

THE GLOBAL CITIZEN PLUS

"The news, connected to what you learn."

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TOP STORY • SAUDI ARABIA AND YEMEN

Missiles Hit Riyadh's Airport as Yemen's War Spills Over

Saudi officials say an attack on the capital's main airport killed 12 people and injured 309. President Trump says the United States may join the fight.

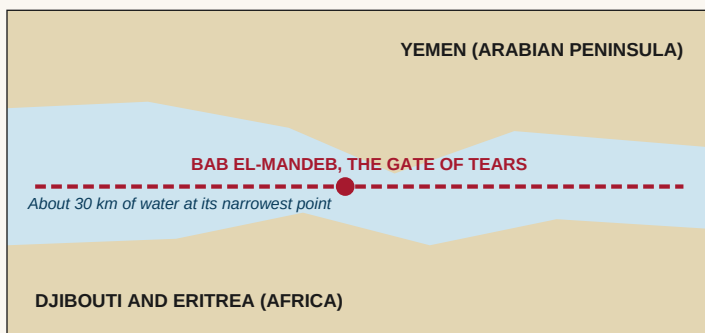
Written and fact-checked by AI • News Pebbles

Saudi Arabia's capital is meant to be one of the safest cities in the Middle East. On Saturday its main airport became a target. An attack on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh killed at least 12 people and injured 309, the Saudi aviation authority said, including travellers from Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan and the United States. Two days earlier, a missile strike there had killed three Saudis, one of them a pilot.

The likely attackers are the Houthis, a rebel movement backed by Iran that has ruled northern Yemen, Saudi Arabia's southern neighbour, since 2014. They claimed Thursday's strike and warned airlines to stay out of Saudi skies.

Their missiles are a reply. On October 4, Yemen's Saudi-backed government launched an offensive to retake Houthi land, and Saudi-led jets have pounded the Houthi-held capital, Sanaa. The UN's envoy for Yemen warned on Friday that the country has slid back into full-scale war.

That puts a decision in front of Washington. Asked whether America would join in, President Trump said: "We may. We're going to look at it." At a rally on Friday he also said he was "about to settle, or win" the wider war with Iran.



With the Strait of Hormuz disrupted, Saudi oil now leaves through this gate.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Yemen's war looks local, but it sits beside one of the world's great doorways. Every ship passing between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean squeezes through the Bab el-Mandeb strait, along Yemen's coast. With the Iran war choking the Strait of Hormuz, Saudi Arabia has been sending its oil out this way instead. In September the Houthis seized the coast beside the strait, which is why the new offensive aims to win it back. This is how a proxy war works: Iran does not have to fire at Saudi Arabia itself if a group it backs can threaten the one route Saudi oil has left.

WORLD • THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

A Judge Who Fought Apartheid Wins the Peace Prize, and the US Hits Her Old Court

Navi Pillay spent six decades arguing that the worst crimes must face a court. Hours after her award, the United States sanctioned the International Criminal Court.

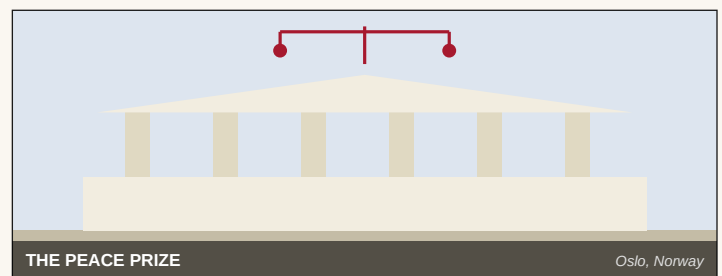
Navi Pillay was born in 1941 in Durban, South Africa, the daughter of a bus driver, in a country whose laws ranked people by the colour of their skin. That system was called apartheid. As a young lawyer she fought it. On Friday, at 85, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Her career has followed one idea: people who commit the worst crimes should face a court. As a judge on the UN tribunal for Rwanda, she helped convict people who took part in the 1994 genocide there. She sat on the International Criminal Court (ICC) from 2003 to 2008 and served as the UN's human rights chief.

