

Red carpet welcome for King in Brunei

By Siti Radzeah Rahmat

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BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN , Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah arrived in Bandar Seri Begawan today for a three-day state visit to Brunei.

His Majesty was accompanied by Raja Permaisuri Agong Tunku Hajah Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah.

The special aircraft bringing the Royal couple touched down at the Brunei International Airport here at 1.10 pm.

Their Majesties were given a red carpet welcome.

On hand to greet them were Brunei Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Mahkota Al-Muhtadee Billah Ibni Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and wife, Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah Pengiran Salleh Ab Rahaman.

Also present were Brunei Home Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Setia Dr Awang Abu Bakar Apong, who is also minister-in-attendance, and his wife, Datin Paduka Dayang Jahrah Mohamad.

The visiting delegation includes Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah and senior officials from the foreign ministry, Istana Negara and the Prime Minister's Department.

His Majesty then inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by a 26-strong team of the Royal Brunei Army led by Lieutenant Mohd Yusof Ibrahim.

Brunei is the first country visited by Sultan Abdullah since his installation as the 16th Yang di-Pertuan Agong on July 30.

The visit is aimed at further boosting the existing close ties between both countries.

Bandar Seri Begawan is heavily decorated with the Jalur Gemilang (Malaysia's national flag) and the Brunei flag as a goodwill gesture to welcome His Majesty's visit.

The Royal couple are scheduled to attend a banquet with the Malaysian diaspora here tonight.

Tomorrow, Their Majesties will be accorded a state welcome at Istana Nurul Aman.

In conjunction with the visit, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah will confer Brunei's highest award, the Darjah Kerabat Mahkota Brunei (D.K.M.B), on Sultan Abdullah and the Darjah Kerabat Laila Utama Yang Amat Dihormati (D.K) on Tunku Azizah.

Their Majesties are later scheduled to visit the Royal Regalia Museum.

In a separate programme, Sultan Abdullah will visit the Royal Customs and Excise Wharf and Kampong Ayer, while Tunku Azizah will visit the Brunei Arts and Handicraft Training Centre and Girl Guides Association Headquarters.

In the evening, Their Majesties will attend a royal banquet at Istana Nurul Iman.

On the final day, Sultan Abdullah is scheduled to visit the Islamic Religious Council of Brunei while Tunku Azizah will visit the Women's Institute (WI) in Tutong, before their departure home.

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