

CIABC urges state to end prohibition like Manipur

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Patna: Welcoming the Manipur government's move to lift liquor ban, the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC), the apex body of Indian alcoholic beverages industry, on Wednesday urged the Nitish Kumar-led government to end prohibition in Bihar to boost its economy and end unlawful trade of poor quality alcohol to avert hooch tragedy.

"By ending over three-decade-long prohibition, the Manipur government has taken a positive step forward which would not only earn Rs600-700 crore as annual tax revenues, but also help tackle the menace of illegal liquor sales and spread of drugs. It is going to give a major fillip to the state's economic growth," said CIABC director general Vinod Giri.

The Manipur cabinet on Monday lifted the ban on liquor.



The CIABC said the Bihar government should also follow suit and lift prohibition which led to so many deaths due to spurious liquor.

"Bihar is paying a heavy price of the prohibition policy in the form of proliferation of unlawful and spurious liquor, hooch tragedies and loss of legitimate government revenues. Bihar is losing revenue from the legitimate liquor trade which is estimated at around Rs10,000 crore per annum. Repeated hooch tragedies have so far seen hundreds of deaths since 2016 while close to 5 lakh cases are pending in courts, clogging the justice delivery system. Around 3 lakh people have been put behind bars for something which rest of the country finds perfectly lawful. Liquor mafias have been thriving in the state. Keeping all these aspects

in mind, we urge the Bihar government to end prohibition and open up liquor trade in the state," said Giri.

"We have even suggested that liquor factories in Bihar would keep 50% of their workforce as women, leading to their true economic empowerment. We have also proposed a special cess on sale of liquor to fund alcohol de-addiction and rehabilitation centres," Giri added.

Stating that the proposed door-to-door survey to study prohibition would serve no purpose, the CIABC director general noted that the National Family Health Survey 2019-20 report had clearly stated that consumption of liquor in Bihar is more than Maharashtra, which proves that prohibition policy has not worked. Report also suggests that 90% of the illegal liquor trade is among poor and backward people.

Manufacturing, sales and consumption of liquor has been banned in Bihar since April 2016.