Her most recent job is why the prize is contested. Last year a UN panel she led concluded that Israel had committed genocide in Gaza. Israel denies this, and its prime minister said the Nobel committee had "lost its moral compass". President Trump said the United States "should have received" the prize instead.

Hours after the announcement, the US put sanctions on the ICC itself, not just its officials, banning dealings with the court. The US objects to the court's investigation in Afghanistan and its arrest warrant for Israel's prime minister. The court called it an assault on the rule of law.

Pillay answered with humour. She said she first thought the news "must be a joke", and dedicated the prize to all the survivors of international crimes. Japan's prime minister, a close US ally, said she was deeply concerned by the sanctions on the court.



The prize is worth about one million euros. It is presented on December 10.

CONNECT THE DOTS

The idea that leaders can be put on trial is younger than you might think. After the Second World War, the Allies tried leading Nazis at Nuremberg, in Germany, for crimes against humanity. For the first time, 'I was following orders' and 'I was running a country' were not accepted as excuses. Special courts for Yugoslavia and Rwanda followed in the 1990s, and Pillay was a judge on the second. In 2002 the ICC became the first permanent court of its kind. The United States, Russia, China and India have never joined it.

INDIA • DEMOCRACY

Delhi Shuts Down to Stop a Youth Protest Over Voter Lists

More than 130 million names have been cut from India's voter lists. The Election Commission and the BJP deny wrongdoing.

Before anyone can vote, their name must be on a list. India, with about a billion voters, has spent more than a year checking those lists, and over 130 million names have been removed, more than the population of Japan.

Opposition parties say many were real voters struck off to help Prime Minister Modi's party, the BJP. The Election Commission, the independent body that runs India's elections, and the BJP deny any wrongdoing. Anger grew when a newspaper reported that the deputies of the chief election commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar, had disagreed with him over the process, and protests demanding his resignation spread this month.

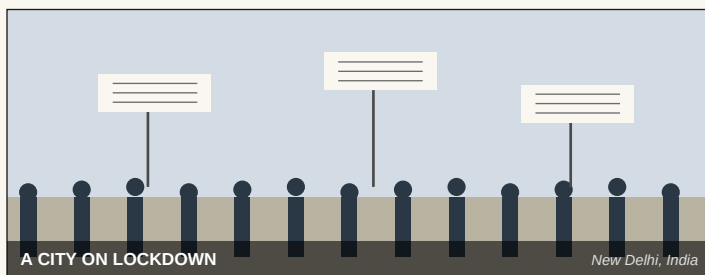
On Saturday a youth group that began as online satire, the Cockroach Janta Party, called a rally in New Delhi. Police refused permission, shut 57 metro stations, cut mobile internet nearby and detained thousands of people.

The group's name is a joke with a point. "Janta" means "the people" in Hindi, and the cockroach is famous for being impossible to get rid of. Its founders started it online to mock politicians; now it is organising crowds in the streets.

Shutting down a capital city's trains to stop a protest is a sign of how seriously the government takes it. It also raised a second question about rights: whether citizens can gather to complain about the very system that lets them choose their government.

India's constitution takes these lists seriously. Article 326 gives every citizen aged 18 or over the right to vote, and Article 324 puts the Election Commission in charge of preparing the rolls and running elections, independent of the government of the day. That independence is exactly what the protesters say they no longer trust.

The stakes are enormous. In India's last general election, in 2024, about 640 million people voted, more than in any election in history. Even a small share of wrongly removed names could decide close races.



WHY THIS MATTERS

An election is only as fair as its list of voters. Removing people who have died or moved is necessary; removing real voters is a way to win without persuading anyone. From outside the two can look alike, which is why trust in the referee matters. Here, the referee is the one under question.

UNITED STATES • HURRICANE ISAIAS

Isaias Batters the Gulf Coast, Cutting Power to Hundreds of Thousands

The season's first Atlantic hurricane came ashore near Destin, Florida, on Friday night. At least four people have died.

A hurricane is a storm with winds of at least 74 miles an hour. Isaias, the first of this Atlantic season, reached land near Destin in the Florida Panhandle late on Friday with 105 mph winds, a Category 2.

