

CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2018

Awards & Honours

The noted Sitar player who has been chosen for the Tansen Samman Award by the Madhya Pradesh Govt for her contribution to music – **Manju Mehta**

The English novelist who has been chosen for the 2018 Jnanpith Award, becoming the first writer in English language to be given this award – **Amitav Ghosh**

The Hindi film actress who has been named the PETA Person of the Year 2018 – **Sonam Kapoor**

The contestant from Philippines who has been crowned Miss Universe 2018 at a beauty pageant held on 17 December 2018 at IMPACT Arena, Muang Thong Thani in Nonthaburi Province, Thailand – **Catriona Gray**

The Saudi Arabian dissident, author, columnist for the Washington Post, assassinated on 02 Oct 2018 who has been chosen to be the Time magazines Person of the Year – **Jamal Khashoggi**

The contestant from Mexico who has been crowned Miss World 2018 at a beauty pageant in Sanya, China – **Vanessa Ponce**

Persons

The new Chief Information Commissioner appointed to succeed Shri RK Mathur – **Sudhir Bhargava**

The legendary filmmaker and Dada Saheb Phalke Awardee who passed away on 30 Dec 2018 – **Mrinal Sen**

The former RBI Governor who has been appointed the head of expert panel on Economic Capital Framework set up to decide on the ideal level of reserves for the Reserve Bank of India – **Bimal Jalan**

The High Commissioner to Bangladesh who has been appointed as the new Indian ambassador to the United States of America – **Harsha Vardhan Shringla**

The new President of Film and Television Institute of India, Pune appointed to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Anupam Kher – **Brijendra Pal Singh**

The new Governor of Reserve Bank of India who has been appointed following the resignation of Dr. Urjit Patel – **Shaktikanta Das**

The new Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India (the position was vacant since June 2018) – **Dr. Krishnamurthy Subramaniam**

The new Finance Secretary of Govt of India who has taken over following the retirement of Shri Hasmukh Adhia on 30 Nov 2018 – **Ajay Narayan Jha**

The new and 58th President of Mexico from 01 December 2018 – **Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador**

Defence

The intercontinental, nuclear capable hypersonic missile which was test-launched from a base in the southern Ural Mountains to hit a practice target in Kamchatka some 6,000 kilometres by Russia is named – **Avangard**

The joint Air Force exercise between the Indian Air Force and the Russian Air Force was conducted at Jodhpur Air Force base from 10 to 21 Dec – **AVIAINDRA 2018**

The bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy and Russian Federation Navy was conducted at/off Visakhapatnam from 09 to 16 Dec 18 – **Indra Navy 2018**

The place at which India's first flyaway Deep Sea Submarine Rescue System (manufactured by M/s James Fisher and Sons) was inducted by Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff – **Mumbai**

The place in China where Sino-India joint military exercise Hand-in-Hand was conducted from 10 to 23 December 2018 – **Chengdu**

The bilateral air exercise by the Indian Air Force and Japanese Air Self Defense Force at Agra Air Force base from 03 to 07 Dec 2018 – **SHINYUU Maitri - 2018**

The bilateral air exercise by the Indian Air Force and US Air Force at Kalaikunda and Panagarh Air Force bases in West Bengal from 03 to 14 Dec 2018 – **Cope India-18**

The book authored by Vice Admiral Anup Singh released by Admiral Sunil Lamba chronicling the history of Indian Navy from 2001 to 2010 is titled – **Blue Waters Ahoy**

Places

The venue of 26th National Children's Science Congress held from 27 to 31 Dec 2018 – **Bhubaneshwar**

The venue of International Gita Mahotsav 2018 held from 07 to 23 Dec 2018 with Mauritius as the partner country and Gujarat as the partner State – **Kurukshetra, Haryana**

The city of Burundi which has been declared to be its new political capital (retaining Bujumbura as its economic capital) – **Gitega**

The places in Telangana and Tamil Nadu where the Union cabinet has approved setting up AIIMS under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) – **Bibinagar and Madurai**

The place in Gujarat where India's first Railway University was dedicated to the nation by Railway Minister Shri Piyush Goyal – **Vadodara**

The place in Jammu and Kashmir where the foundation stone of Institute of High Altitude Medicinal Plants (IHAMP) was laid by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH Shri Shripad Yesso Naik and Union Minister of State in Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Dr. Jitendra Singh – **Bhaderwah (Doda dist)**

