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Roman Colosseum Gets New Hi-Tech Floor

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The ancient Roman Colosseum is once again going to have a floor - a new, high-tech floor at the cost of \$22 million.

Italy's Culture Minister Dario Franceschini described the new project this week as "extraordinary," meaning extremely good or impressive.

Franceschini said the floor will give tourists a clearer idea of how the **arena** would have looked when gladiators fought to the death there. In ancient Rome, gladiators were people who fought against other people or animals for public entertainment.

Archaeologists - experts that deal with past human life and activities - removed the last floor to get a better idea about the area below the arena. The floor was never fully replaced.

An Italian engineering company, Milan Ingegneria, won the \$22 million contract to design the new floor. The company has agreed to complete the project by 2023.

The wooden floor will be made up of hundreds of pieces that can be moved to bring natural light into the underground rooms. These rooms were once used to house the gladiators and animals before their deadly fights.

Franceschini said about the new floor, "you will be able to walk on it and go to the center of the Colosseum, seeing it in the same way as visitors used to up to the end of the 19th century."

The Colosseum is Italy's most popular tourist draw. Some 7.6 million people visited the arena in 2019 before the coronavirus health crisis.

Built 2,000 years ago, the stone arena was the biggest of its kind in the Roman empire. It used to have up to 70,000 seats. It could also be filled with water to re-create battles at sea.

I'm John Russell.

Crispian Balmer reported on this story for Reuters. John Russell adapted it for Learning English. Hai Do was the editor.

Words in This Story

arena – *n.* a building for sports and other forms of entertainment that has a large central area surrounded by seats
