

BAT: Tackling black market critical for economic recovery

PETALING JAYA: British American Tobacco (Malaysia) Bhd (BAT) is calling for more radical and drastic actions to effectively stop the black market, and says it is ready to invest resources to continue tackling this issue.

Managing director Jonathan Reed said in 2019, despite various initiatives by the government, the tobacco black market continued to grow.

“Legal players like us are vital to the nation’s economic recovery and growth. Simply put, legal businesses contribute valuable tax revenues that can be used towards rebuilding and reigniting the economy post the Covid-19 national crisis.

“However, full recovery can only happen if we are able to work hand-in-hand with all relevant parties to implement effective structural reforms to manage the extraordinarily high levels of illegal trade,” he said after the group’s annual general meeting yesterday.

For the year ahead, Reed noted BAT’s growth strategy will be dependent on the recovery of the legal tobacco market, a regulated nicotine landscape, sensible fiscal policies and a resolution to the affordability issues affecting consumers.
