

Govt bans sale of Vat 69, Smirnoff over fake barcodes

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NEW DELHI: Smirnoff vodka and Vat 69 whiskey will remain off the Delhi liquor shelves for at least two years as the Delhi financial commissioner recently upheld the excise department's decision to blacklist United Spirits Limited (USL), the manufacturer of the two popular brands, for allegedly using duplicate barcodes.

According to the order passed by financial commissioner Anindo Majumdar, USL violated the provisions of Delhi Excise Act by using unauthorised and loose barcodes, which could be easily misused, and had also violated the terms and conditions of the licence.

The excise department had blacklisted USL, Aurangabad, in May 2017 for three years after some stocks of Smirnoff and Vat 69 were found with duplicate barcodes. USL had appealed against the department's order, which has been rejected by the financial commissioner. The company has now moved the high court, a source said.

"Though the company had taken the plea that the duplicate barcodes had come into the system by mistake, the department had taken the view going by the merits of the case," said an excise department official.

Delhi was the first city in the country to introduce the 2D barcoding on liquor bottles. It not only helps the excise department to keep a check on the sale of spurious liquor through reuse of bottles but also enables online tracking of the liquor market, said an official.

"A unique number is generated for each liquor bottle which is sent to the plant where liquor is bottled and each barcode is generated through special software. Every single bottle in Delhi is accounted for and it helps us identify whether it has been smuggled from other states or has been filled with spurious liquor," the official said.

The barcoding incorporates a comprehensive database of liquor, date of bottling, batch number, distillery name and other relevant information.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/govt-bans-sale-of-vat-69-smirnoff-over-fake-barcodes/articleshow/65906479.cms>