

● CENTRE TO HC

‘Aadhaar made mandatory to ensure poor get food’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, April 24

AADHAAR WAS MADE mandatory to ensure the poor get subsidised foodgrain under the public distribution system (PDS), the Centre told the Delhi High Court on Monday.

Terming PDS a “misused system”, the Centre told a bench of acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Anu Malhotra that through Aadhaar, the endeavour was to ensure that the real beneficiaries get foodgrain.

“Aadhaar is mandatory for PDS, as this system is mostly misused in our country. The

subsidised foodgrain were not reaching the poor. Someone else were availing the benefit..” Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Sanjay Jain said.

He said that around 2.33 crore ration cards, used to get the benefit under the PDS scheme, turned out to be fake.

The ASG, who was assisted by central government standing counsel Bhagvan Swarup Shukla, also said the government has given time to those people who do not have the biometric-based unique identification number to apply for Aadhaar by June 30.

Aadhaar is a 12-digit unique identification number issued by

the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) after collecting biometric data of the citizens.

The Centre’s response came in the backdrop of a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking quashing of the Centre’s February 8 notification making Aadhaar card mandatory for availing benefits under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

The plea has alleged that it violates the basic principle of law enshrined in Article 14 (equality) and 21 (right to life) of the Constitution.

The Centre, however, sought dismissal of the PIL, saying a similar plea was pending for consideration before the Supreme Court.