



Drumbeat: December 17, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on December 17, 2009 - 9:14am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Unplugging from the world's power lines](#)

London, England (CNN) -- You won't hear much about it in the vast conference halls of the Copenhagen climate change summit, but living "off-grid" -- beyond the water and power lines that intersect much of the modern world -- could hold a solution to some of the planet's worst environmental woes.

Initially adopted by hippies and environmental mavericks, the pioneering lifestyle has grown to attract thousands of devotees who choose to live completely independently of the local utilities power grid and instead generate their own electricity and water.

Some begin their off-grid quest out of environmental concerns and some see it as an antidote to rocketing energy prices and fears of economic collapse. Others simply want to be independent.

days ahead of a meeting of the group in Luanda, Angola.

"It's a fair price that allows investments to be maintained to keep supply and demand satisfied," Rodriguez, a former president of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, said today in an interview in Caracas.

[Petrobras Cleared of Wrongdoing by Brazilian Senate](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleo Brasileiro SA, Brazil's state-controlled oil producer, was cleared of wrongdoing by a Senate committee investigating fraud allegations.

The Senate panel approved its final report in a vote today. The report recommended that Petrobras, as the Rio de Janeiro-based company is known, change some cost calculations and sponsorship practices.

[Jordan Cover LNG terminal wins federal approval](#)

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on Thursday approved plans for a

proposed Coos Bay liquefied natural gas terminal.

[The End of the Oil Age is Coming](#)

Chuck Taylor has held senior management positions with Nabisco Brands, Ryder System Inc., Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad, Mercer Management Consultants, Tri Valley Growers, American National Can, ServiceCraft Logistics, and Norbridge Inc., and recently founded an organization called Awake! He founded Awake! out of concern the supply chain profession is not informed about the critical changes facing it with the end of cheap oil. One goal is to raise awareness so supply chain professionals will understand the stakes and take an active role in shaping energy policy.

[John Michael Greer - The Political Ecology of Collapse, Part Two: Weishaupt's Fallacy](#)

The systems movement, to coin a label for the heterogeneous group of thinkers and policy wonks that made systems theory its banner, had ambitions no less audacious than the neoconservatives, though aimed in a completely different direction. Their dream was world systems management. Such leading figures in the movement as Jay Forrester of MIT and Aurelio Peccei of the Club of Rome agreed that humanity's impact on the planet had become so great that methods devised for engineering and corporate management – in which, not coincidentally, they were expert – had to be put to work to manage the entire world.

The study that led to the 1973 publication of *The Limits to Growth* was one product of this movement. Sponsored by Peccei's Club of Rome and carried out by a team led by one of Forrester's former Ph.D. students, it applied systems theory to the task of making sense of the future, and succeeded remarkably well. As Graham Turner's study "A Comparison Of The Limits to Growth With Thirty Years of Reality" (CSIRO, 2008) points out, the original study's baseline "Standard Run" scenario matches the observed reality of the last three and a half decades far more exactly than rival scenarios.

It's not often remembered, though, that the Club of Rome followed up *The Limits to Growth* with a series of further studies, all basically arguing that the problems outlined in the original study could be solved by planetary management on the part of a systems-savvy elite. The same notions can be found in dozens of similar books from the same era – indeed, it's hard to think of a systems thinker with any public presence in the 1970s who didn't publish at least one book proposing some kind of worldwide systems management as the only alternative to a very messy future.

[Iran slams U.S. as 'oil-addicted warmonger' at Copenhagen](#)

COPENHAGEN -- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad lashed the United States on Thursday as an oil-addicted warmonger and insisted all the world's nations should have access to "clean and renewable energy sources" including nuclear power.

"For about a century, oil has constituted the basic and strategic components of U.S. security foreign policy, the same role it played for the previous empires," Mr. Ahmadinejad said at the UN climate talks in Copenhagen.

"During this period, oil-rich regions of the world became the theatres of wars and military adventurism that led to foreign domination on their energy resources."

[China welcomes U.S. climate cash offer](#)

COPENHAGEN (Reuters) - China said on Thursday a U.S. pledge to mobilize \$100 billion a year in climate funds was a "good step," and signaled Beijing was seeking compromise with Washington on its demand for checks on Chinese emissions curbs.

