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DAILY SABAH

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Nearly half of Sudan's
schoolchildren miss
class for 500 days

ALMOST three years of war in Sudan have left more than 8 million children out of education for nearly 500 days, the NGO Save the Children said yesterday, highlighting one of the world's longest school closures.

"More than 8 million children – nearly half of the 17 million of school age – have gone approximately 484 days without setting foot in a classroom," the children's rights organization said in a statement.

Sudan has been ravaged since April 2023 by a power struggle between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

This is "one of the longest school closures in the world," the British NGO said.

"Many schools are closed, others have been damaged by the conflict, or are being used as shelters" for the more than 7 million displaced people across the country, it added.

North Darfur in western Sudan is the country's hardest-hit state: Only 3% of its more than 1,100 schools are still functioning.

In October, the RSF seized the city of el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur and the last of Darfur's five capitals that had remained outside their control.

West Darfur, West Kordofan and South Darfur follow with 27%, 15% and 13% of their schools operating, respectively, according to the statement.

The NGO added that many teachers in Sudanese schools were leaving their jobs due to unpaid salaries.

"We risk condemning an entire generation to a future defined by conflict," without urgent investment, said the NGO's chief executive, Inger Ashing.

The conflict, which has claimed tens of thousands of lives, has triggered the "world's worst humanitarian crisis," according to the U.N.

On Sunday, U.N. Human Rights commissioner Volker Turk condemned the increasing number of attacks against "essential civilian infrastructure" in Sudan, including hospitals, markets and schools.

He also expressed alarm at "the arming of civilians and the recruitment of children."

The U.N. has repeatedly expressed concern about the "lost generation" in Sudan. PAGE 10

'Board of Peace' steps into Gaza deadlock

Against the backdrop of the World Economic Forum in Davos, U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled the 'Board of Peace,' with Hakan Fidan taking part to represent Ankara's diplomatic push as several global efforts to halt Israel's war in Gaza remain stalled



Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and U.S. President Donald Trump shake hands during a signing ceremony launching the "Board of Peace" at the World Economic Forum annual meeting, Davos, Switzerland, Jan. 22, 2026. (AA Photo)

ISTANBUL - DAILY SABAH

U.S. PRESIDENT Donald Trump yesterday formally launched his ambitious "Board of Peace" at the World Economic Forum, unveiling a new international body initially tied to Gaza's fragile cease-fire but pitched as a broader platform that could reshape, and potentially rival, the United Nations' role in global diplomacy.

Calling it "a very exciting day," Trump

told a packed ceremony in Davos that interest in joining the board was high, even as skepticism from major powers lingered.

Trump, who will chair the body, said the "Board of Peace," which "everybody wants to join," would work "in conjunction with the United Nations," while again criticizing the U.N. for failing to stop wars despite what he described as its "tremendous potential."

The board carries a steep entry price:

\$1 billion for permanent membership.

Trump said he has invited a wide array of leaders, including Russia's Vladimir Putin, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu and Hungary's Viktor Orban, arguing that a mix of powerful and unconventional partners could give the board clout. STORIES ON PAGE 10

GAZA DEATHS MOUNT AS
ISRAELI STRIKES HIT BUFFER
ZONES DURING TRUCE

Japan's TEPCO suspends restart of world's
largest nuclear plant

THE RESTART of the world's largest nuclear power plant in Japan was suspended Thursday, only a day after reopening, with the operator saying it does not know when the problem will be solved.

The Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant in Niigata province had been closed since the 2011 Fukushima disaster, but operations to relaunch it had begun on Wednesday after it received the final green light from the nuclear regulator.

However, its operator, the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), said yesterday that "an alarm from the monitoring sys-

tem ... sounded during the reactor startup procedures," causing it to suspend operations. "We don't expect this to be solved within a day or two. There is no telling at the moment how long it will take," site superintendent Takeyuki Inagaki told a news conference. "We will, for now, fully focus on trying to identify the cause of what happened," he said.

