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Under three months but PM has made his mark, says daily

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Financial Times daily of the United Kingdom said today that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has already made his mark despite being in office less than three months.

In its editorial, "Malaysia's new PM: The post-Mahathir era begins on a promising note", the international financial daily said Abdullah had shown "commendable determination to reform Malaysia" since becoming Prime Minister.

It described him as an Islamic scholar and consensus-seeker who rightly held that Malaysia would not tolerate religious extremism.

"He is the right man to argue that Malaysia's multi-ethnic and economically successful society is no place to experiment with the religious recipes of Pas".

The editorial noted his campaign against corruption, review of big infrastructure contracts, personal spot checks on government offices, cleaning up the police force's image and renewal of cordial ties with Singapore.

It said shelving the RM14.5 billion double-tracking project was his "boldest act" and highlighted his commitment to controlling the budget deficit and boosting the rural economy.

While saying that Abdullah had made a good start, the editorial said he should look at "fostering a free media, depoliticising the justice system and continuing the fight against corruption and cronyism".