

Ramayana Yatha

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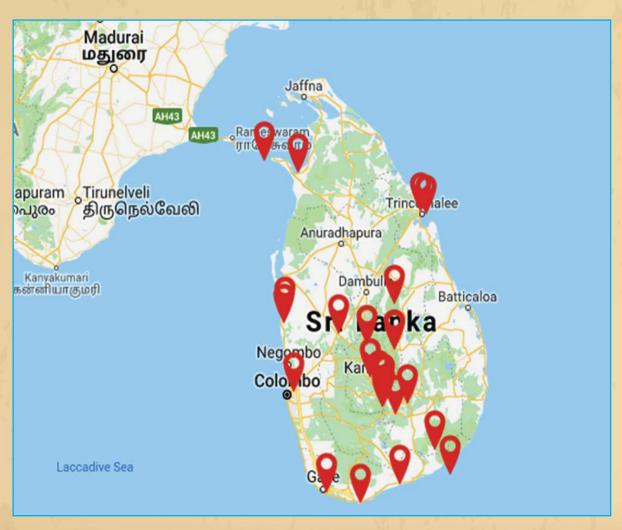
Introduction

Rama Ravana Yudha, the clash of the Titans is a remarkable incident in the history of mankind. Sequences connected to this mega battle were compiled together into a Sanskrit text by sage Valmiki on the title Ramayanam with means Journey of Rama (Rama – Yanam). Further to this, ancient scripts clarifies that deities Sri Maha Vishnu and Sri Devi together with their devotees Jaya and Vijaya came on to the earth as Sri Rama, Sita, Ravana and Kumbakarna respectively to guide human race differentiate good and bad. Thus make the Earth a better living place.

This epic literature influenced many civilizations, penetrated into many cultures and travelled many millenniums to reach our generation. Today's Sri Lanka which was once the capital island of Mighty Emperor Ravana naturally preserved the memories of the iconic era in over 50 locations.

Now the doors are open to the world to explore the unexplored.

Ramayana Yathra Locations



How important is Ramayana Yathra to the world?

Mythological and Spiritual Connection:

Ramayana is the Biological cord of the India sub-continent and is strongly believed and followed by all the religions that took birth in the region say, Shivam, Vaishnavam, Hindavam (Hinduism), Boutham (Budhism) and Jainam (Janism).

Sri Lanka preserved the memories of the epic naturally in over 50 locations and every location of these are connected strongly as holy in the hearts of millions spread across the globe.

Historical and Geographical Connection:

Ramayanam, its historicity and the geography involved may be discussed together for better understanding. First and foremost one should understand that Ramayanam is not a religious text. It is a historical book of documented facts that happened on the very earth we all live in. Ramayanam was quoted as 'Ithihasa' in many books elated to Sanathana or Vedic Darma. The word ithihasa was derived from 'iti-ha-asa' and it means "thus-it-happened". This clarifies that Ramayanam is our history.

Ramayanam written by Maharshi Valmiki is the widespread and most read version. However, the fact is that Ramayanam was not written by Maharshi Valmiki alone but by many writers since ages. In every story irrespective to the author, the characters their names and the geographical locations of various places like Janaka Rajya (now in Nepal), Ayodhya (now in Northern India), Kishkinda (now in Southern India) and Lanka (Sri Lanka) were all in common. The main storyline of Prince Rama, son of King Dasaratha going to forest with his wife, Sitha and brother Lakshmana; Ravana, King of Lanka abducting Sitha; Rama with the help of Sugreeva, Hanuma and team battling in Lanka; Killing Ravana, crowning Vibhishana as the next king of Lanka and going back to Ayodya with Sitha are all common. Multiple authors producing the same sequences, relations, characters and quoting to the same geographical lands yet again narrowing down to the conclusion that Ramayanam is the History of the land and is not just a story that took birth in one individuals' mind. Ramavatharam popularly known as Kamba Ramayanam by Kamban, Sri Ramacharitmanas popularly known as Tulasidas' Ramayanam written by Goswami Tulsidas were two other popular text on Ramayanam.

Other ancient science books like Vaimanika Shastra written by Maharishi Bharadwaja also has references to aeronautical technologies used during the time of King Ravana. Further adding to all the above, linguistically connections to the text and few places in Sri Lanka today adds interest to the modern world to further explore and research the history.

