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NOVEMBER 9-15

THE CLIMATE COST OF INTELLIGENCE

TARKAN HAS A MESSAGE FOR COP31: WAKE UP!

WHAT GROWS IN ANTALYA IN NOVEMBER?

KALEICI: THE OLD HEART OF ANTALYA



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FROM ANKA

THE THINGS WE DON'T SEE

Climate change has a way of drawing our attention to the spectacular. Flooded streets, burning forests, melting glaciers. And, every year, world leaders gathering beneath the banners of another climate summit.

But some of the most important parts of the story are much harder to see.

Consider artificial intelligence. We type a question, receive an answer and move on. Rarely do we think about the electricity, water and infrastructure behind those few seconds. As AI becomes part of everyday life, its environmental footprint is growing alongside its promise to help address the very problems it may be adding to.

Or take the energy transition. We hear plenty about solar panels, wind turbines and electric vehicles. Far less about the distribution networks that must carry electricity from one place to another, or the investment required to keep those networks working as demand grows. Producing cleaner electricity is one challenge. Making sure it reaches people reliably is another.

Sometimes, what lies beneath the surface is not infrastructure but history. Walk through Antalya's Kaleiçi, and it is easy to see little more than a charming old quarter of narrow streets, traditional houses and cafés. Look closer, and a different picture emerges: a city shaped by successive generations, where ancient structures have been reused, neighborhoods transformed and traces of earlier lives remain beneath the streets.

Turkish pop star Tarkan has brought his environmental song Uyan back for COP31, this time in English. Yet behind its renewed message is an older struggle: the campaign to protect Hasankeyf, the ancient settlement on the Tigris River, much of which was eventually submerged by the Ilısu Dam. It is a reminder that environmental decisions leave consequences long after the public debate has moved elsewhere.

Even Antalya, welcoming delegates from around the world, has stories that can be missed by those passing through.

Through ANKA31, we hope to bring some of these less visible stories into focus. They may seem to have little in common. Some concern technologies shaping the future; others, places shaped by centuries of change. But each invites us to look beyond what first catches the eye.



THE CLIMATE COST OF INTELLIGENCE

By the end of this decade, the world's data centers could consume almost twice as much electricity as they do today. Much of that growth is being driven by artificial intelligence. Every chatbot conversation, AI-generated image and increasingly sophisticated model depends on a vast physical infrastructure of processors, servers and cooling systems. And the more capable AI becomes, the more computing power the industry wants.

But there is a twist. The same technology driving up electricity demand is also being promoted as a tool to fight climate change. AI can help make power grids more efficient, detect emissions and predict extreme weather. Could the technology creating new environmental pressures also help relieve them?

That question is finding its way into international climate diplomacy.

At COP31 in Antalya, Turkiye's presidency is seeking support for the Antalya AI Pledge, a political commitment aimed at aligning the development and use of artificial intelligence with

climate goals. The initiative calls for greater transparency about AI's environmental footprint, cleaner energy for its infrastructure and broader access to the technology's potential benefits.

Whether AI ultimately helps or hinders climate action will depend on more than what the technology can do. It will also depend on how it is powered, where it is deployed and whether its promised benefits materialize.

THE ENERGY BEHIND INTELLIGENCE

Ask a chatbot a question, and the answer appears in seconds. It is easy to forget that behind this seemingly effortless exchange are vast data centers packed with processors, servers and cooling systems, all consuming electricity.

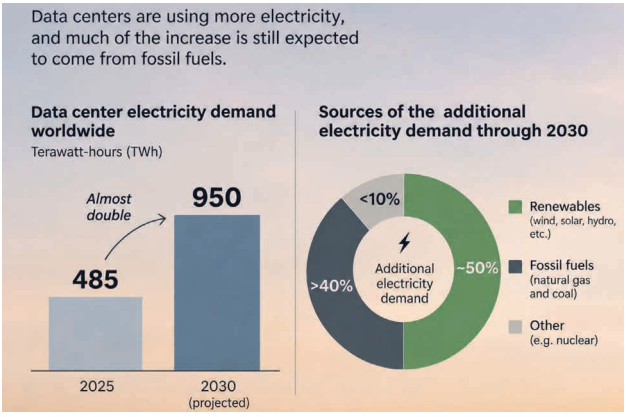
And demand is growing fast. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), data centers consumed around 485 terawatt-hours of electricity worldwide in 2025, a figure projected to reach approximately 950 TWh by 2030. Not all of that electricity goes to AI, but the technology is a major driver of the increase.

