



THE CURRENT AFFAIRS DIGEST

DAILY

"The news you need to know, and remember."



SCAN TO READ & PLAY

Vol. 1 • No. 7 • Saturday, October 17, 2026 • New Delhi, India • 4 Pages

TOP STORY • SAUDI ARABIA AND YEMEN

Houthis Declare Saudi Airports "Legitimate Targets"

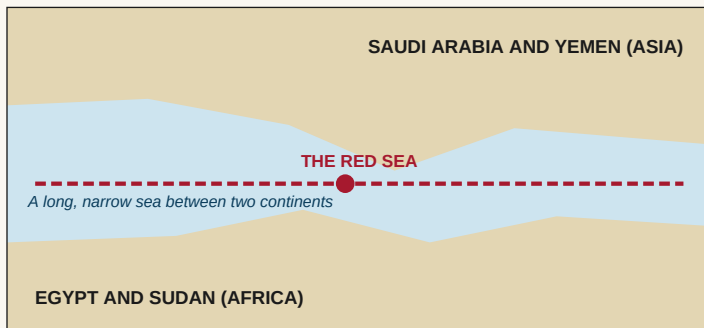
Saudi officials count at least 20 deaths at airports between October 6 and 11.

Written and fact-checked by AI • News Pebbles

The Houthis, an Iran-aligned movement holding Sanaa and parts of north-west Yemen since 2014, are fighting Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces. A UN-brokered truce in place since 2022 has collapsed. After a strike on Sanaa airport, the Houthi leader set out a tit-for-tat policy: "airports for airports, ports for ports, and a blockade for a blockade."

The Saudi-backed Yemeni government says the Sanaa strike was meant to stop an Iranian plane landing there. The Houthis have declared the kingdom's airports and airspace "legitimate targets," except Mecca and Medina, and say they have also hit Aramco facilities, including a gas plant and a refinery.

Saudi civil aviation authorities report at least 20 deaths and 356 injuries at airports between October 6 and 11. The deadliest strike, on Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport on October 10, killed at least 12, including an American citizen. Dammam, Abha, Jazan and Najran airports were also hit. On Wednesday the Saudi-led coalition said it intercepted a missile fired toward Riyadh. Houthi claims could not be independently verified.



Saudi Arabia and Yemen sit on the eastern shore of the Red Sea.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The Bab el-Mandeb strait, at the Red Sea's southern end, is a key route between the Mediterranean and Asia, and its importance has grown because the Iran conflict has effectively closed Hormuz. Control of it is disputed.

New to this story? Catch up with [The story so far](#) on Read & Play.

WORLD • UKRAINE

Russia Targets All Three of Kyiv's Heat and Power Plants

Zelenskyy says at least 600,000 people are without power as winter nears.

In the overnight barrage of October 13-14, Ukraine's prime minister, Serhii Koryntskyi, said all three of Kyiv's combined heat and power plants came under attack. Combined heat and power plants produce electricity and heat for homes from one fuel supply. Officials said everyone at the plants was evacuated and nobody was hurt there; repairs are under way.

Koryntskyi said critical facilities in Kyiv Oblast that supply the capital and central Ukraine were also struck. President Zelenskyy said significant damage had been caused to 26 energy sites and that at least 600,000 people were without power, adding that more blackouts were possible.

The strikes followed US President Donald Trump's announcement of an "energy ceasefire." Zelenskyy said he would honour a deal if Moscow did, but had seen no Russian approval. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov would not say whether Russia had agreed, saying only "Contacts are ongoing."

Combined heat and power plants matter because the heat left over from making electricity can warm buildings through pipes, so one strike can cut both. The casualty and grid figures come from Ukrainian officials and were not independently confirmed in the reports we read. Repairs are under way, officials said, and Zelenskyy warned that further blackouts are possible.



Ukraine says 26 energy sites were badly damaged.

CONNECT THE DOTS

Energy networks have become targets on both sides: Ukraine has also struck Russian refineries, and winter raises the stakes for heating.

