**China steps up security to counter-terror attacks**

BEIJING: China has raised the highest security level and stepped up street patrols in Beijing to counter terrorism ahead of world championships in athletics and 70th anniversary of the victory in anti-fascist war.   
  
Patrol officers, traffic officers, armed police and assistant police will be deployed to densely populated venues, subways and busy streets to enhance patrolling, state-run Global Times reported today.   
  
The campaign, coded "peace action," will last until mid August. Security guards and volunteers in communities are also included in the patrol team, Beijing police said.   
  
Addressing the complicated anti-terrorism situation, controls and supervision would be especially tightened on knives, express deliveries, second hand markets, gas stations, and low-flying small aircraft.   
  
Beijing remained on high security after a terror attack at the Forbidden city in the city in 2013 that killed five persons including three suicide attackers from Muslim-majority Xinjiang province.   
  
The separatist outfit East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) from Xinjiang region was blamed for the attack.   
  
The new campaign is aimed at maintaining stability for the 2015 Beijing World Championships in Athletics that is scheduled to kick off in August, and the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of victory in the anti-fascist war including a military parade, the Global Times reported.   
  
"It also comes in the midst of the holy Muslim month of Ramadan, when the world is witnessing a high frequency of terror attacks," Wang Guoxiang, an associate professor at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, told the Global Times.   
  
"The Beijing police also attempted to avoid another July 5 Xinjiang riot that claimed over 180 lives in 2009, as terrorists tried to stir up troubles around each July 5 since 2009," Wang said.   
  
Xinjiang authorities have crackdown on 181 terror groups as of May after launching a sweeping anti-terrorism campaign in 2014.   
  
The tightened patrols will serve as a psychological deterrent to terrorists, Wang said.   
  
The campaign will also step up a crackdown on other social security problems, including gambling, prostitution, illegal hotels and illegal taxis.   
  
Police will also be dispatched to areas with poor social security to make arrests for illegal behaviour.