

1. Except in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal, domestic flights will commence from Monday. There is no uniformity among States with regard to quarantine guidelines.
2. MSMEs will start operations from Today in Tamil Nadu.

Introduction

The darknet refers to encrypted networks on the Internet that are not indexed by search engines such as Google, Yahoo or Bing. It is a layer of the Internet accessible only by using special software like Tor (The Onion Router), or I2P (Invisible Internet Project).

These are networks that are only available to a select group of people and not to the general Internet public, and only accessible via authorization, specific software and configurations.

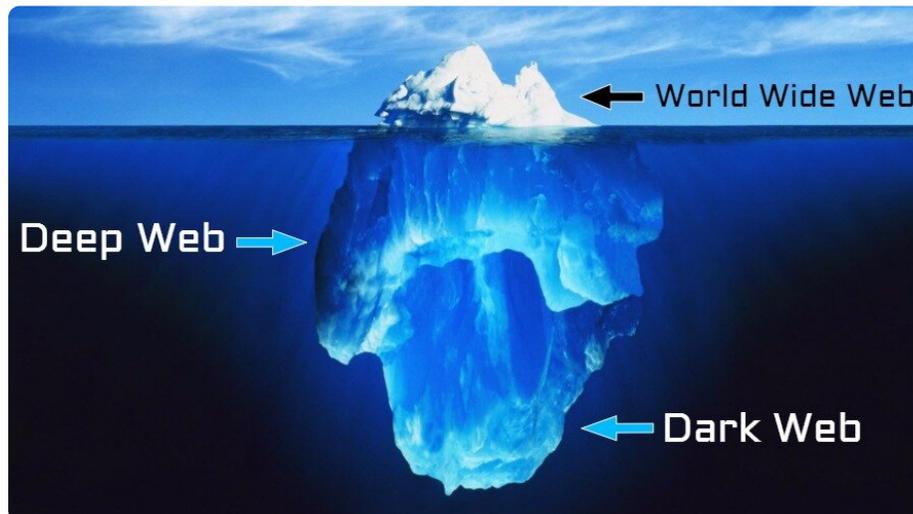
This includes harmless places such as academic databases and corporate sites, as well as those with shadier subjects such as black markets, fetish communities, and hacking and piracy.

The terms "dark net" and "dark web" are occasionally used interchangeably, but with subtle differences in meaning. Dark net is a network built over the Internet whereas dark web refers to websites on a darknet. Dark Net, Deep Web and Surface Web

"Dark net" is commonly confused with "deep web." The deep web refers to unindexed sites which are unsearchable; in most cases, this is because those sites are protected by passwords.

Part of the WWW (World Wide Web) which is not indexed by a search engine like Google is Deep Web and it about 500-600 times larger than the surface web.

Surface Web -Also called the Visible Web, Indexed Web, Indexable Web or Lightnet -is that portion of the World Wide Web that is readily available to the general public and searchable with standard web search engines. It is the opposite of the deep web. It only constitutes 4-6% of the whole web.



Usefulness of DarkNet

To avoid Censorship: Individuals within closed societies and facing extreme censorship can utilize the dark net to communicate with others outside of their society.

Anonymity and Secrecy: Even individuals within open societies may have some interest in using the darknet, particularly as concerns about government snooping and data collection continue to grow worldwide.

Useful for whistleblowers and journalists to maintain secrecy in communication and leaking and transferring information.

Concerns Regarding Darknet

Facilitates Illegal Activities : A large portion of the activity which takes place on the dark net is illegal. The dark net offers a level of identity security that the surface net does not.

Dark net is the virtual equivalent of a black market.

Criminals looking to protect their identities in order to evade detection and capture are drawn to this aspect of the dark net. For that reason, it's unsurprising that a number of notable hacks and data breaches have been associated with the dark net in some way or another.

The relative impermeability of dark net has made it a major haven for drug dealers, arms traffickers, child pornography collectors and other criminals involved in financial and physical crimes so much so that one can buy anything from tigers to hand grenades to any kind of narcotic substances, provided the potential buyer finds the right website on the dark net.

One of the most famous examples of a dark network was the Silk Road marketplace. Silk Road was a website used for the buying and selling of a variety of illegal items, including recreational drugs and weapons. Although it was shut down by government authorities in 2013, it has spawned a number of copycat markets.

Used by Activists and revolutionaries to organize themselves without fear of giving away their position to governments they oppose.

Terrorists use dark net to provide information to fellow terrorists, to recruit and radicalize, to spread propaganda, raise funds, and to coordinate actions and attacks.

Terrorists also use the dark net for illegal purchase of explosives and weapons, using virtual currencies like Bitcoin and other crypto-currencies.

Security experts are claiming that hackers and fraudsters have started to offer access to SCADA and ICS systems via discussion forums on the dark web, potentially compromising vital infrastructure networks across the world.

SCADA systems are used to run facilities like nuclear power stations, oil refineries and chemical plants, so if cyber-criminals gained access to major networks, then the consequences could be lethal.