INDIA • DELHI

Delhi Police Remove Jantar Mantar From Protest Venues

A standing order names Ramlila, Burari and CBD grounds; courts are now involved.

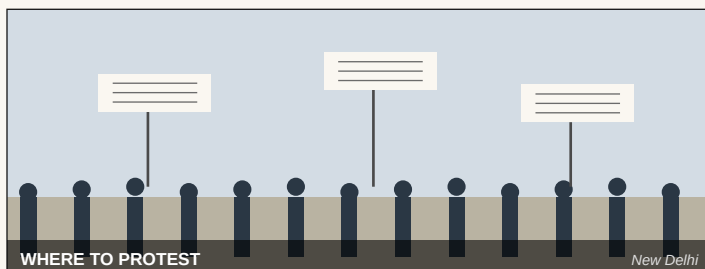
A Delhi Police standing order dated October 11, issued by Commissioner Anurag Kumar, de-notifies Jantar Mantar as a designated protest site. It names Ramlila Ground, Burari Ground and CBD Ground, East Delhi as replacements. Some outlets described a circular issued on October 12, probably the same decision released later. A detailed SOP for the new venues will follow.

The order says it follows recommendations of a Union Home Ministry committee. Indian Youth Congress president Uday Bhanu Chib has challenged it in the Delhi High Court. Police told the court the decision was based on a Supreme Court order of October 9, and a separate plea against the standing order is pending before the Supreme Court.

The move came as protests against the Election Commission and Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar drew heavy police action. Cockroach Janta Party leaders were detained near Jantar Mantar after trying to enter the site.

Jantar Mantar is an 18th-century astronomical observatory in central Delhi that, in recent decades, has also been the city's best-known protest ground. The Constitution guarantees citizens the right to assemble peaceably and without arms, but allows reasonable restrictions in the interests of public order, which is where such venue rules are tested.

Two court processes now run side by side: the Indian Youth Congress challenge in the Delhi High Court and a separate plea before the Supreme Court. Delhi Police have also said a detailed SOP for protests at the three new venues will be issued separately, so the practical rules are still to come.



Three new venues replace Jantar Mantar.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The right to assemble peacefully is a fundamental right under the Constitution, but it can be regulated; the courts will test where regulation becomes restriction.

POLITICS & CIVICS • UNITED STATES

Three Weeks to US Midterms: Congress Is on the Ballot

All 435 House seats and 35 of 100 Senate seats are up on November 3.

Midterm elections take place in the middle of a US president's term. On November 3, 2026, voters will choose all 435 members of the House of Representatives and 35 of the 100 senators. The result decides which party controls each chamber of Congress.

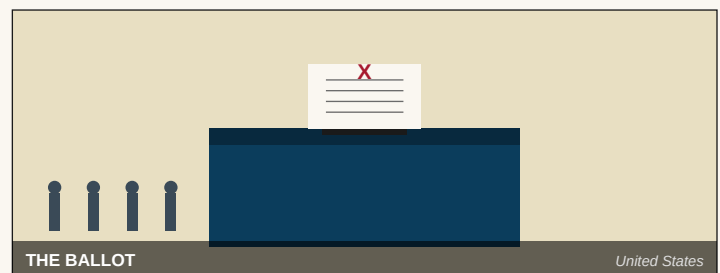
Coverage frames the vote as a referendum on President Trump, and the balance of power in Congress will shape his room to act. Cost of living is a central concern for voters.

Alongside Congress, governors and state legislatures are also being elected in many states.

Congress is one of three branches of the US government. A bill must pass both the House and the Senate and then be signed by the president, who can veto it; Congress can override a veto only with a two-thirds vote in each chamber. Because of this, a president whose party loses control of one chamber can find it much harder to pass laws.

House members serve two-year terms, so all 435 seats are contested at every federal election. Senators serve six-year terms, staggered so that roughly a third of seats come up at each election, which is why 35 are on the ballot this year. Election Day is the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, which in 2026 is November 3.

The majority party in each chamber also chooses its leaders and committee chairs and largely decides which bills reach a vote, so control of even one chamber changes what Congress can do. That is why the economy features so heavily in the campaign: the September inflation figure of 3.7% is one of the numbers voters will weigh.



