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## **Press release**

### **A first week full of cuddles**

#### **Zoo Berlin's new panda mum is giving her cubs plenty of loving care**

The first hint of autumn is in the air, but Berlin's two new pandas wouldn't know it: the practically furless cubs spend their time with mother Meng Meng (6) buried deep in her thick, warm coat – the perfect place for a nap. And if they wake up hungry, mama's milk is right there.

Eat, sleep, cuddle, repeat: some might find the daily routine of Zoo Berlin's panda twins rather monotonous, but it's exactly what they need – and the thick fur of mother Meng Meng certainly looks inviting! The new mum carefully uses her large paws to support and position her ungainly little cubs. "Although I have witnessed the birth and rearing of many animals during my time as a veterinarian, the relationship between mother bears and their cubs never fails to fascinate me," says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "Big, powerful bears turn into loving, sensitive mothers when their offspring arrive – and our Meng Meng is no exception."

Since their first check-up, the two little bears have been spending alternating shifts of two to three hours at a time with their mother. This gives both cubs the best chance of survival, as giant pandas generally only have enough energy to raise one cub. Thanks to good prior training and a little honey, Meng Meng allows her young to be exchanged without a fuss. With her appetite now fully returned, Meng Meng is starting her second week as a mum in the best of health – enjoying plenty of fresh bamboo and her beloved panda cookies.

#### **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 cubs – as is normal for giant pandas.



Current estimates suggest that there are only 1,864 adult pandas currently living in their natural habitat worldwide. Pandas are therefore classified as “Vulnerable” on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Zoo Berlin pays an annual loan fee for the honour of keeping 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.