SUBJECT: PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed please find herewith the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and other important news in today's newspapers for kind perusal.

Media, Communication & Outreach Wing
(MC&O)

DD to Chairperson
BENAZIR INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME

No. 1(2)/Media/BISP/2016

Islamabad, March 28, 2019

Subject: SUMMARY OF BISP RELATED NEWS ITEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Summary of Items</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The News</td>
<td>Imran launches Rs80bn poverty alleviation plan</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>All major English &amp; Urdu newspapers carried the story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Media, Communication & Outreach Wing (MC&O)
Imran launches ambitious scheme to reduce poverty

- Amendment to Constitution planned to make provision of food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief fundamental right
- New ministry of poverty alleviation to be created
- Economic empowerment of women through ‘one woman one bank account plan’

By Aamir Yasin

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday launched an ambitious social safety and poverty alleviation programme ‘Ehsaas’ for the welfare of poor and downtrodden sectors of society with a special focus on empowerment of women.

Speaking at the launching ceremony of the programme at the Jinnah Convention Centre, the prime minister declared that his government wanted to change the Constitution in order to ensure provision of food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief to all the citizens without any discrimination by the state considering them as their “fundamental rights”.

Referring to Article 38(D) of the Constitution titled “promotion of social and economic well-being of the people”, he vowed to include the five above-mentioned basic necessities in the list of fundamental rights as enshrined in Chapter One of the Constitution. According to Mr Khan, this change would give right to the people to take the government to courts upon its failure to provide them these basic amenities.

Highlighting salient features of the programme amid sloganeering by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf activists, the prime minister said the government had decided to allocate Rs80 billion for the well-being of the underprivileged segments of society and it would be increased to Rs120bn next year.

Mr Khan also announced setting up of a new ministry for poverty alleviation aimed at increasing coordination among all organisations and departments presently working for the welfare of the poor and providing them financial and other aids.

He said that presently a number of organisations such as Baitul Maal, Poverty Alleviation Council, Benazir Income Support Programme and Zakat councils were working in the country, but there had been no coordination among them. He said Baitul Maal would construct 10,000 sweet homes for orphans and five homes for old people over the next four years.

Regretting that presently no precise data about poverty was available, Mr Khan said his government would launch a new survey which would be completed by December.

“We will launch new survey of poverty to identify poor and poverty-stricken areas in the country. The survey will be completed by December-end and we will have computerised record and the government will provide them service and monetary assistance.”

The government, he said, would provide mobile phones to 5.7 million women and enable them to open and operate their saving accounts in banks. He said the government had also decided to provide free legal assistance to those who could not afford fees

Continued on Page 3
Imran launches ambitious scheme to reduce poverty

Continued from Page 1

for court cases. In order to make the people self-reliant, he said a fixed proportion on state lands would be allocated for the people so that they could establish kiosks/cafe to make ends meet.

Besides this, he added, the poor would have a share in auctions of shops in a town and tehsil committees.

"Every ministry has been directed to develop pro-poor goals and measurable indicators. Welfare of transgender, street children, bonded labour and daily wages will also be top priority of the government under "Ehsas" programme," he said.

The prime minister also announced setting up of a Rs5 billion fund to provide interest-free loans to the poor for construction of their houses. "We will start construction of five million houses from April and we will give joint ownership of these houses to spouses in this government-supported housing scheme," he said.

Vowing to improve implementation of labour laws in the country, the prime minister announced a number of special measures for labourers, including an increase in pension through EOBI (Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution) from Rs5,200 to Rs6,500. Without elaborating, he said the pension would also be paid to the workers of informal sector like housemaids and other workers.

He said that 40 microfinance companies in the country having Rs40bn would be directed through the State Bank of Pakistan to help people start their own businesses.

He said the government would facilitate technology innovation by enhancing broadband internet services and basic telephony to almost 12,000 villages in 45 districts and this would benefit 30 million people.

"E-learning and television-based education will be launched after this connectivity of broadband and internet for the education of the people," he said and added that the people in remote areas would be provided vouchers for getting education in private schools.

He said the government would provide technical education to labourers who wanted to go abroad where they would get a three-year contract instead of one year.

