



DrumBeat: March 2, 2008

Posted by [Leanan](#) on March 2, 2008 - 9:48am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Russian Feb oil exports slump, output stagnates](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian February oil exports slumped to the lowest level since 2004 as record-high crude export duties forced oil firms to re-route volumes to domestic refineries, while output stagnated for a second month in a row.

Energy Ministry data showed on Monday that February oil production was 9.79 million barrels per day, almost unchanged from 9.78 million bpd in January, while pipeline exports to Europe fell to 3.99 million bpd from 4.28 million in January.

[Rove: Iraq Redeployment Would Cause Oil Prices To Skyrocket To \\$200 A Barrel](#) (with video)

This morning on Fox News Sunday, former White House adviser Karl Rove claimed that redeployment from Iraq would cause oil prices to shoot to \$200 a barrel...

[Gas is key to future growth of oil groups](#)

The world's international oil groups are turning to gas for future growth after increasingly being blocked by national companies from pursuing oil opportunities.

[OPEC rethinking production cut plans](#)

NEW YORK: With high oil prices weighing on a struggling U.S. economy, the OPEC oil cartel is reconsidering plans to cut production this week, which could push prices above their current record levels. Instead, OPEC is likely to keep its output unchanged when its members meet Wednesday.

[Industry veteran Seifollah Jashnsaz to head Iranian oil firm](#)

Tehran: Iran's oil minister has named an industry veteran to head the state National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), tasking him with boosting capacity in the country, the oil

ministry's website said on Sunday.

[Mexico Abruptly Restricts Car Imports](#)

Beginning Monday, only cars built in 1998 -- none older and none newer -- can be legally imported into Mexico. Car dealers were given notice only a month ago.

...Cars newer than that were banned from imports as unwelcome competition for Mexican car dealers, and anything more than 15 years old was seen as a potential environmental and safety hazard.

But now, under pressure from Mexico's new car dealers who say "vehiculos chatarra," or jalopies, undercut their sales, the Mexican government is allowing only 10-year-old used cars to be legally imported into Mexico.

[Oil minister says prices will remain high, Saudi not running out of oil](#)

SAUDI ARABIA. Saudi Arabia's oil minister Ali Al Nuaimi believes that his country would have production capacity of 12.5 million barrels per day (bpd) at the end of 2009, from 11.0 million bpd currently, with spare capacity of 1.5-2.0 million bpd.

In an interview released Sunday, Al Nuaimi also said that Saudi Arabia, which already has the biggest proven oil reserves in the world and exports 10 million bpd, planned to add another 200 billion barrels of oil to its proven reserves figure.

He said this was "to reassure the world that we are not going to run out of oil in the next five to ten years as peak oil theorists say."

[How Many Windmills Does It Take to Power the World?](#)

Power densities are a measure of the land required for both energy sources and energy users. The current infrastructure matches the small footprint of energy sources against the large footprint of energy users. With the drive toward renewable energy sources, this relationship is about to be reversed with consequences few people understand.

[Independent truckers see end of the road](#)

Trucker Robert Griffith is on the road three weeks out of four, pulling oversize loads like crane booms, railroad ties and air conditioning ducts. One of his biggest worries: How he'll find the money to buy his daughter a prom dress.

As the cost of diesel doubled over the last four years, his take-home pay has plummeted, from \$50,000 to \$11,000 last year. He's literally burning money; he spent

\$64,000 on diesel in the last eight months. Since he canceled his satellite radio, he's on citizens band radio constantly (handle: Instigator) talking about what needs to change so truckers like him can survive.

[Ecuador says SOTE pipeline repairs ahead of schedule](#)

QUITO (Reuters) - Ecuador's repairs on its damaged SOTE pipeline are ahead of schedule and pumping should start late Sunday, Oil Minister Galo Chiriboga told Reuters on Sunday.

He said Petroecuador output will not be disrupted by the early repairs.

[Calderon's idea of seeking foreign help to find oil irks rivals](#)

MEXICO CITY -- The political showdown over the future of Pemex, the Mexican government's crucial oil monopoly, appears to loom at last.

