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Scholars-Opening

WORLD CONFERENCE OF ISLAMIC SCHOLARS GETS UNDERWAY

By Wan Nurzila Abdul Rahman

PUTRAJAYA, July 10 (Bernama) -- The World Conference of Islamic Scholars began here today amid anticipation of in-depth discussions on pertinent issues affecting the Muslim ummah.

The three-day conference that was officially opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is regarded as timely in view of the pressing needs for the Muslims to face the challenges of globalisation and correct the many misconceptions of Islam.

Organised for the first time ever, the conference held at the Marriott Putrajaya Hotel is aimed at capitalising on a global way of thinking for the benefit of the Muslims.

The event is the brainchild of Dr Mahathir, who wants a specific programme to educate Muslims on the real meaning of Islam so that they will not be confused by the views of irresponsible parties.

It is also hoped that this meeting of Islamic scholars will bring forth resourceful ideas so that the Muslims can be the driver and catalyst of their own success.

Today's proceedings, which are conducted in Malay, English and Arabic, started with the recitation of the Quran by the National Junior Reciters' Assembly 2003 champion Mohamed Anas Razali, 10, from Tapah, Perak.

The opening session was carried live by national broadcaster, RTM,

The gathering, themed "Islam in the Era of Globalisation", is being attended by some 900 participants and observers from 34 countries, including Malaysia, and will see the presentation of 22 working papers dealing with aspects like politics, social issues, economy and development.

Among the renowned Islamic scholars to speak at the conference is the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar Dr Mohammad Sayyid Tantawi who will deliver a keynote address, American scholar Dr Fathi Osman and Dr Rifa'at Sayyid al-Iwadi of Egypt.

The conference is also expected to address problems regarding Islamic religious matters that have always been referred to ulamas whose services thus far have been under-utilised due to various reasons.

By hosting this event, Malaysia hopes to share its experience in developing Islam, the economy and politics.

This will be done through the presentation of working papers by National Economic Action Council (NEAC) executive chairman Datuk Mustapa Mohamed and corporate leader Tan Sri Mohd Hassan Merican of Petronas, the national petroleum company.

-- BERNAMA

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