

Giant panda gives birth in Malaysia

August 18 2015



Giant panda 'Liang-Liang', pictured on June 25, 2014 at the National Zoo in Kuala Lumpur, gave birth to a cub

A giant panda lent by China to Malaysia has given birth to a cub in captivity, Prime Minister Najib Razak said Tuesday, following a diplomatically tough year between the two countries.

"Glad to hear that Liang Liang, a panda at the National Zoo, has given birth to a child at 1:45 this afternoon," he wrote on his Twitter and

Facebook accounts.

The two countries agreed in 2012 that China would send a pair of giant pandas for a 10-year stay as part of Beijing's "panda diplomacy".

They were due to arrive last April but were delayed by a month after the disappearance of Flight MH370, which vanished on March 8 with 239 people on board including 153 Chinese on board.

Beijing, and especially Chinese relatives of those on board, have been highly critical of Malaysia's handling of the disaster.

The pandas had also caused controversy in Malaysia over a decision to house them in a special \$7.7 million facility at the [national zoo](#).

Environmentalists had argued the money would have been better spent on conservation efforts for threatened Malaysian wildlife.

Mat Naim Ramli, the director of the Giant Panda Conservation Centre, said authorities were unable to determine the sex of the new cub.

"We can see legs and some parts of the body but Liang Liang is still protecting it," he was quoted as saying by The Star newspaper.

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