At stake, people on both sides of the clash say, is the viability of Mexico's petroleum industry, which ranks as the third-largest source of imported U.S. oil and supplies nearly 40 percent of the Mexican government's budget.

[Pipe dreamers](#)

It's time the conspiracy theorists accepted that oil had nothing to do with the US invasion of Afghanistan.

[The New Conquistadores](#)

500 years down history's highway, the Conquistadores have returned to the New World. From Tijuana to Tierra del Fuego, the "Reconquista" is in full swing:

*Item - Repsol, the Spanish energy consortium, signs fat contracts with Argentina, battles Evo Morales for the right to exploit Bolivia's immense natural gas deposits, and is in the mix to pick up a chunk of the about-to-be privatized Mexican giant, PEMEX.

[Pakistan: Inflation tsunami brewing](#)

LAHORE - Following a surge in the oil prices, a tsunami of inflation is all set to immediately hit all the economic sectors in the country particularly the industrial and agricultural, increasing the cost of production and multiplying the miseries of the

businessmen and growers.

The industrialists while strongly criticising the government for bulk increase in the oil prices have termed it a very bad news for the country's economy. However, agriculture experts say that the oil prices surge has put an additional burden of worth over Rs 8 billion on the farmers.

[Pakistan: Businessmen call rise in fuel, power rates anti-industry](#)

LAHORE: Rejecting raise in petroleum products, the local business community has urged the government to immediately withdraw it. "Increase in POL prices is unjustified and unwanted and if not withdrawn, will bring unprecedented price hike besides putting the salaried class in miserable position and affecting the industry, adversely," observed representatives of business associations and trade bodies.

[Local survey of 15 staples finds 16% rise since '03](#)

IF IT FEELS like you are spending more for groceries but bringing home less, you are.

Food prices have been on the increase, numerous government studies have found, but a Blade visit to Toledo-area grocery chains last week to check prices on milk, bread, eggs, coffee, and 11 other food staples revealed a 16 percent increase from a similar survey five years ago.

[BHP go-ahead for \\$1bn South African coal project](#)

THERE was little song and dance at the weekend about BHP Billiton's go-ahead for a \$US975 million (\$A1.04 billion) investment in one of its South African coal projects, the so-called Douglas-Middelburg optimisation (DMO) project.

That was not surprising given that the capital cost estimate is up hugely from the original estimate of \$US548 million on a 100% basis (BHP 84% and operator and Xstrata 16%).

Xstrata has decided not to participate in the DMO, leaving the bill for the integration and upgrade of the Douglas and Middelburg collieries to BHP.

[Keeping coal in the spotlight](#)

Coal people think their industry is misunderstood.

So they set out last fall to change the hearts and minds of the American public.

They hired R&R Partners, a public relations company with an office in Salt Lake City that was behind the popular "What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas" slogan, to develop a \$35 million campaign. Its aim is to influence people to think of coal as a cost-efficient source of electricity rather than one of the culprits behind global warming - and to keep coal central to discussions about the country's energy future.

[Sandinista ideals fail to resurrect a crippled nation](#)

Much of his hopes seem pinned on Venezuelan aid and oil. Shortly after he took power, Nicaragua joined Venezuela and Cuba in the left-leaning Alba bloc of countries designed to offset US influence. One plan would see a \$4 billion oil refinery built in Nicaragua with cash from the South American country.

One incident last August saw Ortega at loggerheads with US-owned Esso, which owns Nicaragua's only existing refinery. Reeling from an energy crisis blackouts plagued the nation last year and an inability to get his hands on oil promised by Chavez, Ortega briefly took control of the refinery site under the guise that Esso owed almost \$3m in back taxes in order to offload some of the Venezuelan oil.

[Oil giant Saudi to become solar power centre - oil minister](#)

PARIS (Thomson Financial) - Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, plans to become an expert in another, cleaner, field of energy by investing in solar power, the country's oil minister said in an interview released today.

[Greener Green Energy: Today's solar cells give more than they take](#)

The new tally shows that net emissions from solar power have decreased significantly in recent years. "There have been studies before, but they've become outdated because technology has been changing," says Fthenakis, the study's lead scientist.

[Solar without the Panels](#)

Utilities are using the sun's heat to boil water for steam turbines.

