



DrumBeat: October 2, 2006

Posted by [threadbot](#) on October 2, 2006 - 9:16am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Update by Leanan on 10/02/06 at 9:19 AM EDT]

[Bad roads drive up motorists' costs](#)

ATLANTA — Crumbling roads and highways in the nation's metropolitan areas are imposing a "hidden tax" on motorists by increasing costs to maintain their vehicles, according to a survey released today.

...The survey comes as transportation policymakers debate how to pay for building and maintaining roads. The costs of materials such as concrete, asphalt and steel are rising sharply. Also, there is little public will to raise the federal gasoline tax, part of which is returned to states for highways, says Alan Pisarski, author of *Commuting in America*.

Many industry professionals believe the gas tax "has seen its best days and that new funding mechanisms are in order," Pisarski says. States increasingly are planning or considering toll roads as one such measure, he says.

[Miners and utilities at odds over uranium price forecasts](#)

Nowhere was it more evident of battle lines being drawn between suppliers and end users in the nuclear fuel sector than at the Platts Second Annual Nuclear Fuel Strategies conference on September 26th. Since April, various utility consultants and fuel brokers have routinely contacted StockInterview to 'talk down' the uranium price. Frequent is the mantra about how speculators and hedge funds are driving the spot uranium price higher. But spot uranium and long-term contracts march higher each month. While utilities appear complacent, there is now an underlying panic lurking beneath the surface.

...Had he not scrambled away from the conference, [Vice President of Nuclear Engineering for Florida Power and Light Rajiv] Kundalkar might have been shocked by the disclosures in the afternoon presentations which followed him. Had Kundalkar presented his thesis to a less savvy audience, he might have received something more than a polite applause when he stepped down. From the disgruntled audience, one long-time industry consultant asked Kundalkar point blank: Have you heard of peak oil?

Kurt Cobb: [The infrastructure of the future](#)

Bangladesh: [Outages and outrages](#)

ANGRY demonstrators rampaged through the streets in the city and elsewhere in the country on Wednesday and Thursday last attacking a number of power stations and clashing with the police in protest against power outages. Following huge power shortage, there have been frequent outages in the capital and elsewhere across the country causing great difficulties to the people who, obviously, have the right to lodge protest to the authorities concerned and to the government that should have a firm commitment in democracy. But all the unfortunate happenings in the last two days in and around the city by organised gangsters created rather much outrage among the citizens as vandalism reigned supreme in the name of 'agitation' programme almost in line with the opposition agenda as manifested through activities and slogans.

[Giant Industries reports fire at Virginia refinery](#)

[Midwest farms reap benefits of ethanol boom](#)

Ethanol plants are changing farming across the Midwest. The last time there was such a dramatic shift in agriculture was "when electricity came to the rural people" in the 1930s and '40s, says Dave Hughes, president of the township board and a farmer who invested in the plant.

[British Expert Warns of Negative Outcome if Russia Buys Into Shell, BP](#)

A former British government adviser has warned it is "only a matter of time" before BP or Shell faces a bid from a Russian state-owned group such as Gazprom which could threaten Western oil supplies. Professor Peter Odell called for creation of a new UN body that would police energy markets.

Odell, an energy economist, says ExxonMobil is also vulnerable to a Chinese takeover as the large UK and American stock-listed oil groups lose their influence in global markets.

[America is living beyond its means](#)

It's 2056. After a coup in Saudi Arabia, the new government announces it is cutting off supplies of its dwindling stock of oil to the United States. The White House responds by sending in the troops, but is forced to withdraw after Beijing says it will only continue shoring up the dollar if the military action is called off.

[Update by Leanan on 10/02/06 at 10:27 AM EDT]

[BP was warned](#): Interviews with employees and a 2002 letter predicting 'catastrophe' show that BP's problems should have come as no surprise to management.



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