Focused COVID-19 Media Monitoring, Nepal
EMERGING THEME(S)

- Nepal reported 849 new COVID-19 cases, 12 fatalities on October 6; no health desk at Gulariya’s Surajpur border checkpost to monitor returnees from India
- Vero Cell vaccine doses bought through COVAX’s cost-sharing scheme likely to be delivered from November
- China to give 1 million doses of Sinovac vaccine to Nepal under grant assistance, provide Rs 12,400,000 to build infrastructure to fight possible third wave of COVID-19 pandemic
- Kathmandu Metropolitan City to run 3-day COVID-19 vaccination drive in all 32 wards from October 8-10 for those above 18 years of age; Lalitpur Metropolitan City administering Vero Cell vaccine for those above 18 from October 6; Rupandehi to administer Vero Cell vaccine to 65,000 people before Dashain on October 8 and 9

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1 This intelligence is tracked through manually monitoring national print, digital and online media through a representative sample selection, and consultations with media persons and media influencers.
Nepal's coronavirus caseload reached 799,615 on October 6 with 849 more people testing positive for the infection in the past 24 hours, while the countrywide COVID-19 mortality toll increased to 11,192 with 12 more fatalities. Nepal's COVID-19 recovery rate stands at 96.6 per cent, the fatality rate at 1.4 per cent and the active COVID-19 case count currently is 16,194.\(^2\)

No health desk has been set up at the Surajpur border checkpoint of Gulariya — the major checkpoint of Bardiya district to enter Nepal from India — keeping in mind the risk of COVID-19 infection. People are allowed to enter the country after being asked some minor questions.\(^3\)

Vero Cell vaccine doses bought from the COVAX facility through a cost-sharing mechanism are likely to be delivered starting November. Officials at the Ministry of Health and Population said they have been waiting for the supply schedule of the vaccine. “The government has already made the payment for 5.9 million doses of the Vero Cell vaccine, which is being purchased through the COVAX facility’s cost-sharing scheme,” Sagar Dahal, Chief of the National Immunization Program, said. “We expect to get the vaccine delivery from November.” \(^4\)

China will give 1,000,000 doses of Sinovac vaccine to Nepal under grant assistance. Likewise, China will also provide Rs 12,400,000 to Nepal to build infrastructure needed to fight the third wave of COVID-19 pandemic, according to a tweet of the State Minister for Health and Population Umesh Shrestha.\(^5\)

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City is set to run a three-day vaccination drive against COVID-19 from all its 32 wards. The first dose of vaccination will be conducted from October 8 to 10 for those above the age of 18.\(^6\)

All people above the age of 18 are being given Vero Cell vaccine in Lalitpur Metropolitan City from October 6.\(^7\)

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\(^2\) THT Online
\(^3\) Nayapatrika
\(^4\) The Kathmandu Post
\(^5\) Setopati
\(^6\) Setopati
\(^7\) Setopati
A total of 65,000 people in Rupandehi will be given the Vero Cell vaccine before Dashain. The vaccines will be administered from all local levels of the district on October 8 and 9.\textsuperscript{8}

Other(s)

National News

Gene sequencing has started in Nepal at the government laboratory — the National Public Health Laboratory has started to use the gene sequencing machine it had brought eight months ago. Before this gene sequencing was being done by paying expensive fees to private laboratories.\textsuperscript{9}

The residents of Chumchet and Chhekampar of Gorkha have demanded the northern border checkpost be reopened due to a shortage of food. The two checkpoints in the northern part of the country that share the border with China have remained closed since the past two years due to the risk of COVID-19 infection.\textsuperscript{10}

The Nepal-China trade that came to halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic has not resumed yet. Everyday goods are being imported to Nepal via nine Chinese containers from Rasuwagadhi border check post at present. But this amount is very less, and the government has not made efforts to reopen the border checkpost, businessmen have complained.\textsuperscript{11}

The Nepal-India border checkpost in Rautahat, which had been shut down since the past one-and-a-half years to control the COVID-19 pandemic, reopened from October 6.\textsuperscript{12}

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\textsuperscript{7} Setopati  \\
\textsuperscript{8} Onlinekhabar  \\
\textsuperscript{9} Baarhakhari  \\
\textsuperscript{10} Kantipur  \\
\textsuperscript{11} Nayapatrika
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Kawasoti Municipality in Nawalparasi (East) has decided to provide Rs 50,000 to each family who has lost family members to COVID-19. Deputy Mayor Prem Kumar Mardaniya said the bereaved families would be provided the amount before Dashain.\(^\text{13}\)

The Environment and Public Health Organization has distributed masks free of charge to people returning to their villages to celebrate Dashain. It distributed the mask in the Koteshwor area with a message that the risk of COVID-19 infection is still there and so one must wear a mask.\(^\text{14}\)

The Lumbini Development Trust has been facing problems paying the salary of its staff as its income has declined due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As such it has been making some of its staff work for 15 days and pay the salary of those days only.\(^\text{15}\)

In a virtual event organized by the Forum for Human Rights, it was complained that the government and political organizations did not pay attention to the Nepalis who went for foreign employment during the COVID-19 pandemic and faced different problems there.\(^\text{16}\)

### International News

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on October 5 warned against travel to Armenia, Austria, Barbados, Croatia and Latvia because of COVID-19 concerns raising travel recommendations to ‘Level 4: Very High’. The CDC lowered its travel recommendations to ‘Level 3’ for Nepal, Morocco, Argentina, France, among others, which urges travelers to be fully vaccinated before visiting.\(^\text{17}\)

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\(^{12}\) Onlinekhabar  
\(^{13}\) The Kathmandu Post  
\(^{14}\) Onlinekhabar  
\(^{15}\) Kantipur  
\(^{16}\) Nagarik  
\(^{17}\) Reuters (in The Kathmandu Post)
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