[South Africa: Eskom plans wind energy farm](#)

The Western Cape has the highest wind speeds in the country, and Eskom plans to harness the full potential of this weather pattern as a long-term resolution to the persisting energy crisis.

The state-owned energy utility has put out a tender for the development of a commercial 100MW wind energy farm on the West Coast, north of the Olifants River mouth, near Vredendal. At this stage Eskom is applying for a licence and conducting environmental impact assessments.

[Miracle solution or imminent disaster?](#)

With worldwide attention on global warming and extremely high fossil fuel prices, interest in alternative energy is booming. The European Union has targeted 5.75 per cent of the market share for fossil fuel mixed with biofuel by 2010. While waiting for more sophisticated techniques to be developed, biofuel is now produced on vast areas of land, both in Western countries and increasingly in developing countries. Indonesia is one of the relatively new biofuel-producing countries. The national government aims to increase the share of biofuel in domestic fuel consumption and to increase production for export. Oil palm, sugarcane, cassava and Jatropha (known in Indonesian as jarak pagar) are the four priority crops in Indonesia for biofuel production.

[Clinton's Efforts on Ethanol Overlap Her Husband's Interests](#)

Several months earlier, Mrs. Clinton had sponsored legislation to provide billions in new federal incentives for ethanol, and, especially in her home state of New York, she has worked to foster a business climate that favors the sort of ethanol investments pursued by her husband's friends and her political supporters.

One potential beneficiary is the Yucaipa Companies, a private equity firm where Mr. Clinton has been a senior adviser and whose founder, Mr. Burkle, has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for Mrs. Clinton's campaigns. Yucaipa has invested millions in Cilion Inc. — a start-up venture also backed by Mr. Branson, the British entrepreneur, and Mr. Khosla, a Silicon Valley venture capitalist — that is building seven ethanol plants around the country. Two are in upstate New York.

[Australia: Big carbon emitters face drop in earnings](#)

EARNINGS of high carbon-emitting businesses could drop by up to 10% if they do not cut their greenhouse gases before an emissions trading scheme starts, with moderately sized companies such as OneSteel and PaperlinX in the gun.

An analysis of large energy, utilities and materials companies on the S&P ASX 200 by research firm Reputex shows that moderate-to-large companies are most at risk, with the materials sector particularly exposed.

[Family is founded on cartography](#)

Davis tries to raise awareness about the energy crisis, which is tied to global warming. He's concerned about whether his family can stay in Hawaii, pointing out, "Oil resources are going to begin to diminish very soon and Hawaii is totally dependent on oil, not only electricity but the entire economy."

[My Forbidden Fruits \(and Vegetables\)](#)

Consumers who would like to be able to buy local fruits and vegetables not just at farmers' markets, but also in the produce aisle of their supermarket, will be dismayed to learn that the federal government works deliberately and forcefully to prevent the local food movement from expanding. And the barriers that the United States Department of Agriculture has put in place will be extended when the farm bill that House and Senate negotiators are working on now goes into effect.

[Yemen Sleepwalks into Water Nightmare](#)

Yemen relies on groundwater, which nature cannot recharge fast enough to keep pace with a population of 22.4 million expanding by more than 3 percent a year.

More water is being consumed than resupplied to 19 of the impoverished country's 21 aquifers, Iryani said.

[New York committed to cutting carbon emissions - with help from utilities](#)

THE STATE Public Service Commission has offered a "straw proposal" that it hopes will be the first step toward achieving Gov. Eliot Spitzer's goal to cut the state's greenhouse gas emissions 15 percent by 2015.

Reducing New York's carbon dioxide emissions could have a major global impact because the state contributes about 0.6 percent of the world's greenhouse gases, according to the Public Service Commission. The commission also hopes the state can implement a policy that will serve as an example for the rest of the country.

[Sacramento-based Sunoptics enjoys skylight success with Wal-Mart](#)

Starting in the mid-1990s, the world's largest retailer began to "daylight" its new stores across the country, installing skylights – mostly those made by Blomberg's firm, Sunoptics Prismatic Skylights Inc. – and turning off electric lights during the day. Daylighting cuts each store's electric bill by as much as 15 percent, according to Wal-Mart officials, and has helped the company build a reputation as an environmental leader.