[Danish Students Say Design Drives Sustainable Behavior](#)

COPENHAGEN — As negotiators gather in Copenhagen to mull the future of the planet, a Danish design school is mounting the argument that, as it relates to reducing the environmental impact of consumption, function follows form.

...“What drives people is their desire, and we don’t believe in telling people what to do or not to do,” said Elsebeth Gerner Nielsen, the school’s chancellor, during a tour of the exhibition. “But if we can talk to their heart, and present some beautiful and well designed products we can get a lot further when it comes to changing consumer habits in favor of the environment.”

[He Delivers Christmas Trees for Rent](#)

TORRANCE, Calif. — It is a nibble weird that a guy who describes his relationship to Christmas as “hostile” runs around greater Los Angeles in a floppy red Santa hat and answers his iPhone, “Merry Christmas, this is Scotty Claus!”

But bummed as false merriment and gift obligations render him, Scott Martin — landscape architect and tree hugger in a literal sense — was unnerved by the sight of post-Christmas trees lying about like so much discarded sausage casing.

What people really ought to do, he reasoned, was rent a Christmas tree, and return it, alive, to the nursery after the season.

[Foes Unite to Support Bill on Old-Growth Forests](#)

Calling a truce in a long and bitter battle, timber executives and environmentalists united Wednesday in supporting legislation to codify and expand current protections for

old-growth forests on federal land in eastern Oregon.

[Weather Device Also Tracks Greenhouse Gas](#)

A satellite instrument designed to improve weather forecasts has provided a wealth of data on the flow of heat-trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, scientists said Tuesday.

The data also verified a mechanism in which rising temperatures increase the rate of ocean evaporation, and the increased water vapor, also a potent greenhouse gas, raises the earth's temperatures further.

[Unplugging from the world's power lines](#)

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[Oil, gas co's to hike new project spending-survey](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Global spending on oil and gas exploration and production will rise 11 percent to \$439 billion in 2010, reversing a drop in spending in 2009 as energy prices climb, according to a survey conducted by analysts at Barclays Capital.

The increase shown by the survey of 387 oil and gas producers follows the drop in spending of 15 percent in 2009 from the previous year, when oil prices reached a record high.

The Barclays' analysts said spending in the United States is expected to rise by 12 percent to \$79 billion, while Canadian budgets will rise by 23 percent to \$23 billion.

Outside North America, spending is expected to rise 10 percent to \$337 billion, largely driven by national oil companies, the analysts said.

[Fire halves Suncor's oil sands upgrader output](#)

TORONTO (Reuters) - Suncor Energy Inc said on Thursday output at its oil sands upgrader located north of Fort McMurray, Alberta will be cut in half after a brief fire in one of the two units on Tuesday.

The company said that it expects output to be reduced by about 120,000 to 150,000 barrels per day during the two to four weeks it takes to repair the unit, Upgrader 2.

[Economist warns homeowners of bubble trouble](#)

The author of "Why Your World is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller: Oil and the End of Globalization" told Reuters that long-dormant inflation rates will soon pick up, thanks to energy prices, leaving central banks little option but to start tightening.

"This is an inflationary world, not a deflationary world, and today's interest rates are a total head fake," he said.

['Generation Limits': An Open Letter to Teenagers](#)

Note from the author: As a peak-oil/climate-aware high school Chemistry teacher, every day is a balance between (1) imparting the daily Chemistry lesson in an effective and entertaining manner, (2) telling the kids the hard, scary truth about our civilization's predicament without crushing their hopes and dreams for a livable future, and (3) offering some ideas about what we could do to help the situation.

Overall, my part-gloomy/part-hopeful message has mixed success with the kids. Some of them couldn't care less. Some of them don't want to hear it at all. But some of them respond with a sincere concern. And this sincere concern sometimes even blossoms into constructive thought and concrete action to address our predicament. So I think I'm having at least some net positive effect. Maybe.

[IHS Examines Investment Perspective In Future Of Energy](#)

"It's now the morning after for the energy world," comment Daniel Yergin, chairman, IHS CERA. "The economic black cloud of the Great Recession has begun to lift and now it is possible to begin to identify the changes to the energy landscape. CERAWEEK 2010 will provide participants with the perspectives to understand what may be ahead in the new energy future."

