

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಧಾನ ಸಭೆ, ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಹಾಗೂ ಉಲ್ಲೇಖನಾ ಶಾಖೆ  
KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RESEARCH AND REFERENCE BRANCH

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು  
PAPER CLIPPING

ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Prime Minister

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: The Hindu ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 11/7/2020

# Free foodgrain scheme till Nov.

Additional outlay of ₹90,000 cr. under PMGKAY will benefit 80 cr. people: Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced that the free grain distribution scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) will be extended by five months till the end of November, with an additional estimated outlay of ₹90,000 crore.

Making the announcement in an address to the nation via television, he said the government's decision to start the PMGKAY within days of the lockdown had ensured that the poorest of the poor were not left hungry, with 80 crore people having benefited from the free distribution of grains.

### 'No hunger'

"Timely decisions of lockdown and distribution of free grains by both the government and civil society



Daily necessities: Workers unloading sacks of toor dal at a warehouse near Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. - K.V.S. GIRI

Timely decisions of lockdown and distribution of free grains by both the government and civil society outfits ensured that our poor did not suffer hunger. Population twice that of the European Union, 12 times the population of the U.K. and two-and-a-half times the population of the United States was provided free grains by the government

PRIME MINISTER

outfits ensured that our poor did not suffer hunger. Population twice that of the European Union, 12 times the population of the U.K., and two and half times the population of the United States was provided free grains... Under this scheme, for the next five months, 5 kg of free rice or wheat, and 1 kg of chana will be provided free

to 80 crore Indians," he said.

Mr. Modi pointed out that while the country was entering Unlock 2, the economic activity during the monsoon was more concentrated in the agricultural sector than in others, and that it also segued into the festival season - starting with Guru Poornima in July to Chhath in November - when people

would also be spending more. "Therefore, the government has decided to extend the programme to the end of November," he said.

Mr. Modi thanked the farmers and the "honest" taxpayers for making it possible to put this ambitious scheme in place.

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## Free foodgrain scheme extended till November

Mr. Modi added that with the amount already spent since April, the total outlay for the scheme would go up to ₹1.5 lakh crore.

According to government sources, the next few months may see a slow recovery in the economy as the COVID-19 cases, as also mentioned by Mr. Modi, showed an uptick but with lower mortality rates compared to other countries.

"The low mortality rates are a result of taking the right decisions of lockdown at the right time and precautions of wearing masks, washing hands frequently and maintaining social distancing. In Unlock 2 we are seeing a lowering of the guard which is to be avoided. People must stick to the precautions as they did under Lockdown," the Prime Minister said