

## Highlights of 18 October 2026 Current Affairs

- The Union government has appointed retired IAS officer SCL Das as the new Chairman of the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) in New Delhi. In his new role, he will head the panel responsible for recommending candidates for key leadership positions in public sector banks and financial institutions. His appointment aims to streamline high-level executive selections across India's premier public financial organizations.
- The Sangeet Natak Akademi has officially selected 106 talented artists from across the country to receive the prestigious Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar. This national award recognizes young achievers for their exceptional talent and dedication to the fields of Indian classical music, dance, theatre, and traditional folk arts. The honor highlights the central government's ongoing commitment to nurturing young creative talent and preserving traditional performing arts.
- The Delhi Cabinet has granted official approval for the creation of the Go-Delhi Foundation, backed by a substantial corpus of ₹50 crore to support local startups. Located in the National Capital Territory of Delhi, this strategic initiative aims to build a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem by providing crucial early-stage funding and incubation support. The initiative aligns with the government's broader vision of transforming Delhi into a thriving hub for innovation and technology-driven businesses.
- The Delhi government has established the Delhi Institute for Transformation and Innovation (DITI) to serve as its premier policy think tank. Operating from the national capital, DITI will formulate forward-looking socio-economic development policies and evaluate existing public welfare programs. This newly minted body is designed to provide expert data-backed recommendations to accelerate administrative efficiency and state-level growth.
- Senior banking executive Kaizad Bharucha is scheduled to exit HDFC Bank on December 31, 2026, concluding an illustrious career spanning three decades. Over his long tenure at India's largest private sector bank, he played a critical role in shaping the institution's corporate banking and risk management frameworks. His departure marks the end of an era for the bank's core leadership team.
- Space agency NASA has introduced the PUFFINS mission, featuring Indian-origin scientists, to study cosmic dust in the upper atmosphere. Operating from international research facilities, the project utilizes advanced payload instruments to measure minute interplanetary dust particles entering Earth's envelope. The findings are expected to offer critical insights into the formation history of the solar system and planetary evolution.
- The historic town hall of Limoges in France stands as a prominent architectural landmark renowned for its rich heritage and distinct regional design. Situated in south-central France, the municipal landmark symbolizes the administrative evolution and cultural pride of the historic Limousin region. It continues to attract historians and architects studying European civic architecture from the late nineteenth century.
- The city of Limoges in France has earned global renown as a historic center for porcelain manufacturing, high-grade kaolin deposits, and its inclusion in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Located along the Vienne River, the municipality leverages its centuries-old clay-working heritage to promote international artisan exchanges. This recognition underscores the city's continuous cultural significance in global ceramic arts.

- France has a long, turbulent history of student protests stretching from the revolutionary uprisings of 1789 to contemporary student movements in 2026. Across various educational hubs in Paris and provincial cities, youth-led demonstrations have historically served as a primary catalyst for sweeping political and labor reforms. These recurring movements reflect a deep-rooted democratic tradition of student activism challenging national policies.
- India has been ranked 100th among 122 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2026, registering a composite score of 24.1. Released globally by international welfare researchers, the index places India within the serious hunger category due to persistent structural challenges in child nutrition and caloric adequacy. The report emphasizes the critical link between stable food access, resilient rural livelihoods, and overall societal security.
- Indian para-shooters dominated headlines at the Para Asian Games 2026 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, where Mona Agarwal clinched the gold medal and Avani Lekhara secured the silver. Mona Agarwal triumphed in the women's 10m air rifle event with a record-breaking score of 250 points, while compatriot Avani Lekhara closely followed with 249.6 points to take silver and lock in a quota for the Los Angeles 2028 Paralympics. This stellar double-podium finish reinforced India's growing dominance in international elite para-sports.
- The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) announced under the PM-VBRY scheme that first-time employees earning up to ₹1 lakh monthly can receive financial incentives of up to ₹15,000. Operating across India through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) network, the scheme disburses the cash reward in structured installments tied to continuous job retention and the completion of digital financial literacy courses. This welfare measure is designed to formalize the national workforce and incentivize youth employment generation.