

In light of Asian Heritage Month, The EDI committee wanted to bring attention to the crises currently unfolding in India. These issues have had devastating effects on the people of India and have resounding impacts in Canada and around the world. We invite you to read through the material to consider showing your support by taking action. Please review the resources and suggestions in “Ways you can help” for aid efforts.

### **COVID-19 in India**

India has set global record for daily coronavirus deaths. On May 17, there was a global record of 4,529 deaths in a 24-hour period, bringing India’s confirmed death rate to 283,248. This data, however, is an undercount. Mortality data in India is unreliable as many deaths, in the home for instance, often go unreported.

In the last month alone, India’s COVID-19 death rates have drastically increased. Crematoriums are operating around the clock; in many parts of Uttar Pradesh (a state in Northern India), crematoriums have run out of wood and hundreds of bodies are washing up on the banks of the Ganges River. There are growing concerns that the virus will spread through the countryside, rural areas, and villages where healthcare and testing resources are limited.

But the risk of spread cannot be contained. As we’ve seen through the pandemic, risks in one country can quickly and easily spread throughout the world. Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, the World Health Organization’s chief scientist stated: "The virus doesn't respect borders, or nationalities, or age, or sex or religion," and "...what's playing out in India now unfortunately has been played out in other countries." Rebecca Morelle for BBC states that the pandemic has revealed just how interconnected the world is; if a country has very high levels of infection, then it’s likely to spread to other countries.



### Cyclone Tauktae

On Monday, May 17, India was hit by the strongest storm on record in its west coast, hindering authorities' response to the COVID-19 crisis in some of the country's hardest hit regions. Approximately 200 000 people were evacuated across several states as the cyclone neared. The death toll continues to rise and 77 people have been reported missing at sea. The storm comes during a moment of crisis in India as the country continues to struggle with the second wave of COVID-19, which has entirely overwhelmed hospitals and other healthcare resources. Please consider supporting efforts to help those impacted in India right now (see list below). We are all in this together.



### Farmer's Protest

Agriculture is the primary source of income and livelihood for about 58% of India's 1.3 billion population. According to one study, the average farmer earned \$140 per month from 2018 to 2019. New laws enacted in September 2020 threaten the livelihood of this group.

To protest these laws, tens of thousands of farmers have been living in tents on highways outside of New Delhi (capital of India) since November 2020. Prior to the new law, the government offered a pre-determined price to farmers for particular crops which allowed farmers to plan for the next crop cycle and maintain basic living necessities. The new laws will put farmers' livelihood at risk as it will create an opportunity for large, private companies to enter and exploit the entire agriculture structure.

The impact of these protests are being felt around the world. India is the world's largest producer, consumer, and exporter of spices as it produces approximately 68% of the world's spices. Many people around the world have been protesting to show support and to stand with farmers because the protests are about "the people who feed all of us". No farmers – no food.



## Ways You Can Help:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/donate-to-covid-19-in-india-crisis/> - This site offers a list of charities providing urgent medical care to those in need in India during the COVID-19 pandemic. These charities provide oxygen, personal protective equipment, emergency medical supplies, and more to those in need.

<https://standwithfarmers.carrd.co/> - This site offers ways to support the farmers in India. There are news articles, media sources, as well as ways to make your voice heard in solidarity and ways to donate.

## Resources:

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/india-sets-global-record-for-daily-coronavirus-deaths-1.5434132>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-56907007>

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/11/world/farmer-protests-india-protests-hnk-trnd/index.html>

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/10/asia/india-farmers-protest-explainer-intl-hnk-scli/index.html>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-57139989>

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/18/india/india-cyclone-tauktae-covid-monsoon-intl-hnk/index.html>