Does more electricity consumption necessarily mean more carbon emissions? Not always. Much depends on how the power is generated. The IEA expects renewables to meet nearly half of the additional electricity demand from data centers through 2030. But natural gas and coal are projected to supply more than 40% of the increase.

And electricity is only part of the picture. Many data centers use water for cooling, potentially putting additional pressure on supplies in water-stressed regions. Manufacturing the chips that power AI also requires energy, water and raw materials.

More efficient processors and cooling technologies could help reduce these demands. But there is a catch: as AI becomes cheaper and easier to use, demand for it may grow even faster. Individual tasks might require less energy, while the industry as a whole consumes more.

Which brings us to another question: If AI is using more resources, what can it give back?



THE FLIP SIDE OF AI'S ENERGY EQUATION

For all the electricity AI consumes, it may also help us use considerably less of it elsewhere.

Consider weather forecasting. In February 2025, the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) began using an AI-based forecasting system that, according to the center, improved some predictions, including tropical cyclone tracks, by up to 20% compared with conventional models. Producing a forecast also required roughly 1,000 times less energy.

That does not mean the entire forecasting operation uses 1,000 times less power, or that AI has replaced traditional weather models. But it shows how the technology can make certain complex tasks both faster and more energy-efficient.

The possibilities extend beyond weather forecasting. AI can help electricity grids anticipate changes in demand, predict wind and solar power generation, and make better use of available energy. In factories and buildings, it can identify inefficiencies and adjust operations to reduce waste.

How much could all this contribute to the fight against climate change?

The International Energy Agency estimates that widespread adoption of existing AI applications could avoid around 1.4 billion tons of CO_2 emissions annually by 2035. But that is a measure of potential, not a forecast of actual savings. The agency warns that deployment is not currently on track to deliver reductions on that scale.

And the benefits are not limited to energy savings. More accurate weather forecasts could improve warnings of storms, floods and other extreme events, giving communities more time to prepare. Yet even the best forecast makes little difference if warnings fail to reach those at risk or people lack the means to respond.

AI offers promising tools for climate action. How much they achieve will depend on where they are used, how widely they are adopted and whether their benefits can be demonstrated beyond the laboratory.

Better forecasts, more efficient grids and more sophisticated policy analysis are valuable advances. But none automatically translates into lower emissions, safer communities or stronger climate commitments. AI can help identify the problems and, increasingly, the possible solutions. Turning that knowledge into climate action remains a matter of investment, political choices and accountability.

THE QUESTION FOR ANTALYA

As AI becomes more widely used, governments face a practical question: how can they manage its growing environmental demands while making use of its potential benefits?

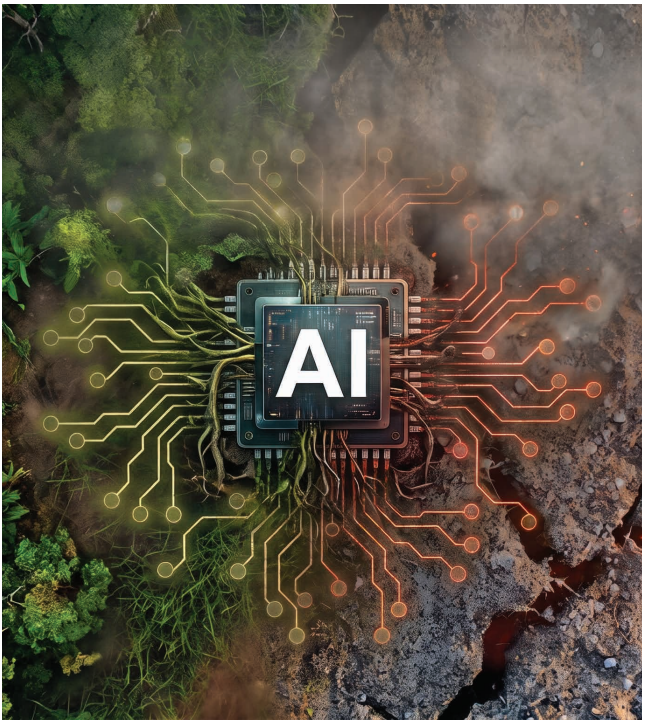
Türkiye's COP31 presidency is putting forward one possible approach through the Antalya Artificial Intelligence Pledge, scheduled to be launched on Nov. 16 in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union.

