

Headline	Pandas home in the works		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	15 Jun 2012	Color	Black/white
Section	Nation	Circulation	304,904
Page No	3	Readership	1,026,812
Language	English	ArticleSize	199 cm ²
Journalist	Tho Xin Yi	AdValue	RM 4,392
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 13,176



Pandas' home in the works

Park sets aside 7ha to house and feed 'treasures' from China

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PUTRAJAYA: The pair of giant pandas that will make their home here for 10 years will be housed in a 1.13ha air-conditioned enclosure at the Wetlands Park.

Another 6.07ha will be used to plant bamboos for their consumption.

The Natural Resources and Environment Ministry had announced on Monday that China would loan to Malaysia two baby giant pandas to mark the 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties between

the two countries.

The agreement for the transfer of the pandas, regarded as national treasures by China, will be signed between the Malaysian Government and the China Wildlife Conservation Association today.

The loan request was made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to his Chinese counterpart Wen Jiabao during his visit to Nanning in April.

Putrajaya Corporation president Tan Sri Samsudin Osman said the pandas ate 15 types of bamboo.

"We already have three here - *buluh Thailand, buluh betong* and

buluh pagar," he said after the soft launch of the Putrajaya Flower and Garden Festival (Floria) 2012 at the Maritime Centre here yesterday.

He added that FRIM director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod, who is a bamboo expert, will share planting tips with the corporation.

Samsudin said in Thailand (where China had also sent its pandas) the animals were fed "bamboo cakes" made of minced bamboo shoots.

"The food has to be kept in an air-conditioned store. Otherwise, the pandas will not eat them," he said.

Federal Territories and Urban Wellbeing Minister Raja Nong Chik

Raja Zainal Abidin, who was present at the event, said six experts from China were here to inspect the site for the pandas yesterday.

"The enclosure, which has yet to be designed, will resemble the panda habitat as close as possible.

"We will propose the design to the Chinese authorities," he said.

Raja Nong Chik added that a Malaysian team had visited Singapore and Chiang Mai in Thailand to get first-hand information on preparations as well as caring for the pandas.

The arrival date of the pandas has yet to be fixed.