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LEAD Mahathir-film

STOP THINKING WORLD OWES YOU A LIVING, PM TELLS FILM-MAKERS

PETALING JAYA, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight told Malaysian film-makers to stop behaving as if the world, the government and everybody else owe them a living.

"We cannot insist that the government fights for you according to what you want when the government has provided various facilities and incentives," he said at a dinner hosted by the Malaysian Artistes Association (Seniman) at Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel here.

Dr Mahathir said: "We are living in an era of the survival of the fittest. For example the Mutlimedia Super Corridor or MSC. It has no precedent. We have no source of reference."

Similarly, he said Malaysian film-makers must be daring in venturing into new areas and after getting into it, to market it aggressively.

The world was beginning to have confidence in Malaysia where to-date 90 companies had applied for the MSC status, he said.

"It is the same for films. Hollywood films are leading the industry not because of big budget but because of aggressive marketing to every part of the world," he said.

As such, he said one must become successful entrepreneur to produce successful and quality films because in business there was also the art of negotiations.

"We must possess the art of negotiations. In my view, film industry people in the country must foster good relation with every one involved in the industry," he said.

Dr Mahathir said to ensure that those involved in the film industry received protection for their creative work, the government through the Multimedia Bill of Guarantees had among others made it a condition that the MSC would become a Regional Leader in Intellectual Property Protection and Cyberlaws.

In this respect, in the government's efforts to develop the MSC, film producers should grab the opportunities since there was now a guarantee that their works would be protected.

"We can make films based on more concrete issues but many films produced in the country were based on the love theme," he said.

He said films which won international awards were not based on the love theme but rather that of the society.

Dr Mahathir cited as example "The English Patient" and "Forrest Gump" where the issues portrayed were universal and not just love story.

He said it was not true that in order to be successful, local producers should copy popular films like those produced by Hollywood.

"There is no need for us to copy films produced in the west including unsuitable culture portrayed in these films. At the Cannes Film Festival last May, an entry from not from the west, The Taste of Cherry from Iran, won the highest award, portraying only the story of a man in search of human compassion," he said.

He said films produced in the country could have Malaysian identities but the issues to be highlighted must be universal.

--BERNAMA

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