

**Pak Lah's 2006 Caribbean trip a holiday in disguise, says leaked cable**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 5 — Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had enjoyed a publicly-financed holiday in the Caribbean in 2006 while prime minister, a leaked US diplomatic cable revealed today, returning to the spotlight the lavish lifestyles of Malaysia's ruling elite.

According to a WikiLeaks report released today on Malaysia Today, Abdullah (picture), also known by the nickname Pak Lah, had been given a red-carpet welcome in the tiny island of St Vincent by its Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, as a follow-up to the latter's Southeast Asia trip.

The then-PM's four-day trip was described by Malaysia's Foreign Ministry as a "working visit", but little appears to have come out from that excursion despite his having addressed the St Vincent Parliament after spending most of his time in the swanky private villas owned by international celebrities, including US tycoon Donald Trump.

"A reporter travelling with the PM wrote in the Malaysia Star that the Jamaica portion of the trip dealt with possible Malaysian investment in energy exploration and construction projects, while the PM was stopping in St Vincent 'mostly for a vacation and to unwind from the pressures of work'," the cable said.

It also commented that Abdullah's working trip was a "vacation" in disguise, noting that "the Government of St Vincent cannot afford such trips by its PM, which must be paid by third parties".

"The question remains, what do these third parties stand to gain from financing the travels of the leader of a small Caribbean island-state?" the cable observed.

Questions that had dogged Abdullah's globetrotting days as PM appear to have switched over to his successor, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, whose frequent travels abroad have come under harsh scrutiny by the public affected by rising living costs.

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