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TOP STORY • SAUDI ARABIA

Houthi Claim Hits on Saudi Pipeline Stations as Hormuz Stays Largely Shut

Reuters reports the claims; Saudi Arabia has not confirmed them, and its coalition says it hit missile sites in Yemen.

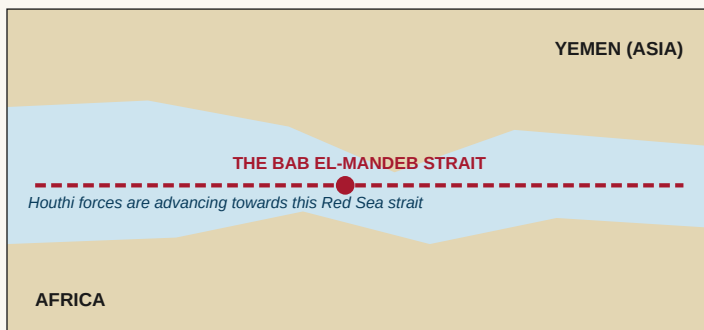
Written and fact-checked by AI · News Pebbles

Three pieces of geography explain why this story matters beyond Saudi Arabia. The Strait of Hormuz, the exit from the Gulf, has been largely shut by the war. The East-West pipeline, a 1,200-km Saudi crude line, gives oil another route. And the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, at the southern end of the Red Sea, is a key route for Gulf oil. Reuters reported on Monday 26 October that the Houthis, an armed group controlling northern Yemen, said they attacked the pipeline's crude pumping stations and Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport. There was no Saudi confirmation.

The claims followed others made on Saturday, covering the pipeline, an Aramco facility in Yanbu and the Rabigh refinery. A satellite image reportedly showed damage at a pumping station, according to the Express Tribune. The airport resumed operations at two terminals on Sunday, after an earlier attack this month that Reuters says killed 13 people, the deadliest in the kingdom in over a decade.

The Saudi-led coalition says it destroyed two ballistic missile launchers in Sanaa, Yemen's capital, one of them used to fire at Riyadh, and on Monday five missile-storage tunnels, four launchers and a storage facility. Spokesperson Turki al-Maliki pledged 'deterrent operational measures'. Houthi-run media say Saudi strikes killed 16 people in and around Sanaa; that figure has not been verified.

Strikes have intensified since the Houthis captured strategic areas on Yemen's Red Sea coast last month, advancing towards Bab el-Mandeb. The fighting has effectively ended the UN-brokered truce that had largely held since 2022. Kotak Neo reports that oil eased on Monday after nearing six-month highs late last week, and that high oil has been the main drag on Indian shares.



The strait is a key route for Gulf oil producers.

WHY THIS MATTERS

With Hormuz largely shut, any hit on the pipeline or the Red Sea route narrows the ways Gulf oil reaches buyers, which feeds into prices worldwide.

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WORLD • SERBIA

Serbia's Student List Wins the Election and Vucic Concedes

Early estimates put the students at about 51-52% of the vote, ending 14 years of rule by the Serbian Progressive Party.

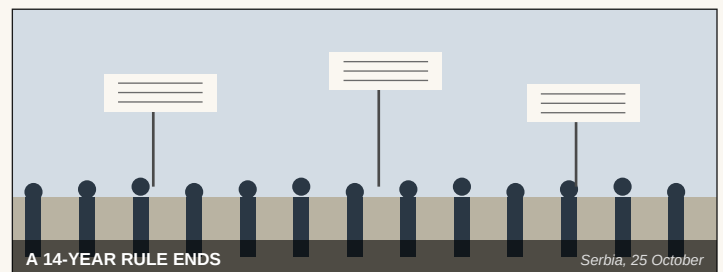
Serbians voted on Sunday 25 October in a snap parliamentary election, one called early, for the 250-seat parliament. On election night Aleksandar Vucic, Serbia's long-time leader, told supporters: 'The Students' List has won.' He said his Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) got about 1.7 million votes against about 2.2 million for the Student List.

The monitoring group Crta put the Student List at about 51.47% and the Vucic-led coalition at about 40.42%. CeSID-Ipsos projections, based on 56% of the sample, gave the students about 52% and 139 seats, and Vucic's bloc about 39.3% and 104 seats, with minority parties taking the remaining seven. Official final results and seat totals were still to be confirmed.

