

# Allow retail vends to open: Liquor makers urge CM

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**Lucknow:** Requesting for opening of retail liquor vends in the state during the lockdown, the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) has written to chief minister Yogi Adityanath and apprised him of growing sales of illicit liquor in the state. It has added that the loss of revenue due to the closure of liquor shops is crucial as the state needs more funds to tackle the situation arising out of spread of coronavirus.

The organisation has also asked for an extension of excise year as vendors have not been able to clear stock or renew licences and registrations.

“The industry finds itself in an unwarranted situation as the excise year ended in the middle of lockdown on March 31. This prevented our members from clearing stocks and renewing licenses and registrations. We request you to extend the current excise year to April 30 or a month from the day lockdown will be lifted and allow existing licenses to continue till then without any fees,” said



## SPIRITED DEMANDS

- Allow retail liquor vends to open during lockdown
- Give online renewal and grant licences and permissions
- Extend excise year from March 31 to April 30 or till a month

from lifting of lockdown

➤ Waive demurrage charges for stock held in depots, shops

➤ Allow usage of existing inventory of packaging material

Vinod Giri, director-general, CIABC. Giri told TOI that the organisation had written to several states with a similar request and many of them had already extended the excise year till May 31. The validity of existing export permits, transit permits and other such permissions should also be extended till April 30 or a month from the day lockdown will be lifted to help process the stock which is stuck in transit, Giri said.

The organisation further informed the government that with authorised liquor vends closed, illicit liquor sales were going up in the state. “Alcohol is one of the most

important sources of revenue for state governments. By shutting down retail shops, governments are depriving themselves of tax revenue which can be utilised in fighting coronavirus spread. Some state governments have taken proactive measures and directed relaxation in the shut down orders for alcoholic beverages shops. Some have also allowed home delivery,” Giri has said in his letter.

The organisation, requesting the government to permit sale of liquor from retail outlets during the lockdown period, said that measures like curtailed shop timings could be implemented.