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TODAY'S ZAMAN PRESENTS 18TH TUSKON TRADE BRIDGE

JUNE 19, 2013 WWW.TODAYSZAMAN.COM



TUSKON's Meral speaks as President Gül (C) and Economy Minister Çağlayan listen.

18TH TUSKON TRADE BRIDGE BRINGS 2,800 ENTREPRENEURS TOGETHER

The event brings businesspeople from the construction and furniture sectors -- this year's focus industries -- and related businesses to İstanbul's Expo Center

The 18th edition of the two-day Turkey-World Trade Bridge summit, organized by the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON), opened its doors to visitors from all around the globe on Wednesday.

Around 1,300 people from 130 countries are connecting with 1,500 Turkish businesspeople in an estimated 20,000 business-to-business (B2B) meetings at the İstanbul event. Foreign participants will also have the opportunity to visit other Anatolian cities and ex-

plore investment and partnership opportunities there.

The event brings businesspeople from construction, furniture and related businesses -- this year's focus industries -- to İstanbul Fuar Merkezi. Investors have the opportunity to discuss deals with their counterparts from the Balkans, the Americas, Asia, Africa and the Asia-Pacific. The summit is also sponsored by the Turkish Ministry of Economy and the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM). This year's event sees the participation of seven particular countries for the first time. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 06**

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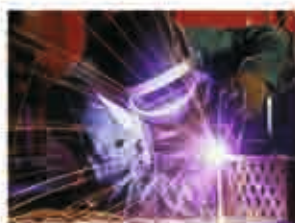
EMAK

ELEVATORS

DESIGN



PRODUCTION



INSTALLATION



MODERNISATION



From the editor

Over the last seven years, we have witnessed the emergence of a new concept in the organization of trade fairs in Turkey by the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON): World Trade Bridges.

The trade bridges program has now successfully become an internationally recognized trade event as well as a valuable brand for Turkey. This year's event, to be held over June 19-20 in İstanbul, features the industries of construction, construction materials and furniture, receiving hundreds of interested business-people and customers from different parts of the world. The 18th Turkey-World Trade Bridge introduces 1,300 businesspeople from 130 countries to 1,500 Turkish counterparts in an estimated 20,000 B2B

meetings. More than 200 companies are represented at booths at this year's program. Putting construction under focus this year is meaningful considering the sector has remained the backbone of Turkish economic growth over the past decade.

It has been exciting to see TUSKON events open up a new era in commercial relations for Turkish entrepreneurs, particularly in markets that were not well known to Turkey. We hope that this year's trade bridge is another good example, yielding the best results for all participant countries.

With deepest respect,

Ergin Hava
Today's Zaman Business Editor

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18th TUSKON trade bridge brings 2,800 entrepreneurs together: The 18th edition of the two-day Turkey-World Trade Bridge summit, organized by TUSKON, opened its doors to visitors from all around the globe on Wednesday.



Turkey's exports and expectations in 2013:

Despite these uncertainties experienced on a global scale, the Turkish economy continues to move forward.

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Questions abound as urban renewal moves full speed ahead:

Urban renewal is a subject of intense focus nowadays with some of the leading names in the construction sector debating what sort of urban renewal they expect.



A last weekend in İstanbul: What if, god forbid, for some reason I had just one last weekend to spend in the 'City of the World's Desire'?

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Time for your stomach to enjoy the finer points in life: As spring began to wrap itself around İstanbul, I said to myself: 'Come on, what are you waiting for? Kanlıca and the Bosphorus are waiting for you!'



PORTAL

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Participants have the chance to make new business connections during TUSKON's Trade Bridge summit.

18TH TUSKON TRADE BRIDGE BRINGS 2,800 ENTREPRENEURS TOGETHER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

These are: Cape Verde, the Seychelles, Guinea-Bissau, Botswana and Djibouti from Africa along with Venezuela and Panama from the Americas. The entering of new countries in the TUSKON summit marks the event's prominence in opening new horizons for the country's entrepreneurs.

Evaluating this year's summit, TUSKON Chairman Rızanur Meral said that officials from his organization have visited 140 separate countries over the past year to promote the summit.

Meral said they expected to provide as many opportunities as possible for Turkish entrepreneurs and their foreign counterparts to expand businesses in all corners of the globe. "We are concentrating on markets in different parts of the world that have long remained unknown to Turkish companies. This strategy has helped our firms branch out into new exports and investment markets so far, and we are committed to pave the way for further integration of Turkey into the world economy," Meral said. Underlining that the summit events have now become "an internationally recognized brand," Meral said TUSKON's efforts, supported by local authorities, have helped Turkey boost trade with diversified market and attract new investments. Turkey is continuing to expand its economic axis in a bid to find new markets, along with signing free trade agreements with several countries.

TUSKON first introduced the summit seven years ago. The meetings have sent Turkish companies to invest in a wide range of sectors -- including agriculture, food, mining, construction and energy -- in a number of markets. The events have gained importance over the years as more foreign and local firms have flocked to participate and benefit from the opportunity to connect to a wide range of global markets under one single roof. In fact, TUSKON's success has been so great that business communities in

the Middle East, Latin America and Central America have requested that the confederation organize similar ventures for their regions. Most observers liken the TUSKON trade bridge summits to a UN economic summit, given the scope of the program and the large number of participants from around the world. The summits are also critical in contributing to strengthening relations between nations and fostering global trade at a time of volatility.

The confederation established its own event organizer subsidiary two years ago and continues to provide guidance to different firms in this regard.

