



Delta-Eko

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Turkey says work on disputed dam on Tigris River could start next week

Turkey said Wednesday it could resume work to build a disputed dam on the Tigris River next week after European lenders release 1.2 billion euros (\$1.6 billion) for the project.

The loan for the Ilisu Dam – extended by an international consortium including Austrian, German and Swiss lenders – was frozen for six months in January on the grounds that Turkey had failed to meet several criteria addressing the project's environmental and social impacts.

Turkish Environment Minister Veysel Eroglu told a news conference on Wednesday the suspension, which expires this month, would be lifted and work could start next week, Reuters reported.

The Ilisu plant, with a planned power capacity of 1,200 megawatts to generate 3.8 billion kilowatt hours of electricity a year, is part of a \$32 billion plan to develop Turkey's economically underdeveloped Southeast and east.

Environmentalists and historians say almost all of the famous ruins that attract tourists to the ancient town of Hasankeyf would be buried under a dam for the plant on the Tigris River.

"We have successfully carried out some important work in order to realize the project in accordance with international standards," AFP also quoted Eroglu as telling the conference.

"The criticism is untrue. This is the work of foreign powers that do not want Turkey to become a regional power," he added.

Hasankeyf was used by the Romans as a fortress to ward off the Persians. The town was later destroyed by Mongols and rebuilt in the 11th century by Seljuk Turks.

According to plans, the ruins would be moved to a nearby area, yet the project would still swallow up more than 80 villages by the time of its planned completion in 2013.

Hunting Channel aims to aid nature protection

For three years now, the television sets in many village teahouses in Anatolia are tuned into Yaban TV. The staff of the channel believes only people who live in nature can protect it. They say they mobilize people who live in villages to be environmentally aware. They say they are nature's soldiers not hunters.

A television channel dedicated to game hunting and the outdoors sees its ultimate mission as one of spreading environmental consciousness among its viewers as a way of helping them protect their environs.



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Yaban TV is a hunting and outdoors channel that aims to train people on hunting and environmental consciousness, its staff says. The channel also seeks to protect nature via a hotline. It is believed that there are 4 million game hunters in Turkey and another 5 million people who fish. The number of registered hunters was only 15,000 before Yaban TV was founded, but this number increased to 40,000 last year and 85,000 this year.

The founder of Yaban TV is a familiar name for Turkish hunting fans: journalist Ufuk Güldemir. Güldemir felt a channel dedicated to the outdoors and hunting was lacking in Turkey and as a result established Yaban TV. Güldemir died two years ago after fighting cancer, but his wife Gaya Güldemir, journalist Melih Meriç and Dr. Ali Bürkeve manage the channel in his place. Bürkeve, a producer and consultant on the acting board of Yaban TV, travels across Turkey, hunts with the people of Anatolia and trains them. "Hunting is actually training," Bürkeve said, adding that millions of people are into it. Bürkeve argued that protecting nature with laws and regulations is not possible.

Training required

"Nature can be protected by the people living in it. That takes training. We provide that. We mobilize people who live in villages by providing them with environmental consciousness. We cannot protect a forest if the people living in it do not. Before the advent of Yaban TV, nature was left in the hands of people with no training. We are changing that. We are not hunters; we are nature's soldiers."

Bürkeve said hunting must be supervised. "There are no Chinese deer in China, but there are in England. The reason is the lack of training in China," he said. Meriç, who is a member of the acting board of the channel, said Yaban TV is popular and broadcasts on different digital platforms available in the country.

"The most popular channels in America produce special hunting shows, and the newspapers publish supplements. Previously in Turkey watching programs on hunting was only possible on foreign channels before the advent of Yaban TV. According to data from consulting firm AGB, Yaban TV ranks at 2 in the ratings. This shows we are among the top 25 channels. We have more viewers than many European documentary channels. Right now we can be viewed through satellite and on D-Smart, and we will be on Digiturk soon," he said. Meriç also said the station covers Environment Ministry projects and that Yaban TV was very popular at village teahouses.

Meriç said thanks to the hotline they have set up, the station broadcasts environmental problems on screen as they happen. "We have founded a hotline. People alert the channel about environmental problems or wrong hunting methods they witnessed. They SMS us, tell the location and time," he said. "'There is an illegal mine here,' 'they are killing the females of the species,' and 'trees are being cut at that location' are the kinds of messages we receive. And we broadcast them. This makes people wonder whether they're being followed and results in self-control."

Gaya Güldemir believes hunting is a lifestyle. "I began to hunt alongside my husband. Ufuk used to read me books. He knew everything about the animal he was going to hunt. He taught me to respect animals. I traveled everywhere in the world from Africa to Alaska. The hunting itself is not important.



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The real joy is the preparation, waiting in nature for hours," she said. "There are not many woman hunters in Turkey. Women should participate in this, too." Yaban TV features many shows on various topics, including hunting and outdoor training.

Sources: www.hurriyetdailynews.com

www.radikal.com.tr