

Turkey News Update

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I thought you might be interested in the latest developments regarding the Republic of Turkey.

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Turkey & US Work to Improve Bi-Lateral Relations

-Turkish FM Cavusoglu, said that Turkey and the US have reached an understanding to stabilize Manjib and the east of the Euphrates, and that they would "work together for the security of these areas", he continued, "First, the YPG will leave and the people of Manjib will govern it. The security of the area will be ensured."

-US President Trump and Turkish President Erdogan spoke in late March to discuss the importance of strong relations and continued cooperation in the fight against terror in Iraq and Syria.

- The Pentagon reaffirms that they have been in close contact with Turkey to discuss the move forward in the fight against ISIS.
- Turkish FM Spokesperson Aksoy said that Turkey is still in talks with the US to purchase our Patriot missile system.
- Turkish FM Undersecretary Yalcin is visiting Washington as part of the US-Turkey working group to discuss the stabilization of Manjib and to prevent US-Turkey clashes in Syria.
- US President Trump emphasized the need to boost cooperation with Turkey regarding their "shared strategic challenges in Syria", on a call with French President Macron.
- US Defense Secretary Mattis stated that Turkey is a NATO ally, and that the US stands with them, in regard to the PKK presence in Sinjar, which poses a threat to Turkey.
- Mattis also said that the US has an open dialogue with the Turkish government in regard to Manjib, and that the two countries are "working it forward".
- Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Kaidanow is visiting Turkey to discuss bilateral defense trade and security cooperation, as well as to provide the US's perspective on bilateral and regional security issues as part of the US-Turkey Defense Trade Dialogue.
- US State Department Spokesperson Nauert stated, "I just want to make sure that we thank the government of Turkey, the police and also the security services for facilitating this investigation.", after Turkish police have detained ISIS suspects who plotted an attack against the US consulate.

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Turkey's Economy Shows Promise

- The IMF has increased the Turkish economy's growth estimate to 4.3% in 2018 and 2019.
- The number of newly established companies in Turkey rose 27.8% in February 2018, compared to February 2017, with the largest expansion in the commercial sector, construction, and manufacturing.
- In 2017, Turkey became the fastest growing economy in the world with an economic growth rate of 7.4%, due to a 12.9% rise in exports driven by increased tourism, eased fiscal policy which lowered taxes, and the government's credit guarantee fund for SMEs that spurred private sector job growth.
- QNB has stated that Turkey will be one of the fastest growing emerging markets of 2018, with an expected growth of 5.4%.
- The "breather" loan for SMEs has been raised to \$1.9 billion, from \$1.25 billion. This loan was an important part of Turkey's economic growth in 2017, generating 1.6 million jobs, and contributed to the 7.4% economic growth rate.
- The Turkish economy's 7.4% growth outperformed China (6.9%) and India (7.1%) in 2017, due to a surge in spending by households and various new government programs.
- Turkeys exports expanded 9.3% in Q4 of 2017.

- Turkey remains a top 10 manufacturing powerhouse, making it one of the most attractive countries for manufacturing companies, due to its attractive geographical position and growing infrastructure.
- Turkey's government is working to revise the Value-Added Tax (VAT) law, which will provide exemptions to philanthropists who build schools, hospitals, dormitories, and mosques, and for foreigners to receive health services.
- The new VAT legislation will support investments, production activities and exports, spark tax adoptions of SMEs, and encourage the formal economy to strengthen taxpayers' rights.
- Norway invested \$1.3 billion into Turkish companies in 2017, with the bulk of the investments going to energy companies.
- Turkey brought in \$66.8 million in exporting bottled water in 2017, a 5% tonnage increase and a 4% value increase from 2016.
- Turkey's foreign trade volume with EFTA and 21 additional countries has increased 35.3%, reaching \$41.6 billion in the last decade.
- A new law has been passed that will cut red tape and boost investments in Turkey by aiming to ease the time, cost, and procedural difficulties that foreign investors face during administrative and bureaucratic procedures.