Preparations to be taken before exploring Ramayana Yathra:

In any ways Ramayana Yathra in Sri Lanka is not a holiday. One should be prepared and travel through the memories and experience the legendary history, Ramayanam. While over 50 locations were identified having connection to Ramyanam in Sri Lanka of which close to 25 sites were having road and semi-road access for pilgrims and tourists to visit. Visitors to Sri Lanka for Ramayana Yathra should make themselves available for at least 9 nights of stay to properly sense feel the historicity of the great era.

Pilgrims will be visiting to the places related to Ramyanam every day and thus, those have the sentiments of wearing fresh while visiting holy places may have to carry sufficient number of clothing. It is recommended to carry light weight clothing as you will need more number of pairs. You will be experiencing the beaches as well as the hilly terrain, thus the combination of both cotton and woollen clothing are highly recommended. Pilgrims and Tourism will be visiting many temples during the Yathra and thus being in the traditional wear is required (Sri Lankan or Indian). Men are required to note and few temple have a restriction of shirts and it those temple men should be toptess (without any shirt or baniyan).

Sita Kotuwa

Legend

The place holds the legend of once having the Queens palace (Anthahpuram), the adobe of Mandodhari. The palace was considered to have heavenly surrounding with mesmerizing nature composed with waterfalls, streams, flora and fauna.

When Sitadevi was brought to Lankapura, she was first offered to stay in this palace and she was further been offered a luxurious private mansion nearby with number of attendants at her service. However, upon her reluctance to the offers and luxuries, King Ravana later moved her to Asoka Vanam.

Location Gurulupotha, Hasalaka

Access Gurulupotha is on the Kandy - Mahiyangana, road at the 63km post,

4 km from Hasalaka town. Trek down 2 km (approx 4 km both ways) from

Gurulupotha Rest House.

Distance & Time Distance from Kandy to the site : 65.4 km

Time : 02 hrs - 01 hr walk

Distance from Mahiyanganaya to the site : 12.3 km

Time : 30 min - 01 hr walk

To spend at site : 2hrs

Note Archaeological site





Gurulupotha

Legend It is believed that there was an aircraft repair center in the capital city of

King Ravana. In Valmiki's depiction King Ravana's Vimana resembled a huge peacock. The Vimana in Sinhala language means Dhandu Monara which is known as flying peacock, and hence the name Gurulupotha, which means

parts of birds.

Location As in Sita Kotuwa above

Distance & Time Distance from Kandy to the site : 65 km

Time : 02 hrs - 01 hr walk

Distance from Mahiyanganaya to the site : 12.3 km

Time : 30 min - 01 hr walk

Note Archaeological site



Rama Setu or Nala Setu:

Legend This is the legendary structure built for the Vanara Sena to cross the

sea. This structure got immersed partially in late 1400 Ads due to natural calamities and global warming. Today and 16 locations between Danush Koti in India and Talai Mannar in Sri Lanka this structure is exposed as sand dunes. One needs to take special permissions and guards to visit this location. In Ramayanam, this bridge was engineered by Nala for

Rama on the instruction of Sugreeva, the king of Vanaras.

Location North Western Sri Lanka

Note Rama Sethu is a causeway with a length of 30km long



Thotupola Kanda

Legend Researchers believe that there were more than 6 airports which were used

by King Ravana and his mighty army to land and take off their vimanas. These Vimanas were used as both goods and passenger carriers. Identified airports are Weregantota in Mahiyangana, Thotupola Kanda at Horton Plains, Ussangoda on the Southern Coast, Wariyapola in Kurunegala and

Wariyapola in Matale

Location Horton Plains

Distance & Time Distance from Nuwara Eliya to the site : 37 km

Time : 01.30 hrs - 30 min walk

Distance from Pattipola to the site : 4.5 km

Time : 01 hr - 30 min walk

Note Steep climb

Ramboda Sri Baktha HanumanTemple

Legend The place has two connections to the history Ramyanaya.

a. It is believed, that Lord Hanuma guessed the location of Asoka Vanam when he lading here.

b. During the time of war, this place served as one of the army camps of Lord Rama

Location Thawalamtenne, Ramboda

Access Kandy - Nuwara Eliya road (40km post on A5 route)

Distance & Time Distance from Nuwara Eliya to the site : 30.8 km

Time : 01.30 hrs - 10 min walk

Distance from Tawalantenne to the site : 450 m

Time : 20 min - 10 min walk

Note Chinmaya mission of Sri Lanka has built a temple with Lord Hanuman as

the presiding deity on this hill. On every full moon day special poojas are conducted and witnessed by thousands of devotees. The statue of Lord

Hanuman here is carved out of granite and is 16 feet in height.





