

Government of Pakistan
Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division
Press Release

Social distancing is priority as Ehsaas commences Emergency Cash Payments



April 9, 2020 - Islamabad: Safeguarding all precautionary measures, the payment process under Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program has begun today to support the deserving families affected by the lockdown. The safety and security of the Ehsaas Emergency Cash beneficiaries arriving to collect cash assistance is the top priority of the government. With opening of as many as 17,000 digital payment points, the biometrically enabled payment operation has commenced countrywide across all provinces including GB, AJK and Islamabad Capital Territory. All these cash transfers are being made after biometric verification of each beneficiary through NADRA.

Under the Ehsaas Emergency Cash framework, an immediate cash relief of Rs. 12,000 will be extended each to families of daily wage earners, whose livelihood has been badly affected by the corona-induced economic downturn. Overall, Rs. 144 billion will be disbursed to more than 12 million families during the next two and a half weeks. For now, as many as 46.38 million people have sent SMS requesting to become beneficiaries of Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program.

To ensure Corona protective measures across payment operations, special disbursement arrangements have been put in place in close coordination with provincial governments.

Social distancing measures are stringently safeguarded including opening of payment points at open public spaces with multiple cash counters along with security for these spaces, permission to keep retail point of sale agents open, management of crowds at cash disbursement points and ensuring preventive measures like facility of hand washing etc. People are collecting cash from biometrically enabled payment points of Habib Bank in Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan and Bank Al Falah across KP, GB and AJK.

To monitor the payment operations, Dr. Sania Nishtar, Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation visited HBL Konnect outlets in Bari Imam area of Islamabad and met with spouses of piece rate workers who had gathered to collect cash handouts under the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program. Interacting with deserving women, Dr. Nishtar said, "Ehsaas has initiated the cash stipend payments to provide instant provide relief to the daily wagers whose livelihoods have been badly affected. This assistance is meant to help them buy rations so that they don't go hungry. We have advised partnering banks to ensure sanitization at all touch points serving payments."

For registration in Ehsaas Emergency Cash, the deserving families can send SMS to 8171 service or can visit web-portal: ehsaas.nadra.gov.pk to check eligibility. Following registration, there are three types of messages in response of people's SMS like eligible, ineligible, or case under scrutiny. Corona Tiger Relief Force will also facilitate to register daily wagers, piece-rate workers and labourers who are unable to register through SMS for Ehsaas cash disbursement program.