



The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies says social distancing can still be practised at liquor stores

10 states asked to allow liquor sale

Apex body of liquor dealers says bootlegged alcohol seeing a spurt; suggests states can use the revenue to fight the pandemic

Mumbai Mirror Bureau
mirrorfeedback@timesgroup.com

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The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) has urged 10 states to allow the sale of alcoholic beverages, contending that a blanket ban during the lockdown to contain the spread of Covid-19 has resulted in the sale of illicit and spurious liquor while also causing a burden on the exchequer.

The CIABC, which is the apex body of the Indian alcoholic beverage industry, sent letters on Monday to chief ministers of Maharashtra, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

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CIABC Director General Vinod Giri said in the letter that there are multiple reports on the sale of bootlegged liquor, which can potentially lead to serious health hazards as well as create adverse law and order situations.

The CIABC requested all state governments to extend liquor licences and approvals till April 30 or an 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, they are depriving themselves of money they could use to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

He also said some people need alcohol on medical grounds.

The CIABC, which includes most major Indian companies that manufacture and market their products in India and abroad, suggested that the state governments can place reasonable control measures such as curtailed shop timings and directing outlets to strictly follow social distancing norms.