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RM1.20 PER MILLILITRE

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Vape Industry Advocacy (MVia) said 73 per cent of respondents to its opinion poll believe that the increase in the excise tax rate for vape liquids, at RM1.20 per millilitre, is too high.

The "#Tax and Regulate MY Vape: Your Say" poll was conducted by Green Zebras Sdn Bhd.

The poll also found that 85 per cent of the respondents believed that the high tax could lead to growth of the black market.

Meanwhile, 91 per cent of respondents believed the government should set a level of taxation on vape products that would prevent consumers from switching to black market products, and 75 per cent said taxation must remain low to keep prices competitive.

MVIA president Rizani Zakaria said these findings reinforced views among the industry players that the tax rate for vape liquids was too high.

"This will cause prices of vape liquids to skyrocket. The govern-

ment needs to be mindful of the negative repercussions when it comes to formulating the tax policy as it will impact the local vape industry," he said in a statement yesterday.

Rizani said the poll's findings were timely, given that the Customs Department had recently announced the postponement in implementing the excise tax.

"We urge the government to maintain the rate at 40 sen per millilitre," he said.

The respondents also agreed that a proper taxation framework would enable consumers to access legal and regulated products.

"Clearly, we are moving in the right direction. Taxation and regulations for the industry is a step in the right direction."

At the same time, he said it was necessary to ensure that vape products were not taxed and regulated the same way as cigarettes, given that vape products were proven to be less harmful and could help smokers quit smoking.