TUSKON is well-known for its efforts to increase collaboration and mutual commercial relations with different world regions that Turkey has low trade volume. It also pays attention to the specific strategies of the Turkish state toward certain markets. For example, steps taken to further relations with the African continent usually take into consideration the Foreign Trade Undersecretariat's Africa strategy. Observers have pointed out that TUSKON is playing a great role in increasing Turkey's global reputation and building bridges with various foreign countries in line with the government's inclusive and dynamic foreign policy agenda.

TUSKON launched its first foreign trade bridge in 2006, targeting African nations. The initiative then stretched from Africa to the Pacific region and, most recently, to Eurasia and the Balkans. Turkish participation in the event is not limited to TUSKON member companies, either. TUSKON is not utilizing state-funded incentives for the summit. Instead, it is relying on sponsorship for its expenditures.

The Turkey-World Trade Bridge summit ends on Thursday. The previous 17 summits combined saw more than 27,000 foreign and 40,000 Turkish businesspeople participate to create an estimated total trade volume of more than \$26 billion. **Istanbul** Today's Zaman



Türkiye Finans supports import and exporters

One of Turkey's leading participation banks, Türkiye Finans, offers an exclusive loan package for Turkish importer and exporters.

Developed by its experienced staff, Türkiye Finans' package titled "Foreign Trade Financing Package" is expected to meet emerging market requirements and includes advantages for importer and exporters from various industries in financing their businesses. Aiming to meet customer needs by providing the right products and high quality services, Türkiye Finans offers a number of incentives including a payment plan aligned with the cash flows of companies, corporate financing support with fixed-cost advantage providing protection against economic fluctuations, leasing and export-credit guaranteed financing in different foreign currencies.

The Foreign Trade Financing Package has a number of advantages such as a 25 percent discount in export and import transaction commissions, a checkbook, collection of checks and bonds, as well as discounts at point of sale (POS) and money transfers. Being the leading participation bank with its innovative products and services, Türkiye Finans provides foreign exchange purchase and selling transaction services to importers and exporters for five days and 24 hours a day without any additional charges through its TFX Target tool.

Türkiye Finans' Foreign Trade Financing Package will be available until Sept. 30, 2013.

Türkiye Finans also provides all kinds of consultancy and intelligence services to companies for their foreign trade transactions. Türkiye Finans' cooperation with commerce and industry chambers continues.

Türkiye Finans continues to support entrepreneurs to increase our country's exports. In this regard, a number of protocols have been signed with the Mardin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Çanakkale Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Denizli Chamber of Industry, the Denizli Chamber of Commerce and the Uşak Chamber of Commerce and Industry. These protocols enable Türkiye Finans to offer exclusive advantages in its foreign trade and foreign currency financing services.

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Turkey's Finance

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A ship arrives in the Port of Mersin.

THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, TURKEY'S EXPORTS AND EXPECTATIONS IN 2013

Despite these uncertainties experienced on a global scale, the Turkish economy and Turkish foreign trade continue to move forward with confidence. In the last 10 years, the country's economy rose 10 places in the international ranking and has become the world's 16th largest economy

MURAT KARAGÖZ

The entire world is in agreement on the fact that international trade increases the welfare of countries and plays a crucial role in the healthy functioning of a fixed exchange rate system and the movement of capital.

However, the trade liberalism of the 19th century was not seen again until the beginning of the 21st century. The goods and capital movements of 100 years ago were still desired in the international arena, but even the two great world wars that came in between and the end of Cold War failed to return world trade to the good old days. In world trade, while the 19th century passed under the leadership of Great Britain, the 20th century passed under US leadership. The dollar-based fixed exchange rate system was abandoned again due to US abuses. The global economic period of the last 40 years

passed with a floating exchange rate system, witnessed a number of large and small-scale regional and global crises. Developed countries, in particular, have not yet recovered from the effects of recent global crises. There are countries that, including the base effect, closed the last few years in a row with negative growth. Speculative venture capitalists, like Soros Fund Management, exploit the blood and life of every country they enter and throw the pulp away like an ill-omened hand.

The need for a new world order or a system with powerful enforcements is heard in the world economy, in international trade and especially in the financial sector. It is clear that a new and fair trade and finance system will be to everyone's benefit. Returning to a fixed exchange rate system does not seem to be possible. Instead, a common global currency and a global monetary authority or a global central bank is more likely. The International Monetary Fund (IMF)

and the World Bank are candidate institutions. An international economic system that cruises aimlessly, unbridled and unregulated is likely to hit a rock that is equal to the depression of 1929, or even greater than that. Actors such as the G-7, G-20 or the EU have attempted to forcibly fill the world leadership position vacated by the US after the end of the Cold War. However, a well-defined, efficient and competent international authority or institution could put together the disorganization of the last 40 years and transform the fragile environment into a secure structure very well.

Turkey's chance and 'fantastic contradiction'

Despite these uncertainties experienced on a global scale, the Turkish economy and Turkish foreign trade continue to move forward with confidence. In the last 10 years, the country's economy rose 10 places in the

international ranking and has become the world's 16th largest economy. Per capita national income increased three-fold and exports five-fold. Foreign debt also decreased remarkably. Unemployment and inflation rates fell to single digits. All of these achievements occurred despite the many obstacles in domestic politics, deep state structures and unlawful disruptions of government. The distinctive characteristics of the 2000s in the Turkish economy were rendering supervisory and regulatory institutions functional and minimizing the exposure to risk factors. If this skillful tracking and populism-free structure of economic administration under the management of Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan had not been present and, if on the contrary it had been in the hands of certain small town-type politicians who were vulnerable to the moral hazards of the '90s, the Turkish economy could have been a thousand times worse than those of Greece and Greek Cyprus today. It was Turkey's good fortune to have a peaceful and stable environment dominate the period of the last 10 years. The Turkish electorate bought and rewarded the stability with the votes they cast. The common sense and appreciation of the Turkish electorate is as admirable as the capabilities of individual political staff and political figures. Taking the pursuit of the Turkish entrepreneur for business into account, the resulting success story proves the presence of a minimum of three pillars: political institutions, business community and the public.

