

PM: We welcome Aussie decision not to interfere

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KLJALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Malaysia appreciates the Australian Government's decision not to interfere in the custody case involving two children who were brought back from Melbourne by their Malaysian father recently, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the (Kuala Terengganu) Syariah court decision which gave custody of the children to their father, Raja Kamarul Baharin Shah Raja Ahmad, the nephew of the Sultan of Terengganu, should be respected.

"People of other countries should respect the court decisions of this country, just as we are required to respect their (court) decisions," he said in reply to a question by reporters after opening the Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Berhad (PLJNB) at

Putra World Trade Centre.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating's statement in Canberra yesterday that the Australian Government could not do anything with regard to the tussle for custody of the children.

The children are Raja Muhammad Baharuddin Ismail Shah, nine, and Raja Shahirah Aishah, seven.

Dr Mahathir thanked the Australian Government for not interfering in the matter, saying the children were born here and were Malaysian citizens.

Raja Baharin, an architect in Kuala Terengganu, disappeared from Australia on July 9 with the two children after taking them from his former Australian wife Jacqueline Gillespie.

Asked if the Government would order an investiga-

tion into allegations that a lot of Muslim intellectuals were "anti-hadith", Dr Mahathir said no decision had been made on the matter.

The police said today there had been no request for extradition from Australia in connection with Raja Kamarul and his children.

Interpol division head Supt Syed Abdul Rahman Syed Kadir said police could only act if such a request was within the provisions of the law in the country.

He was commenting on a newspaper report that police could help the Australian authorities in connection with the extradition.

Australian High Commission officials, acting on behalf of the children's mother, are in contact with the police to get Red Crescent Society or welfare officers to visit the children regularly to see that they are safe.