

Dressing-room fights, fan fury rock Madrid

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## Turkish defense now a global draw: Erdoğan

The president called Türkiye 'undoubtedly one of the founding actors' of the new era, where he says conventional power elements are being replaced by multilayered and integrated systems

ISTANBUL - DAILY SABAH

» TÜRKİYE'S defense industry has transformed into an ecosystem that is sought after, trusted and preferred not only in its region but also globally, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said Friday.

Erdoğan called Türkiye "undoubtedly one of the founding actors" of the new era, where he says conventional power elements are being replaced by multilayered and integrated systems.

He was speaking at the SAHA 2026 defense trade show, which serves as a primary platform for showcasing Türkiye's domestic defense capabilities and has, over the years, seen billions of dollars added to the country's defense exports.

"Türkiye has proudly inscribed its name among the countries whose stars are shining brightly on a global scale in the fields of defense, aviation and space," Erdoğan said.

In recent years, NATO member Türkiye significantly ramped up its defense indus-

try production.

It has injected billions of dollars to transform from a nation heavily reliant on equipment from abroad to one that is a major exporter and where homegrown systems now meet almost all of its defense industry 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 major NATO member.

The country currently exports more than 230 defense systems to 185 countries.

Since it started on Tuesday, the SAHA fair has seen the signing of 182 agreements with a total business volume of \$8 billion (TL 362.92 billion), Erdoğan said.

"Agreements directly aimed at exports accounted for \$6 billion of this figure," he added. Türkiye's defense exports rose about 48% year-over-year in 2025 to a record of more than \$10 billion.

Erdoğan said the goal is to lift this fig-

ure to \$11 billion in the near term, placing Türkiye among the world's top 10 biggest defense exporters.

The fair, organized by SAHA Istanbul, Türkiye's and Europe's largest defense, aviation and space industry cluster, was launched in 2018 when it hosted 180 companies from 12 countries.

The trade show has since expanded to host more than 120 countries and over 100,000 visitors. PAGE 5

### OPINION

IHSAN AKTAŞ

Defense and diplomacy drive Türkiye's rising power

» THIS week, Istanbul is hosting a major defense and aerospace exhibition. In our childhood, we used to talk about exhibitions in Paris or Hannover. Today, the SAHA 2026 Expo at the Istanbul Expo Center has become an event discussed globally.

As I have often noted in my columns, the material infrastructure and institutional ecosystems Türkiye has steadily built have, in the long run, enhanced its leverage in diplomacy.

From the most fundamental level, when the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) came to power, it has methodically established an integrated ecosystem covering transportation, health care, technical education infrastructure, energy, and dozens of other fields. Having matured significantly, these ecosystems now satisfy Türkiye's internal demands while increasingly positioning the country as a provider capable of meeting the needs of neighboring regions and global markets.

History shows that a significant share of technological and managerial innovation has emerged from research and development carried out in the military sphere.

After making breakthroughs in many areas, Türkiye - guided by the high vision of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who has calculated the world's future and the risks facing states - has decisively pushed for a revolution in the defense industry over the last decade. PAGE 9



This U.S. Navy handout photo released by U.S. Central Command Public Affairs on May 8, 2026, shows the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Rafael Peralta (DDG 115) implementing a maritime blockade against the Iran-flagged crude oil tanker vessel Herby while the latter was attempting to sail toward an Iranian port, April 24, 2026. (AFP Photo)

## U.S., IRAN EXCHANGE FIRE IN GULF AS CEASE-FIRE TEETERS ON COLLAPSE

THE FRAGILE cease-fire between the United States and Iran wobbled again Friday after fresh clashes erupted in the Gulf, with both sides trading accusations of aggression while fears grew that the conflict could spiral back into a wider regional war. The latest confrontation unfolded in and around the Strait of Hormuz, the strategic waterway that carries roughly a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas shipments, as U.S. and Iranian forces exchanged fire amid renewed diplomatic efforts to salvage peace talks.

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## WHO says risk low, warns of further cases in cruise ship outbreak

» THE WORLD Health Organization (WHO) said Thursday that additional hantavirus infections linked to a cruise ship outbreak cannot be ruled out, as health authorities across multiple continents continue tracking passengers exposed during a voyage that has already left at least three people dead and several others infected or under observation.

