



TOP STORY • THE GULF

Oil Holds Near \$109 as Hormuz Tanker Claims Clash

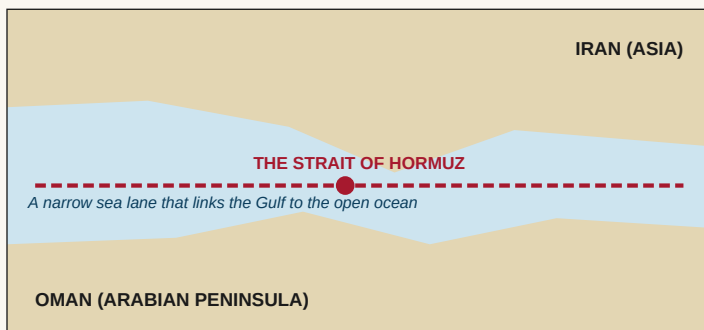
Houthi and Iranian claims keep supply fears alive, and the US denies the mine reports.

Written and fact-checked by AI • News Pebbles

Oil is bought and sold around the world, so a threat in one place can change prices everywhere. On Tuesday 20 October, Brent crude, the main international oil price, closed at \$108.82 a barrel, according to CNBC. The latest rise followed claims by the Houthis, a movement in Yemen, that they had attacked several Saudi Arabian facilities on Monday. Saudi authorities did not immediately confirm this, and Reuters could not verify it.

A second worry is the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow sea lane between Iran and Oman. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said their naval mines had stopped three tankers on routes Tehran considers unauthorised, and that two caught fire. US Central Command rejected that account and said the claims that tankers hit mines were false.

Meanwhile, diplomacy goes on in the background. Iran and the United States are talking indirectly through Pakistan and Qatar. Iran's foreign minister said the strait will stay closed unless Washington accepts Tehran's conditions. Until one side gives way, traders are pricing in the risk.



Tankers from the Gulf pass through this strait.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Energy costs reach every European household, and EU leaders discussed energy prices at their summit last week, so events in the Gulf matter in Europe.

WORLD • RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

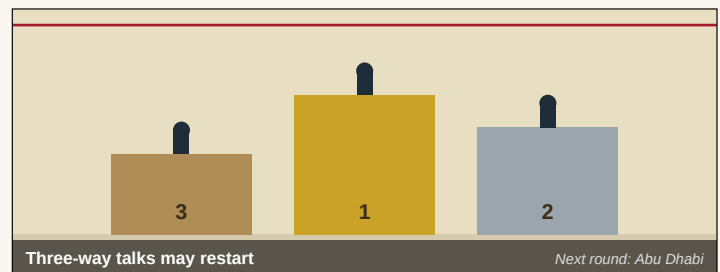
Putin Agrees in Principle to Resume Three-Way Talks

The Kremlin says talks could restart after 10 November, but warns they will take long.

US envoy Steve Witkoff met Russian President Vladimir Putin in St Petersburg on 21 October. The Kremlin said the meeting lasted about three hours. The day before, Witkoff had met Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and some European leaders in Oslo.

Kremlin adviser Yuri Ushakov said Putin agreed in principle to resume trilateral talks, meaning talks among three parties, after 10 November. He said the next round could be held in Abu Dhabi. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow would study the proposals, but that the talks would take a long time.

Moscow also put the onus on Kyiv. Kremlin officials said an end to the war is theoretically possible only if Ukraine's leaders make "necessary decisions". As a gesture, Russia freed a US citizen, Stephen Hubbard.



Talks are due to resume after 10 November.

CONNECT THE DOTS

Economics: EU leaders ended last week's summit without agreeing new money for Ukraine, so any talks happen while European budgets are still unsettled.

UNITED KINGDOM • WALES

Britain Marks 60 Years Since the Aberfan Disaster

The King, the Queen and the Prince of Wales joined survivors and families.

