



# National Day of Turkey

The Daily Star

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**Mustafa Kemal Ataturk**  
Founder and the First President of the Republic of Turkey



**Ahmed Necdet Sezer**  
President of the Republic of Turkey



**Recep Tayyip Erdogan**  
Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey

## MESSAGE

**T**HIS year, we are happily celebrating, both in Turkey, abroad and in the brotherly Bangladesh, the 83rd anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic. On this day of 29 October, in the year 1923, the new Turkish State was born, albeit at the cost of millions of lives of our people during our War of Liberation.

October 29 is also a day of remembrance of the "Founder and the first President of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk" who was given the surname "Ataturk-Father of Turks" by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1934. Ataturk was an exceptional figure still revered as a brave commander, a statesman and a great leader, who had also been well understood and appreciated by the great poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam, for his bravery and his struggle for liberation, which he had meaningfully reflected in his poem "Kamal Pasha".

On this happy occasion, I would also like to express our gratitude to our Bengali brethren, who generously provided moral and material support for our armies during our War of Liberation, under the command of Mustafa Kemal. Sacrificing his short span of life of only 57 years for his people and his country, Ataturk passed away to eternity on 10 November 1938. It is a consolation for us that a school in Feni here in Bangladesh was given the name "Ataturk Model High School" in his remembrance and that the Government of Bangladesh named two streets, one in the capital Dhaka and the other in Chittagong, "Kemal Ataturk Avenue". As reciprocal gratitude, two streets in the center of the capital, Ankara, were named after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman.

Following the proclamation of the Republic, Turkey has consistently pursued a foreign policy aimed at peace based on Ataturk's dictum: "Peace at home, peace in the world." In line with his ideal, Turkey has established friendly relations with her neighbours and member countries of the United Nations, of which she was a co-founder, and has been promoting her relations with them in conformity with the principles of respect for sovereignty, security, territorial integrity and political unity as enshrined in the UN charter. In 1949, Turkey accepted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and became a member of the Council of Europe in the same year.

As is well known, Turkey is the member of numerous international organisations. Apart from her significant role within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Turkey is also an active Member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). Turkish Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu is serving as the Secretary General. Turkey aims to be a full member of the European Union. Turkey has twice assumed the Command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul, Afghanistan. These memberships are all along the noble line of serving for the maintenance of world peace, security and stability.

After gaining her independence in 1971, Bangladesh was officially recognised by Turkey on 22 February 1974. On November 1976, Turkish Embassy was opened in Dhaka. Since then, Turkey and the People's Republic of Bangladesh have maintained exemplary relations of friendship and cooperation between them in all fields. Several agreements were signed. "Turkey-Bangladesh Interparliamentary Friendship Group" and "Joint Economic Committee" were established. There is ongoing cooperation between the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the two countries.

In April of this year the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh HE Begum Khaleda Zia, accompanied by a large delegation and some businessmen paid an official visit to Turkey as the guest of HE. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey. During the visit a cooperation agreement was signed between garment industries organisations of the two countries.

During the month of July this year a Turkish Parliamentary Delegation headed by the Deputy Speaker of the Grand National Assembly HE Ismail Alprekin, composed of Justice and Development Party and People's Republican Party members, visited Bangladesh as the guest of the Honorable Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad HE Jamiruddin Sircar.

We admire the progress Bangladesh is achieving in many fields and particularly appreciate her participation in the United Nations' Peace Keeping Operations in many part of the world, to some of which Turkey is also contributing.

I would like to reiterate that we are committed to maintaining and further improving our relations with Bangladesh and broaden our close cooperation to as many areas as possible.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to reiterate my best wishes of health, happiness and prosperity for my Bangladeshi brothers and sisters.

Before closing, I do respectfully commemorate Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman, the great leaders of Bangladesh, who have sacrificed their lives for their country and contributed to strengthening of the bonds of friendship that tie the peoples of Turkey and Bangladesh together. May Ataturk, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman rest in peace and Turkish-Bangladesh friendship and brotherhood last for ever.



