PRINT MEDIA ANALYSIS

FACTSHEET | ALCOHOL & DRUG INFORMATION CENTRE (ADIC)

July 2026

Introduction

Since 2005, ADIC conducts daily surveillance on print media and produce a monthly analysis of references regarding alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, heroin and other drugs (ATOD) occurring in selected print media in the three mediums – Sinhala, Tamil and English. This “Print Media Analysis” leads to monitoring and identifying the prevailing/ current trends and patterns related to alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, heroin and other drug reporting. It also identifies the current attitudes and the behavior of the media and media personnel with regard to ATOD. The current fact sheet is an analysis of three Sinhala newspapers during the month of July.

Newspapers analyzed **84**

Lankadeepa	29
Divaina	31
Dinamina	24

Prevention – Improve correct knowledge on ATOD, its industries and effective prevention

Promotion - Glamorizing the substance, industry image building, surrogate advertising, social beliefs, unfair privileges and promotion through prevention.

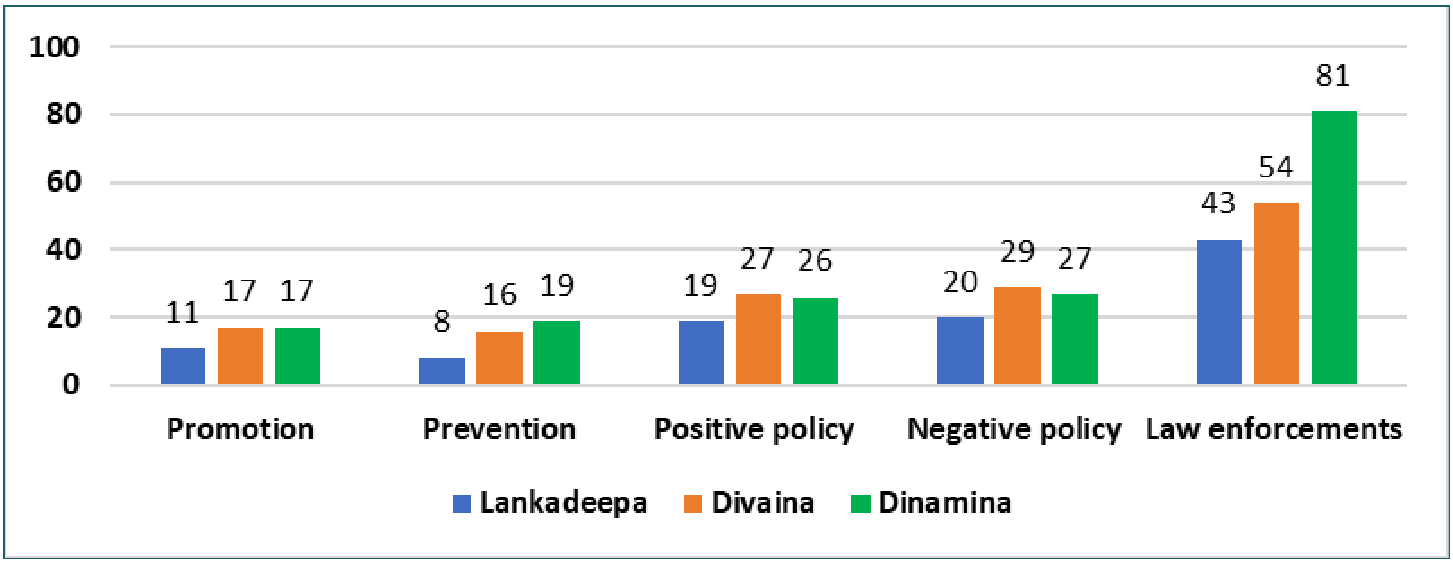
Positive policy – Supporting implementation and formulation, of ATOD control policies.

Negative policy – Undermining formulation & implementation of ATOD control policies

Law enforcement - Legal actions taken by the authorities when ATOD related laws & regulations are violated

Non Category – Specifically does not include policy, prevention or promotion of any drug but it provides information on ATOD through words or pictures.