The pledge asks governments, companies and other organizations to choose from a range of voluntary commitments. Governments, for example, can agree to seek information from AI providers about their energy use and environmental impacts, or encourage data centers to use cleaner electricity. Companies can set their own targets for disclosing environmental data, improving energy and water efficiency, and increasing the share of low-emission power in their operations.

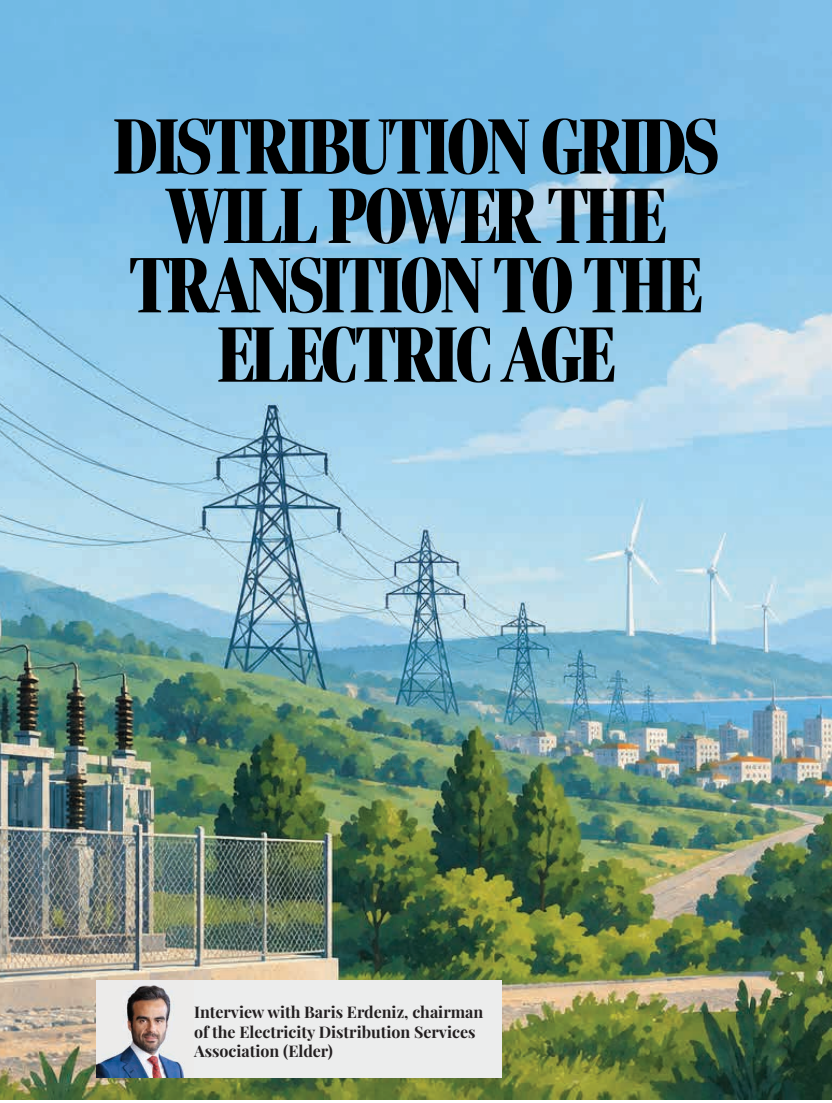
The document also considers the wider implications of AI's expansion, including how the costs of upgrading electricity networks should be shared. Another priority is helping developing countries access the computing resources, funding and technical skills needed to use AI for climate action.

