



Drumbeat: November 20, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on November 20, 2009 - 8:44am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Valero Closes Delaware Plant, the Third Shut in U.S.](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Valero Energy Corp. said it will permanently close its Delaware City, Delaware, refinery because of "very poor economic conditions." The 190,200 barrel-a-day plant is the third U.S. refinery to shutter because of weak fuel demand.

The plant was losing \$1 million a day this year, Bill Day, a spokesman for Valero said in a telephone interview. Valero considered strategic alternatives for the plant, including shutdowns of certain processing units, and a sale.

Western Refining Inc. said Nov. 9 it would close its 16,600 barrel-a-day Bloomfield refinery in New Mexico and use the plant as a terminal. Sunoco Inc.'s Eagle Point refinery in New Jersey stopped production earlier this month and was idled indefinitely because of low demand and increased foreign competition, according to Chief Executive Officer Lynn Elsenhans.

Petroplus Holdings AG suspended operations at its 117,000 barrel-a-day refinery in northeast England and is converting the site into storage and a terminal, CEO Jean-Paul Vettier said Nov. 5.

The table below shows refineries that are slated for sale, closure or conversion, and units idled for economic reasons.

17, its lowest level since May 3, 2002, when there were 640 gas rigs operating.

But the rig count is still down sharply since peaking above 1,600 in September of last year, standing at 785 rigs, or 52 percent, below the same week in 2008.

[Texas high court agrees to rehear Exxon case](#)

DALLAS — The Texas Supreme Court has agreed to grant a rehearing in the nearly 15-year legal battle over accusations that Exxon Mobil Corp. sabotaged abandoned wells.

[Saudi Arabia set for Asia crude benchmark switch, but when?](#)

SINGAPORE: Saudi Arabia is all but certain to adopt the Dubai Mercantile Exchange's (DME) Oman crude oil futures contract as its benchmark one day, oil traders say. Now the main question is when, not if, it makes the switch. The growing confidence that state exporter Saudi Aramco will eventually abandon the Dubai/Oman crude assessment price as its basis for Asian exports is bolstered by two things: the tone of recent discussion between Aramco and its customers; and its abrupt switch to a Gulf sour crude benchmark for all US sales.

[The 10-billion-barrel battle](#)

Henry Lyatsky is a man on a mission.

The Calgary-based oil industry consultant is on a one-man campaign to lift the moratorium on offshore oil drilling on Canada's West Coast.

While his message gets a sympathetic ear in in his home town, the centre of Canada's oil industry, his mission is more of an uphill battle in British Columbia.

[U.S. Fears Iraq Development Projects May Go to Waste](#)

BAGHDAD — In its largest reconstruction effort since the Marshall Plan, the United States government has spent \$53 billion for relief and reconstruction in Iraq since the 2003 invasion, building tens of thousands of hospitals, water treatment plants, electricity substations, schools and bridges.

But there are growing concerns among American officials that Iraq will not be able to adequately maintain the facilities once the Americans have left, potentially wasting hundreds of millions of dollars and jeopardizing Iraq's ability to provide basic services to its people.

[The Oil Casino: SEC Heading for Monte Carlo, Part III](#)

Let's examine a simple idea. In every producing oil well, formation, or field there is a finite quantity of recoverable hydrocarbons. This so-called Ultimately Recoverable Resource is definitively known in retrospect after secondary injection, infill and flank development, or fracturing, chemical or steam enhancements that lifted every drop that makes economic sense.

In a mature field, where reservoir performance is fully understood, no sane person will spend more than \$1 to recover less than \$1 of oil & gas. Wells are abandoned, rigs withdrawn, and the field is sold. Smaller operators might be able to eke out a bit more value from "sub-prime" acreage or strata. They have lower overheads and more leisure to search for crumbs.

[Chris Nelder. logi Energy-China: The Vampire Squid of Commodities. Part Two](#)

Rodgers has no doubt that China understands peak oil and expects future supply disruptions, which is why it's accumulating foreign assets and diversifying its import options.

Peter Dea, the president of oil and gas exploration and production company Cirque Resources LP, made the same point a bit more obliquely, rhetorically asking if China had no doubts about the future of oil, why would they have recently outbid Exxon Mobil for new drilling in Ghana?

