

PRACTICE

MOCK

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

**AUG 2020
2nd Week**

AUGUST 8-15

PracticeMock

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NATIONAL

1. Defence Minister Raj Nath Singh launched "**SRIJAN**", an online portal to promote indigenization of Defence production. Highlights The portal is to display those items that are currently being imported by Indian Defence Industry. This will help domestic industries of the country to learn and focus more on these specific items.
2. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways announced that the Electric Vehicles shall be sold and registered without pre-fitted batteries. This will reduce cost of Electric Vehicles by 50%.
3. **NITI Aayog** announced that it has selected **Oracle Corporation** to modernise vital IT infrastructure in 112 most backward districts under its **Aspirational Districts Programme**. The selected 112 districts constitute 28% of Indian population. The Oracle Corporation will provide new cloud solution and will aid the District Magistrates to transform the lives of the citizens in these Aspirational districts and also to improve their overall performance.
4. the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched **Atma Nirbhar Bharat Saptah**. The scheme aims to shift India towards local manufacturing and aid "Make in India" initiative. The idea of the scheme is to give importance to domestic production in the country. The idea of observing a week will provide impetus to Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
5. On August 15, 2020, PM Modi launched **Project Lion and Project Dolphin** during his speech at the 74th Independence Day celebrations.
6. Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar launched **National Portal on Human Elephant** conflict called "**SURAKHSYA**". The portal aims to collect real time information and will also manage conflicts on real time basis.
7. The NITI Aayog, Atal Innovation Mission along with the collaboration of **NASSCOM** launched the "**ATL AI Step Up Module**". It was launched on the eve of independence-day. The module is to drive AI education and innovation to next levels in schools all over India.
8. On August 15, 2020, PM Modi announced the **Optic Fibre Linking of Lakshadweep Islands** with the mainland during his address at the 74th celebrations of Independence Day. The undersea Optical Fibre Cable link to be established between Lakshadweep and the mainland is second in the country. The first of its kind was established between Chennai and Port Blair. The Lakshadweep Undersea project is to be completed in 1,000 days. It will help to boost communication between India and Lakshadweep. The **Department of Telecommunications** is to implement the project.
9. The **Central Water Commission** along with **Google** has launched **flood forecasting initiative**. Under the initiative, numerous alerts can be sent to the public regarding flood situation in the region. Also, people can learn about current water level in the flood affected regions in the country.

10. Lok Sabha has launched a new **French Course** at beginner level for the staff and officials. Around 57 officials have been registered under the course. The course is being launched as its is essential to acquire knowledge of French language in the interconnected world. The initiative is to be implemented by the Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for Democracy (**PRIDE**).
11. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra (RSK)** an interactive experience centre on the Swachh Bharat Mission. PM launched 'Gandagi Mukh Bharat' – week long (Aug 8-15, 2020) campaign for Swachhata. Railways to observe cleanliness week from August 10-15 to mark Independence Day.
12. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Jal Shakti launched the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Academy, an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) based free mobile online training course with modules on the Open Defecation Free (ODF) Plus programme at an event in New Delhi. It is launched as part of 'Gandagi Mukh Bharat', the ongoing week-long behaviour change campaign.
13. The **Indian Railways** observed **Cleanliness Week** between **August 10, 2020 and August 15, 2020**. The week will give the message of significance of cleanliness. During the week, the Indian Railways is to launch special cleanliness drive that will focus on cleanliness in the station offices, tracks, worksites, colonies and other areas in and around railway stations. The drive will focus on plastic waste collection from the tracks.
14. The Ministry of Textiles has disbanded **All India Powerloom Board** after All India Handicrafts and Handloom boards. Also, all of the eight Textiles Research Associations in the country will now cease to be "affiliated bodies" of the ministry. The Textile Research Associations will now act as approved bodies to conduct tests, researches and development activities of textiles sector. The decision has been made to stick to the principle of "Minimum Government Maximum Governance". The Handloom Board was scrapped on the National Handloom Day (August 7).
15. The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India** recently announced that sale of junk and unhealthy food should be restricted within **50 metres** schools and education institutions. The FSSAI has made the announcement to provide safe foods and balanced diet to children in schools. The foods referred to as HFSS (High in Fat, Salt and Sugar) cannot be sold in mess premises and school canteens. The FSSAI operates under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It was established as statutory body under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
16. The **Khadi and Village Industries Commission** is to set up the first of its kind **training cum production centre of silk** in the state of **Arunachal Pradesh**. The centre is to be launched in the first week of September, 2020. The KVIC will provide machinery such as handlooms, warping drums and silk reeling machines. The centre is to provide training to 25 local artisans and will boost weaving activities in the region.