Turkey's economy, as if to prove all known economic theories wrong, grew while simultaneously restraining inflation. The Philips curve proposes a negative relationship between inflation and unemployment -- a functional inverse relationship. Ac-



ording to this theory, high growth can only be provided with a high rate of inflation. However, in case of Turkey, high growth rates accompanied low inflation rates. This situation has no explanation in the literature of economics. The contrary situation -- when both stagnation (recession or unemployment) and inflation are observed is called stagflation. In a global sense, all economies experienced the nightmare of stagflation with the effect of oil shocks in the 1970s. Despite the global economic crisis that we are still experiencing -- though it reached its peak in 2008, its effects continue -- this achievement that the Turkish economy has shown in terms of inflation and growth can only be defined as a "fantastic contradiction."

Structural problems in foreign trade and expectations for 2013

Since 1950, the Turkish economy has not generally reported any trade deficit, with the exception of just a few years. In other words, our exports have always been behind our imports. This meant the continual flight

of capital abroad. It implied the inability to increase the capital stock necessary for growth; the inability to finance investments in the desired proportion. If the Turkish economy, despite the ever-increasing external deficit, continues to grow and even occupy a higher position of growth on a global scale, the entire nation, including its politicians, businessmen, workers and villagers, should be congratulated for it.

There are, of course, structural reasons behind why our foreign trade deficit still continues. The Turkish economy is still the payer of net patent. We still have industries that are only in their infancy. The automotive industry is especially protected by the walls of higher taxes. Despite this, we have a manufacturing industry that does not provide any added value, does not make technology and innovation transfers, does not possess any power for competition and apart from all these, does not have any goals or ideals. Each sector has its individual value. There is a need to conduct sector research. It was previously handled by various professional and non-governmental organizations, but should be carried out by more effective and competent staff and the results transformed into government policy.

The growth rate has not reached the desired level partly because of the Central Bank's attempt to cool down the economy in 2012. This year, the growth target is 4 percent or above. The engine of growth will again be external demand, just like last year. The capacity utilization rates or industrial production index in the first months of the year will be sufficient for the realization of growth and export goals. The environmental conditions show signs of recovery in the outside world, albeit slowly. We can say that the expectations will be realized in spite of everything.



Construction of the third bridge that will link İstanbul's European and Asian sides has begun.



NEW BRIDGE LINKING EUROPE AND ASIA EMBODIES TURKEY'S RISE

Turkey launched construction of a third bridge linking its European and Asian shores on May 29, the latest in a slew of multi-billion-dollar projects that Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sees as embodying the country's emergence as a major power. Erdoğan, who has led a decade-long transformation of a once crisis-prone economy into Europe's fastest growing, has prioritised the building frenzy as the nation's infrastructure struggles to keep up with its growth. With an eye to an election cycle ending in parliamentary polls in 2015, Erdoğan called on the Turkish, Italian and Korean firms involved to complete the Istanbul bridge within two years. "This is how we are building a powerful Turkey," he told a crowd of several thousand people, some waving Turkish flags, who gathered at a construction site on the shores of the Bosphorus strait to the north of Europe's largest city.

"For the seven hills of İstanbul, we have seven grand projects, one is this bridge, a third necklace over the Bosphorus," he said of the \$3 billion project, set to be the world's widest and longest combined road and rail bridge. A huge 150 billion lira (\$80 billion) is being invested in projects including a third İstanbul airport, billed to be one of the world's biggest, as well as rail

and road tunnels under the Bosphorus, a high-speed train line to the capital Ankara and a shipping canal designed to rival Panama or Suez. The bridge is meant to ease congestion in the city of 14 million people. Its population was less than 2.5 million when the first Bosphorus Bridge was opened to traffic in 1973.

With the population forecast to hit 17 million and the number of vehicles seen rising to 4.4 million from 3 million within a decade, the government is under pressure to act fast. Environmental groups have said the highway and airport projects will cause significant damage, leading to the destruction of hundreds of thousands of trees and harming natural water basins, accusations rejected by Erdoğan.

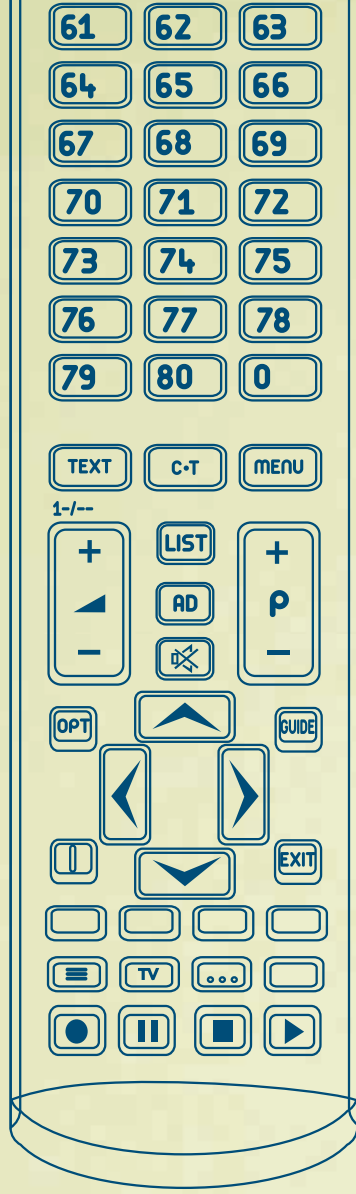
Ottoman legacy

The ceremony, timed to coincide with the 560th anniversary of İstanbul's conquest by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, harked back frequently to the Ottoman Empire, which crumbled to be replaced by modern Turkey 90 years ago.