[America's Pending Collapse](#)

In an essay, written by Richard Heinberg entitled "Should We Prop-up a Dying Economy" (19 October 2009), he argues that the economists and the people who follow physical science disagree sharply about where this economy is going. Peak Oil, whether it is present now or just years away, will mean that the economy will contract. The economists state that growth can happen in any environment, yet it is apparent that when oil prices spiked in 2008, the auto industry and the airline industry almost went belly-up. Shrinkage of energy means shrinkage in the economy, we have all been under the notion that we can borrow against a growing economy. The facts are that if the economy does not grow, there will be very little in the growth of capital to repay debts that are leveraged at an average of an average of 350% of debt to GDP ratio. Where will new capital come from?

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[Recovery over a barrel](#)

After a fall in demand during the depths of the crisis, the IEA now expects global demand for oil to be 84.2 million barrels a day this year and more than 86.2 million barrels a day next year.

Then there is the looming problem of Peak Oil - the stage when demand outstrips the world's capacity to produce it.

In September, a Macquarie Bank report found we had already hit that wall. Report author Iain Reid says production capacity will peak at 89.6 million barrels a day this year. By 2012, demand will exceed this.

[Utility shut-offs soar for poor PG&E customers](#)

The report's authors aren't sure why the number of disconnected customers is growing so quickly at PG&E, compared with other utilities in the state. PG&E rate hikes last fall and this spring may have played a role. So may the utility's new SmartMeters.

The advanced electricity and gas meters, being installed throughout Northern and Central California, allow PG&E to shut off service via a wireless signal, without sending an electrician to the home. The easier process may be leading to more shut-offs, said Dana Appling, director of the utility commission's Division of Ratepayer Advocates, which issued the report.

"All they have to do is flip a switch," she said, adding that her division doesn't have solid proof that the meters are leading to more disconnections.

[Consolidation to hit solar in 2010: BP Solar](#)

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - More consolidation could hit the solar power industry in 2010, as tough competition and falling prices whittle away companies that are sitting on high cost assets and loaded with debt, the chief executive of BP Solar told Reuters on Thursday.

BP Solar, a unit of BP Plc, and other solar companies are seeing demand for the renewable energy systems pick up after a dismal year of difficult financing and a tumble in panel prices, but panel prices will continue to drop.

[Vermont Yankee nuclear plant critics renew campaign to block 20-year license extension](#)



BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) — Hoping to sway lawmakers, two of the state's most famous residents and one of its former governors joined groups opposed to the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant in announcing a push for Town Meeting Day votes on whether the plant should keep operating past 2012.

Ice cream icons Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield and former Gov. Phil Hoff lent their voices to those who want the Legislature to turn thumbs down on Vermont Yankee's request for a 20-year license extension.

[What Peak Oil Can Do for Climate Change](#)

With all eyes focused on the Copenhagen climate summit in less than three weeks, perhaps its time for the peakists to find a new purpose.

The reason is simple. Money isn't interested in problems; it's only interested in solutions. And wherever capital goes is where the changes will be made.

[Industrialized Nations Unveil Plans to Rein in Emissions](#)

With less than three weeks remaining before negotiators gather in Copenhagen to hammer out a global response to climate change, a rapid-fire succession of countries are unveiling national plans that serve as opening bids for reining in heat-trapping emissions.

[U.N. Report Calls for More Environmental Protection in Wartime](#)

A report released this month by the United Nations Environment Program and the Environmental Law Institute calls for stronger international laws to protect the environment during times of war.

The report found that although existing laws of war — including aspects of the Geneva Convention — address environmental protection, their wording is imprecise. Strengthening, enforcing and clarifying existing legislation could help protect “natural assets” during wars, the study says.

[Cuba tries to keep the lights on](#): *Cuba gets plenty of oil from Venezuela. So why is it adopting "extreme measures" to avoid blackouts?*

But just as Cuba’s petroleum trade has soared, revenue is plummeting from other key exports like nickel, pharmaceuticals and tobacco products. Foreign trade is down 36 percent this year, as the global recession and \$10 billion in damage from three 2008 hurricanes have drained Cuba’s finances.

Thus, analysts say, the more oil Cuba can save, the more it can sell abroad.

“I think it is actually a prudent effort on the part of the government that acknowledges the reality that Cuba is in dire need of hard currency,” said Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado, a U.S. expert on Cuban energy at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

“The extent to which they can conserve or curb consumption in order to reserve refined fuels for re-export is logical, but yet another hardship for the people,” he added.

