



KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

# KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

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## FLASHBACK #50

# Panda diplomacy bearing fruit

### Cheering on birth of cubs a unifying factor

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IT wasn't just Malaysians who cheered when Liang Liang gave birth to her third cub in Zoo Negara on May 31.

Netizens in China were just as thrilled, with good wishes being sent to the newborn.

"Welcome, little cutie," someone named Zhaoxiweiyang posted.

Furthermore, the baby panda had arrived on the day that both China and Malaysia marked the 47th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

"What an auspicious baby," said a netizen.

China also marks the following day (June 1) as Children's Day, so the people there wished the baby panda "a happy festival" and hoped that it would grow up healthy like its parents and two siblings, Nuan Nuan and Yi Yi.

"The baby cub is the biggest surprise present to all children," wrote Yechunmei.

Internet user Shunxinsiya said: "A child every three years and all were naturally conceived. Kudos!"



"Liang Liang is so productive," said Fantuan de Maque.

News of the birth came just hours after China's announcement of its backing for couples to have a third child to boost the country's population and also to tackle the problem of an ageing population. In 2016, China, which had implemented the one-child policy since the 1970s, allowed couples to have a second child.

The panda's parents - Xing Xing, which means prosperity and Liang Liang (pretty) - are on a 10-year loan to mark the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China.

They arrived in Kuala Lumpur on May 21, 2014.

To house the pandas throughout their 10-year stay here, a RM60mil Giant Panda Conservation and Exhibition Centre was built in Zoo Negara.

The complex is air-conditioned and has a laboratory, incubator room, veterinary clinic, exercise area, holding den and a monitoring room.

Fifteen months after their arrival, Liang Liang gave birth to Nuan Nuan (warmth) on Aug 18, 2015, marking the cub the fastest naturally conceived baby panda in captivity.

Nuan Nuan, which returned to China in 2017, is currently residing at Ziqing Lake Safari Park in eastern China's Nanjing city.

(According to the agreement, all offspring of the panda must be returned to China when they are two years old.)

She is now a celebrity panda and has her own page on Sina Weibo, a Chinese Twitter-like site.

As for the younger sibling Yi Yi (friendship), born on Jan 14, 2018, the female panda is still in Zoo Negara.

Yi Yi's trip back to the Middle



**Attention grabbing:** From the day they arrived in Malaysia, the pandas have been a star attraction.

Kingdom has been delayed due to Covid-19.

The practice of "panda diplomacy" dates back to the seventh century when Chinese empress Wu Ze Tian of the Tang Dynasty gave a pair of pandas to a Japanese emperor as a gesture of goodwill.

Then in 1941, China gave a panda to the Bronx Zoo in the United States to thank them for their help during World War II.

Today, pandas are no longer given away but are leased to countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia.