

Book hits market after 2 years of toil

② Mahathir Profile

By MEERA THARMARATNAM

AFTER nearly two years of toil and preparation, "Malaysia: Heart of Southeast Asia" (right) was launched in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The first 20,000 copies of the book, which combines the talents of 46 specialist photographers and two internationally known authors, will first be released to regional and local markets.

The book is scheduled to hit the international scene next month. Some 10,000 copies will be in circulation in London, Paris, Rome and Frankfurt. It will be available in four translations: English, German, French and Italian.

By the time the book hits the US next year, circulation is expected to have reached the 50,000-60,000 mark.

To mark the launch, samples of the collaborative work involving the talents of 46 international photographers from 20 different countries were displayed at a photo exhibition at the Artquarium, hosted by Puan Marina Mahathir-Rousille, the book's project director, and Didier Millet, the international publisher of Archipelago Press.

Some 100,000 photographs were taken. The fact that slightly more than 350 images made the final selection shows that capturing the instinctive rhythm and beauty of Malaysian culture was no easy task.

Still, Puan Marina said: "Its potent and memorable impact will serve as a magnet to draw visitors to Malaysia."

Organised as one of the major international activities for Visit Malaysia Year 1990, the project was undertaken by Archipelago Press, with the support of the Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry.

To ensure the success of the book, an advertising campaign costing \$150,000 has been

planned. There will be two promotional drives, the first beginning Sunday through to mid-September and the second will run closer to the Christmas season.

In addition, regular advertisements will be appearing in the New Straits Times. Readers who order the book through the daily will be given free video cassette of the actual on-shoot workings of the photographers.

The video, also entitled "Malaysia: the Heart of Southeast Asia," is sold at \$35.

The book is already available in bookstores at \$135 each. Arenabuku has been appointed the Malaysian distributor of the book.