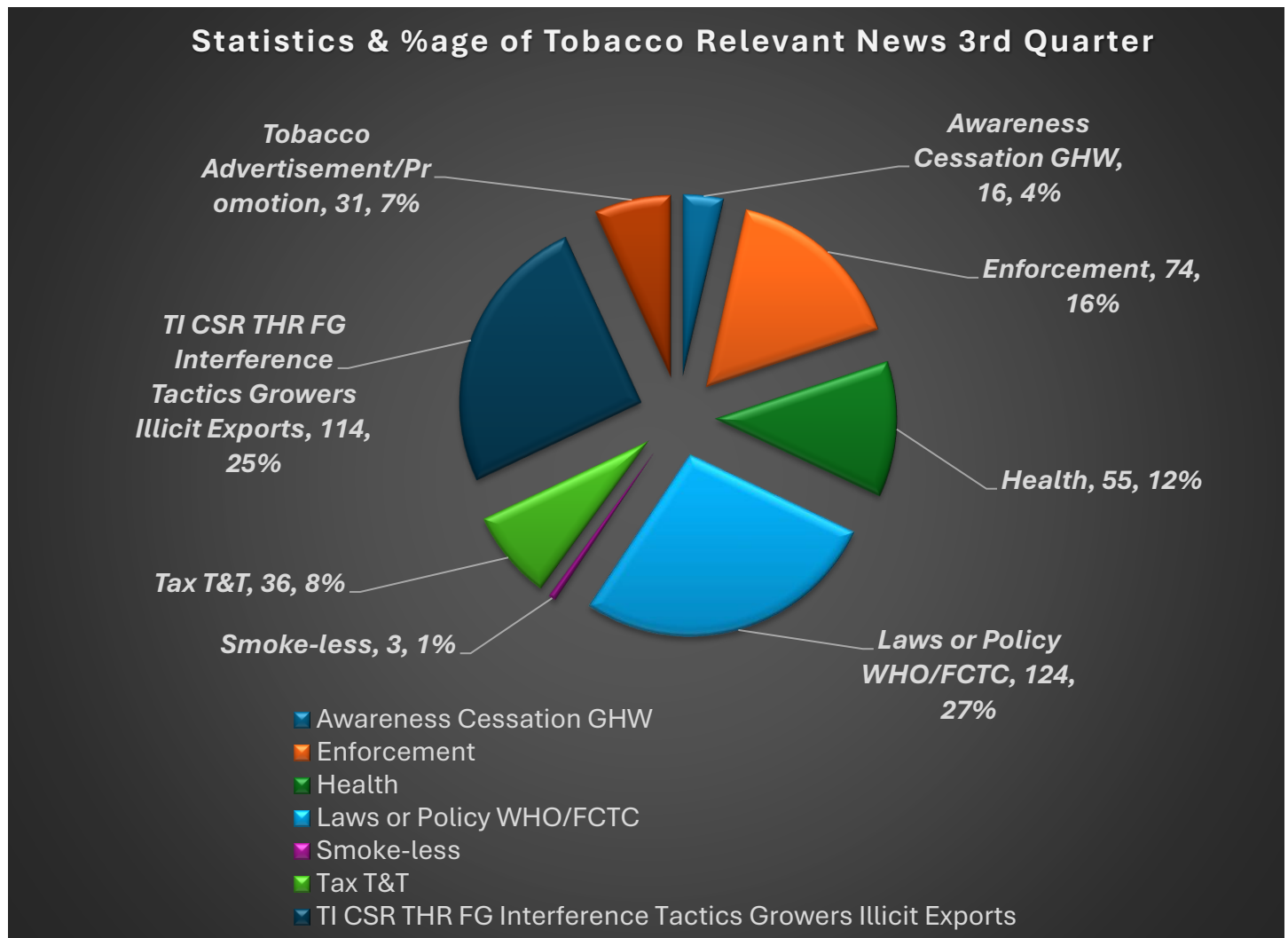


**National Print & Digital Media Monitoring Report
Quarter 3 of September-November 2024**

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

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During Quarter 3 (September–November 2024), a total of **460 news items** were monitored, of which **114 were directly relevant to the tobacco industry**. These included **6 TI**, **28 Tobacco Harm Reduction**, **8 CSR**, **30 Industry Front Group**, **0 Industry Interference**, **30 Tobacco Tactics**, **5 Exports**, **1 Growers**, and **6 Smuggling/Illicit Trade** items. Beyond industry-specific categories, **124 news items** focused on **Laws or Policy (WHO/FCTC)**, while **74 items** were related to **Enforcement**. Taxation and pricing remained visible with **36 items** (23 on tobacco tax & price, 13 on track & trace). Awareness and cessation generated **7** and **8** items respectively. Health-related coverage totaled **55 items**, including **41 Tobacco & Health**, **13 Vaping & Health**, and **1 Nicotine & Health**. Additionally, **31 items** covered **Tobacco Advertisement/Promotion**, and **12 items** fell under **Other Tobacco News**.

Key category summaries (most frequent themes observed for categories with ≥10 items):**Laws or Policy / WHO-FCTC (124):**

Policy-focused reporting dominated this quarter. Articles frequently covered provincial bans, regulatory notifications, and official statements emphasizing compliance with WHO-FCTC obligations. Many stories addressed proposed restrictions on e-cigarettes, enhanced licensing requirements, and calls from health organizations urging stronger national policy implementation. Courts and provincial administrations were often referenced in relation to enforcement of regulatory frameworks.

Tobacco Industry Front Group (30):

A notable rise in front-group activity was observed, with several stories highlighting associations, farmer-linked bodies, and advocacy coalitions issuing statements aligned with industry narratives. These groups often framed taxation as harmful to livelihoods, emphasized the issue of illicit trade, or promoted “harm reduction” talking points to influence public perception and policymakers.

Tobacco Tactics (30):

Media coverage captured a wide range of strategic communication efforts by the tobacco industry and its affiliates. Articles reported attempts to shape tax policy debates, promote alternative products, support lobbying efforts via sponsored research, and argue economic contributions. Several items revealed coordinated talking points aimed at influencing legislative outcomes and positioning the industry as a stakeholder in public health discussions.