[Valero to Permanently Close Delaware City Refinery as Demand Declines](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Valero Energy Corp. said it will permanently close its Delaware City, Delaware, refinery because of losses at the plant.

[Pennsylvania residents sue over gas drilling](#)

DIMOCK, Pennsylvania (Reuters) - Residents of a small rural Pennsylvania town sued Cabot Oil & Gas Corp (COG.N) on Friday, claiming the company's natural-gas drilling has contaminated their water wells with toxic chemicals, caused sickness and reduced their property values.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Pennsylvania, accuses the company of violating state environmental laws by allowing drilling chemicals to escape from gas wells, where they are used in a technique called hydraulic fracturing.

[Total Says Shtokman Natural Gas Start Delayed 2 Years](#)

Shtokman, a natural gas field in Russia's Arctic waters that is one of the world's largest gas deposits, will start producing two years later than OAO Gazprom's planned launch date, according to one of the partners in the megaproject.

[Shell seeks to reassure analysts on major projects](#)

Royal Dutch Shell Plc will aim to reassure investors on the costs and profitability of its Pearl gas-to-liquids and QatarGas projects during a field trip for analysts.

[Moscow's Leash](#)

Many analysts think that Gazprom's "grip" on Europe has loosened. The company has been battered by the economic crisis, while the Continent is now coping with a glut of natural gas rather than scrambling for resources. But this is a cyclical crisis, not a structural one. Europe still needs gas, and Gazprom still wants to sell it. And although the times have changed, Europe's energy challenges have not gone away.

[China refiners agree 12 pct rise in 2010 Saudi imports](#)

BEIJING/SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Chinese oil firms have agreed to buy a total of about 1.04 million barrels per day of crude from Saudi Arabia under a term pact finalised for 2010, roughly 12 percent above the 2009 contract level, trading sources told Reuters.

The pace of growth quickens from a rate of under 10 percent seen this year over 2008, as demand in the world's No.2 oil consumer looks poised to recover more on the back of China's solid economic expansion.

[FACTBOX - India's crude imports by country in Apr-Sept 2009](#)

(Reuters) - India imported 68.3 percent of its crude oil requirements during April-September from the Middle East, with Iran topping the chart followed by Saudi Arabia, government data showed on Friday.

[BP, ConocoPhillips Reduce 2010 Spending Plans in Alaska](#)

BP and ConocoPhillips have reduced their capital spending and developmental budgets for Alaska in 2010 because of higher costs to produce mature fields, disappointing exploratory results and the state's new tax regime, the companies said.

[Energy's the topic of the week](#)

If I could sum up one theme that spoke for the entire week of events, it would be this: innovation.

Dr Yergin, chairman of the IHS Cambridge Energy Research Associates and author of a prize-winning book on the history of the oil industry aptly noted that while the 20th century was the century of oil, the 21st century will be the century of energy innovation.

"This intense push for innovation is drive by two powerful forces - the quest for clean energy and the need to provide energy for economic growth," he said.

[Electricity imports hit France's energy autonomy](#)

France has for decades been fiercely proud of its world-beating nuclear industry but is now having to import electricity from its neighbours and could face blackouts this winter.

News of the imports prompted the environmental group Greenpeace to say Wednesday that this was further proof that France's policy of producing three quarters of its electricity from nuclear power was a big mistake.

France decided after the 1970s oil crises to rapidly expand its nuclear power capacity in order to build up reliable energy supplies, and has long exported power to its neighbours.

But ever-rising demand for electricity combined with ageing nuclear reactors have brought that policy under increasing scrutiny.

[El Nino intensifies Latin America drought](#)

MONTEVIDEO — From a devastating food crisis in Guatemala to water cuts in Venezuela, El Nino has compounded drought damage across Latin America this year.

[Blackout in Brazil: The Problems With Hydropower](#)

It's everyone's worst nightmare: being caught in an underground subway in the midst of a power outage. Yet, that is exactly what happened recently when Brazilian commuters in the city of São Paulo were trapped inside trains and literally had to be pulled out of subway cars. In addition to sparking problems in public transport, the blackout or apagão led to hospital emergencies and the shutting down of several airports. In all the power outage darkened approximately half of the South American nation, affecting sixty million people.

