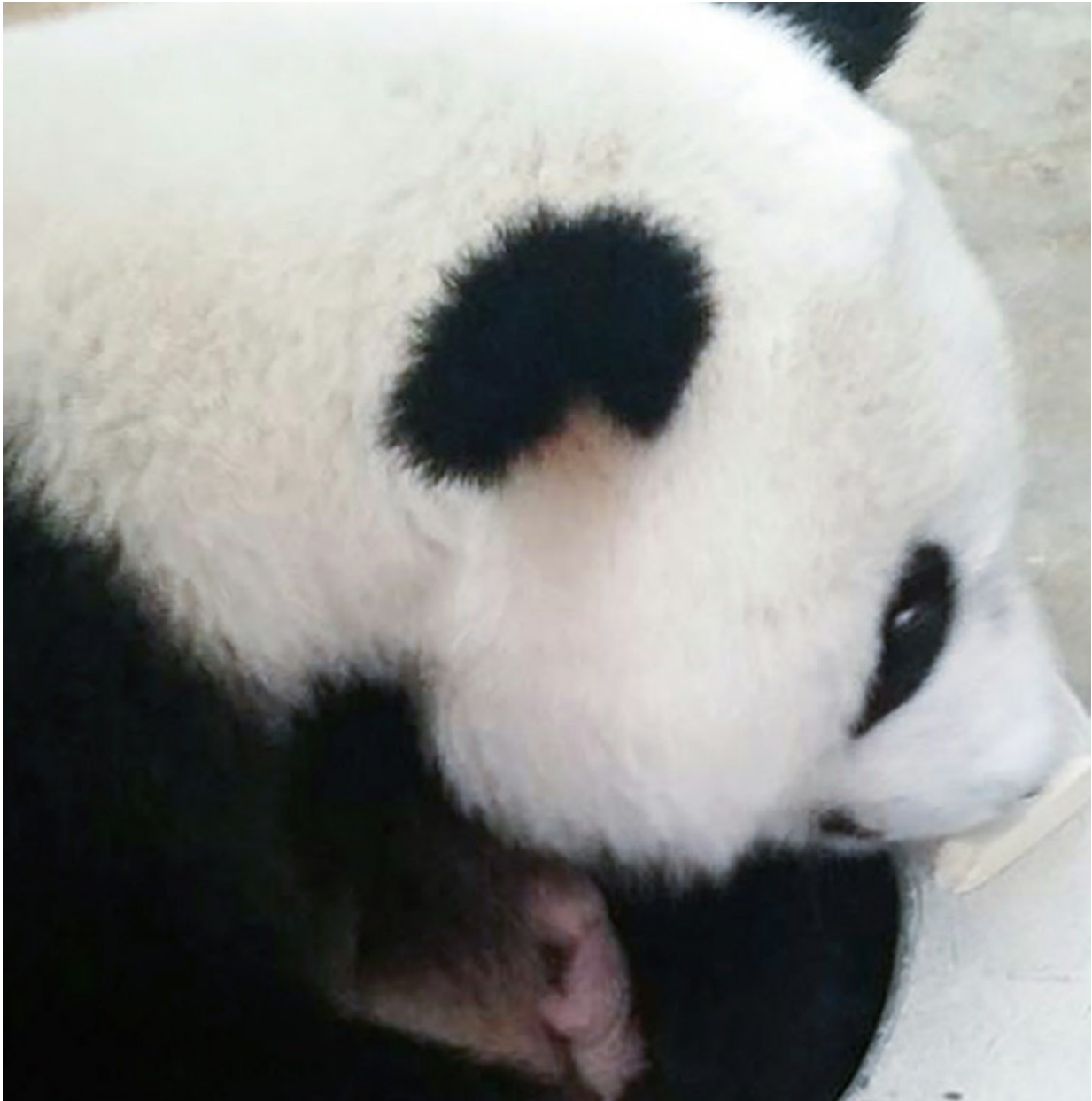


Second giant panda cub born in Malaysia

January 17 2018



Zoo officials are not yet sure of the cub's gender as Liang Liang is keeping it

tightly in her grasp

A giant panda loaned to Malaysia from China has given birth to a second cub during its stay in the Southeast Asian country, zoo officials said Wednesday.

The baby was born Sunday to Liang Liang, who has been on loan to Malaysia since 2014 along with a male panda, said Mat Naim Ramli, director of the national zoo's panda centre outside Kuala Lumpur.

He said officials were not yet sure of the cub's gender as the mother was keeping the youngster so tightly in her grasp zookeepers could not get near.

"The mother is very attentive and protective. She doesn't allow us to (take the cub)," he told AFP.

The first cub, a female called Nuan Nuan, was born in August 2015 and sent to China in November last year as part of Beijing's agreement with Malaysia that cubs born in captivity must go back at the age of two.

Mat Naim said the new cub appeared to be healthy and slightly larger than its elder sister when she was born.

He added that officials were trying to get a closer look at the cub, and that the government would likely hold a competition to name the animal soon.

Liang Liang and the male, Xing Xing, came to Malaysia in 2014 on a 10-year loan.

Their arrival was held up by a month after the disappearance of Malaysian Airlines flight MH370—carrying mostly Chinese passengers—caused tensions between Kuala Lumpur and Beijing.

There are an estimated 1,864 giant pandas left in the wild, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and they can only be found in certain parts of south central China.

The IUCN classifies them as "vulnerable".

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