



DrumBeat: January 23, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on January 23, 2009 - 9:48am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[\\$20 billion clean energy bill clears hurdle](#)

WASHINGTON - The U.S. House Ways and Means Committee on Thursday approved \$20 billion in tax credits and related financial incentives for renewable energy and energy efficiency — elements that are part of the Obama administration's plan to revive the economy.

The legislation's energy tax breaks would benefit the wind and solar energy industries, encourage energy-efficiency improvements to existing homes and help service stations recoup their costs for installing alternative energy pumps.

[Oil up 6 percent as OPEC output drops](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Oil prices rose 6 percent on Friday as mounting evidence that OPEC is complying with the bulk of its record output cuts countered gloomy economic data that further dimmed the outlook for global energy demand.

U.S. crude rose \$2.58 to \$46.25 a barrel by 2:04 p.m. EST (1904 GMT). London Brent traded \$2.35 higher at \$47.74 a barrel.

The gains came after oil consultant Petrologistics estimated OPEC production would fall by 1.55 million barrels per day in January as part of the cartel's efforts to meet a 2.2 million bpd reduction agreed in December.

[Oil Is Dead. Long Live Oil!](#)

This brings oil back, on an inflation-adjusted basis, to the general zone of price levels that prevailed for about 30 years, from 1974 to 2004. Back to normal, in other words, despite the fact that world oil consumption has grown enormously over those decades.

And now the know-it-all commentators have completely, shamelessly, reversed themselves. Remember, six months ago, everyone—and I mean everyone, except me —was talking about the world running out. The slogan was “peak oil,” and they didn’t mean a peak oil price. They meant peak oil production. They’re talking about “peak oil”

again now, but now they are talking about peak oil demand. I'm reading more and more "expert" opinion that we've seen the peak in oil demand from the United States and the rest of the developed world — forever. It's never coming back.

[Number of active oil rigs drops by 53](#)

HOUSTON — The number of rigs actively exploring for oil and natural gas in the United States dropped by 53 this week to 1,515.

Of the rigs running nationwide, 1,185 were exploring for natural gas and 318 for oil, Houston-based Baker Hughes Inc. reported Friday. A total of 12 were listed as miscellaneous.

A year ago, the rig count stood at 1,747.

[Tajikistan warns of possible water shortage crisis](#)

Some Central Asian countries could be hit by severe water shortages this year because power-starved Tajikistan has been draining its reservoirs to generate electricity, the country's foreign minister said Wednesday.

To compensate for a shortfall caused by the suspension of electricity from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan is taking unusually high volumes of water from its main reservoirs to generate hydropower, minister Hamrokhon Zarifi said.

The reservoir supplies Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan with irrigation water over the dry summer months.

[U.S. to get European proposal on gas emissions](#)

BRUSSELS: The European Commission is preparing to call on the United States to create a trans-Atlantic system of carbon trading to limit greenhouse gas emissions and to press for the establishment of similar markets spanning the developed world, according to a draft document seen Friday by the International Herald Tribune.

The European proposal comes as the United States under President Barack Obama enters a period of intense debate over whether to adopt such market-based systems or use a more straightforward tax to limit planet-warming gases from industry.

[Stimulus: Stuck on cars](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) -- A major chunk of the stimulus plan dealing with

transportation is drawing fire for focusing too much on building new highways and not enough on regular maintenance projects and public transport.

The House has budgeted \$30 billion for roads and bridges and \$10 billion for mass transport as part of a \$550 spending plan designed to boost the economy.

While supporters of the plan say most of that money will be spent on repair and the money needs to be allocated quickly to jolt the economy, critics say it short changes public transportation and relies on an outdated distribution system that won't produce the kind of green transformation promised by politicians but rather more of the same mega-highway projects that got the nation into its energy and environmental mess in the first place.

"This is a pretty big disappointment," Robert Puentes, a fellow with the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Project, said of the plan. "There was all this momentum for some kind of reform, but when you look at what's in there, it just doesn't do that."

[Petrobras Cut to 'Equal-Weight' at Morgan Stanley](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleo Brasileiro SA, Brazil's state-owned oil company, was cut to "equal-weight" from "overweight" by Morgan Stanley, which said earnings estimates are too high given a weaker currency and declining oil prices.