Terming malnutrition and stunting among children a major problem for the country, the prime minister vowed to resolve the issue by including it in the new programme.

He said the government had a plan to provide goats and hens to widows living in villages, which would not only help them earn money, but also resolve the issues being faced by them due to malnutrition.

Besides this, kitchen gardens would also be promoted in villages and free-of-cost seeds would be provided to the people, he said.

Referring to a survey which revealed that more than 75 per cent of milk being supplied to main cities was a mixture of washing powder and chemicals, the prime minister said they were starting a plan to improve milk supply initially in Islamabad and Lahore.

He also announced setting up of 20 centres for persons with disabilities, where they would also be provided wheelchairs and other equipment.

Earlier, speaking on the occasion, Poverty Alleviation Coordination Council chairperson Dr Sania Nishtar said the plan was about equality and opportunity for all and it was about lifting underdeveloped areas and leaving no one behind. She said they wanted to invest in human capital, educate girls and give economic empowerment to millions of women.
Constitutional changes to create new rights

PM promises homes, health, bread, clothing & education for all

Says constitutional amendment to be tabled for this purpose;

Sania Nishtar says 25pc people in Pakistan living under poverty line; 40pc people lack basic facilities; 41pc children could not grow up properly due to malnutrition

Myra Imran

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday announced ‘the biggest and the boldest’ poverty alleviation programme of Pakistan titled ‘Ehsas’ while dedicating an additional amount of Rs80 billion to social protection spending in the forthcoming budget and establishing a new Ministry of Social Protection Poverty Alleviation to address issues related to poverty alleviation.

The prime minister shared details of the ambitious plan at an event organised by Poverty Alleviation Coordination Council (PACO) to launch the new initiative. He said that BSP, PBM, Zakat, PPAF, T&V and Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, Poverty Council and planned Labour Commission will work under the new ministry which will develop a one-window operation for social protection to facilitate citizens.

He also announced to table a new constitutional amendment to move article 38(d) from the ‘Principles of Policy’ section into the ‘Fundamental Rights’ section. This change will make provision of food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief for citizens who cannot earn a livelihood due to infirmity, sickness or unemployment, a state responsibility.

Imran Khan said the additional Rs80 billion to social protection spending in the forthcoming budget will take the total spending in social protection to Rs120 billion in the next budget.

“This will take the social protection spending to 1 percent of the GDP,” he said.

While terming the concept of Riast-e-Madina his inspiration, he said the real change is about making the whole system work to protect the weak and the poor and to give them equal opportunities and to lift them. “This is what Ehsas is about. It is for the extreme poor, orphans, widows, homeless, disabled, sick,
PM promises homes, health, bread, clothing & education for all

Continued from Page 1

underprivileged, jobless, poor elderly persons, poor students, poor women and most importantly for making my government pro-poor," he said while presenting the salient features of the programme.

Imran Khan said that the name of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) will remain the same but a new programme ‘Kafalat’ will be initiated under the BISP. Under Kafalat, 6 million BISP women beneficiaries would be given sovereign accounts under the ‘one woman one bank account plan’, the size of the cash transfer will increase from Rs5,000 to Rs6,500 and will also be linked to health and nutrition-related assistance and the 65 BISP and IHC offices will be transformed into digital hubs where the government’s IT, technology and innovation resources will be pooled. By December, we will have completed a new survey of poverty. We will do a triple validation of this survey to identify the real poor," he said.

The premier also announced announcing a precision safety net ‘Tahafuz’ to protect individuals from catastrophic risks.

"We also have plans to graduate BISP beneficiaries out of poverty for the most backward districts. A programme for asset transfers worth Rs5 billion in five districts has additionally been launched through Kafalat. In addition, a programme for asset transfer and training worth Rs14 billion in 25 poor districts has been launched through PPAP National Poverty Graduation Program," said the premier.

He said that under Tahafuz, the government will provide assistance to poor widows. "To help the most marginalised, the government will partner with organisations that support street children, seasonal migrants, transgenders, victims of child and bonded labour and daily-wage workers who don’t get daily work."

