AB InBev told Indian authorities about cartel, triggering anti-trust probe

Anheuser-Busch InBev anho-a: bush-in beth

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - An Indian anti-trust probe into beer price-fixing allegations was initiated after the world’s largest brewer Anheuser-Busch InBev told the authorities last year it had detected an industry cartel, three people familiar with the matter told Reuters.

AB InBev (ABI.BR) discovered the Indian operations it acquired as part of its around $100 billion acquisition of London-listed rival SABMiller Plc in 2016 had for years fixed beer prices along with Denmark’s Carlsberg (CARLb.CO) and India’s United Breweries (UBBW.NS), which is part-owned by Heineken [ˈɦɛinəkən] NV (HEIN.AS), the sources said.

AB InBev conducted an internal investigation in the first half of last year, after closing the SABMiller deal, and found that executives had discussed and agreed on their submission of ex-brewery beer production prices to Indian state governments. Those ex-brewery prices would include all the production and marketing costs, as well as a proposed profit margin, and were used by state governments to set a maximum retail price.

“It was startling,” one of the sources said. “Extensive pricing information about the competition, some of which is extremely confidential, was available to all the three companies.”

Earlier this month the Competition Commission of India (CCI) raided the offices of all the three brewers and found e-mails that showed executives were allegedly violating Indian anti-trust laws, Reuters has previously reported.

According to the three sources, those raids came after AB InBev approached the anti-trust watchdog to make disclosures under a so-called “leniency programme” that provides a whistleblower-type protection for cartel members disclosing wrongdoing.

[Sudhir](https://www.pronouncenames.com/pronounce/Sudhir) [Mittal](https://www.pronouncenames.com/pronounce/Mittal), chairman of the CCI, did not respond to a request for comment.

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A spokesman for AB InBev, whose Indian offerings include Budweiser and Corona, said “it would not be appropriate for us to comment” for this article. Carlsberg, which sells beer under its own-name brand and also owns Tuborg, said it was “committed to complying” with all relevant laws.

United Breweries, which commands a 51 percent share of the Indian market and sells the Kingfisher and Heineken beer brands in India, did not respond to an e-mail seeking comment. Heineken declined to comment.

Calls to Shalabh Seth, the managing director of SABMiller in India at the time of the AB InBev acquisition, went unanswered. He now works for United Breweries.

After Reuters reported the CCI raids on Oct. 11, United Breweries told the Indian stock exchanges the company took its compliance obligations seriously and was reviewing its legal risks and potential implications.

Belgium-based AB InBev has said it takes anti-trust compliance “very seriously”.

The three brewers, who according to Euromonitor International account for 90 percent of beer consumption in the $7 billion India market, together face a potential fine of up to $272 million if they are found to have operated a cartel, the sources said. Any company executives found to have fixed prices could also be fined.

AB InBev could escape some or all of its share of the fines for self-reporting the issue.

It was unclear how much the alleged price-fixing may have cost consumers.

HIGHLY-REGULATED MARKET

The investigation will cast a further shadow on an Indian beer business that already faces stringent compliance and state-level regulation, making it tougher for brewers to expand.

Though a young and affluent population, better social acceptance towards drinking and a growing pub culture have spurred beer consumption, many Indian drinkers still prefer potent spirits, particularly whisky, especially in smaller towns and villages.

Most states individually regulate alcohol pricing and the companies need to submit and get prices approved every year by the local authorities. There are also separate labeling, licensing and brand registration norms.

The ex-brewery prices set by the companies are also the base on which alcohol taxes, a vital source of state government revenue, are imposed.

That results in wild variations in retail prices. A 330 ml bottle of Kingfisher costs 36 rupees (49 cents) in the tourist state of Goa /ˈɡoʊ.ə/, but 130 rupees ($1.77) in the northern state of Haryana [ɦərɪˈjaːɳaː], a major industrial hub, according to India’s largest beer chain, the Beer Cafe.

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Dinde farcie faʀsi aux o marrons maʀɔ̃

Dinde rôtie ʀotiʀ farcie aux marrons.

Chef Simon Préparation : 90' Cuisson : 300' Difficulté moyenne

Quatre-vingt-dix trois cents

1 - Préparer pʀepaʀe la dinde en [ôtant](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/french-english/%C3%B4ter) ote les petits duvets résiduels au chalumeau ʃalymo.

2 - Mettre le hachis porc et veau dans un récipient adapté et ajouter les blancs de volaille au soja détaillés en dés.

3 - Ajouter ail, oignons, échalotes sués au beurre et mélanger.

4 - Ajouter le persil, la chapelure, le porto et en dernier les champignons escalopés justes sautés.

5 - *En dernier lieu* ajouter la moitié des châtaignes cuites entières. Ajouter le quatre-épices. Mélanger à nouveau.

6 - Farcir la dinde. Si vous avez de la farce en trop, gardez-la pour faire un hachis parmentier ou une terrine.

7 - Une dinde de taille plus modeste sera bridée comme un chapon farci. Sinon faites de votre mieux pour fermer.

8 - Brider également *l'autre côté*, le cou.

9 - Traverser les cuisses avec une longue aiguille à brider.

10 - Attacher les pattes.

11 - Relier les ailes entre elles en traversant la bête avec l'aiguille à brider.

12 - Badigeonner la dinde avec un peu d'huile avant de la mettre en cuisson.

13 - Enfourner l'animal à 180°C à chaleur tournante pendant 1 heure/œʀ/ puis à 170°C pendant 1 heure et terminer à 150°C pendant 3 heures. cent quatre-ving/ cent soixante-dix/ cent cinquante

14 - Ce n'est pas parce que la dinde est dorée qu'elle est cuite ! Vérifier la température avec une sonde au cœur de la farce qui doit atteindre 85°C.

15 - Lorsque la dinde a une belle coloration couvrir avec du papier aluminium et ajouter la garniture aromatique. Prélever le jus de cuisson régulièrement.

16 - Après 3 heures de cuisson injecter une partie du jus prélevé dans la chair de la dinde. Le reste sera utilisé pour la sauce.

17 - En fin de cuisson déglacer la plaque en versant le jus récupéré, compléter éventuellement avec un peu d'eau et filtrer au chinois.

18 - La dinde est bien cuite, elle n'est pas sèche *comme vous le constaterez* lors de la découpe.

Recette pour une dinde de 9 kg

1 kg de farce de porc et veau - 300 g de blancs de volaille sautés et déglacés à la sauce soja sucrée - 4 gousses d'ail - 2 gros oignons - 3 échalotes cuisse de poulet - 1 bouquet de persil - 2 dl de porto rouge - 200 g de chapelure - 500 g de champignons - 500 g de châtaignes en conserves ou fraîches - 1 cuiller à soupe de quatre-épices (mélange) - garniture aromatique (4 carottes, 2 oignons, 3 gousses d'ail taillés en mirepoix).