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# Current Affairs Today — May 18, 2026

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## TODAY'S TOP STORIES

**1. VD Satheesan Sworn In as Kerala Chief Minister | Polity** Vadasseri Damodaran Satheesan took oath as Kerala's 13th Chief Minister on May 18 at Central Stadium, Thiruvananthapuram. Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar administered the oath to Satheesan and all 20 ministers simultaneously — the first time in nearly six decades the entire Kerala Cabinet was sworn in together. The UDF (Congress-led coalition) won 102 of 140 seats in 2026, ending two consecutive LDF terms under Pinarayi Vijayan. The 21-member Council of Ministers is exactly at the Article 164(1A) constitutional ceiling.

**2. India-Sweden Strategic Partnership — MEA Releases 6 Outcomes | International Relations** India's MEA formally released the outcomes of PM Modi's Gothenburg visit on May 18. Six deliverables include: elevation to Strategic Partnership with a Joint Action Plan 2026–2030, India-Sweden Joint Innovation Partnership 2.0, cooperation in AI/6G/quantum/critical minerals, a target to double bilateral trade in 5 years, an SME and Start-up Platform, and the Tagore-Sweden Lecture Series ("Vikas Bhi Virasat Bhi"). Modi was conferred Sweden's Royal Order of the Polar Star — his 31st global honour.

**3. Modi in Oslo — First Indian PM Visit to Norway in 43 Years | International Relations** PM Modi arrived in Oslo on May 18 for the third leg of the India-Nordic Summit (1st: Stockholm 2018, 2nd: Copenhagen 2022). He met King Harald V and held bilateral talks with PM Jonas Gahr Støre. Focus areas: renewable energy, Arctic cooperation, maritime cooperation, and digital public goods. Norway's Government Pension Fund Global (GPF) — the world's largest sovereign wealth fund (~USD 1.7 trillion) — has invested ~USD 28 billion in Indian capital markets.

**4. International Museum Day 2026: "Museums Uniting a Divided World" | History & Culture** May 18 is International Museum Day, observed annually since 1977 under the International Council of Museums (ICOM). The 2026 theme — "Museums Uniting a Divided World" — coincides with ICOM's 80th anniversary. The theme links to UN SDGs 10, 16, and 17. India has 1,000+ registered museums; the Indian Museum Kolkata (est. 1814) is the oldest in Asia. Budget 2022 launched 5 iconic sites as "living museums."

**5. WHO Declares Ebola PHEIC — Bundibugyo Strain in DRC and Uganda | Science & Technology** WHO declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on May 17 for an Ebola outbreak caused by the Bundibugyo virus in DRC (Ituri province) and Uganda. This is the 7th PHEIC in WHO history. As of May 16: 8 confirmed cases and 246 suspected cases in DRC; 2 confirmed cases in Uganda. No approved vaccine exists for this strain. India's risk is LOW; airport screening protocols activated.

**6. NEET-UG 2026: SC Petitions Mount — NTA Announces CBT from 2027 | Social Issues** On May 18, fresh Supreme Court petitions were filed seeking NTA dissolution and mandatory shift to Computer-Based Testing. Petitioners include FAIMA (Federation of All India Medical Association) and the United Doctors Front. NTA responded by announcing NEET UG will shift to CBT mode from 2027 onward. The re-exam remains scheduled for June 21, 2026 (pen-and-paper). Over 22 lakh students are affected by the May 12 cancellation.

**7. India-Pakistan Ceasefire: No Expiry Date, Army Clarifies | Security & Defence** The Indian Army officially clarified on May 18 that the ceasefire following Operation Sindoor (May 7, 2025) has no expiry date and no DGMO-level talks are scheduled. Pakistan FM Ishaq Dar had claimed the ceasefire was “extended until May 18” — India categorically rejected the framing of the ceasefire as a temporary arrangement. The understanding has held for one year since the DGMO talks of May 10, 2025.

## EDITORIAL PICKS FOR TODAY

- **The Hindu:** India-Nordic Summit and the GPFG opportunity — why Norway’s sovereign wealth fund is India’s most underexploited strategic asset
- **Indian Express:** NTA’s CBT pivot — too little, too late or a genuine course correction?
- **Business Standard:** WHO’s Ebola PHEIC and India’s biosurveillance gaps — lessons from COVID-19
- **Hindustan Times:** Kerala’s UDF return — what Satheesan’s cabinet signals about Congress’s coalition management

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