



16th May 2022

TIP22/0516/1A

Mr. Abdul Qadir Patel,
Federal Minister,
Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination,
Islamabad.

Subject: Complaint on an illegally engineered shortage of paracetamol to create space for a new, high-dosage variant of the medicine, which is injurious to health of citizens and being sold at three times higher price.

Dear Sir,

Transparency International Pakistan has received a complaint an illegally engineered shortage of paracetamol in Pakistan to create space for a new, high-dosage variant of paracetamol, which is injurious to the health of citizens and being sold at three times higher price.

The complainant has made the following allegations that;

- For more than a year, Pakistan has been continuously facing a shortage of paracetamol painkillers. This shortage is being artificially created by the pharmaceutical companies to pave the wave for a new, high-dosage variant of the paracetamol medicine.
- The new variant i.e. Panadol 665mg, which is banned in the world, is injurious to the health of people, but is being sold in Pakistan.
- The price of Panadol 500mg tablet is Rs1.70 whereas the 665mg variant of Panadol is being sold for as high as Rs5.68.
- In the last four years, the price of Panadol 500mg tablet has already increased from Re0.90 to Rs1.70 which means the new variant is being sold at an exorbitant price of more than 500%.
- **By increasing the price of Panadol and other such tablets, the producers are likely to generate Rs17.095 billion in annual profit.**
- Allegation of involvement of high level government functionaries is also been reported in newspapers of 6 May 2022 (**Annex-A**).

Transparency International Pakistan Comments

Transparency International Pakistan has examined the complaint and prima facie complainant allegations seem to be correct. It may be noted that Paracetamol 665mg is banned across Europe and in different countries and will bring serious health implications for the Pakistani citizens.



Transparency International Pakistan Recommendations

Transparency International Pakistan request the Federal Minister National Health Services Regulations and Coordination to examine the allegations and if found to be correct, take immediate action to give relief to the citizens of Pakistan, as the paracetamol 500mg price will be reduced by at least over 500% for the citizens along with its proper availability in the market.

Transparency International Pakistan is striving for cross the board application of Rule of Law, which is the only way to stop corruption, and achieve against Zero tolerance against corruption.

Regards,

Ms. Yasmeen Lari
Sitara-e-Imtiaz, Hilal-e- Imtiaz
Chairperson
Transparency International Pakistan

Justice (Rtd) Nasira Iqbal
Vice Chair, Sitara-e-Imtiaz
Transparency International Pakistan

Copies forwarded for the information with request to take action under their mandate to:

1. Prime Minister of Pakistan, PM House, Islamabad (for personal action)
2. CEO Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan, Islamabad
3. Chairman, NAB, Islamabad
4. Registrar, Supreme Court of Pakistan, Islamabad

Annex-A

BUSINESS RECORDER

Founded by M.A. Zuberi

[DRAP received 'bribe' to register 'globally-banned paracetamol', claims PYPA](#)

[Abdul Rasheed Azad](#) 06 May, 2022

ISLAMABAD: While drawing attention to the serious shortage of fever and painkiller tablets, paracetamol in the country, the Pakistan Young Pharmacist Association (PYPA) in a letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has alleged that the senior officials of the Drug Regulatory Authority Pakistan (DRAP) have received bribe to register globally banned paracetamol 665mg at an extremely exorbitant price in the country.

Furqan Ibrahim, general secretary of PYPA, in a letter to the PM has alleged senior DRAP officials of illegally allowing heavy advertisement of banned Panadol 665mg.

The PYPA has mentioned that Panadol 665mg was registered in Pakistan when European countries banned this drug throughout Europe. These are extremely evil affairs of the DRAP mafia; they do not bother about the lives of Pakistanis just for money and register those drugs in Pakistan, which are banned all over the world due to serious side effects.

The PYPA has mentioned that by increasing the price of Panadol and other such tablets, the producers are likely to generate Rs17.095 billion in annual profit.

The letter by the PYPA to the PM, a copy of which is available with Business Recorder, reads, “DRAP Mafia was having the full support of Farah Khan (front person of Mrs Imran Khan), Azam Khan former principal secretary to PM, Arif Alvi, President of Pakistan, Imran Ismail, former governor Sindh, Zahid Saeed (Imran Ismail’s cousin and owner of Indus Pharma), Ansar Farooq, former advisor to governor Punjab (9,000kg Ephedrine seller), Pervez Elahi, and former chief justice Saqib Nisar etc.”

The PYPA further alleged that the Federal Secretary and the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister took an alleged bribe of Rs2 billion to register and award a price of Rs5.68 per tablet to Panadol 665mg in Pakistan.

It further says, “This is with reference to our letters dated: 12 March 2022, 16 March 2022, 25 March 2022, 11 April 2022, 23 April 2022, 29 April 2022 and media reports on 14 March 2022, 18 March 2022, 22 March 2022 and 8 April 2022. DRAP Mafia (Dr Faisal Sultan former Special Assistant to Prime Minister, Aamir Ashraf Khawaja Secretary Ministry of National Health Services, Asim Rauf Chief Executive Officer DRAP, Obaidullah acting Director Registration and acting Director Admin DRAP, Sayed Hussain Deputy Director DRAP, Abdullah Secretary Registration Board DRAP, Mr Hafiz Bilal bin Akbar Assistant Director DRAP, Amanullah Director Pricing DRAP, entire Registration Board DRAP and entire Pricing Committee DRAP allegedly took a bribe of Rs2 billion to register Panadol 665mg (which is reportedly banned in entire Europe and not registered in USA, Canada and Japan).”

The PYPA letter, while talking about the shortage of the fever and painkiller tablets in the country, said, “the medicine (Panadol) is out of the market, the reason was very simple. When 01 paisa price increases of Panadol, it means that profit increases by around Rs50 million per annum. In the last four years, the price increased from Rs0.9 per tablet to Rs1.7 per tablet of Panadol, which means that $80 \times 50 = \text{Rs}4$ billion rupees per annum. The demand of Panadol increased by the outbreak of Covid-19; the lust increases.”

The shortage of Panadol 500mg tablet in the market is a successful effort to convert patients to Panadol 665mg, when a patient goes to a pharmacy, the salesman motivates the patient to use a better version of Panadol, ie, Panadol extend 665mg. After calculating the price by unity method the price of

Panadol 665 mg per tablet must be Rs2.261 which in the market is available at Rs5.68 per tablet thus, Rs3.419 is profiteering per tablet.

The PYPA has prayed that a comprehensive criminal probe may be started against the DRAP mafia, health officials, the secretary of National Health Services, the former Special Assistant to the Prime Minister and all the pharmaceutical companies involved in the loot and playing with the lives of Pakistanis; and the looted money may be recovered, and the ad of Panadol 665mg on TV must be immediately stopped, and money transferred out of Pakistan (money laundering) may be brought to Pakistan, and stop DRAP to increase the price of Panadol 500mg; reduce the price of Panadol to 90 paisas per tablet, and Panadol 665mg must be immediately withdrawn from the market.

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