Enforcement (74):

Enforcement reporting remained focused on raids and operational actions against illicit cigarette manufacturing, gutka/naswar suppliers, and smuggled tobacco consignments. Police, food authorities, and customs agencies were involved in recovering banned substances, sealing illegal units, and arresting individuals. Many stories documented heavy volumes of gutka and betel-nut seizures, along with destruction of confiscated contraband to discourage recurrence.

Health – Tobacco & Health (41):

Coverage stressed medical warnings, disease burden, and research findings linking tobacco use to chronic illnesses. Doctors and public health experts highlighted risks for youth and women, and there was increased reporting on economic costs of tobacco-driven disease. Several articles also linked tobacco use to rising non-communicable diseases and called for preventive policy action.

Tobacco Harm Reduction (28):

A significant portion of coverage reflected competing claims about harm reduction products. Some stories featured advocacy promoting alternative nicotine products as safer options, while others questioned the scientific credibility of such claims. Media reporting also highlighted regulatory uncertainty surrounding e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products.

Tobacco Advertisement/Promotion (31):

Stories documented cases of promotional activity, celebrity visibility, and indirect advertising through social media, events, or product displays. Some reports criticized brands for targeting youth audiences or using subtle promotional cues that circumvented regulatory restrictions.

Tobacco Tax & Price (23):

Debates around taxation focused on the economic implications of tax adjustments, industry claims regarding smuggling, and arguments by health advocates that higher taxes remain the most effective tool for reducing consumption. Some items included pre-budget commentary and revenue projections linked to prospective tax reforms.

Track & Trace (13):

Coverage emphasized the performance and challenges of the national track-and-trace system. Articles discussed compliance issues, enforcement gaps, and calls to strengthen monitoring technologies. Several items noted discrepancies in system implementation at manufacturing and distribution points.

Others Tobacco News (12):

Miscellaneous stories covered business updates, export mentions, smallholder farmer concerns, and community-level issues linked to tobacco cultivation or distribution, not fitting neatly into major categories.