The venue of the first International Conference on Sustainable Water Management being organised by Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) during 10-11 December, 2018 with the theme 'Sustainable Water Management' – **Mohali**

The venue of four-day International Conference on Bears Wildlife SOS in collaboration with Bear Care Group from the US and Canada – **Agra**

The country which has decided to leave the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from January 2019 – **Qatar**

The venue of 24th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP-24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held from 2 to 14 December 2018 – **Katowice, Poland**

The venue of two-day Asia Pacific Summit 2018 held from 01 December 2018 with the theme "Addressing the critical challenges of our time: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values – **Kathmandu, Nepal**

Sports

The former Indian cricketer who has been appointed the new coach of Indian women's cricket team – **WV Raman**

The team which has won the Aga Khan Gold Cup hockey tournament 2018 defeating Army XI Danapur in the finals at Major Dhyan Chand Hockey Stadium, Pune – **SAIL Hockey Academy**

The Indian badminton player who has become the first Indian to win the BWF Tour Finals Women's Singles title defeating Nozomi Okuhara in the finals in Tianhe, Guangzhou, China – **PV Sindhu**

The Indian female boxer who has been chosen to be awarded the Meethoileima (Outstanding Queen) by the Manipur govt – **Mary Kom**

The Croatian footballer (club Real Madrid) who has been chosen for the annual football award Ballon d'Or 2018 – **Luca Modric**

The Indian cricketer who has announced retirement from all forms of cricket – **Gautam Gambhir**

The team which has won the Admiral's Cup Regatta 2018, the prestigious international military sailing event hosted annually by Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala at Ettikulum Bay from 02 December to 06 December 2018 – **Italy**

Miscellaneous

The memorial of former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihar Vajpayee which was dedicated to the nation by the President and Prime Minister of India – **Sadaiv Atal**

The denomination in which the Union Govt has released commemorative coin in the honour of former PM Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee – **Rs. 100**

The volcano in Sunda Strait, the eruption of which triggered tsunami in Indonesia resulting in huge loss of life and property – **Anak Krakatau**

The theme of National Consumers Day to be observed on 24 December 2018 – **Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints**

The NBFC which has been merged to IDFC Bank to create a new entity named IDFC First Bank – **Capital First**

The cyclone which rose in Bay of Bengal and hit the state of Andhra Pradesh causing widespread rain and crop loss in the state was named – **Cyclone Phethai**

The twitter account launched by Union Ministry of Home Affairs to spread awareness about cybercrimes is named – **@CyberDost**

The spacecraft launched by China aboard Long March 3B rocket from Xichang Satellite Launch Center on 07 Dec to land for the first time on the far side of the moon is named – **Chang'e 4**

George Herbert Walker Bush

Born: 12 June 1924

Death: 30 Nov 2018

Political Party: Republican Party

Served as: 41st President of the USA from 1989 to 1993

Preceded by Ronald Reagan and succeeded by Bill Clinton

Important events during his Presidential term: Collapse of USSR (1991), Invasion of Iraq to liberate Kuwait (1990), Unification of Germany (1989)

Launch of GSAT-11

Launched on: 04 Dec 2018

Launched from: Spaceport in French Guiana

Launch vehicle: Ariane 5 VA-246 of Arianespace SA

The 5,854-kg GSAT-11 is India's heaviest communication satellite. It will provide high data rate connectivity to users of Indian mainland and islands through 32 user beams in Ku-band and 8 hub beams in Ka-band. GSAT-11 will boost the broadband connectivity to rural and inaccessible Gram Panchayats in the country coming under the Bharat Net Project, which is part of Digital India Programme.

Registration of new breeds of livestock

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has approved registration of record 15 new breeds of livestock and poultry this year.

