

Food ministers to discuss nutrition, consumer protection

Sagar Kulkarni, DH News Service, New Delhi, AUG 31 2019

The Centre has convened a meeting of food ministers of all states on Tuesday, September 3, to discuss the rolling out of rice fortification scheme to tackle the scourge of malnutrition in parts of the country.

The Fifth National Consultative Meeting of state Ministers of Food and Civil Supplies will also discuss the implementation of the Consumer Protection Act and the availability of pulses and onion, whose prices have been spiralling.

In its war against malnutrition, the government plans to roll out a pilot project for distribution of fortified rice through fair price shops 15 districts by the year-end.

Nine states – Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Assam – have already agreed to the scheme and identified the districts.

Under this scheme, rice is fortified with Iron, Folic Acid and Vitamin B-12 at the milling stage and then sent for distribution through fair price shops.

The scheme with an outlay of Rs 147.61 crore will be implemented over three years beginning 2019-20 and would be funded by the Centre in the ration of 90:10 for northeastern, hilly and island states, and 75:25 in other states.

The scheme will be rolled out in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra, Godavari (Andhra Pradesh), Narmada (Gujarat), Bongaigaon (Assam), Yadgir/Raichur (Karnataka), Ernakulam (Kerala), Tiruchirapalli (Tamil Nadu) and Malkangiri/Nuapada (Odisha).

The meeting will also focus on issues related to consumer protection such as the implementation of the Legal Metrology Act, strengthening of consumer fora and start of inter-state portability under one-nation one-ration card system.