Such references have become commonplace under Erdoğan's rule as the country regains prominence across the Middle East, encouraging critics of the authoritarian prime minister to accuse him of

behaving like a modern-day sultan. Hundreds of military officers have been jailed on charges of plotting a coup against Erdoğan; others including academics, journalists and politicians are facing trial on similar accusations. Barred from running for prime minister again, Erdoğan is widely expected to bid for a newly empowered presidency in an election next year, cementing his status as Turkey's most significant leader since Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the modern secular republic. Erdoğan frequently embraces İstanbul's imperial past, when the Ottoman Empire sprawled across three continents. "In all the lands where they were present, the Ottomans left behind creations which conquered the people's hearts. Just like our ancestors we are continuing to write history and leave behind creations," he said. An Ottoman military band banged drums and smashed cymbals while Erdoğan, President Abdullah Gül and their wives said a Muslim prayer before launching the project near the village of Garipçe on the European side of the city.

The bridge will be named Yavuz Sultan Selim, commonly known in English as Selim the Grim, whose 16th century reign brought huge expansion in the Ottoman Empire and dominance across the Middle East.



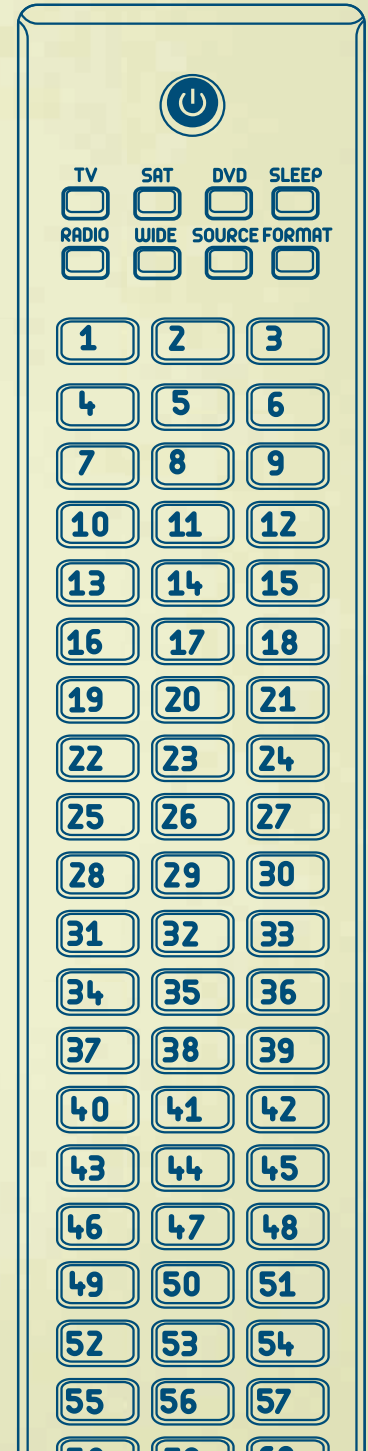
REKLAMINIZI

80 KANALDA

BIRDEN

YAYINLAYAN

TEK KANALI!



İSTANBUL 2020 OLYMPICS BID LEAVES 'EXCELLENT IMPRESSION'

İstanbul's presentation of its bid to host the 2020 Olympic Games left an "excellent impression," the head of the evaluation commission said following their leave on March 27.

Turkey's largest city, which is competing with Tokyo and Madrid for the 2020 Games, presented its candidacy to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) commission, headed by IOC vice president Craig Reedie, late March. Turkish officials highlight the bid as offering the first opportunity for a secular Muslim democracy to host the Games, which would also be the first staged on two continents -- Europe and Asia.

"These [visits] have been extremely well organized and we have an excellent impression of the skills and enthusiasm of the bid committee," Reedie said at a news conference. Keen to avoid indicating a preference for any of the three candidate cities, he added: "[An] Excellent impression in my world is exactly the same as 'hugely impressed' or 'greatly impressed'," referring to his comments about Tokyo and Madrid.

İstanbul's projected infrastructure



Members of the Evaluation Commission visits the Olympic Stadium in İstanbul.

budget of \$19.2 billion is vastly higher than the figures touted for Tokyo and Madrid, but the IOC's Olympic Games executive director Gilbert Felli said most of this sum was not tied to the Games. "Even if the Games are not coming here, most of this budget will be spent," Felli said. "The development of the new city of İstanbul, the new constructions, is part of what they are going to do anyway." Each city delivered their candidature files to the IOC in January and on-site inspections by an evaluation commission were held in Tokyo and Madrid earlier in March. Technical assessments will be published at the beginning of July. Reedie said the commission was impressed by the strong government and business community support for the İstanbul bid.



Young population

Sports minister Suat Kılıç highlighted the country's young population and dynamic economy as assets of the bid.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has transformed Turkey during his decade in power into the fastest-growing economy in Europe and raised the country's profile as a regional power in the Middle East. The country has also enhanced its sporting profile over the last decade, with increased sporting success and growing experience in hosting international events. However, İstanbul's growing population, currently around 14 million, has raised questions about the city's ability to handle the transport challenges presented by the Games.

