

Liquor makers seek govt's support to raise exports

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AN INDUSTRY BODY representing liquor manufacturers has sought government's support to increase exports of alcoholic beverages.

In a letter to commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal, Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) director general Vinod Giri said in 2018-19, exports of alcoholic beverages stood at ₹2,200 crore, while imports were ₹5,400 crore.

"The data clearly indicates how the trade is balanced against India," he said, adding that the ministry should not give major duty concessions to regions like the EU as it will aggravate the trade imbalance beyond redemption.

The European Union (EU) wants significant reduction in the import duty under a proposed free trade agreement with India. Negotiations for the pact are stalled since May 2013 as both the sides have failed to address each others' concerns.

"We understand that the government may have to reduce customs duty due to other global commitments and considerations. However, in interest of the domestic industry, we urge it to be done in a con-



trolled and sustainable manner," he added.

Giri suggested that the basic customs duty should be slashed to a level which does not create great competitive disadvantage for Indian companies and reduction should be done in a phased manner.

He said the duty can be reduced to a maximum 75% in a ten-year period from the current 150%.

"To prevent dumping and protect mainstream Indian products against predatory pricing, products below a certain import price (Threshold Import Price) should be taxed," he added.