

In this week's *Türkiye in Focus*, we cover the following topics:

- President Erdoğan has made significant visits to Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan. Researcher Mehmet Kılıç analyses these official journeys.
- The main opposition party, CHP, has decided to announce its presidential candidate over three years ahead of the elections.
- Early signs of new developments in the Kurdish dossier have begun to emerge.

Türkiye's Asia-Pacific Strategy: Erdoğan's Visits to Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan

Researcher Mehmet Kılıç analysed President Erdoğan's trip to Asia.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's official visits to Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan from February 10-13, 2025, have highlighted Türkiye's efforts to deepen its diplomatic and economic ties in the Asia-Pacific region. Significant agreements were signed in various strategic fields, including defence industry, trade, energy, agriculture, and infrastructure.

Erdoğan's visits to Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan reinforce Türkiye's policy of expanding ties with Asia. These visits aim to strengthen existing cooperation and establish new strategic partnerships. President Erdoğan focused on boosting trade, advancing defence industry projects, and enhancing technical cooperation.

President Erdoğan was welcomed by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim at the airport and held several meetings in Malaysia. At the Türkiye-Malaysia Strategic Cooperation Meeting, Erdoğan stressed that Israel must end its occupation of Palestinian territories and compensate for the damage caused. He called for the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Prime Minister Ibrahim expressed gratitude to Erdoğan for his support during difficult times, describing him as a true friend who stood by them when many others turned away.

In the discussions between the leaders, 11 agreements were signed in areas such as industry, technology, energy, and tourism. Additionally, a target was set to double the trade volume between the two countries from \$5 billion to \$10 billion. Increasing cooperation in the defence industry emerged as one of the key topics.

During his visit to Indonesia, the second stop of his tour, which marked the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations, President Erdoğan highlighted the historical ties between the two countries and the ongoing cultural and political relations dating back to the Ottoman period. President Erdoğan and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto expressed their goal of increasing trade volume to \$10 billion and signed 12 key agreements to achieve this. These agreements span critical sectors such

as the defence industry, agriculture, infrastructure, energy, and technical cooperation.

The agreements highlighted ASELSAN's commitment to establishing a joint venture with Indonesian company Republikorp for the production and capacity building of military communication systems, the cooperation agreement between HAVELSAN and MIMOS-Techinsight in the field of artificial intelligence, and Baykar's comprehensive drone sales agreement, which includes the joint production of advanced technology products such as the TB3 and Akıncı.

President Erdoğan's visit to Pakistan included key meetings that elevated historical brotherhood ties to a strategic level. He and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif co-chaired the 7th Session of the Pakistan-Türkiye High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC), signing a Joint Declaration and several important agreements. Erdoğan also held bilateral talks with President Asif Ali Zardari, focusing on regional security, trade, and energy projects. At the Pakistan-Türkiye Business and Investment Forum, Erdoğan and Sharif highlighted the strategic partnership, bringing together leading investors and business figures from both countries.

Regional and Global Impacts

Türkiye's determination to showcase its defence industry and technology capabilities on international platforms is the most striking aspect of these visits. Collaborations with Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan enhance Türkiye's influence in the Asia-Pacific region and contribute to regional peace.

Furthermore, planning defence industry projects as co-production ventures brings economic benefits and facilitates technology transfer, fostering greater interdependence among the countries. The involvement of companies such as ASELSAN and Baykar in Indonesia's defence industry ecosystem will also positively impact regional security dynamics.

In conclusion, President Erdoğan's visits strengthened Türkiye's strategic position in the Asia-Pacific and laid the groundwork for multifaceted partnerships that align with regional interests. Türkiye's approach in the region allows it to secure substantial diplomatic and economic gains.



(TCCB / Murat Çetinmühürdar - Anadolu Agency)

CHP Sets Timeline for Presidential Candidate Selection

Currently, there are no indications of an early election in Türkiye. Neither the ruling parties nor the opposition have enough parliamentary seats to call for one. However, a shift between the two political blocs or a new alliance scenario could bring forward the general elections, initially scheduled for 2028. Another possibility is that the President himself may call for an early election. However, in that scenario, incumbent President Erdoğan would not be eligible to run again. Both scenarios seem unlikely in the near term.

Despite this situation, the CHP has repeatedly called for early elections. Most recently, the main opposition party decided that its presidential candidate would be chosen through a primary election, in which party members will vote on March 23. Before this decision, CHP leader Özgür Özel met with the party's two likely candidates, Ekrem İmamoğlu and Mansur Yavaş, over dinner. The meeting revealed that no consensus had been reached regarding the nomination process.

Yavaş has opted out of the primary. However, this decision means that the rivalry between İmamoğlu and Yavaş will not directly play out in the internal election, significantly diminishing the primary's meaning. Meanwhile, Yavaş has not explicitly ruled

out a presidential bid. On the contrary, his allusions and insider reports suggest he is pursuing a different strategy from the CHP leadership and İmamoğlu.

Another challenge for CHP is that the candidate selection process has only intensified internal conflicts and crises instead of reducing them. This new phase is also pulling the party away from pressing national debates, limiting its ability to shape the political agenda.



(CHP - Anadolu Agency)

Significant Developments Expected Soon in the Kurdish Dossier

The process that began with Devlet Bahçeli's speech on October 22 and gained momentum after meetings of the DEM Party delegation had slowed down following the second İmralı meeting. However, behind-the-scenes negotiations and preparations have not stopped despite this apparent stagnation. Over the past week, signs have emerged indicating that the process has matured and that significant steps will likely be taken soon.

MHP leader Bahçeli, in a written statement due to his illness, strongly reaffirmed his support for the process. Meanwhile, DEM Party co-chair Tuncer Bakırhan called Bahçeli to wish him a speedy recovery, stating, "Türkiye needs you for peace and reconciliation efforts."

Alongside this positive political atmosphere, a DEM Party delegation is set to visit the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government

(IKRG) in northern Iraq this weekend. The delegation is expected to meet with the Barzani administration in Erbil and Bafel Talabani in Sulaymaniyah. These meetings are crucial for fostering unity among different Kurdish factions. It is important to note that groups close to Barzani hold influence in northeastern Syria, where the YPG/PKK presence remains one of Türkiye's primary security concerns. On the other hand, the PKK terrorist group's main base is located in the Qandil Mountains in Iraq, and the IKRG also faces challenges due to the presence of this armed group.

Ahead of Abdullah Öcalan's anticipated call for the PKK to disarm, efforts to establish the necessary political and regional conditions appear to be accelerating. It is highly likely that more concrete progress will be made within the next few weeks.

Highlights

- The indictment against Ekrem İmamoğlu has been accepted following his comments about İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor Akın Gürlek. İmamoğlu faces charges of "publicly insulting a public official in relation to their duties," "issuing threats," and "targeting individuals involved in counterterrorism efforts." Prosecutors are seeking a prison sentence of up to seven years. The trial's first hearing is scheduled for April 11.
- Türkiye's first domestically produced beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile, developed by TÜBİTAK, has been successfully tested.
- Türkiye is spearheading a four-nation coalition with Iraq, Jordan, and Syria to combat the resurgence of Daesh in the region. The initiative aims to neutralise the threat posed by the terrorist group and reduce the rationale for U.S. support of the PKK/YPG in Syria.

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