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PRESS RELEASE

**Strengthening of Tobacco Control Law a Must for Tobacco-free Bangladesh
Agriculture Minister in Meeting with PROGGA-ATMA**

The initiative to strengthen the tobacco control law to curb tobacco use is a timely one. Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, the agriculture minister said this today (9 November 2022, Wednesday) while meeting a delegation from research and advocacy organization PROGGA (Knowledge for Progress) and ATMA (Anti-Tobacco Media Alliance) at the Secretariat. The meeting was organized to inform the agriculture minister about the progress made by the Health Ministry with regard to the amendment and the potential role the Agriculture Ministry can play in the process. During the meeting the minister said, his ministry stands with full support behind the Health Ministry's proposals for tobacco control law amendment.

During the meeting, PROGGA and ATMA informed that currently the prevalence of tobacco use stands at 35.3 percent (37.8 million) of the adult population (15 y/o and above). Tobacco-induced deaths and diseases cost the economy dearly since the financial toll is much higher than the revenue generated from tobacco sector. Realizing the extent of tobacco's devastation, the Honorable Prime Minister voiced her commitment to build a tobacco-free country by 2040 and accordingly provided the directive to bring time-fitting changes to the tobacco control law. Following clear directive from the HPM, the Health Ministry took the initiative to amend the law. Some of the proposals included in the draft amendment are eliminating Designated Smoking Areas (DSAs) in all public places and public transport, banning the display of tobacco products, banning so-called corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs of tobacco companies, banning the sale of loose tobacco products, banning the production, import and sale of e-cigarettes and other vaping products and increasing the area allotted for graphic health warning (GHW) to 90 percent from existing 50 percent.

The discussants of the event included Md. Mostafizur Rahman, Bangladesh Lead Policy Advisor, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK), Nadira Kiron and Mizanur Rahman, both co-conveners of ATMA, ABM Zubair, Executive Director, PROGGA and Md. Hasan Shahriar, Program Head, PROGGA.

Message Sender

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