# UK Headlines — 17 Oct 2026

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*Saturday 17 October 2026 — UK & world news sweep*

## ? Top Story

**Mystery drones over UK skies; British troops heading to Poland for Ukraine ceasefire war games.** The Daily Telegraph leads with reports that RAF jets had two close encounters with unidentified drones earlier this year during training exercises over the North Sea. The "near-misses" happened days apart; the objects were spotted at 17,000ft — more than 40× the legal height limit for commercial drones. Incident logs show the RAF reported the sightings to police and multiple external investigations are ongoing. Meanwhile the Times reports hundreds of British troops will head to Poland next month in a first-of-its-kind exercise simulating deployment to Ukraine in the event of a ceasefire, alongside French and German personnel. (BBC The Papers)

## ?? UK Politics

- **Heathrow third runway:** John Healey says expansion would drive growth — comes after the PM refused to say whether he backs it. (BBC)
- **Burnham invites Swinney to work together on "deeper Scottish devolution"** — the Greater Manchester mayor's intervention drew 2,200+ comments on the BBC site. (BBC)
- **Banks expect to be hit with higher taxes in the Budget.** (BBC)
- **Brexit reversal back on the agenda:** Guardian analysis says a poll suggesting half of Britons would rejoin the EU has put the B-word back in play; the iWeekend reports the EU is working on a plan letting Britons under 30 take paid jobs in Europe, potentially dropping demands on tuition fees and youth work visas to land an updated Brexit deal quickly. (Guardian)
- **Angela Rayner (Mirror front-page interview):** says the "hell" of her son Charlie's premature birth in 2008 gives her strength for Westminster — "I was never going to walk away from politics." (Mirror)

- **Reform UK vetting row:** Robert Jenrick defends Reform's vetting process on ITV News; separately, Simon Dudley was sacked as Reform's housing spokesman over Grenfell comments. (ITV)
- **Army chief's warning (Express front page):** Gen Sir Roly Walker says political leaders will call on "ordinary Britons" to prepare for war — "You will need to fight for us."
- **Russell Brand trial:** a woman told the court she was left "bewildered and confused" by an alleged assault; Brand faces three charges of rape, indecent assault and three counts of sexual assault relating to six women at Southwark Crown Court. (BBC)
- **Prince Andrew:** police feared Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor would delay a search by claiming the King owned his home, documents show. (BBC)
- **DIY SOS to be axed (Sun front page):** the BBC is set to cancel the Nick Knowles show after 27 years as a cost-saving measure.
- **Devon & Cornwall Police apologise (Guardian front page)** to nine women who say they were abused by officers, some serving in roles protecting women from male violence; the force denies a cover-up but vows improvements. (Guardian)

# ? World

- **Trump waives several Russia sanctions as his row with Zelensky intensifies** — the Independent front page speaks of "Zelensky's despair as Trump turns US towards Putin", with the White House easing shadow-fleet sanctions just as Ukraine runs low on Patriot weapons. Trump separately denies limiting Ukraine's access to Starlink; Italy's defence minister Guido Crosetto tells the BBC Trump is "completely wrong" to restrict support. Putin declares a Ukraine "security zone" non-negotiable. (BBC)
- **Oregon school attack:** a teacher fought the attacker at Silver Rail Elementary in Bend before an armed dad shot the suspect multiple times. (BBC)
- **Pope Leo pictured for the first time since surgery and cancer diagnosis**, celebrating mass from hospital days after part of his lung was removed — the Times front page calls it "Leo's miraculous speed of recovery". (BBC)
- **White House press secretary Katie Zacharia is leaving less than five days into the job.** (BBC)
- **North Korea says it tested a new torpedo system with AI capabilities.** (AP via US News)
- **Mexico:** three men jailed for 158 years each for murdering Australian and US surfers. ( BBC)
- **West Bank:** Palestinians and a US journalist injured by Israeli settlers in an olive-harvest attack. (BBC)
- **Brazil sees a record fall in Amazon deforestation** as a key election looms. (BBC)
- **Istanbul's worst floods in 80 years leave 4 dead**; Italy's air traffic cut 50% after network problems. (ABC News)

