

Tourist arrivals on an upward spiral

By STEVE A. MORRELL

Although the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks were devastating, the current position on tourist arrivals was extremely encouraging. Already arrivals recorded each day were now at around 3500, with increases recorded on an upward spiral. Sri Lanka was no longer at risk. The peaceful atmosphere prevailing, with assurances that the terrorist threat was effectively contained, was influential in increasing visitors to the country. Minister of Tourism and Christian Religious Affairs John Amaratunga said.

Visa-on-arrival and visa free concessions which were temporarily suspended, would be re-introduced, the minister told the press recently.

Domestic air travel to the East, North and South would be an innovative feature to ensure these attractions are within quick access. Additionally, agricultural tourism to Nuwara Eliya would be an additional attrac-



The top table Pic by Saman Ranaweera

tion of domestic air travel to this famed hill station, known for its temperate climate and picturesque topography, he added.

Chairman, Tourism Development Authority Johanne Jayaratne, at the head table, said the dollar concession on air line

achieved this year as well.

The domestic tourism market was being actively exploited with hotel concessions being offered, he explained.

Chandana de Silva, Manager, SriLankan Airlines also addressing the press said the

national carrier would resume the routine of four flights each day with expectation of increase in the flight frequencies. All air lines will be encouraged to resume their flight schedules, including Aeroflot, which had suspended their flights quite a while back.

He was confident flights to Colombo would pick up. He also said this was the European summer when visitors to Sri Lanka were low. He, however, said when the season picks up October through January visitor influx would be good.

De Silva further said there were no cancellations for the month of July this year.

At the head table were also chairman, Board of Airline Representatives Dimuthu Thennakoon, chairman, Sri Lanka Association of Airline Representatives Jerard Victoria, Sec to the ministry S.Hettiarachchi, MD, SLTPB Chamari Maeige.