İstanbul, like Turkey as a whole, is a major tourist destination, used to handling large numbers of visitors. In 2012, the total number of foreign visitors to Turkey rose 1.04 percent to 31.8 million people, according to official statistics. İstanbul was the third most visited city in Europe after London and Paris, and the fifth most visited city in the world last year, bid organisers said. With over 9 million guests in 2012, the number of visitors increased by 16 percent from the previous year. Kılıç played down concerns that İstanbul's bid could be undermined by the problems which have faced organising committees for previous Olympics. "We gave the guarantee to the commission that the problems which are mentioned as having happened in other places will not happen in Turkey," he said. In December, organizers for the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympics were told by the IOC that they needed to push on with their preparations because time was an issue. İstanbul is bidding for the fifth time in the last six votes. The decision on who will host the 2020 Games will be taken by the IOC in September.



Top Turkish state officials, including Youth and Sports Minister Suat Kılıç (6th R), gather at a meeting.



This image shows a scale model of the third bridge to be built over the Bosphorus Strait.

Endless Istanbul: Istanbul projects spark property boom

NOAH BLASER

Taken together, the projects seem impossible in their scale and expense -- a 30-mile-deep water shipping canal, a new "pop-up city" for 1.5 million residents, a third Bosphorus bridge, a new highway network and Istanbul's third airport, hoped to be the world's largest.

Yet all of these projects are about to descend on the sleepy towns and loping hills west of Istanbul, where promises of an "alternative city" are driving a real estate boom that is remaking the region in the concrete image of its eastern neighbor.

Looking over the property maps of realtor Bülent Boral, the opportunities are hard to deny.

"You can't contain this city, and, at the moment, it is headed west," says the affable ten-year real estate veteran, who proudly announces that he is also the brother of Beşiktaş forward Ugur Boral. "Three years ago, land here was TL 50 a square meter. Today it goes from TL 125 to TL 200 [a square meter]. And I'd say

that's not even close to the roof of the market," he says, conceding on the last point that his view is "somewhat influenced" by his profession.

His office is nevertheless an impressive testament to the boom. Located in a tiny village on the outskirts of Arnavutköy - a 30-minute drive from Istanbul's outskirts -- the sparse farmhouse-made-office is sandwiched between a mosque, a grain elevator and a tiny pasture where sheep munch on lush spring grass. "You have to show people what they're buying, and things are selling out now even back in Arnavutköy," Boral says, "but investors will even drive here, because this region is where everything is going to come together."

Just a few kilometers to the north is the vast, (formerly) protected Black Sea forest zone that is slated to become Istanbul's third airport. The \$9 billion, six runway project will be rivaled in scale only by a recently approved 30-mile shipping canal, which allegedly will divert shipping from the winding Bosphorus to somewhere a few kilometers

from Boral's little office. The "crazy project" -- that is what Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan himself has called the canal -- is an engineering challenge for which Ankara has so far refrained from listing a price tag. Filling in the space between the two projects will be a state-funded satellite city, a new highway network and a third Bosphorus bridge to link "new Istanbul" with Asia, Boral explains.

As if on cue, a passing SUV slows, then stops on the gravelly curb. The driver and Boral take to a widescreen computer monitor in his office, where they review plots of buyable land superimposed on a Google-maps-like system. "I see and I buy the same day, deliberating means you lose out," brags the man, who says he's been buying property here over the past two years. After less than half an hour, the strategy seems less arrogant than necessary. Calling after five properties for his anxious customer, Boral finds that they were all sold earlier that morning by his partner back in Arnavutköy. "People grab a property here within an hour of seeing

it, and they throw it back on the market two years later," Boral says as the man leaves. "It's an impulse market."

Boral doesn't like the word gambling, but the market seems to have plenty of uncertainties. For one, Ankara hasn't yet announced exactly where the canal will be -- a map on Boral's wall shows a canal drawn optimistically close to his main holdings, images of cruise ships and sailboats pasted into a lane of ocean blue. But a recent government projection suggested that the canal could connect near the city of Silivri, 18 miles to the west. "No, the location isn't sure, but there are deep lakes near here and a large inlet at Küçükçekmece that make it the logical place," he says, defending his map.

A few people are also sure how the government will compensate landholders in the canal zone or on future airport grounds. Some are buying up those lands in hopes the government will settle for a higher price, but Boral suggests that the government may reclaim land at bottom dollar.

QUESTIONS ABOUND AS URBAN RENEWAL MOVES FULL SPEED AHEAD

At an earlier meeting in İstanbul, Environment and Urban Planning Minister Erdoğan Bayraktar made some striking statements on the various topics at hand. He noted that expectations that the government will try to turn a profit from urban renewal are incorrect, adding that in the areas undergoing renewal, structures of up to five stories only will be allowed.

Bayraktar, asserting that the coming 20-year period will see at least 6.5 million of Turkey's 20 million housing buildings renewed, noted that the main priority is on seeing structures currently at risk due to their location on or near a 24,500-kilometer active earthquake fault line reinforced and strengthened. He said: "So far, we've already razed to the ground around 50,000 units, largely in Esenler and Gaziosmanpaşa. By the end of this year, this process will have reached 200,000 housing units and by the end of 2014, 400,000 units."

