

**Government of Pakistan**  
**Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division**  
**Press Release**

**Disguised in Burqa, Sania visits Ehsaas Payment sites**  
**Ehsaas Emergency Cash payments to category-3 beneficiaries begin today**



May 8, 2020 – Islamabad: The Ehsaas Emergency Cash disbursements have been ongoing for the last one month and so far, Rs. 89.143 billion have been distributed cumulatively for categories-I and II among 7.307 million deserving families across the country. Today, with the commencement of payments to category-3 beneficiaries, Dr. Sania Nishtar, Prime Minister’s Special Assistant on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation covered herself in Burqa and made an unannounced visit to the payment site at Nurpur Shahan in the outskirts of Bari Imam, Islamabad. She toured the site to get a first-hand look at the precautionary measures and biometric disbursement services being offered to Ehsaas Emergency Cash beneficiaries that fall under categories-2 and 3. The beneficiaries under the category-3 have been identified through district administrations. Alongside that, payments to category-2 beneficiaries who entered the program through 8171 SMS service are also underway.

Dressed up in Burqa, Dr. Nishtar showed up at the payment site as Ehsaas beneficiary seeking assistance to withdraw Ehsaas Emergency Cash stipend of Rs. 12, 000 through biometric system. She sat in the queue and waited with beneficiaries who were sitting there to receive the Ehsaas Emergency Cash. She also interacted with recipients and volunteers on the ground and facilitated payments to several beneficiaries herself. She also issued directions to retailers and volunteers to make better use of preventive measures to ensure safety of people while ensuring transparent payments.

During the visit, Dr. Nishtar was pleased to see how retailers, district administration, security agencies and volunteers provide a welcoming environment for deserving beneficiaries, including their methods for guiding beneficiaries through the new system of finger-print security.

While talking to the media, Dr. Nishtar commented, “This visit in disguise was intended to assess the campsite arrangements in terms of quality of services, transparency and accuracy in payment system and COVID-19 preventive measures.” She then continued, “Beneficiaries of the program are mainly the labour class whose means of income are badly affected by COVID-19 restrictions. I strongly believe that it adds value to policymaking when you go in the field and interact with people on your own to gain first-hand knowledge. Today’s visit inspired me greatly.” Further, SAPM concluded that these surprise visits are important to improve the quality of program delivery and she will be conducting more visits in future.

The Rs. 144 billion Ehsaas Emergency Cash is largest social protection program of the government in response to COVID-19 crisis that is serving 12 million families dependent on daily wages through a data driven and biometrically enabled transparent system built in partnership with NADRA and two partnering banks.