Crude oil in New York will probably average about \$50 a barrel in 2009, Morgan Stanley said, 14 percent higher than yesterday's closing price and 66 percent lower than the record \$147.27 in July. This means Petrobras' earnings may fall 60 percent in 2009, more than the average 36 percent drop expected by analysts covering the stock, the brokerage said.

[Why Europe Can't Abandon Russian Gas](#)

While Gazprom may be feeling the pressure of the onset of a deep recession, its price dispute with Ukraine is grounded in Russian geopolitics. "There is a real sense Gazprom behaved in a way designed to embarrass Ukraine, rather than to get the gas flowing again," Julian Lee of the Center for Global Energy Studies in London told Reuters on Wednesday.

The problem facing Europe's consumer nations, however, is that there are precious few alternatives to buying Russian gas. European leaders have spent years developing plans to divert significant supplies of Caspian Sea natural gas from post-Soviet nations such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. But the construction of such pipelines has lagged badly — and may be imperiled by the tensions in the Caucasus in the wake of last summer's Russia-Georgia showdown, which shut the Caspian oil pipeline running through Georgia from Azerbaijan to Turkey.

[Lessons from the Russian Gas Dispute](#)

Exactly what the long-term implications will be are still rather hard to fathom. It doesn't help that many fundamental facts about the dispute remain clouded in controversy —including the key question of who was ultimately responsible for cutting off Europe's gas. While Russia accuses Ukraine of blocking Russian gas supplies to Europe during the dispute, the Ukrainians say that it was actually the Russians who turned off the taps.

[Russian oil consortium in Venezuela to expand to Cuba](#)

MOSCOW (RIA Novosti) - A Russian national oil consortium created to run oil projects in Venezuela will also cooperate with Cuba's state-run oil company Cubapetroleo, a memorandum signed between the two companies stated on Friday.

[Gunmen attack Exxon vessel, tugboat in Nigeria](#)

PORT HARCOURT, Nigeria (Reuters) - Gunmen ambushed an oil supply vessel and tugboat in two separate incidents on Friday, a military spokesman said, the latest in a series of attacks off the coast of Nigeria's Niger Delta region.

Africa's top oil producer has one of the world's highest incidence of piracy, second only to Somalia, with 10 attacks reported so far this year.

[From 'catastrophe' to 'accident,' TVA edited coal ash spill information before public release](#)

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The massive coal ash spill at a Tennessee Valley Authority power plant last month wasn't so much "catastrophic" as it was a "sudden, accidental release."

That's according to a memo obtained by The Associated Press that was prepared by TVA's 50-member public relations staff for briefing news media the day after the disaster at the Kingston Fossil Plant, about 40 miles west of Knoxville.

The nation's largest public utility has been accused by environmentalists and affected residents of soft-pedaling the seriousness of the flood of toxin-laden ash that filled inlets of the Emory River and swept away or damaged lakeside homes.

[Drought spurs Calif. farmers to slash planting](#)

SAN FRANCISCO - Some of the nation's largest farms plan to cut back on planting this spring over concerns that federal water supplies will dry up as officials deal with the drought plaguing California.

Farmers in the Central Valley said Thursday they would forego planting thousands of acres of water-thirsty canning tomatoes and already have started slashing acreage for lettuce and melons.

[Honda's Insight hybrid is a fuel-saving fanatic](#)

Increasing interest in value should make the 2010 Honda Insight hybrid a popular choice, whenever people decide to start buying cars again. Once people open their wallets, they will likely do so with a mind to maximize their value, and the Insight will be waiting for them.

[Americans driving less](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) -- As gas prices spiked last year, American motorists responded by driving less.

Motorists drove 112 billion fewer miles during the 13-month period between November 1, 2007 and November 30, 2008 compared with the year-prior period, the U.S. Department of Transportation said Thursday.

The average price of a gallon of gas on Nov. 1, 2008, was \$2.46, compared to \$2.91 a year prior, according to AAA. In the interim, gas prices skyrocketed to record highs, reaching \$4.11 a gallon in mid-July.

Driving volume posted its steepest monthly drop in November since 1971, the DOT reported. Americans drove 5.3% less, or 12.9 billion fewer miles, compared with November 2007.

The steepest drop off in driving was reported in the South Atlantic region, with 6.4% fewer miles traveled in November 2008 compared to the same time a year prior.

[Mexico's Pemex plans net borrowing of up to \\$3 bln](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico's state oil company Pemex said on Thursday its plans to add between \$2.5 billion and \$3 billion of debt this year after two years of reducing its liabilities.

