



Drumbeat: April 20, 2009

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Oil below \\$46 as stocks tumble ahead of earnings](#)

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – (AP) — Oil prices plunged to their lowest levels in more than a month Monday as investors, nervous about a week chock-full of corporate earnings reports, sought safer havens in gold and the dollar.

Benchmark crude for May delivery fell \$4.45 to settle at \$45.88 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. With trading on the May contract ending Tuesday, most of the trading has shifted to the June contract. Benchmark crude for June delivery dropped \$3.96 to settle at \$48.51 a barrel.

Phil Flynn, an analyst at Alaron Trading Corp., said the oil markets are reacting to weakness in the stock markets and strength in the dollar.

[Chesapeake Energy Corp. Further Trims Natural Gas Production in Current Low Price Environment](#)

Chesapeake Energy Corp. announced it has elected to curtail approximately 400 million cubic feet (mmcf) per day of its gross natural gas production due to continued low wellhead prices.

...The company's 400 mmcf per day curtailment represents approximately 13 percent of Chesapeake's current gross operated natural gas production capacity. The wells that have been curtailed are primarily located in the Mid-Continent and Barnett Shale regions. Until natural gas prices strengthen, the company plans to limit production from most newly completed wells in the Barnett and Fayetteville shales to 2 mmcf per day and in the Marcellus and Haynesville shales to 5 and 10 mmcf per day, respectively, in addition to the approximate 400 mmcf per day curtailment. "

[Court: water from gas drilling must be regulated](#)

The Colorado Supreme Court has ruled that water produced during coal-bed methane drilling is subject to state water law and companies extracting the natural gas must get water well permits or replace the water.

The decision issued Monday stems from a lawsuit by landowners in southwest Colorado who say their water supplies are threatened by companies pumping groundwater to free the natural gas in coal seams. They say companies should defer to water users with older water rights and replace water they use when it belongs to others.

[Agriculture is up to global productivity challenge, says DuPont leader](#)

Science will enable farmers to produce enough grain to meet the growing demand for food, biofuels and materials if public and private agriculture enterprises, regulators and policymakers from around the globe take a more holistic approach to the solution, William S. Niebur, vice president – DuPont Crop Genetics Research and Development, said here today.

Speaking to agricultural leaders at the Informa Economics 17th Annual Food & Agricultural Policy Conference, Niebur said that emerging opportunities for the use of biomass to replace petroleum coupled with the specter of hunger have raised questions about whether farmers can produce enough grain to feed the world and meet the demand for biofuels and biomaterials.

[GE, Cisco, Florida Power to Create Miami ‘Smart Grid’](#)

(Bloomberg) -- General Electric Co., Cisco Systems Inc. and FPL Group Inc.’s Florida Power & Light Co. plan to create a “smart grid” system that will help Miami residents conserve electricity and create as many as 1,000 jobs.

The proposed project would cost \$200 million and the companies will apply for U.S. federal stimulus funding. The Miami program will serve as a model for other cities, the group said today in a statement.

[Interview with Matt Simmons, Part 3](#)

We didn’t have a “price spike;” we had a decade-long rise of 15-fold in oil prices. During the entire decade, we have every lame-brain excuse you can imagine as to why oil prices were temporarily artificially high: the war premium, the risk premium, the labor unrest in Venezuela, the militant unrest in Nigeria, the lack of a quick response from Iraq when the war ended, all the projects that should have been done a decade ago that are just coming on stream, the weak dollar, hedge funds, speculators, abnormal growth in China. The only thing people forgot to look at is fundamental supply and demand. And what they should have looked at is the fact that, from 1997 through 2007, petroleum demand grew by just a shade under 13 million barrels a day and crude oil supply only grew by about 7 mb/d; and most of the growth was in the first half of the decade. So, we created a very tight market. And too often we topped up the market with stock withdrawals ...and the price went up 15 fold. But the 15-fold rise didn’t really trigger an intense

reexamination of our whole oil system. About 1 millionth as many people are worried about peak oil as those worried about climate change.

[Commodities to return: Rogers](#)

The global commodities market is about to make a comeback after years of price declines, which have devastated the food and metal markets around the world, according to billionaire American investor Jim Rogers.

Rogers, in an e-mail interview with the JoongAng Ilbo from Singapore, where he has recently moved to teach his children Chinese, stressed now is time for investors to return to commodities, and warned them to stay away from U.S. currency.

