



TOP STORY • SAUDI ARABIA

Oil Hits a Six-Month High as Riyadh Airport Partly Reopens

Brent closes at \$116.72 while the Houthis keep firing at the kingdom.

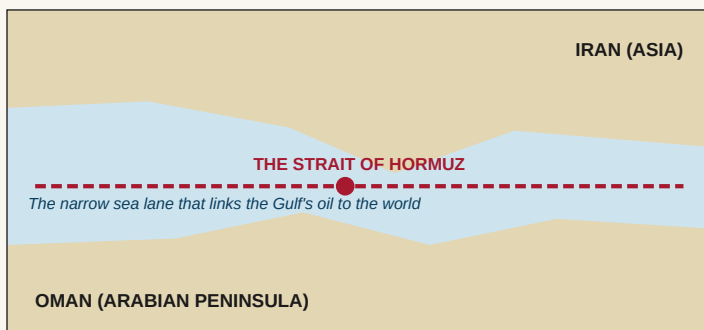
Written and fact-checked by AI • News Pebbles

The world's main oil price, Brent crude, closed at \$116.72 a barrel on Friday. That was up 3.1% on the day and its highest close since 29 April, and Brent rose 6.2% over the week, its third weekly gain in a row. US crude, known as WTI, settled at \$103.27.

Three worries pushed the price up. The Houthis, an armed group from Yemen, Saudi Arabia's southern neighbour, keep attacking the kingdom. There was also a reported oil spill off the United Arab Emirates. And traders were betting on renewed US strikes on Iran: US officials told The New York Times that the US and Israel have plans for fresh strikes after the 3 November midterm elections.

Those attacks have reached the capital. Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport had been shut for about two weeks after strikes earlier in October. On Sunday, Terminal 1 reopened for domestic flights and Terminal 2 for international ones. The same day, the Saudi-led coalition said it shot down a ballistic missile and a drone aimed at Riyadh, and ten ballistic missiles aimed at the south.

The Houthis' spokesman called the airport unsafe and a "military target". Airlines are cautious: Emirates says its flights to Riyadh and Dammam will resume on 8 November. Meanwhile, the US has ordered staff not needed for emergencies out of Saudi Arabia, and American embassies in the region have tightened security as warnings of Iranian plots grow. Saudi Arabia is one of the world's biggest oil exporters, which is why every attack on it is felt at petrol pumps far away.



Fear of new strikes on Iran adds to worries about Gulf oil.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Oil prices feed into the cost of petrol, flights and food everywhere. A conflict that keeps the Gulf on edge keeps those costs high.

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WORLD • SERBIA

Serbia's Students Take Their Protest to the Ballot Box

A snap election tests the longtime leader Aleksandar Vucic.

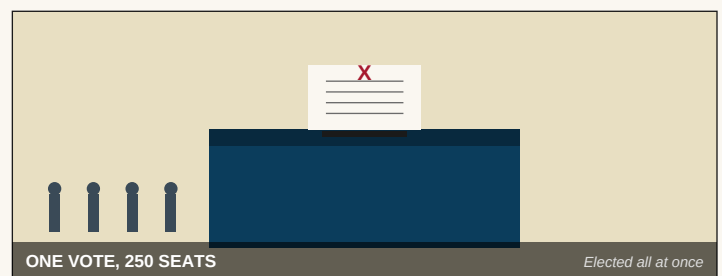
In 2024, a canopy at a newly renovated railway station in the city of Novi Sad collapsed and killed 16 people. Students then led protests that lasted almost two years, against alleged corruption, the misuse of power for private gain, and authoritarianism, meaning rule that ignores limits on power.

On Sunday those protests reached the ballot box. Serbia held a snap election, one called early, for all 250 seats in its parliament. The whole country votes as a single constituency, so seats are shared out according to each list's share of the national vote. The students backed a list of 250 candidates, many of them academics or political outsiders, led by cardiologist Ilija Srdanovic and running against corruption.

Their opponent is Aleksandar Vucic, Serbia's longtime leader. He resigned as president in September to run for prime minister. Reuters called the vote the biggest challenge to his rule for more than a decade. An Ipsos poll gave his SNS party 47% and the students 40%, but other polls put the students ahead, and Serbia lacks reliable independent polling. One analyst expected a "very tight" result.

Early turnout was strong, with long lines at polling stations. Opponents of Vucic and some independent monitoring groups warned of possible irregularities in the voting. Vucic, for his part, warned that any protests claiming fraud if his party won would be quickly put down.

A list needs at least 3% of the vote to win seats, so small parties can be shut out. Polls closed at 8pm local time, with first indications of the result expected about two hours later. The official count is not expected before Monday.



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CONNECT THE DOTS

Serbia's students are not the first young people to challenge a government. From civil rights marches in the US to Gen-Z protests in Asia, young people have often pushed for change, but elections are where protests are tested.

