

Malaysia plans to introduce 'orangutan diplomacy': minister

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A Sumatran orangutan eats vegetables at the National Zoo in Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysia intends to gift orangutans to palm oil-purchasing countries as part of an initiative similar to China's panda diplomacy, the commodities minister said on Wednesday.

Johari Abdul Ghani said the "orangutan diplomacy" strategy would gift the endangered great apes to palm oil trading nations, especially major importing territories like the EU and India.

Orangutans are critically endangered, according to the WWF, with habitat loss "due to logging, [agricultural expansion](#), particularly palm oil plantations, and infrastructure development" posing the greatest threat.

"By introducing 'orangutan diplomacy', it will show to the world, that Malaysia is always committed to [biodiversity conservation](#)," he said in a post on social media platform X.

He urged palm oil companies to collaborate with NGOs to help preserve and provide technical expertise on wildlife in Malaysia.

Palm oil is blamed by environmentalists for fueling the destruction of rainforests in Malaysia and Indonesia, which together produce the majority of global output.

The edible oil is used in foods such as cakes, chocolate and margarine, as well as cosmetics, soap and shampoo.

Beijing has long used panda diplomacy as a form of soft power.

It only loans pandas to foreign zoos, which must usually return any offspring within a few years of their birth to join the country's breeding program.

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