[Crude production up, Russia says](#)

MOSCOW (UPI) -- Crude oil production from Russia is expected to boast modest gains in 2009 despite earlier forecasts of a decline in the industry, officials said.

The output of crude oil from Russia for 2008 and the first two months of 2009 fell about 1 percent, but March output saw a modest increase of 0.4 percent to 9.76 million barrels per day.

The Russian Energy Ministry said it expects that trend to continue for the rest of the year, with an increase of as much as 2 percent, the Platts news service reports.

[Russia plans to gain shares in liquefied gas market: official](#)

MOSCOW (Xinhua) -- Russia is planning to increase its shares in the liquefied gas market, Russian news agencies reported on Monday citing First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Denisov.

"Our energy strategy aims to increase the share of liquefied gas in Russia's exports. Fields in the Arctic region, in the northern seas and in the Far East will become a basis for the production of liquefied gas," Denisov said when interviewed by the VIP-Premier magazine.

[UK agrees to gas storage site tax relief -Centrica](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - UK tax authorities have agreed to gas storage operator calls for tax relief which should spur investment in new facilities and boost energy security, the owner of Britain's biggest gas store said on Monday.

HM Revenue and Customs has accepted Centrica's request to allow operators to claim tax relief on the "cushion gas" used to maintain the right pressure in a storage site by treating it as part of the capital cost of development.

[Saving cash, saving lives](#)

Lowering defence spending around the world has always been a utopian dream for idealists. Yet growing numbers of mainstream politicians from around the world believe they have finally come up with a way of making it possible.

The argument is a simple one – with money, unsurprisingly, at its heart. Defence spending is a huge commitment to the public purse; recent military interventionists in Iraq and Afghanistan are cases in point. It would be much more attractive not having to spend the money in the first place.

Is this plausible? Perhaps. It's certainly the rationale behind conflict prevention, which seeks to pour money into preventing conflicts before they begin. With the world's resources getting more and more stretched efforts towards mediation and dialogue can prevent situations spiralling out of control.

[Australia: Red Oil](#) (TV show)

VENEZUELA has a lot of oil. Oodles of the stuff. For a world facing the potential disaster of peak oil, that's good news - unless you were an oil company executive in Venezuela before Hugo Chavez took over in 1999.

[China to build 5 nuclear power plants this year](#)

BEIJING - China is planning to build five nuclear power stations this year to reduce the country's reliance on coal and oil, state media reported Monday.

The plants will be built in China's eastern provinces of Zhejiang and Shandong, as well as Guangdong and Hainan in the south, the official Xinhua News Agency cited the National Energy Administration as saying.

[Thrifty is the new frugal](#)

Consumers will plan purchases more carefully. 70% say they won't delay if it will save them money in the long run, like socially or environmentally conscious products. We're seeing no reduction in the purchase of environmentally-friendly products.

10% of consumers are spending less on green products, but 35% are spending more.

65% of consumers say they are spending more on products that they know will benefit a good cause.

It's not about price. It's about the whole value proposition. And that result is true for consumers who say they have a lot economic anxiety, too.

[Consultant to check out newly 'walkable' Main Street](#)

At the beginning of 2002, the state DOT was planning to make Main Street a two-lane highway with parking, with turn lanes likely at the intersections of Lake, Center and Buffalo streets. The state was trying to decide whether Buffalo should be three or four lanes.

Around that time, former Mayor John S. Thomas and other officials brought in Burden, the founder and head of Walkable Communities, a nonprofit organization formed to promote "walkability." Burden presented his ideas about ways to calm traffic and make areas more pedestrian- friendly. His ideas got a warm reception from the community, and the DOT's consultant hired Burden to work on more in-depth plans for Hamburg.

It was a turning point for the community.

"Suddenly, in the spring of 2002, not only are they changing their mind, but paying for the guy we like," recalled Village Trustee Michael Cerrone, who was not on the Village Board at the time.

[Why Antarctic ice is growing despite global warming](#)

It's the southern ozone hole whatdunit. That's why Antarctic sea ice is growing while at the other pole, Arctic ice is shrinking at record rates. It seems CFCs and other ozone-depleting chemicals have given the South Pole respite from global warming.

But only temporarily. According to John Turner of the British Antarctic Survey, the effect will last roughly another decade before Antarctic sea ice starts to decline as well.

[Carbon trading won't stop climate change](#)

ONE day renewable energy looks like a sunrise industry, the next, tumbleweeds are blowing around a setting solar panel. What has changed? The price of emitting carbon dioxide.