[Brittany and Paca power cut warning](#)

HOMES in Brittany and Paca are facing power cuts for the next few days as the electricity supply network struggles to cope with increased demand in the cold weather.

EDF's distribution arm, RTE, is advising people in the two regions – which produce very little electricity of their own – to cut down their usage around the peak time of 19.00 to prevent the system falling over.

[The Philippines: DOE urges public use of CFL to save energy](#)

The DOE official said Negros Oriental and other parts of the Visayas are experiencing power supply shortage may be due to an economic growth as this corresponds demand of power, "the power demand can be deferred if we can help avoid increase of power use."

Thus, DOE urges power consumers to change their incandescent bulbs (IBs) to CFL as the latter is more energy efficient which means one pays less for monthly electric bills and save the environment.

[Universal approach towards waste issue](#)

This week the International Atomic Energy Agency held a workshop on the safety and licensing of radioactive waste disposal in Cape Town. More than 90 international experts participated in the one-day event, which looked towards the harmonization of international safety standards for radioactive waste disposal.

Although the technical solutions for waste disposal exist, what is missing is a uniform, international approach to this issue at a normative level. In particular, as a number of countries are moving towards the licensing of geological disposal facilities, the potential benefit of having an internationally harmonized approach to the safety demonstration and licensing process is clearly emerging.

[Chevron Focuses on Deepwater Amid Scramble for Onshore Gas](#)

Chevron Corp. is giving priority to developing hydrocarbon resources in the depths of the sea, while Exxon Mobil Corp. and other oil giants scramble for onshore natural gas assets.

[Ukraine's gas bill set to rise](#)

The price of Russian gas for Ukraine is likely to reach \$300 to \$310 per 1000 cubic metres in the first quarter of next year, up from this quarter's price of \$208 per Mcm, the Russian gas giant Gazprom's Ukrainian unit said.

[TNK-BP's Future Chief Plans to Increase Output](#)

TNK-BP plans to keep expanding oil output even as the rest of the industry stagnates, thanks to a fat portfolio of new fields, said Maxim Barsky, who will run the venture.

[Green building comes of age](#)

Green building is finally coming of age. Building sustainable, energy-efficient homes became a fad during the 1970s energy crisis, bolstered by tax incentives for solar energy and growing environmental awareness. But its popularity faded as oil prices dropped, tax breaks were rolled back, and an economy of excess kicked in during the booming '90s. Green became just a color to many in the culture.

But due to concerns about possible climate change, the recent spikes in oil prices, and a set of new tax incentives, green building has undergone a resurgence in the past two years.

[Stimulus Phase 2: Infrastructure and jobs](#)

Top White House advisers said Wednesday that most of the economic stimulus spent so far has helped prop up the states, paying for food stamps, Medicaid and filling budget gaps that kept police officers, firefighters and teachers employed.

In 2010, most of the remaining recovery spending will be funneled into projects that build roads, lay high speed rail, install broadband in rural areas and fund research at health institutions.

[Roll up, roll up to see the Irish perpetual motion machine!](#)

Remember that zany Irish company Steorn, who claimed to have built a working perpetual motion machine that could produce clean, free energy out of a few magnets and some plastic discs? Well, they're back again. Undeterred by the fact that their own hand-picked jury of scientific judges unanimously agreed that the technology didn't work, Steorn has put its Orbo perpetual motion machine out for public display, and set up web feeds through which you can watch the thing in motion. But the demonstration has failed to impress critics, and for good reasons.

[ON STAGE: A capsule look at area theater productions](#)

JAN. 9

BIG SLIDE: James Howard Kunstler's three-act apocalyptic vision of early 21st century America will be presented in a staged reading by actors from the Greater Rochester Repertory Companies Inc. Kunstler, a graduate of Brockport State College, is scheduled to be in attendance at the performance, where he will introduce the play and answer questions after the reading. Set in the autumn of an unspecified near-future, three generations of the Freeman family have taken refuge at an Adirondack "great camp" after some kind of severe national political maelstrom, that may involve a coup d'etat in the white House and the uprising of local militias. The one-time only reading is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Jan. 9 at MuCCC, 142 Atlantic Ave., Rochester. Admission is "pay what you can"; for more information, go to www.muccc.org.