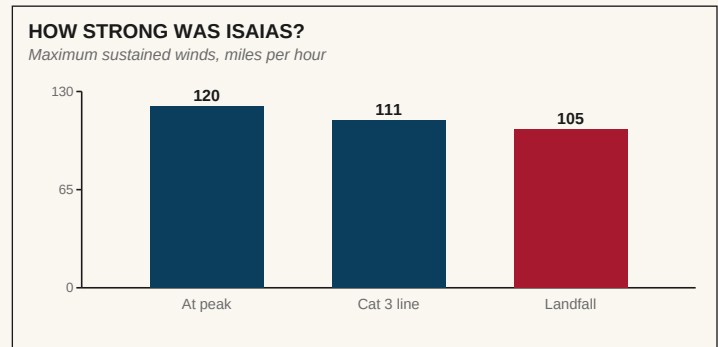
It arrived unusually late. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June to November, and most years produce several hurricanes by October. This year, Isaias was the first. Forecasters link the quiet season partly to the record El Niño in the Pacific, which strengthens winds high over the Atlantic that tear growing storms apart.

Those measurements come from the Hurricane Hunters, crews from the US Air Force Reserve and the weather agency NOAA who fly planes straight through storms, dropping instruments that radio back wind speed, pressure and temperature.

At sea it had been stronger. Hurricane Hunter aircraft measured 120 mph, enough for Category 3, or "major" status, before it weakened near the coast. The damage came anyway: flooded roads, torn roofs and fallen trees across Florida, Alabama and Georgia. At the peak, more than 858,000 homes and businesses lost power.

At least four people have died, two in Florida and two in Alabama. Two were killed by trees falling onto homes, and one man in Florida died in a closed garage with a running generator.

By Saturday night about 438,000 customers were still without power, most of them in Florida. Alabama Power said more than 5,000 extra repair crews were arriving from nearly 25 states. In Escambia County, around Pensacola, about 130,000 customers lost power, the most in the state. In Tallahassee, crews had restored all but about 1,000 outages by Saturday.



Category 3 starts at 111 mph. Isaias crossed that line at sea, then dropped below it.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Wind is not what usually kills in a hurricane. Water, from storm surge and flooding rain, has historically been the bigger danger, and falling trees and generators run indoors threaten people long after the gusts die down.

THINK LIKE AN ANALYST

Think like an analyst: outage counts measure "customers", meaning electricity accounts, not people. One account can be a family of five, an empty holiday home or a hospital. How many people might 858,000 accounts cover? What would you need to know?

SCIENCE & TECH • EL NIÑO

The Pacific Is Heading for Its Strongest El Niño on Record

Forecasters expect a patch of the ocean to run 3.7°C warmer than normal by the end of the year, beating 2015's record by more than a degree.

Most of the time, steady trade winds push warm surface water west across the tropical Pacific, piling it up near Indonesia and Australia. Every few years those winds weaken, and the warm water spreads east toward South America. Scientists call this El Niño.

This year's El Niño is breaking records. The World Meteorological Organization, the UN's weather agency, tracks the temperature of a box of ocean in the central Pacific. It was about 1.6°C above normal in June and 2.5°C in August. For October to December it forecasts about 3.7°C, the highest since measurements began. The old record, set in late 2015, was 2.6°C.

On October 8 the US Climate Prediction Center gave an 83% chance that this will be the strongest El Niño since its records began in 1950. The WMO says it is almost certain to last until February.

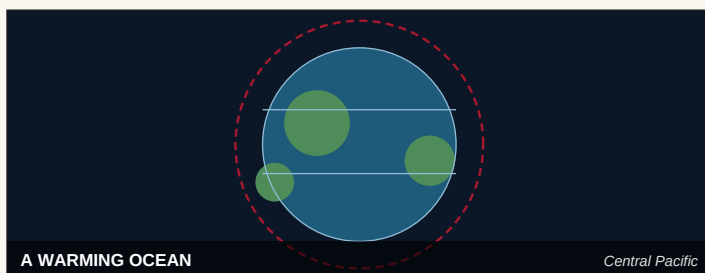
Daily readings have already passed the 2015 peak of about 3.1°C, the Boston Globe reported, and the Washington Post projects the event could peak near 4.2°C in December. Different agencies use slightly different measures, so their numbers do not always match, but all of them point the same way.

