

WikiLeaks info blitz shames gov'ts
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Governments around the world have been shown up by WikiLeaks as "having failed to release information up to the expectations of their citizens".

NONECentre for Independent Journalism director Sonia Randhawa (left) told a forum themed 'Wikileaks Saga: The Malaysia chapter' last night that the public today views information to be obtained freely.

"We see a movement in Europe which calls itself the Pirate Party and demands the abolition of copyright legislation. And the party is mushrooming around the world," she told the 40-strong audience.

Countering the trend are government authorities who, in the name of 'national security', insist on keeping information secret.

"Malaysia, for example, had been classifying the pollution index as (a) national security (issue) until very recently," she said.

"And even thoNONEugh they release it now, we still don't know, for instance, where we source our water from."

She said governments could avoid more embarrassment by enacting Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation.

"Under the FOI, everything should be revealed to the public except a narrowly-defined area which really triggers national security," she added.

Sexuality as a weapon

NONEResearcher and women's rights advocate Jac Kee (right) pointed out that the sexual-assault charge that WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange faces in Sweden is further proof that sexuality is being used as a weapon to restrict information flow.

She noted that sexuality often serves as a moral shortcut in destroying a person's credibility.

Those who refuse to back Assange may also be seen as being against FOI.

Kee also said the WikiLeaks exposé has seen major corporations such as Amazon, Mastercards and Paypal bowing to pressure to cut links with the whistleblower website.

"This raises a question of who we can really trust as guardian of our information," she said.

NONEOn the leaked cable report that implicated Anwar Ibrahim had knowingly walked into a sex trap, lawyer Edmund Bon (right) said people should stop citing the ground of sub-judice to prevent the media from reporting the matter.

"Sub-judice does not apply in Malaysia as there is no jury trial here," he pointed out.

The majority of the panellists reckoned, however, that the leaked cables are merely the opinion of diplomats and do not necessarily constitute the truth.

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