

Primitive forest discovered at the bottom of the giant sinkhole in China

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An ancient forest has been discovered by a cave exploration team that was found at the bottom of a giant karst sinkhole in Leye County in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

According to *Xinhua News*, the sinkhole measured 192 metres in depth, 150 metres in width and 306 metres in length, with its volume exceeding 5 million cubic meters. Considering the dimensions, the sinkhole can be categorised as a large sinkhole and such giant sinkholes are called Tiankeng or "heavenly pit" in Mandarin.

The sinkhole interestingly has three big caves in the sinkhole in the walls, while the bottom has a well-preserved primitive forest with trees that are nearly meters high.

Xinhua Net had reported back in early November about the discovery of the giant cluster of sinkholes in the same region. Earlier in 2016 also scientists discovered the world's largest cluster of sinkholes in northwest China's Shaanxi province.

Basically, the Sinkholes are formed in the ground when Earth's starts collapsing and can occur without warning. These are formed due to human activity or natural processes. Sinkholes typically form in the areas of 'karst' terrains where the rock below the Earth's surface can be easily dissolved by groundwater.

According to a 1997 paper published in the journal *Environmental Geology*, the mining of coal, zinc, lead and iron ore deposits in kaest areas that associate with the formation of sinkholes due to human activity.

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