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New Delhi, April 16 (RHC)-- India reported more than 217,000 COVID cases Friday, a new record, with nearly 1,200 deaths. This comes as millions of people have been converging on the city of Haridwar for

the Hindu festival of Kumbh Mela, the world's largest pilgrimage.

At least 4 million bathed in the Ganges River over just two days this week. Prime Minister Narendra Modi refused to call off the month-long festival to avoid a potential backlash from Hindu leaders and his base. Last year, Indian Muslims faced a torrent of Islamophobic hate after an Islamic missionary group held an event in New Delhi which was linked to a possible outbreak.

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