The alarm that went off prompted TEPCO to "investigate the malfunctioning electrical equipment," spokesperson Takashi Kobayashi told Agence France-Presse (AFP). PAGE 4

OPINION - ZEYNEP GİZEM ÖZPINAR

Türkiye-Uzbekistan axis: Logic of 4+4
mechanism

THE STRUCTURAL transformation undergone by the international system in recent years has led states to re-define their foreign policy priorities, while also deepening the search for the tools and institutional mechanisms through which these policies will be implemented. The era in which security was defined by border security and diplomacy by classic bilateral contacts is largely behind us. Today, state capacity is directly related to the extent to which foreign policy, defense, internal security and intelligence apparatus can work

in coordination.

In this context, the first meeting of the 4+4 mechanism held in Ankara between Türkiye and Uzbekistan represents a strategic milestone, demonstrating that bilateral relations have moved beyond routine diplomatic contacts. The 4+4 format refers to the four most critical seats in the decision-making mechanisms of both countries – the foreign minister, the minister of national defense, the minister of the interior and the head of intelligence – sitting together around the same table. PAGE 9

Istanbul faces
urban fires every
19 minutes in 2025

FIRES in Istanbul remained a major urban safety concern in 2025, with the Istanbul Fire Department responding to a total of 27,820 fire incidents throughout the year. Official figures show that a fire broke out in the city every 18 minutes and 54 seconds, highlighting the scale and continuity of emergency interventions across Türkiye's largest metropolitan area.

According to data from the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Fire Department, the leading cause of fires was faulty and careless use, which resulted in 7,931 incidents, accounting for 28.5% of all fires. These incidents were mainly linked to unextinguished cigarette butts, matches, lighters, unattended stove flames and children playing with fire, indicating that everyday human behavior continues to represent a critical risk factor.

The second most common cause was the improper use of heat sources, responsible for 7,803 fires, corresponding to 28.0% of the total. This category included electrical installation failures, transformer-related incidents, and the unsafe use of electric stoves, irons, and electric heaters. PAGE 3

Central bank cuts key interest rate to 37%,
less than expected

THE TURKISH central bank lowered its key interest rate by 100 basis points to 37% yesterday in its first policy meeting this year, continuing an easing cycle as inflation moderates, although cutting by less than expected.

At a policy meeting, the bank "decided to reduce the policy rate (the one-week repo auction rate) from 38% to 37%," it said in a statement. It has also lowered the overnight lending rate from 41% to 40% and the overnight borrowing rate from 36.5% to 35.5%.

Most polls predicted a slightly larger cut

of 150 basis points.

"The underlying trend of inflation declined in December. While leading indicators suggest that monthly consumer inflation has firmed in January, led by food prices, the rise in the underlying trend of inflation is limited," the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye (CBRT) said following its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting.

"Indicators for the last quarter point to demand conditions that continue to support the disinflation process, albeit at a moderating pace," it added. PAGE 5

Domestic tourism expenditures up nearly
35% in Q3 last year

DOMESTIC tourists' trip expenditures within Türkiye surged nearly 35% on an annual basis in the third quarter of last year, official data showed yesterday, as travel demand remained strong and over 21.5 million residents had trips between July and September.

Spending of domestic tourists increased by 34.8% compared to the same quarter of the year earlier and reached TL 276.11 billion (around \$6.37 billion at the current exchange rate), the data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) showed. Some 84.5% of domestic tourism expen-

diture was individual in the quarter, with TL 233.45 billion, while 15.5% of it was package tour expenditures, with TL 42.66 billion, TurkStat said.

Domestic trips with one or more than one overnights increased by 5.5% year-over-year and surpassed 27 million, the data also showed. In the July-September quarter, domestic visitors made 230.8 million overnight stays, with an average number of overnights of 8.5, the statistics agency said.

The average number of stays rose compared to 5.8 observed in the second quarter of the year. PAGE 5

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