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Turkey Works to Enhance Diplomatic Relations

- Turkey is working out a \$400 million loan to Serbia for infrastructure projects to spur investments and growth.
- Currently, 70 Turkish companies do business in Serbia, and bilateral trade is expected to reach \$1.2 billion this year.
- Bulgaria supports Turkey's EU accession, calling Turkey a significant partner and ally.
- Bulgarian PM Borissov commended Turkey in its fight against illegal immigration, and in its participation in the migrant deal.
- Bulgaria and Turkey cooperate together on energy, the economy, commerce, and in the fight against terrorism.
- German Chancellor Merkel commended Turkey on its work with the refugee crises, and for its part in the migrant deal, stating that the EU and Turkey are dependent on one another, and she reiterated that Turkey is an important partner to Germany, so it is important to maintain a good relationship.
- President Erdogan concluded a five-day tour of Algeria, Mauritania, Senegal, and Mali in early March, where he discussed continued cooperation and support of many African countries.
- Turkey and Senegal are continuing to work together on international matters, counter-terrorism cooperation, and in shutting down FETO-linked schools.
- Recently Turkish companies launched 29 projects in Senegal, worth \$775 million.
- Turkey and Senegal have signed 28 agreements for increased cooperation in mining, construction, infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, health, and energy.
- Trade between Turkey and African countries has increased to nearly \$19 billion.
- Turkey and Mali are working to enhance cooperation in energy, infrastructural developments, and military and defense relations, and have signed eight bilateral agreements in sports, education, technology, health, energy, religious services, hydrocarbons, and mining and minerals.

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Turkey's Humanitarian Aid Keeps Giving

- Turkey provided \$18.4 billion in aid in the last three years to various countries in need.
- The European Commission said they are raising another €3 billion for Syrian refugees in Turkey. Thus far, EU funding has provided 500,000 refugee children with education and has provided cash transfers to 1.2 million refugees to reduce migratory pressures.
- Turkey's disaster management agency says that it has distributed more than 30 tons of food aid, 8,267 bottles of water, hygiene kits, blankets, and clothing to 22 areas in Afrin, Syria since January, and are setting up refugee camps to house 170,000 displaced persons around the Idlib province.
- The Turkish Red Crescent is helping aid the 3.5 million Syrians in Turkey, providing 1.3 million refugees with cash through the Red Crescent Card, hosting 250,000 in 30 refugee camps, and providing 250,000 Syrian children with educational scholarships.
- The Turkish Ministry of Health is providing health care services free of charge for refugees, so far assisting over 40 million Syrian refugee patients in its hospitals, conducting 1.5 million operations, and delivering 200,000 babies.
- Turkey has established 29 aid distribution centers in Syria to provide food and personal care items to civilians.
- Turkey is working to renovate schools in Syrian settlements that have been liberated from terrorists. Turkish groups are refurbishing classroom walls, floors and playgrounds, replacing desks and chairs, and providing educational equipment.
- The EU and the Turkish Republic have set up two projects that will give 4,200 Syrian high school graduates in Turkey the opportunity to attend Turkish Universities, by providing an intensive nine-month Turkish language program that will enable them to reach levels of Turkish proficiency required for enrollment to Turkish Universities.
- The World Bank is giving Turkey \$55.7 million to support employment for Syrian refugees, by helping them find jobs, learn skills, learn the Turkish language, and get an education.
- Turkey has issued just under 105,000 work permits to foreign citizens with nearly 40% of the work permits being given to Syrian citizens.
- The Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority and the UN sent 26 aid trucks to Syria to provide beds, tents, containers, and other supplies to Syrian civilians.
- Turkish officials are working to normalize Jarablus and Al-Bab, Syria with \$500,000 to support healthcare, education, banking, and safety services for locals, as well as vaccinating livestock and training farmers for pesticides and how to sell products. The Turkish government also purchased \$1.5 million worth of agriculture to support the region.
- Turkish aid groups have distributed food, water, hygiene and victual packages, and beds and blankets to civilians in the foothills of Mount Darniq that was recently cleared of terrorists.
- In a discussion about Turkey's generous humanitarian aid, Turkish Deputy PM Cavusoglu, stated, "Turkey goes to these countries in order to develop them and for the welfare of its people, economically, by developing the capabilities of their country."
- The UK's top envoy to Turkey, praised Turkey's efforts in the refugee crises, stating that it is an example for other countries.
- Turkey has been recognized as one of the most generous countries for humanitarian support and the most hospitable for refugees, to which Turkish PM Yildirim, stated, "We cannot ignore the drama of millions suffering from hunger around the world as Turkey is a country tasked with aiding others as a tradition of our past civilizations. We will continue heeding the cries of the oppressed and will extend a helping hand."

