

Pandas should stay on longer

PM Anwar to take it up with President Xi for a mechanism to extend their stay

KUALA LUMPUR: There is a chance that Zoo Negara's star attractions - the two giant pandas - will continue their stay in Malaysia as the country marks its 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations with China this year.

Xing Xing and Liang Liang, who have been on a 10-year loan by China to Malaysia since 2014, are due to be sent home soon, but Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is looking into extending their stay here.

The Prime Minister said he would reach out to President Xi Jinping to allow Xing Xing and Liang Liang to remain at Zoo Negara for longer.

"The giant pandas are due to be returned. I will take it up with the Chinese government and President Xi to see if there is a mechanism to extend their stay



in Malaysia.

"Knowing the excellent relations between the two countries, I am quite optimistic that they will give due consideration to our proposal," he said in his speech at Zoo Negara's 60th anniversary

celebration here yesterday.

Speaking to reporters later, Anwar acknowledged that it was costly to feed and manage the pandas, "but for now, we are looking at the benefits for zo'o visitors."

"We don't pay for the pandas,

Charming icon: Many people visit Zoo Negara, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary, to see the giant pandas.
- IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/
The Star

just the maintenance. Many people come to the zoo to see them because not all Malaysians can afford to go to China to see giant pandas.

"For some Malaysians, seeing them here is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," he added.

Xing Xing and Liang Liang were loaned to Malaysia to mark the 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries then.

Liang Liang gave birth to three cubs while in Malaysia - Nuan Nuan on Aug 18, 2015; Yi Yi on Jan 14, 2018; and Sheng Yi on May 30, 2021.

Nuan Nuan returned to China in 2017 while Yi Yi and Sheng Yi went home last August.

Earlier in his speech, Anwar announced a RM10mil allocation for Zoo Negara's development

programmes and conservation.

He said the government would channel RM5mil while the remaining RM5mil would come from companies via their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes.

Also present at yesterday's event were Deputy Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister Datuk Seri Huang Tiong Sii, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari, Zoo Negara deputy president Datuk Rosly Lana, and Chinese Ambassador to Malaysia Ouyang Yujing.