The movement behind the list began in 2024, when a concrete canopy collapsed at the railway station in Novi Sad, killing 16 people. Protesters blamed corruption and graft during the renovation, and two years of protests followed. The Student List grew out of them, but none of the students is on it: its candidates are experts, athletes, farmers and artists, headed by Ilija Srdanovic, who said 'tonight Serbia has won'. CBS reports its campaign focused on rebuilding the economy and restoring democracy.

Vucic held near-absolute power for 14 years. He served two near-full terms as president and resigned the presidency last month to lead his campaign for prime minister. After the loss he blamed independent media, alleged interference by unnamed European countries and an 'American deep state'; none of these claims is backed by evidence in the reports. Independent monitors had reported dozens of irregularities during the vote, including ballot photographing that suggested voter pressure and attempted vote buying.

Euronews says the move from protest to government will be harder than winning, with the economy, public finances, energy and relations with the EU, Russia and China all on the agenda. CBS notes the result resembles the recent defeat of Viktor Orban in Hungary and could resonate across Europe, where youth protests have been widespread.



Early estimates: students 51-52%, the Vucic-led list about 40%.

CONNECT THE DOTS

The same day, Brazil also voted. Lula lost the first round, then won the runoff, which Al Jazeera says no modern Brazilian politician had done before.

INDIA • WEATHER

Cyclone Arnab Heads for Andhra Pradesh With a Landfall Forecast on 28 October

The IMD expects winds of 115-125 km/h and has issued a red-message warning for Andhra Pradesh and south Odisha.

Cyclone Arnab strengthened over the Bay of Bengal from a deep depression into a cyclonic storm and then, by the IMD's Monday 5:30pm bulletin, a severe cyclonic storm. It was at about 15.6 N, 87.3 E, roughly 490 km east-south-east of Visakhapatnam and 730 km east of Bapatla, moving west-northwest at 17 km/h. The IMD expects a very severe cyclonic storm within 12 hours.

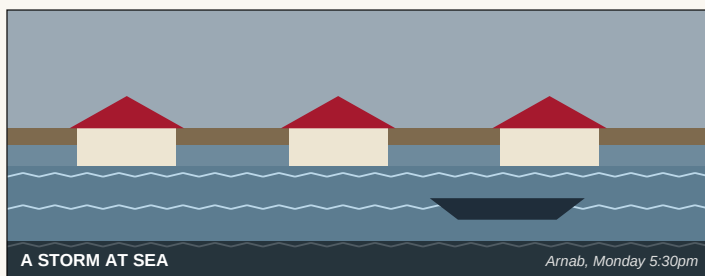
It is forecast to cross the Andhra Pradesh and Yanam coasts between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam by the forenoon of 28 October, with sustained winds of 115-125 km/h and gusts to 140. The IMD expects the storm to keep moving west-northwest until the evening of 27 October, then turn north-west towards the coast. Odisha faces very heavy rain on 27 October, extremely heavy rain on 28 October and very heavy rain on 29 October, with heavy rain on 30 October. Impacts are expected to continue into 29 October and recede substantially from 30 October; no warning is listed for 31 October or 1 November.

Preparations are under way on both sides of the coast. In Andhra Pradesh, officials identified about 5.7 lakh (570,000) vulnerable residents and put 10 NDRF teams and 11 SDRF teams on standby, with control rooms and relief centres being prepared; reporting did not establish that all of those residents had been moved. The utility APEPDCL has opened 30 divisional and 11 circle-level control rooms. On Monday the Centre placed the Army, Navy, Air Force and Indian Coast Guard on standby for rescue and relief.

In Odisha, schools, colleges and Anganwadi centres in Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput and Malkangiri close on 28 and 29 October, and those districts are under a red warning for very heavy rain. The state has begun moving residents out of low-lying and landslide-prone southern districts. It has 302 rescue teams on standby, and 225 fire service teams and NDRF personnel have been deployed. Fishing is suspended, and more than 4,800 boats have returned to the Kakinada coast.

Across the bay, Sri Lanka's meteorology department issued a red warning on Monday for strong winds and rough seas as Arnab intensified, according to a news roundup. In Odisha the IMD expects heavy to very heavy rain, strong winds and possible landslides in several districts, with widespread rain on 28 October and isolated extremely heavy falls in some places.

Bangladesh proposed the name 'Arnab', which comes from the cyclone-name list adopted in April 2020; in Bengali it means 'sea' or 'ocean'.



