

'Motorcycle cat' charms Istanbul in cute costumes

NATIONAL PAGE 3



Bursa's autumn reveals winter's secret

DERYA TAŞBAŞI - BURSA  
BACK PAGE

'Good Will Hunting': Mind, wound, destiny

MELDA ÇİVELEK  
CULTURE PAGE 2



LOCAL PERSPECTIVE, GLOBAL VISION

FRIDAY  
NOVEMBER 21 / 2025  
TL 15.00

# DAILY SABAH

www.dailysabah.com

## Türkiye's football shaken, more raids ahead

The country's football world reels as a vast betting scandal implicates over 1,000 players, 149 referees and top officials, sparking bans, arrests and match-fixing fears ahead of Euro 2032

ISTANBUL - DAILY SABAH

» TÜRKİYE'S football scene is engulfed in a widening scandal as the top prosecutor warned of further operations targeting illegal betting, match-fixing and potential involvement by club officials, coaches and commentators.

What began in late October as a Turkish Football Federation (TFF) internal audit uncovering referees betting on matches has evolved into a full-scale criminal investiga-

tion. Chief Public Prosecutor Akın Gürlek addressed reporters at Istanbul's Çağlayan Courthouse.

"Whoever was involved in cheating, we are chasing them. There will be club chairmen and club executives in the probes. There may be ties between chairmen and referees, coaches and commentators. We are investigating everything," he said.

The TFF has disciplined over 1,000 players and 149 referees so far, with the Professional Football Disciplinary Board (PFDK)

announcing penalties yesterday for 638 additional players, mostly from the TFF 3. Lig, Türkiye's fourth-tier professional league.

Bans, issued under Article 57 of the Football Discipline Instruction (FDI), prohibit all football-related betting and range from 45 days for minor offenses to 12 months for serious violations, sidelining dozens of players for most of the 2025-26 season. This completes disciplinary processing for the 1,024 players suspended earlier this month, following penalties in the

Süper Lig, 1. Lig, and 2. Lig. Most offenses involve personal betting rather than confirmed match-fixing.

Gürlek emphasized that the criminal investigation goes far beyond the TFF's disciplinary actions: "We may carry out another operation in the coming days. We want to clean our football, absolutely."

Evidence from whistleblowers, witness statements, MASAK financial investigations, and cooperation with UEFA and Interpol has expanded the inquiry.

Indirect betting through family members, such as spouses, parents and siblings, has emerged as a central focus, with cases already uncovered involving commentators and club officials.

Legal experts describe the scandal as unprecedented in Turkish football.

Sports lawyer Emin Özkurt called it "the most important investigation in Turkish football history," noting that the inquiry has moved beyond personal betting into match-fixing allegations. PAGE 11

### OPINION

AHMET ARDA ŞENSOY

How will al-Sharaa's historic White House visit shape Syria's future?

» SYRIAN President Ahmed al-Sharaa's diplomatic visit to the U.S., at the invitation of President Donald Trump, marked a historic milestone. Even disregarding the current state of al-Sharaa's government or the fact that the country is just emerging from civil war, the visit holds immense significance for Syrian history: He is the first Syrian leader ever to be hosted at the White House. The visit's timing, just two days after al-Sharaa was removed from the U.S.' "global terrorist" list, makes it particularly noteworthy. PAGE 9

### OPINION

ELÇİN BAŞOL

Prisoner swap as a new opening for Russia-Ukraine diplomacy

» AS THE war between Russia and Ukraine grinds on with no immediate prospect of a political settlement, almost every diplomatic channel has narrowed. Yet one space continues to stand out because it is rooted in concrete human experience rather than abstract negotiation. The issue of prisoners and detainees has become the area in which both sides still accept the need for dialogue. In recent weeks, Kyiv announced that it is working on a major exchange that could involve the release of about 1,200 Ukrainian detainees. PAGE 8



Passengers sit on the upper deck of a ferry with the Süleymaniye Mosque in the background, Istanbul, Türkiye, Nov. 14, 2025. (Getty Images Photo)

## ERDOĞAN RINGS ALARM BELLS ON DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS

PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, a longtime champion of bigger families, warned that Türkiye is facing a disaster in terms of birth rates. The Turkish leader, who declared 2025 as the "Year of the Family," addressed participants at the closing ceremony of the Family and Culture-Arts Symposium at the National Library in Ankara yesterday. "Our population is increasing, but the rate it is increasing is declining. According to data by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), last year's fertility rate was 1.48," he said. Erdoğan was referring to the total fertility rate, or the average number of live births a woman would have in her average reproductive life. "No one who cares about the future of this country can remain indifferent in the face of this reality," Erdoğan said. The elderly population ratio has also risen to 10.6% and it is projected that by 2050, one in every four people will be over the age of 65. PAGE 6

## Google Cloud to invest \$2B in Türkiye as part of Turkcell deal

» THE AMOUNT of investment Google Cloud will make in Türkiye as part of the recently announced deal with Turkcell was disclosed as \$2 billion (TL 84 billion) yesterday. Addressing the "Google Cloud Day Türkiye," Vice President Cevdet Yılmaz said the investment, together with \$1 billion planned by Turkcell, will reach \$3 billion, lauding its significance. "While Turkcell plans to invest \$1 billion within the scope of the project, the fact that Google Cloud will invest \$2 billion is also gratifying for our country. Thus, we are talking about a total investment of \$3 billion. This is indeed a significant figure, and it will trigger other investments as well," Yılmaz told

the event in Istanbul.

