



BASAI News Updates

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For paddy crop, govt puts ban on 10 insecticides for 60 days

PARVEEN ARORA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KARNAL, AUGUST 19

The state government has banned the sale, stock, distribution and use of 10 insecticides for 60 days. These insecticides are mostly used for basmati paddy. The "residual effect" of these insecticides sometimes leads to the rejection of export consignments of basmati rice.

The banned insecticides include Acephate, Buprofezin, Carbendazim, Chlorpyrifos, Methamidophos, Propiconazole, Thiamethoxam, Tricylazole, Profenophos and Isoprothiolance.

Last week, the Punjab Government had imposed a similar ban on 10 insecticides.

The Haryana Government move comes following a request by the Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) that had received several complaints that export consignments of basmati got rejected due to the indiscriminate use of pesticides.

The order has been issued



THE REASON BEHIND RESTRICTION

- The 'residual effect' of insecticides often leads to rejection of export consignments of basmati rice
- The Punjab Government also imposed a similar ban on 10 insecticides recently

by Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department, Haryana, Dr Sumita Misra. The Director General of the department has now asked all DCs, Deputy Directors Agriculture (DDAs), APEDA Director, Director Research CCSHAU, Hisar; Chief Administrator, Haryana State Agricultural Marketing Board (HSAMB); Managing

Director, Hafed, Haryana; Registrar Cooperative Societies; Managing Director, HLRDC; and Managing Director, HSDC; for the implementation of the order.

To overcome the problem of excessive pesticide residue in export consignments, the state has taken this decision and imposed a ban on the sale, stock and use of 10 insecticides for 60

days, the order states.

Last year, a campaign was launched to make farmers aware about the hazards of such chemicals. "In view of these issues, the state government has prohibited the sale, stock, distribution and use of these insecticides on rice crop in the state. These insecticides are potential constraint in the export and consumption of rice, especially basmati," said the order.

"We have received an order as regards the 60-day ban on 10 insecticides so that good quality basmati rice with no residual effect can be produced. We will ensure strict implementation of the order," said Aditya Dabas, Deputy Director Agriculture (DDA).

On the other hand, rice exporters demanded a permanent solution to the problem. Vijay Setia, former president of the All India Rice Exporters Association, said a ban of 60 days was not a permanent solution. The government should focus on farmer friendly varieties that were resistant to pests and diseases, he said.

Rotten deal for orchardists

Govt must protect HP apple farmers' interest

FEELING exploited and robbed of their due profit margins by the manipulative tactics of the corporate sector, apple growers of Himachal Pradesh are on a warpath. It is to underscore this sentiment that the orchardists have resolved to take their ongoing protest to the doorstep of the three Adani-owned controlled atmosphere stores (CAS) in the state. Though Adani Agri Fresh Ltd procures just a fraction of the apple produce, its price offer at the peak of the season has generally been strong enough to rattle the market and cascade into a plummeting of the rate of the produce to unviable lows later. *Incidentally,* even the consumer suffers in this scenario, for the apples preserved in CAS are only taken out during the off-season, when the company makes a killing by selling them way above the purchase price.

Intensifying the growers' woes are the ever-rising input costs of pesticides, picking, packing and transporting the fruit, besides the new GST levied on packaging materials. The farmers see a way out of this rut through a strict implementation of the APMC Act that mandates remunerative facilities like apple sale per kg rather than per box, timely payment, fixed loading charges and sale through auction. While hoping that their amplified cry would shake up the Central Government into acting to protect their interests, they have threatened to move the court if corrective steps were not taken.

The government's intervention is surely needed to arrest the dwindling incomes of the HP orchardists whose situation mirrors the overall agriculture crisis in the country. This crisis was highlighted by the farmers' protest against the 'black laws', forcing the Centre to repeal them. Even abroad, in the developed countries, big business chains are dictating the farm markets and pocketing profits, pushing the peasants to penury and debts. The poor peasants are sustaining only on the back of government subsidies. In that light, a legally guaranteed minimum support price (MSP) for apple should be considered as a cure for the orchardists' ills. Happy farmers would translate into an economically secure state, too, as apples account for 13.5 per cent of HP's gross domestic product.