[Kurt Cobb: Does Rick Perry see the future?](#)

Many of my acquaintances kept telling me during the Bush Administration that America was on the verge of becoming a fascist state and that (according to a few) President George W. Bush would not step down when his term ended. I, on the other hand, have long feared the anarchical tendencies in American life: the states' rights ideology, the vigilantism often seen in the pre-civil rights South, the secessionist movements and every kind of centrifugal political force pursued in the name of localism, but really a pretext for 1) undermining the rights of unionized workers, women, ethnic and racial minorities, and gays and lesbians and 2) destroying the environment in contravention of federal law.

The need for relocalization of the economy in the wake of peak oil and climate change is forcing me to re-examine my views. I am of the belief, however, that should relocalization become a widespread adaptation strategy or simply be forced upon us, the locale where one lives in the United States will become of increasing importance--not only because the availability of basic resources needed for human survival differs from place to place, but also because retrograde notions of human rights, governance and education are likely to be reinstated (probably gradually) in some areas of the country, particularly the South and West.

[Petrobras to Order as Many as 7 Drill Ships, CFO Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleo Brasileiro SA, Brazil's state-controlled oil company, plans to order five to seven drill ships, or semi-submersibles, in the near term as part of its \$174.4 billion investment plan by 2013.

The company will seek more than 240 vessels including drill ships, tankers, production platforms and supply vessels in the next five or six years, Chief Financial Officer Almir Guilherme Barbassa said on the sidelines of a conference in Seoul today.

[Kazakhstan excludes refinery from China oil deal](#)

KazMunaiGas had earlier said it wanted full control of the refinery, one of Kazakhstan's three. It already controls the two other refineries.

The government is keen to curb inflation, forecast at 11 percent this year, and sees control over fuel prices as one of its key tools.

[Importance of energy-saving Standard 90.1](#)

Standard 90.1 provides minimum requirements for the energy-efficient design of buildings in the US, except low-rise residential buildings. Written during the 1970s energy crisis, ASHRAE Standard 90.1 first was published in 1975 as an effort to cut energy use in buildings. The 2004 version of the standard is referenced in the US Energy Policy Act, which requires states to adopt commercial building codes that meet

or exceed the standard's requirements.

ASHRAE has set a goal of making the standard 30% more stringent over the 2004 version by the 2010 publication. The stimulus package, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, focuses on economic stimulus through both tax credits and public-sector spending, with a heavy focus on infrastructure and energy.

[Will Obama rail plan get U.S. back on track?](#)

I'VE LONG believed that one of the biggest policy blunders in modern U.S. history was and is disproportionate investment since the 1950s in the interstate highway system.

Even after the '70s' "energy crisis," we continued to ignore the obvious alternative of greatly improved rail service to reduce growing reliance on foreign oil.

[Pakistan: PM says energy crisis hurting economy](#)

KARACHI - Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on Sunday formally inaugurated Pakistan's first wind power project at Jhampir in Thatta district, which will have the generating capacity of 50 megawatt.

[Blips #85: From The Martian Desk](#)

Just imagine what would happen if President Obama kept saying that the country and the world were so far over the cliff that they had nowhere to go but fall into the abyss. I am sure it would invigorate Rush Limbaugh and his cohort of demagogues as well as the millenarian prophets of doom who merrily applaud the forthcoming ineluctable collapse of "civilization" -- you know, the folks I covered in my Blips #81: Dmitry Orlov, James Howard Kunstler, Jay Hanson, Jan Lunberg, Dale Allen Pfeiffer, Michael Ruppert, Matt Savinar, and I could have added, among quite a few others, Bart Anderson of Energy Bulletin or the congenial Jason Bradford -- but it would not do the rest of us much good, would it?

[China to Boost Commodity Stockpiling Storage Capacity](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China will give priority to boosting its storage capacity for resources such as oil and grains to ensure supply and smooth price volatility, a senior government official said.

China is also likely to further ease state controls on oil prices to reflect the market value of the fuel and encourage energy saving, said Zhang Xiaoqiang, vice chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission.

“We need to improve and strengthen our permanent commodity storage,” said Zhang at the Boao meeting of business and political leaders in southern China. “We should also deepen our reform of the oil price system,” he said.

[China's Banks Ease Foreign Energy Deals](#)

HONG KONG -- China is making a push to lock up energy reserves across the globe by offering much-needed credit to governments. Kazakhstan announced a \$10 billion oil-for-loan deal with China Friday during its president's state visit to Beijing.

