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Move to attract more foreign producers to film in Malaysia

PUTRAJAYA, Tues. - More Hollywood and Bollywood stars will soon begin filming movies in Malaysia following a directive from Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that foreign film producers be given all assistance to help them in their ventures.

This, the Prime Minister said, included providing them help to film at scenic locations such as Langkawi, the Petronas Twin Towers and KL International Airport.

Dr Mahathir added that they should also be accorded easier Immigration clearance.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said this after a meeting with the Prime Minister today.

Abdul Kadir also introduced six Indian producers, who have immediate plans to begin filming in Malaysia, to Dr Mahathir.

"Dr Mahathir promised these producers that the Government will give whatever assistance required to them.

"This is a good way to promote Malaysia and its various scenic destinations," Abdul Kadir told reporters.

The six producers are Rakesh Nath (Dashaka Films), Avtar Kukukohli (Ak International Motion), Priti Sapru (Sai Sapru Creation), Catharin Olivia Augustine (Shogun Films), Vimal Kumar (Shiram Chitya Motion Pictures) and Deepak Bahry (Bahry Films).

The Indian film industry is the biggest in the world, churning out more than 2,000 films annually.

Abdul Kadir said the producers were expected to begin filming here from as early as June.

Bollywood superstars such as Shah Rukh Khan, Sanjay Dutt, Madhuri Dixit and Juhi Chawla will also soon be regular travellers to Malaysia.

"We have also spoken to film producers and directors from Taiwan, China, Japan, the United Kingdom, France and Holland of our beautiful country and told them that we will assist them in any way possible," he said.

"When I met them recently, I told them to contact me directly if they encounter any problem."

Abdul Kadir said such activities would directly benefit the country because the producers would be promoting Malaysia.

Citing an example, he said at least 300 million people watched Hindi movies worldwide.

"This way, we will also save on cost to promote our country," he said.

Abdul Kadir added that the local film industry would also benefit as they would be able to learn new techniques from the foreign producers.

"If they film here, they will also be providing employment to Malaysians," he said.

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