None of these commitments is legally binding. Signatories are invited to review their collective progress at each UN climate summit from COP32 through 2030. But the pledge leaves participants considerable room to decide what they will commit to, how ambitious their targets will be and how they will implement them. It sets out no independent enforcement mechanism, raising questions about how meaningful progress will be assessed and what happens if commitments are not met.

For now, the Antalya pledge sets out a framework for voluntary cooperation. Whether it leads to meaningful changes in AI's environmental impact is something that will become clearer only as those commitments are put into practice.



DISTRIBUTION GRIDS WILL POWER THE TRANSITION TO THE ELECTRIC AGE



Interview with Baris Erdeniz, chairman of the Electricity Distribution Services Association (Elder)

As Turkiye prepares to host COP31 in Antalya from Nov. 9 to 20, the energy agenda extends beyond clean power generation to the infrastructure needed to deliver that electricity.

Baris Erdeniz, chairman of the Electricity Distribution Services Association (Elder), discusses the priorities that Turkiye's electricity distribution sector is bringing to the summit, the growing demands of electrification and the prospects for international cooperation. The sector comprises 21 companies operating across all 81 provinces and serving approximately 52 million consumers.

Turkiye is hosting COP31. What are the electricity distribution sector's priorities for the summit?

Everything around us is becoming increasingly electrified, from transport and industry to heating, cooling and data centers.

We are moving from the age of oil to the age of electricity. And it is the grids, particularly distribution grids, that will carry this transition forward.

Our central message at COP31 is that the energy transition depends on strong electricity distribution networks. Investments in clean electricity generation can only deliver their full benefits if that electricity reaches consumers and the system can adapt to new demands.

That is why we believe grid investment deserves a more prominent place in the climate finance agenda. We will be sharing with our international partners our estimate that Turkiye's distribution system alone will require at least $50 billion in investment by 2035.

Our message is clear: Grids are the unsung heroes of the energy transition.

How do you assess the COP31 Presidency's "35 by 35" Global Electrification Pledge?

The goal of increasing electricity's share of global final energy consumption to 35% by 2035 represents an important step in the energy transition. We are proud that Turkiye has put forward this target.

The pledge calls for faster electrification across sectors such as industry, transport and buildings. But greater electrification requires not only more electricity generation, but also stronger grids.

The International Energy Agency's electrification report, published in September, reinforces this point. The target is achievable with cost-effective technologies, but grids will need to expand and modernize approximately 40% faster than they did over the previous decade.

In other words, the infrastructure needed to deliver the target must receive as much attention as the target itself. Electrification goals and grid investment cannot be treated separately.

Where does Turkiye's electricity distribution infrastructure stand today? How would you describe it to an international audience?

Turkiye has significantly strengthened its electricity distribution infrastructure over the past 12 years. Today, we serve approximately 52 million consumers through more than 1.6 million kilometers of distribution lines and over 573,000 transformers.

By subscriber numbers and network length, Turkiye has Europe's second-largest electricity distribution infrastructure.

In the 12 years following privatization, the sector invested approximately $20 billion. Together with the $13 billion paid in privatization proceeds, this represents a total direct contribution of $33 billion to the Turkish economy.

Over the same period, the length of distribution lines increased by 60%, the number of transformers rose by 67%, and approximately 16 million new subscribers were connected to the system, more people than the populations of many European countries.

We also reduced the sector-wide electricity loss and theft rate from 18.5% in 2013 to 8.8% in 2025. Without this

improvement, we estimate that the sector's total annual costs would be approximately $3 billion higher.

This is experience that can be shared with other countries facing similar conditions.

What investment plans are in place for the coming years?

Under Turkiye's National Energy 2040 vision, electricity demand is projected to rise from 365 terawatt-hours in 2025 to 680 terawatt-hours in 2040. That represents an increase of approximately 86% over 15 years.

For the 2026-2030 implementation period, the investment ceiling is $18.5 billion. Including resources allocated to planned maintenance, we are looking at approximately $22 billion in investment over the next five years.

Over the next decade, we estimate that electricity distribution infrastructure will require at least $50 billion in investment.