Landfall is forecast between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Early red warnings and closures let a state move people and boats before the wind arrives, which is how losses are limited.

POLITICS & CIVICS • ISRAEL

How Israel's Vote Turns Seats Into a Government

On Tuesday voters choose a 120-seat Knesset, and the final polls leave both blocs short of 61.

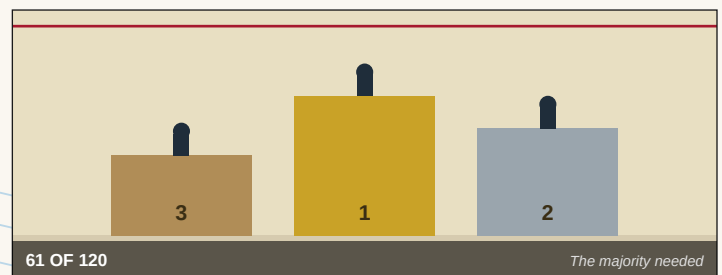
Israel does not elect its prime minister directly. Voters pick a party, and parties win seats in the 120-seat Knesset. The leader most likely to form a governing coalition becomes prime minister, and a coalition needs 61 seats. That is why the final polls matter more for their seat counts than for the share of votes.

Three TV polls, from Kan 11 and Channels 12 and 13, give Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing and religious bloc 50 seats, including Otzma Yehudit and Religious Zionism. They give Gadi Eisenkot's bloc 54: Yashar, Beyachad (led by Yair Lapid and Naftali Bennett), the Democrats and Yisrael Beiteinu. Yashar is projected as the largest party with 22 seats, ahead of Netanyahu's Likud with 20 and Beyachad with 14. A separate survey by Direct Polls for i24NEWS, taken on 22 October with 5,124 adults, put Likud first on 26 seats and Netanyahu's bloc at 59. Neither side reaches 61. At least seven other parties are projected at 7 to 9 seats each.

The kingmakers are the Arab parties, projected at 14 to 16 seats and counted in neither bloc. In the Kan poll the Joint List has 9 seats and Ra'am 5. But the opposition's most direct route is blocked: Yisrael Beiteinu's leader, Avigdor Liberman, refuses to serve with Arab parties, and Eisenkot has publicly ruled out relying on them. A unity government with Netanyahu is unlikely too: Eisenkot has ruled out a deal in which Netanyahu is prime minister, and most of his bloc's leaders have vowed not to join any coalition that includes Likud while Netanyahu leads it. The Kan poll also puts Amcha Israel below the electoral threshold, at 2.9%, though the Direct Polls survey has it across with 4 seats, which is what lifts Netanyahu's bloc to 59.

What happens next is a matter of process. President Isaac Herzog will first invite the leading candidate to form a government and can offer the mandate to the rival if that fails. If no coalition forms, another election could follow, possibly in 2027. Herzog wants to avoid that, noting Israel has voted five times in seven years. Kan asked voters what should happen if Eisenkot's bloc finishes first but short of 61: a unity government 27%, a repeat election 27%, a minority government with Arab parties abstaining 26%.

NBC News describes the vote as Netanyahu's battle for survival after the 7 October 2023 attacks. In the Kan poll 36% of voters were undecided on which party to support, 80% of opposition voters and 75% of coalition voters were certain to vote, and Eisenkot led Netanyahu 44% to 38% on suitability for prime minister. Israel will close West Bank crossings on election day, and an exit poll is scheduled for 10pm IST.



Final polls leave both blocs short of a majority.

WHY THIS MATTERS

A parliamentary system rewards the ability to make deals: the party with the most seats may still be unable to govern.

ECONOMY • INTEREST RATES

The Fed Decides Wednesday With Forecasts Leaning to a Hold

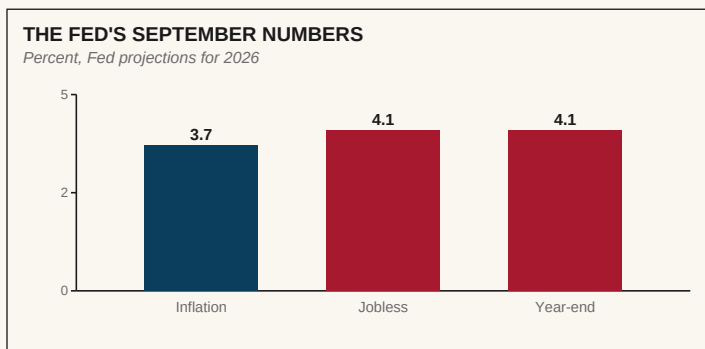
After a September rise to 3.75%-4.00%, CME FedWatch showed an 83% chance of no change on 20 October.

