

Death toll from India toxic liquor hits 31, dozens ill

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A lethal batch of home-brew liquor sold at a local cricket match has killed at least 31 people in northern India, with more than 100 others ill in hospital, police and medical officials said Tuesday.

In the latest incident of alcohol poisoning in India, the toll jumped from Monday's figure of 14 after more people died in hospital after drinking the toxic alcohol on the outskirts of Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh state.

"Thirty-one people have died so far. Those who fell ill are still being treated at different hospitals," police inspector general A. Satish Ganesh told AFP.

Ganesh said that the police had registered a case against five people and had arrested the main suspect.

Police said that the incident happened late Sunday afternoon after people who had come to watch a cricket match at the local Kharta village ground consumed the toxic alcohol.

More than 100 people are still in hospital being treated for [alcohol poisoning](#) after drinking the brew, Uttar Pradesh Chief Medical Officer CSN Yadav told AFP.

"Many who consumed the locally made [liquor](#) fell ill and reported themselves to local hospitals," one [police](#) officer said.

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav has announced an investigation and launched a statewide drive against illegal liquor in the wake of the tragedy.

Bootleg liquor is widely consumed across India where it is sometimes sold for less than a dollar, with deaths frequently reported.

Police arrested 12 people in October 2013 after more than three dozen villagers died from toxic home-brewed liquor in Uttar Pradesh. In 2011 nearly 170 people died in the eastern state of West Bengal after drinking moonshine.

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