Kazakhstan gets cash for new investment projects and China gets a 50% stake in a major Kazakhstan oil producer and priority on future energy cooperation.

China has already struck similar deals this year with state oil producers in Russia, Brazil and Venezuela. In February, China Development Bank extended a \$25 billion financing package to Russia's state-owned OAO Rosneft, its biggest oil producer, and OAO Transneft, its oil pipeline operator, in exchange for Russia sending about 300,000 barrels a day to China through a pipeline under construction.

[Tankers store fuel at sea as demand sinks](#)

A deep drop in demand has forced many oil companies to use tankers floating at sea to store surplus refined products, with the volume off Europe equating to more than a quarter of the world's daily fuel use.

Shipbrokers and oil traders said at least 24 million barrels of gas oil, used for diesel or heating oil, and jet fuel were being stored on more than 30 floating long-range tankers in Europe. Some traders said the stored volume might be even larger and would add to the pressure on bearish products markets.

[Oil falls below \\$50 as investors eye US earnings](#)

VIENNA – Expectations that a slew of new U.S. corporate earnings reports could temper optimism about global economic recovery pushed oil prices below \$50 a barrel Monday.

Benchmark crude for May delivery fell \$2.06 to \$48.27 a barrel by noon in European electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract Friday rose 35 cents to settle at \$50.33.

[U.A.E. Says \\$50 Oil Will Help Economy Recover Fast](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude prices around \$50 a barrel will help the economy recover while supporting investment, the oil minister of the United Arab Emirates said today.

A price of "\$50 provides support for the global economy while sustaining investment," Mohamed al-Hamli said in Dubai. "Maintaining crude prices at reasonable levels is vital."

[Raymond J. Learsy: President Obama's Pledge To End "The Tyranny Of Oil"; "Peak Oil" Mutating To "Peak Consumption"](#)

A multiplicity of factors are in play that for the first time will begin to end the oil cabal's long and painful hegemony over our lives. The government is undertaking important initiatives to increase energy efficiency and the usage of biofuels . The recently passed economic stimulus program has significant new loan guarantees to help renewable energy businesses to get financing and to start up new projects. Mass transportation will return to focus and new high speed rail initiatives will change the American landscape of rail travel. The administration is working assiduously to toughen the average 35 miles a gallon standard for vehicles sold in the U.S. by 2020 as mandated by the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act.

['We'll pay price for spare capacity'](#)

Spare capacity in oil markets could weigh on the price for years to come, BP's chief economist said today.

Lower inventories later this year would support the oil price, but the supply cushion would prevent a sharp rally even if the world economy returns to growth, Christof Ruhl told Reuters in an interview.

"Would that mean prices will shoot up again? I don't think so," Ruhl said ahead of an energy conference in Dubai.

"Even if we went back to the demand growth rates of the past few years, it would take three years to get back to a market that was as tight as last year. And global growth is unlikely to return to the stellar levels of the last few years."

[UK terminal problem stops Norwegian gas](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - A technical problem at the Easington gas import terminal in eastern England stopped gas from Norway's Langeled pipeline from flowing into Britain early on Monday, according to the terminal and pipeline operators.

Langeled, the longest subsea gas pipeline in the world, had been supplying nearly a fifth of Britain's gas before the shutdown in the early hours of Monday morning.

[Aramco Total refinery to start by early 2013-exec](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - Saudi Aramco's joint venture oil refinery with France's Total would be commissioned by early 2013, an Aramco executive said on Monday.

'Yes definitely in 2012, beginning 2013, the refinery will be up and running,' Samir al-Tubayyeb, vice president for marketing and joint venture coordination at Saudi Aramco, told Reuters.

[Halliburton Profit Tumbles 35%, sees more weakness ahead](#)

HOUSTON (AP) -- Halliburton Co. said Monday its first-quarter earnings tumbled 35 percent as oil and natural gas producers, stung by low prices, cut back on exploration and drilling. It also provided a poor industry outlook for the coming quarters.

The oilfield services company, which has corporate headquarters in Houston and Dubai, said its net income in the January-March period fell to \$378 million, or 42 cents per share. That compared with \$580 million, or 63 cents a share, during the same period a year ago.

