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March 23, 2021: National / International [Current Affairs](#)

1. 10 cities put under stiff lockdown till April 11

- The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on March 22, 2021 imposed further restrictions which will remain in force till April 11 in view of the rising cases of Covid-19.
 - The NCOC, at its meeting, decided to impose broader lockdowns, with no mobility except for emergencies, in 10 cities where the positivity ratio is over 8pc. They are Islamabad, Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Bahawalpur, Hyderabad, Peshawar, Swat and Muzaffarabad.
 - The government had earlier implemented a policy of smart lockdowns in which people had liberty to move
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2. Fatwa in favour of Covid vaccine

- Issuing a fatwa (religious decree), Darul Ifta Pakistan on March 22, 2021 declared vaccination against the coronavirus legal and permissible in accordance with Shariah, saying that it was needed to prevent the pandemic.
- Addressing a joint press conference in the office of Muttahida Ulema Board, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi announced the religious decree.
- Flanked by dozens of ulema representing all shades of opinion, Ashrafi said, `this decree is being issued with the consent and consultation of ulema, muftis and leading religious scholars of Darul Ifta Pakistan.

3. One in three Covid survivors suffer long-term health issues: review

- At least one in three patients hospitalised with Covid-19 suffer long term health issues including multiple organ problems and deteriorated mental health, according to a review of studies looking at the lasting impact of the disease.
 - Published in the journal Nature Medicine on March 22, 2021, the review looked at the frequency of symptoms among Covid `long-haulers`, the most common of which include fatigue, shortness of breath, anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder. Authors of the research said the data pointed to an underappreciated health emergency that governments needed to study more closely and find ways to manage
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4. Captain (retired) Muhammad Usman assumes charge as Lahore Commissioner

- Captain (retired), Muhammad Usman, Grade 20 PAS Officer, has assumed the charge of Commissioner Lahore Division, on March 22, 2021.
 - He had served as DCO Lahore, DG Punjab Food Authority and Secretary Primary and Secondary Health Punjab. He said after assuming charge, that cleanliness and price checking were the huge challenges to be coped with.
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5. VEON acquires Dhabhi group stake in Jazz for \$273m

- The Dutch telecom giant VEON Ltd has bought all stakes in its telecom venture from the UAE-based Dhabhi group in Jazz Pakistan.
 - VEON in its official statement released on March 22, 2021 announced that it has completed the acquisition of minority shareholding in Pakistan Mobile Communications Ltd (PMCL).
 - VEON is a multinational telecommunication services company headquartered in Amsterdam, the Netherlands
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6. Punjab launches TB notification apps

- Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid inaugurated the notification TB App and E-TB app at the “Role of Media in Diagnosis and Prevention of TB” workshop here on March 22, 2021.
 - The number of new TB infections is rising the world over. Government is providing free diagnosis and treatment facility to 153,970 patients.
 - This entire week, awareness for TB control will be held across the province and in the year 2020, the above number was diagnosed. Screening of over 500,000 people was done. After screening, 10,817 children were diagnosed
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7. West sanctions Chinese officials over `abuses` against Uighur

- The European Union, Britain, Canada and the United States on March 22, 2021 launched coordinated sanctions against officials in China over alleged human rights abuses in the far western Xinjiang region, provoking swift retaliation from Beijing.
 - The EU targeted four senior officials in Xinjiang. The sanctions involve a freeze on the officials assets and a ban on them traveling in the bloc.
 - European citizens and companies are not permitted to provide them with financial assistance
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8. Saudi Arabia offers ceasefire to Houthi rebels

- Saudi Arabia on March 22, 2021 offered Yemen`s Houthi rebels a `comprehensive` UN-supervised ceasefire, as part of a series of new initiatives aimed at ending a catastrophic six-year conflict.
 - But the Iran-backed Houthis, who have recently stepped up attacks on the kingdom, including its oil facilities, dismissed Riyadh`s initiatives as `nothing new`.
 - The insurgents have also been pushing to seize the Saudi backed Yemeni government`s last northern stronghold, in an escalation of the country`s six-year conflict.
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9. A star has fascinated mankind for decades

- 'Eta Carinae' is an extraordinary star that has fascinated mankind for decades.
 - It's surrounded by an expanding 'Homunculus nebula', shaped like an hourglass.
 - This nebula was expelled in an energetic explosion called the 'Great Eruption' that occurred in the 1840s, when Eta Carinae became the second brightest star in the sky and was visible to the naked eye for over a decade.
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10. Lee, Okuhara bag singles titles at All England Open

- Malaysian shuttler Lee Zii Jia defeated defending champion Viktor Axelsen to win the men's singles crown at the All England Open on Sunday while Japan's Nozomi Okuhara won the women's title for a second time.
 - Sixth seed Lee took control in the third game to beat the Dane 30-29 20-22 21-9 at the Birmingham event. "I'm happy, excited, sad ... Everything has come into one moment so it's hard to describe the feeling," said Lee, who knocked out world number one Kento Momota in the quarter-finals. "Both of us played very well until the third game when Axelsen lost a bit of focus and that's the moment I had the advantage."
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