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Tourism is on the Rise for Turkey

- Istanbul is opening its third airport in October, which is expected to be the largest airport in the world, with the capacity to serve 200 million passengers annually.
- Tourist arrivals in Turkey in January and February reached 3 million, a 35% rise compared to 2016.
- Turkey's tourism revenue reached \$26.2 billion in 2017, a 19% increase from 2016.
- The number of people traveling through Turkish airports increased by 17.6% in February compared to February 2016.
- Turkey is expecting 38 million tourists in 2018.
- Early booking data shows that German tourists visiting Turkey will increase by 100% this year compared to last year, as bookings indicate that Turkey will welcome more than 5 million German tourists.

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Turkey Enhances Energy Efficiency

- Turkey is now home to the largest solar project in the Aegean Region, producing 40.3 MW.
- In 2017, Turkey installed 1.79 GW worth of new solar capacity, a 213% growth since 2016, the most growth of all European countries.
- Turkey signed a contract with GE Renewable Energy to work on eight wind projects, which will provide 410 MW of power, as part of the country's efforts to generate 30% of its energy from renewable sources by 2023.
- Turkey's installed wind power will be 761 MW by the end of 2020.

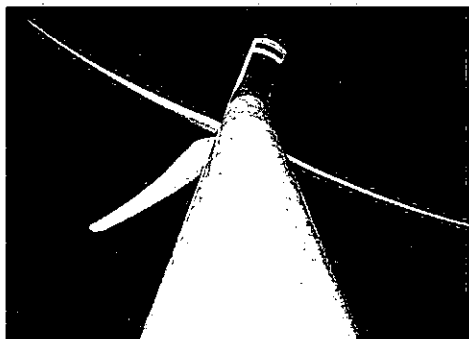
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GE, Fina Enerji sign deal for eight potential wind ...

www.hurriyetdailynews.com

GE Renewable Energy and Fina Enerji signed an agreement on March 12 to work on eight potential projects providing up to 410 megawatts (MW) by the end of 2020, the companies have said in a statement. With a previous agreement signed in 2017 for the Kizilcaterzi Wind Project, Fina Enerji is ...

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GE books 410MW Turkey feast - Onshore Wind reNEWS ...

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Renewable Energy News, Information and Analysis from reNEWS

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GE Renewable Energy and Fina Enerji to drive renewable ...

www.genewsroom.com

GE Renewable Energy and Fina Enerji sign an agreement to work on potential eight projects providing up to 410 MW by end of 2020 With the previous agreement signed in 2017 for Kizilcaterzi Wind Project, Fina Enerji is expected to add up to 425 MW to their installed base by 2020 This collaboration ...

Turkey Continues Fight Against Terror and Ramps up Defense Systems

-Turkey's continues its fight against terrorism to establish security and stability in the region and protect civilians against terrorist oppression.

-Turkish PM Yildirim, stated, "We want peace in the region. We want brotherhood. We want tranquility. We want establishment of an environment of trust. This is what we are struggling for."

