

Turkey Focuses on the Safety of Tourists

Turkey witnessed yet another attack in the first week of June when a bomb blast ripped apart a police vehicle that was passing through the central Beyazit district of Istanbul. The blast killed four civilians and seven officers.

The site of the bomb explosion, Vezneciler metro station area, is just walking distance away from main tourist attractions of the city, which includes the famous Suleymaniye Mosque. Prior to this, in March, a suicide bomb exploded on the Istiklal Street, a place frequented by tourists. In the attack, purportedly carried out by the Islamic State near the cafes and outside the local government offices, at least 36 people sustained injuries.



Ankara, the capital of Turkey, has also witnessed two attacks so far this year, a car bombing incident and the attack on a military convoy. Last year, in October, over 100 people were killed in what can be termed as the deadliest terror strike in the history of modern Turkey.

Currently, the country is going through a terrorism crisis, caused by both the PKK, Kurdish militants and the Islamic State.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President, said that Turkey is the top target as far as the terrorist groups in the region are concerned. Germany closed down its consulate in Istanbul and embassy in Ankara, citing intelligence reports of another attack. The US embassy issued warnings to its citizens about a potential attack.



In Istanbul, all shopping malls and museums have installed bag security x-ray scanners similar to those installed in airports. However, scanners have not been installed in Mosques like the Blue Mosque. The Turkish government announced that security has been beefed up in cities following the suicide bombing in January.

Turkish government has also said that actions are being taken against terrorists. Ahmet Davutoglu, prime minister of Turkey, said that terrorists cannot achieve their goals through such monstrous attacks and that the government would counter terrorism till it is completely wiped off. Turkey has already banned people from accessing Twitter and Facebook so as to prevent sharing of images of attacks.

In February, Turkey announced new security measures following the Ankara car bombing which killed 28 people. The new security measures announced by the Turkish prime minister, after the responsibility of the attack on the military convoy was claimed by a Kurdish armed group, included deployment of more security forces. He also requested the citizens to provide assistance to the security forces. **He noted that the support of the people of Turkey is essential for implementing successful security measures.**



Security measures in Turkey's airports have also been tightened. Even passengers' laptops are being checked after the authorities came across a laptop with a built-in explosive device in Gaziantep province during the course of an operation carried against the Islamic State.

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