The National Energy 2040 vision, presented by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, also envisages approximately $80 billion in investment for distribution grids.

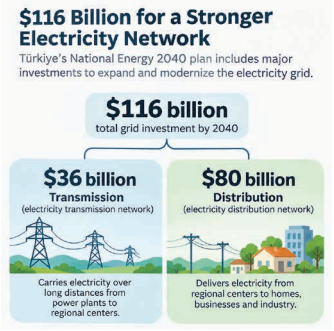
What role does the electricity distribution sector play in the National Energy 2040 vision?

We consider it extremely important that electrification is placed at the heart of the new energy system.

Increasing electricity use in transport, industry, buildings and agriculture is directly linked to grid capacity. The vision's projected electrification rate of 36% by 2040 illustrates the scale of this relationship.

Producing more electricity is important, but so is ensuring that it can be delivered reliably, where and when it is needed.

The plan outlines a total of $116 billion in grid investment, including $36 billion for transmission and $80 billion for distribution.



Industrial electrification and the growth of data centers will be among the major drivers of electricity demand in the years ahead. New industrial and technology investments must therefore be planned alongside the electricity infrastructure needed to support them.

The coming years will be defined by smarter, more flexible and more resilient grid networks that can be monitored and managed in real time, minimize outages, respond quickly when failures occur and make more efficient use of existing capacity.

Our Distribution 2.0 approach is designed to put this transformation into practice.

The vision sets targets of 100% coverage for smart meter deployment, supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems, and urban ring networks.

We expect the number of electricity consumers to reach 64

million by 2035. By 2040, the number of electric vehicles is projected to reach 20 million, with at least 1.5 million charging sockets.

In other words, our sector must expand and modernize at the same time.

How will these investments be financed? What do you expect from international financial institutions?

Electricity distribution is a capital-intensive infrastructure activity with a long investment horizon. The benefits of investments made today will be felt for decades, so financing arrangements must reflect that long-term nature.

High financing costs can make investment projects more difficult to undertake. That is why we attach great importance to cooperation with international financial institutions, development banks and green finance mechanisms.

I would also emphasize that strong distribution grids enable greater electrification and the integration of renewable energy into the system. Electrification, in turn, can reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and lower energy import bills over the long term.

The International Energy Agency estimates that, under a high-electrification pathway, energy-importing countries could reduce their combined annual energy import bills by approximately $400 billion by 2035.

From this perspective, grid investment is not simply a matter of climate policy. It is also a matter of economic policy and energy security.

Until now, climate finance has largely prioritized clean energy generation. It is time to give equal attention to the grids that connect that electricity to the system and deliver it to consumers.

At COP31, we hope to see decisions that facilitate access to long-term, affordable and sustainable financing mechanisms.

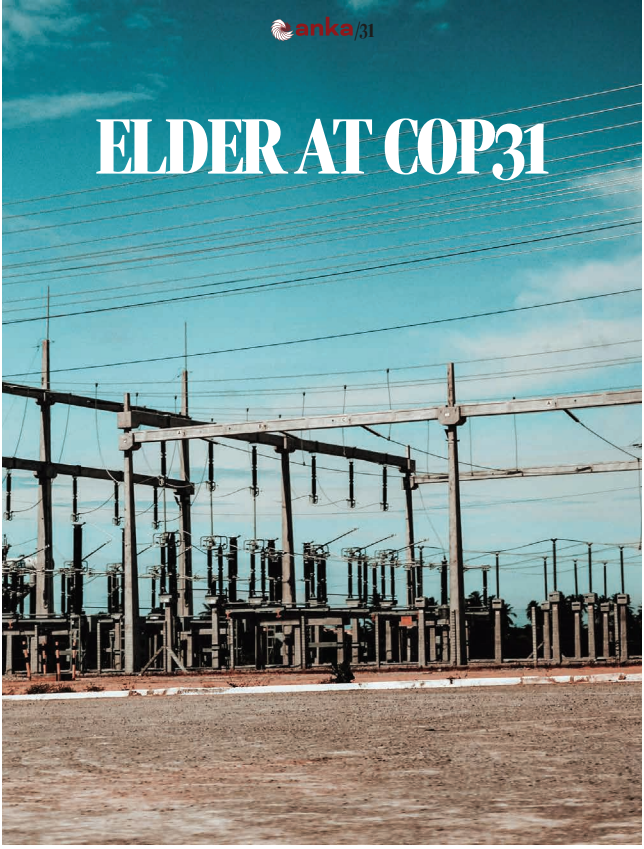
What would constitute a successful outcome from COP31 for your sector?

