

SRI LANKA: POLICE TRACK FOREIGN TOURISTS



According to an announcement of Sri Lankan police officials, they have begun keeping tabs on all foreign tourists in a bid to make sure that they are safe throughout their stay.

Buddhika Siriwardena, the police spokesman stated that part of the new security plan required guest houses and hotels to submit reports on all their foreign guests every week.

Speaking to the AFP, Siriwardena was quoted saying, 'Tourists are part of the economy.' He further explained that the scheme would ensure **that law enforcement officers had details of tourists around their zones which would help keep tabs on them.**

Hotel owners have confirmed these reports; most said that they had been asked to provide visa and passport details of foreigners they have been accommodating. This information will be fed to a database dedicated to industry-related statistics. A hotel worker, who requested anonymity, said that some people would be put off as it looked like surveillance.

This comes after a Briton was killed during a gang attack in a southern tourist-resort sometime in December 2011 and barely a month after 2 Europeans were beaten. The British Foreign-Office claims that violent cases against foreigners in Sri Lanka are rare although there has been a noticeable increase in cases of sexual offences even on minors.

The tourism sector received a massive boost after Tamil tigers separatist-rebels were ousted ending nearly 4 decades of ethnic dissension that claimed over 100, 000 lives according to figures released by the UN.

Hotel prices have gone up 300% as a record 1,000,000 tourists visited the country in 2012. This is double the average figures recorded in the final-years of the civil-war. Sri Lanka began charging entry-fees into the country in 2011 after scrapping off the visa-on-arrival system.

Law enforcement officers are using an ordinance that was issued in 1866 to oblige hotels to supply relevant information.

Date: 2013-04-22

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/sri-lankan-police-started-tracking-foreign-tourists--news3668>