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Press release

A big day out for little bears!

Zoo Berlin's panda twins take their first steps outdoors

Pit (Meng Xiang) uses his sharp claws to drag his fluffy round body along the thick branch that leads to the bathing pool filled with bark mulch. His brother Paule (Meng Yuan) is waiting for him, and greets him with a playful chomp into his fur – that's how panda cubs express brotherly love! This morning, the twins took their first trip outside with mum Meng Meng (7). Everything went well, which means that from this Thursday the panda family will finally be on view to visitors.

The Zoo Berlin team has waited a long time for this moment, ever since the panda twins were born 152 days ago on 31 August 2019, weighing just 186 and 136 grams respectively. Now, the keepers are delighted to be able to present their darlings to the public. "On this special day I would particularly like to thank the Zoo's committed team of keepers, vets and biologists," said Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "But I am also grateful to everyone else who contributed to the successful breeding of these wonderful bears here at Zoo Berlin – the first pandas ever to be born in Germany. We hope Zoo visitors will now join us in welcoming these special black-and-white Berlin bears." The twins enjoy hanging out on their wooden climbing posts, but their favourite thing to do is play fight with one another. The two brothers have already developed very different characters:

Pit (Meng Xiang)

Laid-back, dreamy, and always ready for a nap – that's our Pit! He may be the older of the two by a whole 48 minutes, but he has no interest in taking the lead when it comes to exploring. However, mild-mannered Pit does have another side that occasionally comes out: if the rough and tumble with his brother gets too much, he reprimands him with a loud yelp.

Paule (Meng Yuan)

Paule is a lively little fellow known for his mischievous, inquisitive nature. For him, no rock is too high to climb and no nook too small to sniff at. Paule just loves to go exploring. With his short snout, he resembles his mother Meng Meng.

Background:

Zoo Berlin has been home to Germany's only giant pandas since summer 2017. On 31 August 2019, female panda Meng Meng gave birth to two cubs weighing 186 and 136 grams. Father Jiao Qing (9) is not involved in the rearing of the 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 the pandas, and 100 percent of that sum is channelled into conservation work, such as the breeding, protection and reintroduction into the wild of the beloved bamboo-eating bears. Panda pair Meng Meng and Jiao Qing are sponsored by cooperative banking association Berliner Volksbank. Panda fans will get to enjoy watching the twins for some time yet. They won't leave Zoo Berlin until they are two to four years old – the age when pandas in the wild also strike out alone.