To provide a secure future for the orphans, he said that Pakistan Baitul Mal will expand its network of Ehsaas homes for children to provide decent living, food, education and health facilities to 10,000 children in four years. For health, he said the government has already committed to launching a Universal Health Insurance Card in 88 districts for 3.3 million people over a four-year period and have committed Rs83 billion for the purpose.

Sharing his plans for nutrition, he said that in Kafalat programme, the government is designing a conditional cash transfer for health and education for 6 million women and families so that they can have access to nutrition assistance. "I have directed that deworming drugs, iron folie acid, micronutrient supplements of quality should be made available at all government hospitals and BHUs and that information about breastfeeding and complimentary feeding should be made widely available in local languages," he said.

He also announced to establish a high-level multi-sectoral nutrition coordinating body in his office. He said that 51+ models of ‘desi’ chicken for poverty alleviation and nutrition, kitchen gardening initiative for provision of subsidised seeds and seedlings and asset transfer of goats are also part of the nutrition initiative as well as providing a source of income to the poor families. He also announced establishing a university-hosted National Centre for Human Nutrition in Peshawar and said that 7 million dollars have been committed for this through a partnership agreement.

For persons with disability, he said the government is launching a programme for universal access to assistive devices. "In addition, the government will partner with civil society and expert organisations to develop 20 centres for the physically challenged in under-privileged districts over a four-year period," he said.

For overseas workers, the PM announced increasing the role and number of community welfare attaches and protector of emigration offices besides increasing the duration of briefing and training sessions prior to departure for intended migrant workers.

Besides that, the prime minister said the Ministry of OP and HRD has been instructed to negotiate with foreign government to extend the duration of the first contract agreement from one year to at least three years. He also announced subsidy on air tickets for migrant unskilled workers, earning less than a given income and who have not visited home for more than seven years.

For homeless, he announced providing ‘Panahgah in several major cities of the country with the support of philanthropists. "The government’s housing scheme will centre on facilitating provision of homes to the poor (including landless farmers), through interest free loans. Rs4.5 billion has been allocated for this," he said. The prime minister also announced increasing monthly labour pension through EoBI from Rs5,250 to Rs6,500. In addition, he said that 5 Ehsas homes (old people’s homes) will be established.

For poor students, the prime minister announced pre-paid vouchers for children in areas where public schools do not exist, but private schools exist. ‘In the next budget, we will be increasing the budget of the National Education Foundation for this purpose," he said.

Prime Minister Imran Khan also announced to introduce a countrywide education conditional cash transfer programme to address the problem of out-of-school children. "A second chance programme for girls will be designed by focusing on the expertise of local and international experts," he said. In addition, he said in the next five years, Rs15 billion will be made available for scholarships by the Higher Education Commission for PhDs, masters and Bachelor’s degrees.

Prime Minister Imran Khan also announced policies to benefit poor farmers. The federal government will exercise national leadership to ensure that tenant farmers have formal contracts with landlords and labour laws will be applicable to such tenant farmers," he said.

He also announced a number of overarching agriculture policies including a policy to help farmers with fragmented and small landholdings, crop diversification and value addition policy, incentivising local manufacturing of farm equipment, drip irrigation materials and solar equipment and promote joint ventures with seed companies and promote models to sell locally-produced saplings, subsidised seed and equipment for farmers. He said that he is instructing to prepare a six-monthly agriculture terms of trade report and constituting a committee on fair agriculture pricing. He also announced reducing the cost of agriculture inputs by minimising import duties and taxes and providing market stimulus for livestock and fisheries.

Imran Khan also shared a plan to set up a Labour Welfare Commission with representation from federal and provincial governments to develop a comprehensive plan for revolutionising labour social security and welfare systems. "The commission will submit its recommendations within three months," he said, also hoping to launch a pension scheme for the informal sector by the end of the term of this government.

Imran Khan said that the government has identified three areas where there is opportunity to create jobs including IT sector, TVET sector and sector of manpower export.

Speaking on this occasion, Chairperson Poverty Alleviation Coordination Council Sania Nishtar said that the poverty alleviation agenda of the government has been prepared after extensive consultation under the leadership of the prime minister. She presented the poverty statistics through maps showing development disparities in different parts of the country.