We see COP31 not only as an opportunity to showcase our sector, but also as a platform for developing new partnerships.

Turkiye has accumulated considerable experience in electricity distribution, both in terms of the scale of its infrastructure and its operational expertise. We are ready to share that experience and learn from international practices.

For us, the real measure of success will be whether the connections established in Antalya translate into long-term partnerships, concrete projects and financing opportunities that support the transformation of our sector.

ELDER AT COP31

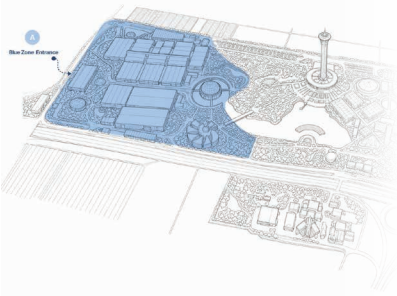


The Electricity Distribution Services Association (Elder), an official observer organization accredited under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is joining COP31 in Antalya, representing 21 electricity distribution companies operating across Turkiye's 81 provinces.

Together, these companies serve approximately 52 million consumers through more than 1.6 million kilometers of distribution lines.

At COP31, Elder will showcase Turkiye's experience in electricity distribution while calling for greater recognition of grid investment in international climate finance.

DON'T MISS: GRIDS, INVESTMENT AND FINANCE



NOVEMBER 10 | 16:00–16:45

BLUE ZONE · TURKİYE PAVILION · AREA B2

How can electricity grids keep pace with the energy transition, and who will finance the investment they need?



Panel Speakers

- Fakir Huseyin Erdogan - Secretary-General, Elder
- Gurbuz Gonul - Director of Country Engagement and Partnerships, IRENA / UNEZA
- Kristian Ruby - Secretary-General, Eurelectric
- Demetrios Papathanasiou - Energy Director, World Bank Group
- Serhat Metin - Deputy General Manager, TEIAS / Vice President, Med-TSO

BEYOND THE PANEL

At its Blue Zone space, Elder will showcase 48 climate-focused R&D projects, alongside Turkiye's experience in grid modernization, digitalization and electricity distribution.

The showcase reflects Elder's central message at COP31: electricity distribution is the backbone of the energy transition, and stronger grids deserve greater attention in climate finance discussions.

The association welcomes meetings with international financial institutions, development banks, technology developers, industry organizations and diplomatic missions throughout the summit.

FIND ELDER IN THE BLUE ZONE

Turkiye Pavilion · COP31 Antalya · Nov. 9–20, 2026

"Electricity distribution is the backbone of the energy transition." – Elder's COP31 motto

Elder

Elektrik Dağıtım Hizmetleri Derneği

TARKAN HAS A MESSAGE FOR COP31: WAKE UP!



Türkiye's pop megastar Tarkan has brought an old song back to life for COP31. This time, he's singing in English, and the message is for the whole planet.

The singer has revisited his earlier song Uyan (Wake Up), giving it new English lyrics and a fresh musical arrangement for the U.N. climate conference.

The accompanying music video trades the usual pop-star glamour for images of environmental destruction and a diverse cast of people spanning different ages, ethnicities and backgrounds. From children to older generations, the faces in the video offer a visual reminder that the climate crisis crosses borders, cultures and generations, and so must the response to it.

Tarkan says he originally wrote Uyan out of concern for the natural world and humanity's failure to protect it. Now, years later, he hopes the English-language version will carry that message to a wider audience.

