

Headline	Fast track mode to ensure pandas are at home here		
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Fast-track mode to ensure pandas are at home here

PUTRAJAYA: Preparations are under way by Putrajaya Corporation for the arrival of the two baby pandas from China.

The president of the corporation, Tan Sri Samsuddin Osman, said they had made visits to Chiang Mai, Thailand and Singapore to study the artificial environment most suited for the animals.

“We are in a fast-track programme to research the type of enclosures, temperature and living environment that is best suited for the animals needs,” he said at the soft launch of Floria Putrajaya 2012, here, yesterday.

Both Thailand and Singapore have received a pair of pandas on loan from the Chinese government and Thailand has achieved much success in rearing the pair which gave birth at the Chiang Mai Zoo in 2009.

Samsuddin said they would take into consideration the methods used by the two countries as well as their own to bring up the pandas in Malaysia.

He said a 1.1ha site in the Putrajaya Wetlands had been set aside for the pandas’ habitat and another 6ha for bamboo cultivation. He also said they were currently growing three of the 15 species of bamboo that make up the animal’s diet.

Samples of the bamboo would be

sent to their Chinese counterparts to make sure that it was up to their standards and to the pandas’ liking, he added.

He said that pandas were very sensitive animals, and “it is crucial that we give them the best living environment that they can adapt easily to”.

He said they would work closely with the ministries of Natural Resources and Environment, and Federal Territories and Urban Wellbeing as well as the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia.

Earlier, at the launch of the event, Federal Territories and Urban Wellbeing Minister Datuk Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin said that a special envoy from China had arrived yesterday to inspect the site.

Six researchers would visit the site to be approved by the Chinese government and ensure that it was as close as possible to the pandas’ natural habitat, he added. Asked when the pandas would arrive, he said that it was up to the Chinese government.

The 10-year loan agreement is part of a collaboration between the China Wildlife Conservation Association and the Malaysian government to mark the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two nations.