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Muslim heritage expo meant to inspire young generations

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By ARAB NEWS

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LONDON: On his visit to the UK, Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan visited on March 16 the "1001 Inventions" exhibition in London that features many scientific achievements that Western Europe inherited from the Muslim world, including the Ottomans.

"Through our sponsorship of 1001 Inventions we aim to provide the role models that will inspire generations of young people of many diverse backgrounds to explore the possibility of becoming science and technology entrepreneurs," said Fady Mohammed Abdul Latif Jameel, president of Abdul Latif Jameel International Foundation, while welcoming Erdogan to the exhibition at the Science Museum, in South Kensington, London.

The 1001 Inventions gallery at the country's premier science museum attracted more than 80,000 visitors in its first eight weeks. "1001 Inventions: Discover The Muslim Heritage In Our World" was launched on Jan. 21 to highlight the scientific heritage the world has inherited from Muslim civilization.

The venue has been inundated with visitors prompting the museum director to describe the exhibition as a blockbuster. The Muslim heritage exhibition, sponsored by the British charity Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation, a program of Abdul Latif Jameel Community Services Programs, traces the forgotten story of a thousand years of scientific achievements of the Muslim world since the seventh century.

The event has become so popular that its short run in South Kensington has now been extended until the end of June 2010 after which it will go on a five-year tour of major cities across the globe.

During the visit, the prime minister and his wife were guided by Fady Jameel and Salim Al-Hassani, chairman and founder of the 1001 Inventions.

The exhibition highlights many social, scientific and technical achievements that are credited to the Muslim world, including the Turkish region.

"This exhibition features a diverse range of exhibits, interactive displays and dramatization, all of which acknowledge the Muslim world's contribution to many modern inventions in fields such as engineering, medicine and architecture," said Jameel speaking on behalf of the Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation.

"Our gallery showcases dozens of exhibits from the history of Muslim civilization. For example, our visitors will discover that Turkey is responsible for giving the world immunization, suction pumps, rocket powered flight and the oldest surviving detailed map of the Americas. The Turkish region was also home to engineering geniuses like Al-Jazari and Taqi Al-Din, whose machines and mechanisms are key in plants and agricultural industries, and master architects like Sinan whose influence can be seen throughout the capitals of Europe," Al-Hassani said.

"Our aim is to improve mainstream understanding of Muslim contribution to arts, science and technology and to the modern civilization, and this interactive exhibition does this by bringing to a wider audience eye-opening facts and astounding stories," he said.

Among these achievements are:

- The world's first rocket powered flight, carried out by Lagari Hasan Celebi, who soared above Istanbul's Bosphorus strait in the 17th century.
- A five-meter high recreation of the Elephant Clock produced in the 13th century by master engineer Al-Jazari in what is now southern Turkey.
- The story of inoculation and immunization, a concept imported from Turkey.
- How the architecture of landmark buildings across Europe was inspired by architects like Sinan of Turkey.
- Reproduction of the pistons-crank systems and suction pumps used by engineering pioneers like Taqi Al-Din and Al-Jazari.
- Hezarfen Ahmed Åelebi, the first person to successfully fly between two continents in a glider.
- Åerefeddin SabuncuoÅlu, who invented numerous surgical instruments and wrote one of the first illustrated handbooks on surgery.
- How Ottoman administrators made important advances in the field of town planning.
- Spa treatments developed in Turkish Hammams which are now widely practiced around the world.
- How the Turkish language inspired many English words (like ÅYogurt, ÅCrimson and ÅKiosk).

The 1001 Inventions exhibition runs from Jan. 21 until June 30 at the Science Museum, South Kensington, London.

The Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation is a British charity established in February 2009 by Mohammed Abdul Latif Jameel, president of Abdul Latif Jameel Co. Ltd., the largest independent Toyota distributor in the World and with distributorships in Turkey (ALJ Toyota) and many other countries including Japan, the UK, Germany, China, Egypt, Monaco, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

Launched in the United Kingdom in March 2006, 1001 Inventions was created by the Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilization (FSTC), a British-based non-profit, non-religious and academic organization. Working with leading academics from around the world, FSTC engages with the public through educational media to highlight the shared cultural and technological inheritance of humanity to improve social cohesion. →