In recent years Brazil has become an economic powerhouse yet the blackout exposed

vulnerabilities in the country's infrastructure. In the wake of the power outage, government officials intent on sustaining high economic growth have tried to figure out what might have gone wrong with the country's electrical grid. Initial reports blamed the power outage on the massive Itaipu hydroelectric dam though a spokesperson for the facility said there had been no problem at the plant.

[Sustainability and Social Justice: Do the Math](#)

According to data compiled by the UN, the Global Footprint Network, and Dr. William Rees at the University of British Columbia, total human consumption already exceeds the Earth's capacity by 30 per cent. This is known as biological 'overshoot'. The UN estimates that most natural services to human societies - forests, fish, fresh water and clean air - decline annually. As human population and consumption grow, our collective overshoot increases.

Meanwhile, the wealthy 15 per cent use about 85 per cent of the resources - the total energy and materials - the 'stuff' - that Earth provides. The 'wealthy' includes anyone who has a home, job, transport, access to education, hot showers, convenient fuel and food every day: people in the so-called 'developed' world. If you have those things, you live among the wealthy 15 per cent who use most of the world's resources.

[In Kiribati, a way of life is being washed away](#)

"The contamination of the groundwater started in the late '70s, and after that erosion started and houses started to fall into the sea," recalls Aata Maroieta, the 64-year-old village chief.

"The force of erosion was stronger than the sea walls and eventually the Government said, 'All you can do is relocate.' "

[Peak Oil Files: Why Is Saudi Aramco Building Supercomputers?](#)

The biannual list of the world's 500 fastest computers was released on Tuesday and Aramco had two new entries at No. 119 and No. 134. Both are Dell clusters, running Intel processors and both are very, very fast.

The oil industry uses Concorde-jet speed computing to aid its understanding of underground reservoirs and to look for new sources of oil and gas. Aramco used another computer cluster to build a "full field model" of the Safaniya oilfield in 2008.

Clearly, Aramco is taking a sophisticated approach to understanding its remaining oil resources. And peak oilers will likely argue that Aramco's interest in teraflops is a sign that it needs all the help it can get to ensure oil keeps flowing out of its once mighty fields. After all, why bother throwing so much muscle into understanding the reservoir if there

were no worries about its future performance.

[IEA provides a rosy supply of crude](#)

The International Energy Association (IEA) released its World Energy Outlook to controversy on Nov. 10. The U.K.-based Guardian newspaper quotes IEA sources admitting the agency's figures for future oil production were inflated because of U.S. pressure. The two separate sources within the IEA want to remain anonymous because they feared reprisals. Now why does this matter?

Put simply, future oil shortages are being downplayed. In 2005, the IEA predicted daily oil production would rise to 120 million barrels by 2030. But harsh criticism forced the agency to cut this estimate a number of times until finally, in 2008, the IEA claimed the world oil production would be 105 million barrels a day by 2030.

[Crude prices follow world markets downward: Still, with oil near \\$80 per barrel, consumers are starting to feel the pinch](#)

NEW YORK - A global sell-off on equity markets dragged down crude prices by nearly 3 percent Thursday, the first decline this week.

..."Bottom line, the race is on; between falling demand and falling production," analyst Stephen Schork said. "Regardless of the outcome, one result is almost guaranteed ... the consumer will lose. And, given that consumer spending is responsible for more than two-thirds of the U.S. economy, that does not bode well for the strength of the incipient recovery."

[Macquarie Says Crude Oil May Fall to About \\$60 Next Quarter](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil prices may fall to about \$60 a barrel in this and next quarter on weak demand from developed countries and growing inventories, Macquarie's oil economist Jan Stuart said today.

[Analysts Split on Direction of Crude Oil Prices, Survey Shows](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News were split over whether crude oil prices will fall or be little changed next week amid a weak dollar and ample fuel supplies.

Ten of 27 analysts, or 37 percent, said futures will drop through Nov. 27. Ten more respondents predicted that oil will be little changed. Seven said futures will rise. Last week, 50 percent of those surveyed said prices would fall.

“I think we’re still in a very well-defined trading range when it comes to oil,” said Phil Flynn, vice president of research at PFGBest in Chicago. “Oil just can’t stay above \$80 a barrel, but by the same token it can’t seem to stay below \$77.”

