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Lights, camera, action!

Hanizah Hashim

UNIVERSITI Teknologi Mara lecturer Abdul Razak Mohaideen could only talk during the lull just before the shooting of a segment of the talk show Sambil Sembang-Sembang.

As lecturer in the Department of Screen Arts, he is a hands-on man who checks on equipment and crew prior to the taping of the show (a joint effort with Serangkai Holdings) for RTM.

Abdul Razak said he was looking forward to the first batch of students for the Bachelor of Arts and diploma in screen arts next month.

"Movie-makers must be creative people who are willing to face challenges. They have to be versatile, intelligent and quick thinkers.

"It's the kind of job where you have to be the tahan lasak (hardy) type who can withstand difficulties. If you cannot tahan lasak, it can be rough," he stressed.

Abdul Razak obtained a degree in journalism from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and was a journalist before becoming a lecturer in mass communications at ITM.

He went on to earn his master's in film and video at Sheffield Hallam University in Britain.

Having directed Dr Mahathir CEO of Malaysia, produced TV dramas like Anak Mami and Menantu Mami and a feature film titled Gemerlapan, Abdul Razak knows what he is talking about.

"Movie-making incorporates all aspects of the screen arts from scriptwriting, acting, directing and production. The end-product will be on stage, on videotape or film.

"Nowadays you have multimedia and animation. With the electronic village plan for the Multimedia Super Corridor as the biggest entertainment centre in Asia, the opportunities are there.

"We hope to go into multimedia and animation soon to cater to the demand. But for now we will focus on basic film-making."

Entry requirements for the course include SPM with five credits including English and Bahasa Malaysia for the diploma course. The degree course requires STPM qualifications.

However, experience in the relevant field will be taken into consideration.

Abdul Razak says there is much to be improved on as research for his master's thesis showed that Malaysia's film-making industry was 25 years behind that of the United States'.

"Local movies still cater to the masses. There seems to be little room for avant garde or innovative films as the industry is not strong enough.

"The problem is often a lack of funds. We need sponsors to finance things like special effects. If the market is there, sponsors will come in. The bottom line is the profit margin.

"We need to market our movies better. There should be no reason for our movies not selling. Sometimes it is just lack of exposure. Language should not be a hindrance.

"Look at Hong Kong movies in Cantonese and Bollywood movies in Hindi. They have a worldwide audience."

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