...The bulk of the investment program is targeted at the company's oil and gas production operations, where Pemex is struggling to reverse sliding oil output

[Schlumberger Net Income Falls; Job Cuts Affect 5,000](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Schlumberger Ltd., the world's largest oilfield-services provider, said fourth-quarter profit fell 17 percent as a collapse in petroleum prices slowed exploration spending by customers. The company said job cuts "concern" 5,000 people worldwide.

Net income dropped to \$1.15 billion, or 95 cents a share, from \$1.38 billion, or \$1.12, a year earlier, Schlumberger said today in a statement. Excluding costs associated with job cuts and a write-off related to a customer with "liquidity issues," profit was 1 cent below the average estimate of 24 analysts surveyed by Bloomberg.

[Drilling Slows, Hits Panhandle Area Hard](#)

Jobs affected, rigs closed. Our region's oil and natural gas business is taking a hit with the economic downturn.

More than 30 rigs have shut down since crude oil prices dropped this fall. That means more than 300 workers either lost their jobs or took pay cuts.

Take into account that most workers on the rigs make around 25 dollars an hour.

Now, you begin to understand the impact the downturn has had on our economy.

[Obama unlikely to move soon on Arctic policy](#)

Canadians are delighted at the prospect of a looming official state visit by U.S. President Barack Obama, but those hoping that he will move quickly on Arctic policy are likely to be disappointed.

[Our Clean Energy Future Should Minimize Ethanol](#)

Americans might be waiting long after 2022 for their five million green jobs and true energy independence if the pink elephant of alternative energy a.k.a. the Ethanol Lobby has its way. President Obama's glorious plan for a "clean energy future" baffles environmentalists as it continues to promote biofuels, like corn-based ethanol, as an answer to our energy problems despite the facts.

The jury is out and the facts are in. The American consumer has voted with his money: the corn-based ethanol industry is not a fiscally viable alternative energy source and environmental scientists are stating that it's production and use is actually contributing more to global warming than regular gas.

[Bulgaria seeks restart of old nuclear reactors](#)

SOFIA, Bulgaria: Bulgaria's parliament has approved plans to seek European Union permission to relaunch two old nuclear reactors mothballed when it joined the EU two years ago.

[The Philippines should spend funds on real energy solutions instead of nuke plant](#)

MANILA, Philippines - Instead of allotting funds for recommissioning the Philippines' mothballed nuclear facility, the country should use its resources for "real and meaningful solutions to climate change and energy crisis."

This was proposed by the Philippine Climate Watch Alliance (PCWA), a group of progressive sectoral and environmental organizations that expressed opposition to Senate Bill No. 2665. The bill intends to re-commission the BNPP, "to address global warming" and the "shortfall in the electric generating capacity of the country in 2012."

[US Fast Making Nuclear Power Core of its Energy Mix](#)

RNCOS in its new research report, "US Nuclear Energy Outlook", says that the US is expected to become the world's largest consumer of nuclear energy in future, with total consumption nearing 917 Billion KWh by 2030.

The US is adding nuclear power in its energy portfolio to enhance the security and diversity of energy supplies. As the supply of traditional energy sources is disrupted, the US has increased focus on the expansion of its nuclear industry. Nuclear energy not only represents an important hedge against volatile fossil fuel prices, but also offers prospect of low and stable running cost.

[The truth about Community Choice Aggregation](#)

The running theme of the piece, by Peter Jamison, is that Community Choice Aggregation, an energy plan that would allow the city to be the wholesale buyer and provider of power to residents, comes with a high risk. In an effort to get greener power, the article charges, the city may wind up raising electric rates - "which could have a crippling impact on the city's poorest residents."

Of course, PG&E is going to raise electricity rates every year for the foreseeable future, and high PG&E rates are already having a crippling impact on poor people, small businesses and the local economy. But that's not addressed in the story.

The truth is, CCA is only "risky" if you (a) assume that PG&E, which has been in and out of bankruptcy and continues to seek rate hikes, will somehow be a risk-free source of energy in the future and (b) assume that there's no risk whatsoever to continuing to rely almost entirely on nuclear power and fossil fuels for our energy needs.