[Bill McKibben: Only the numbers count – and they add up to hell on earth](#)

Climate Interactive's software speaks numbers, not spin – which is where the true understanding of the Copenhagen summit lies

[Why Britain faces a bleak future of food shortages](#)

Britain faces a 'perfect storm' of water shortage and lack of food, says the government's chief scientist, and climate change and crop and animal diseases will add to future woes. Science is now striving to find solutions.

[Iran defiant in face of new US gasoline sanctions](#)

New US sanctions on international companies that sell gasoline to Iran would raise Tehran's energy bill but won't devastate the Iranian economy, say financial analysts in the Islamic Republic.

Iranian government officials were defiant Wednesday, saying that the country has many suppliers.

"If any refiners or trading houses for any reason can not supply us gasoline... we will refer to our long list of suppliers and find others – as we have always done – and work with them. There is nothing to stop us from going from one region to another to obtain gasoline," says Hojatollah Ghanimifard, the National Iranian Oil Company's deputy director for investment affairs, in a phone interview from Tehran.

[Sinopec Group May Increase 2009 Crude Imports by 8%](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China Petrochemical Corp., the nation's biggest oil refiner known as Sinopec Group, may boost its crude-oil imports by 8 percent this year as the economic recovery increased energy demand.

The Beijing-based parent company of Hong Kong-listed China Petroleum & Chemical Corp. will likely purchase 138 million metric tons, or about 2.8 million barrels a day, of crude from outside China in 2009, Sinopec Group said in a statement posted on its in-house newsletter today. That accounts for 71 percent of the nation's estimated total imports of 195 million tons.

[China's November Crude Oil Stockpiles May Have Fallen, OGP Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China's crude stockpiles at the end of November are forecast to have fallen 1.3 percent from a month earlier, according to China Oil, Gas & Petrochemicals.

Crude oil inventories may have dropped to 37.5 million metric tons at the end of last month from about 38 million tons at the end of October as crude runs outpaced apparent consumption, according to the fortnightly newsletter dated Dec. 15 published by the official Xinhua News Agency, without saying where it got the information.

[China Trumps Gazprom](#)

Up until last spring, Gazprom had pursued a policy of importing all available gas from Central Asia at almost any price based on the wishful assessments of trends in European and U.S. demand and in the valuation of its main product. The collapse of oil prices in late 2008 took Gazprom completely by surprise. Then it was hit by two more surprises: a sharp drop in demand on the European market in the first quarter of 2009 and an even deeper contraction of the U.S. market, which has become saturated with domestic shale gas.

Gazprom was slow to respond to these challenges, and it still has no answers sticking to the doubtful axiom that "the era of cheap hydrocarbons is over." But one fact is indisputable: After Gazprom agreed in July 2008 to import gas from Central Asia based on high European prices, every cubic meter of gas that it imported from the region was a net loss on the company's books. As the international economic crisis gained steam and global demand for energy resources dropped dramatically, Gazprom could no longer afford to buy gas at these high prices. But it was unthinkable to raise this issue with Kazakhstan, and political relations with Uzbekistan were too delicate to back out of the gas deal. Therefore, it was Turkmenistan by default that had to take the blow alone. The explosion on the pipeline near the Turkmen-Uzbek border in April inflicted little material damage, but it was used as a pretext to put a complete stop to all Turkmen gas imports. The flow was restored in November after Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov's visit to Moscow, but Russia bluntly refused to honor the "take-or-pay" provision in the contract.

[Canada Inflation Quickens to 1% on Gas, Fastest in Eight Months](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Canadian consumer prices rose at a 1 percent annual pace in November,

the fastest in eight months, as a slump in gasoline costs linked to the global recession ended.

Retail gasoline prices increased 14 percent from a year earlier compared with October's annual decline of 13 percent, Statistics Canada said today in Ottawa. Housing was the only major component of eight to decline in November. Economists surveyed by Bloomberg News had expected overall inflation to gain 0.8 percent, based on the median of 22 forecasts.

[Conventional gas players overlooked](#)

CALGARY - Exxon Mobil Corp. further amplified the excitement around unconventional natural gas producers this week, with a US\$41-billion takeover of XTO Energy Inc. that runs counter to the company's character. But perhaps investors should look where Exxon did not - at the unfashionable conventional players.

