

# KERATAN AKHBAR

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## Are we ready for IR4.0?

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► Experts say M'sia is not there yet and suggest digital transformation strategy within our means

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**SHAH ALAM:** As the world inches towards more advanced technology in Industry 4.0 (IR4.0), academicians suggest Malaysia develop and implement a digital transformation strategy within our capacity.

Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management vice-president I Dr Mohd Rafizi Rahmad said this includes the public sector delivery system.

"Planning is important. It requires inspiring leaders to plan the necessary actions. Failing to plan means planning to fail," he said, adding that counter services are among those that need to be

given a new lease of life.

Mohd Rafizi said there is a need to create portals with user-friendly dashboards that can be switched to applications via smart phones.

"Human resource practitioners today talk about competence-based talent management, which means to cope with IR4.0, a new set of competencies are also required," he said.

This, according to Mohd Rafizi, can be done through investments in education and training.

"The existing talents in service, especially the young ones, need training to take advantage of new technologies," he said.

Unitar vice-chancellor Tan Sri Dr Sahol Hamid Abu Bakar said despite the lack of public awareness about IR4.0, Malaysia retains a strong

and competitive position among global competitors.

"No doubt, the government is aware of this revolution, and has encouraged manufacturers to embrace IR4.0," he told *theSun*.

Sahol Hamid said although the automotive sector is ideally suited to kick-start the IR4.0 revolution as it is traditionally regarded as the "industry of industries" - particularly due to its traditional role in spearheading wider, cross-sectoral industrialisation - Malaysia is not yet ready to embrace IR4.0.

"Malaysia is classified as an adopter of IR4.0, and while the nation's digital transformation is leading in the region, our economy still lags behind notable forerunners such as Japan and Singapore," he said.

The civil engineering professor also said Malaysia must aspire to become a front-runner in digital innovation if it is to fully unlock the economic benefits.

Sahol Hamid said in the past two years, the

government and its agencies have been spearheading the need for digital transformation.

In 2021, it allocated more than RM5 billion to support the transition to IR4.0 and other incentives. This includes an allocation of RM1 billion for the National Fibre Connectivity project to enhance the country's broadband infrastructure.

It also included another allocation of RM10 million for e-Sports - a growing trend among younger generations that is leading to new careers.

"In spite of these significant incentives, Malaysia's small and medium enterprises, which make up a 38.3% share of the GDP, continue to lag behind," he said.

Other organisations in Malaysia that have begun adopting to digital developments still face gaps in their strategies, either due to misalignment across the organisation or the lack of a clear roadmap on how to adopt digitalisation systematically.