

# Massive carpet mosaic briefly uncovered in Palestinian town

October 20 2016

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A portion of a 7th century, 827 square meter (8900 square ft) mosaic is on display ahead of the opening ceremony at the Islamic archaeological site of Hisham Palace, in the West Bank city of Jericho, Thursday, Oct. 20, 2016. The unique mosaic was displayed for the first time in its entirety to the public Thursday before it undergoes a US \$13 million Japanese funded project to protect it and exhibit it to visitors. (AP Photo/Nasser Nasser)

Archaeologists have removed the protective cover from one of the

Middle East's largest carpet mosaics—but only for a day.

Visitors got a glimpse on Thursday of the sweeping geometric and floral patterns in vibrant red, blue and ochre stones.

The 827-square-meter (8,900 square feet) mosaic covers the floor of the main bath house of an Islamic palace near the biblical town of Jericho. The palace was destroyed by an earthquake in the eighth century.

Since being excavated in the 1930s and 1940s, the mosaic largely remained hidden under canvas and soil to protect it against sun and rain.

Tourism Minister Rula Ma'ayah says the mosaic, which depicts 38 scenes in 21 colors, will be covered again until construction of a protective roof is completed next year.



Visitors roam the Islamic archaeological site of Hisham Palace ahead of an

opening ceremony, in the West Bank city of Jericho, Thursday, Oct. 20, 2016. A unique 7th century, 827 square meter (8900 square ft) mosaic was displayed for the first time in its entirety to the public Thursday before it undergoes a US \$13 million Japanese funded project to protect it and exhibit it to visitors. (AP Photo/Nasser Nasser)



A Tree Of Life mosaic is shown at the site of a 7th century, 827 square meter (8900 square ft) mosaic ahead of the opening ceremony at the Islamic archaeological site of Hisham Palace, in the West Bank city of Jericho, Thursday, Oct. 20, 2016. A unique group of mosaics was displayed for the first time in their entirety to the public Thursday before it undergoes a US \$13 million Japanese funded project to protect it and exhibit it to visitors. (AP Photo/Nasser Nasser)



A laborer from the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities works at the site of a 7th century, 827 square meter (8900 square ft) mosaic ahead of the opening ceremony at the Islamic archaeological site of Hisham Palace, in the West Bank city of Jericho, Thursday, Oct. 20, 2016. The unique mosaic was displayed for the first time in its entirety to the public Thursday before it undergoes a US \$13 million Japanese funded project to protect it and exhibit it to visitors. (AP Photo/Nasser Nasser)



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