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Erdoğan hails major defense tech leap

The breakthroughs achieved in unmanned technologies over the last 23 years have helped Türkiye reach a level today that 'leaves the whole world in awe,' the president said

ISTANBUL - DAILY SABAH

» PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdoğan yesterday opened new facilities of Türkiye's defense software giant Havelsan and laid the groundwork for new ones, adding to the momentum to further build the capacity of one of the most critical industries.

The ceremony in Ankara also saw the commissioning of Havelsan's armed unmanned surface vessel (AUSV), named

Sancar, equipped with engagement capability, mine detection systems and autonomous mission functions.

Erdoğan stressed that the breakthroughs achieved in unmanned technologies over the last 23 years have helped Türkiye reach a level today that "leaves the whole world in awe." "With the Sancar AUSV, we are strengthening our unmanned capabilities in the seas, enhancing our security, efficiency and surveillance capacity," he said.

The platform is fully integrated with the ADVENT Combat Management System, also developed by Havelsan, making it the first and only Turkish AUSV capable of operating in complete coordination with the network-centric warfare system.

Years of investment have helped Türkiye evolve from a country heavily reliant on foreign defense systems to one where domestically developed platforms meet almost all of its needs.

For much of the past two decades, Ankara has expressed frustration over its Western allies' failure to provide adequate defense systems against missile threats despite Türkiye being a NATO member.

The transformation since the early 2000s has driven the development of a broad range of homegrown air, land and naval platforms, reducing foreign dependency from around 80% to below 20% today.

The capabilities of its defense platforms,

led by its combat drones, helped it seal billions of dollars' worth of deals in recent years.

More than 3,500 firms operate in the Turkish defense industry, boasting a workforce of about 100,000. Yesterday, Erdoğan laid the foundation for the Simulator Production and Integration Facility and inaugurated the Kaan Technology Facility along with the Naval Combat Management Systems Center. PAGE 5

OPINION

MUHİTTİN ATAMAN

Who utilizes the US-Iran tension, and for what reason?

» TENSION between the United States and Iran is being closely watched by the world, with speculation mounting about whether the conflict will escalate into war. There has been a looming tidal wave for a long time. The U.S. and Iranian representatives are making contradictory statements. They sometimes use conciliatory language and sometimes confrontational language. Observers place bets every day on whether the two states will go to war.

The two countries have sat on the negotiation table in Muscat, Oman and continued in Genoa, Switzerland. It seems that it will not be an easy decision to make for both sides. When we look at the Iranian side, we see that they use a conciliatory language, their officials insistently explaining that they will not start the war. However, Iran faces very serious risks and threats in two areas.

On the one hand, perhaps the Iranian regime is going through its most difficult days since the revolution in 1979 in its domestic politics. The latest wave of protests and growing economic problems are causing difficult times for the Iranian regime. On the other hand, given the losses of the last year, such as the attacks against Iran during the 12-Day War, the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria, which was Iran's closest ally in the region, and the blows suffered by Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iran has been forced to adopt a defensive stance against the U.S. and Israel. PAGE 8



Displaced people walk through a waterlogged street after heavy rain in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip, Palestine, Feb. 24, 2026. (AFP Photo)

GAZANS SUFFER IN WATERLOGGED TENTS AMID HEAVY RAINS, COLD WAVE

TORRENTIAL downpours flooded tents housing war-displaced Palestinians across the Gaza Strip yesterday, officials and witnesses said, compounding a deepening humanitarian crisis during the first winter storm of Ramadan as Israeli restrictions limited the flow of supplies. A weather system brought rain and falling temperatures to Gaza late Monday and was expected to ease by yesterday evening, meteorologist Laith al-Alami said in a post on Facebook. Gaza's Civil Defense said its crews received multiple distress calls overnight reporting flooded displacement camps caused by heavy rainfall. Rescue teams saved several families after floodwaters submerged their tents in the al-Mawasi area west of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza, the agency said. Witnesses told Türkiye's Anadolu Agency (AA) that rainwater also inundated tents west of Gaza City, particularly in the al-Rimal neighborhood and near the port area. PAGE 10

Terror-free initiative architect Bahçeli calls for clarification in plan

» NATIONALIST Movement Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahçeli hailed the latest stage in the terror-free Türkiye initiative that he helped conceive in 2024, but pointed out that more needs to be done.