[Nigeria: Oil Derivation - Who's Fooling Who?](#)

Ever since the oil bearing states took their position on increasing the derivation formula from 13 to 50 per cent (not that this would solve their problems), the wave of insecurity and wanton destruction of oil industry infrastructure in the region has grown to unimaginable proportions. What once started out as a worthy cause to agitate against 50 years of underdevelopment in the region, has been taken over by criminals who kidnap innocent people and steal oil for personal gains.

[Putin's Tariffs Stall Russian Growth for Caterpillar](#)

Deere and Caterpillar, reeling from the longest U.S. recession in a quarter century, were the companies most affected by loan restrictions and tariffs of as much as 25 percent that Putin imposed this year, according to a U.S. Chamber of Commerce survey of the top 50 American businesses operating in Russia.

Putin is trying to boost Russian industries with tariffs on everything from drugs to farm equipment as declining oil revenue saps the nation's economy. The policies are hurting sales by Caterpillar, Deere and Agco Corp. in a market where revenue was forecast to rise as much as sixfold in the next decade.

[Rubber to Decline 35% as Tire Sales Signal Slump](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The 42 percent, four-month rebound in rubber prices may be coming to an end as global tire demand plunges the most in three decades.

[EU policy is an 'aberration', says fisheries group](#)

According to Mr Aston, last year's fuel price crisis was a reminder of the advent of peak oil and a warning that "there can be no economic or social stability until the stranglehold of oil-dependence is broken".

He is proposing research into sail and hydrogen-powered fishing vessels, using lines to fish for tuna, mackerel and pollack. Germany has already developed vessels powered by fuel cells, drawing on recombined hydrogen and oxygen.

[Response to the consultation on "The Future of Transport": Passenger transport in urban areas](#)

More than 70% of the economic wealth in Europe is created in urban areas. Cities are the places where business is done and investments are made. At the same time they face high congestion and pollution levels and approximately 7% of this wealth is wasted on the external costs of accidents, congestion, health and environmental damage linked to transport.

However, the current development model of cities is not viable and the severity of climate change, the looming prospect of "peak oil" and the heightening of social tensions mean that we can procrastinate no longer.

[Why I retired to 'green' my detached 1970s house](#)

I'm Rob Veck, 54, father of two and recently retired from a demanding project manager job at IBM. My wife Sue is also a project manager and initially thought I was mad to embark on retrofitting our house to get as near to a carbon zero home as possible, with minimal energy usage. She no longer thinks I'm mad - just eccentric.

It took me two years to read a book that had a significant impact on my thinking on environmental issues – The Party's Over by Richard Hienberg, about the connection between population growth, energy supply, and peak oil. It took two years because it was difficult to accept the consequences of what could happen when demand exceeds a diminishing supply.

[Congress to pass energy bill this year: White House](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – U.S. lawmakers will pass major energy legislation, possibly including measures to address climate change, by the end of this year, a top White House official said on Sunday.

"I do know this, at the end of this first year of Congress there will be an energy bill on the president's desk," White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel told ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos."

[Palestinians face dire water shortage: World Bank](#)

JERUSALEM (AFP) – Palestinians face dire water shortages because of both bad Palestinian management and Israeli restrictions, the World Bank said in a report on Monday.

The report, the first of its kind, noted the "complete dependence" of the Israeli-occupied West Bank and the blockaded Gaza Strip "on scarce water resources shared and largely controlled by Israel."

[Consumers start feeling higher costs of clean fuel](#)

Clean energy has a dirty secret.

It isn't cheap.

Consumers already are starting to feel at least a modest pinch in their electric bills. The impact is expected to grow in the next few years as utilities accelerate their investments to meet state quotas requiring a portion of clean energy in their generation mix. And bills in Congress would impose a similar national quota, an idea President Obama supports.

The cost is one reason electric rates have been fairly stable as oil and natural gas prices have plunged.

"There are offsetting costs — renewables is one — that are keeping power prices up," says Larry Makovich of Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA).

[Controversies Continue to Swirl over Corn Ethanol](#)

Rising corn prices and slack demand have hurt producers. And biofuel makers face a limit on how much ethanol can be blended with gas.

[Agreement reached on common plug for electric cars](#)

BERLIN (AFP) – Leading automotive and energy companies have reached agreement on a common "plug" to recharge electric cars, a spokeswoman for German energy company RWE said Sunday.

The three-point, 400-volt plug, which will allow electric cars to be recharged anywhere in a matter of minutes, is set to be unveiled Monday at the world's biggest industrial technology fair in Hanover, northern Germany.

