Long queues, higher taxes, doubts over home delivery

LIQUOR SALE

On Day 2, states deployed different schemes, methods and rules to control the rush and cash in on demand

THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

- Total confirmed cases including new cases added on May 5
- New cases
- Recovered cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>UT &amp; J K</th>
<th>Punjab</th>
<th>Himachal Pradesh</th>
<th>Chandigarh</th>
<th>Uttarakhand</th>
<th>Uttarakhand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UT Ladakh</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assamesh</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>1344</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andaman &amp; Nicobar</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49,379

Total number of cases across India

1,613

Deaths due to Covid-19 across India

DATA STORY

- State: Assamesh
- Source: Press Monitor

**Hindustan Times, Mumbai**

Wednesday, 6th May 2020; Page: 4

**Width:** 42.62 cms; **Height:** 64.06 cms; **a3; ID:** 25.2020-05-06.10

---

**Press Monitor**

---

**NEW DELHI:** Increased excise duty on alcohol, heavier deployment of police personnel to enforce social distancing, long queues and speculation over home delivery of liquor in some states marked the second day of liquor sales across the country after curbs on sale of alcohol were lifted after 42 days on May 4.

Till Tuesday evening, four states - Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Rajasthan - had announced an increase in the excise duty for liquor. Delhi increased the tax by 1%, Andhra by 7%, West Bengal by 15% and Rajasthan by 10%, all to raise funds to fight the pandemic and manage state finances, the governments said.

To reduce chaos at liquor vending, the Chhattisgarh government set up a new company, Chhattisgarh State Marketing Corporation Limited, to deliver liquor in home in green zones, a government statement said.

“A customer can order up to 500 ml of liquor at a time for home delivery and the delivery charge will be Rs 10,” the release stated. Except Raipur and Korba districts, the remaining 26 districts of the state are green zones.

West Bengal also allowed online sale and home delivery from retail outlets to restricted areas, it said.

“We welcome the government’s decision,” said Dilip Pal, a shopkeeper from the Salkhabar market in Kolkata.

Punjab also took a similar proposal at a Cabinet meeting on Thursday. “For allowing home delivery of liquor, we need to make changes in the excise policy. For that, the Cabinet’s approval is needed,” said a state government official.

Others states have brought in changes in excise policy through a Cabinet decision. In Punjab, the proposal to deliver liquor at home from local vendors.

In the excise policy for current financial year, the state had approved a pilot project for home delivery of liquor in Mehsoli. However, the proposal could not be implemented as curfew was imposed across Punjab from March 22 to contain the outbreak of Covid-19. In other states, Assam and Andhra Pradesh recorded high sales on first few days.

Assam, where liquor shops opened from Saturday, earned more than Rs 90 lakh in the first three days, officials said.

Assam earns on an average earns Rs 90 lakh per month from liquor sales. “On the first day (Saturday), Andhra Pradesh earned around Rs 90 lakh through liquor sales,” said a state government official.

On the second day, Tuesday, higher revenue is expected as the price of liquor has increased and shops will open for an extra hour, the official said. In Karnataka, the estimated excise revenue on Tuesday was Rs 16 crore as compared to Rs 46 crore earned on Monday.

In Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, officials had to use the sale of liquor bottles to the states, a person is entitled to buy only two bottles of distillers spirits and six bottles of beer.

In Karnataka, where a similar order was issued on Monday morning, action was taken against a vend owner who sold more than the prescribed bottles to a customer, who put out his own Rs 1 lakh liquor bill on social media.

To enforce social distancing norms, local administrations deployed additional police personnel at liquor vend and, in some places, such as Mumbai, BMCs were hirer for enforcement of rules and those violating protocols.

In Uttar Pradesh, Police had to use mild force to disperse the crowd. UP’s excise secretary, Sanjay Bhosledra, said the sale of liquor has been smooth and the government expects the revenue to increase in the coming days.

In Andhra Pradesh, where liquor is 75% cheaper than it was in the pre-lockdown period, people scrambled to buy alcohol despite the price hike even as women in Nellore and Visakhapatnam districts protest at opening of the shops. Out of 464 retail outlets, only around 500, located in red zones and containment areas of seven districts in the state, remained closed. “The steep hike in liquor prices is to discourage the consumption of alcohol and number of shop owners would also be slashed by month end,” the officials said.

Officials said there was huge rush at liquor vends in districts bordering Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, which are yet to resume sales. Police in Männer and Tamil Nadu had to carry out a mild mathi charge to shoo away more than 3000 people who crossed over into Karnataka through porous border to purchase liquor.

In Rajasthan, where excise duty was increased by 15%, shops opened late as police tried to control unruly crowds. There were also complaints of overcharging from Jaipur and Chandigarh.

Liquor sales in Goa were devoid of incident because of the state’s high number of liquor dealers, per capita, 3,000 liquor retailers and 11,000 licensed liquor vendors, a bulk of whom are serving liquor through bars or restaurants and cannot currently reopen. The shops will open in MP on Wednesday and in Punjab on Thursday. Tamil Nadu also announced that liquor vends will not open in Chennai for further notice.