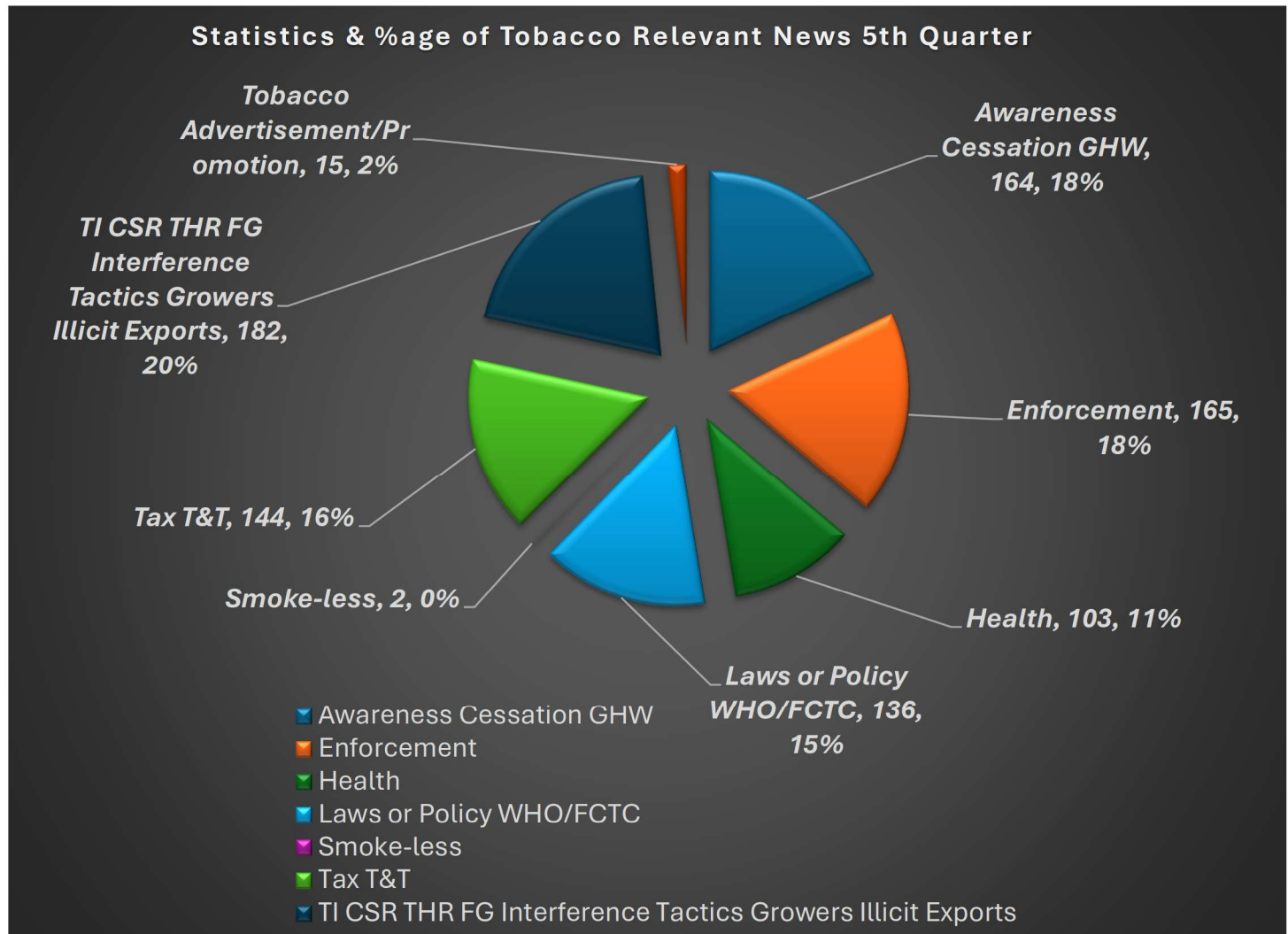


**National Print & Digital Media Monitoring Report
Quarter 5 of March-May 2025**

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

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During Quarter 5 (March 2025–May 2025), a total of **941 news items** were monitored, of which **182 were directly relevant to the tobacco industry**. These included **11 TI, 10 Tobacco Harm Reduction, 7 CSR, 21 Industry Front Group, 1 Industry Interference, 107 Tobacco Tactics, 17 Exports, 7 Growers, and 1 Smuggling/Illicit Trade** item. Beyond industry-related content, **136 items** focused on **Laws or Policy (WHO/FCTC)** while **165 news** highlighted **Enforcement**. Taxation and pricing coverage remained significant with **144 items** (136 on tobacco tax & price and 8 on track & trace). Awareness and cessation generated **155** and **7** items respectively. Health-related reporting totaled **103 items** (62 Tobacco & Health, 29 Vaping & Health, and 12 Nicotine & Health). Additionally, **15 items** covered **Tobacco Advertisement/Promotion**, and **30 items** were classified under **Other Tobacco News**.

Key category summaries (categories with ≥10 items)

Tobacco Tactics (107)

Media coverage intensively documented the tobacco industry's strategies to shape public and policymaker perceptions. Common narratives included framing illicit trade as the primary barrier to revenue collection, portraying tax increases as harmful to farmers and the economy, and leveraging NGOs, business groups, and third-party voices to promote industry-aligned arguments. Several articles highlighted misleading claims, selective economic data, and sophisticated communication tactics designed to weaken support for stronger regulation.

Awareness (155)

Awareness coverage was dominated by **public awareness activities by anti-tobacco advocates**, including NGOs, youth groups, district administrations, universities, SDPI, community organizations, and health professionals. Many items reported seminars, workshops, cycling rallies, panel discussions, public speeches, school programs, anti-drug campaigns, and awareness sessions exposing tobacco harms and industry manipulation. Some stories highlighted research-based advocacy calling for higher taxes and stronger regulation.

(No pro-industry awareness items were identified; if any appear in future datasets, the report will classify them as "Public awareness activities by the tobacco industry.")

Laws or Policy / WHO-FCTC (136)

This quarter saw strong policy-oriented reporting. Articles covered government deliberations on strengthening regulations, introducing stricter packaging and labeling standards, and tightening control on nicotine products. Coverage included calls from international and local health organizations urging alignment with WHO-FCTC commitments, provincial notifications on public smoking bans, and discussions on licensing rules for retailers and manufacturers. Administrative enforcement of tobacco-control laws was also frequently highlighted.