Sita Amman Temple

Legend Today's Sita Amman Temple or Sita Eliya Temple is considered to be a part

of Asoka Vanam. This is the temple that holds the ancient idols of Sita Devi, Lord Sri Rama, Lakshmana and Lord Hanuma. There was no record on by whom and when were these idols installed here. Temple around the idols kept on upgraded and polished. A stream behind the temple is considered as the stream where Sita Devi used to bathe. One can also see the footprints

of Lord Hanuma here.

Location Seetha Eliya

Access Kandy - Nuwara Eliya road (40km post on A5 route)

Distance & Time Distance from Nuwara Eliya to the site : 03.7 km

Time : 30 min

Note Now there is a temple for Lord Rama, Sitadevi, Laxshmana, and Lord

Hanuman.



Gayathri Peedam

Legend

During the mega battle Meghanatha, Son of King Ravana who was title as Indrajith on defeating Indra decides to conduct an auspicious at Nikumbhila Chaitya for an assured victory. Sensing his plan, Vibhishana alerts Rama and his team and suggest interrupting the said Homam. For which Lakshnama, Vibhishana and Hanuma takes the lead and Lakshmana neutralized the Homam and Meganatha. Today's Gayathri Peedam is considered to be at the Nikumbila Chaitya Homam place.

Location Nuwara Eliya town

Distance & Time Distance from Nuwara Eliya to the site : 04.6km

Time : 20 min
To spend at site : 20 min

Note This is the first temple built for Gayathri Amman in Sri Lanka, and the Shiva

Lingam in this temple was brought from the holy river Narmada.

Ussangoda

Legend According to Ramayana, after meeting Sitadevi Lord Hanuman decided to

test the strength of the mighty King Ravana and his army of Rakshasas. In the events that unfolded Lord Hanuman's tail was set on fire by the Rakshasas, who in turn went on to torch some parts of King Ravana's empire. It is believed that Ussanggoda is one of the torched areas, which is said to have

been an airport used by King Ravana.

Location On the Southern coast of the country

Access 4km off Nonagama on Matara Hambantota road.

Distance & Time Distance from Colombo to the site : 222 km

Time : 03.30 hrs

Distance from Ambalanthota to the site : 07.7 km by water

Time : 30 min

Note The soil in this area still has the blackened, burned scorched effect as a

reminder of Lord Hanuman's escapade. It is also evident that the soil in the

surrounding area is of different color and has plant life.



World's End or Pathala Loka

Legend World's end or Pathala Loka is the place where King Ravana had hidden

both Lord Rama and Lakshmana who were later rescued by Lord Hanuman

who carried them back on his broad shoulders.

Location In Horton Plains (closer to Nuwara Eliya)

Distance & Time Distance from Nuwara Eliya to the site : 37 km

Time : 01.30 hrs - 03.30 hrs walk

To spend at site : 3 hrs

Note Involves 8 km of walking.





Muneeshwaram

Legend

Lord Rama after his victorious battle left for Ayodhya in one of King Ravana's vimana's. He felt he was being followed by "Brahmahasthi Dosham" as he had killed King Ravana who was a Brahmin. He stopped the vimana at this juncture because he felt at this place the Brahma hasthi Dosham" was not following him. He ascended from the vimana and asked God Shiva for a remedy. God Shiva blessed Lord Rama and advised him to install four lingams at Manavari, Thiru Koneshwaram, Thiru Ketheshwaram and Rameshwaram in India and pray, as the only remedy to get rid of the "Brahmahasthi Dosham".

Location About 1.2km from Chilaw town, on Chilaw - Kurunegala Road.

Distance & Time Distance from Colombo to the site : 86.2 km

Time : hrs

Distance from Chillaw to the site : 1.2 km
Time : 10 min
To spend at site : 30min

Note

In Tamil Mun - means long time ago and Eswaram - means Shiva temple. Temple is open from 6.00 a.m to 8.00 p.m. Two annual festivals take place in this temple in February and in August. This temple was destroyed by the Portuguese. It was reconstructed in 1753. Later temple was renovated and reconstructed by Kumaraswami Kurukkal in 1875. The construction of the "Kopuram" was completed in 1963.





Thiru Koneswaram

Legend

Thiru Koneswaram, today's Trincomalee too had connections to the Legendary History.

