

## **Restoration work resumes at historic Sümela Orthodox Monastery**



Restoration work has resumed on the historical Sümela Monastery, located in the Maçka district in the northern Trabzon province, a major religious tourism hub in Turkey. The restoration work had been suspended due to adverse weather conditions and as part of measures to combat the coronavirus outbreak.

A total of 35 people are participating in the project, which started about 10 days ago, including four expert restorers and 18 industrial climbers. All of the work is conducted in line with social distancing guidelines.

One section of Sümela Monastery, located in the Altındere Valley of Trabzon, which was closed to visitors due to restoration work on Sept. 22, 2015, was reopened on May 25, 2019, and was scheduled to be fully completed by May this year. On Oct. 30, 2019, Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy visited the restoration site and received information from the authorities regarding the second stage of the restoration project.

The minister had said that all sections of the Sümela Monastery would be opened for visitors in May 2020, adding: “Unless we are struck by adverse weather conditions, we want to open the second phase during the 2020 Museums Week and make all parts of Sümela Monastery available for a visit.” When the section of Sümela Monastery up to the first courtyard was opened to visitors in 2019, it attracted great interest from local and foreign tourists.

As part of the work, the restoration of the rock located at the entrance gate of the monastery has been largely completed, while work on the bedrock surface above the monastery continues to be carried out by industrial climbers. Although restoration work was expected to be finished by July 18, 2020, as per the contract, the period will be extended due to the adverse events.

Also as part of the restoration work, rocks on steep slopes were cleaned and protective scaffolds were installed to prevent damage to the underlying structures. Work is being carried out to prevent damage to the buildings within the Sümela Monastery, which will be protected by high-strength steel wire networks that are stretched to the hillside.

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