

PM: Make movies with better values

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on the film industry to produce movies with better values instead of depicting violent scenes, which escalates oppression and war throughout the world.

"It is important that the film industry people become more conscious of their responsibility to society and they should realise that their films have an effect on the audience.

"If they produce films with good values, perhaps we can reduce the degree of violence. That is our hope," he said at the opening ceremony of the Kuala Lumpur World Film Festival 2003 at Dataran Merdeka last night.

"In ancient times, warriors were killed (in wars). Today, bombs are dropped and people who are not connected to the war will be killed," he said.

"People don't seem to have feelings about killing a huge number of people because the world culture seems to be accepting war as part of life and not something that should be avoided," he said, adding that the slightest excuse made one resort to violence to settle problems.

Dr Mahathir said the people now lived in an era of violence and that it was caused by what was popularised by the media, including violent films, which influenced a society and its culture.

"I believe we try to copy what is

shown on films. There have been instances of children shooting their own parents and we even have (cases of) children trying to fly, after watching films, which showed these (acts)," he said, adding that there was no end to the escalation of violence.

Dr Mahathir said pictures of crude violence on the screen affected the thinking of people, especially the young ones, because they were in their formative years.

The festival, held in conjunction with the 13th Non-Aligned Movement summit, will see the participation of 38 countries with 47 movies vying for the coveted Perdana and Jury Merit Awards with prize money of US\$57,000 (RM216,000).