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Business Use: SMS Food Alerts To Indian Poor

 Submitted by [Mike Grenville](#) on Wed, 09 Jan 2008 15:01

A regional government in India plans to send SMS alerts about the availability and supply of food to beneficiaries of the subsidised public distribution system (PDS).

The [Chhattisgarh government](#) in north east India is to provide 35kg of rice a month to each family at the subsidised rate of Rs 3 per kg under a food security scheme. The rice will be rice in sealed packets of 5kg, 10kg and 35kg. When the food is available at the distribution centre SMS alerts will be sent out to families registered.

To get the alerts, the families will have to register details of their mobile phones at the [food and civil supplies department](#) website.

Department officials said alerts would also be given out through the Internet to beneficiaries of the Rs 8.5 billion Food Security Scheme once they have registered their names, addresses and mobile phone number. The food scheme starts on 16th January and the SMS facility will be provided from 26th January.

'Besides the SMS facility, the government will be setting up toll-free call centres across the state from January 26 to take up supply related complaints of PDS beneficiaries immediately and deliver reply to them in time-bound banner on their telephones,' Alok Shukla, secretary of food and civil supplies.

The scheme will cover 3.4 million families or about 60 percent of the state's 20.08 million population although officials admitted they are unclear how many of such families actually own mobile phones or even have access to the internet to be able to register.

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Those visitation rights were cut off last January for unknown reasons and Wang's family was left in the dark for about six months.

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