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Price of various liquor brands hiked

Increase Ranges From ₹10 To ₹50; Prices Of 107 Brands Reduced

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T'puram: Effective from Monday, liquor prices in the state underwent a significant revision, with increases ranging from Rs 10 to 50 across various brands. This decision followed multiple requests from liquor manufacturing companies and came after they submitted revised pricing quotes to the Kerala State Beverages Corporation (Bevco) during a recent tender invitation for liquor supply.

Notably, the price of state-manufactured liquor, including the popular brand Jawan, increased by Rs 10. While 341 brands experience priced hikes, the prices of 107 brands have been reduced. Bevco has indicated that despite the increases, they do not anticipate a significant drop in liquor sales or overall revenue, as the price reductions on popular brands may help offset some of the impact of the increases.

The rise in prices is largely attributed to the steep increase in the cost of extra neutral alcohol (ENA), a key ingredient in the production of Indian made foreign liquor (IMFL). The state requires approximately 5.5cr litres of ENA annually, which is sourced from states such as Punjab, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal. The long-distance transportation of ENA contributes significantly to the retail cost of IMFL, affecting both locally produced and imported brands.

In addition to the changes in retail prices, bar hotels in the state are expected to implement subsequent price increases.

These establishments often sell liquor at prices significantly higher than the retail maximum retail prices (MRPs), meaning that consumers may face even steeper costs when purchasing drinks at bars and restaurants.

Kerala heavily relies on liquor sales as a primary source of revenue. In the fiscal year 2023-24, the state recorded impressive sales figures, with 221.7 lakh cases of IMFL and 105.38 lakh cases of beer sold.

'Govt serves interests of liquor companies'

T'puram: Opposition leader **VD Satheesan** said the state govt's recent decision to raise alcohol prices serves the interests of liquor companies rather than the public. In a statement on Monday, he said that the govt raised prices of all popular brands, including those from the Oasis company, which he claimed was granted secret permission to establish a liquor manufacturing facility in the state.

"The govt's decision to increase prices for the benefit of liquor companies, especially after approving the manufacturing company, raises serious questions about transparency," he said. He highlighted that the govt previously waived sales tax at the request of liquor companies, leading to losses that were subsequently compensated by increasing prices.

"Just as the approval for the liquor manufacturing company in Elappully was shrouded in secrecy, this price hike also lacks clarity," he said. Satheesan also added that raising alcohol prices will not bring down consumption, warning that women and children will suffer as their share of the family budget shrinks. The govt's support for exploiting alcohol consumers to benefit liquor companies is unacceptable, he said, adding that the govt should be prepared to withdraw this decision. TNN