

## Textiles and Jute Minister's support for strengthening and amendment Tobacco Control Act- TCRC team met with the Minister



Tobacco seriously threatens public health, social degradation, the economy, and the environment. According to a study by the Bangladesh Cancer Society in 2018, the government's revenue from tobacco in the fiscal year 2017-18 was about Tk 22,000 crore, while the cost of treating tobacco-related diseases was Tk 30,570 crore in the same fiscal year. Every year about 99 thousand 600 acres of land in the country is cultivated with tobacco. However, although the government's export income from the daily essential product 'clothes' is 31.6 billion US dollars, cotton is grown on only 8,430 acres of land in the country. From which 1 lakh 37 thousand 990 bales of cotton are produced, which is only 2% of the total demand. Bangladesh needs about 85 lakh bales of cotton every year while about 80 lakh bales of cotton have to be imported, the import value of which is more than 35 thousand crore takas. If cotton is cultivated on tobacco land, it is possible to produce more cotton than the current production by about thirteen and a half (13) times or about 15% of the total demand. Which will help to reduce the import cost by about 6000 crore rupees. If cotton can be grown on tobacco land, it will be profitable for the country and the government will play a special role in protecting public health.

A delegation of the Tobacco Control and Research Cell (TCRC) and Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance met with Mr. Golam Dastgir Ghazi, MP, Minister, Ministry of Textile and Jute on 12 February 2023. They discussed cotton cultivation as an alternative to tobacco cultivation. Minister said he will support strengthening the tobacco control law and increasing cotton cultivation in tobacco farming land.

The honorable minister said that the process of amending the law to strengthen the law on the need for tobacco control is ongoing and I and my ministry have full support in this regard. Hon'ble Prime Minister's dream to build a tobacco-free Bangladesh by 2040 will always have the support of our Ministry in tobacco control activities. At the same time, he also talked about the initiative to grow

cotton on tobacco land. He said it will contribute to the increase of cotton production and meet the shortage of cotton in the country. We will work with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Commerce in this regard.

Project Director and Associate Professor of Tobacco Control and Research Cell (TCRC), Dhaka International University Md. Bazlur Rahman, Project Manager Farhana Zaman Liza, Project Manager of the Bureau of Economic Research, Dhaka University Hamidul Islam Hillol, Project Officer of TCRC Md. Zulhas Ahmed, Bivuti Bhuson Mahato, and the Project Officer of Work for a Better Bangladesh (WBB) Trust Md. Samiul Hasan Sajib were present at the meeting.