Analysis of Weekday and Weekend Sinhala Newspapers



KEY OBSERVATIONS


මේ ආණ්ඩුව ගොවියාට බදු බර දී සිගරැට් සමාගම්වලට බදු සහන දීලා

විපක්ෂ නායක සජිත් ප්‍රේමදාස

"Tobacco industry gets a break, while farmers face higher costs"

On July 14th, Lankadeepa reported how the Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa stated that cigarette companies received almost Rs. 9.2 billion in tax relief between January and July 2026, while farmers continue to face tax burdens on essential agricultural equipment. He has expressed his concerns on the government enabling tax benefits to the tobacco industry while failing to extend concessions to support the farming sector. His argument reflects concerns over the irregularities in the tobacco tax structure in Sri Lanka, where the effective tax share of cigarettes has declined over the years. According to a recent analysis by *Verite Research*, the tax share of the retail price of cigarettes fell from 74% in 2018 to 66.8% in 2026, below the WHO-recommended 75% benchmark. The analysis estimates that restoring cigarette taxation to this level could generate an additional Rs. 17.3 billion in annual government revenue, highlighting the significant revenue loss associated with the current approach to cigarette taxation.

"Same Old Arguments of the Tobacco Industry is Now Used to Promote E-Cigarettes"


ඊ දුම්වැටි තහනම් කිරීම නීති විරෝධී වෙළඳපොළ

A Divaina article argued that banning e-cigarettes could increase illegal trade — a familiar argument used by the tobacco industry to oppose regulation and now being used to promote e-cigarettes in Sri Lanka. The industry weaponizes the "threat" of the black market against any policy that threatens their profits, including sales bans, flavor bans, or tax increases. Research shows that major tobacco companies have historically been directly or indirectly linked to parallel illicit supply channels while publicly using it as a shield to block restrictive laws. A *study conducted by the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS)* shows that the illicit tobacco trade is driven by affordability, corruption, weak regulatory enforcement, and sociocultural influences rather than bans or increase in taxes.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

බාර්ටෙන්ඩර් කුසලතා, IDL දායකත්වයෙන් නිමාවට පත්වෙයි

ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ බාර්ටෙන්ඩර් කලාවේ දක්ෂතා ඇගයීමට ලක් කරන 31 වන ජාතික බාර්ටෙන්ඩර් තරගාවලියේ (NBC 2026) අවසන් මහා තරගය කොළඹ Cinnamon Grand Colombo හෝටලයේදී අති උත්කර්ෂවත් ලෙස පැවැත්විණි.

ශ්‍රී ලංකා ආගන්තුක සත්කාර කළමනාකරණ උපාධිධාරීන්ගේ සංගමය සහ ශ්‍රී ලංකා සංචාරක හා හෝටල් කළමනාකරණ ආයතනය එක්ව සංවිධානය කළ මෙම තරගාවලියට, IDL Group අඛණ්ඩව සිව්වන වසරටත් අනුග්‍රහය දැක්විය. දිවයින පුරා හෝටල්, නිවාඩු නිකේතන, ආපනශාලා සහ අධ්‍යාපන ආයතන නියෝජනය කරමින් පැමිණි තරගකරුවන් කලාපීය තරග, පුහුණු වැඩසටහන්, Master Class සහ අර්ධ අවසන් වට රැසක් පසුකර මෙම අවසන් තරගයට සුදුසුකම් ලැබූහ. මෙම වැඩසටහන දේශීය තාරුණ්‍යයේ වෘත්තීය කුසලතා සහ සංචාරක ක්ෂේත්‍රයේ ප්‍රගතිය දිරිගන්වීමේ වැදගත් වේදිකාවක් විය.

"IDL Sponsorship of National Bartenders Competition Raises Concern Over NATA Act Violation"

On July 12th, Lankadeepa reported how International Distillers Limited (IDL), an alcohol manufacturer, has partnered with the 31st National Bartenders Competition 2026 for the fourth consecutive year, in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Hospitality Graduates Association (SLHGA) and the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (SLITHM). IDL's involvement has been publicly promoted as supporting and partnering with the competition, while the event itself centers on bartending, cocktails and mixology.

This raises a direct concern under Section 36(1) of the *National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol Act, No. 27 of 2006*, which prohibits the use of the name of an alcohol manufacturer, brand name, trademark or associated symbol in connection with the promotion of an educational, cultural, social or sporting organization, activity or event, including where such association indicates financial or other assistance from the manufacturer.

The reported partnership between IDL and the National Bartenders Competition therefore appears to fall within the type of alcohol-industry sponsorship and association prohibited by Section 36 of the NATA Act. The repeated sponsorship over four consecutive years also demonstrates a sustained industry presence associated with a national organization involving young professionals in the hospitality sector.

References:

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- Insitute of Policy Studies Sri Lanka. Illicit Tobacco Trade: Evidence-Based Insights (2025). PolicyInsights.
- National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol Act, No. 27 of 2006