

Merge to make better movies, firms told

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. Local production houses must consolidate if the film industry is to improve and survive, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

This will enable sufficient capital to be injected into producing big-budget movies of better quality, which only a large production house can afford to do.

He said the large number of small production houses meant that there will not be enough capital to improve, since they will always remain small businesses.

"At the moment, I'm told that there are about 90 small local production houses, which means not all dramas can be sold to the five TV stations," he told reporters after visiting the Information Ministry at Angkasapuri.

"I feel we should reduce the number of movie houses, although I know that this is easier said than done. I'm not confident that all will agree to merge into one."

Mahathir said one way of helping the local film industry to survive is to "shut out Hollywood and Bollywood movies... however, this will be quite impossible".

Compared with the US, Malaysia also has the problem of a limited audience, given the population of 22 million with a per capita income of US\$4,000 (RM15,200) a year, he said.