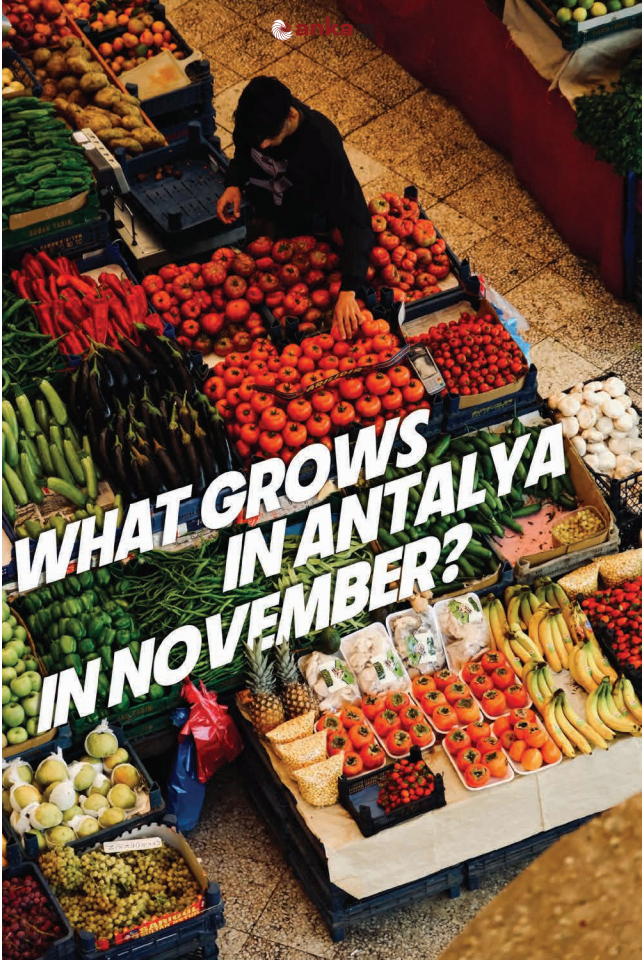
A SONG ROOTED IN RESISTANCE

The song also has a history rooted in one of Türkiye's most prominent environmental struggles. In 2008, Tarkan visited Hasankeyf, an ancient settlement on the banks of the Tigris River, to support a campaign against the Ilısu Dam project. That same year, he released Uyan in collaboration with the Nature Association, with a contribution from legendary Turkish musician Orhan Gencebay.

Much of the historic settlement was eventually submerged following the dam's construction. Nearly two decades later, the song is returning to the stage of a global climate summit, carrying a message that, in Hasankeyf's case, came too late to prevent the loss.

And he isn't the only one bringing music to COP31. Türkiye's preparations have also included an English-language song called Let's COP.

Whether a song can change minds, let alone climate policy, is another question. But as negotiators prepare for long days of speeches, technical discussions and difficult compromises, Tarkan has offered them a soundtrack with a message that's hard to misunderstand: The planet doesn't have a snooze button.



November may be the beginning of winter in much of Europe, but in Antalya, the market stalls still have plenty of color.

For visitors in town for COP31, a trip to a local produce market offers a taste of the Mediterranean growing season. There are familiar vegetables, autumn favourites and a few regional specialties worth keeping an eye out for.

Tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and eggplants are still in season, thanks in part to the greenhouses around Aksu, Serik, Kumluca and Demre, where harvesting continues well into November.

Look for piles of red tomatoes, long green peppers and glossy purple eggplants. These are staples of Turkish cooking, appearing in everything from breakfast spreads to roasted vegetable dishes and slow-cooked stews.

You will also find plenty of leafy greens: spinach, arugula, parsley, chard, lettuce and spring onions. Alongside them come the cooler-weather vegetables, including leeks, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, radishes, beetroot and celery.

And don't overlook the pumpkins. November is a good time to find them, whether destined for a savoury dish or kabak tatli-

si, the traditional Turkish pumpkin dessert.

AN AUTUMN SPECIALTY: ÇINTAR

One of the more distinctive things to look for is cintar, a wild mushroom gathered in the forested areas around Kas, Serik, Kumluca and Finike.

November is part of its relatively short gathering season. With its orange coloring and earthy flavour, cintar is a local autumn favourite, often cooked simply in a pan.

