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OIC-Summit

ISLAMIC LEADERS OPEN KEY SUMMIT

By: Amad Zukiman Zain

TEHRAN, Dec 9 (Bernama) -- Leaders of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) opened a three-day summit here today that is expected to reaffirm Muslim solidarity as they seek more significant participation in global affairs.

The leaders comprising monarchs, presidents, prime ministers or their representatives were welcomed by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who inaugurated the opening ceremony at the Tehran Conference Centre which was specially built for the summit.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is among the leaders attending the summit carrying the theme "Dialogue, Dignity and Participation.

He is accompanied by Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamad, who is sitting in for Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Abdullah had to fly to Bonn for a meeting on the implementation of the Dayton peace accord on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This is the first time that Iran is hosting the summit in the 28 year-old history of OIC. It is also the largest gathering of leaders seen in Tehran since the 1979 revolution.

In his address, Khamenei said the world's present conditions had exposed the 55-member organisation to greater expectations.

The OIC could be the symbol of true unity of Muslim countries in the face of events and common interests, he said in the speech that reflected the expectations of the Islamic ummah for peace and brotherhood among Muslim nations.

Khamenei told the Muslim leaders that Iran posed no threat to any Islamic country.

He said Iran was more avid than ever for unity and dignity of the world of Islam.

The summit, chaired by Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, followed a two-day meeting of OIC foreign ministers which had forwarded 140 resolutions for the leaders' deliberation. -- Bernama

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