She said 25 percent people of the country, which means every fourth person, are living under poverty line and they are deprived of two-time meal. She said 40 percent people of the population lack basic facilities of life. She said 41 percent children could not grow up properly due to malnutrition.
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan addresses launching ceremony of Poverty Alleviation Programme. —APP
Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday launched a grand Poverty Alleviation Programme under the title of ‘Ehsas’ on war footings to uplift the economic conditions of the marginalised segments of the society. Addressing the launching ceremony of the programme here, the Prime Minister said a new ministry is being created with the title of Ministry for Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation. He said that it is the beginning of a mission to alleviate poverty and bring the destitute people above the line of poverty.

He said that the government would increase spending to bring out the poorest section of society highlighting the programme is reversion to Pakistan ideology under which our founding fathers had decided to establish a true Islamic welfare state.

The Prime Minister said that the first step towards implementation of ‘Ehsas’ programme is to amend Article 38-D of the Constitution under which provision of food, clothes, shelter and health will be treated as fundamental rights of the people.

He said that spending for the poor people is being increased to Rs 80 billion and this amount will be further increased every year up to Rs 120 billion.

All welfare organizations, including Pakistan Baitul Maal, Benazir Income Support Programme, and Poverty Alleviation Coordination Council, will be coordinated under the new ministry.

He said that data is being collected about income and poverty to correctly assess the poverty indicators.

The Prime Minister said ‘Ehsas’ program will include the component of Tahaffuz, under which, a survey will be conducted for financial assistance of the destitute people.

Similarly, saving accounts will be opened for 5.7 million poor women and mobile phones will be provided to these women for access to their bank accounts.

He said that the stipend of the poor women is being increased from Rs 5000 to Rs 5500.

He said that tehsil level hubs will be established for these women, where they will get access to their bank accounts and receive assistance in job search.

Imran Khan said another component of the programme is Tahaffuz under which, legal aid will be provided to any person in difficulty. Besides, assistance will also be provided to the destitute in health, education, and other sectors. Assistance will also be provided to the destitute widows, he added.

The Prime Minister said that partnership will be made with NGOs to help the poor segments.

He said that help will also be provided to stunted children, street children, gypsy children, transgender and bonded labour through public-private partnership.

“Pakistan is one of the country’s which collects the least amount of tax, however, the nation is among the top five for donations,” he added.

He said the state would take steps to ensure all marginalised groups are protected. The Prime Minister said Pakistan Baitul Maal has been assigned the task of funding homes for 10,000 children in the next four years.

He said health programme is also being launched to provide health cover to three point three million people in thirty-eight districts. He said that nine initiatives are being launched to overcome the nutrition problems of children with stunted growth.
PM rolls out Rs80b anti-poverty plan

Imran says ‘Ehsas’ programme will uplift vulnerable segments

OUR CORRESPONDENT
ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday rolled out a Rs80 billion poverty alleviation programme “Ehsas” — aimed at uplifting the downtrodden and vulnerable segments of society.

The government will allocate an additional amount of Rs80 billion in the country’s social protection spending in backward areas from the current year, raising it to Rs120 billion in 2021.

“TThe government has launched a war against poverty,” the prime minister said while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the programme.

He said an amendment would soon be made to the Constitution, moving Article 38(6) from the “Principles of Policy” section into the “Fundamental Rights” section.

This will make it a fundamental right for all citizens to be given food, anti-poverty plan, page 8
PM rolls out Rs80b anti-poverty plan

The prime minister also announced the establishment of a new ministry to alleviate poverty.

Various institutions like the Benazir Income Support Programme, the Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal and the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund will work under the new ministry, developing a one-window operation for the social protection of the poor and to facilitate citizens.

"Making the provision of food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief to citizens a state responsibility is a first step towards the creation of a welfare state," the prime minister said.

Under the "Kifalat" programme, the government is designing a conditional cash transfer for healthcare and education of millions of women and families so that they can have access to nutrition assistance. The prime minister said he was establishing a multi-sectoral nutrition coordinating body within his office. It will also include the private sector to ensure food fortification and supplementation, he added.

"Sanitation and clean water are essential to stop stunted growth in children. It is worrying to see how contaminated milk is being sold in different parts of the country," he noted.

