

NHRC, India takes suo motu cognizance of the reported deaths of at least 9 people and 39 others in a critical condition after consuming spurious Indian-Made Foreign Liquor in Bhavnagar district, Gujarat

The Commission issues notices to the Gujarat Chief Secretary and Director General of Police, calling for a detailed report on the matter within two weeks

The report to include updated status of the death toll, hospitalised victims, investigation, departmental action initiated against erring officers, relief, compensation and medical assistance provided to the families of the deceased and to the survivors

Information also sought on long-term measures to prevent such tragedies

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The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has taken *suo motu* cognizance of media reports that at least 9 people died and 39 others were hospitalised in a critical condition after consuming spurious Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) in Bhavnagar district, Gujarat. Reportedly, the illicit liquor was spiked with a high concentration of methanol and was being sold in counterfeit bottles bearing the label of a popular brand. The illicit liquor racket came to light during an investigation of an accidental death case registered for the death of a police recruit.

The Commission has observed that the contents of the news, if true, raise serious issues of violation of human rights. Therefore, it has issued notices to the Gujarat Chief Secretary and Director General of Police, calling for a detailed report on the matter within two weeks.

The report is expected to include the updated status of the death toll, hospitalised victims and investigation including the steps taken to trace the entire supply chain of methanol and other raw materials. It should also include the details of the departmental action initiated against the suspended police personnel and any other erring officials, relief, compensation and medical assistance provided to the families of the deceased and to the survivors. Besides, the Commission has also sought a report on the long-term measures being implemented to strengthen the enforcement of the prohibition law and prevent such tragedies.

According to the media reports, a large manufacturing setup was uncovered and chemicals, colouring agents, ready-filled counterfeit liquor bottles, fake branded stickers and sticker rolls, bottle caps and cardboard packaging material were seized by police.

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