

# Ceremonial welcome in Sarawak for royal couple

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The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid were accorded a ceremonial welcome when they arrived at the airport here for their first official visit to Sarawak.

The royal couple were greeted with a 21-gun salute shortly after the executive jet touched down at about 12.10pm yesterday.

The King inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by 101 men and four officers from the 13th Royal Malay Regiment, led by parade commander Mej Mohd Hanafi Shamsudin.

Yang di-Pertua Negri Tun Abang Mohammad Salahuddin and his wife Toh Puan Norkiah, Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud and wife Datuk Amar Laila Taib,

including state ministers and local dignitaries were present.

Earlier, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was at the TUDM base in Subang to send off the King and Queen.

However, the plane carrying the royal entourage returned to base soon after it took off because the front tyre failed to retract.

Deputy Housing And Local Government Minister Datuk M. Kayveas, who was present, said the King was "cool" about the incident.

"The Yang di-Pertuan Agung told me this was the fourth time such a thing had happened to him; once when one of the flaps failed to work properly, and, twice when a window on the plane was found to have cracked," he said.

The King and Queen boarded another plane to their

destination, accompanied by Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Leo Moggie and his wife.

In Kuching, the King attended a state development briefing at Wisma Bapa Malaysia, Petra Jaya, and the royal couple were honoured with a banquet at the state assembly building banquet hall last night.

The royal couple will head for Bintulu to visit the Malaysian Liquefied Natural Gas complex today before flying off to Miri.

They will tour a traditional longhouse, Rumah Panjang Long Bedian in Baram in the interior region of northern Sarawak, tomorrow.

Before returning here, the King and Queen will visit the world-renowned Mulu Caves.

On Thursday, an investiture ceremony will be held at the state Astana.