

A series of investigations has exposed how pharmaceutical companies are not only paying doctors to prescribe their products, but also providing them with countless material benefits from cars, houses to overseas trips, home décor, and even daily groceries.

The unethical practice appears sanctioned at the highest echelons, with at least one company chairman personally issuing such cheques, many to departmental heads of hospitals. The operation also involves improper activities by banking officials who try to cover up the paper trail of the cheques. The sprawling operation is not only rife in Chittagong, where the investigation was carried out, but can be linked to nationwide activities of other pharmaceuticals.