Under the new programme, 5.7 million women will be given savings accounts under the "one woman one bank account plan". The government will increase the current Benazir Income Support Programme cash transfer of Rs5,000 to Rs5,500.

The government is launching a precision safety net, called "Tahafaz" to protect individuals from catastrophic risks - a transparent and trackable digital system of cash transfers through which the government will give legal aid, education grants and health assistance to those without Insaaf card entitlements.

Khan said the government had already committed to launching the Insaaf Insurance Card in 36 districts for 3.3 million people over a four-year period and had committed Rs3 billion for this purpose. In addition, through "Tahafaz", the government will cater to additional needs of those requiring financial access to treatment. The government will make sure every poor and deserving person approaching public hospitals has access to treatment and surgery.

The government will also set up shelter homes in several major cities of the country. The government's housing scheme will focus on facilitating provision of homes to the poor, including landless farmers, through interest-free loans. The government has allocated Rs4.5 billion for this purpose.

The Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal will establish five Ehsas homes this year, and the number would be raised by the passage of time.

"In the next four years, the Bait-ul-Mal will provide shelter for 10,000 orphaned children," Khan said.

Referring to the government's five million housing programme, Khan said the government would ensure that women were given joint ownership of houses.

The government has decided that migrant unskilled workers, earning less than a given income and who have not visited home for more than seven years, will be provided subsidy on air tickets." Khan announced.

He also announced an increase in the monthly living pension to Rs6,500. Biometric payments will be used for all labour pensioners from next year to counter pilferage.

The prime minister said being aware of the special problem of the inability to reach children where there were dispersed populations, the government would make e-learning content freely available online and use chat bots in local languages for displaced populations.

The government will allocate Rs3 billion per year for scholarships in the higher education particularly in backward areas. The prime minister also announced a policy of corporate farming to help farmers with fragmented and small land holdings.

This will provide market stimulus for livestock and fisheries in arid zones to create livelihood opportunities for small farmers.

The government will work on facilitating the expansion of microfinance services to reach remote areas.

It would include skill training in school curricula from 8th class.

The age of enrollment in technical training is also being decreased from 18 to 15 so that after matriculation and skill training can be started immediately.

To facilitate remittances, the government is introducing a slab for remitters of up to Rs6,000 with half of the existing tax.
PM launches Poverty Alleviation program 'Ehsas'

New ministry for social protection being set up; People from one area to be served under a ‘one-window operation’

Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Wednesday the government had begun a war against poverty as he rolled out a comprehensive programme ‘Ehsas’ to develop the lowest segment of society.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony of government’s poverty alleviation programme, he said an amendment would soon be made into the Constitution, making it a fundamental right for all citizens to be given food, shelter, education and health facilities by the state.

The prime minister said the government would increase spending to help the poor, adding that “a separate ministry will be established to alleviate poverty”.

He said a database was being created to ascertain the exact number of people currently below the poverty line. Pakistan, the prime minister added, was one of the countries which collected the least amount of tax; yet it was among the top five for donations.

He said the state would take steps to ensure all marginalised groups are protected, and will also roll out strategies to alleviate poverty in rural areas of the country. “In the next four years, the Baithul Maal must provide shelter for 10,000 orphaned children,” he said.

The PM said nine policies were formed for nutrition to bring an end to stunted growth, adding that sanitation and clean water were essential to stop stunted growth in children. “It is worrying to see how contaminated milk is being sold in different parts of the country,” he said.

The premier said the first change that would be brought under the poverty alleviation plan would be amending Article 38(D) of the Constitution which included a clause regarding providing people with food, shelter, clothing, education and taking care of their health.

But the provision in its current form is only a policy recommendation, Khan noted, saying that the government would need to bring an amendment in the Constitution and make it a “fundamental right” so the state can guarantee these five things to the people of Pakistan.

“This is the first step, it is a difficult task,” the premier said, adding that the government was putting the pressure on itself so that anyone will be able to go to the courts and say that this is their fundamental right.

Khan said under the programme, the money spent on underprivileged segments of society would be increased by Rs80 billion, and further by Rs120bn by 2020.

