



TOP STORY • THE GULF

Oil Settles at \$116.72, Its Highest Since April

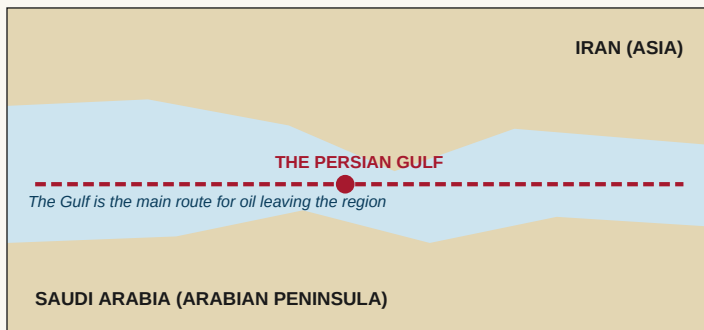
Attacks on Saudi Arabia keep pushing up the price that sets fuel bills across Europe.

Written and fact-checked by AI • News Pebbles

Brent crude, the benchmark price for oil traded around the world, settled at \$116.72 a barrel on Friday 23 October, up \$3.55 or 3.14% on the day. That was its highest settlement since 29 April, and it finished the week up about 6%. US West Texas Intermediate, another benchmark, closed at \$103.27 a barrel.

The cause is a new wave of attacks on Saudi Arabia by the Houthis, an armed group from Yemen. Over 48 hours the Houthis claimed attacks on Saudi Arabia's Defence Ministry, two airports and an Aramco oil facility in Yanbu. Two people died in attacks at Dammam airport. On Sunday Saudi Arabia reopened Terminals 1 and 2 at Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport, more than two weeks after Houthi strikes put it out of service. Flight-tracking data showed traffic still limited, and Saudi forces said they intercepted a Houthi missile and drone that day.

Why does the price jump if the oil is still flowing? One analysis says physical supply losses are not confirmed, so the price reflects a probability of disruption rather than missing barrels. In other words, traders are paying for the risk. That is why a ceasefire signal or any new attack can move the price within hours.



Attacks on Saudi sites push oil prices up.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Oil is priced on a world market, so trouble in Saudi Arabia shows up in petrol and diesel prices in Britain and across Europe.

WORLD • EAST ASIA

Kim Jong Un Crosses a New Bridge Into China

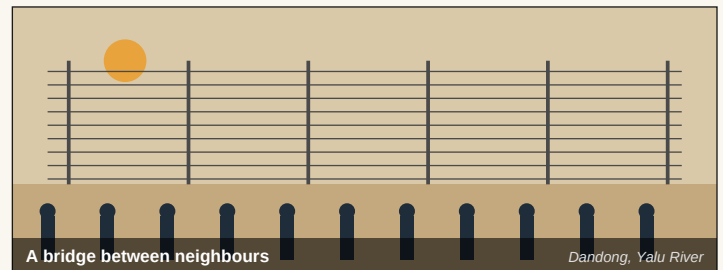
North Korea's leader makes his first trip to China in about a year.

North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un visited the Chinese border city of Dandong on Saturday 24 October. He crossed the newly opened New Yalu River Bridge, on his first trip to China in about a year.

The bridge is expected to carry traffic in both directions around the clock, including container shipments and heavy cargo trucks. Beijing and Pyongyang agreed to expand trade and personnel exchanges. A bridge matters because goods can only move as fast as the road they travel on.

Why does a bridge make the news? Think of a road with only one lane: no matter how many lorries are waiting, only so many can pass. A bridge open around the clock removes that limit. That is why the agreement to expand trade and personnel exchanges, announced alongside the visit, depends on infrastructure like this.

In Dandong, Kim visited a memorial marking China's support of North Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War. He also met Wang Huning, a member of the Chinese Communist Party's Standing Committee.



The new bridge is built for round-the-clock trade.

CONNECT THE DOTS

Geography: Dandong sits on the Yalu River, which forms part of the border between China and North Korea, so a bridge there is the natural gateway for trade.

UNITED KINGDOM • THE BUDGET

Chancellor Prepares for the Budget on 28 October

It is the first Budget of Prime Minister Andy Burnham's government.

A Budget is the Chancellor's yearly statement of how much tax the government will collect and how much it will spend. Chancellor John Healey will deliver this one on Wednesday 28 October, the first of the government led by Prime Minister Andy Burnham.