[Russia Waives Ukraine Gas Fine, Easing Threat of Supply Cuts](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Russia agreed to waive fines on Ukraine for consuming less gas than contracted and said it would renegotiate volumes for next year, easing a threat to shipments of the fuel to Europe.

“We made a decision not to impose penalties, and I want to confirm it in public,” Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said at a meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart Yulia Timoshenko yesterday in Yalta, Ukraine. “Despite agreements reached earlier on volumes, to avoid sanctions next year it was decided that OAO Gazprom and NAK Naftogaz Ukrainy will agree on new volumes.”

[Russian transit gas via Ukraine down 26.4%](#)

Transit of Russian gas via Ukraine to Europe fell by 26.4% 74.5 billion cubic metres in the January to October 2009 period from 101.2 Bcm in the same period in 2008, Ukraine's Fuel and Energy Ministry said today.

European countries have cut energy consumption as industrial activity has fallen due to a global economic slowdown.

[Obama administration pauses on Alaska drilling](#)

WASHINGTON – The Obama administration has delayed a decision on a request by Shell Oil Co. to drill for oil and gas in Alaska's rugged Chukchi Sea. The delay came after the oil company asked for time to respond to criticism of its plan to drill in the icy sea, a prime habitat for threatened polar bears.

Marvin Odum, president of Shell Oil Co., the U.S. unit of Royal Dutch Shell, denied Thursday that the oil company had requested the delay.

But a letter from the Minerals Management Service, an arm of the Interior Department, says Shell asked for a chance to respond to a deluge of public comments submitted to the agency about the proposal to drill off Alaska's Northwest coast.

[Kazakh Credit Risk Drops Most in World as Oil Revives Economy](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Kazakhstan is regaining bond investor confidence faster than any other country as rising oil prices spur an economic rebound.

[Angola sees boost in oil money](#)

Angola's oil revenues from taxes and fees charged to oil companies operating in the African nation are expected to rise to \$16.6 billion in 2010 from \$15.7 billion this year, according to the country's draft budget plan.

Angola, which rivals Nigeria as Africa's biggest oil producer, has calculated the oil revenues based on an average oil price of \$58 dollars per barrel for 2010.

[Angola: Senator Lugar Hails New Chapter in U.S.-Angolan Relations](#)

Lugar noted that Angola is an important trading partner for the United States, primarily because of its oil and gas. He said Angola has now eclipsed Nigeria as the largest oil and gas producer in Africa. "Angola has demonstrated the vitality of its petroleum industries, which operate on the cutting edge of technology in deep-water oil fields off coast. On the strength of this oil extraction, Angola has maintained an average GDP growth of more than 14 percent per year since 2002. Nonetheless," he said, "Angola remains near the bottom of the U.N.'s Human Development Index," which tracks the economic well-being of a country's population.

He cited estimates that Angola may be within five to 10 years of reaching peak oil production and, therefore, he stressed the need for diversifying the country's economy in the long term, to establish alternative sources of income. Angola's success in diversifying its economy, he said, will depend on "expanding the important progress already made towards deepening democratic governance, improving public transparency, creating a business environment that is unambiguous in its law and its practice."

[Housing bust halts growing suburbs](#)

The recession and housing collapse have halted four decades of double-digit growth for nearly half of the nation's biggest rapidly expanding suburbs.

Twenty-four of the 53 cities of 100,000 or more that grew by at least 10% every decade since 1970 lost population in the last two years.

[Cargill warns on self-sufficiency](#)

The drive towards self-sufficiency in response to last year's food crisis will fail, a top

executive at Cargill has warned, adding that the idea that countries "can be self-sufficient in every single food is a nonsense".

The warning by the world's largest trader of agricultural commodities comes ahead of next Monday's UN World Summit on Food Security in Rome, the first since 2002. The summit was prompted by the surge in the price of staples such as rice and wheat, which last year hit record highs, sparking food riots in countries from Bangladesh to Haiti.

[LCC threats: The Environment, fuel prices, aircraft financing and fees & taxes](#)

Inevitably, fuel prices are critical to the shape of the industry. For the lower cost carriers, fuel constitutes a higher proportion of costs and LCCs are consequently more sensitive to substantial input price increases. As jet fuel prices went through USD170 a barrel last year and rising, many LCCs were becoming seriously compromised. Peak oil promises to threaten the basic model again, as economies recover.