The MV Hondius, operated by Netherlands-based Oceanwide Expeditions, is now sailing toward Spain's Canary Islands under close international monitoring, with authorities preparing a tightly controlled

evacuation once it reaches Tenerife over the weekend. More than 140 passengers and crew are expected to disembark under strict isolation procedures as governments coordinate repatriation flights and contact tracing efforts. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said five confirmed and three suspected cases have been identified so far, noting that the situation remains fluid due to the virus's long incubation period, which can last up to six weeks. PAGE 10

ANKARA SAYS NO HANTAVIRUS CASES DETECTED, MONITORS REPORTS PAGE 3

## African nations warn citizens amid xenophobic unrest in South Africa

» AFRICAN countries, including Kenya, Malawi, Lesotho and Zimbabwe, have urged their citizens in South Africa to stay cautious and remain indoors amid attacks targeting foreigners, while Ghana has called on the African Union to intervene.

South Africa has been gripped by a wave of protests against illegal immigration, with tensions spilling into violence against migrants from other sub-Saharan African nations in the continent's largest economy.

Migrant rights groups say foreigners are being scapegoated by South Africans who blame them for the country's economic

problems, particularly unemployment, which stands at more than 30% and disproportionately affects the Black population.

Ghana said Wednesday it had facilitated the safe return of a citizen who was targeted in a video that went viral, while Nigeria said it was repatriating at least 130 citizens following the deaths of two Nigerians.

Ghana's statement did not identify the incident it was referring to, but one video circulating on social media showed a Ghanaian man being harassed by a crowd demanding to see his documents before questioning their authenticity. PAGE 10

## War for rare metals and new face of capitalism

OPINION - MAHMUT ÖZER

» AS THE world witnesses a technological rupture driven by artificial intelligence - one fundamentally different from previous turning points - it is simultaneously experiencing two deep-seated transformations: the energy transition and the deepening of digitalization. The energy transition, which aims to steadily reduce the share of conventional energy sources and elevate clean energy sources to the status of primary energy providers, has now become a central objective for most countries. The deepening of digitalization, on the other hand, is less a transition than the inevitable outcome of accelerating technological progress. Interestingly, both transformations rest on - and are therefore dependent upon - the same foundation: rare metals and rare earth elements. It is hardly surprising that in recent years, from the U.S. to China and across the European continent, the explicit political positions of leaders have increasingly been shaped by the drive to secure control over these metals and elements. PAGE 8

## Türkiye, Algeria sign series of co-op deals across multiple areas

» PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune oversaw the signing of a series of agreements in Ankara on Thursday, following bilateral talks and the first meeting of the Türkiye-Algeria High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council.

The two leaders signed a joint declaration marking the council's first meeting, a step Ankara and Algiers described as part of efforts to deepen political, economic and institutional cooperation between the two countries. The agreements covered a wide range of areas, including transportation,

telecommunications, industry, agriculture, disaster management, media cooperation, investment promotion and broadcasting.

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf signed a MoU on cooperation in postal services and telecommunications. Fidan also signed an agreement on international passenger and freight transport. Another memorandum, signed by Family and Social Services Minister Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş and Attaf, focused on the welfare of independence veterans and the relatives of soldiers killed during service. PAGE 7

## Top business group says 'strong Europe impossible without Türkiye'

» ONE of the top Turkish business associations is ramping up its public diplomacy campaign and on Friday urged German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and other European leaders to revive Türkiye's stalled European Union membership process. "A strong Europe is impossible without Türkiye," the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) said in a full-page open letter this week in the German newspaper Bild. That marks the second phase of DEİK's broader initiative timed around Europe Day. The campaign follows similar appeals published in the Financial Times

in January. DEİK says its diplomatic and commercial initiatives aim to re-energize Türkiye's relations with the bloc, including efforts to resolve longstanding visa issues and modernize the customs union agreement.

The board called for a "paradigm shift" after years of stalled accession talks, arguing that Türkiye's integration into the EU's economic security and defense architecture has become a strategic necessity amid challenges including migration, demographic change, the rapid spread of artificial intelligence and the energy transition. PAGE 5