

BOLIVIA MAY LOOSE ITS UNESCO SITE



Bolivians have decided to make an ancient pyramid Akapana more attractive to tourists. They, however, used adobe instead of stone for its reconstruction and now the site may lose its UNESCO World Heritage status. What is worse the insensitive reconstruction may cause the pyramid to collapse.

A pre-Columbus Bolivian pyramid Akapana, part of the city of Tiwanaku - a UNESCO World Heritage site - has been in a serious condition for years. Tiwanaku was a capital of a powerful pre-Hispanic empire. However, the activities of Spanish conquistadors and consequent erosions resulted in severe damages.

This year the local authorities reacted to numerous complains that the site is not enough attractive for tourists and decided it needed an overhaul. After all, thousands of tourists coming to the site, each of them paying US \$10 is a reason enough for such decision.

The problem is that **the reconstruction was not planned well**. Instead of original stone there was used simple adobe to rebuild the structure thus changing the appearance considerably. The problem is not only that the use of adobe alters the original form of the pyramid; it could also cause the pyramid to collapse. Lower decks of the pyramid are now tilting because of the extra weight of the adobe walls.

Bolivians have halted the reconstruction after the intervention of the UNESCO. The organization has now sent experts to determine whether the site should be delisted from the list of World Heritage.

Bolivians argue it now looks more like the original structure than it did before the reconstruction. In addition, the Bolivia's state National Archeology Union, Unar has fully approved the reconstruction.

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