- King Ravana did his penance to Lord Shiva here. a)
- b) After the mega-battle, this is one of the four places where Lord Rama installed Shiva Limgams to get rid of Brahma Hatya Dosham.
- This place holds one Shakthi Pheetam. "Lankaayam Shankari Devi" is referred to this place.

: 257 km

Location

In the Trincomalee Town

Distance & Time Distance from Colombo to the site

Time : 05 hrs - 5 min_walk

Distance from Trincomalee to the site : 500 m

: 10 min - 5 min walk Time

Note

This is situated within the Dutch Fort. People are allowed to walk to the

temple without any special approval.



Thiru Ketheswaram

Legend Thiru Ketheshwaram is the third Lingam in Lanka, which Lord Rama installed

and prayed to get rid of the Brahmahasthi Dosham.

Location In Mannar

Distance & Time Distance from Anuradhapura to the site : 112 km

Time : 02 hrs

Distance from Mannar to the site : 8.7 km
Time : 15 min



Kanniya

Legend

It is believed that Kanniya is the place where King Ravana carried out the last rites for his mother. When he was not able to find water to perform his rites, he in sheer anger pierced the ground with his trishul seven times, and water started gushing out immediately. It is believed that the anger of the king subsided on seeing the water and similarly the warmth of the water also reduced. The temperature of the water is different in each of the seven wells.

Location About 10km from Trincomalee town on the Trincomalee - Anuradhapura road

Distance & Time

Distance from Trincomalee to the site : 10 km

Time : 20 min - 5 min walk

Manavari

Legend Manavari is the first place where Lord Rama installed the Shiva Lingam

and prayed after the end of the war with King Ravana. This Lingam is called Ramalingam because it was made by Lord Rama. Apart from this, the Lingam in Rameshwaram is the only Lingam in the world which is named

after Lord Rama

Location On the Chiaw - Puttalam road about 10km from Chilaw. From Katunayake

Airport about 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Distance & Time Distance from Colombo to the site : 93.6 km

Time : 02.30 hrs - 02 min walk

Distance from Chillaw to the site : 10 km

Time : 20 min - 02 min walk

Note The annual festival takes place in **July** for **Ten days**.

from 6.30 a.m to 12.30 p.m and from 4.00 to 7.00 p.m









Ishtripura

Legend Ishtripura means an area of women in Sinhalese. It is believed that this was

one of the places to which King Ravana shifted Sitadevi as a precautionary measure after Lord Hanuman's advent. It is said that Sitadevi took bath in nearby stream and dried her hair sitting on a rock and put clips to her hair,

hence this rock is known as Kanda Kattu Gala.

Location Kirivanagama, Lunuwatte (13km from Welimada)

Access Welimada Town I Udapussalawa Road I Lunuwatta I Thrivangama temple

(about 17.5km) Proceed on Udapussalawa road from Welimada town. Turn off to Lunuwatte Road. Pass Lunuwatte Town and proceed to Kirivanagama (13km from Welimada). Trek from Kiriwanagama temple, trek approx about

3 km one way.

Distance & Time Distance from Nuwara Eliya to the site : 27 km

Time : 02.30 hrs - 01 hr walk

Distance from Welimada to the site : 13 km

Time : 01hr - 01hr walk

Note There are many interconnecting tunnels and caves in this area. This appears

to be a part of a great ingenious network of paths, which is connected to all

the major areas of King Ravana's city.

Ravana Cave

Legend These tunnels prove beyond doubt the architectural brilliance of King

Ravana. These tunnels served as a quick means of transport through the hills and also as a secret passage. These tunnels networked all the important cities, airports and dairy farms. A close look at these tunnels indicates that they are man-made and not natural formations. The Buddhist shrine at Kalutara was where once King Ravana's palace and a tunnel existed. Existing tunnelmouths are situated Isthripura at Welimada, Ravana cave at Bandarawela, Senapitiya at Halagala, Ramboda, Labookelle, Wariyapola / Matale and Sitakotuwa / Hasalaka. In addition there are many more tunnels.

Location From Bandarawela pass Ella to Ravana Cave

Access Turn off 3Km from Ella on Wellawaya Road. Go up 2 km to Ravana Ella

Temple. Trek up hill for about 2 Km

Distance & Time Distance from Ella to the site : 01 km

Time : 15 min - 01 hr walk

Note To reach the site: The trek is 45 minutes. To spend at site: 02 hrs.





