

# Fortified rice likely through PDS: Paswan

‘Subsidy up by 26% since 2014’

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

Union Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan on Tuesday announced that his Ministry was mulling over a proposal to distribute fortified rice through the public distribution system. He once again promised that the prices of grains supplied through the PDS would not be increased till June 2019, when the general elections are due.

“We are planning to introduce rice fortified with essential vitamins and minerals,” Mr. Paswan said. The first meeting on the issue was held last week.

Counting the unchanged price since the Narendra Modi government took over as one of his Ministry’s achievements, Mr. Paswan said: “The food subsidy has increased by 26% since 2014. And the Centre is bearing the bulk of the subsidy bill with very few States contributing to it.”

He was addressing a press



Ram Vilas Paswan

conference to mark four years of the NDA government. The Ministry claims to have achieved 100% digitisation of ration cards, 83% Aadhar seeding and 60% of automation of fair price shops.

The Opposition has criticised the BJP government for cutting corners on the Food Security Act. The CPI (M), in its report card on the government’s performance, has said that the digitisation and Aadhar linking of ration cards had deprived many rightful beneficiaries. “We do not have any plans to amend the Food Security Act,” Mr. Paswan asserted.