[The Red Queen](#) (audio)

First up Dmitry Orlov and Albert K. Bates explore visions of a post-collapse America, and later KMO talks food, consciousness, and the forces of darkness with Neil Kramer of the Cleaver.

[Democrat's Tax On Oil Companies Won't Ease Price At Pump](#)

While it might produce a sense of satisfaction to punish oil companies for their profits, this tax bill will do little more than provoke an increase in the price of gasoline. The Democrats' tax hike will discourage investment in natural gas and oil exploration, thereby creating a shortage of energy. This is an easy scenario to predict because we've seen it before. A windfall profit tax was imposed during the Carter Administration as a way of penalizing oil companies for reaping large profits. The tax was so damaging it was repealed in 1988, during the Reagan Administration. Due to the windfall profit tax, domestic oil production fell and oil imports rose.

[The Transition Handbook](#)

The publication of the much anticipated Transition Handbook marks the latest landmark in what has become the fastest growing environmental movement since CND in the 1960s: the phenomenon that is sweeping the UK, the Transition Towns movement.

[The man who turns wheat into gold](#)

Why are food prices so hot at the moment? Demand for the three Fs: food, feed and fuels. Most of the demand for food and animal ent on oil. The US is producing about five billion gallons of bioethanol a year, has 120 bio-fuel production plants and is building 68 more. But there is room for massive growth.

As with tech, though, aren't we seeing a bubble? Not at all. We are at the start of a super-cycle that will see commodity prices trend upwards for the next 15 years or longer.

Commodity cycles tend to last an average of 20 years. We are only in year six with oil, year four with metals and year two for agriculture.

[When it doesn't rain, economic troubles flow in a chain reaction](#)

In much of Virginia, a hot, dry spring and summer dried up pastures where cattle and horses normally graze during the growing season. Owners had to start feeding hay

months earlier than normal.

But the drought also kept hayfields from growing, and farmers who usually get up to four cuttings off a field got, in many cases, only one, or none at all.

No pasture, a shortage of hay. The price, by January, had risen from \$3.50 a bale to nearly \$12. Cattlemen sold their stock before it reached full market weight; horses were given away.

[Districts face soaring cost of building; alternative materials, construction methods considered for new schools](#)

Tom Oehler, managing principal at SHW Architects, said that since 2003 construction costs have gone up between 7 percent and 12 percent annually.

He said higher fuel prices play a role in the increase, but there are other factors.

“Hurricanes Rita and Katrina created a big demand on materials and created a shortage on materials nationally,” Oehler said. “At the same time China, with all their construction for the Olympics, has been dominating the scrap steel market. Those types of raw goods usually seen in good supply in the United States are becoming scarce.”

[Skeptics on Human Climate Impact Seize on Cold Spell](#)

The world has seen some extraordinary winter conditions in both hemispheres over the past year: snow in Johannesburg last June and in Baghdad in January, Arctic sea ice returning with a vengeance after a record retreat last summer, paralyzing blizzards in China, and a sharp drop in the globe’s average temperature.

It is no wonder that some scientists, opinion writers, political operatives and other people who challenge warnings about dangerous human-caused global warming have jumped on this as a teachable moment.

[Danish Guest Asks Bush to Back Climate Treaty](#)

It remained unclear whether Mr. Bush was offering anything beyond a rhetorical blessing. The administration has long been at odds with many European countries that would like to forge a new treaty with mandated limits on greenhouse gas-causing emissions.

[Global Warming Paradox?](#)

If only the masses could understand the science of global warming, they'd be alarmed, right? Wrong, according to the surprising results of a survey of Americans published in the journal Risk Analysis by researchers at Texas A&M University.

['Enjoy life while you can'](#)

Climate science maverick James Lovelock believes catastrophe is inevitable, carbon offsetting is a joke and ethical living a scam. So what would he do?

[Oilfield faces delay](#)

RIYADH: Production at Saudi Arabia's 500,000 bpd Khursaniyah oilfield may be delayed beyond the first half of this year.