He announced that a new ministry for social protection and poverty alleviation was being set up which would work on the coordination of the programme’s implementation throughout Pakistan.
creatively how to increase the income of the people. We are also thinking to involve rickshaws for garbage disposal,” he said. The Prime Minister also cited the example of China in lifting 700 million people out of poverty trap in 30 years and congratulated Dr Sania Nishtar for developing a first of its kind programme in the country.

Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Dr Sania Nishtar said that the plan is about equality and opportunity for all, and lifting lagging areas at par with developed parts of the country in order to make sure that no one is left behind.

“It’s about investments in human capital. It’s about girls’ education, and economic empowerment of millions of women. It’s all about financial inclusion and access to digital services,” she maintained.

In the backdrop, Dr Nishtar also said that the programme is all about poverty alleviation not just through the safety net approach but also through job creation in areas where there are quick wins.

She said that the programme would be tapping whole of government, ensuring joint federal-provincial leadership, and mainstreaming the role of the private sector through an approach which will provide a level playing field on the one hand, and foster locally relevant innovation on the other.

Besides, she said that the principle resonates with the spirit of the sustainable development agenda. She said that the success of this plan will hinge on two factors: the speed with which Pakistan will control its population control, and the effectiveness of reform of governance, especially curbing elite capture. “Our Prime Minister is personally committed to both these areas,” she declared.

A short documentary was also screened on the issue of children with stunted growth on the occasion.
PM LAUNCHES AMBITIOUS POVERTY ALLEVIATION PLAN

IMRAN SAYS ‘EHSAS’ PROGRAMME WILL ENSURE PROVISION OF FOOD, SHELTER, EDUCATION AND HEALTH TO CITIZENS AS FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

DATABASE CONTAINING INCOME DETAILS OF CITIZENS TO BE LAUNCHED BY DECEMBER

ALSO ANNOUNCES ‘TAHAFUZ’ PROGRAMME TO HELP PEOPLE IN DIFFICULT TIMES BY PROVIDING THEM WITH LEGAL AID

ISLAMABAD
STAFF REPORT

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday launched ‘Ehsas’ (compassion), an ambitious social safety and poverty alleviation programme aimed at providing people with food, shelter, clothing, education and taking care of their health.

Speaking at a ceremony in Islamabad to kick off the programme, the premier said the first change that would be brought under the poverty alleviation plan would be amending Article 38(D) of the constitution, making it a fundamental right for all citizens to be given food, shelter, education and health facilities by the State. The prime minister noted that the provision in its current form is only a policy recommendation as the government would need to bring an amendment in the Constitution and make it a “fundamental right” so the State can guarantee these five things to the people of Pakistan.

“This is the first step, it is a difficult task,” the premier said, adding that the government was putting the pressure on itself so that anyone will be able to go to the courts and say that this was their fundamental right.

PM Khan said that the government would increase spending to help the poor, adding that a new ministry for social protection and poverty alleviation was being set up which would work on the coordination of the programme’s implementation throughout the country.

He said that the purpose of this move is to bring all organisations which are currently working on the same agenda under one umbrella as there is little or no coordination between these organisations.

He also said that in the first phase, the government is working on a database containing the income levels of the people and the number of indigent citizens residing in a particular area. “Once this data comes, we will coordinate all the organisations from one place,” he said. The prime minister added that everything will be made computerised using information technology and they would know which organisation is helping poor people in which area.

“We will run the poverty alleviation campaign in the country from one place,” he said, adding that people from one area would be served under a “one-window operation”. He also revealed that the government was conducting a new survey — which would be completed by December — on the basis of which people would be given financial aid. Until then, money will be distributed on the basis of a previous survey. Pakistan, the prime minister added, was one of the countries which collected the least amount of tax; yet it was among the top five for donations.

PM Khan said that under the programme, the government would increase the state’s spending on underprivileged segments of the society from Rs50 billion to Rs120 billion by 2020.

“No government has so far spent so much money on poverty alleviation,” he said. He said the state would take steps to ensure all marginalised groups are protected, and will also roll out strategies to alleviate poverty in rural areas of the country.

“In the next four years the Baithul Maaal must provide shelter for 10,000 orphaned children,” he said.

The premier announced the ‘Tahafuz’ (protection) programme which would help people in difficult times by providing them with legal aid.

