

Major blow to beer lovers after rise in temperature

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The tick up in temperature has come as a major blow to the beer lovers in the national Capital as most liquor vends in the city seem to be turning them back empty-handed. Shortage of beer in the national Capital is a normal feature during the summers but this year it is more due to less supply.

Beer lovers have raised the issue with vends while the officials concerned refuted the complaints about popular brands missing from the shelves but admitted that tenders have been placed by corporations for refrigerators and chillers and they will be available at the shops soon.

Liquor industry sources said Delhiites gulped down 12-13 million cases of beer last year each containing 24 bottles or cans. The India



Meteorological Department (IMD) has already predicted normal to above normal temperature from April to June.

A consumer outside a liquor store near the DSIIDC office in Connaught Place complained about the unavailability of beer brands. "They are offering brands whose names I am hearing for the first time. None of my two-three favourite ones is available," he said.

Another consumer in Laxmi Nagar complained that the liquor shops were not selling chilled beer. "I used to pick up a couple of bottles and drink them after reaching

home.

Now, they are selling beer at room temperature," he added. People running the vends admitted that refrigerators were unavailable and so a majority of consumers, many of them youngsters, were returning empty-handed.

A senior excise department officer said the complaints of brand unavailability are generic and there was no specific complaint of any brand of beer missing at the shops. He, however, said the corporations have placed tenders and refrigerators will be soon available at the liquor shops.

Under the current excise regime in Delhi, four undertakings of the Delhi government — DSIIDC, DTTDC, DSCSC and DCCWS — are engaged in retail liquor sales through more than 550 stores across the city.

No reaction was available from the corporations on the lack of refrigeration facilities at the vends run by them. Vinod Giri, director general of the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies, said consumers in Delhi drink nearly 15 crore bottles of beer every year.

The demand is skewed towards the three months of summer which accounts for nearly six crore bottles, he said.

Giri listed several reasons for the shortage of popular beer brands, including the lack of captive production in Delhi and dependence on suppliers located in other States.