Election Day is November 3.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Congress passes laws and controls federal spending, so control of either chamber changes what a president can achieve.

ECONOMY • UNITED STATES

US Inflation Rose to 3.7% in September

Costlier gasoline pushed prices up 0.6% in a month, the most in five months.

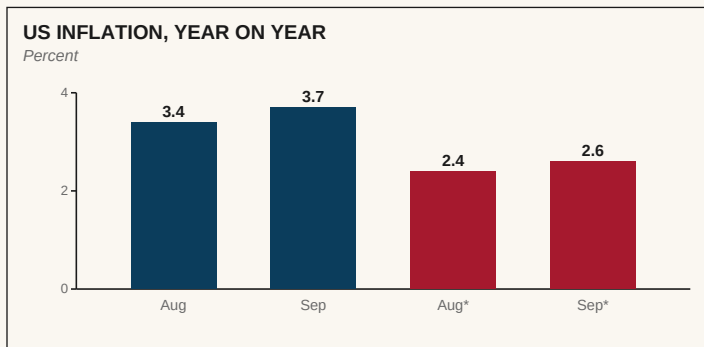
Inflation measures how fast prices rise. The US Labor Department reported on October 14 that consumer prices in September were 3.7% higher than a year earlier, up from 3.4% in August. Gasoline was the main driver.

Prices rose 0.6% from August to September, the biggest monthly gain in five months. Prices excluding food and energy, which show underlying pressure, rose 2.6% over the year, up from 2.4%.

Higher inflation puts pressure on the Federal Reserve, which meets October 27-28 and raised its target range to 3.75%-4.00% in September, its first hike since 2023.

The labour market looks steady. Initial jobless claims fell to 197,000 in the week ending October 3, below the 200,000 forecast, and the insured unemployment rate held at 1.1%. Continuing claims rose to 1.716 million, which suggests hiring has slowed even though layoffs remain low. Economists were expecting another rate hike in December.

The distinction between the two inflation measures matters: gasoline prices can swing sharply with events such as the attacks on ships near Hormuz, while the measure excluding food and energy moves more slowly and shows whether higher prices are spreading to other goods and services. For a household, the practical effect is that petrol, transport and food bills can rise even when wages have not.



*Excluding food and energy. All prices: 3.4% to 3.7%; excluding food and energy: 2.4% to 2.6%.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Inflation shrinks what a household's income can buy and shapes interest-rate decisions that affect loans everywhere.

THINK LIKE AN ANALYST

Why does the gap between overall inflation and the figure excluding food and energy matter? What would a rate rise do to borrowers and savers?

SCIENCE & TECH • ASTRONOMY

Webb Data Reveal the Lopsided Edge of an Exoplanet's Atmosphere

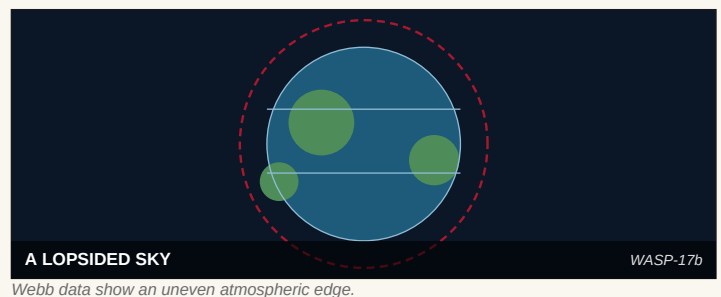
A Cornell-led team mapped WASP-17b in a Nature Astronomy paper on October 14.

An exoplanet is a planet orbiting a star other than the Sun. WASP-17b is a scorching gas giant about 1,300 light-years away, per Cornell and Bristol. Astronomers often treat the outline of such a planet's atmosphere as a circle when they study starlight passing through it.

The team used a technique called transmission strings, which measures the distance from the planet's centre to the atmospheric edge at many points, using James Webb Space Telescope data. The edge was slightly lopsided: it reaches farther on the evening side, while the cooler morning side is less extended. Winds carry heat from the day side to the night side, which drives this asymmetry.