The name comes from Peru. Fishermen there noticed that a warm current sometimes arrived around Christmas and drove away the fish, and they named it El Niño, "the boy", after the infant Jesus.

Scientists measure all this with satellites and with a line of floating buoys across the equator, which read the water's temperature every day.

It may already be shaping the weather. El Niño tends to strengthen winds high over the Atlantic that rip apart growing storms, one reason this year's Atlantic hurricane season stayed quiet until Isaias formed in October.

The timing matters for diplomacy too. Ahead of the COP31 climate summit in Turkey in November, the UN pointed to this year's record heat, devastating floods and an "unprecedented" El Niño as reasons for countries to cut emissions faster.



El Niño moves the Pacific's warmest water from Asia toward the Americas.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Where the warmest water goes, rain follows. Strong El Niños have brought droughts to Australia, Indonesia and parts of India, floods to Peru, and wetter winters to the southern United States. Knowing months ahead lets farmers choose crops and cities prepare.

ECONOMY • INTEREST RATES

India Raises Interest Rates for the First Time Since 2023

With oil prices high and the rupee weak, the Reserve Bank of India made borrowing more expensive to keep prices in check.

When prices rise too fast, a central bank's main tool is the interest rate it charges banks. On October 7 the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) raised that rate, called the repo rate, from 5.25% to 5.50%. It was the first increase since February 2023, and all six members of its policy committee voted for it.

A quarter of a percentage point sounds tiny, but it matters. Banks pass it on: when they pay the RBI more to borrow, they charge more on home loans, car loans and business loans. A family repaying a home loan over 20 years can see its monthly payment rise, and a company may put off building a new factory.

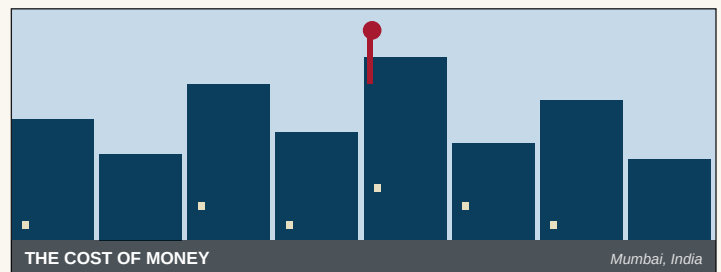
The RBI also raised its forecast for inflation this financial year to 5.2%, up from 5.0%, while still expecting the economy to grow by about 7.1%. Governor Sanjay Malhotra described the bank's new approach as "calibrated tightening": raising rates carefully rather than sharply.

A weaker rupee touches students and families directly, too. Anything priced in dollars, from imported phones to university fees abroad, now costs more rupees than it did a few months ago.

Part of the pressure comes from abroad. Brent crude, the main global oil price, is about two-thirds higher than a year ago because of the Iran war, and India buys most of its oil from other countries. After the RBI's move, the rupee fell to a five-month low of 96.78 to the US dollar, which makes imports such as oil even more expensive.

India is not alone. Around the world, borrowing has become more expensive: the yield on the US government's 10-year bonds, a benchmark for loans worldwide, ended the week around 5.24%, and Japan's 30-year bond yield hit a record this month. When investors expect higher prices, they demand more interest to lend.

The RBI's aim is to keep inflation close to its target of 4%, within a band of 2% to 6%. At a forecast of 5.2%, prices are still inside the band, which is why the bank moved gently rather than sharply.



The RBI, based in Mumbai, sets the rate banks pay to borrow from it.

WHY THIS MATTERS

A higher repo rate spreads through the economy: home loans and car loans cost more, so families and businesses borrow and spend less, which slows price rises. The trade-off is slower growth, so central banks try to raise rates just enough.