The US Federal Reserve's policy committee meets on 27 and 28 October, with its decision at 2pm Eastern Time on Wednesday 28 October. The rate it sets is the benchmark for what banks charge for credit. On 16 September the Fed raised its range by 25 basis points, a quarter of a percentage point, to 3.75%-4.00%, its first increase since 2023. The rise took effect on 17 September.

As of 20 October, CME FedWatch, which turns futures prices into probabilities, showed about an 83% chance of a hold and about 17% of a quarter-point hike; a cut was essentially zero. Estimates differ: Octagon's page puts the market chance of no change at 53.0% and of a rise at 47.0%. Chair Kevin Warsh, speaking in Bangkok on 16 October, said 'I don't prejudge meetings', according to Reuters, and that the Fed 'removed a dose of accommodation about a month ago', meaning the September rise. The Fed's last vote, in July, was 9-3 to hold, with Beth Hammack, Neel Kashkari and Lorie Logan dissenting in favour of a hike.

The numbers behind the choice: US consumer prices rose 3.7% over the past year in the September report, up from 3.4% in August. At the September meeting the Fed's median projection for the year-end rate rose to 4.1% from 3.8% in June, and 16 of 18 participants put their own year-end rate above the midpoint of the current range. Its projections put 2026 PCE inflation, the Fed's preferred price measure, at 3.7% and unemployment at 4.1%. A single quarter-point rise would take the range to 4.00%-4.25%, in line with that median. The next meeting is on 8 and 9 December.

Other central banks decide this week too, the ECB and the Bank of Japan, and Kotak Neo says Indian traders were cautious ahead of all three decisions. High oil prices complicate the choice, since a supply scare lifts prices without anyone spending more.



PCE inflation, unemployment and median year-end rate. Source: CoinGape.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Interest-rate decisions in Washington reach loans and currencies worldwide, including the rupee and India's own rate choices.

THINK LIKE AN ANALYST

Why might a central bank hold its rate when prices are rising 3.7% a year? Why do estimates of the odds differ so much between sources? What would a rate rise do to borrowers, and who gains?

SCIENCE & TECH • MARS

Mars's Giant Canyon System Is Still Active, a Marsquake Study Finds

Researchers traced a 2021 quake to a fault beneath Valles Marineris.

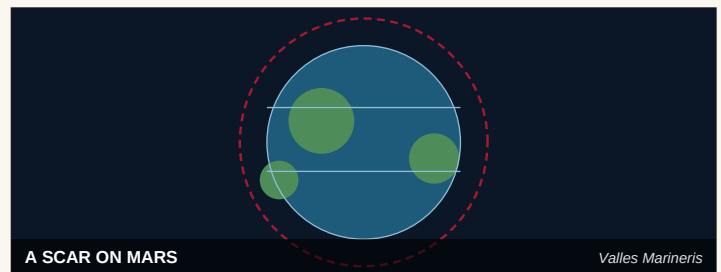
Mars may be geologically less quiet than thought. A study in Nature Communications by Jung-Hun Song, the lead author, with Folarin Kolawole of Columbia University and Doyeon Kim, the senior author, of Imperial College London, found that Valles Marineris, the solar system's largest canyon system, is still tectonically active. The canyon is nearly 3,900 km long, up to 600 km wide and more than 9 km deep, which Imperial says is about nine times longer, more than 20 times wider and about five times deeper than the Grand Canyon.

The evidence is one marsquake, called S0976a, recorded by NASA's InSight lander on 25 August 2021. It came from the opposite side of Mars from the lander, and it was the only marsquake of the mission that could be located in the planet's western hemisphere. The team studied how different seismic waves travelled to InSight and used their strength and direction to reconstruct the motion at the source. It places the rupture roughly 20 to 40 km beneath the surface in western Valles Marineris.

The researchers tested alternatives. They modelled meteoroid impacts, landslides and other mass movements, and none reproduced the observed waves. Satellite images of the source region showed no fresh crater or large new landslide. The best explanation is a strike-slip event, in which blocks of crust slide horizontally past each other along a steep, deep-rooted fault.