Water and carbon dioxide were found fairly consistently around the edge, even as temperature and shape varied. The differences were broadly consistent with theory and earlier models, Cornell said.

This is not the first time WASP-17b has surprised astronomers. A 2023 Webb study reported quartz crystal clouds in its atmosphere, according to Cornell, and Webb is the James Webb Space Telescope, launched in 2021. A light-year, the unit used for WASP-17b's distance, is the distance light travels in a year, about 9.5 trillion kilometres. Mapping the shape of the atmospheric edge is a new way to test models of how winds move heat around a planet with a hot day side and a cooler night side.

**WHY THIS MATTERS**

Peer-reviewed methods like this let astronomers test models of weather on worlds too far to ever visit. The paper appeared in Nature Astronomy, where independent experts check results before publication, and its findings were broadly consistent with earlier models, so the method looks sound. Because it measures the edge at many points, the same approach can be used on other hot planets.

ONE-LINE BRIEFS

- Albania: Students protested for a third day in Tirana, and police said 16 people were arrested after a fire at the Education Ministry.
- Austria: TU Wien and PTB reported a thorium-229 nuclear clock that corrected itself and ran for over 24 hours, in a paper in Nature.
- Oil: Brent crude was about \$108 a barrel on Friday as attacks on ships near the Strait of Hormuz continued.
- Kenya: Health officials confirmed the country's first Ebola case on October 6, in a man who returned from DR Congo and died in Nairobi.

VOCABULARY BUILDER**Words that unlock today's news****Truce**

An agreement to stop fighting for a time. Today: The 2022 UN-brokered truce in Yemen has collapsed.

Tit-for-tat

Answering a harm with the same kind of harm. Today: The Houthi leader's "airports for airports" policy.

Standing order

A rule issued by an authority that stays in force until changed. Today: Delhi Police's order ended Jantar Mantar's role as a protest site.

Exoplanet

A planet that orbits a star other than the Sun. Today: WASP-17b's atmosphere was mapped with Webb data.

DID YOU KNOW?

Brent crude, the oil benchmark quoted in today's news, is named after the Brent oilfield in the North Sea.

EXPLAINER**How is the US Congress elected?**

Congress has two chambers. The House of Representatives has 435 members, who serve two-year terms, so every seat is up at each election. The Senate has 100 members, two per state, who serve six-year terms, so only some seats are up at a time.

That is why this year's midterms put all 435 House seats and 35 Senate seats on the ballot. Midterms fall halfway through a president's four-year term, which makes them a common test of the president's popularity.

QUIZ**Eight questions on this issue**

- Between October 6 and 11, how many deaths did Saudi aviation authorities report at airports?
(a) At least 2 (b) At least 20 (c) At least 200
 - Which Kyiv facilities were all attacked?
(a) Three heat and power plants (b) Two bridges (c) Four railway stations
 - What did Delhi Police remove Jantar Mantar as?
(a) A railway station (b) A designated protest site (c) A court
 - How many Senate seats are on the ballot on November 3?
(a) 100 (b) 35 (c) 435
 - US inflation in September, year on year?
(a) 3.4% (b) 3.7% (c) 2.6%
 - Which journal published the WASP-17b study?
(a) Nature Astronomy (b) Science (c) The Lancet
 - Which element is the crystal in the Vienna nuclear clock made with?
(a) Uranium-238 (b) Thorium-229 (c) Carbon-14
 - When is the Supreme Court hearing on the voter-list petition?
(a) October 9 (b) October 27 (c) November 3
- Answers.** 1 (b). 2 (a). 3 (b). 4 (b). 5 (b). 6 (a). 7 (b). 8 (b).

TOMORROW'S WATCHLIST

- Whether airport and oil-site attacks between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia continue.
- What the Supreme Court hears on October 27 and what the Fed decides on October 28.
- Whether power is restored across Ukraine as winter nears.

You are not just reading the news — you are learning to think about it. See you tomorrow.