Once legislation regarding the programme is completed, Imran Khan said, call centres will be set up to provide legal assistance to people as well as grants to children to want to study.

In addition, anyone who does not already have the Insaf health card will be able to call the Tahafuz programme office and the money will be organised for them. Widows without any source of income will also be in the database and assisted by the programme, the premier said. While on the subject of social safety, Prime Minister Khan disclosed that the government was not spending any money on the shelter homes it had set up in Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Peshawar, as people were coming forward themselves and donating money.

“IT is the first time that such a programme is coming to Pakistan. You will remember the day we launched this programme the day Pakistan becomes a great country,” he said with confidence.
Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday launched a Rs 80 billion comprehensive poverty alleviation programme "Ehsas", aimed at helping the downtrodden and vulnerable segments of society, including the poor, orphans, widows, homeless, disabled, undernourished and jobless.

Unveiling the salient features of the poverty alleviation programme, he said the government would allocate an additional amount of Rs 80 billion in the country's social protection spending in backward areas from the current year, which would be raised to Rs 120 billion in 2021.

The prime minister also announced the establishment of a new Ministry of Social Protection/Poverty Alleviation to address the current fragmentation. Various institutions like the BISP, PBM, Zakat, PPAF, etc would be working under that ministry. This will develop a one-window operation for social protection of the poor and to facilitate citizens, he added. He said the government would introduce a new constitutional amendment to move Article 38(6) into the "Principles of Policy" section to the "Fundamental Rights" section.

The change would make provision of food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief for the citizens, who could not earn a livelihood due to infirmity, sickness or unemployment, a state responsibility, the prime minister said, and described it as a first step towards the creation of a welfare state.

Imran, while realising that 25% to 40% of the people in Pakistan were suffering from poverty, said he wanted targeted subsidies, adding that the government would have a new survey of poverty to be completed by December this year.

He said the government was also launching a new programme "Kafaat" under the BISP, adding the new programme would have five pillars.

The prime minister said that under the new programme which was aimed at economic empowerment of women, 5.7 million women would be given savings accounts under the "one woman, one bank account plan". He said 500 BISP and Pakistan Baitul Mal (PBM) offices would be transformed into digital hubs where the government's IT, technology and innovation resources would be pooled in.

The government's digital resources, such as access to the labour information system, online curricula and one-window social protection interface would be accessible, which would create opportunities for BISP families to graduate out of poverty, he added.

Imran said the government would not just give money to the poor but link it with health and nutrition-related assistance, which would help address the problem of stunting among children.

He said the government had already committed to launching the Insaf Insurance Card in 38 districts for 3.3 million people over a four-year period and had committed Rs 33 billion for the purpose.

In addition, he said, through "Tahafaz" the government would cater to additional needs of those requiring financial access to treatment.

The government would make sure that every poor and deserving person approaching public hospitals had access to treatment and surgery, he added.

Imran said that as stunted growth was linked to malnutrition and poor sanitation, he had directed that de-worming drugs, iron folic acid and micro nutrient supplements of quality should be made available at all government hospitals and Basic Health Units (BHU). Awareness about breastfeeding should also be created in the rural areas, he added.

He referred to a survey and tests of unpacked milk conducted in a city and said it showed 75% adulteration. The government would launch a pilot programme to ensure the availability of pure milk initially in Islamabad and Lahore, he added.

He said that with an aim to help poor village women earn their livelihood, the government would provide them with buffaloes, cows, goats and hens. It was a test method of poverty alleviation worldwide, he added.

He said provision of goats could be both income generating and nutrition boosting.

Similarly, he said a kitchen gardening initiative would also be introduced, where subsidised certified seed and seedlings would be provided through the entrepreneurial model as well as corporate social responsibility.

The premier, besides urging the edible oil companies to give seed packets along with oil cans, also directed the Utility Stores to do likewise. He regretted that during the last 10 years of democracy, the country's debt swelled to Rs 30,000 billion from Rs 6,000 billion, and added that Rs 6 billion a day was paid as interest on those loans, he added.
PM launches Rs 80bn poverty alleviation programme ‘Ehsas’ to protect vulnerable segments

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Imran Khan Wednesday launched a Rs 80 billion comprehensive poverty alleviation programme “Ehsas” aimed at helping the downtrodden and vulnerable segments of the society, including the poor, orphans, widows, homeless, disabled, undernourished, jobless etc.

