

Kangaroo on the menu for Harry and Meghan

AFP | Melbourne, Australia

Chargrilled kangaroo was on the royal menu yesterday as Prince Harry and his pregnant wife Meghan arrived in Australia's second-largest city Melbourne, where they were greeted by thousands of screaming fans.

Clutching flowers and waving flags, the crowds turned out to welcome the pair, who were delayed in traffic after flying in from Sydney on the third day of their tour Down Under.

The pair will only spend a few hours in Melbourne, but had a jam-packed schedule that included a meal featuring native Australian foods and a trip to a beach.

"I love everything they stand for. As a human being you have so much to look up to with them," one young fan who had been waiting since before dawn told national broadcaster ABC as the pair mingled with the crowd.

A teenage girl cried tears of joy and threw her arms around the prince as she clutched a hand-written banner with the words: "Been here since 4am. Loved you since I was eight."

"You're gonna get me in trouble," Harry joked as he embraced



Prince Harry (R) and Meghan watch thirteen-month-old Ruby Carroll during a visit to the drought-affected farm Mountain View in Dubbo in Dubbo



Britain's Prince Harry (3/R) and his wife Meghan, Duchess of Sussex (3/L) chat with farmers Scott Woodley (2/R), daughter Laura Woodley (R) and Scott's father and mother Margaret (L) and Richard Woodley (2/L) during a visit to their drought-affected farm called Mountain View



Meghan waves to students as she and her husband Prince Harry visit Albert Park Primary School in Melbourne



I made it with pasta and dipped them in gold paint and threaded the string through

A BOY ON DINOSAUR PASTA NECKLACE MADE FOR MEGHAN

the footsteps of Harry's grandmother Queen Elizabeth during her 2011 visit by taking a tram ride in Melbourne.

They are due to return to Sydney later this week for the opening of the global sports championship the Invictus Games, which was set up by Harry for wounded military personnel after his decade of service in the army.

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her. Meghan was inundated by flower bouquets and baby gifts following their announcement on Monday that Meghan was expecting their first child.

The US-born royal also put on a dinosaur pasta necklace made by a five-year-old boy, who was wearing his favourite pilot uniform outfit, for the rest of her walk.

"I made it with pasta and dipped them in gold paint and threaded the string through," he told news.com.au.

The Duchess was wearing

a tan trench-coat, believed to be by Paris-based Australian designer Martin Grant, a navy dress by the breakthrough star of local fashion Dion Lee, and holding a Gucci Sylvie clutch.

The loved-up husband and wife mostly mingled with the crowd separately, but when they were together, they held hands and the Duchess periodically stroked Harry's back.

After the public meet-and-greet, the couple spent some time with the Victorian Governor Linda Dessau in an offi-

cial reception at Government House, where the Duchess of Sussex stole the hearts of local sports fans by handballing a football used in the Australian Rules game. They then headed to a restaurant that mentors in-

digenous chefs with chargrilled kangaroo and wild boar on the menu, according to broadcaster Channel Nine. They will visit a school before finishing up at South Melbourne beach.

The couple will also follow in

Myanmar Buddhist temple now a nirvana for snakes

AFP | Yangon, Myanmar

Crossing a bridge to the middle of a lake in Myanmar's Yangon region, pilgrims arrive at a temple to pin their hopes on the pythons slinking across the temple's floors and draped across windows.

"People come here because they believe that their prayers will be fulfilled when they ask for something," said Sandar Thiri, a nun residing at the Baungdawgyoke pagoda -- dubbed the "snake temple" by locals.

"The rule is that people can only ask for one thing, not many things," she said. "Don't be greedy."

In the main room of the temple is a tree with figurines of Buddha around it. The serpents move slowly through the



A monk touching a snake resting in his room in the Baungdawgyoke pagoda, outside Yangon.

branches, their forked tongues darting in and out as they gaze down on the worshippers pros-

trating themselves.

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some measuring up to two or three metres in length, as a sign of the pagoda's power.

Win Myint, 45, said he has been coming to Baungdawgyoke since he was a child.

"Now I am older and I come to give offerings, which has made

some of my wishes come true."

Nearby, a monk dozes on a chair with two serpents curled at his feet, their thick bodies holding 1,000 kyat notes (worth about 60 US cents) tucked in between their coils by hopeful visitors. A woman, brave enough to venture close to a python, gently caresses it.

The mythical "naga" -- a Sanskrit word for snake -- is a common figure seen in temples throughout Southeast Asia, where Buddhist, Hindu and animist influences are intertwined. Nagas are usually carved out of stone and placed at the entrances.

But seeing a live snake slithering among Buddha statues is rare, and for some visitors, that serves as a draw to visit Baungdawgyoke -- a short drive south-

west of downtown Yangon.

With snakes curled up next to meditating monks, the image is reminiscent of a story in Buddhist mythology when the Buddha sat under a tree to meditate.

According to the legend, as it started to rain, a cobra protected Buddha by fanning its hood wide over his head to act as a shelter.

Nay Myo Thu, a 30-year-old farmer, believes he will receive good fortune by bringing the snakes he finds in his fields to the temple instead of killing them, adhering to a Buddhist belief that all animals are sentient beings that can be reincarnated as humans.

"I don't want to bring about any misfortune by killing a creature," Nay Myo Thu said. "Catching and donating the snakes brings me good fortune instead."