

# Liquor association urges Nitish to lift prohibition gradually

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Indian liquor manufacturers Association has urged Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to gradually withdraw prohibition in the State claiming that it has not only increased smuggling and sale of illicit liquor but has also caused major financial losses to the State exchequer.

It said that the prohibition has also adversely impacted potential investments, and job creation opportunities.

In its representation to the Chief Minister and leaders of NDA constituent parties, the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) has sought immediate withdrawal of prohibition which has led to creation of liquor mafia, and has caused major damage to state's economy.

In its letter, which has also been addressed to the Deputy Chief Minister, NDA allies Jitan Ram Manjhi and Mukesh Sahani, the CIABC has stated that an organised liquor cartel has come up in the state which was selling liquor at 400% premium.



“While people are forced to pay exorbitant prices for procuring liquor illegally, the government revenues are severely hit by the illegal sale. Revenue from liquor sale used to be a major source of revenue for the state exchequer. The state government is missing out on an annual revenue of ₹7,000-8000 crore, while the state is moving towards debt crisis due to major loss of revenue” said CIABC Director General Vinod Giri.

Giri said the need of the hour is that Bihar government should review its prohibition policy. “The State Government needs to gradually end prohibition and go for controlled and channelised opening of liquor trade in the state. We have sug-

gested that liquor sale should be allowed only in urban areas to begin with, and the government should fix a minimum price so that cheap liquor which is more harmful is not sold in the market. The government should also strictly tackle drinking in public places as is being done in states like Delhi,” he added.

“We have also suggested that the Government should put a women welfare tax on liquor and additional money generated from it should be used for women empowerment. We have asked the government to make it mandatory for liquor producers that their workforce in factories should comprise 50% women for which the industry is ready to cooperate,” Giri said.