EMIRATES A380 COLOMBO FLIGHT MARKS A MILESTONE

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An Emirates A380 superjumbo landed at Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) Katunayake on Monday, helping Sri Lanka and the airport to achieve an aviation milestone.

Sri Lanka's minister of transport and aviation Nimal Siripala de Silva was at the airport to greet Abdul Hameed Abdul Fattah Kazhim Al-Mulla, the UAE Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Emirates' senior vice president commercial (West Asia & Indian Ocean) Ahmed Khoory who were among the VIPs on the flight, the first A380 commercial flight to the country.

Arranged to celebrate the BIA's recently resurfaced and upgraded runway, the special one-off A380 flight operated as EK654 from Dubai, replacing the B777 aircraft usually deployed by Emirates on flights to Sri Lanka. The world's biggest passeneger jet was on ground for more than six hours.

"This one-off flight reflects the strong relationship we have with the market and our commitment to the destination. It signifies that, when demand for the destination grows, as it definitely will, to the point that scheduled A380 flights are feasible, Emirates will be ready to operate one," said Mr Khoory

"For the BIA, this event signals that it is 'A380-ready,' and that the world's largest A380 operator - Emirates - has already operated a commercial flight. Given the Sri Lanka government's focus on

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developing tourism, this is an important development. For local aviation enthusiasts it is a matter of pride that their airport has joined the ranks of leading international airports in the A380 league," he added.

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