**Ferit Ergin**  
Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Bangladesh

## From the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic

**T**HE Ottoman Empire which was founded in Anatolia in 1299, was a semi-theocratic Muslim state. It was extremely tolerant under the authority of the Sultan and the laws of the Muslim theocracy. Sheyh-ul-Islam counselled the state in its religious affairs.

Ottoman Empire embodied a variety of communities namely Moslem, Christian, Jewish and Armenian firmly together. These communities all enjoyed freedom of religion and conscience.

Yavus Sultan Selim, who brought the sacred Islamic relics to Istanbul from Egypt in 1521, also bestowed upon himself the title of Khalifa and made the Empire the sole representative and guardian of

the Muslim Ummah. It was with the transfer of the Khaliphate to the Ottomans that relations between the Turks and other Muslim nations gained significance. Whether Ottoman subjects or not, the majority of Muslims recognised the Khaliph, the Ottoman Sultan, as the head of Islam and guardian of the holy lands from 1521 on wards. During the reign of the Ottomans, life and well-being of their subjects were in the hands of the Sultan. He, as the ruler, personified the state and as Khalifa, the religion.

Sultanate was an inheritance to go to the eldest Shehzade from his father the Sultan. But as decadence of the Empire began, the society also gradually transformed into a bizarre mixture. The court and the dignitar-

ies formed a privileged clique. The Sultan, evading his responsibilities, lost all authority and only sought his fortune. Janissaries revolted against the state turning into revolutionary hot-beds. Unity of the Empire was thus lacerated by innumerable parties; the ruler himself, the court, the madrasas and even the universities. Thus, the Empire found itself in a state of complete military, cultural, social and political dissolution.

During Turkey's war of liberation against the invaders under the command of Mustafa Kemal, Turkish Grand National Assembly was convened and its Government was formed in Ankara on 23 April 1920. Under such state of affairs the Grand National Assembly abolished the Sultanate in November

1922. Sultan Vahdettin fled the country in a British ship upon the writ of religious jurisprudence on the grounds that he had violated the law against Khaliphate.

Turkish Republic was proclaimed on 29 October 1923. In March 1924, several laws were enacted by the Grand National Assembly. Education system was unified, waqfs were nationalised and Khaliphate was abolished.

The new Turkish State was founded as a secular democratic republic. Sovereignty was unconditionally vested with the people and could not be transferred. Consequently, the Turkish State could no longer continue to be the sole representative and guardian of the Ummah.

Kemalist Turkey replaced the ruins of the Ottoman monarchy with a democratic state whose Parliament was composed of the representatives democratically elected by the people and its President elected by the Parliament.

For Turkey, modernization means elevating the living standards of the Turkish people to the level of contemporary civilization.

Today, Ataturk's motto: "Peace at home, peace in the world" and his secular doctrine are firmly established in Turkey. Ataturk, meaning father of Turks, was given to Mustafa Kemal by a law passed by the Grand National Assembly in 1934.

According to its constitution,

Turkey is a democratic, secular, social, parliamentary and pluralistic state governed by the rule of law and based on the concepts of public peace, national solidarity, justice, respect for human rights and loyal to the principle of nationalism of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

Turkey does not have a state religion specified in its constitution. According to Article 24, titled "Freedom of religion and conscience": Everyone has the rights to freedom of conscience, religious belief and conviction.

The Kemalism ideology of the Turkish people conceives the world in the light of a positive spirit the roots of which are embedded in the Turkish soul. It represents the regeneration of the Turkish nation.

## Turkey in figures

**T**URKEY is situated at the crossroads of the three continents of the old world and stands as a cross road between Asia, Africa and Europe. The size of the country is 779,452 square kilometers of which 23,763 square kilometers lie in Europe called "Trakya-the Thrace" and, the remaining 755,689 square kilometers in Asia called "Anatolia-Asia Minor".

Total length of the country's coastal lines along the Black Sea in the north, inland sea the Marmara, the Aegean in the west and the Mediterranean in the south total to 8,333 kilometers.

Turkey is surrounded by Greece and Bulgaria on the west, Georgia, Armenia and Nakhichevan on the northeast, Iran on the east and Iraq and Syria in the south.