Two cattle breeds - **Ladakhi** (J&K) and **Konkan Kapila** (Maharashtra & Goa)

Three buffalo breeds - **Luit** (Assam & Manipur), **Bargur** (Tamil Nadu), **Chhattisgarhi** (Chhattisgarh)

One sheep breed – **Panchali** (Gujarat)

Six goat breeds – **Kahmi** (Gujarat), **Rohilkhandi** (UP), **Assam Hill** (Assam & Meghalaya), **Bidri** (Karnataka), **Nandidurga** (Karnataka), **Bhakarwali** (J&K)

One pig breed – **Ghurrah** (UP)

One donkey breed – **Halari** (Gujarat)

One chicken breed – **Uttara** (Uttarakhand)

FIH Hockey World Cup 2018

Venue: **Kalinga Stadium**, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

From 28 Nov to 16 Dec 2018

Teams: 16

Mascot: **Ollly**, an Olive Ridley turtle

Winners: **Belgium**

Runners-up: **Netherlands**

Player of the tournament: **Arthur Van Doren** (Belgium)

Fair Play Award: **Spain**

Global Gender Gap Index 2018

Released by: World Bank

Rank	Country	Rank	Country
1.	Iceland	103	China

2.	Norway	108	India
3.	Sweden	122	Bhutan
4.	Finland	100	Sri Lanka
5.	Nicaragua	105	Nepal

Bogibeel Bridge, Assam

Inaugurated by: PM Shri Narendra Modi

Inaugurated on: 25 Dec 2018

Located over: Brahmaputra river in Dibrugarh district

Length: **4.94 kilometers**

Feature: **Longest** rail-road bridge in India. 4th longest bridge in India after Bhupen Hazarika Setu, Mahatma Gandhi Setu and Bandra-Worli Sea Link. Foundation stone was laid in 1997 by former PM Shri HD Deve Gowda, construction was inaugurated by former PM Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2002.

Renaming of islands in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

PM Shri Narendra Modi announced renaming of 3 islands in Andaman and Nicobar Islands on the occasion of 75th anniversary of tricolour hoisting by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

Ross Island renamed as **Netaji Subhash Chandra Dweep**

Neil Island renamed as **Shaheed Dweep**

Havelock Island renamed as **Swaraj Dweep**

Important Days of December

World AIDS Day: 01 December 2018

Designated by: World Health Organisation

Theme: Know your status

First Observed in: 1988

International Day of Persons with Disabilities: 03 December 2018

Designated by: United Nations General Assembly

Theme: Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

First Observed in: 1992

International Volunteer Day: 05 December 2018

Designated by: United Nations General Assembly

Theme: Volunteers build resilient communities

First Observed in: 1986

World Soil Day: 05 December 2018 First launched by: International Union of Soil Sciences (2002) Endorsed by: Food and Agricultural Organisation (Jun 2013) Accepted by: United Nations General Assembly (Dec 2013) Theme: Be the solution to soil pollution
International Civil Aviation Day: 07 December 2018 Established by : International Civil Aviation Organisation (1994) Adopted by : United Nations General Assembly (1996) Theme (2015-18): Working Together to Ensure No Country is Left Behind
International Anti Corruption Day: 09 December 2018 Designated by: United Nations General Assembly First Observed in: 2003
United Nations Human Rights Day: 10 December 2018 Designated by: United Nations General Assembly Theme: Stand up 4 human rights First Observed in: 1948
International Mountains Day: 11 December 2018 Designated by: United Nations General Assembly Theme: Mountains Matter First Observed in: 2003
International Universal Health Coverage Day: 12 December 2018 Designated by: United Nations General Assembly Theme: Unite for Universal Health Coverage: Now is the Time for Collective Action First Observed in: 2017
International Migrants Day: 18 December 2018 Designated by: United Nations General Assembly Theme: Migration with dignity First Observed in: 2000
International Human Solidarity Day: 20 December 2018 Designated by: United Nations General Assembly First Observed in: 2006

Reduction in GST Rates/Exemptions on Services

GST Council in the 31st meeting held on 22nd December, 2018 at New Delhi took following decisions relating to changes in GST rates, ITC eligibility criteria, exemptions and clarifications on connected issues.

1. GST reduced from 28% to 18%

Pulleys, transmission shafts and cranks, gear boxes etc., falling under HS Code 8483; Monitors and TVs of upto screen size of 32 inches; Re-treaded or used pneumatic tyres of rubber; Power banks of lithium ion batteries. Digital cameras and video camera recorders; Video game consoles and other games and sports requisites falling under HS code 9504; Cinema tickets above Rs. 100.