ONE-LINE BRIEFS

- Panama: a magnitude 7.7 earthquake injured 27 people and damaged more than 400 homes; the government declared a state of emergency.
- Russia: President Trump announced that Russia will sell diesel to the US and paused sanctions on it until April 2027. Ukraine's president condemned the deal.
- Europe: China agreed to cut its hybrid car exports to the European Union by more than half over four years, the EU's trade chief said.
- Literature: Canadian poet Anne Carson, 76, won the Nobel Prize in Literature for work that plays with ancient Greek and Roman writing.

VOCABULARY BUILDER

Words that unlock today's news

Strait

A narrow passage of sea linking two larger bodies of water. Today: the Bab el-Mandeb strait runs along Yemen's coast.

Sanctions

Penalties used to pressure a country or group, such as banning trade. Today: the US sanctioned the ICC.

Repo rate

The interest rate a central bank charges banks for short-term loans. Today: India raised its repo rate to 5.50%.

Apartheid

South Africa's former system of laws separating people by race. Today: Navi Pillay fought it as a lawyer.

DID YOU KNOW?

The word 'rupee' comes from the Sanskrit 'rupya', meaning wrought silver. In the 1500s the ruler Sher Shah Suri issued a silver coin called the rupiya, and the name stuck. Today Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Mauritius and the Seychelles also call their money a rupee.

EXPLAINER

How raising interest rates cools prices

Inflation means prices rising across the economy. A little is normal; a lot makes everyone's money buy less. Central banks such as the Reserve Bank of India try to keep it near a target.

Their main tool is the interest rate they charge banks. When it goes up, banks charge more for loans, so families delay buying homes and cars and companies delay building factories. With less spending, shops find it harder to raise prices.

Think of it like the brakes on a bicycle going downhill. Squeeze too little and you speed up; squeeze too hard and you stop and fall. Central banks adjust a little at a time, in steps of a quarter of a percentage point, because changes take months to work through the economy.

Higher rates also make savings accounts pay more, which encourages people to save rather than spend. The catch is that slower spending can mean slower growth and fewer jobs, so central banks move in small steps and watch what happens.

Central banks cannot change oil prices, which are set worldwide. What they can do is stop a jump in fuel costs from spreading into everything else, as shops raise prices and workers ask for higher pay to keep up. That chain reaction is what the RBI is trying to break.

QUIZ

Five questions on this issue

1. Which narrow sea passage runs along Yemen's coast?

(a) Strait of Hormuz (b) Bab el-Mandeb (c) Strait of Malacca (d) Strait of Gibraltar

2. In which country did Navi Pillay grow up under apartheid?

(a) India (b) Kenya (c) South Africa (d) Zimbabwe

3. What did the Reserve Bank of India raise its repo rate to?

(a) 4.00% (b) 5.50% (c) 6.50% (d) 7.10%

4. In which category was Isaias when it reached land in Florida?

(a) Category 1 (b) Category 2 (c) Category 3 (d) Category 5

5. El Niño happens when warm water spreads across which ocean?

(a) Atlantic (b) Indian (c) Arctic (d) Pacific

Answers. 1 (b): Bab el-Mandeb means "gate of tears"; ships between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean must pass it. 2 (c): Pillay was born in Durban in 1941 and fought apartheid as a lawyer. 3 (b): up from 5.25%, the RBI's first rise since 2023. 4 (b): Isaias had 105 mph winds at landfall, down from 120 mph at sea. 5 (d): the warm water spreads east across the Pacific toward South America.

DISCUSS

Talk it over

Pick one question. Argue one side for two minutes, then switch and argue the other. Which side was harder to argue, and why?

1. The United States says the International Criminal Court should not judge Americans. Should a country be able to refuse a world court's authority over its own citizens? What would happen if every country did?

2. India has removed 130 million names from its voter lists. Who should check those lists, and how could everyone, on every side, be sure it was done fairly?

3. Raising interest rates slows price rises but can slow hiring too. If you ran a central bank, who would you worry about most: savers, borrowers or job-seekers? Why?

"I thought it must be a joke." — Navi Pillay, on hearing she had won the Nobel Peace Prize

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