

Minister reveals details about giant infrastructure projects in Turkey

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ANKARA—Transportation, Maritime Affairs and Communication Minister Binali Yıldırım has updated the status of a number of giant infrastructure projects across Turkey, noting these projects will make a great contribution to the country's economy in an exclusive interview with daily *Hürriyet*.

In Turkey, a total of seven mega projects are currently under construction, including: Istanbul's third airport; the third bridge over the Bosphorus Strait; a new highway which will connect commercial Istanbul with the Aegean resort of İzmir and also includes the world's fourth longest suspension bridge over İzmit Bay; the Eurasia Tunnel, which is an underground road tunnel linking Istanbul's European and Asian sides; the Gebze-Halkalı commuter train link in Istanbul; the Ovit tunnel in Northeastern Anatolia; and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway.

"These projects will make a huge social and economic contribution to Turkey. They have already achieved this, as these ongoing projects have created around 8.6 billion Turkish Liras [\$3 billion] for the economy and created more than 65,500 jobs. A majority of the employed people are composed of qualified workers and office staff in addition to more than 2,100 engineers," said Yıldırım.

He noted these projects would create much more employment, as well as other social and economic bonuses when they are completed.

"The third airport of Istanbul alone will create around 210,000 jobs when it is opened," he added.

Turkey has invested around 253 billion liras (\$90 billion) into major transportation and communications projects in the last 13 years, according to the minister.

"We have been paying attention to the preservation of natural and historical richness," he added. "We built 37 viaducts at [Atatürk Airport](#), Istanbul's third airport, the third bridge over the Bosphorus and the İzmit Bay Bridge in a bid to preserve ecological and historical assets there."



Istanbul's third airport

The Cengiz-Kolin-Limak-Mapa-Kalyon Consortium, a joint venture of Turkish companies, won a tender for the third Istanbul airport in May 2013, promising to pay the state 22.1 billion euros, plus taxes, over 25 years starting in 2017. The project, which is expected to cost with all investments and annual rent around 33 billion euros, is the largest project in the country so far. The first part of the airport with two landing fields and one terminal is planned to open in 2018 to serve 90 million passengers. The

airport is expected to become one of the biggest in the world when it is completed and serve 150 million passengers. Around 1.5 billion euros has been invested in the project so far and around 13,000 people are now working on the project, including subcontractors, according to the latest data.



Third Bosphorus bridge

Istanbul's third Bosphorus bridge, which was named for Ottoman Sultan Yavuz the Grim or Yavuz Sultan Selim, was designed as a "hybrid bridge" in shape. The bridge will have eight road lanes as well as two rail tracks. The third bridge is expected to be about 1.4 kilometers in length and 59 meters in width, making the bridge the widest in the world when it is completed. The bridge tower is 322 meters tall, constituting another world record. It will stretch over 2 kilometers with about 1.4 kilometers spanning over water, and will also be the longest suspension bridge in the world carrying a rail system. According to the latest data, the project has created around 6,000 jobs and the construction activities have added an annual 1.75 billion liras (\$611 million) to the economy.



The Istanbul-İzmir highway

As a part of the Istanbul-İzmir Highway project, the İzmit Bay Bridge will be the fourth largest in the world by the length of its central span. The bridge is planned to open in May, and it will shorten the time to travel to the other side of the bay drastically. The project's cost is at around \$6.3 billion and has created 7,918 jobs, according to the latest data.

Gebze-Halkalı commuter train links

The renovated train links which will connect Istanbul's outskirts on the European side with those on the Asian side are expected to be completed in 2018. The 1-billion-euro project has created jobs for 829 people and made around 500 million liras (\$175 million) for the economy.

Eurasia Tunnel

The two continents will be connected by a 3.34-km-long tunnel under the sea in Istanbul in the framework of the project, which is also dubbed the Istanbul Strait Road Crossing Project. The total distance of the tunnel will be 14.6 km when it is opened by the end of 2016. The expected fuel saving with the tunnel is around 38 million liters annually. The project, for which 1,800 people are employed, will also

decrease carbon emissions by 82,000 tons a year, said the data.

Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway

This will be the third largest project, which was made jointly by Azerbaijan, [Georgia](#) and Turkey, after two leading energy pipeline projects. When the railway project is completed, the line will be able to carry a total of 1 million passengers and 6.5 million tons of cargo. The capacity of the railway is expected to increase to 3 million passengers and 17 million tons of cargo by 2034. The project has created 8,237 jobs and made a contribution of around 988 million liras (\$345 million) to the economy so far.

Ovit Tunnel

The construction of a new highway tunnel in the northeastern region of Turkey, which is planned to be one of longest tunnels in the world, is invigorating the commercial prospects of local businessmen, both regionally and internationally. The tunnel is set to cut through Ovit Mountain, which is located between İkizdere, a district in the northwestern province of Rize, and the eastern province of Erzurum's İspir district. The dual-tubed project will eventually exceed 14.7 kilometers, including the linking roads around it. Some 600 people are working on the project, for which some 719 million liras (\$251 million) has been invested so far.

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