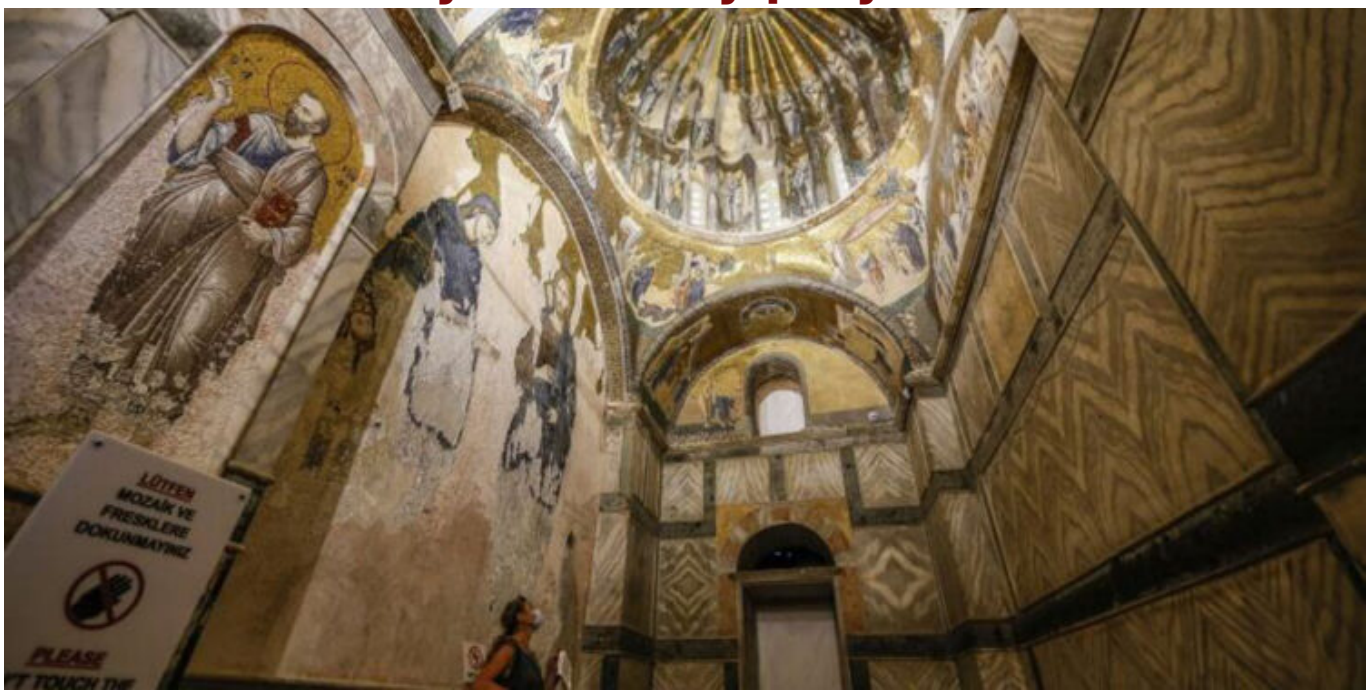
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Significant number of Muslim pilgrims gather at Chora Monastery for Friday prayers



A significant number of Muslim pilgrims gathered at the Chora Monastery for the Friday noon prayer, an important ritual in the Islamic tradition, marking the first such occasion following the conversion of the Monastery into a mosque.

Last Monday, Recep Tayyip Erdogan officially reopened the former Byzantine church of Constantinople as a mosque in a special ceremony broadcasted live from the presidential palace via teleconference.

Despite the limited capacity of the monastery’s interior, which accommodated only a fraction of the attendees, many worshippers remained in the outdoor area surrounding the monument. The interior space reached full capacity half an hour before the prayer began.

Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Chora Monastery boasts some of the most intricate Byzantine mosaics in Constantinople, alongside renowned landmarks like the Hagia Sophia and the Pammakaristos Monastery, both of which also operate as mosques.

As in the Hagia Sophia’s case, the mosque will cover the mosaics adorning the prayer area while providing designated areas for guided tours, allowing visitors to appreciate the historical and artistic significance of the monument.

Originally constructed in the 6th century AD, the Church of the Holy Saviour in Chora, serving as the primary worship space of the former monastic complex, gained prominence for its exceptional mosaics and frescoes created during the 14th century, under the auspicies of the Palaiologos dynasty.

In 2019, Turkey’s State Council (Danistay) nullified a 1945 decision regarding the monument, paving the way for President Erdogan to announce its conversion back into a mosque in 2020.

Source: ANA-MPA

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