

In this edition of *Türkiye in Focus*:

- President Erdoğan visited the MHP leader to discuss key domestic developments.
- Significant subjects were examined during Iraqi Prime Minister Sudani’s visit to Türkiye.
- President Erdoğan’s phone call to Özgür Özel after he was attacked at Sırrı Süreyya Önder’s funeral was viewed as a temporary lull in political tensions.

President Erdoğan Visits Bahçeli

President Erdoğan held a private meeting with Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Chairman Devlet Bahçeli at Bahçeli’s residence, marking their first face-to-face meeting in a long time. Bahçeli had been away from the public eye for a while due to health issues and has recently been conducting parliamentary activities remotely. Nevertheless, he frequently issues statements on current affairs, particularly regarding the terror-free Türkiye initiative.

In the ever-shifting landscape of Turkish politics, every word—and even the silence—of Bahçeli and Erdoğan often sparks political interpretations and speculation about the state of the AK Party–MHP alliance. In this context, their meeting was viewed as a sign that the alliance remains strong.

Meanwhile, Türkiye’s agenda has been heating up with developments such as the terror-free Türkiye initiative and the investigation into Ekrem İmamoğlu. In addition, a new judicial reform package, which includes major changes to sentencing



(Metin Aktaş - Anadolu Agency)

laws, has been under discussion for some time. Following the Erdoğan–Bahçeli meeting, concrete steps in these areas may soon be expected.

Iraqi Prime Minister in Türkiye

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia’ Al-Sudani paid an official visit to Ankara. As part of the visit, the Türkiye-Iraq High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council meeting and a bilateral discussion between the leaders of the two countries were held.

Türkiye and Iraq have recently developed stronger ties across a range of economic and political issues. Iraq is among the countries with which Türkiye maintains one of its largest volumes of trade. While the trade volume between the two nations stood at \$20 billion last year, Trade Minister Ömer Bolat stated that this year’s goal is to increase it to \$30 billion.



(Muhammed Selim Korkutata - Anadolu Agency)

The Development Road Project between the two countries is also expected to further enhance their relations and strengthen both political and economic interests. In this context, researcher Burak Elmalı stated the following:

“The Türkiye-Iraq Development Road Project—anchored by the construction of the Al-Faw Port and the rapid progress of highway and railway infrastructure along the route—stands as a clear reflection of the deepening ties between the two countries in diplomacy, trade, and security. At its heart, this ambitious initiative seeks to link the Gulf region with Europe, and it embodies the shared vision of Turkish President Erdoğan and Iraqi Prime Minister Sudani to turn regional connectivity into a practical, mutually beneficial partnership that serves both nations.”

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that this meeting took place at a time when the PKK is expected to disband as part of the effort toward a terror-free Türkiye. The PKK is based in the Qandil Mountains in northern Iraq and also poses a threat to Iraq’s security. It is known that the two countries are in dialogue regarding the steps to be taken after the organisation’s dissolution.

President Calls Özgür Özel After He was Assaulted at Sırrı Süreyya Önder’s Funeral

Sırrı Süreyya Önder, a member of the İmralı delegation of the DEM Party and Deputy Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, passed away in the hospital where he was receiving treatment for a heart condition. His funeral brought together figures from across the political spectrum in Türkiye. Government officials, opposition leaders, and representatives from various political and social groups came together to pay their respects. Known for his artistic and political career, as well as his ability to engage in dialogue with diverse segments of society, Önder had recently been playing an active role in seeking a resolution to the Kurdish question.

During the memorial ceremony in Istanbul, CHP leader Özgür Özel was physically attacked by a man who punched him. The attacker was later reported to have served time in prison for killing his two children, and some of his former cellmates are said to have been involved in other politically charged incidents. MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli also issued a statement emphasising that the incident must be thoroughly investigated.

In the immediate aftermath of the attack, President Erdoğan phoned Özgür Özel to extend his good wishes—a gesture that stood out given the heightened tension between the two

parties. Özel thanked Erdoğan and said the call was seen as a de-escalatory step. However, this positive tone was criticised by some figures in opposition-aligned media, who favour a more radical and confrontational stance from the CHP.

While some interpreted the phone call as a momentary easing of the political atmosphere, tensions between the two parties remain far from settled.



(Cemal Yurttaş - Anadolu Agency)

Highlights

- In a phone call with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Erdoğan expressed solidarity with Pakistan and stated that Türkiye is ready to do its utmost to help de-escalating tensions in South Asia.
- A Turkish general has been appointed to a key leadership role within NATO’s command structure, marking a significant milestone in Türkiye’s relationship with the alliance. The Ministry of National Defense announced that Brigadier General Eray Unguder has been selected as NATO’s “Director of Cooperative Security,” a crucial position within the organization.
- The first round of negotiations to modernize the free trade agreement (FTA) between Türkiye and the United Kingdom is set to begin in July, announced Türkiye’s Trade Minister, Omer Bolat after his meeting in London with U.K. Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Jonathan Reynolds, Minister Bolat shared his reflections on X.

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