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Govt to aid those keen to study animation: PM

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THE Government is willing to help Malaysians who want to pursue studies in animation abroad to enable them to improve their skills and develop the local animation industry.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said despite the current economic problems in the country, the Government will extend its assistance to those who want to improve their skills in animation industry because of its potential.

"Although we would not want to send students overseas during the present economic problems, this will be an exception because they will later contribute to the development of such important industry in the country.

"We are willing to send those talented and interested to pursue their studies in this field at institutions of higher learning abroad," he said after the premiere of Malaysia's first animated film, "Silat Legenda", in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Dr Mahathir described the animation industry as important for Malaysia in terms of promoting the country as a highly technological and informative nation.

"With the availability of modern and sophisticated equipment and technology in the country, I think Malaysians can achieve what they cannot do previously," he added.

Produced by Peninsula Pictures, "Silat Legenda" is the first Malaysian animated feature film. The inspiration for the film came from legendary Malaccan warriors.

The film, which cost about RM5 million, took three years to produce by using the latest animation technology.

It involved more than 100 local animators comprising trained graphic designers as well as artists.

Dr Mahathir said although "Silat Legenda" may not be on par with the standards of other animated films produced by international producers such as Walt Disney and Warner Bros, he is confident that local animators can still improve the quality of their film with the availability of high technology equipment.

"I am confident that if we continue to strive and do it continuously, we will be able to increase our quality. We will be more efficient when we do something continuously than when we do it the first time.

"I hope this film will not be the first and last but the first of the many things to come. I am also quite sure that we have the capability to achieve success," he said, while urging Malaysians to support the local animation industry.

Dr Mahathir also received a mock cheque of RM150,000 as donation for the Special National Fund, which was set up to revive the country's economy.

The amount was raised through the premiere.

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