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# Tourism minister mulls wristbands, curfews for tourists

## Tourism minister suggests tourists be tracked, limited in party hours

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Online news: [Local News](#)  
Writer: [Reuters](#)

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Thailand's tourism minister said Tuesday that identification wristbands could be distributed to tourists following the murder of two British backpackers earlier this month that has raised fresh concerns over tourist safety.

Tourism and Sports Minister Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul said she had approached hotels over the idea of handing out wristbands to help identify tourists that get lost or into trouble.



Tourists carry their luggage on a pier in Chumphon province on their way to the boat heading to the island of Koh Tao. Thailand's tourism minister said Tuesday that identification wristbands would be distributed to tourists nationwide when they check into hotels following the murder of two British backpackers on the island. (AFP photo)

"When tourists check-in to a hotel they will be given a wristband with a serial number that matches their ID and shows the contact details of the resort they are staying in so that if they're out partying late and, for example, get drunk or lost, they can be easily assisted," Ms Kobkarn told Reuters.

"The next step would be some sort of electronic tracking device, but this has not yet been discussed in detail."

She added that a "buddy system" - pairing tourists with a local minder at tourist destinations - was also being discussed.

The bodies of Hannah Witheridge, 23, and David Miller, 24, were found on a beach on the southern island of Koh Tao Sept. 15. Post-mortem examinations by Thailand's forensics department showed Witheridge died from severe head wounds and Miller died from drowning and blows to the head. Almost three weeks after the murder police are no closer to an arrest as frustration mounts over the lack of a breakthrough.

Ms Kobkarn admitted the wristband idea has already met with some resistance. "Most people welcome the idea but some hotels are concerned that tourists may not want to wear the wristbands."

Limiting party hours on some of Thailand's islands and imposing restrictions over where beach parties can be held were also being considered, said Kobkarn. The idea is unlikely to go down well with hoards of young backpackers who travel to Thailand each year in search of sun, sea and a good time.

Authorities have expressed concern over the murders' impact on tourism, which accounts for nearly 10% of GDP.

Thailand is still under martial law after a May 22 coup, something that has made many tourists think twice about traveling to the country.

The industry has yet to recover from a slump in visitors due to months of sometimes-violent street protests that left nearly 30 people dead. Tourists arriving in Thailand fell 11.9% in August from a year earlier after a 10.9% drop in July.

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**dragonkrz** Posted: 325 | 30 Sep 2014 at 20.32 [Report abuse](#)

The story is already here in Europe. My office colleagues cannot believe this could be true. Unfortunately is.

15 0 0

**Ernie.M** Posted: 5 | 30 Sep 2014 at 20.29 [Report abuse](#)

You will lose so many tourists believe me. People will not accept tracking devices and think Thailand is much more dangerous than it really is! Talk about a hammer to swot a fly!

19 0 0

**ricardo** Posted: 366 | 30 Sep 2014 at 19.40 [Report abuse](#)

As a former tennis player used to say "You cannot be serious". All that is needed is "real" police that patrol the areas in question rather than sit in the station and gamble all night.

23 0 0

**gingerpops** Posted: 42 | 30 Sep 2014 at 19.01 [Report abuse](#)

now I have heard everything! a better way would be to meet all tourists at the airport, escort them to their hotels and tell them to remain in the hotel until its time to go home! think that would ensure their safety but I don't think it would do thailand's economy much good!

16 0 0

**Riceater** Posted: 1 | 30 Sep 2014 at 18.32 [Report abuse](#)

Just print an encoded room number and the hotel address on their room key/card. This would only assist them if lost, but the issue is about safety, and this will require more cctv and competent, visible police officers.

13 0 0

**pquinlan** Posted: 1,492 | 30 Sep 2014 at 18.26 [Report abuse](#)

This has already hit the ABC in Oz. I'm sure it must be cropping up in all of Thailand's main tourist source markets. Saying it is not being well received would be something of an understatement. Think again Minister. And Gen Prayuth, maybe think again about this ministerial appointment?