Bayraktar noted that while all this urban renewal is creating to the widespread belief that there has been a rapid increase in public works projects, he said that this is in fact not true. He noted: "Right now, for example, the increase in public works projects in Esenler has not generated a profit for anyone. In that case, the streets are being widened."

The minister noted that he

definitely disagrees with the general thought that urban renewal will simply see the reconstruction of old buildings. He said: "According to the general layout of a particular spot or property, if there is a need for a reconstruction, it might occur in a well-planned urban design fashion. The government subsidizes contractors or real estate owners with 4 percent of each TL 10,000 in loans they acquire for urban renewal. We also provide the homeowner with a sum equal to 18 months' rent."

The minister noted that in cases involving the reinforcement of structures at risk of earthquake damage or damage from other natural disasters, the government wishes to see citizens meet with the contractors.

Thus far, 20,000 people across Turkey have applied for government assistance in having buildings they own reinforced against natural disasters. Of these, 17,000 applications have been approved on the basis of earthquake risk. The state has given district governorships the authority to raze homes that are considered to be at risk.

Earthquakes sparked urban renewal

According to Real Estate Development and Investors Association (KONUTDER) President Ömer Faruk Çelik, the

national discussion on urban renewal began only after the Van earthquake in November of 2011. He noted within this framework that the real need lies not in quickly demolishing buildings and putting up new ones but rather in doing some good city planning.

He said: "Right now, we are doing what we can according to what we know and what we are accustomed to. However, in some developed countries, things might be done entirely differently. It would be better if we had some serious discussions on all of this."

İstanbul's Esenler mayor, Tevfik Göksu, noted that most cities around the world tend to ignore the safety of residents and prioritize other factors when it comes to urban renewal. He said: "According to what priorities does urban renewal take place in Paris, Barcelona or Buenos Aires, for example? When urban renewal started up in Paris, the safety of residents was one of nine basic priorities. In Barcelona, safety isn't even one of the basic priorities of urban renewal projects; it is the same for Buenos Aires. However, here in Turkey, we had to make it the number one priority on the list."

CEO of construction company Sur Yapı, Altan Elmas, asserted that urban renewal will likely change all dynamics of the construction sector, noting: "While there was limited space in large city centers for our

construction projects [before], countrywide urban renewal will see the opening of new fields. Construction firms will need to plan development projects carefully since most of them will take place in city centers."

Elmas said that there will be great opportunities created through the razing of older buildings and renewal in cities over the next 20 years to transform these cities.

Turkish construction firm Yeşil GYO CEO Işık Gökkaya added that while urban renewal is vital, there are some important deficiencies in the way it is being carried out now.

He said: "There is talk that urban renewal will cost around \$400-\$500 billion, but the actual value to be contributed to the economy in terms of new investment opportunities will be more than a trillion dollars. There need to be different perceptions taken on urban renewal and city renovations. The people living in areas slated for urban renewal need to be better apprised of what is happening."

Gökkaya went on to add that he thinks the laws regulating urban planning in Turkey should be updated to address the large scale of the urban renewal projects taking place. He noted that nowhere else in the world is there a project as ambitious as one that proposes reinforcing over 6.5 million housing complexes. **İstanbul** Today's Zaman



Gaziantep's Şahinbey Municipality is pulling down old buildings as part of the government's urban renewal efforts.



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A LAST WEEKEND IN İSTANBUL

TERRY RICHARDSON

Over the course of the last three months, I have spent several weeks foot-slogging my way around the streets, alleys and byways of the great city of İstanbul updating the next edition of a well-known travel guide.

Whilst doing so I got to wondering. What if, god forbid, for some reason I had just one last weekend to spend in the “City of the World’s Desire”? How would I choose to pass my final two days in a city with so much to see, so many things to do, a sprawling metropolis bridging two continents, a settlement that goes back several millennia and even today encompasses a wealth of different cultures and faiths?

The following itinerary, my perfect “last” Saturday, is entirely subjective. It involves a fair bit of walking because this is, I firmly believe, by far the best way to see the Old City (the historic peninsula enclosed by the Land Walls of the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius, which run from the Sea of Marmara to the Golden Horn) but it is well worth the effort.

Along the Golden Horn

Eminönü’s waterfront has always been one of my favorite parts of the city. The concrete underpasses where traders knock out everything from fake designer T-shirts to battery-operated dancing giraffes to the shuffling hordes, the waterfront fish sandwich purveyors in their faux-Ottoman gilt embroidered waistcoats, along with the constant to and fro of the smoke-belching ferries, immortalized in Ara Güler’s stunning black and white photographs, make for the most colorful of scenes. Then there is the crush of anglers on the Galata Bridge, the vendors selling plates of grain to feed to the clouds of feral pigeons outside the Yeni Camii and, up on the hillside to the southwest, the elegant domes and minarets of the great Süleymaniye Camii. Having absorbed the scene here, it would be time to board the smart new boat which plies between Üsküdar over in Asia and Eyüp at the head of the Golden Horn (Halç in Turkish).

For the Byzantines the Golden Horn was both the deep water harbor par excellence, but also a chink in the armor of Constantinople. If

assailants could get past the massive chain (links of which can be seen both in the Archeology Museum in Sirkeci and the Military Museum at Harbiye) that was stretched across the entrance to the inlet, the city was vulnerable to attack as was proven in 1204 when the Crusaders forced their way into Constantinople after storming several of the towers along the Golden Horn’s sea walls. Chunks of the sea walls are visible from the boat as it glides up the Horn, under the Unkapanı Bridge to current Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s old stomping ground, the gritty dock area of Kasımpaşa, then back across the limpid waters to Fener İskelesi, where I would disembark.

