

PM: CREATING TECH THE WAY OF FUTURE

Businesses must invest in R&D to remain competitive, says Dr Mahathir

TEOH PEI YING
PETALING JAYA
news@nst.com.my

Malaysian businesses must change their strategy, mentality and culture to remain

competitive in the face of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, or Industry 4.0, said Prime Minister

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Business strategies in Malaysia, he said, needed to change from merely using technology to developing technology.

"We are sometimes too operational-oriented to deliver results. Often, we are too conservative with regard to business diversification and product development.

"This kind of business mentality and culture has to change. Malaysian businesses need to start seriously investing much more in research and development to increase and upgrade their products and service development, business processes and integrated technologies.

"We need to change our strategy from being technology traders and users to technology creators," he said in his keynote address at the International Conference on Industry 4.0: A Global Revolution in Business, Technology and Productivity here yesterday.

He reminded universities to focus on developing research and development capabilities to solve industry problems and focus on



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad arriving at the International Conference on Industry 4.0: A Global Revolution in Business, Technology and Productivity in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, yesterday. PIC BY EIZAIRI SHAMSUDIN

studies on increasing productivity and return on Investment.

"There must be more research on transforming SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) into technology-driven businesses.

"We need more customised technologies to suit Malaysian industries and Industry 4.0 can be a new beginning for local technology developers and researchers.

"Of course, the government is more than willing to listen, understand and assist the private sector in establishing the right ecosystem for this purpose."

He said there was a need to look

into the education system, as well as transform human capital, the workforce and students with new skills, innovative thinking and multidisciplinary knowledge.

"It is equally important for private firms to invest in reskilling and upskilling of employees and new entrants into the workforce.

"This is to sharpen the skillset of workers so that they can keep up with the new landscape.

"This will be consistent with the Industry4WRD policy's target of increasing the number of high-skilled workers in the industry from 18 per cent to 35 per cent by 2020.

"The education system is aligned

to the economic needs of the nation.

"The teaching of industrial skills should focus on innovative knowledge. Graduates from tertiary institutions should be able to meet the demands of the job market."

On another matter, Dr Mahathir said the police's decision to use the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (Sosma) against those allegedly linked to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was the right move.

"I was briefed by the police. They told me why they acted and I am satisfied with the reasons.

"Sosma is still there, and in the absence of other laws that can be

applied, they used Sosma."

Police detained 12 people, including two assemblymen, under Sosma last week on suspicion of promoting, supporting, possessing materials and channelling funds linked to LTTE.

Following the arrest, several politicians raised questions about the use of Sosma against those arrested over suspected ties to LTTE, classified as a terrorist group in the country since 2014.

Federal police Special Branch Counter-Terrorism Division assistant principal director Datuk Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay had urged people to stop making statements on the arrests.