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Venezuela-welcome

VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT GETS CEREMONIAL WELCOME

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- Venezuelan President Hugo Rafael Chavez Frias, who is here on a three-day state visit, was accorded a ceremonial welcome at Parliament Square here.

He was met on arrival at the square by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah.

Prime Minister Datuk Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi were also present.

After the national anthems of both countries were played, Sultan Salahuddin accompanied the President for the customary inspection of the guard-of honour mounted by 108 officers and men of the First Battalion of the Royal Malay Regiment led by Major Abdul Basit Abdul Rahman.

Chavez Frias was then introduced to members of the cabinet and diplomatic corps.

Chavez Frias, who arrived yesterday, is on his first visit to East and Southeast Asia since assuming the presidency last February.

His itinerary here includes calling on the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and holding talks with Dr Mahathir.

According to the Foreign Ministry, the visit was aimed at strengthening Venezuela-Malaysia ties and exchanging views and experiences with Malaysian leaders on economic development and international issues.

The presidential entourage includes senior officers of the Venezuelan Planning and Development, Commerce and Production, Infrastructure, Energy and Mines and Science and Technology ministries.

-- BERNAMA

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