Way forward

Given the increased importance of cryptocurrencies in the financial world, it's possible that dark nets will become more of a feature for everyday Internet users in the future. In the meantime, they may also still provide criminals with a means of eluding capture, although true anonymity is never guaranteed, even when using encryption of the type found in these networks.

Governments across the world should strengthen their Cybersecurity Framework to deal with the threats posed by dark net. They must cooperate with each other regarding securing the Cyberspaces worldwide through intelligence, information, technology and expertise sharing.

India should invest enough in research and development and training and capacity building of personnel in the field of Cybersecurity.

Kerala Police Department's initiative, Cyberdome, a premier facility dedicated to prevent cybercrime and mitigate cybersecurity threats to the State's critical information infrastructure, is a step in right direction which other concerned authorities across the nation can learn from.

The 2017 Economic Survey had advocated implementation of UBI as an alternative to the various social welfare schemes in an effort to reduce poverty. The Survey said, "UBI is a powerful idea whose time even if not ripe for implementation, is ripe for serious discussion." However, Late Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in June 2017 said the scheme as proposed in the Economic Survey will not be politically feasible in today's India.

What is Universal Basic Income?

Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a programme for providing all citizens of a country or other geographic area/state with a given sum of money, regardless of their income, resources or employment status. The main idea behind UBI is to prevent or reduce poverty and increase equality among citizens. The essential principle behind Universal basic income is the idea that all citizens are entitled to a livable income, irrespective of the circumstances they're born in.

The idea of a universal basic income has gained currency in the West because of the threat of automation-induced job losses.

In India, the idea first gained currency as a solution to chronic poverty and government's failure to effectively target subsidies towards the poor

The five broad features of such schemes are:

Payments at periodic regular intervals (not one-off grants),

Payments in cash (not food vouchers or service coupons),

Payments to individuals,

Universality

Rationale behind UBI:

The average Indian family's monthly income in 1938 was Rs 25.

Today, the average Indian family's monthly income is roughly Rs 50,000, a 2,000 times increase since 1938.

The poorest 10% of Indian families earn a mere Rs 5,000 a month.

25 million Indian families earn just a tenth of what the average Indian family earns.

And, 50 million households earn just a fifth of the average Indian family.

While the Indian economy continues to grow, the much touted trickle down impact of economic development seems elusive to the poorer sections of our society.

There is a real risk of the bottom quarter of Indian families being left behind completely.

The plan to ensure a basic minimum standard of living for every Indian family that was envisaged by Nehru and Bose in 1938 is applicable even today.

Economic Survey 2016-17:

Universal Basic Income should replace the welfare scheme. The Economic survey wants UBI to replace and NOT supplement the existing social welfare, anti-poverty schemes like MGNREGA, PMJSY etc

Economic Survey has suggested replacing all current cash transfers with universal basic income.

Survey in a bold step ensured that universal basic income will not be distributive in nature. The burden to distribute the income will not be shared by the rich.

The Survey points out that the two prerequisites for a successful UBI are: functional JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhar and Mobile) system as it ensures that the cash transfer goes directly into the account of a beneficiary and Centre-State negotiations on cost sharing for the programme.

The pros of UBI:

Fights Poverty and vulnerability: Poverty and vulnerability will be reduced in one fell swoop. It increases equality among citizens as envisaged in our **VPSR**.

New social contract: A social contract that will empower citizens with the freedom of choice. UBI treats beneficiaries as agents and entrusts citizens with the responsibility of using welfare spending as they see best; this may not be the case with in-kind transfers. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen had also propounded that choice should be given to people, which will lead to development.

Better targeting of poor: As all individuals are targeted, exclusion error (poor being left out) is zero though inclusion error (rich gaining access to the scheme) is 60 percent.

Example: The India Human Development Survey found that in 2011-12 about half of the officially poor did not have the BPL card, while about one-third of the non-poor had it.

Fighting technological unemployment: With **IR4.0** on the rise, there is an increase in the automation leading to loss of many white and blue collared jobs. UBI can act as a sort of security net for the millions of people who will be left jobless by the tech revolution.

Supporting unpaid care workers: Those with ill or differently abled relatives are often forced to quit their jobs and look after them full-time. UBI would allow care-workers to support themselves, encouraging care work and taking pressure off public services that provide care to the sick and elderly.

Expanding the middle class: The economic growth of high-income countries is making the rich richer, but having very little effect on the working classes. The research of economists Emmanuel Saez and Thomas Piketty showed that "The bottom half of earners went from making 20 percent of overall income in 1979 to just 13 percent in 2014. The top 1 percent, on the other hand, have gone from making 11 percent to 20 percent. The pie has gotten vastly bigger, and the richest families have reaped bigger and bigger pieces from it." UBI would help balance this inequality and expand the ever-shrinking middle class.

Insurance against shocks: This income floor will provide a safety net against health, income and other shocks.

Improvement in financial inclusion Payment: transfers will encourage greater usage of bank accounts, leading to higher profits for banking correspondents (BC) and an endogenous improvement in financial inclusion. Credit – increased income will release the constraints on access to credit for those with low income levels.

