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KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 4, (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD RETURNED TO WORK TODAY AFTER TAKING THREE WEEKS' LEAVE FOLLOWING HIS CORONARY BYPASS OPERATION IN LATE JANUARY.

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO CLOCKED IN AT 7.34AM, WAS MET ON ARRIVAL AT THE OFFICE BY HIS DEPUTY SHAFAR BABA WHO LATER BRIEFED HIM ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR YESTERDAY RETURNED FROM THE THREE-WEEK VACATION ABROAD DURING WHICH HE VISITED LONDON, SPAIN AND MOROCCO. HE LEFT THE COUNTRY ON MARCH 12.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER THE BRIEFING, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WAS THANKFUL TO ALLAH THAT HE WAS ABLE TO RESUME WORK FOLLOWING THE OPERATION AT THE KUALA LUMPUR GENERAL HOSPITAL ON JAN 24.

HE SAID HE WAS GRATEFUL TO THE TEAM OF DOCTORS AND HOSPITAL STAFF WHO HAD WORKED SO HARD DURING HIS STAY IN THE HOSPITAL. -- MORE
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HE ALSO THANKED FRIENDS AND PEOPLE WHO HAD PRAYED FOR HIS SPEEDY RECOVERY.

HE ASKED MALAYSIANS TO WORK HARDER AND UPGRADE PRODUCTIVITY TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED PROSPERITY OF THE COUNTRY.

HE SAID TO DEVELOP THE COUNTRY, THEY MUST WORK HARD TO INCREASE INCOME AS THIS WOULD GIVE THE GOVERNMENT MORE REVENUE BY WAY OF TAXES TO CARRY ON WITH ITS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT WITHOUT DILIGENCE, PROSPERITY AND SUCCESS WOULD BE HARD TO ATTAIN.

THE GOVERNMENT'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES WERE FUNDED BY TAXES COLLECTED FROM THE PUBLIC AND IF THE PEOPLE AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY MADE MORE PROFITS, MORE FUNDS WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO STEP UP DEVELOPMENT, HE ADDED. -- MORE
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THE PRIME MINISTER SAID MUCH MORE NEEDED TO BE DONE BY THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE MALAYSIA A PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS NATION.

HE REMINDED THE PEOPLE THAT ALL EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN WERE FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND WELLBEING.

HOWEVER, THERE WERE SOME PEOPLE WHO FAILED TO REALLY UNDERSTAND THAT THE MONEY SPENT ON DEVELOPMENT WAS GOVERNMENT REVENUE COLLECTED FROM THE PEOPLE THROUGH TAXES, HE ADDED.

HE ALSO SAID A PRIORITY MATTER HE WOULD GIVE ATTENTION TO AFTER STARTING WORK WAS TO SEE UMNO STREAMLINED AND ABLE TO FUNCTION MORE ACTIVELY IN UNITING THE MALAYS.

UMNO FORMED THE BACKBONE OF THE BARISAN NASIONAL AND THE GOVERNMENT AND IT WAS CRUCIAL THE PARTY REMAINED STRONG TO BRING PROGRESS AND PEACE TO THE PEOPLE AND COUNTRY.

THE PRIME MINISTER BEGAN HIS OFFICIAL DUTIES BY SIGNING SEVERAL DOCUMENTS AND LETTERS ON HIS DESK. -- BERNAMA
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