

In this week's *Türkiye in Focus*;

- President Erdoğan paid diplomatic visits to Saudi Arabia and Egypt.
- Türkiye's efforts to help de-escalate tensions between the United States and Iran continue.
- As Türkiye marks the third anniversary of the earthquake, reconstruction efforts continue apace.

President's Visits to Riyadh and Cairo

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's diplomatic tour to Saudi Arabia and Egypt this week marks more than a routine exchange of high-level visits; it signals the effective completion of a long and carefully managed normalisation process. After years of strained ties and strategic recalibration across the region, Ankara now appears to have firmly reset its relations with both Riyadh and Cairo. The optics and substance of the meetings suggest that what was once a cautious rapprochement has matured into a pragmatic partnership, rooted in converging regional priorities rather than temporary expediency.

For Türkiye, both Saudi Arabia and Egypt are emerging as increasingly vital actors within a shared regional vision. Discussions reportedly centred heavily on Gaza, underscoring a renewed alignment on one of the Middle East's most urgent crises. Speaking to journalists on his return flight, Erdoğan emphasised the significance of humanitarian aid reaching Gaza via Egypt and highlighted the strategic importance of Turkish-Saudi cooperation in the territory's eventual reconstruction. This framing reflects Ankara's effort to position itself not only as a vocal advocate on the Palestinian issue, but also as a constructive partner in post-conflict recovery—working in coordination with key Arab powers rather than at cross-purposes.

Beyond geopolitics, the visit yielded tangible economic and strategic outcomes. Agreements were signed in several sectors, most notably energy. The renewable energy



(TCCB / Murat Çetinmühürdar - Anadolu Agency)

investment deal with Saudi Arabia aims to enable Türkiye to secure electricity at what officials describe as the lowest unit cost it has achieved to date, reinforcing Ankara's push for energy diversification and affordability. Erdoğan also hinted that defence cooperation could deepen, suggesting that collaboration with Riyadh on Türkiye's KAAN fighter jet program may soon enter the agenda. Taken together, these developments indicate that Türkiye's recalibrated ties with Riyadh and Cairo are not merely symbolic; they are structured around long-term economic, security, and regional calculations that could reshape Ankara's role in the Middle East.

Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi in Ankara

As tensions between Washington and Tehran continue to test regional stability, Türkiye has stepped up its diplomatic engagement to ease strains through dialogue rather than escalation. Ankara remains in close contact with both sides, positioning itself as a potential facilitator amid fragile



(Arif Hüdaverdi Yaman - Anadolu Agency)

communication channels and deep mistrust. One of the most notable engagements in this context was the January 30 meeting in Ankara between Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi. Following the talks, both sides underscored the importance of negotiations, signalling a shared preference for diplomacy over confrontation.

Türkiye's active diplomacy has even sparked discussion about whether it could host future U.S.-Iran talks. While such a scenario has been floated in political circles, current indications suggest that Oman will remain the likely venue for any renewed negotiations. Still, Ankara's sustained outreach to both Washington and Tehran highlights its ambition to play a stabilising role in a volatile geopolitical landscape. By maintaining open channels with all parties, Türkiye seeks not only to reduce immediate tensions but also to reinforce its broader role as a pivotal diplomatic actor in the region.

Third Anniversary of the Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes

Three years ago, on 6 February, Türkiye was shaken by two devastating earthquakes that occurred just 9 hours apart, measuring 7.7 and 7.6 in magnitude. Although centred in Kahramanmaraş, the destruction rippled across eleven provinces situated along and around the fault line, leaving an indelible mark on the nation's social and economic fabric. Official figures record 53,537 lives lost and 107,213 people injured, while the overall economic cost is estimated to have exceeded \$100 billion. In the immediate aftermath, the country's focus was on search-and-rescue operations, followed by an immense effort to provide temporary shelter for more than 1.5 million people whose homes had become uninhabitable. Public institutions, alongside a wide network of civil society organisations, mobilised rapidly, establishing large-scale container cities and tent camps in a display of intense national solidarity.

Today, that emergency phase is gradually giving way to long-term reconstruction. A massive rebuilding campaign is underway across the affected provinces. Thus far, 201,580 housing units and workplaces have been completed and handed over to their rightful owners—roughly 45 per cent of



(Betül Abalı - Anadolu Agency)

the total target. Authorities aim to surpass 450,000 delivered units by the end of this year, a goal that underscores both the scale of the destruction and the ambition of the recovery effort. While localised challenges persist in certain areas, construction continues apace, shaping what is arguably one of the most extensive post-disaster reconstruction drives in Türkiye's modern history.

Highlights

- The EU-India agreement grants Indian goods preferential access to both EU markets and countries such as Türkiye within the Customs Union, without offering reciprocal advantages to Turkish exports in India. This exposes a structural asymmetry in the EU–Türkiye Customs Union and could increase competition for Türkiye in its key EU market.
- The recently disclosed Epstein files have drawn significant attention in Türkiye, particularly due to references to certain businessmen and allegations of his activities at a hotel in Antalya. At the same time, unverified rumours—lacking concrete evidence—have fuelled speculation regarding missing children in the country.
- The CHP organised a conference under the theme of social peace and democracy, bringing together experts on the Kurdish issue in an effort to align with the "Terror-Free Türkiye" agenda. However, internal dissent within the party over this approach continues to emerge.

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