GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4076
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 23.12.2015

USE OF DEEP/DARK WEB BY ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA

4076   SHRI NARANBHAI KACHHADIYA:
SHRI GAJANAN KIRTIKAR:
KUNWAR HARIBANSH SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:
(a)   whether the Government is aware that Deep/Dark Web is being used by the Islamic State (ISIS) for its communication and recruitment;
(b)   if so, the details thereof and response of the Government thereto;
(c)   whether presently it is impossible to decode the contents of deep web making it more lethal;
(d)   if so, the details thereof; and
(e)   whether the Government has hired or proposes to hire experts who can decode the deep/dark web and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) and (b): Internet has an extraordinary reach particularly in the field of information sharing and dissemination and has resulted in several advantages to the society. The term "deep web" is used to denote a class of content on the Internet that is not visible to general browsing and not indexed by search engines. "Dark web" is part of "Deep web" that has been intentionally hidden and is inaccessible through standard web browsers.

Dark web sites serve as a platform for users for anonymity. Dark web has the potential to host malicious services and activities due to inherent anonymous nature. The ability to traverse the Internet with complete anonymity provides specific advantage to adversaries to conduct illegal/malicious activities.

The hidden eco system of the Dark web and its potential use for malicious activities provides a conducive environment for terrorist purposes including propaganda, recruitment, financing and planning disruptive activities. There has been an increasing concern across the world regarding the use of Dark web to perpetrate terrorist attacks. Several reports have been published in the media about usage of Dark web by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

(c) and (d): Traditional search engines are prevented from indexing the deep web pages by using techniques such as dynamic content, pages without back links (unlinked pages), sites requiring login,

pages with limited access content etc. Dark web technologies such as The Onion Routing (TOR) provide restricted access as well as prevent monitoring through use of encryption.

(e): In view of increasing use of Dark web to carry out malicious activities, the issue of development of effective technical solution has been engaging the attention of academia and research community worldwide. Government is in touch with academia and research institutions to evolve and engage in suitable research activities in this area.

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