



10 July 2017

**Press release**

## **Meng Meng turns four**

### **Zoo Berlin celebrates its first panda birthday in five years**

*Happy birthday to you  
Happy birthday to you  
Happy birthday, dear Meng Meng  
Happy birthday to you!*

After weeks spent practising the correct pronunciation of our new female panda's name – which lies somewhere between Mong Mong, Mung Mung and Mang Mang – panda fans could show off their skills today as they wished her a very happy fourth birthday. To mark the big day, our young bear received a special bamboo ice cream cake – the result of a Chinese-German collaboration in the zoo kitchen.

The lively female panda is a real celebrity in her native home of China, where she was born on 10 July 2013 in Chengdu with the studbook number 868. Her mother's name is Er Yatou and her father is Yong Yong.

Meng Meng now weighs around 83 kg and can be distinguished by her round face and cute, stubby snout. Her inquisitive nature is already keeping staff at Zoo Berlin on their toes. On her first day outdoors, Meng Meng was given the chance to explore her new realm in the peaceful early hours of the morning, before the throngs arrived. During her outing, she took a particular liking to an old oak tree. After a quick and exciting climb to unexpectedly lofty heights, she completed her lap of the Panda Garden by playing on the swing, splashing through the stream, and testing out the climbing apparatus.

"Little Meng Meng is one of the cutest pandas I have ever seen – we all fell in love with her immediately," says head panda keeper Christian Toll. "We are really happy that our Meng Meng is now celebrating her birthday in Germany and that she has settled in so well," says Zheng Hao, one of the accompanying keepers from Chengdu.

### **Pandas under threat**

Giant pandas, more than any other animal, have become an international symbol of species conservation and occupy an almost holy status in their native country. These remarkable bears were once found right up in the north-eastern part of China, all the way down into



Myanmar and Vietnam. Today, the territory of the giant panda has shrunk to the sparse coniferous and deciduous woods in the mountain ranges around China's Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces. The latest panda count carried out by China's State Forestry Administration in 2014 recorded at least 1,864 of these bears living in their natural habitat – 17 percent more than in 2004. But despite successful conservation efforts, the survival of giant pandas in the wild is not guaranteed. That is why pandas are still classified as “vulnerable” on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Zoo Berlin posts all the latest panda news on its panda blog: [www.zoo-berlin.de/panda-blog](http://www.zoo-berlin.de/panda-blog)