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Mahathir-Film

FILM COMPANIES SHOULD MERGE TO BOOST CAPITAL

KUALA LUMPUR, April 5 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today suggested that the film companies in the country merge to boost their capital so that they can produce better quality films.

"When there are too many (companies), there's not enough capital so we will become small companies in an industry that requires large capital," the prime minister said at a question-and-answer session after visiting Angkasapuri in conjunction with Radio Television Malaysia's (RTM) 55th anniversary.

He said that the United States, with a population of 260 million and a per capita income of US\$26,000, had very few movie studios like MetroGoldwynMeyer (MGM) Universal Studio whereas Malaysia, with 22 million population and US\$4,000 per capita income, had 90 film companies.

He said that in the US, each film was produced at a cost of at least RM100 million and he questioned how the local companies were to produce an interesting movie with RM300,000 capital.

Dr Mahathir also touched on the limited local film market, saying that the local films only concentrated on local screening and the customers were limited as Malaysia had only five television stations.

"Each has its problems...and these films cannot be sold to all the stations, only one. But many want to produce films," he said.

It was also not possible to prohibit the entry of films from Hollywood or Bollywood just to make the viewers watch the local productions as this could cause dissatisfaction among the viewers, he said.

As such, the government could not resolve the problem and only those in the film industry could, he said.

Another problem, he said, was the bickering and animosity among the film companies and he saw no way of revitalising the industry except through mergers.

Otherwise, he advised them to look for other fields to venture into.

Dr Mahathir was also asked how Angkasapuri could attract more visitors in view of the dwindling interest resulting from the competition posed by Putrajaya.

He said Angkasapuri could emulate Universal Studios in California by having shows on filming techniques like a mechanical shark for the movie "Jaws".

Many visitors would pay to see such shows, he said.

-- BERNAMA

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