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Book-Mahathir

MAHATHIR RECIEVES ILLUSTRATED BOOK ON MALAYSIA

PUTRAJAYA, Nov 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today recieved a book complete with photographs on Malaysia authored by a 56-year-old banker from Belgium.

Dr Mahathir took time from his busy schedule to spend 15 minutes with the writer, Francois Walter, at the Prime Minister's Office here this morning.

Comprising 265 gloss pages, the book has 240 pictures of Malaysia, its people and its diverse cultures.

The initial 2000 copies of the book would be marketed in Belgium and other parts of Europe and there are plans to translate the book from English to French, Italian, Dutch and Russian in the near future.

The book, simply titled "Malaysia", has three chapters on Kuala Lumpur and its surroundings, the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, and Sabah and Sarawak.

All the photographs were taken by renown photojournalist Yvan Deweerdt.

Speaking to Bernama after meeting Dr Mahathir, Walter said the book was aimed at exposing Malaysia to tourists, especially those in Europe as many of them did not know about the country and its beauty.

"A lot of European tourists bypass Malaysia, preferring Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand. This book can be used as an eye opener for them," he said.

Walter said Dr Mahathir showed keen interest in the book and planned to give copies of it to foreign leaders when they call on him or when he meets them overseas.

"This is a big day for me because I had a chance to meet him and I am astonished at the interest he showed in the book," said Walter.

He said the 240 photographs in the book were selected from over 12,000 slides captured by Deweerdt.

Walter forked out RM400,000 from his own pocket to publish the book, which he felt was an appropriate gift from Malaysians to their foreign friends.

"Locally we would print only if there is demand and it would be priced at around RM200 a copy," he said.

Walter, a banker for 32 years, has taken five years of leave to complete the book.

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