An uphill struggle

It would be hard to resist the short detour north to the bizarre St. Stephens of the Bulgars, an attractive enough building in its own right but wholly remarkable in its method of construction. Cast in great iron panels in Vienna in the late 19th century, it was transported by barge down the Danube and into the Black Sea before being brought to its present home,

right on the shores of the Horn. From here I would backtrack to just north of the Fener Patriarchate building then head steeply uphill into Fener. I have seen TV crews here filming period dramas in the atmospheric cobbled alleys of this rapidly gentrifying neighborhood, but my goal would be St. Mary of the Mongols (Kanlı Kilisesi, or “Bloody Church” in Turkish), in the shadow of the gigantic red-brick, Gothic-style Fener Greek School for Boys. I always felt compelled to come here because of its historical significance as the only church in the city which has had continuous Orthodox services from before the Ottoman conquest of 1453 to the present day. I feel an enormous sense of loss when I listen (with incomprehension I admit) to the female caretaker here speak in Greek to her friends, for she is one of just a couple of thousand Greek Orthodox Christians left in a city which was once predominantly Greek-speaking. The massive school nearby now educates a meager 60 Greek boys. It’s another uphill slog to Fethiye Cad-

desi, which runs along the spine of the fifth hill.

Sugar pie, Byzantine mosaics and a mosque with a view

The hilltop here is in the district of Çarşamba, named after a famous old market which, were one of my final two days in the city a Wednesday, I would be sure to visit. But it is a Saturday and probably a little peckish, I would pop into Fethiye Börek Salonu. It is nothing remarkable, but weekdays I have enjoyed a refreshing glass of tea and a plateful of goat's cheese börek (pie) here, watching school kids queue up in their dozens for a generous portion of plain börek liberally dusted with icing-sugar, a cheap and cheerful stomach-filler in a poor neighborhood. Fortified with pie, the next stop would have to be the wonderful Fethiye Müzesi. Originally the 12th-century Byzantine church of Theotokos Pammakaristos, today the majority of the red-brick structure is the Fethiye Camii. What was once a parakklesion or side-chapel, however, is now a museum containing a number of fabulous mosaics the equal of those in the nearby Kariye Museum (Church of Holy Savior in Chora).

From here I would head southeast along Fethiye Caddesi before turning left down a street which runs alongside a massive hole in the ground. This is not just any old hole. Now a pleasant park area, in Byzantine times it was the Cistern of Aspar, one of three great open cisterns supplying water to the good citizens of Constantinople. Just north of it and beautifully restored to its former grandeur is the simple but impressive Yavuz Selim Camii. An imperial mosque completed sometime in the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent in honor of his precursor Selim I, it stands on a beautifully landscaped platform which gives sweeping views down over the Golden Horn and across to the new city. On a recent visit Fox channel was doing a fashion shoot in the courtyard, with a tall, alarmingly skinny model posing elegantly beneath the portico. It was not something I expected to see in an Ottoman mosque in ultra-conservative Fatih, but one can always rely on the unexpected in this fascinating city.

A culinary downhill diversion

It is around three-quarters of a kilometer from the Yavuz Selim to the Fatih Camii, heading south along Darüşşafaka Caddesi. The Fatih Camii, still undergoing reno-



vation, is undeniably monumental and very important as it was the first purpose-built imperial mosque in the city. I find its interior rather gloomy, though, and its situation is not exactly spectacular, so it is on and down rather dull Halıcılar Caddesi to the busy, broad thoroughfare of Adnan Menderes Bulvarı, in Aksaray. This is a considerable diversion from my overall trend, which is the magnificent Süleymaniye Camii, but worth it for what I consider to be some of the very best food in the city. Restaurants dishing up the Arab-influenced cuisine of Turkey's southeastern

borderlands have proliferated over the last few years in Istanbul. The Akdeniz Hatay Sofrası, which I discovered some four or five years ago remains, in my opinion, number one -- and the number of Arab visitors who favor it appears to back up my judgment. The menu is incredibly broad, with the most unusual of the meat-based mains tuzda tavuk, a whole chicken stuffed with fragrant pilaf rice, encased in a thick layer of solid rock salt and baked in the oven for four hours. It is the meze which appeal to me the most, though, and after a few hours exploration on foot it would be time

to tuck into a portion of pastrami-topped, oven-baked hummus accompanied by zahter, a tangy fresh oregano-based salad dripping with pomegranate sauce and olive oil.

A perfect end

Then it would be back-up the hill, cutting through the unremarkable backstreets, towards the line of the fourth-century Aqueduct of Valens, pausing only to admire something which to my shame I only discovered recently, the Column of Marcian. Erected in the reign of Emperor Marcian A.D. 450-457, standing on a small traffic island, it has lost the emperor statue that must once have topped it, but still boasts a massive Corinthian capital and an inscription at its base. The Aqueduct of Valens lies a few minutes walk to the north. Following the line of this monumental fourth-century structure eastwards, crossing busy Atatürk Bulvarı, my next stop would be Vefa Bozacısı. It is not that I am a massive fan of the fermented millet drink boza, but the interior of an institution going back to 1876 is wonderful -- with its ornate-tiled floor, bent-wood furniture, dark-wood shelves lined with Victorian-looking bottles (of balsamic vinegar and pomegranate syrup) and mirrored glass.

