India's official COVID-19 caseload tops 20 million

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A critical shortage of oxygen showed no signs of abating, with residents turning to social media to appeal for oxygen canisters for sick relatives and friends.

New Delhi, May 5 (RHC)-- India reported another 357,000 new coronavirus cases and nearly 3,500 deaths Tuesday, as India's total caseload during the pandemic passed 20 million.   A critical shortage of oxygen showed no signs of abating, with residents turning to social media to appeal for oxygen canisters for sick relatives and friends.

Meanwhile, long lines at crematoriums and overflowing hospitals across India suggest the government is vastly underreporting the extent of India's crisis.

One worker at a crematorium in India's capital, Om Prakash, told reporters: "People have to wait for at least five to seven hours before getting a chance to cremate the bodies. The bodies are not even being cremated properly because there are only four to five priests who are performing the rituals. Although, as you can see, the bodies are being cremated rapidly, there is still a long queue of ambulances carrying bodies of COVID-19 victims outside the crematorium."

India's COVID crisis has spilled into neighboring Nepal, which reported a record one-day high of daily infections Tuesday. Nepal's Army began cremating the remains of COVID victims in open areas of Kathmandu after temples and crematoriums ran out of space.

Nepal's Ministry of Health has issued an urgent appeal for millions of vaccine doses, calling the crisis "unmanageable."

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