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Dr M: Dub feature films made here to tap export potential

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said Malaysian-made feature films can be dubbed into foreign languages and exported to capture a bigger market.

The Prime Minister said he was impressed with the development achieved by HVD Entertainment particularly in exporting local drama productions to foreign countries.

The production house now brings out Chinese and Malay drama serials and television movies broadcast across 20 countries including China, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, United States and Britain.

Dr Mahathir said he noticed that Malay films produced by HVD were dubbed in Spanish and exported to the Latin American countries.

"In the past, we believed that only the Malays watch Malay movies. But, when they are dubbed in foreign languages and appear almost natural, these films have the potential to be exported," Dr Mahathir said in reply to questions from reporters after visiting HVD's new RM40 million outdoor studio in Taman Permata, Cheras.

Earlier, the Prime Minister inspected the studio which houses a Malay village, a nostalgia square and a modern village which was completed last December.

He was accompanied by Information Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Rahmat, HVD executive director Adnan Zakaria and managing director Sebastian Foo.

Dr Mahathir believed that these films could also feature beautiful tourism spots to attract foreign viewers to the country.

Asked whether local production companies should be merged, the Prime Minister said some of them had done so, but their progress was limited.

He also suggested that they co-operate by sharing sophisticated equipment instead of buying them separately.

"These companies can compete in the form of story lines but they can share the facilities to make the movies," he said.

Besides HVD, there are more than 300 production companies including Konsortium Keris Motion Sdn Bhd. HVD also has under its wing, 67 Bumiputera production companies participating in its vendor programme.

Dr Mahathir also advised local film companies not to send their films for processing abroad but to rely on local expertise.

He was also asked to comment on certain local suppliers of imported items demanding payment in US dollars and refusing to accept the ringgit.

"The ringgit will depreciate if they do this and in the long run we may end up using the foreign currency. At that particular time, we will have a huge problem. I do not see why they do not want to accept payment in ringgit.

"The legal tender in the country is the ringgit."

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