



DrumBeat: May 18, 2008

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[In Siberia, Shopping Malls Are Sprouting All Over](#)

Siberia, where Russians waited in long lines to buy food with ration cards not long ago, is the improbable epicenter of a huge mall boom. As retail businesses shrink in the United States, provincial Russian towns like this one have become targets of retailers and shopping center developers from around the world. Malls in this area are even poaching managers from as far away as California.

Across the great expanse of Russia — on plots cleared of birch groves and decrepit factories, on the territory of old airports and collective farms — big-box stores are rising at a rate of several a month. Russia is projected to open twice as much mall space as any other European country this year, and Europe will open more shopping centers this year than ever.

[Energy seeks a boom in youth](#)

Finding young scientific and engineering talent also is a growing concern for the world's energy companies as they face what Chevron Corp. calls the "big crew change."

During the next decade, more than half of the energy industry's employees are expected to retire, said Peter Robinson, vice chairman of Chevron, who was in Houston this spring to give a speech at Microsoft's Global Energy Forum.

[World's Poor Pay Price as Crop Research Is Cut](#)

The budgets of institutions that delivered the world from famine in the 1970s, including the rice institute, have stagnated or fallen, even as the problems they were trying to solve became harder.

[California farm product exporters face shipping squeeze](#)

As the weak dollar makes the fruits of California farms ever more attractive to overseas

buyers, big exporters like Sacramento's Blue Diamond Growers are finding it tougher to get their products to far-off customers.

The high price of oil and shifts in the global balance of trade have made space on container ships hard to come by. Cargo rates are up sharply. Delays of several months have become routine.

[Hezbollah's Actions Ignite Sectarian Fuse in Lebanon](#)

After almost a week of street battles that left scores dead and threatened to push the country into open war, long-simmering Sunni-Shiite tensions here have sharply worsened, in an ominous echo of the civil conflict in Iraq.

[Juneau's utility faces consequences of past actions](#)

AEL&P was operating close to the edge financially even before a series of avalanches took down a series of transmission lines feeding power to Juneau.

With the loss of the Snettisham hydroelectric project's 78,299 kilowatts of power, the company - and the city - were left to rely on the few thousand kilowatts it could squeeze out of three old, small power dams and several big diesel generators. And suddenly, diesel had become frighteningly expensive.

[Govt in no mood to revise fuel price: Finance Minister](#)

KATHMANDU - At a time when the country is reeling under the shortage of petroleum products, Finance Minister Dr Ram Sharan Mahat Sunday announced that the government was not in a position to revise the fuel price.

Minister Mahat also informed that the government cannot extend more loans to the cash-strapped Nepal Oil Corporation for the time being.

[Chávez Seizes Greater Economic Power](#)

CARACAS, Venezuela — Faced with shortages of foods, building materials and other staples, President Hugo Chávez is intensifying state control of the Venezuelan economy through a new wave of takeovers of private companies and the creation of government-controlled ventures with allies like Cuba and Iran.

[To teens in the first decade of the 21st century](#)

A university degree is not the best choice for a significant number of young people. They and society at large would be better served in other pursuits.

Peter Drucker (1909-2005), was one of the world's wisest men on topics related to business, economics, and the future. A university professor himself, Drucker in 1997 predicted the demise of the residential college campus within 30 years (by the year 2027).

[Los Angeles Eyes Sewage as a Source of Water](#)

LOS ANGELES — Faced with a persistent drought and the threat of tighter water supplies, Los Angeles plans to begin using heavily cleansed sewage to increase drinking water supplies, joining a growing number of cities considering similar measures.

[Germany Debates Subsidies for Solar Industry](#)

Now, though, with so many solar panels on so many rooftops, critics say Germany has too much of a good thing — even in a time of record oil prices. Conservative lawmakers, in particular, want to pare back generous government incentives that support solar development. They say solar generation is growing so fast that it threatens to overburden consumers with high electricity bills.

[The Simple Way To PoP The Oil Bubble Speculation](#)

What is the simple answer to end the craziness?

The USA government should pass a law that declares every oil contract bought on the mercantile exchanges must be delivered to the buyer and held in storage no longer than 6 months. It cannot be traded back onto the exchanges and its end use must be in an oil related business. Likewise, all sell contracts have to originate straight from companies that extract oil from the ground and they cannot trade contracts that have been purchased on the exchanges.

[Legendary oilman says it's time to go green](#)

"Three hundred dollar a barrel oil is where I think we are going," Thomas Homer-Dixon said Thursday night in Petrolia, Ont. -- the birthplace of the North American oil industry 150 years ago, in 1858.

[This pundit is immersed in oil data](#)

Tom Kloza, chief analyst for the Oil Price Information Service, is the go-to guy for those who want to know why gasoline prices are soaring and where they're heading.

[Can Stephen Harper learn anything from Vladimir Putin?](#)

Whereas Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper is eager to allow the private sector to control this country's energy future, Putin went in the exact opposite direction.

Reading Klare's work, it's clear that Putin never would have allowed the Chinese and the Americans to engage in a bidding war for Russia's bountiful oil and gas reserves.

Harper, on the other hand, doesn't seem to have the same concerns.

[Growing pains for farmers](#)

It's a crazy time for farmers, torn among environmental interests, the demand for cheap food and a chance to earn more.

[Concerns about pipeline were ignored, inspectors say](#)

Three former inspectors on the western portion of the Colorado-to-Ohio Rockies Express natural gas pipeline said a contractor on the project in Kansas used stealth, threats and bribery to make safety shortcuts while they hustled to get the pipe in the ground on deadline.

