

Sümela Monastery sees influx of tourists



The Sümela Monastery has seen an influx of tourists during the Eid al-Fitr festival following a four-year-long comprehensive restoration and rock improvement project.

On the first day of the festival on June 4, a total of 1,990 tourists visited the picturesque monastery located in the Black Sea province of Trabzon. On the second day on June 5, another 4,418 entered the great monument.

In total, some 6,408 tourists visited the monastery during the two-day festival. Along with the surge of visitors came a traffic jam on the road to the monastery's parking lot.

Sümela Monastery was temporarily closed on Sept. 22, 2015 for a restoration project to eliminate danger caused by loose rocks around Karadağ Mountain in the Altındere Valley. Restoration work has also been ongoing inside the historical monastery.

The first part of the monastery was opened to visitors on May 25. Since then, a total of 14,000 visitors have flocked to the great monument.

There was no entrance fee for the monastery during the May 25-June 1 period, but after that day, admission was set at 10 Turkish Liras (approximately \$1.70) per

person by the Culture and Tourism Ministry.

The Sümela Monastery, located on a steep and rocky area, offers a stunning combination of nature, history and culture.

The monastery is popular during every season. Visitors often participate in trekking, mountain biking, paragliding and photo safaris.

It is a Greek Orthodox monastery was constructed in the fourth century and founded Emperor Alexios III of Trebizond (1349 – 1390).

The monastery sits inside the Altındere National Park and is surrounded by a beautiful forest. At the bot-tom of the mountain flows one of the arms of Değirmendere Creek.

Vehicles can drive as far as the parking lot at 950 meters height near the river. From that point, visitors need to hike for about 1 kilometer along on uphill trail to reach the entrance of the monastery, which is located 1,200 meters above sea level.

– Source: hurriyetdailynews.com