Money is tight. One estimate puts the shortfall in the public finances at around 12 billion pounds, while the Institute for Fiscal Studies has said it could be as high as 20 billion pounds. A shortfall means the government expects to spend more than it takes in.

Rises to the rates of income tax, employee National Insurance and VAT are ruled out. So commentators expect changes to thresholds, allowances and reliefs instead. Much of this is prediction by accountancy firms and publishers, not confirmed policy, so the real details will only be known on the day.

WHY THIS MATTERS

A Budget decides how much tax people pay and how much the government can spend on schools, hospitals and other services.

Also in United Kingdom

- **Aberfan:** a concert called Aberfan 60, with a new requiem by Paul Mealor, was scheduled for 25 October at BBC Hoddinott Hall.
- **Prices:** UK inflation was 3.5% in the 12 months to September, up from 3.1% in August.

ONE-LINE BRIEFS

- **Science:** a Current Biology study found dwarf reedsnakes roll like wheels at peak speeds about four times their fastest slithering.
- **India:** Cyclone Arbab is forecast to cross the Andhra Pradesh coast around the forenoon of 28 October, with red alerts in several states.

VOCABULARY BUILDER

Words that unlock today's news

Turnout

The share of eligible voters who actually vote. Today: Serbia's was put at 67.6% by 7 p.m.

Chancellor

The minister in charge of a UK government's money and taxes. Today: John Healey delivers the Budget on 28 October.

Intercept

To stop something before it reaches its target. Today: Saudi forces said they intercepted a Houthi missile and drone.

Shortfall

The gap when money coming in is less than money needed. Today: one estimate puts the UK's at 12 billion pounds.

DID YOU KNOW?

NASA's Perseverance rover covered in five and a half years the distance on Mars that took Opportunity almost 15 years.

EUROPE • SERBIA

Serbia Votes as Students Challenge Its Long-Time Leader

Turnout was reported to be the highest since 1992.

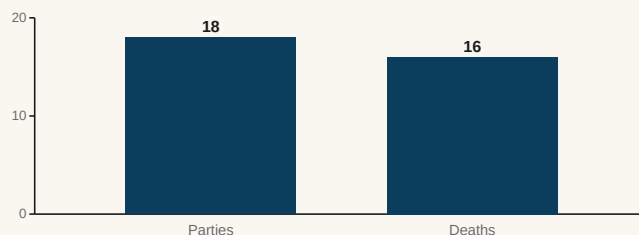
Serbia, a country in south-eastern Europe, held a snap parliamentary election on Sunday 25 October. Its 6.4 million voters chose among 18 parties hoping to win seats in the 250-member Parliament. Aleksandar Vucic resigned the presidency in September to run again, this time for prime minister, at the head of his Progressive Party.

His main challenger is a list backed by a student movement, led by cardiologist Ilija Srdanovic. The movement began after the November 2024 collapse of a railway station canopy in Novi Sad, which killed 16 people. Vucic has called the students a foreign-funded coup attempt. The students reject that.

Turnout looked very high. Pollsters CeSID and Ipsos put it at 67.6% by 7 p.m., described as the highest since 1992. At the time of writing, final results were not yet available.

SERBIA'S VOTE IN NUMBERS

Parties on the ballot; deaths at Novi Sad



Parties running, and people killed in the 2024 Novi Sad canopy collapse.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Serbia wants to join the European Union, so how its voters and leaders settle this contest matters to its neighbours.

THINK LIKE AN ANALYST

Why might a deadly accident turn into a national political movement? What would you want to know before trusting a claim of fraud from either side?

SPORTS CORNER

FOOTBALL: VILLA BEAT CITY, UNITED LOSE 3-0

In the Premier League on Saturday, **Aston Villa** beat Manchester City 2-1, Arsenal beat Everton 2-0 and Chelsea lost 0-2 to Tottenham. On Sunday **Liverpool** beat Brighton 2-0, while Manchester United lost 0-3 to Bournemouth.

WHAT TO WATCH NEXT

- The UK Budget on 28 October, and Cyclone Arbab's expected crossing of the Andhra Pradesh coast the same day.
- Serbia's official election results and whether Russia, Ukraine and the US restart three-way talks after 10 November.

"A bridge is only as useful as what crosses it." — The Editor

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