[Pedal power beats \\$4 a gallon](#)

"With the train, I have to walk 20 minutes to get to the train, it's 30 minutes on the train, and then I have to wait for the shuttle here," he said. "It ends up being about an hour. The bike takes an hour-and-a-quarter, but then I don't have to go to the gym."

Besides the health benefits, bicycling advocates say the potential savings for regular riders may be driving more people to consider a two-wheeled commute.

[Coal, new gas to help avert crisis](#)

What should Bangladesh do when oil price hits a \$200 per barrel mark?

[Russian Energy and U.S. Implications](#)

Lost in a lot of the oil analysis these days is Russia's role. Over the past 5 years or so, Russia has provided roughly 80% of non-OPEC oil production growth. This increase in Russia's oil production was just what the doctor ordered to match concurrent increased demand from China, India, the Middle East, and Russia itself.

That said, Russia's oil production peaked a few months ago and is now contracting - under the 10 million BPD average production rate of 2007. One can find multiple explanations for the decrease in Russian oil production: aging infrastructure, less Western oil company participation, high tax rates, or perhaps just Russian government officials asking themselves. Or perhaps depletion rates are catching up with new production.

[Australia: Fears over state's food security](#)

VICTORIA'S ability to feed itself is threatened by new farming practices and cheap imported fruit and vegetables, warns a major food report commissioned by the State Government.

Competition for water and increased fuel costs are driving farmers away from essential food production to high-value export-oriented crops such as wine, almonds and dairy.

The Secure and Sustainable Food Systems for Victoria report said food supply problems were so severe that consumers' access to affordable, healthy diets was jeopardised.

[No need for emergency OPEC meeting: Attiyah](#)

DUBAI • Oil markets are balanced and there is no need for an emergency OPEC meeting before September despite record oil prices, Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry H E Abdullah bin Hamad Al Attiyah said yesterday.

[Iran sees daily gasoline imports of 20m liters](#)

TEHRAN: Iran expects to import about 20 million liters of gasoline per day during the 2008-9 year, less than half the amount it would have imported had it not launched rationing last June, an energy official said yesterday. But the figure was still 5 million liters higher than an import estimate given by another oil official in February, before Iran allowed the sale of extra, higher-priced gasoline outside the rationing system launched in June last year.

[Oman to invest \\$10bn in oil production](#)

Oman is investing \$10bn until 2011 in a programme to boost oil production. By using enhanced oil recovery – using gas to pump out additional crude – the country believes it

can hit 900,000 barrels a day.

[A big cause of the high price of gasoline](#)

Here is a test question for you: The next time you find yourself irritated by the price of gasoline, you need to remind yourself of how much -- or little -- of that nearly \$4 per gallon charge is the oil company's profit. How much is that profit, anyway?

[Record oil may hold stocks hostage](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Stocks will face major obstacles to extending their gains next week if the price of oil continues to break records, as fears about inflation and the discretionary spending power of the embattled American consumer are forced into the spotlight.

[When cars compete with people for food](#)

Crude oil prices hit \$120 a barrel this month, translating into gas pump prices above \$4 a gallon in parts of the United States. As a result, the rallying cry of energy self-sufficiency is gaining strength, reinforcing the U.S. policy of promoting renewable fuels, particularly corn-based ethanol, to reduce dependence on imported oil.

But a different rallying cry - food self-sufficiency - is becoming louder in many developing countries where rice, wheat and other staples are in such short supply that food riots have erupted. China, India, Argentina and several other countries have raised export restrictions on key crops to ensure food supplies for their consumers. That move has further increased world prices.

[Iran confirms Khatibi as new OPEC governor](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran has officially announced the replacement of its long-time governor to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Oil Ministry's website Shana said on Sunday.

[Four bucks a gallon is no gas](#)

"If you extrapolate what happened with gas prices the last two years over the next 10 to 15 years, something has got to happen." Mast said. "We've laid our country out - where we live and where we work - based on the automobile and cheap gas."

Mast said consumers better get used to the term "peak oil" - the moment when oil production reaches its highest point and begins to decline because all petroleum sources

have been tapped.

[An emerging energy apartheid?](#)

Our contention in 2000 is the same as today: It is poorer communities and families that can least afford to waste energy. Our agencies, churches, public schools and homes are the first to feel the effects of quadrupling energy prices, causing us to make the hard choices between heat, food, gasoline to power older cars to get back and forth to lower-paying jobs, and the important civic and educational uplift programs we need to survive in an increasing hostile economy.

[Was Malthus just off a few decades?](#)

There are some 75 million more people to feed each year! Consumption of meat and other high-quality foods — mainly in China and India — has boosted demand for grain for animal feed. Poor harvests due to bad weather in this country and elsewhere have contributed. High energy prices are adding to the pressures as some arable land is converted from growing food crops to biofuel crops and making it more expensive to ship the food that is produced.

[Plans for new coal plants under fire](#)

Protesters are to launch one of the hardest-hitting environmental campaigns for more than a decade over plans to build a new generation of coal-fired power stations in the UK.

Senior scientists, City investors, international leaders and MPs from all parties have joined environmental groups in condemning plans to approve coal plants before there are guarantees that they will be fitted with equipment to stop the release of harmful greenhouse gases.

[Market developing in carbon credits](#)

The European Climate Exchange is based in London.

The Chicago Climate Exchange is based in Chicago.

The Global Emissions Exchange wants to open a branch in your living room.

[Zones of death are spreading in oceans due to global warming](#)

Marine dead zones, where fish and other sea life can suffocate from lack of oxygen, are spreading across the world's tropical oceans, a study has warned.

Researchers found that the warming of sea water through climate change is reducing its ability to carry dissolved oxygen, potentially turning swathes of the world's oceans into marine graveyards.



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