Even at today's depressed levels of economic activity, oil prices are hovering around USD70, partly on speculation, partly due to production and refining issues. Once prices rise above these levels, there is a steep reduction in the value proposition of LCCs vs full service airlines.

[Gold Investing Expert: Bob Moriarty Goes on Record Part II](#)

Peak oil is real and the only thing preventing \$200 a barrel oil right now is a recession that is morphing into a depression. Energy of all sorts is good.

Food is an analog of energy so agriculture is good.

Uranium is the only reasonable replacement for oil but we have waited for too long to recognize peak oil and we are going to pay for that error of judgment.

[Chris Nelder, logi Energy-China: The Vampire Squid of Commodities, Part One](#)

In his presentation on China's oil and gas balance, Michael Rodgers of PFC Energy made one thing abundantly clear: China's domestic oil production has nearly peaked, while its demand for oil is only going up.

[CBI boss's memo to Gordon Brown: when you're in a fiscal hole, stop digging](#)

While sanguine about the possibility that the world has passed the point of peak oil, Lambert says the CBI is concerned that action will be needed to prevent energy shortages by 2016-17. "It won't happen because people can see it coming."

[Even in a season of apocalyptic films, these facts are really, really scary](#)

In *Collapse*, Ruppert connects the dots between peak oil, essential human services, alternate energy sources, agricultural production, governments, money interests and strategies for survival. All power points from his recent book, *A Presidential Energy Policy*, Ruppert delivers them in a plain-spoken vocabulary peppered with imaginative analogies. But this is not merely an activist doc intended to support Ruppert's treatise. Smith gives us something much more: a subtle portrait of a man whose sense of duty has affected his personal life.

[Water and Energy Crisis Looms on Horizon](#)

Ocean Energy Institute founder and energy investment banker Matthew Simmons gave an hour-long keynote address at the Island Institute's 2009 Sustainable Island Living conference on Saturday morning at the Strand Theatre in Rockland. Simmons titled his talk "The Gulf of Maine: What Lies Beyond the Fossil Fuel Horizon," but his presentation ranged far outside the Gulf to encompass the globe.

Sporting a delicate windmill as a lapel pin, Simmons started off by reflecting on the concept of sustainability, a current buzzword among energy development experts. "More and more people around the world are beginning to wonder, "Does the globe have a sustainable strategy?" Simmons said. "It's all about sustainability. Sustainability means protecting or improving our living standards. And without abundant water and energy, we are not sustainable," he said. "There's no question that our oceans are energy's last frontier."

[Who cares about peak oil when you have corn cobs?](#)

The nation's biggest ethanol firm says costs for corn-cob biofuel are coming down. But what happens to the soil?

[SAfrica plans new nuclear power station by 2020](#)

PRETORIA (Reuters) - South Africa, plagued by chronic power shortages, plans to have the country's new nuclear power plant up and running by 2020, Energy Minister Dipuo Peters told a nuclear conference on Friday.

State-owned power utility Eskom, which operates Africa's sole nuclear power plant with a total capacity of 1,800 MW, cancelled plans to build a new facility at the end of last year, citing financial constraints.

[Doubts raised on nuclear industry viability](#)

(PhysOrg.com) -- The investment in nuclear power has been growing around the world over the last few years, being viewed as a means for countries to control their energy security, avoid the price fluctuations of other energy sources, and reduce their carbon dioxide emissions, but concerns are now being raised.

A scientist from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology predicts that supplies of uranium are running out and countries relying on imports of uranium may face shortages by 2013, while a *New York Times* journalist suggests new nuclear power plants are an "abysmal" investment that will never pay for itself without government financial support.

[BP Invests \\$3 Billion in Alternative Energy Globally](#)

(Bloomberg) -- BP Plc, Europe's second-biggest oil company, has invested \$3 billion in alternative energy globally and is on course to meet its commitment made in 2005 to spend \$8 billion, said a company official.

London-based BP will focus mainly on wind power projects in the U.S., solar in India and China and biomass in Brazil, BP China President Chen Liming said at a Beijing conference today.

[Beijing to Boost Alternative Energy, Electric Cars](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Beijing plans to build a 70 megawatt solar power plant and a 50 megawatt biomass power plant as part of the city's focus on expanding the use of alternative energy, the capital's Development and Reform Commission said today.

