

Utusan raps Finas for failing to promote films like Tanda Putera successfully
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Umno-controlled Utusan Malaysia has taken a swipe at the National Film Development Corporation (Finas) for being concerned with declining box office receipts rather than ensuring the marketing success of quality films like Tanda Putera.

Columnist Siti Jarum said Finas was worried over a drop in this year's collection at the box office which up to August was RM36.43 million compared with RM97.29 million and RM126.49 million in 2012 and 2011, respectively.

"Finas is not concerned about viewers not being interested in high quality films," she said, referring to the Tanda Putera's dismal RM1 million ticket sales after opening in local cinemas on August 28.

She disagreed with some parties who claimed it wasn't Finas fault that Tanda Putera, which had received a RM4.5 million grant from the government, had bombed at the box office.

She said the agency had been formed to develop the local film industry but Finas was only interested in box office success, not the quality of the film being produced.

"If I was the person in charge at Finas, I would be knocking my head against the wall for failing to help viewers progress. Is Finas going to continue celebrating when films which corrupt the minds of Malays continues to perform well while films of historical significance are sidelined by the movie-goers?"

Though she did not mention any movie, she was referring to movies like KL Zombie, Adnan Sempit, and Mat Rempit which played to full houses while historical films like 1957 Hati Malaya – a biopic on Independence fighter Datuk Onn Jaafar, bombed.

"Finas can't be proud just because they have allocated millions of ringgit to produce a movie about the country if it does not build up an audience. Tanda Putera is a must-watch movie for all Malays, because a majority of Chinese, especially DAP supporters, won't watch the movie."

Siti said there was a large of number of Chinese supporting the local Chinese film industry.

"The film directed by Namewee which insulted Malays, Kara King, for example, received a lot of support. The same goes for the Chinese film which glorified the communists, The New Village," Siti said, lamenting the poor response Tanda Putera received from the Malays.

"If the Malays are not strong-willed, producers such as Datin Paduka Shuhaimi Baba will eventually give up and close shop. All that will be left behind are film producers who will make the minds of Malays go even more backward."

Tanda Putera, in the words of director Datin Paduka Shuhaimi Baba, is a movie about the close friendship between Malaysia's second Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein and his deputy Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman during the unrest and chaos caused by May 13.

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