INDEPENDENCE DAY: 'RICE PROVIDED UNDER GOVT SCHEMES TO BE FORTIFIED BY 2024'

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Government will fortify rice distributed to the poor under different schemes such as mid-day meal to address the problem of malnutrition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Sunday. He was addressing the nation on 75th Independence Day.

"Malnutrition and the lack of micronutrients are affecting the growth of poor children. To address this, by 2024 rice distributed under all government schemes will be fortified rice, whether through ration shops or mid-day meal scheme," said Modi.

"It is the government's priority to take 'poshan' to every person, every poor person; government has decided to provide fortified rice to the poor," said Modi.

Currently, out of the 15 states identified for the 'central scheme on fortified rice and its distribution via public distribution system (PDS)', five are implementing it in one district each on a pilot basis.

Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh have started distributing fortified rice—mixed with nutrients—in their respective identified district.

Modi also spoke about his government strengthening healthcare infrastructure and making medicines affordable for all.

"Under the Jan AushadhiYojana, the poor and the needy are now getting affordable medicines. Over 75,000 health and wellness centres have been built and we are working on a network of hospitals at the block level," said Modi in his speech from the Red Fort.

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