80 0 0

**millsee** Posted: 5 | 30 Sep 2014 at 18.23 [Report abuse](#)

Looking at how badly they have bungled this case with international attention imagine what happens when an impoverished Thai is murdered? Thai cops are a disgrace to the country. They should give them tracking devices.

64 0 0

**john120** Posted: 2 | 30 Sep 2014 at 18.19 [Report abuse](#)

The police investigation is a joke, and comments made by government officials just makes Thailand look bad in the eyes of the world. So many crimes against tourists happen in Thailand and they are past off as suicides or crimes committed by a scapegoat with out the real person being charged. The Bangkok Post has a very good article about crimes committed against Tourist's in Sundays paper. Time to sort the police out, train them how to be real police, how to control a crime scene, how to give facts to the media and public and up hold the law.

62 0 0



**ploydonut** Posted: 604 | 30 Sep 2014 at 18.07

Report abuse

This is the good idea but expensive. I do think cheaper way is for tourist to sign paper every beach they go to, and if they go out at night have to sign and write where they will go.

5 96 1

**Comment reply**

Report abuse



**LukeThomas** Posted: 17 | 30 Sep 2014 at 19.56

Foreign tourists will see (and have already seen) that all this hassle can be avoided by not going to Thailand.

15 0



**jungleman** Posted: 2 | 30 Sep 2014 at 18.06

Report abuse

Maybe they should have a small special unit dedicated to serious crimes against foreigners that can be shipped in to wherever , that way there would be less chance of locals influencing and interfering with the investigation.

55 0 0



**GerryGee** Posted: 81 | 30 Sep 2014 at 18.05

Report abuse

ABC has picked up this story, so it should get a viral global laugh as well. Imagine telling your friends your going to Thailand for a holiday. First they would laugh, then call the "nutty" Doctor for you.

39 0 0



**nui** Posted: 1,359 | 30 Sep 2014 at 17.40

Report abuse

I just checked, already headlines in New Zealand, Australia and Germany. What an embarrassment. Many tourists will stay away from Thailand after this absurd statement.

52 0 0



**myopinion** Posted: 135 | 30 Sep 2014 at 17.39

Report abuse

Unbelievable! I hope this does not make it into the international news - tagging tourists like prisoners! When I read the headline first I quickly checked if it is an old story from Aprils fools day?

80 0 1

**Comment reply**

Report abuse



**onlooker** Posted: 46 | 30 Sep 2014 at 18.26

more good stuff for the tabloids.... just when you think it could not get any worse.

39 0



**Chamisal** Posted: 1 | 30 Sep 2014 at 17.35

Report abuse

Two tourists get murdered, so let's restrict the tourists not the criminals? I know this seems funny to many, but it shows a serious lack of comprehension by such a 'prominent' official. Foreigners do not need to be coddled and tracked because of their 'naive' expectation of safety. Their expectation of safety should instead be the goal Thailand aspires to if it wants to retain tourist income. Blaming the victim is never a good strategy to attract sympathy or understanding. By proposing these measures in response to the murders, the minister is virtually saying the fault lies with the tourists, not the perpetrators.

88 0 0



**johncat1** Posted: 618 | 30 Sep 2014 at 17.29

Report abuse

Thais have IDs but it doesn't keep them safe

64 0 0



**Chef** Posted: 371 | 30 Sep 2014 at 17.28

Report abuse

Or you could arrest the crooked cops and invest in ethical, moral police officers. Wristband with tracking device may be easier.

52 0 0



**bangna63** Posted: 178 | 30 Sep 2014 at 17.18

Report abuse

Exactly how is a rubber wristband going to deter thieves, murderers and rapists?! The 2 victims were not lost! I have an alternative idea: get a competent police force.

67 0 0



**Kong1610** Posted: 3 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.49

Report abuse

Absurd idea. And when the tourism/sport minister claim most people support it, i wonder if she is referring to this planet earth tourists?