"The oilfield may start pumping limited quantities in May but it will not be able to meet the announced production capacity ... since the gas plant has not been completed yet," an industry source said.

"The project's completion ... might be delayed to beyond the first half of this year," the source added.

[Oil prices to stay above 60-70 dollars: Saudi Arabia](#)

PARIS (AFP) - Saudi Arabia's oil minister believes oil prices are set to stay above a minimum price of 60-70 dollars per barrel, signalling a new era for world energy markets, he said in an interview released Sunday.

Ali al-Nuaimi, one of the most influential people in the business as oil minister for the world's biggest crude producer, said "a line has been drawn below which prices will not fall."

[Energy policy a top priority for U.S.](#)

Energy has been a critical political and economic issue throughout American history. The steamboat, coal-powered railroads, steel production, electrification, Standard Oil Trust, the Model T and the production line, the Teapot Dome scandal, commercial nuclear power, the Arab oil embargo - each of these and more have defined entire eras.

[Down with King Corn](#)

The path the GMO companies are on is leading to higher energy and food prices. The

corporate petrochemical-dependent plan to own the means of producing food and energy won't save the planet in a post peak oil world... their efforts will only make things worse. What we need is to grow our own food here on Kaua'i. Every experimental corn plot is a field that could otherwise be used to produce local organic vegetables, eggs, dairy or meat to feed the people of Hawai'i.

[Contributing to our local food supply](#)

How secure do you feel about the global food supply right now? The price of food is going up and there are unprecedented food surplus shortages due to impacts of climate change, peak oil, soil degradation, bee colony collapse, population explosion and fresh water shortages on global agriculture. How does the fact that, overall, BC imports 50 percent of the food it consumes strike you? (Vancouver Island imports 95 percent.)

[Clothing \(partially\) made in Vermont](#)

I asked around to find stories about local clothing and fiber production in Vermont or the region. It seemed like an economic niche closely related to local food. It is farmers, after all, who produce natural fibers like wool, flax, hemp and cotton. As with foods, some fibers are easily produced here, and others not so easily, for reasons related to both the climate and the law. Wool and flax grow well in our climate, like strawberries or parsnips or potatoes; heat-loving cotton is more like oranges or bananas. Hemp grows easily here, but farmers are no longer allowed to grow it. (Hemp is in a thornier regulatory thicket than even raw milk or chickens slaughtered on the farm. At least farmers are allowed to produce, possess and sell small amounts of raw milk or their own chicken meat. A Vermont farmer who produced the hemp that goes into clothing sold a few blocks from the Statehouse could be thrown in jail for years.)

[10 Plus: Megan Quinn Bachman](#)

We saw that people were scared to death by so many of the movies and the articles predicting doom and gloom, and they were so much in a state of despair and denial that they weren't doing anything. They just continued their overconsumptive lifestyle because they were immobilized by fear. So, we wanted to provide people with some possibilities for action, some practical options. We were so inspired by the innovation and perseverance of the Cuban people when the Soviet Union collapsed and they lost half their oil overnight. We thought we could motivate Americans to do a little bit more and start taking some small steps to address peak oil and climate change before we have a crisis like Cuba.

[The world has to get used to high oil prices](#)

The international hydrocarbons expert, Nicolas Sarkis said the world has to get used to high oil prices in the future, as the depletion of oil and the drop of reserves in several

countries are a fact not fiction. He further said some OPEC member countries, like Indonesia transformed into non-exporter countries, while the US reserves have dropped. He pointed out that Western countries tend imposing guilt complex on OPEC country members as they exercise an intellectual terror against OPEC while making it always responsible for oil soaring prices.

[Oil to drop as OPEC turns up the taps](#)

The IMF appears still behind the curve in its forecasts for the U.S. economy in 2008. End of January revisions to 2.2% growth for 2008, down from 2.7%, appear overly optimistic. The IMF also noted that the "balance of risks to the global growth outlook is still tilted to the downside." In other words, more downward revisions are likely. Therefore cuts to oil demand in '08 loom large over US\$100 per barrel oil prices.