According to 2005 census Turkey has a total population of 72,065,000. Approximately one fourth of the population reside in five biggest cities namely Istanbul, Ankara-the capital, Yzmir, Adana and Bursa. The country has 81 provinces. The salient demographic features are the high rate of urbanization and the large share of the young generation in Turkey's total population.

Since its foundation in 1923 the Turkish Republic has acquired a contemporary identity. Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state that respects the rule of law. Her official language is Turkish while other languages such as English, German and French are also spoken.

Since 1980 Turkey has taken

important steps towards liberalizing and opening her economy. As a result of the policies aimed at achieving these goals, export earnings have quadrupled whereas the share of industrial products in total exports has risen to more than 90 percent. With her natural resources, historical and cultural inheritance, attractive climate, Turkey presents a tremendous potential as regards tourism, a sector which has achieved remarkable progress and by her liberal economy and handsome incentives for foreign investment.

The first formal links between the European Union and Turkey were forged in 1963 with an Association Agreement providing for Turkey's full membership through stages. On January 1, 1996, Customs Union Agreement between Turkey and the EU became effective. On December 11, 1999, the European Summit held in Helsinki endorsed Turkey's candidature for full membership. The European Council decided in its meeting held in December 2002 that if the EC in December 2004 decides that Turkey fulfills the Copenhagen political criteria, the EU will open negotiations "without delay". On 17 December 2004 the European Council decided to initiate the accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 December 2005. The screening process under 35 chapter headings began on 12 June 2006 and is going on within the framework adopted by the Commission on 29 June 2005. As of October this year, the screening process of 27 chapters have been completed.

## Turkey in a snapshot

### A land of resources

- A treasure of history, a melting pot of civilizations and cultures.
- The variety and beauty of its landscape and climate attracts tourists to its beaches, mountains, plains and valleys.
- A dynamic nation of 70 million people with an average age of 27.

### Committed to democracy and pluralism

- A multi-party parliamentary democracy since 1946.
- A secular democracy among more than 50 republics with a predominantly Moslem population.

### A free market economy

- A free and privately-owned media, with 16 nation-wide private TV networks, broadcasting through three Turkish communication satellites.
- A member of OEEC from 1947 and 1960 and a founding member of OECD since 1961.
- Founding member of the Council of Europe since 1950.
- A member of NATO since 1952, an associate member of the European Union since 1964. Involved in a customs union with the EU since 1996.

### Strategically placed

- A physical and cultural bridge between Europe and Asia, in the heart of Eurasia, bordering 12 nations and 4 seas.
- An outlet for the Black Sea basin countries to warm seas through the Turkish straits.
- A significant contributor to the development of the states of Central Asia and the Caucasus.
- A prospective energy terminal for the export of Caspian oil and natural gas.

### A regional leader

- A contributor of UN peacekeeping operations worldwide.
- An initiator of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation region which

encompasses 11 nations from the Balkans to the Caucasus.

- A supporter of the South-east European Countries Co-operation Process and an initiator of the Multinational Peace Force in South-eastern Europe; participant in the Kosovo International Security Force.
- A supporter of the Middle East peace process and the only regional country which participates in the temporary international presence in Hebron (TIHP), at the request of both the Palestinians and Israelis.

### An economic power

- A modern telecommunication and transportation network.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> biggest donor country in the world terms of its GNP.
- A donor of \$3.5 billion economic and technical assistance including credits and \$300 million humanitarian aid to several countries.
- In Russia alone, the investments of Turkish private enterprises amount to \$10 billion.
- Exports to 155 countries ranging from cable for the Channel Tunnel to cars to China.
- Europe's largest supplier of textiles and apparel.
- The only F-16 fighter plane factory outside the US.
- A regional center for international companies such as Coca-Cola, Chase Manhattan, Philips and Siemens.

### A land of opportunity

- A privatization programme including state enterprises active in airlines, banking, telecommunications and petroleum.
- A privatization and its \$4.5 billion per year energy investment programme offering important opportunities for foreign investors.
- One of the 10 big emerging markets.
- Organizes the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) for hydroelectric power generation and irrigation, creating vast investment opportunities in agro-industries.



Our heartfelt felicitations to the Government and friendly people of the Republic of Turkey on the occasion of the 83rd anniversary of the proclamation

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