

In this week's edition of Türkiye in Focus, we delve into the tumultuous Can Atalay session in the Turkish parliament, explore the political ramifications of the recent forest fires, and examine the significant rise in bankruptcy protection requests in Türkiye, particularly as the construction sector confronts mounting challenges.

Fistfight in Parliament

On Friday, August 18, a fistfight erupted in parliament, which was unusually in session due to the opposition's call for an extraordinary meeting following the Constitutional Court's ruling regarding Can Atalay. Elected as a Hatay MP for the Workers' Party of Türkiye (TİP) in the May 14, 2023, elections, Atalay remains imprisoned due to the Gezi Park case. The Constitutional Court's decision, which supported Atalay's release, contrasted with the Court of Cassation's stance, prompting the opposition to convene to facilitate his release.

The session was notably marred by a physical altercation involving AK Party deputy Alpay Özalan and TİP deputy Ahmet Şık, leading to reprimands from the Parliamentary Presidency for both. This incident underscored differing perspectives within both the government and opposition. While some in the AK Party defended Özalan, [others](#) disapproved his actions and criticized Şık's provocative speech, lamenting the lost opportunity for dialogue. The MHP, a coalition partner of the AK Party, expressed its disapproval by not attending the session.

Within the opposition, the TİP, despite having only three deputies, significantly influences the opposition's tone. There are factions within the CHP advocating for a more confrontational



(Osmancan Gürdoğan - Anadolu Agency)

approach. These internal dynamics among both the ruling party and the opposition will shape future interactions, with the new legislative year in October likely clarifying the direction of these relationships.

The session closed without a resolution, and ongoing cases like Can Atalay's and Osman Kavala's continue to be focal points of conflict. The developments in these cases will likely serve as indicators of the political path ahead.

Forest Fires

News of forest fires is emerging from various parts of Türkiye, particularly affecting the Mediterranean and Aegean regions which are grappling with seasonal fires. These areas are experiencing high temperatures and periods of elevated wind speeds, exacerbating the risk of fires. Last weekend, fires



(Berkan Çetin - Anadolu Agency)

near the city center of Izmir were successfully extinguished without any loss of life.

The extensive fires of 2022 sparked intense political debates, especially in the lead-up to the 2023 elections, where the adequacy of the response to forest fires became a contentious issue between local authorities and the central government. This conflict also permeated various political camps in society. During this year's fires, which saw a quicker response, there was noticeably better cooperation among local governments from different political parties, suggesting that tensions between the government and the opposition may be lower than in previous years.

Bankruptcy protection requests surge in Türkiye as construction sector faces challenges

In the first seven months of the year, approximately 1,554 companies in Türkiye have sought bankruptcy protection as economic tightening continues and indications of economic stagnation increase.

Significant players in the construction sector, often viewed as a cornerstone of the economy, are among those filing for bankruptcy protection. Industry leaders have pointed to challenges in securing payments from clients as a primary difficulty.

In the first half of the year, the number of companies shutting down rose by 25.8% compared to the previous year, while requests for bankruptcy protection across various sectors increased by 50-55%.

The construction sector, traditionally seen as the driving force behind Türkiye's economic expansion, is leading this upward trend.

The recent bankruptcy protection filing by Yenigun Construction, a prominent player in the industry, has once again drawn attention to the challenges facing the sector.



(Metin Aktas - Anadolu Agency)

Despite these challenges, there is a potential for recovery and adaptation. As Türkiye's economic landscape evolves, businesses and industry leaders are increasingly exploring innovative solutions and new market strategies. The resilience and creativity shown by these companies can pave the way for a revitalized economic environment, reinforcing the construction sector's role and igniting growth across other industries as well.

Highlights

- The Central Bank kept the policy interest rate unchanged at 50%, in line with expectations.
- TRT World's documentary "Holy Redemption" will be premiered on Saturday, August 24th. The documentary includes footage obtained by infiltrating radical Zionist settler groups.
- TRT Arabi crew on duty in Gaza was attacked by Israeli forces. There were no casualties, but reporter Sami Barhoom was slightly injured.

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