2. GST reduced from 28% to 5%

Parts and accessories for the carriages for disabled persons

3. GST reduced 18% to 12%

Cork roughly squared or debagged; Articles of natural cork; Agglomerated cork; Cinema tickets upto Rs. 100; Third party insurance premium of goods carrying vehicles

4. GST reduced from 18% to 5%

Marble rubble

5. GST reduced from 12% to 5%

Natural cork, Walking Stick, Fly ash Blocks

6. GST reduced 12% to Nil

Music Books

7. GST reduced from 5% to Nil

Vegetables, (uncooked or cooked by steaming or boiling in water), frozen, branded and put in a unit container; Vegetable provisionally preserved (for example by sulphur dioxide gas, in brine, in sulphur water or in other preservative solutions), but unsuitable in that state for immediate consumption.

Launch of GSAT-7A

Launch vehicle: Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F11)

Launched from: Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota

Launched on: 19 Dec 2018

About GSAT-7A: Weighing **2250** kg, GSAT-7A is an advanced communication satellite with a Gregorian Antenna and many other new technologies. GSAT-7A is the 39th Indian communication satellite of ISRO to provide services to the users in Ku-band over the Indian region. Dubbed '**Angry Bird**', the satellite will give a boost to the strategic communication and networking capabilities of the **Indian Air Force**.

Bio-jet fuel flight by IAF

Type of aircraft flown: **AN-32**

Date: 17 December 2018

Fuel used: Bio-jet fuel from **Jatropha** (10% mix with Aviation Turbine Fuel)

Jatropha oil sourced from Chattisgarh Biodiesel Development Authority (CBDA).

Flight flown by: Test pilots from ASTE, Bengaluru

Base flown at: **Chandigarh**

Bio-jet fuel technology developed by: Indian Institute of Petroleum, Dehradun

New Chief Ministers

Rajasthan: **Shri Ashok Gehlot** (3rd time)

Madhya Pradesh: **Shri Kamalnath**

Chhattisgarh: **Shri Bhupesh Bhagel**

Telangana: **Shri K Chandrashekhar Rao**

Mizoram: **Shri Zoramthanga** (3rd time)

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2018

Language	Title and Genre	Author
Assamese	Kailoir Dinto Amar Hobo (Poetry)	Sananta Tanti
Bengali	Srikrishner Sesh Kata Din (Story)	Sanjib Chattopadhyay
Bodo	Dwngse Lama (Short Stories)	Rituraj Basumaraty
Dogri	Bhagirath (Novel)	Inderjeet Kesar
English	The Blind Lady's Descendants (Novel)	Anees Salim
Gujarati	Vibhajanni Vyatha (Essays)	Sharifa Vijliwala
Hindi	Post Box No. 203-Naala Sopara (Novel)	Chitra Mudgal
Kannada	Anushreni Yajamanike (Literary Criticism)	K.G. Nagarajappa
Kashmiri	Aakh (Short Stories)	Mushtaq Ahmad Mushtaq
Konkani	Chitralipi (Poetry)	Paresh Narendra Kamat
Maithili	Parineeta (Short Stories)	Bina Thakur
Malayalam	Gurupournami (Poetry)	S. Ramesan Nair
Manipuri	Ngamkheigee Wangmada (Short Stories)	Budhichand Heisnamba
Marathi	Sarjanprerana ani Kavithwashodh (Literary Criticism)	Ma. Su. Patil
Nepali	Kina Royeu Upamaa (Short Stories)	Loknath Upadhyay Chapagain
Odia	Prashanga Puruna Bhabana Nua (Literary Criticism)	Dasarathi Das
Punjabi	Kone Da Suraj (Poetry)	Mohanjit
Rajasthani	Kavita Devai Deeth (Poetry)	Rajesh Kumar Vyas
Sanskrit	Mama Janani (Poetry)	Rama Kant Shukla
Santali	Maron (Novel)	Shyam Besra 'Jiwi Rarec'
Sindhi	Jia Mein Taandaa (Poetry)	Khiman U. Mulani
Tamil	Sanchaaram (Novel)	S. Ramakrishnan
Telugu	Vimarshini (Essay)	Kolakaluri Enoch
Urdu	Rohzin (Novel)	Rahman Abbas

Changes to National Pension Scheme

The Cabinet approved changes to National Pension Scheme to come into effect from April 1 next year once amendment to the Finance Bill is passed.