- **Tesla unveils the Roadster 2 "flying car"** — it flies vertically, hovers and even flies upside down; several papers compare it to the Back to the Future DeLorean. (Times/FT/Star)
- **India:** the "Cockroach Janta Party" founder Abhijeet Dipke was detained ahead of protests over voter-roll irregularities. (BBC)
- **Germany:** trial opens for the steakhouse heiress at the centre of a huge spy scandal. (BBC)

# ??????? Wales

- **Data centre developers may build a "climate-wrecking" gas power plant** next to the Cardiff East Park and Ride site — plans face growing opposition from politicians. (BBC Wales)
- **Nurse stole £750k from a 99-year-old woman** to fund cosmetic surgery and home improvements. (BBC Wales)
- **Aberfan 60th anniversary:** the hero dinner lady who died saving five children in the 1966 disaster is remembered. (BBC Wales)
- **"It's called a phone"** — why young people don't need to move to London to work in fashion. (BBC Wales)
- **Off Campus star collaboration "gave me chills"**, says Welsh singer Babydoll. (BBC Wales)

# ?? Weather

- **Still no named storms this season** — the BBC explains why the UK has had a quiet start to storm season. (BBC Weather)
- Today: sunny spells, high of 13°C, low of 4°C.

# ? Polling

| Pollster | Finding |
|---|---|
| Ipsos (9–13 Oct) | Conservatives seen as the main opposition for the first time this Parliament — 35% vs Reform 32%; Badenoch topples Reform's 28-point lead of May |
| Ipsos | Nearly half of Britons approve of the Jenrick sacking, but no obvious spike in Badenoch's favourability |

| Pollster | Finding |
|---|---|
| YouGov (13 Oct) | Tories 23% (+3 "Badenoch bounce"), Reform falls to third; Khan holds a 25-point London mayoral lead over Susan Hall |
| britpolls.co.uk Oct average | Labour 27%, Reform UK 23.2% |

Sources: Ipsos, Telegraph, Daily Mail, YouGov

# ? Feel-Good Roundup

- □□ **Record fall in Amazon deforestation** in Brazil ahead of the election.
- □ **Pope Leo's rapid recovery** — pictured celebrating mass days after lung surgery.
- □□ **Oregon teacher fought a school attacker** to protect pupils before an armed parent intervened.
- □□ **An emotional TV plea for cancer research led to a meeting with the PM** for campaigner Archie Goodburn.
- □□ **Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2026** winning images revealed (CNN).
- □□ **Harry and Meghan at their first joint engagement since returning to the UK**, visiting a community recording studio in Nottingham.

# ? Quick Summary

| Area | Headline |
|---|---|
| Defence | RAF near-misses with mystery drones at 17,000ft over North Sea; UK troops to Poland for Ukraine ceasefire drills |
| Politics | Healey backs Heathrow third runway; Burnham pushes "deeper devolution"; Budget bank-tax fears |
| Brexit | EU plan for under-30s to work in Europe; half of Britons open to rejoining, says poll |
| Polling | Tories overtake Reform as main opposition (Ipsos 35% vs 32%) |
| World | Trump eases Russia sanctions, Starlink row with Zelensky; Oregon school attack; Pope Leo recovering |
| Wales | Gas plant plans beside Cardiff data centre; nurse's £750k theft; Aberfan 60th anniversary |
| Weather | No named storms yet; sunny, 13°C today |
| Media | DIY SOS axed by BBC; Brand trial continues; Star's High Court gagging injunction story |

*Compiled: Saturday 17 October 2026, ~08:15 BST — sources: BBC News (UK/World/Wales/The Papers), The Guardian, Telegraph, Daily Mail, Ipsos, YouGov, ITV News, SBS/AP, ABC News.*

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