The government will also develop wind power, nuclear power and geothermal power, according to a statement by the commission issued before a news briefing.

[China May Lead Mergers in Asia Clean Energy, Stanchart Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Asia's renewable business led by China may see mergers and acquisitions because of overcapacity, declining raw material prices and multiple players, an official from Standard Chartered Plc said.

"There will be consolidation in the wind and solar sector in the near future, predominantly in China," said Brad Sterley, director, renewable energy and environmental finance. "The renewable energy market is very fragmented in the manufacturing sector."

[China May Increase Wind Turbine Exports, Morgan Stanley Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China may increase wind turbine sales to the U.S. and Europe because of lower domestic demand and an overcapacity in manufacturing, threatening global makers, an official at Morgan Stanley said.

Power grid constraints in China may leave as much as 4 gigawatts of wind power generation capacity lying idle, slowing further additions in producing electricity from wind, said Sunil Gupta, managing director for Asia and head of clean energy at Morgan Stanley in Singapore. As much as 40 percent of China's wind power generating capacity may be unutilized, he said.

[Md. regulators approve Garret County wind farm](#)

BALTIMORE – The Maryland Public Service Commission has approved an application to build a 50-megawatt wind energy farm atop Backbone Mountain near Oakland in Garrett County.

[Geothermal Needs Support: Industry](#)

Indonesia needs to relax its laws to make it easier to explore for geothermal energy in protected forests if it is going to meet a target of lifting electricity demand from renewables, an industry official says.

[Cabinet approves solar power programme](#)

NEW DELHI (Reuters) – India's cabinet on Thursday approved its first solar power plan, pledging to boost output from near zero to 20 gigawatts (GW) by 2020 as part of its plan to fight global warming.

[Shun beef to stop climate change, says India](#)

NEW DELHI (AFP) – India, a stronghold of vegetarianism where the cow is a sacred animal for the majority Hindu population, has urged the rest of the world to give up eating beef to help reduce global warming.

"The single most important cause of (carbon) emissions is eating beef," Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said during a speech on Thursday, his office told AFP.

[Sex, food, and climate change](#)

Roughly two centuries ago, British thinker Thomas Malthus famously predicted that human overpopulation would result in food shortages and mass famine. "The power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man," he said. For a long time, his idea that mass famine would overtake humanity was rejected out of hand by those who pointed to industrial agriculture and vastly increased crop yields. Industrial agriculture proved him wrong, or so the textbooks said.

Malthus's ideas are now back in vogue as global food futures are uncertain, due to a devastating combination of fresh water depletion; drought caused by climate change; the collapse of the world's oceans; an increase in fuel prices (as global oil supplies peak); soil erosion caused by excessive pesticide use; and the replacement of agricultural lands by biofuel crops.

[NY AG: AES Corp. agrees to pollution disclosures](#)

NEW YORK – AES Corp., which operates several coal-fired power plants in the U.S., has agreed to put more information about global warming in its public financial disclosures.

New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo said Thursday that AES, based in Arlington, Va., is the latest power company to agree to give investors more information about pollution.

[Energy leaders back climate change deal](#)

GENEVA (AFP) – Energy industry leaders on Thursday called for an international deal on climate change to tackle financial uncertainty and prevent potentially catastrophic global warming.

"The climate framework is the top long term issue," World Energy Council (WEC) Secretary General Christoph Frei told a UN conference on energy security.

[Harvard Finds Kidney Stones, Malaria Among Global-Warming Risks](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Kidney stones, malaria, Lyme disease, depression and respiratory illness all may increase with global warming, researchers at Harvard Medical School said.

Climate change from the burning of fossil fuels will add to risks to public health, said Paul Epstein, associate director of Harvard's Center for Health and the Global Environment in Boston. The center and groups led by the American Medical Association are presenting data at a briefing today in Washington as a call for action to curb emissions.

[Scientists baffled by global warming's time-out](#)

Temperatures haven't risen this decade, as climatologists expected. Is it sunspots? Ocean currents? Secret volcano?

[Melting sea ice dilutes water, endangers sea life](#)

HONG KONG (Reuters) – Melting of the Arctic sea ice due to global warming is diluting surface waters and this is endangering some species of shellfish which need minerals in the water to form their shells and skeletons, scientists have found.

In a paper published in Science, they warned that this has serious implications for ecosystems in the Arctic.



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