

Dr M: Make better movies

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed told the local film industry to produce better quality movies to increase box-office revenue and to stake their claim to have them shown in better cinemas.

Despite Government encouragement and incentives, the film industry had yet to attain the progress expected, the Prime Minister said.

"The failure of Malaysian-produced films to win the best movie award at the film festival in 1989 reveals the true situation about the industry.

"The Government wants the industry to develop further.

"Screening Malaysian films in Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore is not enough. Malaysian movies should penetrate the Asean and even the world market."

Dr Mahathir today opened the Merdeka Studio Complex of the National Film Development Corporation (Finas) in Ulu Klang and simultaneously launched the corporation's 10th anniversary celebrations and the 9th Malaysian Film Festival.

More than 3,000 people, including artistes and popular personalities, attended the function.

Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Finas chairman Tan Sri Abdul Samad Idris and Finas secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Zain Hamzah.

Dr Mahathir said film producers should be far-sighted to ensure the industry's continued development.

Cinema-goers, he said, have proven that they would support quality films.

He said the total box-office collections in the country last year was \$124 million. Of the amount, only about \$6 million came from local films.

He said the Government was willing to consider setting up a film village like those found in Taiwan and Singapore.

Dr Mahathir told reporters that film producers should improve the plots, performance and dialogue in their movies.

"If stage shows can achieve international standard, there is no reason why the film industry cannot do so."

On the question of Western influence, Dr Mahathir said that to produce quality films did not necessarily mean they must include sex and violence in their plots.