Kataragama

Legend This is the temple of Lord Karthikeya Subramaniam at Kataragama. During

it is believed that Lord Karthikeya, the Senapathi of the Gods was requested by Lord Indra to support Lord Rama. This was done to protect Lord Rama from the wrath of Brahma asthram shot by King Ravana which otherwise would have weakened Lord Rama. Brahmaasthram aimed at Lord Rama for the second time was rendered useless by the presence of Lord Karthikeya.

Location Kataragama

Distance & Time Distance from Colombo to the site : 282 km

Time : 06 hrs - 10 min walk

Distance from Tissamaharamaya to the site : 18.1 km

Time : 30 min - 10 min walk



Yudhaganawa

Legend It is said that this particular piece of land can never bear any vegetation as this served as the battlefield and had borne the brunt of destruction.

Location In the midst of the jungle Wasgamuwa

Access In side Wasgamuwa National Park. Accessible by 4 wheel drive jeep

Distance & Time

Distance from Kandy to the site : 123 km Time : 02.30 hrs

Distance from Mahiyanganaya to the site : 40 km Time : 01hr

Note Wild life safari could be done.



Rumassala Sanjeevani Drops

Legend

The name derived from the world Ruma and Massala where Ruma is the historical character in Ramayanam – the queen of Vanara Sena and wife of King Sugreeva, while Massala means big rock. This Rock is believed to be one of the pieces of the Audhadhi mount (popularly known as Sanjeevini mount) which was brought by Lord Hanuma in rescue of Lakshmana during. It is believed that parts of the hill fell on five places in Sri Lanka, namely, Rumasala in Galle, Dolu Kanda in Hiripitiya, Ritigala on the Habarana Anuradhapura Road, Thalladi in Mannar and Kachchativu in the North.

Location Unawatuna, Galle

Distance & Time Distance from Colombo to the site : 128 km

Time : 02 hrs

Distance from Galle to the site : 05.5 km
Time : 15 min
To spend at site : 1 hr

Note There is a statue of Lord Hanuman at the site.



Divurumpola

Legend

This is the place where Sitadevi underwent "Agni" test. Sitadevi reached her husband. Meeting him after such a long time, she was overcome by joyous emotion. But Lord Rama appeard to be lost in thought. At length he spoke, "I have killed my enemy. I have done my duty as a true king. But you have lived in the enemy's abode. It is not proper that I should take you back now Sitadevi was shocked. Is it my fault that the monster carried me off by force? All the time, my mind, my heart, and soul were fixed on you and you alone, my Lord!" she said and turned to Lakshmana and said with tears streaming from her eyes, "Prepare for me a fire, that is the only remedy for this sorrow of mind Lakshmana in suppressed anger, looked at Lord Rama's face, but saw no sign of softening. He lighted a big fire. Sitadevi reverently went round her husband and approached the blazing fire. Joining her palms in salutation, she said, If I'm, pure, the fire protect me, with these words she jumped into the flames, to the horror of the monkeys who stood on all sides watch ing the tragic sight. Then arose from out of the flames Agni, the firegod, whom she had invoked. He lifted Sitadevi from the flames unharmed, and presented her to Lord Rama. "Don't I know that she is spotless and pure at heart?" cried Lord Rama, standing up to receiver her. "It is for the sake of the world that I made her go through this ordeal of fire, so that the truth may be known to all.

Location

20km from Seetha Eliya on Nuwara Eliya Welimada road

Distance & Time Distance from Nuwara Eliya to the site : 17.7 km

Time

: 01.30 hrs - 5 min walk

Distance from Welimada to the site

Time

: 20 min - 5 min walk

: 03.7 km





Kelaniya Buddhist Temple

Legend

It is believed that Kelaniya is the place from where King Vibeeshana ruled after being crowned by Lakshmana. As Lord Rama was in exile for 14 years, could not take part in any coronation ceremony, deputed his younger brother Prince Lakshmana to crown Vibeeshana. Today in this very place a Buddhist shrine and a temple for king Vibeeshana exist. There are murals enshrined outside the Buddhist temple depicting the crowning of King Vibeeshana. Today temples for King Vibeeshana are found throughout Lanka and he is still considered as one of the 4 guardian deities of Sri Lanka. A painting of King Vibeeshana adorns the walls of the new parliament. It is a fact that there is no temple for King Ravana where as many exist for King Vibeeshana. This goes on to prove that his stand towards dharma and justice made him a God in Sri Lanka.

