

# Govt injects RM5mil into zoo operations

Funding will go towards upgrades, maintenance

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**GOMBAK:** Zoo Negara received a welcome boost when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced an additional RM5mil allocation to upgrade facilities and support operations.

The announcement was made during a visit to the Zoo Negara Giant Panda Conservation Centre yesterday, where Anwar said the latest funding reflects the zoo's strong performance as both a conservation hub and a major tourist attraction.

"When I visited last year, I announced RM5mil to improve facilities. This year, I have approved another RM5mil for operations and maintenance," he said at a press conference yesterday.

"The zoo plays an important role in environmental education, particularly for schoolchildren," he added.

The government had previously channelled about RM5mil to Zoo Negara ahead of the arrival of giant pandas Chen Xing and Xiao Yue on Nov 18 last year.

Expressing appreciation to China, Anwar described the presence of the two giant pandas

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Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

as a meaningful contribution that has boosted Malaysia's tourism appeal both locally and internationally.

He also praised Zoo Negara's staff and animal care team for their dedication, noting the meticulous care required to look after the pandas.

"I was told the pandas are extremely selective. They don't eat just any bamboo. They only accept bamboo from Rembau, after trying many varieties from different places," he said.

Anwar arrived at the centre at 11.30am and spent time observing the pandas from the walkway bridge while zoo personnel pro-



**Panda appeal:** Anwar (second from left) with (from left) Zoo Negara deputy president Datuk Rosly Lana, Kurup, Syed Ibrahim and Amirudin at the Zoo Negara Giant Panda Conservation Centre in Kuala Lumpur. — Photo from the Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia

vided explanations about the animals.

Also present were Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister Datuk Seri Arthur Joseph Kurup, his deputy Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari, Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry secretary-general Datuk Shahrudin Abu Sohot and China's Ambassador to Malaysia, Ouyang Yujing.

Responding to concerns raised by Taman Melawati residents and non-governmental organisations about a reserved land parcel dating back to 1963 that Zoo Negara had sold, Anwar said preserving green spaces remains a priority.

"We don't have to use every

inch of land. Otherwise, we risk losing our green lung," he said, adding that there is no immediate need to expand zoo facilities and no current plans to develop the land.

"It is a congested area with nearby housing, and that must be taken into account.

"I thank the Selangor state government for ensuring there is no new development within the green lung under the zoo's control, and in surrounding areas, which must be protected," he said.

It was previously reported that the land plots were sold during the Covid-19 pandemic to help sustain the zoo's operations and finances, which had dwindled to just RM1mil in savings at the time.

Meanwhile, Anwar was also asked about the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's ongoing investigations into alleged corruption and cartel practices involving military procurement tenders.

He reiterated the government's full support for enforcement agencies, saying that current anti-corruption efforts are commendable and represent a marked improvement compared with previous years.