LSD leaves dairy farmers worried, seek relief from govt

300 cases reported till August 6, number jumped to 3,000 on Thursday

NITISH SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

AMBALA, AUGUST 19

A continuous increase in the cases of lumpy skin disease in Ambala over the past few days, has left people involved in the dairy business worried.

While nearly 300 cases were reported till August 6, the number of cases jumped to 3,000 by Thursday evening.

Officials in the Animal Husbandry Department said the virus was spreading and more cases were likely to be reported in the coming days. However, the infected cattle are also recovering. Out of 2,945 cases reported, 1,148 cattle had recovered.

Rishi Pal, president of the Kanwla Dairy Complex, Ambala City, said, "Cases are on the rise and some cattle have also died. People are hiding the cases because they are apprehensive that people may stop taking milk from them if they come to know that the cattle at the dairy are infected. We are in touch with the veterinary doctors."

Hira Lal Yadav, president, Gawal Sabha Ambala Cantonment, said, "Dairy owners are getting treatment done from private veterinary doctors and some are also using 'desi' techniques. Milk production has reduced and the situation is not good for the dairy business. A large number of cases



An official visits a gaushala in Ambala City to check cattle infected with lumpy skin disease.

NO NEED TO PANIC

“Cases are increasing but the cattle are recovering too. Dairy owners and other people who have cattle are advised not to panic. They only need to follow the guidelines, maintain hygienic conditions and isolate the infected bovines. Dr Prem Singh, DEPUTY

DIRECTOR, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING DEPT, AMBALA

TOUGH TIME FOR US

“We request the government to announce some relief for the people involved in the dairy business due to the high cost of feed. The dairy business operators were already facing a tough time and now the lumpy skin disease has further worsened the situation. Rishi Pal, PRESIDENT OF THE

KANWLA DAIRY COMPLEX, AMBALA CITY

are being reported from the gaushalas too.”

While the cattle owners are getting their cattle treated, Vande Matram Dal, a non-government organisation, has been taking care of the stray cattle. Davinder Jassal, state president of the VMD, said,

“We have been providing medical treatment to injured animals for several years. After the cases of LSD reported in stray cattle we started using sprays to sanitise the stray cattle, and giving medicines to provide relief to the cattle on roads in Ambala City.”

The Deputy Director, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Department, Ambala, Dr Prem Singh, said, “A majority of the reported cases are from the gaushalas because the virus spread quickly among the cattle there due to shortage of space.

Storms kill 12 in Europe, China declares drought

Agencies

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BERLIN/SHANGHAI: Authorities in Germany warned of heavy rainfall in the south on Friday and put air rescue services on high alert, after severe storms killed at least 12 people elsewhere in Europe a day earlier.

Two girls, ages 4 and 8, were killed when sudden strong winds toppled trees late on Thursday at a lake in the Lavant Valley of southern Austria. Officials said 13 people were injured, two of them seriously. Many of the victims were vacationers visiting the tourist region.

Austrian President Alexander Van Der Bellen called the children's deaths "an unfathomable tragedy" and the mayor of the nearby town of Wolfsberg, Hannes Primus, said the area looked "like a battlefield".

In Lower Austria, three women were killed when lightning struck a tree near the central town of Gaming, causing it to fall over.

Fierce storms also killed at least seven people in France and Italy on Thursday. French interior minister Gérald Darmanin said on Friday during a visit to Corsica that five people were killed on the island - correcting a figure of six dead he had given a day earlier.

Germany's national weather service DWD warned of "extremely abundant, prolonged rain" along the edge of the Alps



A camping site near where a tree fell on a bungalow during storms killing a 13-year-old tourist in Sagone, Corsica. AFP

could drop as much as 140 litres of water per square metre over a 48-hour period that could cause flooding.

The Bavarian Red Cross said it was raising the alarm level for its air rescue specialists, putting helicopter crews on heightened alert.

Separately, China issued its first national drought alert of the year as authorities battle forest fires and mobilise specialist teams to protect crops from scorching temperatures across the Yangtze river basin.

