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### GUL: "LET'S PROMOTE ALL LANGUAGES, BUT NOT FOR IDEOLOGICAL REASONS"

All social groups in Turkey should join forces to help develop the country, said President Abdullah Gul on Saturday. Addressing the Turkish Energy, Water and Gas Workers' Union (TES-IS), Gul said, "All of us need to promote our citizens, and stick together in order to make this country and its people more powerful." Touching on recent debates on bilingualism, Gul said that everyone should watch what they say and do so as to protect the public peace. "The official language of Turkey is, of course, Turkish, and so it will continue to be in the future," he added. "But there are various languages being spoken in various parts of Turkey. All of them are our languages. We will promote all of them. But if we attempt to do this out of ideological motives, then we will disrupt peace and order and start to harm our own people." /Today's Zaman/

### OBAMA: "OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH TURKEY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER"

The relationship between Turkey and the United States remains strong and is "more important than ever" in the wake of leaked US diplomatic cables critical of some officials in Ankara, US President Barack Obama said in an e-mail interview with Turkish daily Hurriyet published yesterday. In a recent conversation with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Obama said, the two leaders "reaffirmed the strong state of US-Turkish relations" despite some differences "from time to time." "Our partnership is resilient, and we agreed that the irresponsible acts of WikiLeaks do not threaten it," said Obama. "Given the increasingly complex challenges the world faces, I believe that US-Turkish cooperation is more important now than ever." In the interview, Obama addressed many of the most important issues facing Turkey, including its EU bid, its ties with Israel and the West, and how it deals with its Kurdish population and religious minorities. Reiterating US support for Turkey's fight against the terrorist PKK, Obama hailed Ankara's moves to improve the "human rights and economic situation for Kurds," including loosening restrictions on teaching Kurdish and on public and private broadcasting in Kurdish. On the diplomatic chill between Turkey and Israel, Obama encouraged the two US regional allies to "find an acceptable way forward" and "do everything they can to repair their relations," while praising Erdogan's decision to send assistance to Israel earlier this month to battle a devastating forest fire. /Hurriyet Daily News/

### NEW IRANIAN FM: "TIES WITH TURKEY ARE A TOP PRIORITY"

Officially taking charge on Saturday as Iran's new foreign minister, Iran nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi said boosting ties with Turkey is one of Tehran's top priorities. "Iran's first priority in diplomacy should be its neighbors and the Islamic world. In this regard, both Saudi Arabia and Turkey have a special position," Salehi was quoted as saying by the Mehr news agency. Salehi said both Iran and the European Union would benefit if the EU switched its position toward Tehran from "confrontation to engagement as soon as possible." "Despite some unfair moves by the European Union, this Union wants respectful ties with Iran for a number of reasons, including energy," he added. /Hurriyet Daily News/

### FRESH FROM 2-YEAR TENURE, TURKEY TO TRY AGAIN FOR SPOT ON UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Turkey will again seek a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu announced Saturday. In October 2008 Turkey was elected a non-permanent member to the Council for a two-year tenure which started in January 2009 and will conclude next week, on Dec. 31. Davutoglu said at a ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party meeting in Konya that not long after its membership ends, Turkey would try again for a seat. But UN rules may complicate Davutoglu's plan. Chapter V, Article 23 of the UN Charter states, "A retiring member shall not be eligible for

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immediate re-election." Davutoglu said that Turkey's two-year tenure was widely seen as making a mark on the UN. "Over the last two years, we have represented humanity and conscience," Davutoglu said. "We have represented the human quest for security and freedom. We have not represented the interests of any other country or group. We have only represented our principled and honored world view." He added that during the last Security Council meeting, top officials from several countries asked him when Turkey would again seek a seat. "They told me that Turkey would absolutely win more than 153 votes this time," he said. "We won that number in 2008, and it was a record high number of votes. We will run again, and we will win again." Turkey last served on the council in 1952-1953. /Hurriyet Daily News/

#### **IRANIAN, IRAQI PRESIDENTS DUE IN ISTANBUL FOR ECO SUMMIT**

Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad are expected to arrive separately in Istanbul this week to attend the 11th Heads of State and Government Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) set for Thursday. The ECO, founded in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, is an intergovernmental regional organization providing a platform to promote economic, technical and cultural cooperation among member states. Before the summit, on Wednesday foreign ministers of ECO member countries will hold a Council of Ministers Meeting. The council is working to restructure the organization in line with member states' expectations. /Milliyet, Sabah/

#### **TOP SYRIAN OFFICIALS TO ATTEND COOPERATION COUNCIL SUMMIT IN ANKARA**

The second Turkish-Syrian High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council summit in Ankara today and tomorrow will be co-chaired by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Syrian counterpart Muhammad Naji al-Otari. A dozen Turkish government ministers and their Syrian counterparts will attend the summit, where 51 agreements signed at the first council meeting will be reviewed. /Turkiye/

#### **FIRST TURKISH NATIONAL FIGHTER JET COULD FLY IN 2020**

Turkey's dream of producing a national fighter jet entirely on its own is likely to finally come true after a meeting of the Defense Industry Implementation Committee (SSIK) on Saturday. The committee decided to start on the design of the first Turkish fighter jet and talks with Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI), Tusas Engine Industries (TEI) and Uzay Industries on producing the aircraft. "The jet will be cutting edge," the committee said in a statement after the meeting. "It will replace the F4s and will be a fighter jet that works with the F-16 and F-35." /Sabah/

#### **TURKISH-GERMAN ENTREPRENEUR PLANS TO PRODUCE SMALL PLANES**

A Turk living in Germany has plans to produce small airplanes by investing €30 million in Turkey. Koc Consulting Chairman Aydogan Koc, who studied space engineering in Germany, is now preparing to make Turkey a small plane production hub. Saying he expects to establish a company early next year, Koc gave a target of delivering the first planes some 10 months later. Producing 150-200 planes, he wants to win a 2-3 percent stake of world small plane production, he said. "We have German partners, but we're also open to offers from Turkish companies," Koc said. He added that they will seek research and development incentives from Turkey's Industry and Trade Ministry. Koc worked for many years at top positions at Airbus and Eurofighter, and also serves on the Turkish-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry. /Today's Zaman/

#### **TURKISH CONTRACTORS ENJOY SUCCESS IN LIBYA**

The success of Turkish contractors in Libya is a key piece of Turkish-Libyan economic ties, said Ambassador to Libya Levent Sahin Kaya over the weekend. "Bilateral relations especially took off after Prime Minister Erdogan's visit to Libya in November 2009," he said. "Economic, trade and investment ties are very strong." The value of construction projects undertaken by Turkish firms in Libya over the last five years totals \$14.5 billion, and Libyan infrastructure projects are favorites among Turkish contractors. Last year Turkish builders requested help in getting payments from the Libyan government. On these payment problems, Kaya said both he and Erdogan are watching the issue closely and that Turkey and Libya have overcome similar problems in the past. /Turkiye/



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