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APEC-NEWS-PHOTO LEAD

APEC LEADERS HOLD FIRST GROUP PHOTO SESSION

By: Mohd Arshi Daud

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 17 (Bernama) -- Apec leaders attending the Sixth Apec Leaders' Summit held their first group photo session at the Palace of Golden Horses Hotel near here this afternoon.

Soon after they were welcomed by Malaysian prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at Grand Salon, the hotel's lobby lounge, the leaders stepped out and went down the stairs to the East Terrace Garden of the luxury hotel.

There, under bright sunshine and breezy conditions outside the hotel, the leaders of the 21-member Apec economies lined up according to alphabetical order for the photo session on the lawn.

However, Dr Mahathir, who is the chair of this year's meeting, was flanked by Canadian prime minister Jean Chretien, last year's Apec Summit chair, and New Zealand prime minister Jenny Shipley, the 1999 Apec chair.

The leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) Forum also waved at the photographers after a Malaysian photograpers shouted "Wave Datuk Seri" to Dr Mahathir. When the Malaysian prime minister raised his hand, the other leaders followed suit.

After being photographed, the leaders proceeded to the Unity Room of the hotel for an agenda briefing on their summit.

The leaders had their photos taken under tight security. They will have another photography session tomorrow morning at Cyberview Lodge at CyberJaya near here when they meet for their retreat. -- BERNAMA

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