

Giant Panda Liang Liang Gives Birth At Zoo Negara

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By Soon Li Wei

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- The female giant panda, Liang Liang, has given birth to a cub at 1.45 pm in the Giant Panda Conservation Centre (GPCC) at Zoo Negara here Tuesday.

Zoo Negara deputy president Rosly@Rahmat Ahmat Lana said the veterinary experts and staff at the GPCC had been able to detect extraordinary behaviour of Liang Liang over the past two weeks.

"Liang Liang began to show extraordinary behaviour, such as losing appetite, being less active and making peculiar sounds, two weeks ago.

"Since then, our veterinary experts had begun carrying out blood test and measuring its weight, before they finally decided that there was an 80 per cent probability that Liang Liang was pregnant," he told Bernama here today.

Rosly said it was the staff at the GPCC who saw that Liang Liang was showing labour symptoms when they took it out to the exhibition area at 10 am.

"Based on the experts' observations at the exhibition area, Liang Liang appeared to have uncontrolled anxiety until about 1 pm when it started to go inside a hidden corner and gave birth to a cub.

"They (the experts) knew that a baby panda was born as they could see a small leg," said Rosly.

The birth of the panda cub also captured the attention of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak who expressed his happiness on his Twitter account.

Rosly said they had yet to ascertain the gender of the cub as Liang Liang had kept it in a hidden corner at the GPCC's exhibition area.

"Liang Liang also seemed to be quite aggressive and unapproachable after giving birth," he said.

Rosly also said that Liang Liang would be quarantined temporarily to undergo the confinement period while nursing the baby until the experts confirmed that it was ready to receive visitors.

As such, he said visitors would only be able to see the male giant panda, Xing Xing, when visiting the GPCC for the time being.

Based on the Malaysia-China Giant Panda International Conservation Agreement, Rosly said the panda cub could only stay in Malaysia for two years and must be sent back to Chengdu, China, the hometown of Xing Xing and Liang Liang.

"It will belong to China after that," he said.

Meanwhile, GPCC Zoology and Veterinary director Dr Mat Naim Ramli said panda's gestational period normally lasts three months.

He said the giant panda pair had earlier undergone a 10-day mating process from April 28 to May 7.

"At the initial stage, both the giant pandas appeared to have accepted one another, maybe for 20 minutes, because after that we have to conclude that the mating process had failed because Xing Xing was seen to be rejecting Liang Liang.

"However, from the health examination carried out on Liang Liang over the past two weeks, we found that there was an 80 per cent probability that the female giant panda was pregnant," he said.

The giant panda pair, formerly known in China as Fu Wa and Feng Yi, arrived in Malaysia on May 21, 2014, and will stay here on loan for 10 years, to symbolise the 40th anniversary of Malaysia-China diplomatic relations.

On June 25 last year, Najib announced the giant pandas' Malaysian name of Xing Xing (prosperity) and Liang Liang (pretty) in conjunction with the launch of the GPCC.

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