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Agong-Ceremony

AGONG ACCORDED UZBEK STATE WELCOME

TASHKENT (Uzbekistan), Sept 8 (Bernama) -- The Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail, was accorded a state welcome at the Durmen Country Residence here on the second day of his state visit to Uzbekistan.

Escorted by Uzbek President Islam Karimov, he inspected a guard of honour before Uzbek dignitaries and foreign diplomats, including Foreign Minister Sodiq Safoev and Uzbek ambassador to Malaysia Aybek Khasanov, were introduced to him.

Present were the minister-in-attendance, Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, and Malaysian ambassador to Uzbekistan Mohamed Zain Abu Bakar.

Later, his majesty had a tete-a-tete with the president to mark the first ever state visit by a Malaysian head of state to the former Soviet Union republic since diplomatic relations were established between both countries in 1992.

Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin is accompanied by the Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid, on the five-day state visit to Uzbekistan, covering three cities -- Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarkand.

The visit is to reciprocate that of Karimov to Malaysia in 1992, which was followed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to Uzbekistan the following year.

Their majesties will be feted to a state banquet by Karimov and his wife, Tatyana Karimova, at the same venue tonight.

On Tuesday, they will visit the ancient cities of Bukhara and Samarkand, famed for their historic monuments and mausoleums.

This Islamic central Asian nation of 25 million people is situated on the crossroads of the ancient Silk Road, between Europe and Asia.

Uzbekistan, the world's second largest cotton exporter, recorded a total bilateral trade of RM7.3 million with Malaysia last year.

Malaysia's exports to Uzbekistan, worth RM6.6 million last year, were mainly television sets, furniture, margarine and cooking oil while Uzbek imports, totalling only RM0.74 million, were chiefly cotton.

On Thursday, the royal entourage will make a four-day state visit to Astana City in Kazakhstan.

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