Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod cannot wait for the pandas to arrive. After all, he is the bamboo expert.

For a long time, I had wished that there would be pandas in Malaysia. The base of the plant can be used as ‘dessert’ for the pandas, while its top end can be utilised for commercial products such as chopsticks,” the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) director-general said during a tour of the institute’s bamboo garden here yesterday.

China has agreed to loan two pandas to Malaysia for 10 years in recognition of the good bilateral ties and in conjunction with the countries’ 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties.

The pandas would cover over one kilometre a day and spend about 10 to 16 hours eating up to 30kg of bamboo.

“Pandas feed on the stalk, leaves and shoots, and they appear to like parts that are juicy and sweet,” said Dr Latif.

He said the animals would cover over one kilometre a day and spend about 10 to 16 hours eating up to 30kg of bamboo.

Dr Latif said pandas would love the shoots from the locally-available Siamese bamboo while the hedge bamboo’s leaves and stalks would be tasty snacks.

“When cut into chopstick-sized stalks, the buluh betung and buluh beting will make a good dessert for the pandas,” he said, adding that pandas love to play in a type of bamboo called Buddha’s belly bamboo or bottle bamboo bushes.

He said the supply of bamboo for the pandas would come from bamboo planted in 15ha in Putrajaya Wetlands and Paya Indah Wetlands as well as the plantation in Raub.

“The plantation alone can supply food for the pandas for about three years,” he said.