# Death toll rises to 54 in India liquor tragedy

Reuters

The death toll has climbed to 54 from consumption of tainted liquor in India’s southern state of Tamil Nadu, with more than 100 people still in hospital, a government official said on Saturday.

Nearly 200 people have been treated since Wednesday for vomiting, stomach aches and diarrhoea, after drinking liquor spiked with methanol in the district of Kallakurichi, about 250 km (150 miles) from Chennai, the state capital.

Law enforcement officials investigating the incident have arrested seven people, said M.S. Prasanth, a senior district official, adding that follow-up action was being taken against liquor sellers and brewers in the district.
Deaths from illegally produced alcohol, often called country liquor, are a regular occurrence in India, where few can afford branded spirits, despite public demands for a crackdown on the vendors.

The state government said it was taking steps to identify those involved in production of methanol, a toxic chemical normally used for industrial purposes.