The national 'yellow alert', issued late on Thursday, comes after regions from Sichuan in the southwest to Shanghai in the Yangtze delta have experienced weeks of extreme heat, with government officials repeatedly citing global climate change as the cause.

The alert is two notches short of the most serious warning on Beijing's scale.

In one of the Yangtze's important flood basins in central China's Jiangxi province, the Poyang Lake has now shrunk to a quarter of its normal size for this time of year, state news agency Xinhua said on Thursday.

As many as 66 rivers across 34 counties in the southwestern region of Chongqing have dried up, state broadcaster CCTV said on Friday.

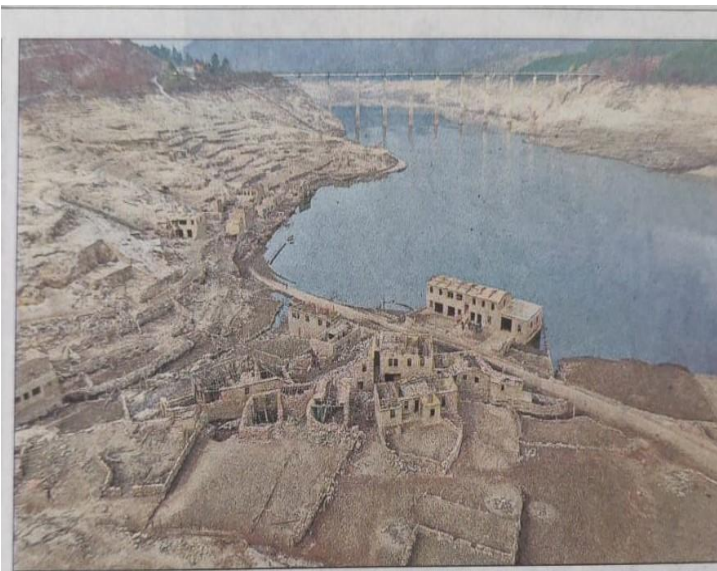
Meanwhile China's National Meteorological Center (NMC) renewed its high-temperature red alert on Friday, the 30th consecutive day it has issued alerts, it said on its Weibo channel. State forecasters also predicted that the current heatwave would only start to abate on August 26.



ROMAN REMAINS

The River Po—Italy's longest river—is at its lowest level in 70 years. The dried-up riverbed revealed previously hidden World War II-era wreckage such as a German tank and cargo ships. (above)

In Rome, meanwhile, drought sapped the River Tiber and unveiled a bridge that's thought to have been built (left) during Emperor Nero's rule.



A GHOST VILLAGE

A town stuck in the early 1990s has re-emerged in Galicia, Spain. Acereo, a village near Spain's border with Portugal, was flooded in 1992 to make room for the Alto Lindoso reservoir. In February—about 30 years later—drought re-exposed the small town. Soon, tourists began flocking to see a place frozen in time.



CIRCLE OF STONES

Officially known as the Dolmen of Guadalperal but dubbed the Spanish Stonehenge, the circle of dozens of megalithic stones is believed to date back to 5000 BC. It currently sits fully exposed in one corner of the Valdecanas reservoir, in the central province of Caceres, where the water level has dropped to 28% of capacity.

It was discovered by German archaeologist Hugo Obermaier in 1926, but the area was flooded in 1963 in a rural development project under Francisco Franco's dictatorship. Since then it has only become fully visible four times.

Extreme heat uncovers lost villages and ancient ruins

Extreme heat this year has triggered wildfires, drought and melting glaciers. Less expectedly, it has also revealed some weird and dark things about our past—shipwrecks, corpses, ghost villages, and ancient cities. Here's a look at some of those discoveries



GRIM DISCOVERIES

Lake Mead—the massive reservoir at the iconic Hoover Dam—has shrunk to a fraction of its former self to become a site of ghoulish curiosity.

Visitors have come across everything from sunken boats to dead bodies. The human remains discovered at the site include a body in a barrel, according to the US National Park Service.

