Giant pandas Feng Yi, Fu Wa due to arrive in Malaysia on Wednesday

KUCHING: A pair of giant pandas from Chengdu, China, is expected to arrive in Malaysia on May 21.

Natural Resources and Environment Deputy Minister Datuk Seri Dr James Dawos said he would fly to Chengdu on Sunday to arrange the delivery.

"I have been tasked to bring the pandas to Malaysia. The pandas will be flown in by MASKargo and are scheduled to arrive at KLIA at 6am."

Dawos said the pandas would be loaned to Malaysia for 10 years and would be housed in a special enclosure encompassing three main areas with the temperature under 24 degrees Celsius - which is the same as its original habitat - exercise area, holding den, food preparation area and food storage area.

He said if the pair successfully mates, Malaysia would get to keep the baby.

"We were told these pandas had given birth to a cub. So, hopefully the pair will multiply here so we can keep the baby panda at Zoo Negara."

Dawos said a complex had been built on a 1.6ha site at Zoo Negara, adding that the cost of constructing the complex at RM25 million was borne by 1Malaysia Development Berhad (RM15 million) and the government (RM10 million).

He said the complex also had a laboratory, veterinary clinic, incubator room, nursery and monitoring room.

He said the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia had identified a plant species, which is found in Malaysia, to feed the pandas.

Giant panda feeds heavily on bamboo.

On June 15, 2012, the Malaysian and Chinese governments clinched a deal for Feng Yi (female) and Fu Wa (male) to be loaned to Malaysia for 10 years to mark the 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries this year.

Dawos said the Giant Panda Complex would be opened to the public.