

Headline	Giant pandas to arrive on April 16		
MediaTitle	The Sun		
Date	10 Apr 2014	Color	Full Color
Section	National	Circulation	300,512
Page No	10	Readership	650,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	270 cm ²
Journalist	AIEZAT FADZELL	AdValue	RM 4,802
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 14,405



Giant pandas to arrive on April 16

> Special enclosure, food supply and playground all ready for pair from China

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KUALA LUMPUR: The much-awaited giant pandas, Feng Yi and Fu Wa, will finally be arriving in Malaysia on April 16 and will settle in at their RM25 million complex at Zoo Negara.

The complex features three main exhibit areas, which would be kept at below 24°C to simulate their natural habitat.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri G. Palanivel said the six-year-old pandas will leave China on the night of April 15 and arrive at the KL International Airport at 6.25am the next day.

All facilities necessary at the airport will be provided free by MAS Kargo.

"They will be in quarantine for a month before settling in at the

complex," he told reporters after his first official visit to the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), where he also launched a Bamboo and Palm Gallery.

The pandas are on loan from China to Malaysia for 10 years to mark the 40th anniversary of mutual diplomatic ties.

In preparing for the arrival of the pandas, Palanivel said bamboo plants have been grown to ensure enough food supply for the animals during their stay here.

The pandas are scheduled to be "officially named" by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak in a ceremony at Zoo Negara on May 22.

It is learned that Zoo Negara has completed all facilities for the

pandas, including a wooden playground and water feature.

The water feature is said to serve as a buffer against noise made by visitors, which may startle the pandas.

"If the pandas mate and have an offspring, it will be sent to China after two years," Palanivel said.

Meanwhile, FRIM chief director Datuk Abdul Latif Mahmud said they have 11 types of bamboo, of which only five are readily available within the zoo area for the pandas.

When asked if there would be a consistent and adequate supply of bamboo as food for the pandas, Abdul Latif said Malaysia is ready to shoulder this responsibility.



Giant pandas Fu Wa and Feng Yi will be settling in at Zoo Negara after a month in quarantine.