

Turkish unveils 500th aircraft with special 'TK Family' livery

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Dhaka: Turkish Airlines unveiled its 500th aircraft on Friday, February 13, marking a significant fleet milestone for the flag carrier and signaling the beginning of what it describes as the “Second 500” era in its long-term global expansion strategy.

The aircraft, named “TK Family,” features a special livery created with photographs of 100,000 employees and retirees. The design reflects unity and solidarity across the airline’s workforce and underscores that its growth story is built on shared effort and collective commitment.

The unveiling ceremony took place at Istanbul Airport and drew wide participation from senior executives, former leaders, employees, retirees, and representatives from the broader aviation industry, highlighting the symbolic importance of the milestone for the national carrier.

Children of martyrs from all 81 provinces of Turkey also attended the event, along with the cast of the airline's well-known "When You Dream" commercial. Turkish Airlines said the gathering aimed to demonstrate the airline's expansion represents not only operational success but also national pride and shared values.

The 500th aircraft, TC-LHH, an Airbus A350-900, joined the fleet at the end of 2025. To commemorate the occasion, the jet operated a special ceremonial flight under flight number TK500, tracing the number "500" in the sky to mark the start of a new growth phase.

The commemorative flight carried children of martyrs and their families, alongside airline executives, former senior leaders, and employees. The airline said the symbolic journey represented the collective contribution of thousands of individuals who have supported its development over the decades.

Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee Prof. Ahmet Bolat said the 500th aircraft represents far more than fleet expansion. He described it as a symbol of 93 years of dedication, determination, and a shared vision that has shaped the carrier's transformation.

Bolat noted that after 2003, when the airline operated 65 aircraft, it significantly accelerated growth. Today, it serves 356 destinations across six continents with a fleet exceeding 500 aircraft, reflecting what he described as a remarkable trajectory in global aviation.

He also recalled that 12 years ago, when the airline filmed its "When You Dream" commercial, it operated 247 aircraft and flew to 247 destinations. At that time, reaching 500 aircraft was viewed as a distant ambition rather than an imminent reality.

The airline now considers the 500th aircraft not as a conclusion, but as the beginning of its "Second 500" era. Turkish Airlines has set a target of expanding its fleet to 1,000 aircraft by 2036 as part of its long-term strategic vision.

During the unveiling, milestone aircraft marking earlier stages of fleet growth were showcased, including those representing the 100th, 200th, 300th, and 400th additions. A full-scale replica of the airline's first aircraft also attracted attention from attendees at the venue.

Turkish Airlines said it will continue investing in modern aircraft to enhance operational efficiency and passenger comfort while supporting sustainable growth. The 500-aircraft milestone, it added, reflects both its current strength and its ambitions to further expand its global network.

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