

Delay In Arrival Of Pandas Due To China's Preoccupation With MH370
Bernama
11 Apr, 2014

PUTRAJAYA, April 11 (Bernama) -- The arrival in Malaysia of two Giant Pandas from China, originally scheduled on April 16, has been postponed to next month.

Instead, the pandas, Fu Wa (male) and Feng Yi (female), from Chengdu, will arrive in the country in May-end.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri G. Palanivel said the Chinese Government's postponement was due to preoccupation with the search for the Malaysia Airlines MH370 aircraft whose flight path ended in the middle of the southern Indian Ocean.

A total of 153 Chinese nationals were part of the 227 passengers on board MH370 when it vanished on March 8. The search enters its 35th day today.

Palanivel said he had explained the matter at today's Cabinet meeting.

"Initially, the two pandas were scheduled to arrive on April 16, but because of the incident (disappearance of MH370), the Chinese ambassador said they would send them at the end of May.

"They want to look for the black box first," he told reporters at his office here Friday.

The sending-off ceremony involving the pandas was to have taken place at the Dujiangyan Disease Control Centre in Chengdu.

In February, the two giant pandas were transferred from the Bifengxia Panda Base in Ya'an to the Dujiangyan, both in Sichuan province.

They have been put in quarantine since arriving at Dujiangyan to prepare for their departure.

The panda programme symbolises the 40th anniversary of Malaysia-China diplomatic ties which will be celebrated this year.

It is a follow-up to the cooperation agreement signed between Malaysia and China on June 15, 2012.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2014 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=1029912>