

RESTORATION OF COLOSSEUM TO BEGIN IN DECEMBER



It is official. Diego Della Valle, an Italian billionaire, is funding a project to save the crumbling Colosseum. Repairs to the crumbling 2,000-year-old monument that have been long delayed will start in December. The culture ministry stated that they awarded a \$10.2-million (8.3-million-euro) tender for the restoration project.

Frequently passing traffic has left the Roman amphitheater dirty and decaying, which is expected to be cleaned during the restoration. The Colosseum is among the most visited tourist spots in the world. Even though the ancient monument will be covered in scaffolding during the two and a half year restoration, the public will be able to access it through that time.

The project was hailed by Lorenzo Ornaghi, the Culture Minister, and the owner of the Tod's shoe empire, Della Valle, at a press conference in Rome. Della Valle said that his company was proud of supporting the restoration project and helping preserve one of Italy's most prominent symbols in the world. Ornaghi and Della Valle said that they hoped that more private businesses would be encouraged by the project to contribute towards the restoration of other famous monuments in Italy. According to Della Valle making use of the beauty of Italy's food, landscape and monuments was the only way to secure a bright future for the country.

Not only will the Colosseum be cleaned, but the cracks in the building will also be removed and temporary metal arches attached near the ground will be removed. All the subterranean and internal areas of the monument will be repaired and a new visitor center will also be constructed as a part of the project.

The Colosseum is 48.5 meters high and measures 188 meters by 156 meters. After the release of the blockbuster film "Gladiator", 6 million visitors explore the monument every year compared to one million visitors a decade ago.

It was back in 80 AD that Titus, the Roman emperor, completed the monument and in recent months, the Italian media has frequently featured the pitiful state of the Colosseum. In January, small pieces of tuff rock were noticed by a group of tourists falling from the monument, and this wasn't the last of such incidents.

In a recent study, it was also discovered that the foundations on its southern side are probably cracked because the entire monument is tilting by 16 inches (40 cm) on that side. It has been suggested by some reports that a project like the one stopping the Leaning Tower of Pisa from tilting further might have to be used to prevent the Colosseum from collapsing. Next year, more studies will be compiled on the tilt of this monument.

Gianni Alemanno, the mayor of Rome, said that the Colosseum will be restored to its previous glory once the project wraps up in mid-2015. He said that the Colosseum has to be turned into the central point of the city and the country.

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