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December 23, 2020: National / International [Current Affairs](#)

1. Govt okays 2017 census results after three years

- After a lapse of three years, the federal cabinet finally approved the 6th National Census-2017 on December 22, 2020 with a dissenting note submitted by the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), one of the government`s main allies.
 - A meeting of the cabinet, presided over by Prime Minister Imran Khan, decided to send the census report to the Council of Common Interests (CCI) to get its final nod with consensus among the provinces.
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2. Current account posts fifth monthly surplus of \$447m in November

- The country`s current account posted a surplus of \$447 million in November the fifth consecutive month since July.
 - The State Bank`s latest data issued on December 22, 2020 showed the current account surplus in November increased by 7.7 per cent from \$415m surplus in October.
 - However, during July Nov FY21, the surplus rose to \$1.64 billion against a net current account deficit of \$1.745bn in the same period of last fiscal year.
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3. US Congress approves \$900bn stimulus package

- US lawmakers have approved a \$900 billion relief package for the world's biggest economy that will provide a long-sought boost for millions of Americans and businesses battered by the coronavirus pandemic.
 - Overwhelming approval in the Senate and House of Representatives on Monday cleared the way for the legislation to be sent to President Donald Trump to be signed into law.
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4. Anti-Modi alliance sweeps local polls in held Kashmir

- An alliance of Kashmiri parties opposed to the state's annexation by India last year was poised to sweep local body polls against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, and claimed it was a verdict to reverse New Delhi's arbitrary rule in the region, reports said.
 - The Farooq Abdullah-led People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration, which was heading for a big victory in the local polls, has favoured talks between India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir dispute
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5. Russia sanctions EU over poisoning of `delusional` Navalny

- Russia on December 22, 2020 slapped tit-for-tat sanctions on EU officials over their response to the poisoning of Alexei Navalny, saying the opposition leader had a persecution complex and `compares himself to Jesus.
 - Moscow summoned several senior EU diplomats before announcing the new travel bans in response to what it said were `confrontational` sanctions imposed by the bloc in October
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6. China launches first phase of plan to make reusable rockets

- China's new carrier rocket, the Long March-8, made its maiden flight on December 22, 2020, the country's space agency said, the first phase of a strategy to deploy launch vehicles that can be reused.
- The Long March-8 series is part of China's endeavours to develop reusable rockets, potentially lowering mission costs and paving the way towards commercial launch services.

7. US reinstates Sudan`s sovereign immunity over `terror attacks`

- US lawmakers on December 21, 2020 backed legislation granting Sudan legal immunity for past militant attacks, a final step in a historic deal removing Khartoum from Washington`s blacklist of state sponsors of terrorism.
 - The text restores Sudan`s sovereign immunity with the exception of litigation already pending in US federal courts related to the September 11, 2001 attacks, and earmarks hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to Khartoum.
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8. Putin signs bill giving presidents lifetime immunity

- Russian President Vladimir Putin on December 22, 2020 signed legislation that will grant former presidents lifetime immunity once they leave office.
 - The bill, which was published online on Tuesday, gives former presidents and their families immunity from prosecution for crimes committed during their lifetime
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9. Commercial flight from Israel lands in Morocco

- The first Israel Morocco direct commercial flight landed in the North African kingdom on Tuesday to mark the latest US-brokered diplomatic normalisation deal between the Jewish state and an Arab country.
 - US President Donald Trump`s son-in-law and White House adviser Jared Kushner was on board along with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu`s National Security Adviser Meir Ben Shabbat
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10. Rizwan-inspired Pakistan deny Black Caps T20 series sweep

- Mohammad Rizwan celebrated his elevation to the Pakistan Test captaincy in style on December 22, 2020, smashing a careerbest 89 to stop New Zealand claiming a series sweep in the third Twenty20 International in Napier.
- Rizwan got out in the final over at 171-6 with Pakistan still needing three runs to win with

four balls left. The recalled Iftikhar Ahmed settled the issue when he hoisted the fourth ball of the last over out of the ground for six, lifting Pakistan to 177-6

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December 2020:

- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(December 31, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(December 30, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(December 29, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(December 28, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(December 27, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(December 26, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(December 25, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(December 23, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(December 22, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(December 21, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [1](#)
- [2](#)
- [3](#)
- [>>](#)

November 2020:

- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(November 30, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(November 29, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily DAWN News Vocabulary with Urdu Meaning \(28 November 2020\)](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(November 28, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(November 27, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(November 26, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(November 25, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(November 24, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(November 23, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(November 21, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [1](#)
- [2](#)
- [3](#)

- [>>](#)

October 2020:

- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(November 10, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(November 05, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(October 30, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(October 29, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(October 28, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(October 27, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(October 26, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(October 25, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(October 24, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(October 23, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [1](#)
- [2](#)
- [3](#)
- [4](#)
- [>>](#)

September 2020:

- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(September 30, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(September 29, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(September 28, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(September 27, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(September 26, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(September 25, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(September 24, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(September 23, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(September 22, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(September 21, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [1](#)
- [2](#)
- [3](#)
- [>>](#)

August 2020:

- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(August 30, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(August 29, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(August 27, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(August 26, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(August 25, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(August 24, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(August 23, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(August 22, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(August 21, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)
- [Daily Top-10 Current Affairs MCQs / News \(August 20, 2020\) for CSS, PMS](#)

- [1](#)
- [2](#)
- [3](#)
- [>>](#)

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