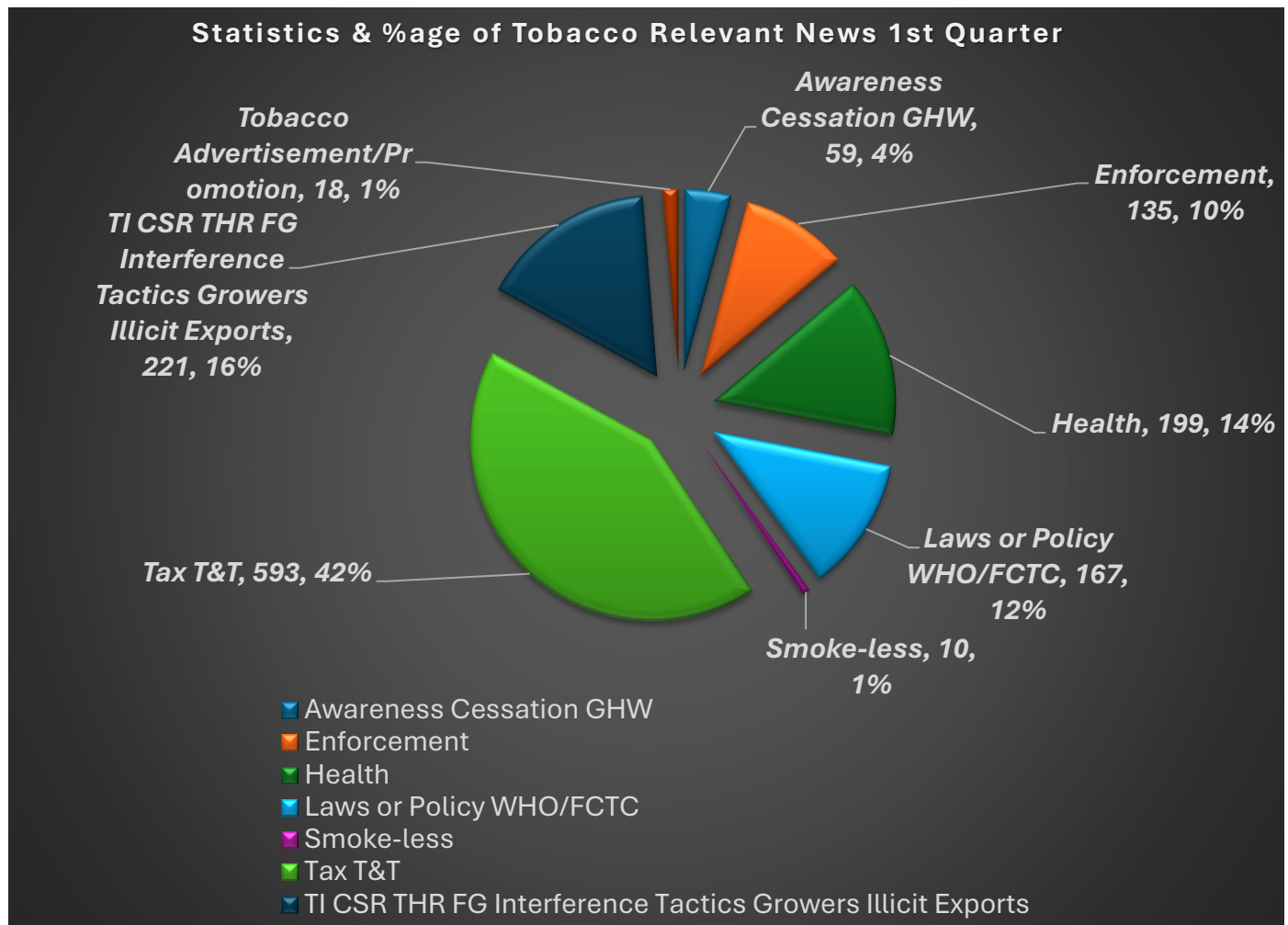


**National Print & Digital Media Monitoring Report
Quarter 1 of March-May 2024**

**Prepared by Society for Alternative Media and Research
(SAMAR)**

SAMAR National Print & Digital Media Monitoring Report Quarter 1 of March-May 2024



During Quarter 1 (March–May 2024) a total of **1,426** news items were monitored, of which **221** were directly relevant to the tobacco industry. Of the industry-relevant items, **50** covered Tobacco Industry (TI) developments and **143** focused on Tobacco Tactics, indicating heavy reporting on industry strategies to influence public opinion and policy. Regulatory and fiscal topics were prominent: **593** articles addressed Tobacco Tax & Price and Track & Trace (537 on tax & price, 56 on track & trace), while **167** items covered Laws or Policy (WHO/FCTC). Enforcement reporting increased substantially with **135** enforcement items recorded, and health topics remained significant with **199** health-related stories (155 on tobacco and health, 42 on vaping and health, 2 on nicotine and health). Other categories meeting the frequency threshold included Awareness (**22**), Cessation (**25**), Pictorial Health Warnings/Packaging Labels (**12**), Tobacco Advertisement/Promotion (**18**), Smoke-less (**10**), and Others (**25**). Overall, Quarter 1 was dominated by fiscal and regulatory discourse around taxation and track-and-trace, concurrent with strong media attention on industry tactics and a notable rise in enforcement coverage.

Key category summaries (most frequent themes observed for categories with ≥ 10 items):

- **Tobacco Tax & Price (537):** Pre-budget debates and industry lobbying dominated coverage, with frequent reporting on calls for tax adjustments, arguments about illicit cigarettes, and proposals to change tax distribution among manufacturers.
- **Tobacco Tactics (143):** Media frequently documented the industry's strategic narratives — framing illicit trade to argue for tax relief, promoting harm-reduction narratives, and deploying public-facing campaigns to influence regulators.
- **Laws or Policy / WHO-FCTC (167):** Coverage centered on national and international policy moves, court rulings and legislative debates, plus reporting on international developments and WHO guidance influencing domestic policy discourse.
- **Enforcement (135):** Most items reported operational activity — raids, seizures (notably gutka and illicit cigarettes), factory inspections, and legal actions against non-compliant manufacturers and sellers.
- **Health (199):** Articles spotlighted the health burden of tobacco use, epidemiological findings and cost estimates, and growing coverage of vaping-related health concerns.
- **Tobacco Industry (TI) (50):** Corporate developments, company statements, delistings, and industry responses to regulation and enforcement formed the bulk of coverage.
- **Cessation (25):** Reporting focused on availability of cessation services, calls for stronger quit supports, and occasional coverage of cessation campaigns and programs.
- **Awareness (22):** Public awareness activities by anti-tobacco advocates — including World No Tobacco Day events and advocacy messaging urging stronger tobacco control — were the most common themes besides increasing tax.
- **Others (25):** Miscellaneous items included business, export, farmer/livelihood mentions and other tobacco-adjacent stories that did not fit primary categories.
- **Tobacco Advertisement/Promotion (18):** Coverage chiefly concerned celebrity mentions, advertising campaigns, and promotional activity around tobacco or vaping products.
- **Pictorial Health Warnings / Packaging Labels (12):** Stories reported on proposals and debates concerning health warnings and label reforms.
- **Smoke-less (10):** Coverage included news on alternative products (pouches) and related debates (policy or market developments).