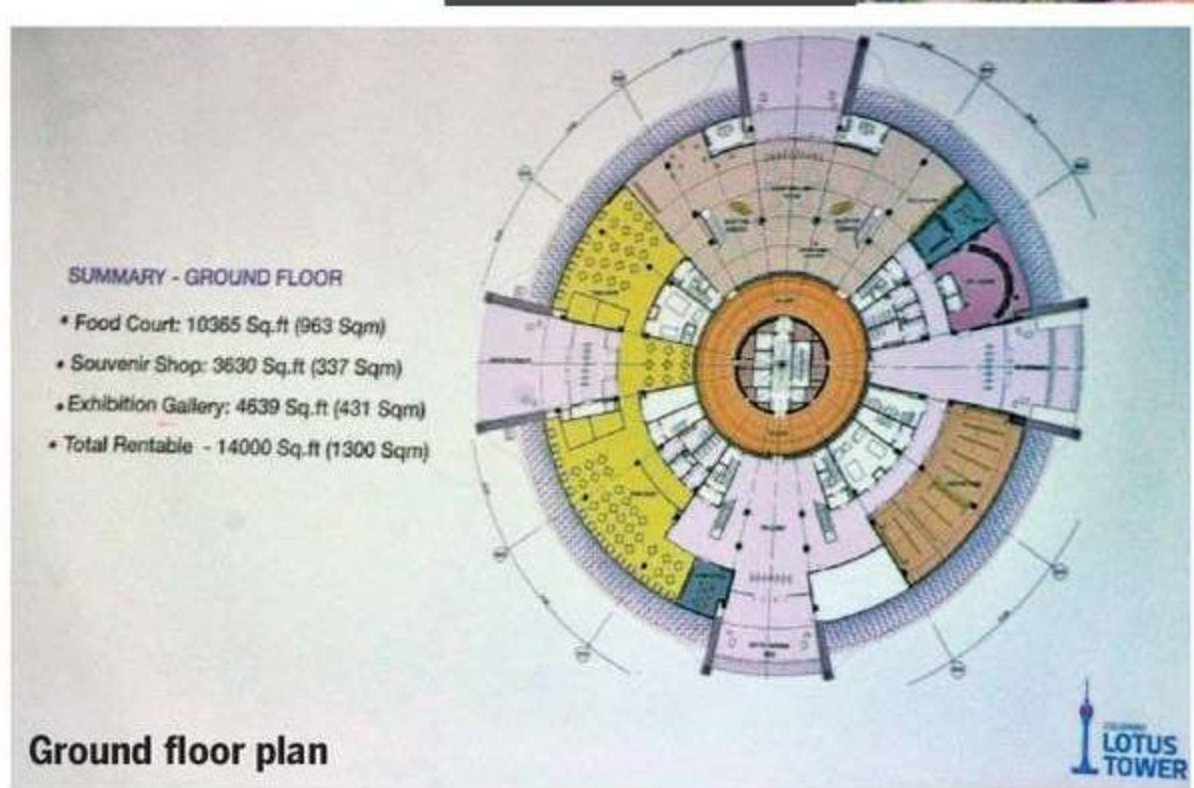
HISTORY OF LOTUS TOWER

- In 2008, the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) planned to create Lotus Tower.
- In 2012 the construction process began. At that time the estimate was 104.3 million dollars.
- It was supposed to finish in 2015, but that did not happen.
- The Chinese company requested to give them time until 2017.
- In 2012 a loan from Exim Bank was approved for 88 million.
- By 2017, 68 million dollars had been spent.
- Then there was a delay in operations.
- In 2019 it was opened, but the Chinese company did not hand it over to the TRCSL.
- In 2020 a third party/ group (engineers and specialists) got involved and it was found that there were some shortcomings (21 shortcomings) from floor to floor.
- In February 2022, this building was taken over from the Chinese Company by the TRCSL (Until then the TRCSL did not have ownership)
- Colombo Lotus Tower Management took over on August 8 this year. So the Colombo Lotus Tower has been doing a lot of work in order to open it to the public. (So many professionals worked on this enterprise)



Revolving restaurant.

Pictures by Sudath Malaweeera



Ground floor plan



Aerial view from the Lotus Tower observation deck.