1. Subscribers will get full tax exemption on the 60% of the corpus that an investor is allowed to withdraw on maturity. Currently 20% of the amount is taxable on withdrawal.
2. For central government employees covered under NPS, the government's contribution towards the pension scheme has been increased from the existing 10% to 14%. The employee's contribution remains unchanged at 10%.
3. Central government employees covered under NPS will get more flexibility in terms of choice of pension fund managers. Also, they will be offered more choice in patterns of investment (debt and combination of equities and debt).
4. In terms of income-tax benefits, contribution by government employees under Tier-II of NPS will be covered under Section 80C for deduction up to Rs. 1.50 lakh, provided that there is a lock-in period of 3 years.

Women Transforming India Awards 2018

The NITI Aayog organised the Third Edition of the Women Transforming India Awards 2018 in collaboration with United Nations. The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu presided over as the chief guest of the event and conferred WTI Awards 2018.

The following are the recipients:

1. **Kshetrimayum Indira Devi:** Founder of Chanu Creations, Manipur which is engaged in manufacture of handloom products since 2003.
2. **Ajaita Shah:** Founder CEO of Frontier Markets Consulting Pvt Ltd. which is a last-mile distribution company with a mission to create 'Saral Jeevan' or an 'Easy Life' for rural customers by providing them with access to quality clean energy solutions through our network of digitized rural entrepreneurs, with women at the center of the value chain.
3. **Pranshu Patni:** Co-founder of Hello English an English language-learning application, which allows users to learn the English language through interactive modules.
4. **Namita Banka:** Founder of Banka Biolo Ltd, Hyderabad which is one-stop solution provider of sanitation in India. The company builds toilets, provides operation and maintenance and different disposal methods of fecal waste.
5. **Ezhil Subbian:** Co-founder of String Bio Pvt Ltd which works at cutting edge of biology, engineering and chemistry to deliver radical and sustainable solutions to real-world challenges.
6. **Priyanka Agarwal:** Co-founder of Wishberry Online Services Pvt. Ltd, Mumbai, which offers a new way of raising funds for creative projects through rewards-based crowdfunding.

7. **Kavita Iyer Rodrigues:** Founder CEO of Zumutor Biologics Pvt Ltd which is a leading Immuno-Oncology company in the space of targeted NK cell therapeutics. Formed in 2013, the company is headquartered at Woburn, MA, USA; with a ISO 9001:2015 laboratory in Bangalore, India.

8. **Neelima Chaturvedi:** Founder of Korea Mahila Grih Udyog (Chattisgarh), a group of around 17,000 women engaged in manufacture of household items like broomsticks, mats, decorative items and also spices, pickles and snacks.

9. **Shikha Shah:** One of the founders of Canva Fibre Labs LLP and BrewSight Analytics LLP, which through proprietary technologies convert agricultural waste and some plants into superior textiles. These textiles are environment friendly and also more durable.

10. **Devika Malik:** Co-founder of Wheeling Happiness foundation whose mission is to create an inclusive & barrier-free society and empower people with disabilities, women and economically under-served communities. Her mother, Deepa Malik is the first Indian woman to win a medal in Paralympic Games and won a Silver medal at the 2016 Summer Paralympics in shot put.

11. **Monika Shukla:** Co-founder of LetsEndorse Development (Bengaluru) which is connecting scalable social innovations to communities, grassroots organisations, businesses and local administrations in India, ensuring solutions reach the last mile.

12. **Thinlas Chorol:** Founder of Ladakhi Women's Travel Company which is owned and operated by women.

13. **Tage Rita Takhe:** Founder of Lambu Subu Food & Beverages in Arunachal Pradesh, which manufactures Naara-Aaba, India's first kiwi produced wine.

14. **Yamuna Sastry V:** Founder of Cab Dost, a Bengaluru based organization which helps taxi drivers file income tax returns to bring financial dignity.

15. **Seema Prem:** Co-founder of FIA Technology Services Private Ltd., Gurgaon whose aim is to elevate Asia's unserved geographies through its core vision of 'economic and social inclusion'.

Books in News

Changing India - **Dr. Manmohan Singh**

And then one day - **Naseeruddin Shah**

Early Indians: The story of our ancestors and where we came from - **Tony Joseph**

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