(Left) A formerly sunken boat standing upright in the air along the shoreline of Lake Mead near Boulder City, Nevada, US; (bottom, left) the dolmen of Guadalperal and (below) parts of the old village of Acereo in Spain. AGENCIES

Privacy bill may apply to digital data at first

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NEW DELHI: The data protection bill that is being redrawn after being withdrawn in Parliament by the government earlier this month will initially only cover digital personal data and not records on paper, people aware of the matter said, adding that possible legacy provisions will be included to cover any data that is subsequently digitised.

The move will include making a distinction between digitised and non-digitised data, according to internal discussions held at the ministry of electronics and information technology.

"The government is still working on how to segregate the two, with a special focus on ensuring safety of sensitive personal data," said one official, asking not to be named.

"The ultimate aim will be to digitise all data, but the bill, as it is shaping up, is likely to only apply to digital data initially," the official added.

But, this person said, a legacy provision will be included to cover any data later digitised. "Think of birth certificates that

OFFICIALS SAID THE MOVE WILL INCLUDE MAKING A DISTINCTION BETWEEN DIGITISED & NON-DIGITISED DATA

are old, and so far, only maintained as physical records. Over time, they will be digitised and all forms of personal data will be protected under the bill," the official added. A second official said that the Bill will be a truncated version as compared to the report that was tabled by the Joint Committee of Parliament in December 2021.

"The idea is to make the bill less complicated and more easily accessible," the second official said.

The first official added that the problems remain the same, and will have to be addressed in the new bill. The bill will be put for public consultation once it is finalised. "To try and apply the laws to data that is on paper will take extensive time. Right now the need is to prioritise privacy

of citizens and provide a mechanism to ensure it," the official said. "There are other recourses that citizens can take if data which is on paper is missed."

"Sensitive personal data will have to be tackled with great care and the government is taking all necessary steps to ensure its safety," the official reiterated.

Experts, however, raised some concerns over the delay. "Legacy provisions were weak to begin with for digitised data and clarity and precision were hoped for from the new law. Unfortunately, it appears that there will be more delays for this," said Supreme Court lawyer and founder of Cybersaathi NS Nappinai.

"The first leaked version of the privacy law draft of 2011 itself explicitly covered digital and digitised data." She added that whilst simplicity and clarity are welcome, ensuring a comprehensive law is equally essential.



READ: New Bill may do away with key data protection body

India needs a data regulator

Doing away with the data protection authority will bring with it several challenges on privacy

The government is considering doing away with the need for a data protection authority (DPA) in the new draft of the data protection law, this newspaper reported on Friday. Officials aware of the discussions said instead of DPA, a committee to hear and act on user grievances could instead be created. The officials who spoke of the plan reiterated that it is still in the works, and that the bill will be floated for public consultation once a draft has been hammered into shape. But they cited the ease of doing business, especially for small- and medium-sized enterprises for whom a regulator such as DPA, especially in how its role was envisioned in the last personal data bill, could lead to cumbersome compliance requirements. Their obligations, under a DPA-less regime, will likely be coded into the law itself.

In effect, not having DPA would mean abandoning a data protection regulator in its entirety. DPA, according to the provisions of the now-abandoned personal data protection bill, would have monitored the application and enforcement of statutory protections, looked into complaints, and specified rules and protocols. In the scope of its prerogatives was an acknowledgement that the information era poses unprecedented opportunities as well as challenges. Today's technologies and their mass applications are unlike what they were 15 years ago, and what they will evolve into 15 years later is even more difficult to predict. Thus, DPA was also designed to be empowered to monitor technological advancements. The plan itself isn't novel — it was borrowed from the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), largely regarded as the gold standard for a user-focused privacy statute.

True, GDPR's rollout was cumbersome. Ensuring a business doesn't fall afoul of GDPR obligations has meant expensive legal costs. On the other hand, companies still violate the letter and spirit of the European law, especially Big Tech, which is holding on to data-harvesting business models, where risks to privacy come in previously unseen and unknown forms (internet-wide, cross-site user tracking). To assume that merely empowering users to have the right to be heard ignores the existence of invisible harms — both of which are and can be easily obfuscated by evolving tech and the protections private enterprises enjoy. To truly gain visibility into these areas thus requires a regulator, one that is independent, empowered and adequately resourced. Any decision on the country's privacy framework must keep that in mind, and how problems have been dealt with by the regulators we have today, whether in banking, medicine, or the environment.