I have written about the Süleymaniye Camii in some detail for Today's Zaman quite recently, (May 4, 2011, to be precise) so will skip a description of architect Sinan's masterpiece on this occasion. Suffice it to say that having enjoyed both the magnificent exterior and interior of this Ottoman classic, I would leave the hallowed precincts from the northwest corner and begin to cut down steep Fetva Yokuşu towards my start point, the Eminönü waterfront, hidden from view below. Just off to the left here is another place I discovered quite by chance a few years ago, the Aga Kapısı café. It has a splendidly traditional feel to it, with dark-wood floors and furniture, but what is stunning about this place is a view so unexpected it is staggering. For here the great picture windows dramatically frame the scene below, of the trams, buses, trucks and cars crossing the Galata Bridge, the tankers plying up the Bosphorus, the ferries weaving their way across to Asia and up and down the Golden Horn. The scene is eerily silent, surreal, like watching the city on a giant IMAX screen with the volume off. A reinvigorating Turkish coffee in hand, it makes a perfect end to a perfect day.



İkinci Bahar, owned by Erdoğan Öztaş and his wife, Sinem Öztaş (above), will make you feel as if you are somewhere along the Aegean coastline.

TIME FOR YOUR STOMACH TO ENJOY THE FINER POINTS IN LIFE

As spring began to wrap itself around İstanbul, I said to myself: “Come on, what are you waiting for?”

Kanlıca and the Bosphorus are waiting for you!” And so I headed over to the Asian side of the city to one of the more stunning districts of İstanbul: Kanlıca. It is a spot about which famous writer Yahya Kemal once said, “Our life is too short to properly love this district.” In any case, I went over to the quiet and calm of Mihrabat Street, located in an area where traditional neighborhood life has not been lost, where geraniums spill over from apartment balconies. It would not be inaccurate to note that when I entered this calm street, right across from the traffic lights after the docks, I moved one step further from city life. At the head of this street -- and up a few steps -- lies boutique restaurant İkinci Bahar. A small terrace with a wonderful ambiance, surrounded by white hydrangeas, makes you feel spring’s arrival all over again. In the corner are two orange trees, each boasting two oranges apiece. With its white wooden tables and chairs, İkinci Bahar actually makes you feel as though you are somewhere on the Aegean coastline. In any case, the décor and the ambiance were perfect, and so I awaited the food with much curiosity.

Before eating, I had the chance to chat with the owners of İkinci Bahar, Erdoğan Öztaş and his wife, Sinem

Öztaş. Erdoğan Bey is someone who has been in the restaurant business at every level from dishwasher to apprentice to master. As for this restaurant, it has been his now for exactly 14 years, but he still circulates among the tables, serving things up himself. His wife, Sinem, decided to give up her previous job to devote herself to İkinci Bahar. She says: “The pace is not fast here, most of our customers are people we know. They are like members of our family, and so making them happy just makes us very happy. People need to trust the spot they choose to eat in. And we believe that we provide this sense of trust by using the most original, the most organic of products possible.” Sinem Hanım’s skills are reflected in the way the food is served up, as well as the table and plate designs, but this is not all she can do. She is also a master of desserts, producing pumpkin dessert, chocolate soufflé and a rice pudding on the level you would only expect from a master chef. She uses recipes she learned from her own grandmother when making desserts and jellies for the table. In any case, we’ve now leapt ahead, describing this meal from the end, so let’s head back to the beginning, shall we?

The first course was a “yuvalama” soup. Though I found the lamb pieces



cut a bit small and noted the absence of tail fat, its taste and texture were superb. I suppose there’s really no need to point out that the yoghurt used here is the famous Kanlıca yoghurt.

A bit later, a “gavurdagi” salad arrived at my table, absolutely perfect down to the last detail. Cut very fine, with no cucumbers in it -- there are some places that include cucumbers, something I cannot figure the reason for. I had asked for the salad with onions, and I would advise that you do this too. After this came “finger” pide, with special herbs, and a really delicious hazelnut lahmacun. Everything I’ve described up until now has been basically just “clips” -- the real “film” began after this. A mixed plate including homemade köfte, a ground beef kebab (made using a special grinder), steak and chicken shish kebab made from organic chicken meat was what arrived next. And it was the sort of main dish that you feel completes everything. There was also a lamb tandoor served with rice stuffing. Words are really insufficient to do justice to the extreme deliciousness of the lamb tandoor, made from lamb from the Afyon region of Turkey and cooked for four hours. The final “blow” after all this is struck by an incredible serving of “hünkar beğendi” (a dish made from pureed eggplant and meat. Its name translates as “The Sultan liked it,” and

I should note that it was in fact impossible not to like!) And so I close by saying that you should definitely drop by İkinci Bahar, not only to relish the tastes of incredible food cooked in traditional styles, but also to take advantage of the city. Everything you eat here is cooked using an oak fire oven, even the desserts. As for the ingredients used, they are all organic or otherwise natural. Note that you can even purchase certain food items produced here before you head home.

Natural, organic and absolutely delicious

Both the ambiance and the tastes served up at İkinci Bahar are right on the mark. The fact that the foods here are made from organic ingredients and the meat is from free-range animals is clear when you taste it. My personal favorites on the menu were the lamb tandoor, the “hünkar beğendi” and the organic chicken shish. Oh, and I loved the organic bread, baked in an oak fire oven.

This restaurant, which can serve up to 100 at a time, does have a car park. It is open from 9 a.m. until midnight and has a staff of eight. Look also for the special Alaçatı style breakfasts in the morning, as well as their diet breakfast options. Some of the organic food items sold here include hot pepper paste, rye and wheat bread, rock salt, mantı, olive oil, köfte for grilling, organic eggs, natural black olives, home made jellies and jams and fresh, daily milk.



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