



DrumBeat: August 20, 2006

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[ANALYSIS - Costs surge threatens Big Oil's output plans](#)

The world's top oil firms are struggling to expand oil and gas output, hit by a tight market for drilling rigs and rising costs, hampering development of new supply at a time of record prices.

Production is falling at many companies even as capital spending rises. Crude oil has more than tripled since early 2002 to \$70 a barrel, driven by worries about supplies and growing world demand.

[Violent protest in Nepal over hike in fuel prices](#)

KATHMANDU: Violent protests erupted in the capital city Kathmandu and other prominent cities in Nepal on Saturday as the government hiked fuel prices, triggering a warning by the Maoist guerrillas that they would begin another revolt if prices were not rolled back.

[ANAVATAN finds solution to exorbitant fuel prices](#)

TURKEY - Motherland Party's (ANAVATAN) Konak branch leader Hikmet Tekcan recently appeared in a horse-drawn carriage to protest against high fuel prices, arguing that this was the best mode of transport after recent fuel-price hikes.

... Turks are used to paying for the most expensive gasoline in the world, but with the recent oil price rises gasoline has become a luxury a select few can enjoy.

[Gas pipeline explodes in Turkish rebel region](#). The pipeline carries gas from Iran to Turkey. Kurdish separatists are suspected.

Scotland: [Keep the flame alive, for peat's sake](#). Despite high energy prices, people aren't going out on the moors to gather free energy any more. It's more convenient to buy it. But some blame climate change, saying the moorlands are too wet now for the peat to dry properly.

[Chavez seeks Chinese support, Beijing wants oil](#)

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez will be seeking political support as well as energy deals when he visits China from Tuesday, but Beijing is keen to stick to business and avoid antagonizing Washington, analysts say.

...Their courtship has raised hackles in U.S. corridors of power, where some officials fear the emerging Asian heavyweight is trying to edge its way into Washington's sphere of influence in South America.

[A Chinese link to Middle East conflict](#)

There is no doubt that Iran is the source of Hezbollah's arsenal of missiles, which have recently been used against Israel. But the controversial issue is whether these missiles are genuine Iranian products. Military and intelligence reports have long confirmed that they are one of the fruits of the strategic alliance between Tehran and Beijing.

[Nigeria arrests over 2,000 suspected militants after kidnapping wave](#)

[Fledgling Shanghai oil exchange reports robust trade](#)

[Silicon hike hits solar energy](#). Solar panels now consume half the world's silicon production (up from one-fifth in 2000). The price of silicon has soared over 50% in the last year. Chinese solar cell producers are blamed for bidding up the price.

[New technique promises to make oilsands extraction much greener](#)

[Brazil's Road to Energy Independence](#)

In Brazil, the transition to the new fleet has changed the habits of many drivers and, in many cases, sharpened their math skills. Many drivers are keenly aware that ethanol has about 70 percent of the fuel efficiency of gasoline, which means they perform quick, pump-side calculations to determine whether the price of ethanol is at least 30 percent less than the price of gas. Some plot the distance of their trips and choose gasoline if it means the difference between filling up once or twice.



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