

30 JUL 2002

Ghana-Welcome

RED CARPET WELCOME FOR GHANAIAN PRESIDENT AT PARLIAMENT SQUARE

KUALA LUMPUR, July 30 (Bernama) -- Ghanaian President John Agyekum Kufuor was accorded a full ceremonial welcome here today at the start of his four-day state visit to Malaysia.

Present at the ceremony held at Parliament Square were the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail, Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

Kufuor, accompanied by his wife, Theresa, arrived in Malaysia yesterday.

The ceremony today got underway with the band playing the national anthems of Malaysia and Ghana, after which the president inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by four officers and 103 men of the First Battalion of the Royal Malay Regiment as a 21-gun salute filled the air.

Members of the Malaysian cabinet and the foreign diplomatic corps were then introduced to Kufuor and his wife.

Later today, the Ghanaian leader will hold official talks with Dr Mahathir at the prime minister's office in Putrajaya.

The visiting president will have an audience with Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin and Tuanku Fauziah at Istana Negara this evening before being hosted to a state banquet.

Kufuor is also scheduled to attend the Langkawi International Dialogue after the conclusion of his visit.

Ghana, a West African nation, was a former British colony known as the Gold Coast until 1957 when it became the first state in sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence from European colonial rule.

Its capital city, Accra, is the largest in the country.

Ghana has a total area of 238,500 sq km and an estimated 20 million population.

It is a country rich in natural resources like gold, diamond and timber as well as agricultural produce.

-- BERNAMA

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