



Mahathir waving to the crowd during the event yesterday at SEGi University in Kota Damansara, Selangor.
-ASYRAF RASID/THESUN

PM: Workforce transformation vital

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PETALING JAYA: Institutions of higher learning must start focusing on research and development to solve real industry problems that will lead to better productivity and return on investment, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said there was a need to provide human capital, both in the existing workforce and students, with new skill, innovative thinking and multi-disciplinary knowledge.

This will be consistent with the Industry Forward (Industry4WRD) policy target aimed at increasing the number of highly-skilled workers from 18% to 35% by the year 2020, he added.

"It is important for private firms to invest in

re-skilling and up-skilling of their employees, and new entrants into the workforce," he said in his speech at the International IR4.0 Conference at SEGi University in Kota Damansara yesterday.

"The Malaysian education system is currently being aligned to the economic needs of the nation. Focus on the teaching of industrial skills ought to be skewed towards innovative knowledge. Graduates from tertiary educational institutions should be able to meet the demands of the market."

Mahathir said the country's industrial revolution transformation (IR4.0) is expected to increase per capita productivity in the manufacturing sector by 30%.

"This would elevate the absolute contribution of the manufacturing sector to our economy by 54%, from RM254 billion to

RM392 billion."

Mahathir said technologies such as the Internet of Things, advanced robotics, artificial intelligence and additive manufacturing were contributing factors to generate an increase in net productivity.

He said these transformations will not take effect unless the public was armed with the right strategy and took the initiative.

"We need to take the Industry 4.0 transformation seriously," he said, adding that the country can remain competitive and relevant globally.

The Industry4WRD policy is expected to position Malaysia as a strategic partner for smart manufacturing, a primary hub for high-tech industries, as well as a total solution provider for the manufacturing sector in Asia Pacific by 2025.