Psychological benefits: A guaranteed income will reduce the pressures of finding a basic living on a daily basis.

Ending abuse: Those who suffer domestic abuse, mainly women, become trapped in violent situations because they don't have the means to leave them. UBI would make leaving an abusive partner easy, and would unleash the potential of countless people trapped by domestic violence.

Administrative efficiency: A UBI in place of a plethora of separate government schemes will reduce the administrative burden on the state.

Problems with UBI:

Conspicuous spending: Households, especially male members, may spend this additional income on wasteful activities.

Disincentive to work: A minimum guaranteed income might make people lazy and opt out of the labour market.

Gender disparity induced by cash Gender norms may regulate the sharing of UBI within a household – men are likely to exercise control over spending of the UBI. This may not always be the case with other in-kind transfer

Implementation: Given the current status of financial access among the poor, a UBI may put too much stress on the banking system.

Poor fiscal capacity: India doesn't have the fiscal capacity to implement Universal Basic Income. Economic Survey calculations showed that a 75% universality rate with an annual Universal Basic Income of Rs 7,620 per year at 2016-17 prices will cost about 5% of the GDP. Economist Pranab Bardhan showed that inflation-indexed Universal Basic Income of Rs 10,000 at 2014-15 prices—about three-quarters of that year's poverty line—will cost about 10% of the GDP.

Distort labour Market: Universal Basic Income can create distortions in the labour market. A steady, permanent and guaranteed income without any work is likely to affect labour mobility and participation. It can cause a rise in the wages too.

Political economy of universality: ideas for self-exclusion Opposition may arise from the provision of the transfer to rich individuals as it might seem to trump the idea of equity and state welfare for the poor.

Exposure to market risks (cash vs. food): Unlike food subsidies that are not subject to fluctuating market prices, a cash transfer's purchasing power may severely be curtailed by market fluctuations.

Conclusion:

If people are able to look after themselves better than the state then this concept can be tried out. UBI holds a lot of potential as a welfare scheme, however in its present form needs to be re-evaluated. There is a need for a 10-fold increase in resource mobilisation combined with increasing the tax base for funding. However, the alternatives to UBI can be explored like direct benefits transfers, conditional cash transfers and other income support schemes which also hold the potential to yield the above mentioned benefits.

Rekindling tensions over boundary claims, Indian and Chinese troops have clashed at two points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) recently, leaving personnel injured on both sides.

What's the issue?

The incidents took place in the Naku La sector and in a contested area near Pangong Tso, a lake in Ladakh.

But the Army played down the two incidents as "temporary and short-duration face-offs" that were resolved by "local commanders as per mutually-accepted protocols" through dialogue and flag meetings. These kinds of incidents do occur as boundaries are not resolved.

Where is Naku La?

Naku La sector is a pass at a height of more than 5,000 metres above Mean Sea Level (MSL) in the state of Sikkim.

It is located ahead of Muguthang or Cho Lhamu (source of River Teesta).

The other passes located in the state of Sikkim are Nathu La Pass and Jelep La Pass.

Pangong Tso lake:

It is a 135-km long lake, located in the Himalayas at the height of approximately 4,350 m, stretches out from India to China.

One-third of water body, its 45 km stretch, is in Indian control while the rest of the 90 km is under Chinese control.

It is formed from Tethys geosyncline.

It is a salt water lake.

Strategic significance: By itself, the lake does not have major tactical significance. But it lies in the path of the Chushul approach, one of the main approaches that China can use for an offensive into Indian-held territory.



India- China Border:

India and China share a 3,488 km long boundary. Unfortunately, the entire boundary is disputed. The line, which delineates the boundary between the two countries, is popularly called the McMahon line, after its author Sir Henry McMahon.

In 1913, the British-India government had called a tripartite conference, in which the boundary between India and Tibet was formalized after a discussion between the Indian and the Tibetans. A Convention was adopted, which resulted in the delimitation of the Indo-Tibetan boundary. This boundary is, however, disputed by China which terms it as illegal.

In 1957, China occupied Aksai Chin and built a road through it. This episode was followed by intermittent clashes along the border, which finally culminated in the border war of 1962. The boundary, which came into existence after the war, came to be known as Line of Actual Control (LAC). It is a military held line.

Attempts to resolve the issue:

The rapprochement between the two countries in 1976 enabled India and China to initiate High Level border talks in 1981 to find a solution to the vexed problem. After eight rounds, the talks broke down in 1987.

In 1988, following Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China, the Joint Working Group (JWG) was set up to look into the border problem.

In 1993, the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) was signed and the India-China Expert Group of Diplomatic and Military Officers was set up to assist the JWG.

In 1996, the Agreement on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in the Military Field along the LAC was signed.

In 2003, two special representatives (one each from India and China) were appointed to find a political solution to the border dispute.

Till 2009, these two special representatives had held 17 rounds of talks, but it seems they have not made much headway.

Recently, NSA Ajit Doval was appointed as Special Envoy for talks.

