

Berlin's panda twins ready for public debut

January 29 2020



Meng Yuan and Meng Xiang, two Berlin-born Chinese panda cubs, make their public debut on Thursday

Two panda cubs born at Berlin Zoo last year charmed local media on Wednesday, a day before their debut in front of the general public.

Five-month-old males Meng Xiang and Meng Yuan, whose names mean

"long-awaited dream" and "dream come true", were seen climbing over boulders as they explored their enclosure, watched by their mother Meng Meng and members of the press.

The two cuddly cubs were the first pandas to be born in a German zoo, and have been nicknamed "Pit" and "Paule" by their carers.

The births were particularly rare as it is notoriously hard to breed pandas.

The zoo is expecting a surge in visitors when the pandas are put on public display for the first time on Thursday.

Zoo directors are planning to open more ticket desks to avoid long queues, and have arranged for [security personnel](#) to guard the panda enclosure.

Alongside their parents Meng Meng and Jiao Qing, the twins are the only pandas currently visible in Germany.

On loan from China, the panda couple had arrived in Berlin in June 2017 to great fanfare.

Famed for its "panda diplomacy", China has dispatched its national treasure to only about a dozen countries as a symbol of close relations.



The male panda cubs are five months old and their names mean "long-awaited dream" and "dream come true"



One of the two giant panda cubs with his mother Meng Meng at their enclosure during the first presentation to the media at the Berlin Zoo



The mother Meng Meng was brought to Berlin in 2017 along with Jiao Qing, who is the proud father

Berlin Zoo pays \$15 million (13.4 million euros) for a 15-year contract to host the two adult pandas, with most of the money going towards a conservation and breeding research programme in China.

While the cubs were born in Berlin, they remain Chinese and must be returned to China within four years after they have been weaned.

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