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Latest Turkish govt spectacle on Tues. at historic Monastery of Panagia Sumela



The Islamist Erdogan administration is readying yet another high-profile PR event centering around a Greek Orthodox landmark and renowned Byzantine monument, just days after the first Muslim prayer was held at the iconic Hagia Sophia in nearly nine decades – a shocking event that sealed the 6th century Orthodox basilica’s conversion back into a mosque, from its status as a museum and UNESCO World Heritage site.

On Tuesday, the historic Monastery of Panagia Sumela, near the Black Sea city of Trabzon and for centuries the cradle of Pontian Hellenism, is scheduled to reopen after five years of restoration work – all in the presence of the Turkish culture and tourism minister.

Besides a ribbon-cutting ceremony, climbers are set to unfurl a massive Turkish flag above the abandoned monastery, which today serves as a museum, yet another opportunity to convey what critics call Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's vision of a revived Islamic caliphate, as spearheaded by his government.

At the same time, another Hagia Sophia cathedral, this one in Trabzon, will also reopen this week after two years of restoration, and after the monument was also converted into a mosque seven years ago by the Erdogan administration.

Panagia Sumela and the Hagia Sophia in Trabzon are among the most visited monuments in the ancient Pontus region, which encompasses much of the southeast Black Sea coastline and inland mountainous region.