

Hello and welcome back to the program that helps you learn and improve your American English. I'm Jim Tedder in Washington. Today we turn an ear toward Turkey to hear about what some people are calling a "deep state." It appears that some prison doors have been swinging open, and not everyone is happy about who is being freed.

Then we're off to India, where voters will soon be lining up for general elections. This time, many of those casting ballots will be young people who are becoming more and more politically involved.

And near the end of our program, a bit of American history! We are here every day, and we give you our world ...good or bad ...As It Is.

People in Turkey are talking about the release of retired military officials and organized crime group members from prison. Some people say the release is a sign that the country's "deep state" could return. What exactly does that mean? Jonathan Evans answers the question.

Many were found guilty of crimes linked to what government lawyers have called deep state. They use deep state to describe unofficial organizations of power. Prosecutors have blamed such groups for targeted killings of political leaders or enemies of the state.

Cengiz Aktar is with the Istanbul Policy Forum. He says the prisoner releases are troubling.

"The Turkish public opinion is extremely worried now about these releases because these people might think of taking revenge in the months to come."

Among those released are people jailed for killing Hrant Dink, a leading Armenian reporter. Government lawyers say the killers of three religious workers were also released.

Human rights groups say most “deep state” targets were activists fighting for the rights of Turkey’s Kurdish minority. They say much of the violence took place during the 1990s. That is when Turkish forces repeatedly clashed with the Kurdish rebel group PKK.

This month, Turkish nationalists attacked several offices of the People’s Democracy Party. The group supports Kurdish rights. Ertugrul Kurkcu is the leader of the People’s Democracy Party. He believes the ‘deep state’ organization was involved. He also thinks supporters of the group are responsible for past crimes against the Kurds.

He and other observers say the government has released individuals linked to the deep state in an effort to defeat followers of an Islamic clergyman Fetullah Gulen. The religious leader lives in self-imposed exile in the United States. The government accuses his followers of seeking to gain influence in Turkey’s judiciary and police.

Sinan Ulgen does not believe the government would take such a risky move. Mr. Ulgen is a visiting scholar with Carnegie Europe in Belgium. He blames the releases on the court system.

"From the standpoint of the government this was also an unwanted development because most of Turkish society is critical about this development. There has been a fundamental shift in the civil military relationship and that will not change."

Cengiz Aktar agrees that Turkey has changed since the military became directly involved in politics. But he says the country remains at risk for corruption.

"The police and justice have been shaken and destabilized. Therefore we don't know who will ensure the public order, with that many criminals there in the streets of the country."

Human rights groups accuse Turkey's deep state of thousands of political deaths and disappearances during the 1990s. I'm Jonathan Evans.

Young People May Affect Elections in India

India is making final preparations for general elections. The voting begins next month. About 120 million Indians will be able to vote for the first time. Indians under the age of 25 are becoming more involved politically. They want leaders who will deal with issues like jobs and development. Karen Leggett takes the story from there.

In 2011, tens of thousands of young people joined anti-corruption protests in the center of India's capital, New Delhi. Sanjay Kharwar was among the demonstrators. At the time, he was an engineering student at the Indian Institute of Technology. This year, he will be voting for the first time. But he wants to do more than mark a ballot. He wants to give his country a new direction.

Sanjay Kharwar is now working as a volunteer for the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party, or BJP. He believes the party's candidate for prime minister would be able to deal with three issues of concern to young people. They are good governance, faster economic growth and jobs.

Thousands of college students like him have offered to help political parties in the election campaign. Voting for the 543 seats in parliament begins on April 7th.

India has the highest number of young people in the world. With a total population of one-point-two billion people, half are under 26 years old.

Political parties largely ignored young people until they began protesting corruption and the gang rape of a student in Delhi in late 2012. Now parties are seeking the support of these young voters.

The ruling Congress Party hopes the image of its leading campaigner, Rahul Gandhi, will appeal to young voters. Mr. Gandhi is 43 years old. He has been pushing for younger candidates and speaking to young voters at campaign events.

Ravi Shankar Prasad is a top leader of the BJP. He says his party's attention to development issues is important to young people.

Political observers say the two main parties have failed to act on the concerns of young people.

Sanjay Kumar is with the Center for Developing Societies in New Delhi. He wrote a book about Indian youth in politics. He says young Indians are showing more interest in politics than they did 10 years ago.

Some of these young men and women want to become political leaders themselves. Others, like Sanjay Kharwar, do not. Still, they are making time to campaign for their chosen parties.

They organize meetings, actively use social media websites and climb onto crowded trains to publicize their ideas before the elections. I'm Karen Leggett.

And I'm Jim Tedder in Washington. Today is the birth date of the wonderful jazz singer, Sarah Vaughn. She was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1924. Don't forget, there are more Learning English programs still to come, and world news at the beginning of the hour. This is VOA.