Last week, Turkcell announced that it has entered into a strategic partnership with Google to provide Google Cloud services in Türkiye. As part of the collaboration, Turkcell will work with Google Cloud to provide the infrastructure needed for a planned Google Cloud region in the country. Speaking at the event, the vice president stated that the hyper-scale cloud region to be implemented in cooperation with Google Cloud and Turkcell is an important and strategic step that will further strengthen Türkiye's regional position in data, cloud infrastructure and artificial intelligence. PAGE 5

## Türkiye wins bid against Australia to host COP31 summit

» A LONGSTANDING race to host next year's COP31 summit ended with a win for Türkiye, which competed against Australia. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said yesterday that they would lead the conference's negotiations among governments and that Türkiye would host next year's U.N. climate summit, under a compromise deal taking shape in talks in Brazil. The annual COP conferences are the world's main forum for driving climate action. The compromise resolves a stand-off between Australia and Türkiye over who would stage COP31. Both bid in 2022 to host it and refused to stand down.

The two sides were now close to a deal that would see Türkiye hosting COP31 as summit president, with a pre-COP event staged in the Pacific and Australia as president of negotiations, Albanese said. "What we've come up with is a big win for both Australia and (Türkiye)," he told Australian Broadcasting Corp Radio. The two nations now have just a year to prepare for an event that attracts tens of thousands of people and requires months of diplomatic legwork to reach consensus around climate goals. PAGE 7

## Israel continues to violate Gaza truce by killing 4 in fresh strikes

» AT LEAST four Palestinians were killed yesterday in new Israeli strikes in Gaza, a local hospital said, amid an Israel-Hamas blame game over violating a weeklong truce.

The new strikes came the morning after one of the deadliest days in the Gaza Strip since the truce came into effect on Oct. 10, with 27 people killed, according to Gaza's civil defense agency, which operates under Hamas authority.

Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis in southern Gaza said four people were killed in the strikes early yesterday, after the civil

defense agency gave a lower toll of three dead.

The dead included three from one family, including a 1-year-old girl, in a strike on a house east of Khan Younis, and one person in an airstrike on the town of Abasan al-Kabira, also east of Khan Younis. A source at Gaza's Interior Ministry, who did not wish to be identified, said artillery fire was continuing in the Khan Younis area.

The so-called yellow line demarcates the boundary inside the Gaza Strip that Israeli troops have withdrawn to positions east of, as part of the U.S.-brokered cease-fire. PAGE 10

## Syrian soldiers killed as YPG terrorists attack Raqqa

» THE U.S.-backed YPG, the Syrian wing of the PKK terrorist group, attacked Syrian military positions in overnight clashes in northeastern Syria's Raqqa. The YPG claimed targeting positions of the terrorist group Daesh, while the Syrian Defense Ministry said two soldiers were killed in the attack.

The YPG carved out a self-styled autonomy in Syria's northeast during the Syrian civil war that ended in December 2024. Under the pretext of "fighting Daesh" in Syria's north, it enjoyed vast military support from the U.S. In a statement quoted by Syria's

SANA news agency, the Defense Ministry said the YPG took control of several locations, which led to the injury of several others in the attacks. Soldiers then returned fire and retook the positions, it said, adding Damascus held the YPG responsible for the attack. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor gave a higher toll of six government personnel dead.

In March, the YPG signed an agreement with Syria's new administration for integration into the central government. However, differences between the two sides have held up the deal's implementation. PAGE 6

## Domestic unmanned fighter Kızılelma conducts historic F-16 test



» TÜRKİYE'S first unmanned fighter jet, Bayraktar Kızılelma, completed another historic test, locking onto a target F-16 and achieving a direct hit in a simulated firing test conducted with the national air-to-air missile Gökdoğan, its developer Baykar said yesterday.

According to a statement from Baykar, the Bayraktar Kızılelma, developed indigenously and with the company's own resources, has successfully navigated another critical milestone that will prove its effectiveness on the battlefield. PAGE 5

INDEX • Culture P2 • National P3 • Money P4 • Business P5 • Politics P6 • Opinion P8 • International P10 • Sports P11

