



## 1. CLIMATE SMART VILLAGES CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

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Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon giving a block of Bio Briquette (Blackgold) to a BISP beneficiary in Haripur. (Dated: April 6, 2016)

Islamabad: Minister of State and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Marvi Memon launched a campaign for Climate Smart Villages in Haripur by training BISP women beneficiaries to prepare Bio Briquette (Black gold) in the wake of severe climatic effects causing damages upon infrastructure and human lives.

Bio Briquette (Black gold) is an efficient, cheap and environment friendly fuel which is prepared by burying and burning dry leaves and organic wastes in the earth. The resultant ash called Charcoal combined with soil is put

in a casting box and a solid block is prepared which burns much longer than wood, with much less smoke. This is low cost fuel used in many countries of the world.

While addressing beneficiaries on the occasion, BISP chairperson said that in order to meet fuel needs in the mountainous areas, people cut trees indiscriminately that result in deforestation. Deforestation enhances the severity of land sliding and floods.

(Business Recorder, Pakistan Observer, Frontier Post, Patriot, Jang, Khabrain and Ausaf also carried the story and picture)

## 2. NA BODY FOR SURVEY TO DETERMINE BENEFICIARIES OF HEALTH PROGRAMME

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### NA body for survey to determine beneficiaries of health programme

Committee members criticise data used by programme, recommend prioritising underdeveloped areas

By A Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Reform grilled the director of the Prime Minister's National Health Insurance Programme (PMNHP), and suggested that underdeveloped areas of the country should be prioritised. Committee members also expressed reservations about data from the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), which is used to provide health services. They suggested that a survey be conducted to determine the actual number of deserving citizens.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif launched the health programme on Dec 31, 2015, for Islamabad, and described it as the first step towards making Pakistan a welfare state. The prime minister launched the same scheme in Muzaffargarh on February 25.

In the next phase, the programme will be expanded to various parts of Punjab, Balochistan and Fata. Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will not benefit from the initiative before their provincial governments declined to become a part of the federal government's programme.

PMNHP Director Dr Faizal Rifaq, while briefing the committee, said a family will receive Rs50,000 for secondary care treat-

ment which begins as soon as a patient is hospitalised. This covers all kinds of conditions, including pregnancy.

Each family can receive treatment for Rs250,000 under the category of 'priority diseases', which includes cancer, accidents, burn injuries, diabetes complications, heart bypass surgery and infections. He said that each family could therefore receive treatment for Rs300,000 per year.

"The beneficiaries are the poor families of Pakistan with a daily income of \$2 (Rs200) or less. So far, more than 2,000 beneficiaries have been treated for various ailments ranging from a simple appendectomy to open heart surgery in hospitals on the programme's panel. In the next phase, the scheme will be inaugurated in Quetta," Dr Rifaq said.

He said that 70pc of the population accesses the private health sector, and that 80pc of the expense is out-of-pocket due to which, in case of a disease, they sell their cattle, land or valuables, and drop below the poverty line.

"The programme is expanding district by district, and as many as 3.1 million families, or 20 million people, will become beneficiaries," he said.

The programme director said Rs1,300 is paid for each family to access the facility for a year. In the case of Islamabad, Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and Fata, 100pc of the funding is provided by the federal government. In the case of the other provinces, Rs100 will be provided by the federal government and Rs1,000 will be contributed by the province, per family.

MNA Dr Asima Mamdot said that a number of people were being deprived of the facility, and said deserving individuals should be included in the scheme.

The committee's chairperson, Abdul Majeed Khan Khattak, said that half of BISP's data was inaccurate.

"The rural health units and basic health units should be upgraded instead of paying funds to the private hospitals that have been providing the service to members," he suggested. He also suggested that "less developed" areas should be prioritised because they are in greater need of health facilities than developed areas.

MNA Chaudhry Jaffar Iqbal said government hospitals should be funded because they provide services to low-income citizens.

"Funds should not be transferred to private hospitals," he said. "Moreover, Zakat committees should be involved in the registration of individuals, because local committees know the deserving people."

Mr Iqbal added that neither the PTI nor the PPP would contribute to a scheme owned by the PML-N. He said the federal government should contribute 50pc to the scheme to create interest among the PPP and the PTI.

The committee also recommended that the offices of the Zakat Management and Baitul Maal at district and tehsil levels should be taken onboard to consider prospective programme beneficiaries. Ministry of National Health Services Secretary Ayub Sheikh said the PMNHP is the best option to provide health services to nearly 20 million people.

"The overall expenditure of the scheme will be Rs26 billion, which is [equivalent] to the budget of the country's four big hospitals. We already see serious crowds in government hospitals, which is why private hospitals have been involved and those hospitals will provide services at around a 50pc discount," he said.



### 3. THE POVERTY LINK

*Letter to editor published in The News, April 07, 2016*

#### **The poverty link**

This refers to the article, 'Making a new social contract' by Danish Khan (April 2). The writer has suggested measures to minimise the income gap between the rich and the poor, and better ways for the distribution of wealth to cope with the problem of terrorism. There is no difference of opinion as to the link between poverty/unemployment and the rate of crime in a society. If we look at the World Bank, UNDP and IMF's lists of countries by income inequality metrics – including Gini coefficient – we see that Pakistan, Bangladesh and India are fairly close to each other in the rich-poor ratio.

Analysis of the situation may further reveal that there are other overriding factors, in addition to poverty that are responsible for this menace. A few would-be suicide bombers had disclosed in their interviews on the media that they were doing so in compliance with the orders of their Ameer (leader) and not for money. In the long run, the suggestion of the writer for equitable income distribution does carry weight.

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<http://e.thenews.com.pk/pindi/4-7-2016/page7.asp>