The initiative, which aims to disarm the terrorist group PKK, has largely succeeded so far. It took a new turn last week when a parliamentary committee approved a final report on proposals for new laws and regulations to facilitate the process. The initiative has been unilateral, after the PKK announced it would dissolve itself following a February 2025 call by its jailed ringleader,

Abdullah Öcalan. Lawmakers are now expected to discuss amendments to existing laws or implement new ones for the integration of PKK members not involved in acts of terrorism.

Critics of the initiative claim that the PKK would get away with the crimes it committed, and Bahçeli yesterday highlighted that authorities should be careful not to create a such a perception. "It is precious to have a joint understanding (at the committee) on full dissolution of the PKK, its disarmament and the need for enactment of legal amendments to that extent. PAGE 6

Marriage rates fall while divorces rise across country

» TÜRKİYE witnessed 552,237 marriages and 193,793 divorces in 2025, according to data released by the Türkiye Statistical Institute (TurkStat). The number of divorces increased from 188,963 in 2024 to 193,793 in 2025. The crude divorce rate, representing the number of divorces per 1,000 people, was calculated at 2.26 per thousand last year.

When examining the average age at first marriage over the years, it increased for both genders. In 2025, the average age at first marriage was 28.5 for men and 26 for women, with an average age gap of 2.5 years.

The province with the highest crude marriage rate last year was Gaziantep, at 7.76 per thousand, followed by Osmaniye with 7.68 and Şanlıurfa with 7.5 per thousand.

The province with the lowest crude marriage rate was Tunceli, at 4.18 per thousand, followed by Gümüşhane at 4.58 and Ardahan at 4.67 per thousand.

The proportion of foreigners among total marriages was also analyzed. In 2025, the number of foreign grooms was 5,347, accounting for 1% of all grooms. PAGE 3

Vice President Yılmaz says financial conditions will improve in 2026

» VICE President Cevdet Yılmaz yesterday said overall financial conditions were expected to improve in 2026, adding that the government is aware of financing challenges faced by the real sector and is implementing necessary measures to ease access to funding.

Speaking at the Investment Environment Improvement Coordination Council (YOİKK) meeting in Ankara, Yılmaz said the government remains determined and coordinated in its fight against inflation while seeking to strengthen financial stability.

"As the government, we continue our de-

termined and coordinated efforts to reduce inflation. At the same time, we aim to provide a more solid foundation for the real sector by reinforcing financial stability," he said.

Türkiye's annual inflation eased to 30.7% in January. But a monthly spike of nearly 5% in consumer prices triggered market doubts about whether the downward course seen throughout 2025 is on track.

Officials have dismissed those doubts, saying there's no deterioration in Türkiye's disinflation path but rather a slowdown mainly due to food prices and seasonal effects. PAGE 5

Sudan sets national interests, territorial unity conditions for truce

» ANY PROPOSAL to end the Sudan civil war between the military and the Rapid Support Forces must respect the country's supreme interests, unity and territorial integrity, the government said Monday.

In a statement, the Sudanese Foreign Ministry said that "any proposal or initiative does not necessarily mean its acceptance or approval by the Sudanese government."

It stressed that "any proposals to end the war and achieve peace must take into consideration the country's supreme interests, Sudan's national security, full national sov-

ereignty, the unity of Sudan's territory, the unity of its institutions, and its territorial integrity."

The ministry added, "Any proposals that do not take into account the country's supreme interests will not be accepted by the government and, therefore, will not find their way to implementation."

It also emphasized that Sudan "is a sovereign state and takes its positions and decisions based on its supreme national interests."

The ministry did not provide further details about the nature of the proposal. PAGE 10

Trump's new tariffs target problem many economists say doesn't exist

» U.S. PRESIDENT Donald Trump's promised temporary 15% tariffs to replace those struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court are meant to resolve a problem that many economists say does not exist: a U.S. balance of payments crisis, making them potentially vulnerable to new legal challenges.

Hours after the high court on Friday struck down a huge swath of tariffs Trump had imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), the president announced the new duties under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974 - a

never-used statute that even his own legal team dismissed as irrelevant months ago.

An initial 10% tariff came into effect at a minute past midnight yesterday, according to a customs notice, and it was unclear when the promised increase to 15% would take effect. So far, Trump has only signed an executive order for the 10% tariff.

The Section 122 law allows the president to impose duties of up to 15% for up to 150 days on any and all countries to address "large and serious" balance-of-payments deficits and "fundamental international payments problems." PAGE 4