

'Allow liquor sale outside containment zones'

Industry contributes over ₹2 lakh cr. in taxes: confederation

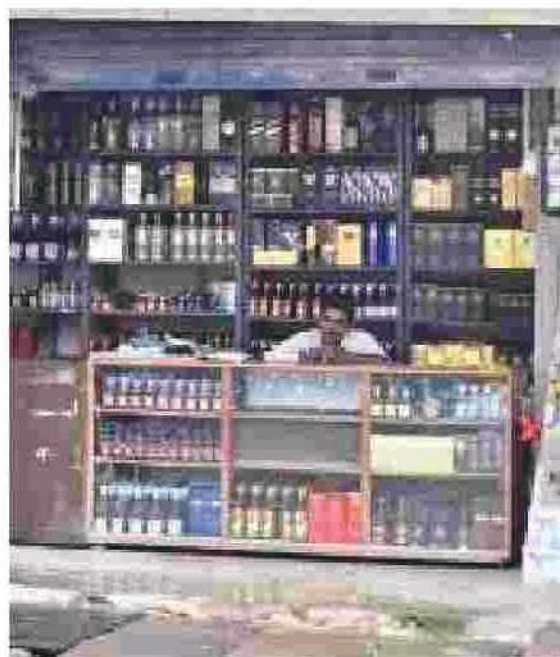
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Liquor and beer makers in the country have reached out to State governments to allow alcohol sales outside containment zones, with strict social distancing guidelines, while pitching for online sales and home delivery.

"The alcoholic beverage industry contributes over ₹2 lakh crore in taxes, sustains the livelihood of 40 lakh farmers, and employs 20 lakh people. A prolonged shutdown of industry is forcing lakhs of farmers and workers into joblessness and poverty," Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) said in its letter to Chief Ministers of all States, barring those under prohibition.

Separately, the All India



Brewers Association (AIBA) has also written to CMs of 13 States, including Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala, Karnataka, West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana and New Delhi, with similar requests.

AIBA noted that State governments generate more than ₹36,000 crore of tax revenue per year from beer alone, in the form of excise duties and VAT. "The stringent lockdown measures

have brought our business to a complete standstill. Especially during the peak summer of March to June, wherein almost 40% of the year's sales and revenues are generated. Similarly, the States too stand to lose a substantial part of the annual tax revenue," it said.

"It is requested to allow alcoholic beverages to be sold through e-commerce and allow for home delivery of beer, through existing retailers with accredited delivery staff. This also will lead to reduced crowding at shops and ensure that beer sales and excise revenue is not impacted adversely by closure of certain outlets," AIBA said, adding that beer manufacturing plants also be allowed to restart operations, along with opening of ancillary sectors.