

# Allow liquor sales as illicit trade is a burden on States' exchequer: CIABC

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The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) has urged 10 States to allow sale of alcoholic beverages saying that a blanket ban during the lockdown has resulted in sale of illicit and spurious liquor, while causing burden on the exchequer.

The body said the lockdown has resulted in the shutdown of all wholesale and retail shops selling alcoholic beverages.

It said the need to close on-shops (bars) is well understood in light of social distancing.

The CIABC, which is the apex body of the Indian alcoholic beverage industry, has sent letters on Monday to Chief Ministers of 10 States — Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Ra-

jasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

CIABC Director-General Vinod Giri said in the letter that there are growing reports of sale of illicit and spurious liquor which can potentially lead to serious health hazards for people as well as create adverse law and order situation.

## **Extend licences**

It has also requested all State governments to extend all liquor licences and approvals till April 30 or one additional month post lockdown, whichever is later.

Giri said alcohol is one of the most important sources of revenue for State governments and by shutting down retail shops, States are depriving themselves of the tax revenues that are so vitally required in fighting the coronavirus pandemic.