Good-times ahead!

According to the latest statistics released by the Ceylon Tourist Board, tourist arrivals into Sri Lanka are showing signs of an upturn.

First quarter of 1997 reflects a 19.9% increase as against the same period in 1996. The total increase is in the region of 21,000 arrivals.

The 100,000 drop recorded in 1996 has been attributed to the escalation of domestic violence.

The Tourist Board is to entrust Manning Selvage & Lee, New York, the task of implementing an international image-building campaign. The total cost of the project is US$2.5 million and it is to be launched in selected markets-France, Germany, Holland, South Africa, Russia, South Korea, Singapore, Japan, India.

Whether the increase in arrivals and the new promotion plan will deliver the goods is a question for the future. What is of more importance is to discern whether a qualitative change has taken place. Spending power, duration of stay, breakdown of arrivals… have to bet looked into more carefully and evaluated. National figures have to be set side by side with world and regional figures.

Just because somebody writes ‘tourist’ on an embarkation form, to think that the tourist industry will leap frog, is jumping the gun.