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Press release

What cute peepers!

Zoo Berlin's panda twins open their eyes for the first time

Ever so slowly and ever so slightly, Meng Meng's second-born cub opens one little eye and peers out shyly from under mum's big paw. Shortly afterwards, the second eye opens too, and the tiny panda looks up at its mother for the very first time. A few hours later, the larger of the two cubs also begins to cautiously blink its eyes. This week, six weeks after their birth, Berlin's new pandas can finally begin to see the world around them.

However, it's hard to know what the two small bears can actually make out with their cute little eyes just yet. What we do know is that over the coming days and weeks their sight will get consistently better until they are able to move around with confidence. "We are thrilled that the two pandas are developing so well," beams Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "We have been referring to them as 'big one' and 'little one', but thanks to Meng Meng's nourishing milk the two siblings are now almost the same size and weight. They both weigh around two kilograms, and they are about 30 centimetres long respectively."

Background:

Zoo Berlin has been home to Germany's only giant pandas since summer 2017. On 31 August 2019, female panda Meng Meng (6) gave birth to two cubs weighing 186 and 136 grams. Father Jiao Qing (9) is not involved in the rearing of cubs – as is normal for giant pandas. Most recent estimates suggest that there are only 1,864 adult giant pandas living in their natural habitat worldwide. Giant pandas are therefore classified as "Vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Zoo Berlin pays an annual loan fee to be able to keep these rare bears, and 100 percent of that sum is channelled into conservation work such as the breeding, protection and reintroduction into the wild of the bamboo-eating bears. Panda pair Meng Meng and Jiao Qing are sponsored by cooperative banking association Berliner Volksbank.

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