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Mahathir-Director

MAHATHIR PLAYS THE ROLE OF FILM DIRECTOR

By: Lizawati Bahanan

KUALA LUMPUR, April 5 (Bernama) -- "Action!...Cut!" said the director during the staging of a scene from the film "Embun" at the Auditorium Perdana Wisma Radio, Angkasapuri here today.

It was a familiar voice. The director was no other than Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The staging of a fragmentation of the film "Embun", which is based on the original works of Rohiman Haroon entitled "Titisan Air Mata Embun", was part of the efforts to publicise the first joint film production involving two agencies under the Information Ministry -- Finas and Filem Negara.

"Just now I became the director but the truth is I cannot become director, saying 'action' instead of 'cut', so I am more qualified to be a politician," he said in a lighter vein during his working visit to Angkasapuri today in conjunction with RTM 55th anniversary.

Dr Mahathir played director during the launching of the "The Making of...". He was assisted by "Embun" director Erma Fatimah.

The film "Embun", covering the period of the Japanese occupation, relates the struggle of the Malays who demanded that Japan kept its promise and slogan of "Asia for Asians".

Embun (Intan Azura), Bayu (Hani Mohsein) and the villagers later revolted against the Japanese as life became intolerable due to shortage of food and diseases.

The filming of Embun will start in June and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

In a dialogue session later, the Prime Minister suggested the local film producers combined their resources to produce films of quality.

"When compared with Malaysia, the United States does not have many studios and there are two major one, Universal Studio and MGM and its films are marketed worldwide. Malaysia has many film companies and studios but no substantial capital," he said when asked about the direction of the Malaysian film industry.

Dr Mahathir's suggestion was welcomed by many film directors including Yusof Haslam who produced and directed many movies such as "Maria Mariana", "Sembilu", "Bara" and "Gerak Khas The Movie".

"I agree but it is up to individual. If I can get a good partner, maybe. For now, I am comfortable working with (director) Aziz M Osman," said Yusuf, met after the directors had lunch with the Prime Minister.

He said Malaysians also needed an epic like "Embun" directed by Erma Fatimah.

Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob meanwhile said the government's involvement in the joint venture production was merely symbolic of the progress of the Malaysian film industry.

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