What the Dolo 650 case before the SC is all about

Priyanka Gawande

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MUMBAI: The Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives Association of India (FMRAI) has filed a public interest litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court seeking to fix accountability for freebies allegedly distributed to doctors in order to get them to prescribe Dolo 650, which was the most consumed anti-fever drug during the Covid-19 pandemic.

What is the case?

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Centre to respond to a PIL filed by FMRAI which claims the makers of Dolo offered freebies worth ₹1,000 crore to doctors to promote the anti-fever drug. The court called it a "serious issue" and will take up the matter on 29 September.

What is Dolo?

Dolo 650, made by Bengaluru-based Micro Labs Ltd,

became a household name during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Doctors had started prescribing Dolo as an over-the-counter anti-fever drug. Easy availability and doctors' prescriptions fuelled sales.

What is FMRAI alleging?

FMRAI is a national trade union with units in 300 cities and towns. The body is seeking enforcement of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution, alleging mounting instances of unethical marketing practices by pharma companies in their dealings with healthcare professionals. This, it says, results in irrational and excessive prescriptions and a push for over-priced brands -- practices that directly affect citizens' health.

What else does it say?

In the PIL, the petitioners have also prayed that a statutory code of ethical marketing, with penal consequences, be established for the pharma



A PIL filed in the court claims that the makers of Dolo offered freebies worth over ₹1,000 cr to doctors for drug promotion. AFP

industry to curb such practices. Because the existing code is voluntary, unethical practices continue to proliferate, something that surfaced during the pandemic. FMRAI counsel said the price of a tablet up to 500 mg is regulated by the government but that of a drug above 500 mg can be fixed by the drug maker.

What is the CBDT's role here?

It was the Central Board of Direct Taxes that accused the makers of Dolo tablets of distributing freebies worth ₹1,000 crore. Earlier this month, the National Medical Commission (NMC) asked the Income Tax Department for details of doctors who allegedly received freebies from six pharma companies, including Micro Labs against which raids were con-

ducted last month.

What are the relevant laws and regulations?

Indian Medical Council's regulations prescribe a code of conduct for doctors in their relationship with pharma and allied health sector, and bar them from accepting gifts and entertainment, travel facilities, hospitality, cash etc. But the regulation does not apply to drug companies; so doctors' licences are cancelled for misconduct which is actuated, encouraged, aided and abetted by pharma companies. In a similar case, a bench of Justices U U Lalit and S Ravindra Bhat held that gifting freebies to health professionals is clearly "prohibited by law", and not allowed to be claimed as a deduction.

What do pharma companies say?

Mint reached out to Micro Labs and the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance but there was no response till press time.

Manipulated prescription

Dolo-650 case must trigger clean-up in pharma sector

A PETITION contending that doctors have been given freebies worth over Rs 1,000 crore for prescribing an irrational dose of popular fever drug Dolo-650 during Covid waves lays bare the deeply-entrenched corruption in pharmaceutical marketing. The brazen indulgence in unethical practices also brings the functioning of the drug regulatory system under scanner. The market price of tablets up to 500 mg is controlled, it has been pointed out to the Supreme Court, while that of drugs exceeding 500 mg can be fixed by the companies. Offering gifts, paying cash and sponsoring trips of medical practitioners to influence prescription of unwarranted or irrational drugs, or push for high-cost and over-priced brands, is an open trade secret. The plea for a statutory code of ethical marketing with penal consequences, along with introduction of stringent transparency and accountability mechanisms, offers a chance to clean up the healthcare sector.

There is merit in the demand to make pharma companies equally liable for bribing doctors, as the practice can put patients' health at risk and endanger positive health outcomes. Instances of ghost-management of medical research and sponsorship of clinical trials to influence results exemplify the extent of the rot. The move to amend laws through which freebies offered to doctors will be taxable may not turn out to be an effective disincentive for pharma companies, as it legalises and institutionalises corruption.