Unveiling the salient features the poverty alleviation programme here, he said the government would allocate an additional amount of Rs 80 billion in the country’s social protection spending in backward areas from the current year, which would be raised to Rs 120 billion in 2021.

The Prime Minister also announced the establishment a new Ministry of Social Protection/Poverty Alleviation to address the current fragmentation. Various institutions like the BISP, BMM, Zakaat, PPAF etc. would be working under that ministry, which would develop a one-window operation for social protection of the poor and to facilitate citizens, he added. He said the government would introduce a new constitutional amendment to move Article 38(d) from the “Principles of Policy” section into the “Fundamental Rights” section.

The change would make provision of food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief for the citizens, who could not earn a living due to infirmity, sickness or unemployment, a state responsibility, the Prime Minister said and described it as first step towards the creation of a welfare state.

Prime Minister Imran Khan while realizing that 25% to 40% of people in Pakistan were suffering from poverty, the government wanted targeted subsidies, adding, the government would have a new survey of poverty to be completed by December this year.

He said the government was also launching a new program “Kafalat” under the Benazir Income Support Program, adding, the new program would have five pillars.

The prime minister said under the new program which was aimed at economic empowerment of women, 5.7 million women would be given savings accounts under the “one woman one bank account plan”.

He said 500 BISP and Pakistan Bait ul Mal (PBM) offices would be transformed into digital hubs where the government’s IT, technology and innovation resources would be pooled.

The government’s digital resources, such as access to the labor information system, online curricula, and one window social protection interface would be accessible and create opportunities for BISP families to graduate out of poverty, he added.

The prime minister said the government would not just give money to the poor but link it with health, and nutrition-related assistance, which would help address stunting of children.

He said, under Kiflat, the government would raise the current cash transfer of Rs5,000 to Rs5,500.

He said the government was launching a precision safety net, called “Tahafaz” to protect individuals from catastrophic risks—a transparent and trackable digital system of cash transfers through which the government would give legal aid, education grants and health assistance to those without Insaf card entitlements.

He said the government also had plans to graduate BISP beneficiaries out of poverty for the most backward districts, adding, a program for asset transfers worth Rs5 billion in five districts had additionally been launched through Kiflat.

The Prime Minister said the government would use the social mobilization skills of the rural support programs and their network of community nurseries for this purpose. In Tahafaz, he said the government would provide assistance to poor widows who had no source of income and no earning children. To help the most marginalized segments of the society, he said, his government would partner with organizations that support street children, seasonal migrants, transgender, victims of child and bonded labor and daily wage workers who do not find daily work.

He said in order to provide a secure future for the orphans, the PBM would expand its network of Ehsas homes for children to provide decent living, food, education and health facilities to 10,000 children in four years.

The prime minister said the government would also help upscale reputed private institutions for orphans, so that the government could fulfill its objectives of serving the poor.

He said the government had already committed to launching the Insaf Insurance Card in 38 districts for 3.3 million people over a four-year period and had committed Rs33 billion for this.

In addition, he said, the government would continue to provide additional needs of those requiring financial access to treatment.

The government would make sure every poor and deserving person approached public hospitals had access to treatment and surgery, he added.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said as the stunted growth was linked with malnutrition and poor sanitation, the government had directed that de-worming drugs, iron folie acid and micro nutrient supplements of quality should be made available at all government hospitals and BUs (Basic Health Units).

Awareness about breast-feeding should also be created in rural areas, he added.

He referred to a survey and tests of unpacked milk conducted in a city and said it showed 75% adulteration. The government would launch a pilot programme to ensure the availability of pure milk initially in Islamabad and Lahore, he added.

The Prime Minister said with an aim to help poor villagers women to earn their livelihood, the government would provide them with buffaloes, cows, goats and hens.

It was a worldwide tried and tested method of poverty alleviation, he added.

He said asset transfer of goats could be both income-generating as well as nutrition boosting.

Similarly, he said a kitchen gardening initiative would also be introduced where subsidized, certified seed and seedlings would be promoted both through the entrepreneur model as well as CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility).
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