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### **Current Affairs:- August 5 – August 20, 2018**

- The iconic Mughalsarai Railway Junction in Uttar Pradesh has been renamed as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction Railway station. The bi-weekly Ekatmata Express, train connecting Lucknow and Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction was also flagged off on the occasion.
  - In the 29th meeting, GST council approved cash incentives to promote Digital transactions. Finance Minister Piyush Goyal announced 20% Cashback upto Rs.100 for the Digital Transactions done via BHIM, Rupay or USSD mode.
  - PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi will step down in October after serving for 12 years as the top boss at the global beverage giant, PepsiCo. Indian-origin Indra Nooyi was the first ever woman to be appointed the CEO at PepsiCo, in the year 2006. She will be succeeded by company President Ramon Laguarta.
  - Indian Golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar grabbed his maiden European Tour title at the Fiji International in Natadola Bay. It was Bhullar's first win on the European Tour, ninth Asian Tour title and 10th crown overall. He now becomes the most
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successful Indian player on Asian Tour, overtaking the tally of eight tour wins by Arjun Atwal and Jyoti Randhawa.

- In Women's Hockey World Cup 2018, the Netherlands has been crowned the world champions for a record eighth time. The defending champions recorded a victory over Ireland in the summit clash at London, UK. Kitty van Male finished the tournament as the top scorer with eight goals. India finished the tournament at the 8th spot.
  - The 2018 BWF World Championships is a badminton tournament which was held at Nanjing Youth Olympic Games Sports Park Arena in Nanjing, China. Ace Indian shuttler P V Sindhu won the silver medal as she was defeated by Carolina Marin in the World Championships' women's singles title.
  - The world's first-ever thermal battery plant was unveiled in Andhra Pradesh by the state's Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.
  - The 123rd Constitutional Amendment Bill giving constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) has got Parliamentary assent.
  - The National Handloom Day was observed on 7 August to honour the handloom weavers in the country.
  - The Indian and Thailand's armed forces concluded a two-week long platoon level joint military exercise called 'Exercise Maitree 2018' in Jammu & Kashmir's Srinagar.
  - Google's latest Android operating system update, Android 9 Pie, was officially released to customers following a beta
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testing period that started earlier this year. Note: Google CEO- Sundar Pichai, Parent organization- Alphabet Inc., Headquarters- the USA.

- Farm and construction equipment maker Escorts appointed Nikhil Nanda as the chairman and managing director (MD) of the company.
  - The nominating committee of Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has selected Ajay Data, Founder & CEO of Data XGen Plus and a global leader in email linguistic services, as a new council member of Country Code Supporting Organisation (ccNSO). Ajay Data is the first Indian to have been selected as a member of ccNSO.
  - The Indian women chess team at the Asian Nations Cup 2018 clinched the gold in the Blitz event held in Iran. It's India's first gold-medal finish at the event since 2014. They also won silver and bronze in the Rapid and Classical categories, respectively.
  - Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar and Tourism Minister Manohar Ajaonkar flagged off the Goa Tourism Development Corporation's app-based taxi service called 'GOAMILES' in Panaji.
  - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) chief and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi passed away in Chennai. He started as a screenwriter in Tamil film industry and was Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for five-term.
  - The Ministry of HRD has embarked on a major and new initiative Project called 'Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds' (SWAYAM), which will provide
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one integrated platform and portal for online courses. The objective is to ensure that every student in the country has access to the best quality higher education at the affordable cost.

