

"The New Village" is a love story during turbulent times say producers
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The producers of "The New Village" film have defended it by stating that it is a forbidden love story set during a turbulent period in the country's history.

It noted that the film had been given the approval by the Censorship Board in September last year.

In a joint statement, Astro Shaw and Yellow Pictures, the film's producers tried to shed some light on the film which the Umno-controlled Mingguan Malaysia had claimed glorified communism.

"'The New Village' is a Chinese period feature film in Mandarin that depicts a forbidden love story. This Chinese movie is set against the backdrop of the struggles of the Chinese communities in the resettlement into New Villages by the British," it said in a two-paragraph statement today.

"The movie has undergone all due processes including LPF (Lembaga Penapis Filem) screening, and was given a P13 classification with no cuts, in September 2012. Currently, 'The New Village' is going through a second review," it said.

Yesterday, the Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the ministry had suspended the movie's release pending a review from the censorship board following unhappiness from certain quarters.

It was slated to open in cinemas nationwide on August 22.

Meanwhile, two ministers weighed in on the controversy surrounding the film. Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek sympathised with the producers and said it would be unfair to judge the film based on the trailer.

He called for a rational decision on the film.

However, Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz cited two reasons on why the film should be banned if the allegations were found to be true.

"If it does indeed idolise communists, then it should be disallowed from screening," he said.

"It's against the Rukunegara principle of the belief in God, something that communists do not subscribe. Second, it is insensitive towards the roles played by our army veterans during the emergency."

Ahmad Shabery and Nazri admitted that they had not watched the movie.

Ahmad Shabery said he was not surprised that the film drew protests from Utusan and the Umno Youth considering the DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang's reaction to "Tanda Putera" which was also based on a trailer.

Ahmad Shabery noted that his ministry had no say on the film, which was cleared by the

Film Censorship Board.

The Chinese language film, directed by a renowned local director Wong Kew Lit, details the resettling of the Chinese into 450 new villages during the mid-1950s.

The controversial "Tanda Putera" is due for release on August 29 after being postponed several times last year following protests, particularly by the DAP, which had been unhappy over the way the party's then secretary-general Lim Kit Siang had been portrayed. – July 29, 2013.

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