

## **'Tanda Putera' earnings slide further**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**Sept 17, 2013**

Even nationwide sponsored screenings by political parties have failed to boost the ticket sales for controversial film 'Tanda Putera'.

According to the latest National Film Development Corporation (Finas) data, box office earnings slipped soon after it opened in cinemas on Aug 29.

NONEWhile it earned a commendable RM410,000 in the first four days of screening, putting it in sixth spot on the Malaysian box office list, it failed to double that come Day 11 on Sept 6.

By Sept 6, the film, which cost RM4.7 million to make, had only made RM780,000 in ticket sales.

In contrast, local zombie flick 'KL Zombi', which opened on the same day as the Shuhaimi Baba-directed 'Tanda Putera', raked in RM2.83 million in the same period.

'KL Zombi', which cost RM1.8 million to make, showed at 64 cinemas over the first 11 days while Tanda Putera showed at 60 cinemas.

Both Malaysian productions qualify for 'Compulsory Screening', whereby cinema operators must screen the films for 14 days in its largest hall, unless it can show that sales are poor.

Finas, which had partly-funded 'Tanda Putera' had reportedly said that the success of the movie cannot be measured by ticket sales alone.

Shuhaimi Baba's last film before 'Tanda Putera' - the 2007 historical biopic '1957: Hati Malaya' - cost RM3 million to make but only earned RM316,000 at the box office.

In contrast, her horror film 'Waris Jari Hantu', also released in 2007, earned RM1.74 million on a budget of RM1.5 million.

'Most Malay viewers useless'

An Utusan Malaysia columnist, who goes by the pseudonym Siti Jarum, has panned Finas for allowing Malay viewers to continue to be "dumbed down" by films with

poor substance, to the detriment of 'Tanda Putera'.

"Because they (Malay viewers) have poor taste, they are also not patriotic enough to watch films which deal with the subjects of country and nation ...

"Logically, 'Tanda Putera' should have smashed the box office. First, it's a good film; second, it's a film about our nation; third, it portrays the sacrifices of our leaders; and fourth, the Chinese had campaigned for its boycott.

"But the reverse happened, because 99 percent of Malay viewers are useless. They only think of being entertained while the Chinese think of the fate of their race."

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/241256>