

## **Beer lovers lobby against sin tax**

K Pragalath | October 7, 2013

PETALING JAYA: A group of alcohol users, via social networking site Facebook, are planning to lobby Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak not to raise the sin tax on alcohol come Budget 2014 as it will be seen as a move to target them. Known as the Alcohol-Consumer-Rights Group Malaysia (Alcon), it is very sure that the alcohol taxes would be raised again because there is an annual affair of doing so.

“Shit might hit the fan this budget. The government needs money and we might be victims of higher booze taxes,” said Alcon group administrator Deepak Gill in a posting on the group’s page. Gill has suggested that group members totaling about 7,000 to write to the Prime Minister’s Office and Treasury Department. He has listed several points on why the taxes should be lowered.

“It costs more to have two beers than to buy party drugs which encourages drug consumption. The taxes are also very high for casual drinkers. “Even tourists are complaining about the high prices,” he said. He also called for a raise in taxes against compounded hard liquor. “Tax on low quality compounded hard liquor instead is very low and should be increased as it is badly produced and raises health risks,” he said. Examples of compounded hard liquor include samsu and cheap whiskey with very high alcohol content.

Alcon also listed a number of reasons for alcohol tax reduction in their manifesto. The groups was formed in 2011 and currently have a following of 7,000 members. Among others it stated that Malaysians pay the second highest import duty in the world after Norway. High taxes lead to alcohol smuggling. Alcon urged the

government to consider giving more legal brewing licenses to curb smuggling and ease monitoring.

On the same note, Alcon members have started another initiative to name and shame business outlets that overcharge its patrons and at the same time sell low quality beer. According to a travelers’ blog, Travelfish ([www.travelfish.org](http://www.travelfish.org)), currently Malaysia is the 10th largest alcohol consumer worldwide. However in terms of alcohol tax, Malaysia is second to Norway. –

**Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2013/10/07/beer-lovers-lobby-against-sin-tax/#sthash.DMC5raMd.dpuf>**