-Turkish FM Cavusoglu, said that Turkey is working to accomplish three objectives in Syria: 1. It is leading the efforts to alleviate humanitarian suffering, 2. It is taking the initiative to deny terrorist entities any room in Syria, through use of force against them, and 3. It is trying to promote a political solution in war-torn Syria.

-Turkish FM Cavusoglu, stated, "The Turkish people want to live in a democratic country. Now, we are going through a necessary phase during which we make sure that FETO members, including sleeper cells, are removed from all positions of power in the state organs, media, business and academia. This is a painful process, but we act strictly within the confines of the law."

-The Turkish government has invested \$35 billion in the defense arena in the last 15 years and is now exporting \$2 billion worth of defense goods and services and procuring 65% of its national defense equipment through its own resources, building its own helicopters, planes, warships, tanks, air defense systems, satellites, and unmanned aerial weapons.

-Turkish PM Yildirim, stated, "These operations, this struggle is actually also for the peace of Europe. It is also needed for global peace in the world... Turkey wants peace and stability to dominate our region. We want this bloodshed and tears to end."

-Turkey's government and military leaders are working on a new generation of unmanned vehicles for land, naval, and aerial programs that will reduce production, maintenance, and operational costs, as well as, decrease personnel casualties in operations.

<https://www.venisafak.com/en/news/countering-terror-turkeys-most-legitimate-right-pm-3136012>

<https://aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/fm-cavusoglu-explains-turkeys-objectives-in-syria/1078272#>

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-has-invested-35-bln-in-defense-industry-in-15-years-pm-yildirim-128167>

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkeys-border-areas-cleared-of-terrorists-pm/1078962>

<https://www.defensencnews.com/unmanned/2018/03/06/unmanned-tech-ambitions-shape-turkeys-future-military/>

Turkey Works Toward Furthering Equality

-Out of the 9 million new jobs that were created in Turkey over the past decade, nearly 4.2 million of the new jobs were filled by women, thanks to the government's employment mobilization program.

-Turkey is appointing female deputy muftis in all its provinces across the country, and for the first time in the history of Diyanet, they have a female president, and 6-7 female heads of departments.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/nearly-4-2-million-women-employed-in-turkey-in-last-decade-labor-minister-128388>

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-top-religious-body-head-to-appoint-more-women-clerics-128592>

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-religious-directorate-appoints-first-ever-woman-as-deputy-chair-128733>

Turkey Sees Rise in Innovation

-Germany's leading software developer SAP, sees Turkey as the main hub for digital transformation due to its geography, with more than 1,800 institutions using SAP products in Turkey.

-A Turkish textile firm is now producing 100% of its yarn from recycled plastic bottles that are collected from schools, hospitals, hotels, and institutions. The firm produces 5 tons of yarn a day, which is used for industrial weaving and knitting, as well as, furnishing and curtain production.

-Turkey is aiming to bring greater innovation to its telecommunications infrastructure by implementing a 5G telecommunications system, which will bring tremendous service to society.

<https://aa.com.tr/en/economy/germanys-software-giant-sees-turkey-as-main-hub-/1091367>

<https://aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-plastic-waste-turns-into-yarn-and-fiber/1101679>

<https://aa.com.tr/en/science-technology/-turkey-has-opportunity-to-realize-5g-in-telecom-field-/1079631>

Erdogan Moves Up Timeline on Democratic Elections

-Turkish President Erdogan announced this week that Turkey will be moving up its 2019 elections to June 2018, stating, "Developments in Syria and elsewhere have made it urgent to switch to the new executive system in order to take steps for our country's future in a stronger way", he continued, "Our preference has been to try to hold out till the date in November 2019. However, whether it be the cross-border operation in Syria, or the historic developments in Iraq and Syria have made it so that it is paramount for Turkey to overcome uncertainty."

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43814077>

<https://www.haareiz.com/middle-east-news/turkey/erdogan-calls-for-snap-elections-to-switch-system-of-government-1.6012064>

All the best,

The Honorable Robert Wexler