- Public sector non-life insurance firm United India Insurance Company announced the appointment of S. Gopakumar as its Director and General Manager.
  - The Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve (in Sikkim) has become the 11th Biosphere Reserve from India that has been included in the UNESCO designated World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve in Sikkim is one of the highest ecosystems in the world, reaching elevations of 1,220 metres above sea-level.
  - The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is observed across the world on August 9 with an aim to strengthen international cooperation for solving problems faced by indigenous peoples. The theme of 2018 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was 'Indigenous peoples' migration and movement'.
  - NDA candidate Harivansh Narayan Singh was elected the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman with 125 votes. The Opposition candidate BK Hariprasad managed to get 105 votes. Note: Venkaiah Naidu is the Chairperson of Rajya Sabha.
  - Ivan Duque was sworn in as the newly elected President of Colombia.
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- The World Biofuel Day is observed every year on August 10 to create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels. On the occasion, PM of India, Narendra Modi unveiled a Booklet on “National Policy on Biofuels 2018”, and launched “Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive and Virtuous Environmental Single window Hub” [PARIVESH].
  - The Global Innovation Index 2018 was launched in New Delhi by Ratan P Watal, Principal Adviser, NITI Aayog & Member Secretary of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister. India’s rank on the Global Innovation Index (GII) has improved from 60 in 2017 to 57 in 2018.
  - The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the ‘One District One Product’ Summit in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. Under the ‘One District One Product’ scheme, the state government has set a goal of providing employment to 25 lakh people in five years through the financial assistance of Rs.25,000 crores.
  - The United Nations announced that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has chosen former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet to be the UN’s new human rights chief. Bachelet’s name will now go forward for consideration and approval by the 193-member UN General Assembly.
  - This year's Asian Games, also known as Jakarta Palembang 2018, has started from 18th August to 2nd September in the Indonesian cities of Jakarta and Palembang.
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- Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra was the flag bearer for the Indian contingent at the opening ceremony of the Asian Games 2018. The 20-year-old has won a gold medal in World Junior Championships, Asian Championships, South Asian Games and Commonwealth Games in his career so far.
  
  - In Asian Games 2018, Bajrang Punia opened India's gold medal account by defeating Japan's Daichi Takatani in the final of Men's Freestyle 65 kg. category. Note: Bhin Bhin, Kaka, and Atung are the mascots of the 2018 Asian Games.
  
  - The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will transfer Rs.50,000 crore of its surplus money to the government, the highest since 2015-16..
  
  - As part of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) initiatives, SCO Peace Mission Exercise is conducted biennially for SCO member states. The joint exercise for the year 2018 will be conducted by Central Military Commission of Russia from 22 August to 29 August 2018 at Chebarkul, Chelyabinsk, Russia. This will be a historic occasion due to the maiden participation of India post becoming a full member of the SCO in June 2017. Note: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an eight-member multilateral organization, established on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Pakistan also became the full member of SCO along with India, taking its membership to 8.
  
  - Axis bank has become the first bank in the country to introduce Iris Scan Authentication feature for Aadhaar-
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based transactions through its micro ATM tablets. Note: Shikha Sharma is the present CEO and Managing director of Axis Bank.

- Santhali (Santali), a tribal language primarily spoken in India, Bangladesh and Nepal, received global recognition when it got a Wikipedia edition in its own script.
  - The Union Government has unlocked green funds worth over Rs 66,000 crore to increase the country's forest cover.
  - International Youth Day was observed on 12 August. The Theme for IYD 2018 is: "Safe space for Youth".
  - India will launch its second lunar mission "Chandrayaan-2" on January 3, 2019, to land on the moon with a lander and rover. 800-crore rupees is the cost of lunar mission named "Chandrayaan-2. The lander on the Chandrayaan-2 mission, which is scheduled to be launched in January 2019 will be named 'Vikram' after Vikram Sarabhai, the father of Indian space programme.
  - The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) blasted off a \$1.5 billion spacecraft toward the Sun on a historic mission to unveil the mysteries of dangerous solar storms. NASA's 'Parker Solar Probe' has become the first-ever mission to "touch" the Sun. The spacecraft, about the size of a small car, will travel directly into the Sun's atmosphere about 4 million miles from the surface.
  - The Ease of Living Index 2018 was released by Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. Of total 111 cities ranked under the index, Pune has been ranked first while Navi
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Mumbai has surfaced as the second preferred spot in terms of 'liveability'.

- Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh announced that Chhattisgarh is the first among the 28 other states in the country to provide Right to Skills' Development to the youth.
  - National Wildlife Genetic Resource Bank (NWGRB) was inaugurated at Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology's (CCMB) Laboratory of Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES) facility in Hyderabad, Telangana. It is India's first genetic resource bank where the genetic material will be stored for posterity which will further the cause of conservation of endangered and protected animals.
  - The Delhi Police inducted an all-woman Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, consisting of 36 commandos – the first ever by any police force in India – for anti-terrorist operations.
  - Country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) is considered to be the most patriotic brand, according to a survey conducted by UK-based online market research and data analytics firm YouGov, followed by Tata Motors, Patanjali, Reliance Jio and BSNL.
  - Indian golfer Viraj Madappa became the youngest Indian to win on the Asian Tour, as he won his first title on the Asian Tour at Take Solutions Masters in Bengaluru. He is 20 years old. Earlier this record was held by Gaganjeet Bhullar, who won the Indonesia Invitational when he was 21 years and three months old.
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- Chhattisgarh Governor Balramji Das Tandon passed away at the age of 90.
  - Former India cricket captain Ajit Wadekar, who led the team to path-breaking Test wins in England and the West Indies, passed away after prolonged illness.
  - Mario Abdo Benitez was sworn in as the new President of Paraguay for a five-year term.
  - Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) has launched BSNL WINGS a VOIP based service. In WINGS, there is no SIM or cable wiring as it is a VOIP service through an app. Note: Anupam Shrivastava is the Chairman & Managing Director of BSNL.
  - Former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has passed away aged 93 in Delhi. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was three times Prime Minister of India. First Term: May 1996, Second Term: 1998-1999 and Third Term: 1999-2004. He headed the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in the Indian Parliament, and became the first Prime Minister unaffiliated with the Indian National Congress to complete a full five-year term in office.
  - The Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Radha Mohan Singh urged Jose Graziano da Silva, the Director General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO) to declare the upcoming year as the 'International Year of Millets'.
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- The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) released the Global Liveability Index 2018, the ranking of 140 global cities based on their living conditions. Delhi was ranked at 112th position and Mumbai fetched 117th spot. Austria's capital Vienna has been ranked as the world's most liveable city.
  - The World Humanitarian Day is observed across the world on August 19 to pay tribute to workers who risk their lives in humanitarian services and to gather support for people affected by crises around the world. The campaign launched on World Humanitarian Day is "#NotATarget".
  - The 11th World Hindi Conference started in Port Louis, the capital of Mauritius.
  - India defeated Bangladesh in the final of South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Under-15 Women's Championship in Thimpu, Bhutan.
  - Cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan took oath as Pakistan's new prime minister.
  - Teen cyclist Esow Alben has created history by claiming India's first ever medal – a silver- at the UCI Junior Track Cycling World Championships in Aigle, Switzerland.
  - NABARD All India Financial Inclusion Survey (NAFIS), conducted by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), was released by Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog in New Delhi.
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- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj inaugurated 'Panini Language Laboratory' at Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) at Port Louis in Mauritius.
  - Delhi government's additional director of health, SK Arora was awarded prestigious World Health Organization (WHO) World No Tobacco Day 2017 Award for his extraordinary contribution towards tobacco control. Note: World No Tobacco Day is observed around the world every year on 31 May.
  - The United States government has awarded the Legion of Merit (Degree of Commander) to General Dalbir Singh Suhag (Retired), of the Indian Army, for exceptionally meritorious service as chief of the Army staff, Indian Army.
  - The Government of India has released 470 million Nepali rupees grant for Terai roads project in Nepal.
  - Film actor Akshay Kumar becomes Brand Ambassador for Road Safety Campaigns.
  - With an aim to provide country's poor access to quality and affordable healthcare, government announced the launch of Ayushman Bharat (now Jan Aarogya Abhiyan) on September 25, covering 50 crore people. Nearly 10 crore families will get health cover worth Rs.5 lakh each year under the scheme.
  - NITI Aayog has launched "Pitch to MOVE" - a mobility pitch competition that aims to provide budding entrepreneurs of India a unique opportunity to pitch their business ideas to a distinguished jury.
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- Rifleman Aurangzeb and Major Aditya Kumar of Indian Army were conferred with the Shaurya Chakra along with 18 others Armed Forces Personnel and members of Paramilitary Forces. Besides, Sepoy Vrahma Pal Singh was awarded with Kirti Chakra posthumously. The President also conferred Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) to Group Captain Abhishek Sharma, Squadron Leader Vernon Desmond Keane and Sergeant Shashidhar P Prasad.