[Fuel Cells For Cars With Current Technology Are a Non Starter Due To Natural Resource Limitations](#)

The fuel cell in the Honda Clarity is the source of electricity for the electric motors that drive the car. The fuel for the fuel cell is hydrogen gas, which can be plentifully produced either by the simple electrolysis of water or by chemical processing of natural gas or ammonia both of which chemicals are widely distributed throughout our society. Why then is no one moving to create a hydrogen production and distribution system so that fuel cells of the type used by the Honda Clarity can be mass produced? It's simple; there isn't enough platinum to make such a move practical now or ever.

[Coastal aquifer in danger of contamination, study finds](#)

The Israel Water Authority is struggling to cope with a severe water shortage that has been made more acute by a continual deterioration in the water quality of the coastal aquifer, one of the two main underground water sources in the country, according to a new report.

[Deffeyes: President Obama](#)

It's still out there; world oil production has ceased growing. The Obama administration might be able to fix the banking and financial situation, but the financial freezeup is a symptom and not the disease. Oil production ceased to grow in 2005, as I predicted. I expected a gradual rise in the price of oil; the abrupt jump from 2004 to mid-2008 came as a surprise. Oil prices had already doubled before the first mortgage funds got into trouble. A gradual price rise would have caused a few homeowners at a time to become unable to meet their mortgage payments. The sudden energy price increase caused lots of delinquent payments, all at once. Even if the Obama administration puts in 90 percent of their attention and 200 percent of the available money to fix the financial structure, the world oil situation could turn around and trash the financial system all over again.

[Russia's crude output down 0.7%, gas up 1.6% in 2008](#)

MOSCOW, January 23 (RIA Novosti) - Russia's crude production in 2008 declined 0.7% year-on-year to 488 million metric tons (9.8 mln bbl/d), while natural gas output increased 1.6% to 663 billion cubic meters, the Federal Statistics Service said on Friday.

Oil production fell 0.9% year-on-year in December and increased 3.3% against last November.

[Bolivia to seize energy firm Chaco - gov't source](#)

LA PAZ, Jan 23 (Reuters) - Bolivia's leftist government plans to seize control of energy producer Chaco, controlled by Pan American Energy, a government source told Reuters on Friday.

Morales ordered Pan American Energy last year to transfer shares in Chaco to the Bolivian government so that state-run energy company YPF, which holds a 49 percent stake, could become majority shareholder.

[Resources Layoffs Bode Ill](#)

Even if cutting some workers makes sense in a crunch, however, this is worrying, and not merely for the sector's employees. Until recently, investors in mining and energy were fed a diet of Malthusian predictions about peak oil, equipment shortages and a dearth of engineering graduates.

Instead, the cycle lives on. Consensus forecasts still point to a bounce back in the price of commodities such as oil and aluminum as early as this year. But if the pace of layoffs picks up, the unavoidable conclusion would be that the producers themselves don't share such optimism.

[Ukraine President Plans to Seek Changes to Russia Gas Accords](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Ukraine's president plans to propose changes to a natural-gas accord with Russia that the two nations' premiers hammered out to end almost two weeks of supply disruption for the European Union.

The Ukrainian side will seek to start consultations with Russia "no later than in the summer," Oleksandr Shlapak, the first deputy chief of President Viktor Yushchenko's staff, told reporters today in Kiev. The country will honor the contract's terms because legally it can't withdraw, he said.

[New EU gas pipeline must avoid Russia: Hungary](#)

BUDAPEST - Europe must give solid support for the ambitious Nabucco gas pipeline project, Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany said Friday following a crisis over Russian gas imports this month.

[Slovakia scraps plans to restart reactor as gas flows to Europe](#)

Bratislava - Slovakia scrapped plans to restart its Soviet-era nuclear reactor in Jaslovské Bohunice as Russia renewed gas supplies via Ukraine and the power grid was stable, an official said Friday. Slovakia abandoned its intention to restart the unit on the

day when the Bulgarian parliament asked government to probe options for restarting Bulgaria's nuclear reactors that were closed as a requirement for entering the EU.

The reactor at Jaslovske Bohunice was shut down on December 31 as a condition for Slovakia's membership to the EU.

[ConocoPhillips to Shut U.K.'s Humber Refinery for Maintenance](#)

(Bloomberg) -- ConocoPhillips plans to shut units at its Humber refinery, the U.K.'s third-largest, for maintenance next quarter, cutting fuel output.