93 1 0



**garabaldi** Posted: 264 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.48

Report abuse

This is hilarious.

95 2 0



**robins** Posted: 1,720 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.43

Report abuse

If you really want to help both tourists and your industry, make it a standard practice to invite countries whose nationals are murdered here to send law enforcement representatives to assist and witness the investigation, many like the FBI are already in Thailand. Think how much grief Thailand's tourist industry could have saved itself if British law enforcement officials were in a position to defend the investigation of the island murders.

89 6 1

**Comment reply**

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**meerkat** Posted: 103 | 30 Sep 2014 at 19.09

The British Criminal Investigation Department one of the best in the World should have been invited to attend when it was confirmed that the victims were British!!

10 0



**robins** Posted: 1,720 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.39

Report abuse

If I were PM and one of my subordinates made a public statement like this in his or her official capacity, there would be a vacant position to fill tomorrow.

120 2 0



**tommylee** Posted: 732 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.35

Report abuse

It is so easy to make Thailand the laughing stock of the world.

127 1 0



**tomtotom** Posted: 21 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.15

Report abuse

March of the gladiators is ringing in my ears

33 0 0



**martz** Posted: 5 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.13

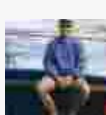
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It might be funny for a lot of readers, but i am dependent on tourism to pay my staff and my wages. Can we please STOP trying to hurt the tourism sector again and again and again.... and again. First the riots and killings, then martial law and the power take over, then the killings of the two Europeans (lets be honest, this happens all over the world, in all countries; its horrible but this is not Thailand alone nor Thailand's fault), then the bikini and ugly women row and now this. Can we put a filter between back room nonsensical thoughts and information you want to go world wide and can hurt the industry?

43 30 1

**Comment reply**

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**sibley** Posted: 401 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.44

I am not saying you but over the years tourism has been hurt by the farang being treated badly, namely over pricing, scams, Thailand needs to treat tourists with respect not like cash cows or ATMs , when you speak Thai and you go to buy a piece of chicken and the Thai person before you gets charged 30 bart and when you as for the same chicken the price is 50 bart, ok it is only 20 bart but all the same it is disappointing.

87 1



**luciano** Posted: 5 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.09

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That's right. Treat the tourist as the criminals, put them to bed before midnight and let the real criminals and murderers roam free. Thailand is getting more idiotic by the minute. Time to sell my assets here and move the hell out before all is worthless...

134 1 0



**HKfoot** Posted: 12 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.08

Report abuse

It is not surmise a minister has such idea to treat tourists as convicts on parole, we the expats have been treated as people on bail for trial since we need to report to the Immigration every 90 days.

125 1 0



**Cheezsnack** Posted: 2 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.01

Report abuse

:D Joking..right? You should test this first with criminals who are most likely to commit new crimes.. And if it works, then you can start to "Big Brother" tourists also, who STILL NOW brings in huge amount of money to your country.

69 1 0



**nui** Posted: 1,359 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.01

Report abuse

Oh my God, I can't believe that . Are they from another planet ? This will be the headline in the media all over the world tomorrow. How embarrassing for Thailand.

85 0 0



**zulu** Posted: 166 | 30 Sep 2014 at 16.00

Report abuse

it's true the suggestions of the tourism minister are absurd, but before you make your comments, be aware that every mobile phone, every ATM card are tracking devices. so, the traveler just has to give his/her mobile no. and TAT, police/army/cia/nsa/mi6 - you'll name it always perfectly know where you are. (and with the ATM card they also know what you eat + drink) it's already there. Kobkarn is behind. TAT could create a fancy app. "let us know where you party, TAT buys the drinks". - will be a huge success :)

26 10 0



**Asterix** Posted: 251 | 30 Sep 2014 at 15.55

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Ridiculous and useless because tourists are not toddlers and will not accept that stupid idea. no country around the world have used wristbands excepted for