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SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT GIVEN A STATE WELCOME

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 2 (Bernama) -- South African President Thabo Mbeki, who arrived here yesterday for a three-day official visit, was accorded a state welcome at Parliament square here today.

Accompanied by his wife, Zanele Mbeki, he was received by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid.

Present were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, cabinet ministers and members of the diplomatic corps.

Mbeki inspected a guard of honour mounted by 103 officers and men of the First Battalion, Royal Malaysian Regiment, led by Mejar Kamruzzaman Mohamed Yunus after the national anthems of the two countries were played and a 21-gun salute was fired.

The dignitaries were then introduced to Mbeki who was later taken on a state drive of the federal capital.

He is scheduled to meet Dr Mahathir in Putrajaya today to discuss bilateral relations, followed by a meeting at the delegation level.

-- BERNAMA

SNS AHH JK