

Wait a little longer for liquor stores at domestic terminals

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New Delhi: The Delhi airport is not likely to have liquor stores for a few weeks, Senior officials said. Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC), which has been assigned the airport zone, has failed to find space to open the liquor stores at the three domestic terminals of Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA).

The domestic terminals had six premium liquor stores when the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22 was in force. Sources said the licensee that ran these stores had signed a longer contract with the airport operator for the space it took on lease and not vacating it despite the closure of the liquor shops.

"DTTDC has apprised the excise department about the issue and requested it to find a solution," said a senior Delhi government official. The duty-free shops at the international terminals will continue to run.

While announcing the shift to the old excise regime, the Delhi government divided 30 of the 32 pre-defined zones in the municipal corporation areas among its four corporations — DTTDC, Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation, Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation and Delhi Consumers' Cooperative Wholesale Store. The government further allocated zone 31, comprising New Delhi Municipal Council and Delhi Canton-

ment Board areas to DSIIDC, while assigning zone 32, the Delhi airport, to DTTDC.

The airport zone ran into trouble even when the 2021-22 excise policy kicked off last November. While liquor stores came up all over Delhi in November and December, the private company allocated the airport zone could only start six of the 10 shops in February. With the withdrawal of the policy, private liquor stores all over the city have shut shops, including the airport area.

IGIA sources confirmed that DTTDC had approached the airport operator to allot it space to open government-run liquor stores at the domestic terminals. "We are contemplating on the future course of action," said

an airport official.

Excise officials said their focus right now was to normalise the supply of liquor in the city area by opening as many retail shops as possible to ensure consumers do not have to run around. "We are aware of the situation at the airport. We will soon find a way out," said an official.

Vinod Giri, director general of Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies, said the liquor shops at the airport were quite popular with the flyers. "Several airports across India have opened liquor stores to enhance traveller experience after watching the success of such shops in Delhi. We hope the government soon take it up to find a solution on priority," Giri said.

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LIQUOR STORES TO OPEN ACROSS DELHI BY THE END OF THE YEAR