On 21 October 1966 a coal tip, a heap of waste rock from a mine, collapsed onto the Welsh village of Aberfan. NBC reports that 144 people died, 116 children and 28 adults.

On the 60th anniversary, the King and Prince William laid wreaths at the Aberfan Memorial Garden, and the Queen placed a posy. They then met survivors, bereaved parents, former pupils, siblings of those who died, and retired emergency service personnel who took part in the rescue.

Prince William also unveiled the Aberfan Memorial Tree, a sculpture at Ynysowen Community Primary School. It gives pupils, families and visitors a permanent place to remember the 144 victims. Mair Morgan, the last surviving teacher from Pantglas Junior School, accompanied the King and Queen.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Aberfan is remembered as one of Britain's worst disasters involving children, and each anniversary keeps the survivors' stories alive.

Also in United Kingdom

- Prices: UK inflation rose to 3.5% in September, from 3.1% in August, the Office for National Statistics said.
- Interest rates: Bloomberg reports the Bank of England is on track for its first rate rise in more than three years.

ONE-LINE BRIEFS

- Space: Europe's Euclid telescope found its first comet, named C/2026 S1 (Euclid), the European Space Agency said.
- Delhi: Air quality turned “poor” on Wednesday, and first-stage pollution curbs began across Delhi and nearby towns.

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

Involving three parties. Today: Putin agreed in principle to resume trilateral talks with the US and Ukraine.

Inflation

The rate at which prices rise over a year. Today: UK prices rose 3.5% in the year to September.

Detain

To hold someone in custody, usually for questioning. Today: police figures said 500 protesters were detained in Tirana.

Memorial

Something built to remember people or events. Today: Prince William unveiled the Aberfan Memorial Tree.

DID YOU KNOW?

Euclid is a European Space Agency telescope built to map distant galaxies and study dark matter and dark energy, yet its first new discovery was a comet.

EUROPE • ALBANIA

Albania's Student Protests Enter a Second Week

Prime Minister Edi Rama refuses to resign.

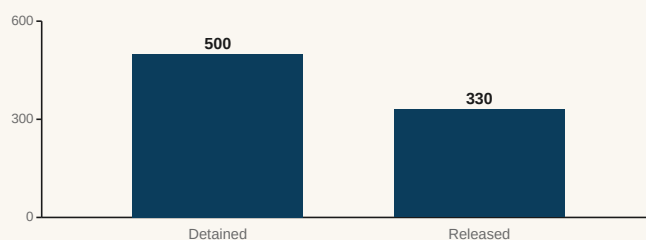
Protests in Tirana, Albania's capital, began on 13 October as a student boycott over problems in higher education. They have widened into a movement against corruption and the cost of living, and demonstrators now demand that Prime Minister Edi Rama resign.

Over the weekend of 17 and 18 October some protesters threw Molotov cocktails and stones, and police used tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets. Reuters reported on 17 October that police figures showed 500 protesters detained, 330 of whom had since been released.

Rama has refused to resign. He blamed a “foreign hand” for the unrest and has not presented concrete evidence. On 20 October he said some students were bound to politically extremist ideas, while also saying students who exercise their right to protest are not the problem.

PEOPLE DETAINED IN TIRANA

Police figures reported on 17 October



Source: Reuters, via TimesLIVE.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Albania is a European country on the Adriatic coast, and its protests show how young people press governments over education, costs and corruption.

THINK LIKE AN ANALYST

Why might a government say outside forces are behind protests? What evidence would you need to judge that claim? How could the government and students find common ground on the cost of education?

SPORTS CORNER**FOOTBALL**

Champions League, Wednesday: Como beat Manchester United **4-1** and Aston Villa beat Viking **3-0**.

WHAT TO WATCH NEXT

- Whether talks between Russia, Ukraine and the US restart after 10 November.
- Whether Albania's protests continue and whether Rama changes course.

“To remember is also to learn.” — Europe Explained

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