

# Delhi govt may deliver alcohol to your doorstep

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THE DELHI government is discussing the possibility of home delivery of alcohol amid the lockdown, something that Chhattisgarh and Punjab have already announced. Senior government officials, however, said there were major challenges to the plan, especially in a city as densely populated as Delhi.

“Discussions are underway, though at a preliminary stage. The biggest issue that needs to be resolved, if we go forward with this, is that of back-end operations. In a city like Delhi, demand is going to be high. We have to see if we have the capacity to fulfil that demand...,” said an official.

The Delhi government had said government-owned liquor stores could open from Monday provided they are not located in malls or market complexes, and social distancing norms are followed, as per orders of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Long queues, extending for a



Outside a liquor shop in Kalyanpuri, Wednesday. *Amit Mehra*

kilometre in some areas, were seen outside liquor stores over the past three days. MHA had said liquor store operators will have to post marshals to ensure people maintain a 2-metre distance from each other and wear masks. Some stores had to be shut as guidelines were not being followed.

Excise revenue amounts to around Rs 6,000 crore in Delhi, which has been struggling to find funds since the lockdown — its April tax collection dipping to a tenth of what it was in April last year. On Tuesday, liquor worth Rs

7.65 crore was sold in the city. This includes corona tax amounting to Rs 3.15 crore.

Representatives from the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC), meanwhile, will meet representatives of the Delhi government Thursday to offer suggestions for a way forward. “We will suggest that the government expand the number of stores that are allowed to open to deal with crowds, apart from allowing home delivery,” said Vinod Giri, director general, CIABC.