Completing the story, additions to OPEC spare capacity in 2008 means that falling demand will be well covered by rising supply. OPEC appears to be bringing on a significant amount of spare capacity with gross additions of 3.1 mbd translating to over 800,000 bpd in net capacity additions by the end of the year. This figure represents the highest level for OPEC spare capacity in years (excluding the first half of 2007 when oil prices had briefly plummeted to the US\$55) range.

[Pipeline deal strengthens Russian grip on Europe's gas supplies](#)

Russia notched up major success in its quest to establish a strategic stranglehold on gas supplies to western Europe last week.

[Exxon Mobil Needs a Hug](#)

Mr. Obama is clearly an intelligent man. So it may not be too early to start a small process of education about Exxon Mobil and other oil companies and why attacking them is not smart. First, Exxon Mobil, like all the other gigantic integrated energy companies in this country, is owned not by a cabal of reactionary businessmen holding clandestine meetings in a lodge in the Texas scrublands (as Oliver Stone so brilliantly illustrated in "Nixon").

Exxon Mobil, in fact, is owned mostly by ordinary Americans. Mutual funds, index funds and pension funds (including union pension funds) own about 52 percent of Exxon Mobil's shares. Individual shareholders, about two million or so, own almost all the rest. The pooh-bahs who run Exxon own less than 1 percent of the company.

[Insecurity Rocks Increasingly Valuable Saharan Desert](#)

The Sahara has become a much more attractive place to invest, as countries struggle to

meet their energy needs. The price of uranium, used to produce nuclear energy and mined in northern Niger, has multiplied six times within the past decade. Planning has begun for a more than \$10 billion Trans-Saharan natural gas pipeline, expected to pump Nigerian gas to energy-hungry neighbors by the year 2015.

As the desert's value increases, so has its crime level.

[Flight of biofuel fancy?](#)

Virgin concedes that, while babassu and coconut oil could potentially fuel a small fleet of aircraft, it is not a realistic fuel source for aircraft globally.

As Paul Charles, director of corporate communications at Virgin Atlantic says, this is not a "long-term solution", rather "the first stage on the journey through to biofuels for aviation."

[Experts to consider coal-burning stoves for Mongolia](#)

Korean energy and environmental protection experts plan to conduct a fact-finding mission to determine the feasibility of providing Mongolia with coal-fired stoves, a publicly run non-profit organization said Sunday (Mar. 2).

The Korea Mine Reclamation Corp. (MIRECO) said the mission will determine if providing 40,000 coal stoves would help reduce air pollution in the land-locked country.

[The Key to Safe and Effective Carbon Sequestration](#)

To the dismay of environmentalists, coal is still king in the U.S. electricity market. Nearly 50 percent of the electric power in this country comes from burning coal to create steam that drives electricity-generating turbines. Coal-burning power plants in the United States emit about 2.1 billion tons of carbon dioxide each year—nearly 17 percent of worldwide coal emissions—and finding technologies that reduce those emissions in the United States and China, which burns even more coal than we do, is crucial to combating global warming. One oft-cited but little-used solution is to catch carbon dioxide as it is released from smokestacks and pump it underground into rocks capped by impermeable shale, a process called carbon capture and storage. The worry is that the injected material could leak and bubble to the surface, negating the whole point of the process.

[Faith Birol - We can't cling to crude: we should leave oil before it leaves us](#)

We are on the brink of a new energy order. Over the next few decades, our reserves of

oil will start to run out and it is imperative that governments in both producing and consuming nations prepare now for that time. We should not cling to crude down to the last drop – we should leave oil before it leaves us. That means new approaches must be found soon.

Even now, we are seeing a shift in the balance of power away from publicly listed international oil companies. In areas such as the North Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, production is in decline. Mergers and acquisitions will allow "big oil" to replenish reserves for a while, and new technologies will let them stretch the lives of existing fields and dip into marginal and hard-to-reach pools. But this will not change the underlying problem. Oil production by public companies is reaching its peak. They will have to find new ways to conduct business.

[Rising prices threaten millions with starvation, despite bumper crops](#)

There has never been anything remotely like the food crisis that is now increasingly gripping the world, threatening millions with starvation. For it is happening at a time of bumper crops.