Its limited availability also means that prices can be higher than those of cultivated mushrooms. If you spot some at a market, you may be looking at one of the season's more fleeting treats.

Other wild mushrooms found in Antalya's forests include cedar mushrooms (Tricholoma anatolicum) and parasol mushrooms (Macrolepiota procera), although their availability varies with the weather and location.

A LITTLE SOMETHING SWEET

Antalya is also known for its citrus fruits, pomegranates, bananas and avocados.

Keep an eye out for local specialties such as Finike oranges, Alanya avocados and Gazipasa seedless pomegranates, all of which have protected geographical indications.

Another Mediterranean favourite is deniz borulcesi, or sea asparagus, a salty coastal green typically served with olive oil and lemon. Its harvest can extend into November, depending on weather conditions.

For a city hosting two weeks of international climate negotiations, the local market offers a rather different kind of itinerary: one that follows the season, one stall at a time.



KALEICI:
A CITY WITHIN A CITY



Walk through Hadrian's Gate in Antalya, and you enter a city that has been reinventing itself for more than 2,000 years.

The Roman arches are still standing. Beyond them, narrow streets wind between traditional houses, boutique hotels, restaurants and souvenir shops. Bougainvillea spills over garden walls, and somewhere downhill, the Mediterranean waits at the old harbor.

It is easy to mistake Kaleici for a particularly picturesque corner of a modern resort city. But the old quarter has a more complicated story to tell.

Its streets have witnessed the rise and fall of empires, changes in trade and religion, and, more recently, the transformation of a residential neighborhood into one of Antalya's best-known tourist attractions.

A CITY BUILT AROUND THE SEA

Antalya's story begins with Attaleia, a Hellenistic settlement traditionally associated with King Attalos II of Pergamon in the second century B.C.

Its location is sheltered by the coastline and connected to Mediterranean trading routes, the settlement developed around a natural harbor that would remain central to its fortunes for centuries.

Yet the earliest history of Attaleia is not as straightforward as the familiar founding story suggests.

In a recent study historian Noah Kaye reexamined the city's origins through archaeological evidence, ancient coins and surviving architectural remains. His research highlights how much remains uncertain about the early settlement, despite Antalya's long and prominent place in the historical record.

Under Roman rule, one of the city's most recognizable monuments, Hadrian's Gate, was erected in honor of Emperor Hadrian's visit in the second century A.D.

Nearly 1,900 years later, the gate still performs its original architectural function: marking a passage into the city. Only the world on the other side has changed.

Kaleici is often described through the civilizations that ruled it: Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman. But cities rarely follow such neat timelines.

Buildings are reused, streets outlive their original purposes, and new communities adapt what earlier generations left behind. Archaeological discoveries in Kaleici, including remains of a Roman residence and an early Byzantine church, reveal a history often hidden beneath later buildings and today's streets.

Traditional Antalya houses tell another story of adaptation: long before air conditioning, their courtyards and architectural layouts helped residents cope with the Mediterranean heat.

WHEN THE OLD CITY BECAME A DESTINATION

For much of its history, Kaleici was not a place people visited to admire the past. It was simply where people lived.

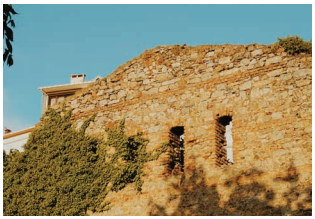
During the Ottoman period, Kaleici was a bustling port neighborhood, with homes, shops, places of worship and commercial activity woven into everyday life, rather than a collection of monuments.

Today, many traditional houses have become hotels, restaurants and other tourism businesses. The buildings remain, but their relationship with the people who use them has changed.

Tourism has given historic buildings new purposes and economic value, but it has also raised questions about preservation, commercial activity and local identity.

With its shaded courtyards, winding lanes, harbor views and countless cafes, Kaleici is an easy place to lose an afternoon. Yet beyond its picturesque streets, the past is everywhere: in the Roman gateway that still welcomes visitors, in traditional houses shaped by centuries of Mediterranean life, and in archaeological remains that reveal traces of long-vanished communities.

Kaleici is not a city frozen in time. It is a city that has never stopped changing.



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