[Sarkozy's proposal on fixing price deserves attention](#)

Although the call came from none other than French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the call failed to generate the ripples that it truly deserved. The call was significant in more ways than one, to say the least. An opportunity seems open, waiting to be seized.

While talking to foreign diplomats based in Paris, Sarkozy came out with a rather unusual proposal: Fixing the crude prices at a level acceptable to both the producers and consumers.

"It is in everyone's interest to regulate the prices of raw materials, not just oil, not just gas, but all raw materials," said Sarokozy.

[Oil production tumbles faster than expected](#)

Global oil production is falling faster than market expectations as production cuts by Opec members coincide with a sharp slide in supplies from some producers outside the cartel, raising the prospect of a price rise.

In spite of the drop in supplies, oil prices remain stuck in the mid-\$40 a barrel range depressed by weak consumption and worries about the economic crisis. However, traders in the physical oil market said supplies were now beginning to drop into balance with falling demand.

Crude oil tankers, which a month ago were proving unsaleable because of the glut in the physical oil market, are selling relatively quickly as refiners look for supplies to replace the oil they are no longer being offered by Opec countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and even Venezuela.

[OPEC-11 to Cut January Supply 5%, PetroLogistics Says](#)

OPEC will cut supplies by about 5 percent this month as the group implements production constraints announced in December, according to preliminary estimates from consultant PetroLogistics Ltd.

Oil supply from 11 members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries subject to quotas will average 26.15 million barrels a day in January, down from 27.65 million barrels a day, Conrad Gerber, the founder of PetroLogistics, said today by telephone from Geneva. From this month, members have a production quota of 24.845 million barrels a day. Iraq has no quota.

['A lot of OPEC countries are cheating'](#)

The problem with the OPEC countries is the compliance factor. A lot of them are cheating—like Venezuela, for example. They've increased their budget for 2009 by 22%, so they need \$60 oil to break even. Now you have to ask yourself, are they going to be compliant? Probably not. They're going to have to make up the decrease in oil price with volume. The one interesting fact is that they are increasing the supply to the large offshore tankers. They're filling them up and they're waiting. So there's a lot of supply just sitting there and the market is aware of this.

It's different than what Putin is claiming in Europe right now, where he can control compliance because he shuts off the taps for the pipeline. So there will be a difference; you will see large differentials in the European energy markets with the natural gas and Brent Crude prices—it's never been this high of a differential. Even the natural gas in Europe is much more expensive than in North America. So that's going to be a continuation of 2008, where we're going to see downward pressure on the energy commodity prices.

[Peru oil ambitions get a reality check](#)

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Low oil prices are forcing Peru's government to reevaluate \$2 billion it planned to invest in an oil refinery and new pipelines in the Amazon jungle, the country's oil minister said Thursday.

Suspending the pipeline project could put Peru's ambitions to become a net oil exporter on hold.

[Uzbek leader quells Russian gas fears, secures deal](#)

TASHKENT (Reuters) - Uzbekistan pledged on Friday to support a new trans-Russian gas pipeline, easing Moscow's fears it would succumb to European pressure to bypass Russia with its energy supplies and reduce its influence in the region.

[Venezuela and Argentina sign cooperation accords](#)

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) -- The presidents of Venezuela and Argentina signed a dozen agreements Thursday to cooperate in energy, industry and agriculture - including a joint venture to develop oil fields in eastern Venezuela.

['Sustainable' policies vowed at Transportation](#)

WASHINGTON - Former congressman Ray LaHood said Wednesday one of his priorities as transportation secretary will be to make sure the money Congress sets aside for construction projects to stimulate the economy is wisely spent.

One of two Republicans President Barack Obama picked to serve in his Cabinet, LaHood also signaled the new administration sees transportation as key to its environmental agenda, telling a Senate panel that all areas of transportation from roads to rails must be "sustainable" to "acknowledge the new reality of climate change."

[Lawmakers consider energy measures in stimulus](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee on Thursday was set to approve energy measures included in Democrats' economic recovery package, even though a leading Republican criticized the bill as too narrow.

The \$825 billion plan would spend about \$25 billion on renewable energy, energy efficiency and electricity transmission.

The package would also promote the development of so called smart power grid technology to support alternative energy use, plug-in hybrid vehicles and boost energy efficiency.

[American Electric Sees More Profit Growth in Lines Than Plants](#)

(Bloomberg) -- American Electric Power Co., the top U.S. producer of electricity from coal, expects to rely more on power lines for profit growth after the worst recession in a quarter-century, Chief Executive Officer Michael Morris said.

