

# BHUTAN TIMES



Your Week Begins Here!



**03** Health Minister sends letter of thanks to the U.S. for Covid-19 vaccine donation

NU 10 12 PAGES SUNDAY

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## COVID-19

### National

**Case Recorded**

**2,544**

**Active: 82**

**Death: 2**

**RECOVERED: 2,460**

**TOTAL VACCINATED:**

**475,787**

**Turn your pages**



A videobyte from Samten Tenzin Drolma of Mothithang HSS wins the first prize in the competition organized by the Indian Embassy in commemoration of India's 75th Independence Day celebrations. She is flanked by the President of Royal Thimphu College Tshewang Tandin and India Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj at the prize award ceremony yesterday (Story on page 3)



Incessant rain delays potato harvest in Gangtey

>>> 05



Sabin Limbu is the Golden Youth of 2020

>>> 09



MHPA accorded the Brunel Medal 2020

>>> 12

## Govt. requests additional Moderna vaccine for children from the U.S

Also pursuing with Pfizer to speed-up the delivery of purchase order and GAVI to consider the requirement of Moderna of Pfizer vaccines instead of AstraZeneca

**Lhakpa Tshering**

After the first shots of the Moderna vaccines were administered to children aged between 12-17 years in nine high-risk districts, the government has requested the United States for additional doses of about 145,000 Moderna vaccines to continue jabbing eligible children.

The request has been placed considering the number of vaccines administered to children aged between 12

to 17 years in the nine high-risks dzongkhag – Chhukha, Dagana, Paro, Pemagatshel, Samdrup Jongkhar, Samtse, Sarpang, Thimphu, and Zhemgang.

These additional vaccine needs are to administer both shots to over 47,000 unvaccinated children and the second shot to over 32,000 children immunized with a half-dose. It will also help to immunize

## Travel restrictions likely to ease by October

**Lhakpa Tshering**

While official discussions on relaxation measures have not yet been considered by the government, highly reliable sources say that pandemic travel restrictions in the country are likely to end by early October this year.

People can expect the announcement after children aged between 11 to 17 years are being fully vaccinated with two shots against coronavirus.

“The government is thinking to look at the potential of relaxing some measures including travel restrictions from early October,” the gov-

ernment official said.

The move would allow the tourism and hospitality businesses to reopen with density restrictions while people and other businesses can also expect to return to a new normal.

Officials expect the new policy by the government, paving the way for the reopening of international tourism with reviewed measures on quarantine for both domestic (high to low-risk areas) and international. “It can be shortened quarantine periods or travel without

READ MORE ON PAGE

**02**

READ MORE ON PAGE

**02**



## Health Minister sends letter of thanks to the U.S. for Covid-19 vaccine donation

**Lhakpa Tshering**

In a letter dated 30 July – three days after the successful second round nationwide immunization drive against Covid-19 – health minister Dasho Dechen Wangmo sent a letter of thanks to the U.S for its generous donation of vaccines to Bhutan.

Addressed to the U.S Chargé d'affaires Atul Keshap in New Delhi, the health minister expressed gratitude to the U.S government for making the nationwide rollout of the second Covid-19 vaccination program in the country possible, as it received 500,000 doses of Moderna vaccine through the COVAX facility.

“We are humbled by the generosity of your government and the American people. We look forward to engaging with the U.S government to end this pandemic,” the letter of thanks reads.

She described the United States’ international engagement and multilateral cooperation in combating Covid-19 and advancing global health security under President Joe Biden’s leadership as inspiring and wrote, “Ensuring broad and equitable access to vaccines is no doubt an integral part



*Health Minister Dasho Dechen Wangmo*

of this goal.”

The half a million doses of the Moderna vaccine by the United States enabled Bhutan to launch a successful nationwide second dose vaccination drive for the eligible adult population from 20 July onwards which had

attracted international attention.

Expressing greater appreciation, Lyonpo wrote, “During the second nationwide Covid-19 vaccination campaign that lasted for a week, around 95.3 percent of the eligible populations have

been vaccinated with the second dose.”

Besides, she also expressed her excitement for the Moderna vaccine receiving authorization to use in children aged 12 to 17 from the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the first time the vaccine

has been authorized for people under 18 years old.

“Today, as we welcomed the approval by EMA for Moderna vaccine use in children aged 12 to 17 and following emergency authorization by the Drug Regulatory Authority (DRA) in the country, we have started inoculating children aged 12 to 17 in nine high-risk districts including the capital with the remaining doses,” she said.

In the meantime, Lyonpo also informed that the population-based research collaboration between the Moderna and the Ministry of Health is moving ahead as planned.

This research aimed at understanding the safety, efficacy, and reactogenicity of the Moderna vaccine inoculated in the eligible population as heterogeneous Covid-19 prime-boost vaccination.

“We hope the data generated through this collaboration will provide ‘real-world’ evidence to guide future vaccine development and innovation,” Lyonpo wrote, adding that the research collaboration with her alma mater – Yale University, is also advancing well in the area of public health.

## Samten Tenzin Drolma wins Indian Embassy’s Videobyte competition

**Sonam Penjor**

As part of the ongoing India@75 Special Week in Bhutan, the Embassy of India invited youths to speak on the theme: ‘What India means to me?’.

A Class 12 student, Samten Tenzin Drolma from Motithang Higher Secondary School won the first prize in the competition.

In her videos, she highlights India as her best friend, not just any common friend but liter-

ally her best friend. “It’s like the title ‘best friend perfectly fits her or its just made for her.”

“India is like My Best Friend- who is there with you during your ups and downs,” Samten Tenzin Dolma said.

The videos also highlights that “She does everything a best friend does like being there in your ups and downs, helping you out even when she is not in the situation to help you out.”

Samten said that there are so many things India

has done for her but the most recent things that comes to her mind is of India helping our country during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, the chief guest at the India@75 Special Programme, the President of Royal Thimphu College, Tshewang Tandin, distributed prizes and certificates along with India Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj .

Though, the India themselves has shortages of Covid-19 vaccines, the videos highlighted that India

being a friend of Bhutan, India has sacrificed and donated the vaccines to Bhutan.

“Bhutan being a small country, we won’t be able to produce vaccines in our country, so they donate their vaccines which aren’t even sufficient for their people.”

This Special Programme was a part of the India@75 Special Week of Amrit Mahotsav celebration in Bhutan spanning activists hosted by the Embassy of India from 209 August 2021 .

The second prize was bagged by Neelam Phuyel, student of Changangkha Middle Secondary School and third prize was bagged by Karma Tenzin, student of Gedu College of Business Studies. Cash prizes of Nu 20, 000, 15, 000 and 10, 000 were awarded respectively.

A number of participants from Bhutan who took part in the online course on Gandhian Philosophy by Dr Shobhana Radhakrishna also received their certificates of appreciation from the Indian Embassy.