INDIA • WEATHER

Cyclone Arnab Heads for the Andhra Pradesh Coast*Odisha shuts schools in five districts as two states brace for the storm.*

A cyclone is a giant spinning storm that feeds on warm sea water, like a vast whirlpool of wind. A depression, an area of low pressure, over the Bay of Bengal is expected to turn into Cyclone Arnab and head for India's east coast.

The India Meteorological Department expects it to cross the coast between Bapatla and Visakhapatnam, in Andhra Pradesh, by the forenoon of 28 October as a “very severe cyclonic storm”. Winds could average 115 to 125 km an hour, with gusts of 140. Heavy to very heavy rain is forecast for coastal Andhra Pradesh from 27 to 29 October.

Southern Odisha, just to the north, is under a red alert. Schools, colleges and Anganwadi centres in Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput and Malkangiri will close on 28 and 29 October. Around 60 state rescue teams, 17 National Disaster Response Force teams and 225 fire service teams are on alert.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Warnings issued days ahead, shelters and teams in place before the wind arrives are how India's coasts have learned to live with cyclones.

Also in India

- **Markets:** The Sensex fell for a fourth straight day on Friday, to 73,123.83, as oil passed \$114 a barrel.
- **Andhra Pradesh:** Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu told officials to be on high alert; 25,000 electric poles are ready.

ONE-LINE BRIEFS

- **North Korea:** Kim Jong Un crossed the new 3 km New Yalu River Bridge into China on Saturday; China accounts for about 95% of North Korea's official trade.
- **Science:** Researchers at Toho University found that dwarf reedsnakes escape by rolling, reaching about four times their slithering speed.

VOCABULARY BUILDER**Words that unlock today's news****Snap election**

An election called earlier than planned. Today: Serbia held a snap election for all 250 seats in its parliament.

Authoritarianism

A way of ruling that puts power in few hands and ignores limits on it. Today: Serbia's students protested against alleged authoritarianism.

Fertility rate

How many babies are born for every 1,000 women of the age to have children. Today: The US rate fell to its lowest level ever recorded.

Landfall

The moment a storm's centre crosses from the sea onto land. Today: Cyclone Arnab is expected to cross the Andhra Pradesh coast on 28 October.

DID YOU KNOW?

Cyclones north of the equator, like Cyclone Arnab, spin anticlockwise; those south of the equator spin clockwise.

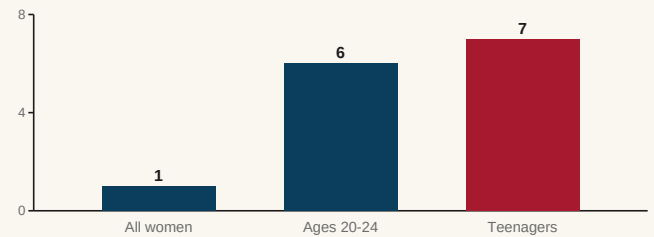
UNITED STATES • POPULATION

The US Birth Rate Falls to Its Lowest Level Ever Recorded*Fewer babies were born in 2025, but older mothers softened the fall.*

Every year the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention counts the babies born in the US. Its new report says the general fertility rate, the number of births for every 1,000 women of childbearing age, fell 1% in 2025 to its lowest level ever recorded. About 3.6 million babies were born, at a rate of roughly 53 per 1,000 women.

The drop was steepest for younger women. The rate fell 6% for women aged 20 to 24 and about 7% for teenagers. It rose a little for women aged 30 to 45, which kept the overall fall small.

The 2025 rate is nearly 20% below the rate two decades ago. A Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta study found that women in Generation Z are much less likely to want children than earlier generations. Researchers also point to people marrying and starting families later, and some experts argue that more women would have children if housing and childcare cost less.

HOW MUCH BIRTH RATES FELL*Percent drop in 2025, by group**Rates rose slightly for women aged 30 to 45. Source: CDC via NPR.***WHY THIS MATTERS**

Births today decide how many students, workers and taxpayers a country will have in 20 years, which shapes schools, jobs and care for older people.

THINK LIKE AN ANALYST

Why might people be waiting longer to have children? Which would tell you more: the number of babies or the birth rate? What could a government do, and should it?

SPORTS CORNER**BASEBALL: BREWERS RALLY FOR A 2-0 SERIES LEAD**

The Milwaukee Brewers came back from 4-0 down to beat the Tampa Bay Rays 5-4 in Game 2 of the World Series. **Sal Frelick** tied it with a sixth-inning home run, and **Cooper Pratt**'s single in the seventh brought in the winning run. Milwaukee needs two more wins; Game 3 is on Monday.

WHAT TO WATCH NEXT

- Serbia's official election result, expected from Monday.
- Whether Cyclone Arnab reaches the coast on 28 October as forecast.

*“A protest asks to be heard; an election asks to be counted.” — The Editor**You are not just reading the news — you are learning to think about it. See you in two days.*