Enforcement (165)

Enforcement-related stories reported continuous raids, seizures, and crackdowns targeting illicit cigarettes, gutka, naswar, betel nut, and non-duty-paid products. Police, customs, ANF, district administrations, and food authorities were frequently mentioned in operations involving factory closures, arrests of suppliers, confiscation of machinery, and destruction of illegal stockpiles. Many articles showcased government efforts to disrupt smuggling networks and curtail the illegal tobacco market.

Tobacco Tax & Price (136)

Tax-related coverage continued to be prominent, with debates focusing on revenue gains, affordability issues, and the relationship between taxation and illicit trade. Industry-linked voices claimed tax increases fuel smuggling, while public health experts emphasized taxation as the most effective tool to reduce consumption and raise revenue. Discussions around federal budget proposals, suggested reforms, and projections of fiscal impact were widely reported.

Health (103) – Tobacco & Health / Vaping & Health / Nicotine & Health

Health reporting highlighted the rising disease burden caused by tobacco and newer nicotine products. Many items cited doctors and medical experts warning about cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory harm, and youth addiction. Several articles documented hospital observations, research findings, and public health statements urging caution regarding e-cigarettes, vapes, and nicotine pouches. Vaping-related harms and youth exposure were recurring themes.

Tobacco Industry Front Group (21)

These stories showed front groups amplifying industry-friendly arguments, often presenting themselves as representing farmers, small businesses, or economic stakeholders. Many items reflected narratives opposing tax increases, urging “support” for growers, or warning about job losses—messaging consistent with industry interests.

Tobacco Harm Reduction (10)

Coverage featured mixed viewpoints. Some stories promoted alternative nicotine products as safer options, while others questioned the credibility of harm-reduction claims. Several articles highlighted regulatory uncertainty and concerns about youth uptake.

Others (30)

This category included agriculture-related updates, academic discussions, administrative notices, community issues, and general tobacco-market developments not captured by primary categories.

Tobacco Advertisement/Promotion (15)

These items documented instances of indirect advertising, brand visibility, promotional events, celebrity mentions, and marketing of nicotine products—often raising concerns about youth appeal and regulatory loopholes.