All the familiar signs of impending disaster are here, and in spades. Across the developing world already hungry people are now having to eat even less. Food stocks have plunged to record lows. Food prices have scaled new heights. Food riots are spreading around the globe. Yet the world is still harvesting record amounts of grain.

[£42 a day: cost of UK family bills](#)

The price of keeping a car has also gone up, with petrol costing 18p more a litre than this time last year, according to the AA, and motor insurance up by an average 5 per cent.

Evidence is emerging that some households are struggling. 'Our debt inquiry figures suggest that growing numbers of people are not only finding themselves over-committed on credit cards, loans and overdrafts, but are also struggling to meet their day-to-day living expenses,' said Moira Haynes of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

[Gas and electricity bosses told 'give back profits'](#)

The Sunday Telegraph has learnt the chief executives of the utility giants have been summoned to Downing Street and given a dressing-down over the soaring sums being made from millions of customers.

They are being told that, unless they agree to subsidise a new nationwide "fuel poverty" scheme aimed at the 4.5 million poorest households, a levy will be put on their profits. It is understood that the fuel poverty programme is to be unveiled by Alistair Darling, the Chancellor, as part of the Budget on March 12.

[All eyes on record oil prices as OPEC prepares to meet](#)

LONDON (AFP) - OPEC, whose member countries together pump 40 percent of the world's oil, was expected to maintain its official output ceiling on Wednesday as crude prices trade at record highs above 100 dollars.

OPEC President Chakib Khelil said the 13-member Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries would decide to either cut or hold its current daily output level of 29.67 million oil barrels when it meets in Vienna.

[Thirsting for Energy in India's Boomtowns and Beyond](#)

A beacon of India's red-hot economy, this new suburb on the edge of the capital, New Delhi, is also a symbol of India's fast-growing hunger for energy. By the government's own estimates, energy consumption in this country of 1.1 billion is expected to quadruple over the next 25 years, inevitably expanding India's emissions of greenhouse gases.

At the moment, it is a mixed blessing that Gurgaon remains an island of air-conditioned malls and roaring, round-the-clock office towers, and that behind this brightly lighted boomtown lies a vast nation of darkness and cow-dung-fueled stoves.

[Reduce computer power waste](#)

While computers alone are not being blamed for global warming, the phenomenal amounts of electricity used by some big computer centres are prompting a re-think about reducing waste.

[Texas companies quicker to switch to green energy than residents](#)

Thousands of Texans are consciously agreeing, even searching for a way to pay more for electricity. They want wind power.

More consumers are buying wind power than ever before. But the sweet spot of the market – the biggest, fastest-growing customer segment for wind – is corporations. Companies will pay a little extra for electricity to earn green bragging rights.

[Pakistan: Millers raise flour price](#)

LAHORE: The Pakistan Flour Mills Association, Punjab branch, on Saturday announced a Rs5 increase in the price of a 20kg flour bag in view of hike in production cost due to upward revision of POL rates and electricity tariff.

[India: No place for pedestrians?](#)

The BBMP, in its enthusiasm to provide motorists with hassle-free rides, has let pedestrian safety fall by the wayside. Flyovers, underpasses and one-ways have squeezed pedestrians out of the roads.

Major infrastructure projects either eat up footpaths or shrink them so much that they are practically useless.

[Michigan: DTE pledges millions to keep power flowing](#)

"I've lost \$2,600 on repairs to appliances caused by outages and got a \$20 credit from DTE. That's an insult," said Linda Mexicotte, who lives in Burton Hollow. "Things had better get better or I'm going to sue."

[UK: Lower tax call for oil companies](#)

Liberal Democrats have called for lower taxes on North Sea oil firms, accusing the Westminster Government of discouraging investment in the sector.

[Malaysian scientist turns rice husk into high-tech insulator that could cut electric bills](#)

SKUDAI, Malaysia (AP) - A Malaysian scientist says she has discovered a cheap way to turn discarded rice husks into a high-tech material that could reduce electricity bills, protect buildings from bomb blasts and make airplanes and tennis rackets lighter.

[Climate crisis getting short shrift in US president race: Gore](#)

MONTEREY, California (AFP) - Former US vice president and renowned climate change fighter Al Gore said Saturday that the global warming crisis is getting short shrift in this year's presidential race.



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