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May 03, 2021: National / International [Current Affairs](#)

1. Controls on Afghan, Iran borders being beefed up to fight Covid

- In a bid to prevent possible arrival of new Covid-19 variants, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Sunday decided to enhance protocols on borders with Iran and Afghanistan by regulating inbound pedestrian movement and effectively managing health guidelines.
 - On the other hand, vaccination of people in the age bracket of 40-49 years is set to begin on May 2, 2021 (today).
 - An official of the Ministry of National Health Services, on condition of anonymity, had said that there were an estimated 12 million people in this age group
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2. Pakistan reduces foreign airlines` flights to 120 per week

- After reducing the number of inbound flights to 20 per cent as pan of measures to halt the spread of Covid-19 from May 5 to 20, Pakistan has also slashed the number of foreign airlines` flights to 120 per week.
 - Currently, 29 foreign airlines have been operating 590 flights per week to Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, Quetta, Faisalabad, Sialkot and Multan
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3. Balochistan minister stripped of portfolio

- Differences within the provincial cabinet have intensified despite Prime Minister Imran

Khan`s recent visit to Quetta and his talks with Chief Minister Jam Kamal Alyani and head of parliamentary party of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) in the Balochistan Assembly Sardar Yar Mohammad Rind.

- The chief minister, who has been facing criticism from Education Minister Sardar Rind, in his latest move withdrew portfolio of local government and rural development from Minister Sardar Mohammad Saleh Bhootani.
 - This is the second change made by the chief minister in his cabinet. Last year Health Minister Naseebullah Marri of the PTI was removed from cabinet
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4. Saudi Arabia to fund mosque construction in Islamic university

- Saudi Arabia has agreed to finance the construction of 80-kanal Jamia Masjid King Salman bin Abdul Aziz in International Islamic University Islamabad, said Special Representative to Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi.
 - In a statement, he said the mosque having capacity to accommodate over 12,000 faithful would be a gift from Saudi government to the people of Pakistan and the students of Islamic University ahead of the visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to Saudi Arabia. After Shah Faisal Mosque, Islamabad, this mosque will be a great addition to the mosques of Pakistan
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5. All brick kilns in Punjab shifted to eco-friendly technology

- In yet another milestone in the fight against air pollution and smog, the present government has converted all brick kilns in Punjab to zigzag technology.
 - Due to Prime Minister Imran Khan`s personal attention and encouragement, the country is making some major and important strides to deal with the bigger issue of climate change. These efforts focusing on clean energy and nature based solutions were also being applauded at the international level, said a press release issued here on Sunday.
 - Whilst no attention was paid to it in the past, the government achieved the target of converting all the 7896 brick kilns in Punjab to the eco friendly technology in a record period of just six months, proving true the maxim that when there is a will there is also a way
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6. Vaccine discomfort mostly caused by anxiety, says US report

- Most Covid-19 vaccine reactions such as fainting, dizziness and nausea were due to anxiety and not the shots themselves, says America's main health monitoring agency, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
 - The advisory is based on the data collected from five mass vaccination sites in the United States and was released on Friday afternoon.
 - The centres reported 64 anxiety-related events, including 17 events of fainting after receiving the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine in early April. US health agencies called for a temporary pause on this vaccine after six people developed a rare blood clot disorder
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7. Mamata wrecks Modi's facade in West Bengal

- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee landed a two-thirds resounding sweep on May 2, 2021 in crucial state polls that saw Prime Minister Narendra Modi snubbed for leading the BJP's charge in a state that has been a bastion against his divisive politics.
 - 'Bengal has saved India,' Ms Banerjee said as her Trinamool Congress (TMC) arrived at a score of 215 seats in a 294-member assembly. The BJP appeared a distant second with 78 seats as final tallies were awaited.
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8. UK says Iran's treatment of Zaghari-Ratcliffe is 'torture'

- Iran's treatment of detained dual national Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe amounts to "torture" and she is being held hostage, Britain said on May 2, 2021, after she was convicted anew and banned from leaving the Islamic republic.
- The British-Iranian woman has been held in Iran since 2016. In late April, she was sentenced to a year's imprisonment and banned from leaving the country for a further 12 months.
- British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who spoke to Zaghari-Ratcliffe on Wednesday, said she was being held "unlawfully" and "being treated in the most abusive" way. "I think it amounts to torture the way she's being treated, and there is a very clear, unequivocal obligation on the Iranians to release her," he told BBC television on Sunday

9. Beijing conducts exercises in South China Sea after US move

- China`s Shandong aircraft carrier group has recently conducted routine annual exercises in the South China Sea, the Peoples Liberation Army said on May 2, 2021, after Beijing criticised the US for sending Navy ships into the strategic area.
 - The Chinese Defence Ministry last week urged the US to restrain its frontline forces in the air and seas near China. US reconnaissance aircraft and warships have become more active around China since President Biden took office, it said
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10. ISS astronauts splash down off Florida on SpaceX craft

- A SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule carrying four astronauts back to Earth splashed down off Florida early on May 2, 2021 in Nasa`s first nighttime ocean landing in more than 50 years.
 - The crew reported they were feeling well after their arrival back on Earth following a nearly six-month mission aboard the International Space Station, Nasa said.
 - The capsule splashed down at 2:56am in the dark in the Gulf of Mexico off Panama City after a six-and-a-half-hour flight from the ISS, night-vision images relayed by Nasa`s WB-57 high-altitude research aircraft showed
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