Mars has no moving tectonic plates; its crust behaves more like a single cooling lid. Imperial says structures billions of years old can still control where it breaks. Active faulting has now been identified beneath Valles Marineris, Cerberus Fossae and southern Elysium Planitia, which suggests crustal stress varies from place to place. Song said 'this is not just a dead fossil landscape'. Kolawole said ancient structures can still shape where the crust breaks, and Kim said a single marsquake can teach scientists about both the planet's centre and an active fault under one of its most remarkable landscapes.

There are limits. The conclusion rests on a single quake, and the authors call the strike-slip explanation the best fit, not a certainty. InSight's mission ended in 2022, so no new seismic data can be added.



One 2021 marsquake was traced to a fault beneath the canyon.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Marsquakes let scientists probe the planet's inside, much as earthquakes do for Earth.

ONE-LINE BRIEFS

- Brazil: Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva won the presidential runoff with just over 51% of the vote; Flavio Bolsonaro, with 48%, says he will seek to annul it.
- Singapore: It plans a crude oil storage arrangement with Saudi Arabia at the Jurong Rock Caverns, with operations expected to begin in the second half of 2027.
- India: The Sensex rose 482.92 points to 73,606.75 on Monday, ending a four-day losing streak as oil eased.
- United States: Early voting begins in Washington DC on Monday, in Oklahoma on Wednesday and in Kentucky on Thursday, ahead of Election Day on 3 November.

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

To accept that you have lost. Today: Aleksandar Vucic conceded defeat in Serbia's election.

Coalition

A group of parties that agree to govern together. Today: Israel's next government will need a coalition of 61 seats.

Annul

To declare a result invalid. Today: Flavio Bolsonaro says he will seek to annul Brazil's election result.

Fault

A crack in a planet's crust along which rocks can slip. Today: A marsquake was traced to a fault beneath Valles Marineris.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Mars quake traced to Valles Marineris was the only marsquake the researchers could locate in the planet's western hemisphere.

EXPLAINER**How the IMD grades a cyclone**

India's weather office tracks a storm over the sea in stages. Arnab began as a deep depression, then became a cyclonic storm, and by Monday evening a severe cyclonic storm. The IMD forecast a further step to a 'very severe cyclonic storm' before landfall, when the storm's centre crosses the coast.

The grades mark how strong the winds are. For Arnab, the IMD forecast sustained winds of 115 to 125 km/h at the coast, with gusts up to 140 km/h. Each step up is a warning to move people and boats earlier.

A depression is a low-pressure area over the sea. A 'deep depression' is a stronger one, and the next step up is a cyclonic storm, then a severe cyclonic storm and a very severe cyclonic storm. The IMD gives its position as latitude and longitude, here about 15.6 N, 87.3 E, and its distance from the coast, here about 490 km from Visakhapatnam.

Storms get names from lists agreed by countries around the ocean. 'Arnab' was proposed by Bangladesh and comes from the list adopted in April 2020; in Bengali it means 'sea' or 'ocean'. The IMD gives its pronunciation as 'Ornab'.

QUIZ**Eight questions on this issue**

1. Which strait does the East-West pipeline help Saudi oil avoid?

- (a) Bab el-Mandeb (b) Hormuz (c) Malacca

2. What share did the Student List get in Crta's estimate?

- (a) About 41% (b) About 51% (c) About 61%

3. How many seats does Israel's Knesset have?

- (a) 61 (b) 100 (c) 120

4. What is the Fed's range after September's rise?

- (a) 3.75%-4.00% (b) 4.75%-5.00% (c) 2.75%-3.00%

5. Where is Arnab forecast to cross the coast?

- (a) Between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam (b) Near Mumbai (c) Near Chennai

6. What was the marsquake traced to Valles Marineris called?

- (a) S0976a (b) C/2026 S1 (c) Arnab

7. When will Lula be sworn in?

- (a) 5 January 2027 (b) 3 November 2026 (c) 28 October 2026

8. What did the Sensex close at on Monday?

- (a) 73,606.75 (b) 83,606.75 (c) 63,606.75

Answers: 1 b, 2 b, 3 c, 4 a, 5 a, 6 a, 7 a, 8 a.

TOMORROW'S WATCHLIST

- Who wins Israel's election, and whether any bloc can reach 61 seats.
- The Fed's decision on Wednesday 28 October.
- Whether Cyclone Arnab crosses the Andhra Pradesh coast by the forenoon of 28 October.

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