[Japan's TEPCO inches closer to nuclear plant restart](#)

TOKYO (Reuters) - Tokyo Electric Power Co, Asia's largest utility, will finish setting up turbines at one of its quake-hit nuclear generators by early February, as it inches closer to restarting part of the world's biggest nuclear plant, its president said on Friday.

The indefinite shutdown of the plant has forced TEPCO to rely more on thermal power output, resulting in higher fossil fuel usage.

But TEPCO President Masataka Shimizu said the firm still could not give a schedule for the restart of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear plant, shut since a major earthquake in July 2007.

[Brown-Forman Director Matthew Simmons to retire](#)

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - (Business Wire) Brown-Forman announced today that Matthew R. Simmons is retiring from the company's board of directors, effective at the conclusion of today's board meeting. Simmons, who has been a director since 2002, is leaving to devote more time to his business, Simmons & Company International, a specialized energy investment banking firm. "I regret that my other responsibilities require me to leave the Brown-Forman board, but I depart knowing that the company is in the very capable hands of CEO Paul Varga, Presiding Board Chairman Garvin Brown, an outstanding board of directors, and the exceptional management team that works with them," said Simmons.

Simmons is also the author of the noteworthy 2005 book, "Twilight in the Desert: The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy," which stated that the world's oil production was nearing, or already at, its apex, making him one of the world's preeminent experts on the "peak oil" movement.

[Ethanol Lawsuit Proceeds against Oil Companies](#)

NAPLES, Fla. -- A Florida lawsuit against six oil companies that alleges negligence for failing to warn boat owners of potential harm from ethanol-blended gasoline, survived a motion to dismiss from the defendants, *NaplesNews.com* reported.

[It's big, expanding and has a carbon footprint to match](#)

A riddle. It's invisible but ubiquitous, and growing exponentially. Even as it provides the capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, its own carbon footprint is ever larger. It is the fuel of clouds and the stuff that races through fibre optic cables at the speed of light.

It is, of course, the internet, or more specifically, Information and Communication Technology (ICT). At institutions as diverse as Melbourne University, and its counterparts in the University of California (UC) system in San Diego and Irvine, it frames the next generation of virtual meetings, with instantaneous transmission of image and sound, from near or far.

[Wood and dung fires feed Asia's brown cloud](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Wood and dung burned for home heating and cooking makes up most of a huge brown cloud of pollution that hangs over South Asia and the Indian Ocean during the winter months, researchers said on Thursday.

The study in the journal Science solves the mystery of what makes up the soot in the brown haze linked to hundreds of thousands of deaths -- mainly from lung and heart disease -- each year in the region, they said.

[Health concerns as HK pollution levels rise](#)

HONG KONG (AFP) – Thick smog enveloped Hong Kong again on Friday, as scientists and campaigners said recent pollution had reached levels ten times above annual World Health Organisation guidelines for clean air.

The heavy haze descended on the city, blocking views across the financial hub's famous Victoria Harbour and raising serious health concerns.

[OPG sees 27% fall in coal emissions](#)

Ontario Power Generation has devised a strategy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from its coal-fired generating stations by 27 per cent in 2009, but industry groups say the target makes little difference until restrictions are placed on U.S. coal-power imports.

[Japan launches rocket with greenhouse-gas probe](#)

TOKYO – The first satellite dedicated to monitoring carbon dioxide emissions was launched into space Friday from a center in Japan, where officials hope to gather information on climate change – and help the country compete in the lucrative satellite-launching business.

[Sanyo, Nippon Oil to Produce Solar Cells](#)

Sanyo Electric Co. and Nippon Oil Corp. said on Jan. 23 they would collaborate to produce thin-film solar cells for large-scale power generation. The 50-50 joint venture will spend roughly 20 billion yen (US\$226 million) to build a factory in Japan that can annually produce enough solar cells to produce electricity worth 80 megawatts.

[Launch green economic revolution now, says Stern](#)

Never mind the downturn, a green economic revolution must be launched within months, one of the world's top economists has told *New Scientist*.

"You do hear voices saying now is not the moment," says Nicholas Stern, former head of the World Bank, in an exclusive interview. "Now is precisely the moment to make the change" to a low-carbon economy.

Also: [Time for a green industrial revolution](#)



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