Sri Lanka unveils bold AI vision at Inaugural National AI Expo 2025



L–R: Sunil Kumara Gamage; Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports; Sunil Handunnetthi, Minister of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development; Prime Minister Dr. Harini Amarasuriya; Eng. Eranga Weeraratne, Deputy Minister of Digital Economy, Dr. Mothilal De Silva, Chairman, SLT Group, and Waruna Sri Dhanapala, Acting Secretary, Ministry of Digital Economy.

Sri Lanka’s inaugural National AI Expo and Conference 2025 is a major step towards becoming a regional AI hub. Organized by the Ministry of Digital Economy and SLT-

MOBITEL, the event brought together local and global leaders to shape an AI-driven future. Discussions focused on AI's impact on sectors like the Digital Economy, Education, Healthcare, Agriculture, and National Security. Experts highlighted the need for human capital development, innovation ecosystems, ethical practices, inclusivity, and enhancing cybersecurity to prepare a future-ready workforce.

Prime Minister Dr. Harini Amarasuriya highlighted AI's growing role in decision-making, envisioning the country as a leader in using technology for problem-solving and social equity. She emphasized the need for critical thinking, ethical innovation, and a workforce prepared for modern technology, advocating for the integration of digital literacy and data education into the national curriculum.

Eng. Eranga Weeraratne, Deputy Minister of Digital Economy stressed AI's importance and its overall contribution to the Digital Economy. The Deputy Minister compared AI to electricity in its transformative power, calling on industry to invest in talent and ideas while ensuring equitable access that supports rural and urban communities, local languages, and Sri Lanka's unique needs. He also announced plans for a dedicated startup funding program beginning in January 2026 to support AI research and innovation.

Dr. Mothilal De Silva, Chairman of SLT Group, highlighted the pivotal role of telecommunications infrastructure in enabling AI, describing data networks as the 'arteries carrying blood.' He underscored SLT-MOBITEL's commitment to advancing AI responsibly, ensuring data sovereignty, providing AI-as-a-service for all, and fostering broad stakeholder collaboration to build an inclusive, AI-enabled society. Dr. De Silva also emphasised the importance of partnerships between government, industry, and academia to position Sri Lanka as a leader in the global AI landscape.

The National AI Expo & Conference featured a vibrant exhibition with demos, workshops, and hands-on experiences, attracting thousands of attendees. Huawei showcased AI solutions in cloud, smart cities, healthcare, and education, while Microsoft, AWS, and other partners supported the event.

A highlight was the SLT-MOBITEL AI Campus, where students engaged in robotics and coding, receiving mentorship on career paths. The event included hackathons and concluded with an Awards & Recognition Ceremony for winners in various categories. The Expo aimed to position Sri Lanka as a digital services hub in South Asia, fostering a thriving ecosystem for tech entrepreneurs and investors.