17. On August 8, 2020, India commemorated the 78th anniversary of Quit India movement. On August 8, 1942, Mahatma Gandhi launched Quit India Movement at the session of All India Congress Committee in Mumbai.
18. The Indian Railways is to operate first parcel special train to **Bangladesh under Ahmedabad division**. The train is to traverse 2,110 km to reach Benapole in Bangladesh. The Western Railways sent goods train earlier with loaded wagons of onion to Bangladesh.
19. NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (**AIM**) in collaboration with Dell Technologies has launched the 2nd edition of Student Entrepreneurship Program (**SEP 2.0**) for young innovators of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs). The objective of the programme is to accelerate the entrepreneurial journey of young innovators who can play a major role in creating a new innovative India.
20. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (**MoTA**) announced that **the nine Tribal Freedom Fighters Museums** that are under development by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to recognise the contribution of the tribal freedom fighters will be completed by the end of 2022. The Museums will utilise latest technologies like Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, 3 dimensional (3D) and 7 dimensional (7D) holographic projects and others.

STATES

21. Gujarat Government launched a new scheme called the **Mukhya Mantri Kisan Sahay Yojana**. The scheme will replace Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana in the state for the current year alone.
22. The Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel announced about the launch of "**Indira Van Mitan Yojana**" on the eve of International Day of World Indigenous People. It is an initiative to support forest dwellers of Chhattisgarh and achieve self-reliance.
23. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched "**Delhi Electric Vehicle Policy**". Under the new policy, the State Government of Delhi will waive registration fee and road tax. Also, it will provide an incentive of up to Rs 1.5 lakhs for new cars in the NCR region.
24. the Assam Government is to identify beneficiaries of new scheme called "**ORUNODOI**". The scheme is being launched to help in **women financial empowerment**. Highlights The ORUNODOI will be the biggest scheme in Assam that will benefit more than 17 lakh families.
25. The **Andhra Pradesh Government** has launched a new **State Industrial Development Policy** for the year 2020-23. The policy aimed to create employment for youth and match national average in industrial GVA per capita. The previous Industrial Development Policy of the state was implemented between 2015-20.
26. On the occasion of International Youth Day and Janmastami (August 12, 2020), Captain Amarinder Singh, Chief Minister of **Punjab** launched the "**Punjab Smart Connection Scheme**" worth Rs. 92 crores to

provide free smartphones to the students of class 12 and he also handed over the smartphones to 6 students.

27. On the occasion of International Youth Day August 12, 2020, the **West Bengal** government launched the '**Karma Sathi Prakalpa**' scheme under which 1 lakh unemployed youth will be provided soft loans and subsidies so as to make them self-reliant. The West Bengal (WB) Government launched 'Matir Smristi' scheme to utilise 50,000 acres of barren land in 6 districts for income-generating activities.
28. YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh launched "**YSR Cheyutha**" a scheme to ensure the **sustainable livelihood of women** by providing a financial assistance of Rs. 18750 per year for 4 years. The scheme benefits around 23 lakh women of age group 45-60 belonging to the minority community like SC, ST, BC.
29. The Government of Telangana has launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Agricultural Innovation Programme (AI4AI) in collaboration with Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) & World Economic Forum (WEF) – India. Agriculture Innovation Program is being launched as part of Telangana's year of AI (2020) programmes.
30. The **Gujarat State Government** launched the "**Industrial Policy 2020**". The policy aims to provide Rs 40,000 subsidies to the industries in the state in the next five years.
31. **Himachal Pradesh** Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate "**Atal Tunnel**" by the end of September 2020.
32. On August 14, 2020 the Arunachal Pradesh Government formed a committee under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein to discuss possible solutions of the Patkai Autonomous Council and Mon autonomous Region.
33. The E-commerce platform Flipkart signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Uttar Pradesh** Government's One District, One Product (**ODOP**) scheme. As part of the MoU, artisans, weavers and craftsmen under the One District, One Product (ODOP) scheme will be brought into the '**Flipkart Samarth**' initiative. This partnership will enable the under-served communities to showcase their specialised products and crafts in the e-commerce platform.

