

# Pak Lah shocked over Chad expulsion order

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Prime Minister said he was shocked to hear that the Chad government has ordered Petronas to leave the country within 24 hours for failing to honour tax obligations.

"We do not have such a record. Petronas is a competent company and listed as a Fortune Global 500 company (which ranks the 500 largest corporations in the world).

"I am very shocked but I believe that this is not done deliberately," said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The Chad government had not informed the Malaysian Government of what had happened, he added.

He said Petronas chief executive officer and president Tan Sri Hassan Merican had been trying to get information from the Petronas office in Chad to find out what exactly has happened - whether it was a case of late payment, or of not paying taxes, and if so, to find out why they were not paid.

Abdullah said the Government would not be seeking clarification from the Chad government on the matter because this was for Petronas to do so.

"It's their own company and they should be able to get all the facts. They must act very fast because the warning is very serious," he told reporters after attending the opening of the Putrajaya National Watercolour Exhibition 2006 here yesterday.

Foreign news agencies carried the story on Saturday that the Chad president had ordered Petronas and US energy giant Chevron to leave the country within 24 hours for non-payment of taxes.

Chad president Idriss Deby said the Government had asked the companies to honour their tax obligations but had received no reaction from the two partners.

Petronas holds 35% of the consortium extracting oil in the African country, while Chevron has a 25% share and Exxon Mobil the remaining 40%.