[UN atomic chief warns of nuclear power dangers](#)

BEIJING (AFP) – The head of the UN atomic watchdog warned here Monday that the world's growing appetite for nuclear energy could lead to dangers associated with unsafe technology and weapons proliferation.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei said more than 60 countries were considering going nuclear amid an energy crunch and global warming concerns, adding to the 30 countries with existing programmes.

[Beyond Fossil Fuels: Eric McAfee on Biofuels](#)

What technical obstacles currently most curtail the growth of biofuels? What are the prospects for overcoming them in the near future and the longer-term?

The conversion and commercialization of cellulose inputs into fuel ethanol is a significant technology obstacle to the growth of the ethanol industry as a mainstream fuel. A number of companies are currently working on cellulosic technologies, and great strides have been made, but a gap remains between technology advances and full commercial deployment. Much of this challenge exists around two factors—scalability and cost. Science is no longer the primary gating issue—it's now a matter of investment and resource allocation.

[Lawn Mowing: Get Reel, Go Gas-free](#)

Gasoline-powered lawnmowers will soon have to be dramatically cleaner under new rules issued by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The long-awaited regulation requires a 35 percent reduction in emissions from new lawn and garden equipment beginning in 2011. The reductions will be the equivalent of removing one out of every five cars and trucks on the road, according to the National Association of Clean Air Agencies.

[In 2009, Earth Day is for everybody, every day](#)

Since the first Earth Day in 1970, environmental consciousness has become part of the economic and political mainstream, Cohen says. One example: President Obama's call for investment in renewable energy as a way to boost the economy, he says. Now "it's no longer an issue of liberal versus conservative," he says. "It's a mainstream issue."

[Indigenous groups hold climate summit in Alaska](#)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – Indigenous people from around the world are gathering in Anchorage this week for a conference on climate change, a subject participants say disproportionately affects them though they share relatively little responsibility for it.

Patricia Cochran, chairwoman of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, said the United Nations-affiliated conference intends to provide "a unified voice, to be able to have more influence over the political and other decisions that are being made that impact our communities."

[Grizzly bears spreading through yellowstone region](#)

BOZEMAN, Mont. – Hunters are killing grizzly bears in record numbers around Yellowstone National Park and researchers say the once-endangered predator is expanding across the region.

Bears are being seen — and killed — in places where they were absent for decades. Researchers suspect climate change is wiping out one of the bear's food sources and they worry the trend will continue as the animals roam farther in search of food.

[Barendrecht's Stand Up to Shell's Plan to Bury CO2](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The Dutch town of Barendrecht has a message for Royal Dutch Shell Plc: Not under my backyard.

The oil company and the Netherlands government intend to build the first of a new generation of carbon-dioxide storage facilities in two depleted natural-gas fields in Barendrecht. The plan is to capture emissions from a gasification hydrogen plant at Shell's nearby Pernis refinery and then store the CO2 more than a mile below area homes, preventing the greenhouse gas from reaching the air and harming the environment.

[Japan approves "exceptional" coal plant plan](#)

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan Environment Ministry on Monday backed plans to enlarge a coal-fired power plant, saying it would not greatly affect Japan's target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 60 to 80 percent by 2050.

'It's an exceptional case, so we should make it clear why it can go ahead with the coal thermal plan,' said Yoshihiro Yamamoto, head of the environment ministry's assessment office.

[Carbon emissions fuelled by high rates of obesity](#)

High rates of obesity in richer countries cause up to 1bn extra tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions every year, compared with countries with leaner populations, according to a study that assesses the additional food and fuel requirements of the overweight. The finding is particularly worrying, scientists say, because obesity is on the rise in many rich nations.

"Population fatness has an environmental impact," said Phil Edwards, from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. "We're all being told to stay fit and keep our weight down because it's good for our health. The important thing is that staying slim is good for your health and for the health of the planet."

[China Warned It May Face Priced Carbon Emissions](#)

BEIJING – The International Energy Agency warned Monday that China must clean up its coal sector or face dire environmental consequences for itself and the world, outlining a series of steps to mitigate pollution including tougher enforcement of regulations, more foreign investment and an eventual price on carbon emissions.

"Without strong action, CO₂ emissions could rise in an unsustainable way," IEA Executive Director Nobuo Tanaka said at a briefing to launch a new report on clean coal technology in China. The report was done in cooperation with the Chinese government, reflecting growing awareness in Beijing of the hazards of current energy trends.



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