# UK Royals Host State Banquet for Japanese Emperor and Empress



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer will attend a state banquet at Buckingham Palace hosted by King Charles in honor of Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako of Japan. The event is scheduled for next Tuesday evening, occurring just over a week before the UK's General Election on July 4.

The Japanese royal couple's visit is not political but aims to enhance friendly relations across generations between Japan's imperial family and the British royal family. Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako will be welcomed with a traditional ceremony at Horse Guards Parade, a luncheon at the Palace, and the state banquet, all organized by King Charles and Queen Camilla. The Prince of Wales will greet the guests on Tuesday morning, while the Princess of Wales, due to ongoing cancer treatment, will not participate in the official events.

Unique to this visit, usual engagements like Downing Street talks and a speech at the Palace of Westminster are omitted due to the timing with the election campaign. The state banquet will feature speeches and toasts by King Charles and Emperor Naruhito, with Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir expected to sit near each other amidst their political rivalry.

The Emperor and Empress arrive in the UK on Saturday for a seven-day stay, involving private engagements before the official visit starts on June 25. Emperor Naruhito will visit the Thames Barrier on Monday, reflecting his academic research interests from his time at Oxford University. Empress Masako, who has faced health challenges in the past, is slated to participate in all key events, including a visit to the Young V&A Museum and Oxford.

The state visit avoids direct political engagement but underscores the longstanding cultural and diplomatic ties between Japan and the UK.