The apex court recognising the issue as serious and of great public importance denotes some movement forward in curbing manipulated prescription. The National Medical Commission, too, has sought from the Income Tax Department details of the doctors who allegedly received bribes from six pharma companies, including the Dolo-650 maker against whom raids were conducted last month. A threefold growth of India's pharma sector is projected in the next decade. For the industry, confronting the erosion of trust and reliability should be the key concerns. Self-introspection should trigger course-correction.

Sprawling Parl library is now open for public

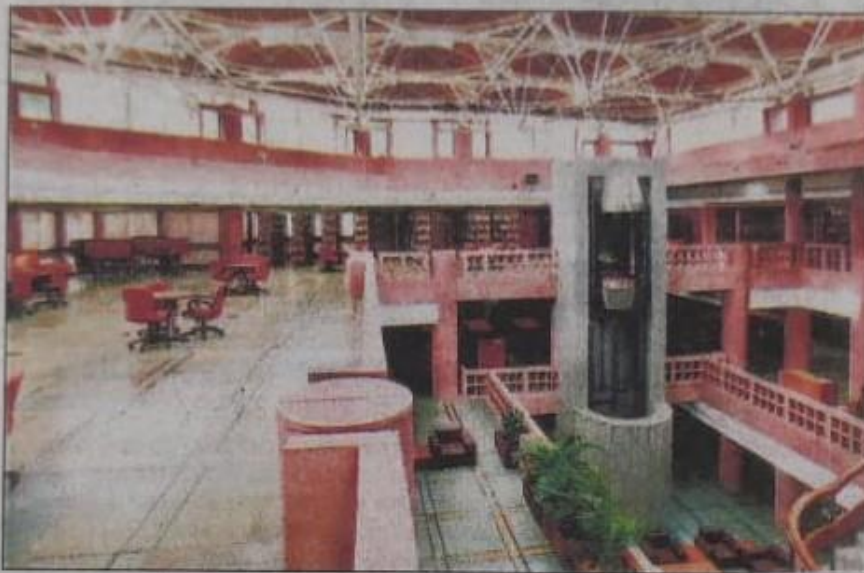
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NEW DELHI: The Parliament Library which until recently was accessible only to lawmakers, government functionaries, accredited media persons and research scholars, has opened its collection of 1.7 million publications to the common people.

As the library — which is the largest in Delhi and second largest in the country behind the National Library in Kolkata — is housed in tightly secured Parliament Complex, visitors will be granted physical access only after verification of their documents for identification which they have to upload online, according to officials.

Originally located in the Old Secretariat building in Delhi, the library was shifted to the Parliament Complex in 1927. The new Parliament Library building was inaugurated in 2002, when all the collections were moved there. "Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had decided that as a part of the celebrations of 75 years of Independence, the library should be open to all from



Visitors will be granted physical access only after verification of their documents for identification, officials said.

August 15. We made all arrangements in this regard. Parliament Library is now open to public," said a senior official.

Initially, the general public can access the vast resources of the library only for an hour and the slot is likely to increase in the coming days, said officials.

Spread over four floors, the library has a massive collection of fiction and non-fiction books, all central and state government Acts since 1836, 88 newspapers,

365 periodicals, all parliamentary debates from the British-era Central Legislative Assembly, Constituent Assembly and the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha since their beginning.

In a quiet corner of the library building, a room has been dedicated to preserve the two original copies of the Indian Constitution — in Hindi and English — in nitrogen-filled receptacles. Access to the original copies of the Constitution, however, is

limited. The original library was housed in a chamber adjacent to the Central Hall of Parliament. The chamber is now used as a reading room by lawmakers, who often come there to prepare their draft speeches. The new library also has a dedicated section for MPs. It also has two separate sections on Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

As part of speaker Birla's initiative, the library also has collection of books written by Presidents, Vice Presidents, Prime Ministers, Speakers, sitting and former members of parliament.

Over the last few years, the vast resources of the Parliament Library have been digitised and the e-archives were made public on December 11, 2018.

"Its digitized collections range from 1854-2022 having 4.7 million pages of 0.6 million documents. 31.09 lakh (over 3.1 million) visitors have used the website," said an official statement. "Apart from debates, the website also has digitised parliamentary committee reports, PM speeches, LS publications and Bulletins and Resume of Lok Sabha."