



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and other visitors looking at one of the new pandas at the Giant Panda Conservation Centre in Zoo Negara, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday. NSTP PIC BY ASYRAF HAMZAH

ZOO NEGARA

RM5m grant to upgrade, run programmes

KUALA LUMPUR: Zoo Negara will receive an additional RM5 million to bolster its sustainability, conservation and eco-tourism initiatives.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the funding, approved for this year, reflected the government's commitment to upgrade the national zoo.

"When I visited last year, I announced a RM5 million allocation to improve facilities and maintenance.

"This was because the zoo's performance is impressive, particularly in attracting tourists and educating schoolchildren on

being nature-friendly.

"This year, I am approving another RM5 million for their management and maintenance," he said after opening the Giant Panda Conservation Centre yesterday.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said the new pair of giant pandas, Chen Xing and Xiao Yue, would be a major draw for tourists.

"I would like to take this opportunity, through ambassador Ouyang Yujing, to express my gratitude to President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and the Chinese government for this meaningful

contribution," he said.

Anwar also praised the expertise of local staff in caring for the pandas.

Earlier, the prime minister was briefed on the dietary habits of the pandas.

"I was informed that these pandas are very selective. They do not just eat any bamboo; they specifically prefer bamboo from Rembau. They tried various types, including from Permatang Pauh, but they only accepted the ones from Rembau," he said jokingly.

Anwar is from Permatang Pauh and had once served as its member of parliament.