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INTERNATIONAL

34. the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar announced that the Indian Government will provide **100 million USD** of grant and **400 million USD of line of credit to Maldives**. The funds are to be used for connectivity projects.
35. The **Bangladesh** Government is to construct **war memorial** for Indian soldiers killed in 1971 war. The memorial is to be constructed in Ashuganj, Brahmanbaria bordering **Tripura**.
36. On August 8, 2020, the island **of Mauritius has declared environmental emergency** due to oil spill caused by Japanese owned ship that was stranded off the coast days ago.
37. The USA Presidential Candidate Joe Biden has chosen **Kamala Harris** to run for Vice President. As a running mate, she will be the first black woman and the first person of Indian origin to be nominated for the national office of a majority party in the US.
38. the **United States Food and Drugs Administration** authorised the emergency use of saliva based diagnostic test for COVID-19. This is to be a game changer as it provides the results rapidly. The testing method has been named "**SALIVA DIRECT**".
39. The planet hunter of NASA called the **TESS** (Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite) has found **66 new Exoplanets**. TESS is Transitioning Exoplanet Survey Satellite. It scanned about 75% of the starry sky during its mission.
40. The **COVAX** Facility of the **World Health Organization** recently renewed its invitation to countries to join its COVID-19 vaccine facility. The COVAX facility is a mechanism designed to guarantee fair, rapid and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. CAVAX is COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access facility. The facility is backed by Bill Gate Foundation. The foundation is working to make COVID-19 vaccines available to poor countries.
41. **Russia** becomes the World's 1st country to officially register a COVID-19 vaccine and declare it ready for use. The vaccine will be marketed in foreign markets under the name '**Sputnik V**', after the world's first satellite Sputnik. The vaccine has been developed jointly by the Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology and the Russian Defence Ministry.
42. As per the latest report, '**Progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in school's** Special focus on COVID-19' released by World Health Organization (**WHO**) and United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**) through the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme(JMP), around 818 million children across the world lacked basic hand-washing facilities in their schools which makes them prone to the COVID-19 and other transmittable diseases.

REPORTS & SCHEMES

43. On August 15, 2020, PM Modi launched the **National Digital Health Mission** during his address at the 74th Independence Day celebrations. Under the mission, every Indian is to get a **Health ID card**. The ID card will contain all relevant information about the person's past medical condition, treatment and diagnosis. The mission is completely technology based. The mission aims to **improve the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of health care** in India. It is to operate under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana or Ayushman Bharat.
44. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs recently released ranking of states under AMRUT scheme. Odisha has secured first position by scoring 85.67%. AMRUT is Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation Scheme. The scheme aims to provide piped water supply to households in urban areas of the state. It also aims at construction of sewerage treatment plants and improving green spaces in the cities. This year, **Odisha has topped the ranking** followed by Chandigarh, Telangana, Gujarat and Karnataka in the implementation of the scheme.
45. Indian PM has launched financing facility of **Rs 1 lakh crore** under **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund** via video conferencing. Along with the facility the Prime Minister will also release sixth installment of funds of **Rs 17,000 crores**. This is to benefit more than 8.5 crore farmers under PM-KISAN scheme.
46. The International Animal Welfare Organization, World Animal Protection on the eve of World Elephant Day (August 12) released its report, "**Elephants. Not Commodities**". According to the report, over 200 elephants in India are kept in severe inadequate conditions. According to the report, **India is home to second-highest number of elephants used in tourism in Asia**. There are 21 venues in India that houses 509 elephants that are used in Tourism. The report says that of these 509 elephants, 45% (225) are in inadequate conditions. The World Animal Protection is working to phase out Elephant rides in Amer fort in Jaipur. Over 100 elephants here provide daily rides to 1000s of tourists.

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ECONOMY & BUSINESS

47. The Reserve Bank of India recently released its report of Consumer Confidence Survey. According to the survey, consumer confidence has dropped to a record low. The current index dropped to **53.8 in July, 2020** from 63.7 in May. The survey was conducted through telephonic interviews in thirteen major cities.
48. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare recently announced that **India ranks first in Organic Farming**. Also, India ranks **ninth in terms of areas under Organic Farming**. **Sikkim** was the first state in the world to become completely organic. The other states that have similar targets include Uttarakhand and Tripura.

49. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has received several proposals to make Solar **Equipment for over 10 GW**. India has set its target to set up 100 GW of solar energy by 2022. India has already achieved 31 GW by October 2019. Currently, the country is focusing on domestic manufacturing to reduce dependency on imports.
50. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unveiled a new platform called "**Transparent Taxation-Honouring the Honest**". This was earlier announced by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as "Tax Charter" in Budget 2020-21.
51. The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently launched **National Infrastructure Pipeline online dashboard**. The dashboard is to act as a one-stop solution for all stakeholders who are looking for information about infrastructure projects. The Finance Minister had announced an outlay of Rs 100 lakh crore for infrastructure projects in the country for the next 5 years in her Budget Speech 2019-20. The dashboard is to be hosted by **India Investment Grid (IIG)**. IIG is a dynamic online platform that showcases real time investment opportunities in the country.
52. On August 12, 2020, the panel formed by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) made its proposals on **Business Responsibility Report**. The panel was formed in 2018 in efforts to have a single source for all the non-financial disclosures made by the corporates. The panel comprises of representatives of MCA, SEBI, etc. The panel proposed that the Business Responsibility Report shall be called as **Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report**. This is to help in reflecting better intent and scope of the report.

FINANCE AND BANKING

53. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy board of India recently amended the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India Regulations. This is the second amendment. The amendment has made major changes to the voluntary liquidation process. The amendment allows the **corporate persons to replace the liquidator with another liquidator** or insolvency professional to initiate voluntary liquidation process.
54. The Reserve Bank of India has constituted a panel under former ICICI bank CEO **K V Kamath**. The panel will make recommendations on **financial parameters that are to be considered to structure loans** that are impacted by COVID-19.
55. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revised the guidelines applicable for Core Investment Companies (**CICs**) on the basis of the recommendations of the Working Group (WG) to Review the Regulatory and Supervisory Framework for Core Investment Companies (CICs), constituted under the Chairmanship of **Tapan Ray**, former Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA). In this regard, RBI has made the guidelines stricter for CICs by mandating more disclosures, better risk management and a simpler group structure w.e.f. August 13, 2020. The existing entities have been given time till 31 March 2023 to reorganize their business structure.

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PERSON IN NEWS

56. Former president of Sri Lanka Shri Mahinda Rajapaksa was sworn in as the new **prime minister**.
57. On **August 16**, 2020, India commemorated death anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
58. Former Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Jammu and Kashmir **Girish Chandra Murmu** took oath as Comptroller and Auditor General of India. He is the first tribal to take oath as CAG of India. The oath was administered by the President Ram Nath Kovind.
59. Reliance Industries Chairman **Mukesh Ambani** has become the **world's fourth richest person** surpassing Bernard Arnault. As per the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, Ambani's net worth is now at \$80.2 billion (approx Rs 6 lakh crore). Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos (\$187 billion), Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates (\$121 billion) and Facebook co-founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg (\$102 billion) were in top 3 respectively.

OBITUARIES

60. Urdu Poet & Lyricist, **Rahat Indori** who was being treated for COVID-19 died of Heart Attack at Aurobindo Hospital, Indore. He was born as Rahat Qureshi on 1 January, 1950 in Indore.

IMPORTANT DAYS

61. The United Nations (UN's) **International Day of the World's Indigenous** People is annually observed on **9th August**. The International Day of the World's Indigenous People also known as World Tribal Day. The First International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was celebrated on 9th August 1995. The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2020 is celebrated under the theme – "**COVID-19 and indigenous peoples' resilience**"
62. Every year **International Youth Day** is celebrated on **August 12** by the United Nations and other organizations. The first International youth Day was celebrated in 1999. This year, the day is celebrated under the following theme: **Youth Engagement for Global Action**.
63. Every year, **World Elephant Day** is celebrated on **August 12**. It is an international event that is dedicated to preserve and protect world elephants. The idea of World Elephant Day was conceived by Canadian film makers Patricia Sims and Michael Clark in Thailand. The main objective of celebrating World Elephant Day is to create awareness about the urgent plight of Asian and African elephants. The African Elephants are listed as "Vulnerable" and Asian Elephants as "Endangered" in the IUCN Red List of threatened species.

SPORTS

64. **Red Bull's** 22 years old driver **Max Emilian Verstappen** from Netherland had won F1 70th Anniversary Grand Prix (officially called as Emirates Formula 1 70th Anniversary Grand Prix 2020) at the Silverstone Circuit, Silverstone, United Kingdom and became the first non-Mercedes driver to win a race in the 2020.

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