Location

About 10km from Colombo on Colombo-Kandy Road



Dewundara

Legend It is believed that from here Sugreeva king of the Vanara's started his

onslaught on King Ravana's forces.

Location On the Colombo - Matara main road

Access Colombo - Matara main road

Distance & Time Distance from Colombo to the site : 164 km

Time : 03 hrs

Distance from Matara to the site : 24.3 km Time : 45 min

Note The Southern most part of Sri Lanka is called Dewundara and futher up

towards west is called Seenigama Hikaduwa

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Wariyapola in Kurunegala & Matale

Legend

Today, Wariyapola is a name of a village in Sri Lanka. However the legend attached to it was that one of the Ravana's airports used to be here. The legend further gains support on breaking down the name "Wariyapola" and observing it linguistically. The name actually means "Aircraft landing place".

Kurunegala:-

Location Kurunegala

Distance & Time Distance from Kandy to the site : 25 km

> : 01 hr Time

Distance from Kurunagala to the site : 25.2 km : 43 min

Time

Matale:-

Location Matale

Distance & Time Distance from Kandy to the site : 25 km

> : 01 hr Time

Distance from Mathale to the site : 01.1 km

Time : 15 min

Very flat area surrounded by hills Note





Pushpaka Vimana

By far, the most popular of them is that of Pushpaka Vimana which was used by Rama to return from Lanka to Ayodhya along with Sita, after vanquishing Ravana.

This Pushpaka Vimana was the one in which Vibhishana, the then crowned King of Lanka, brought Rama and the entire entourage to Ayodhya. This particular Pushpaka Vimana which was in the Airport hangar of Ravana, originally belonged to Ravana's step brother, Kubera, from whom Ravana took it.

Apart from the Pushpaka Vimana, Ravana owned many other Vimana too. Ravana probably used these Vimana to travel to different parts of Lanka as well as outside Lanka. This is also borne out by the following sloka in the Valmiki Ramayana.

Rama tells Lakshmana, as they fly over Lanka in the Pushpaka Vimana, after the victory over Ravana.

Dandu Monara Vimana

The one other well mentioned Vimana that was used by Ravana, is Dandu Monara. In the local Sinhalese language. Monara means Mayura, peacock and Dandu Monara means "that which can fly resembling a peacock".

The six airports of Ravana

Ravana had many Vimana in his aero plane hangar. Infact, Ravana had six airports in his kingdom of Lanka. They being,

- **1.** Weragantota in Mahiyangana In the Sinhalese language, this word means a place for an aircraft to land.
- 2. Thotupola Kanda at Hoton Plains The word Thotupola means a port, a place that one touches during one's journey. Kanda means rock. Thotupola Kanda is a flat land over a rocky range at a height of 6000 feet from sea level. So this means that it could only have been a port of call for a transport vehicle that could travel in air. So it must have been an airport and not a sea port. The present airport of Sri Lanka at Colombo, is called Videsha Bandaranayake Guwan Thotupola in Sinhala where again Guwan means air and Thotupola means port.
- 3. Ussangoda on the southern coast During the time of Ramayana ravana used to travel in his pushpak Vimana from one place to other, And it is believed that ravana used to park his pushpak vimana in this place. In here sand is red and some stones are black and people believe that hanuman came and burnt the land since then the land turned red.

WARIYAPOLA

(KURUNEGALA)

WARIYAPOLA

(MATTALE)

WARIYAPOLA

GURULUPOTHA

THOTUPOLA KANDA

USANGODA

Ravana's six airports on Sri Lanka map

- **4. Wariyapola in Kurunegala** the word Wariyapola is said to have been derived from Watha-ri-ya-pola meaning place for landing and takeoff of aircrafts.
- 5. Wariyapola in Matale -
- **6. Gurulupotha in Mahiyangana** the word Gurulupotha in Sinhalese means parts of birds, indicating this to be an aircraft hangar or repair centre.

Other places in relation to Ramayanam:

Ramayan Yathra is not restricted to the above mentioned locations alone. They are many others to explore in the Island nation and these need more time blended in enthusiasm and adventurous nature. Some of them are mentioned below.

- Maha Ravana (in the Indian Ocean)
- Kuda Ravana (in the Indian Ocean)
- At World's End (Horton Plains)
- Chariot Path
- Istripura (Streepura)
- Dunuvila
- Sita Pokuna
- Yudhaganawa
- Dolukanda
- Ritigala
- Talladi
- Katchchathivu
- Yahangala (Bed Rock)
- Many more....

