

Delhi reverts to old excise policy regime

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Delhi returned to the old excise policy regime within a year on Thursday with the opening of nearly 350 government-run liquor vends and exit of private players from retail business, even as liquor lovers rued the absence of their favourite brands as well as discounts.

Excise department officials said brand registration is an ongoing process and more will be available in coming days.

“The day one of policy transition was satisfactory with nearly 350 government undertaking vends opening across the city. In the last 15 days, we registered around 400 brands and some more were registered even today.

“This will ensure all the popular brands back on the shelves in coming days as it takes time as supply follows production and dispatch after a brand is registered,” said a senior officer from the excise department.

The customers at domestic terminals of IGI airport could not purchase liquor as all the six vends operated earlier by private operators were closed. The DTTDC assigned to operate liquor stores there is still working out modalities, officials said.

The department has so far issued 422 retail licences to four Delhi government undertakings — DTTDC, DSIIDC, DSCSC and DCCWS — that have been directed to open 500 vends in the city in September.

A total of 700 liquor vends



are planned to be operationalised by the four corporations by end of the year.

The return of old excise policy, which was in force before November 17, 2021, also means that discounts offered by private vends on liquor brands and schemes like one plus one free have become a thing of the past for Delhi.

Excise officials said teething troubles are expected to persist for some days but liquor supply and brand availability will improve in the coming days.

The warehouses are stocked with over 80 lakh alcohol bottles to meet the demand amid expectations of a sluggish sale of around 12 lakh bottles per day in July. The demand had scaled to 15 lakh bottles per day in August, the officials said.

Around 35 lakh bottles have been supplied to the liquor vends, the excise officials said.

Vinod Giri, Director General, Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC), said initial days of switching back to the old excise policy is not going to be easy.

Many L1 licensees (wholesalers) are in place and number of retail vends is likely to reach 500 within a month, Giri said.