

Specimen of largest whale shark inaugurated at PMNH



ISLAMABAD: UNESCO with its partner Pakistan Science Foundation, on Tuesday inaugurated one of the largest found whale shark specimen at the Pakistan Museum of Natural History (PMNH).

According to details, the specimen was unique due to its huge size. It is 40 feet high, weighs 16 tonnes and is the biggest specimen of fish recorded in the history.

The whale shark (rhincodontypus) was seen alive but motionless on February 6, 2012 in the Gora Bari area of Arabian Sea, by local fishermen. It was brought to the Karachi Fish Harbour the next day.

Later, the PMNH took possession of the specimen from the Karachi Fish Harbour Authority and the Marine Fisheries Department.

The specimen was finally inaugurated on Tuesday after the completion of process of stuffing. Pakistan Science Foundation Chairman Dr Manzoor Hussain Soomro said, "We are very grateful to UNESCO for providing PSF technical and financial support to promote culture of science, scientific knowledge and science popularisation."

The inauguration was planned to coincide with the visit of UNESCO Education Assistant Director General Qian Tang. Qian said, "Museums play an important role for popularisation of science education, and I believe that the PNSH is doing a wonderful job for educating people in Pakistan."

Dr Kozue Kay Nagata, in her remarks, congratulated the PSF and the PMNH on the successful completion of the preservation process. She stressed the idea of sharing scientific knowledge, which would be a important milestone for educated minds of next generation.

UNESCO is supporting the PMNH to increase the experience and knowledge of visitors.

Whale shark is declared a vulnerable specie by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and its population is said to be decreasing at an alarming rate.

The specimen at display was of age 50, when found. Despite its huge size, this whale shark is harmless to humans and feeds only on plankton, krill, fish eggs and crabs. The specimen is open for public display in the PMNH.