[China, India Demand May Boost Thermal Coal Price, JPMorgan Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Demand for thermal coal from China and India may boost prices of the fuel to \$80 a metric ton next year amid reduced supplies and lower inventories, JPMorgan Chase & Co. said in a report.

Prices of coal burnt at power stations may rise to \$85 a ton in 2011 from \$70 this year, JP Morgan said in a report today. China and India may import a combined 63.9 million tons of thermal coal next year and 56.4 million tons in 2011, it said. Power-station coal prices at Newcastle port, a benchmark for Asia, fell 0.7 percent to \$79.90 a metric ton in the week ended Dec. 11, according to the global COAL NEWC Index.

"Supply will be tight in the next two years," Stevanus Juanda, a Jakarta-based analyst for JP Morgan, said in the report. "In the second half of 2009, we have observed sizable imports of coal by China, due to the closure of mines in the Shanxi region and rise in electricity generation."

[Iraq Is Wild Card in World Oil Supply](#)

Ten years ago, U.S. Energy Secretary Bill Richardson was hinting at a potential release of oil from the country's strategic reserves to cool prices, then at the heady level of \$25 a barrel. As 2009 draws to a close, many regard Friday's price of \$69.87 as a buy.

Surging demand from countries like Brazil, Russia, India and China trashed prevailing wisdom. The BRIC nations accounted for 61% of demand growth over the past decade, according to the International Energy Agency.

As important, however, was a squeeze on supply. The Energy Policy Research Foundation has estimated disruption caused by factors like war and resource

nationalism lowered potential global output by between 2.5 million and 4.5 million barrels per day in the second half of this decade. That is a lot when you consider OPEC's buffer of spare capacity fell below two million barrels per day by mid-2008, when oil prices peaked.

[Japan Drilling Soars in Tokyo Debut on Growth Outlook](#)

Murata said prospects for the offshore drilling market have improved after an oil glut in the 1980s and 1990s made production uneconomical. Companies declined to invest in rigs, leading to an aging stock that is only now being replaced, he said. Large capital investment in rigs means contractors will have to raise fees to cover the outlays, benefiting the industry as a whole, Murata said.

[John Wood Expects Engineering Margins to Stay Under Pressure](#)

(Bloomberg) -- John Wood Group Plc, the U.K.'s largest oilfield-services provider, expects profit margins in its engineering business to remain under pressure early next year and demand to pick up in the second half of 2010.

[Oil sands pushing for regulatory relief](#)

Alberta's export-oriented oil industry is urging Ottawa to provide the same kind of relief from tough climate-change regulations that the politically powerful U.S. coal industry is expected to receive from Washington, a move that would put greater onus for emissions cuts on Canadian consumers and other industries.

And while Ottawa insists no decision has been made, Environment Minister Jim Prentice suggested this week that energy-intensive export-oriented industries may need protection under a federal climate-change plan and refused to rule out extending such benefits to the oil-sands producers.

[Biden tells Obama that 40 million U.S. homes will have smart meters by 2015](#)

A new report by Vice President Biden, which President Obama mentioned briefly in an appearance Tuesday, projects that the number of U.S. homes with smart meters will jump from about 8 million now to 40 million by 2015.

In a memo to Obama, entitled "Progress Report: The Transformation to a Clean Energy Economy," Biden says the Recovery Act will help fund the installation of smart meters in 18 million homes. As of January, he says 8 million homes had such meters, which track energy usage by month, week and even hour.

[Southern Said to Be Positioned for U.S. Nuclear Loan Guarantee](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Southern Co. is positioned to win preliminary approval for a federal loan guarantee to build a nuclear plant, as the U.S. government tries to boost an industry stalled for decades, said two people familiar with the process.

[Israel: Hundreds of companies stuck with solar power systems they can't use](#)

About 200 companies that ordered solar-power systems to generate their own electricity are stuck with systems that the Israel Electric Corporation won't connect to the national grid.

Yesterday the IEC finished a preliminary estimate and concluded that out of the 35-megawatt quota of generation capacity allocated to the business and agricultural sectors, 43 have been used. Yes, it's overshot the quota, the utility suspects. So any more companies waiting for their systems to be connected to the national grid will just have to wait for the government to decide on its next policy move.

[Company Plans To Pull Solar Energy From Orbit](#)

The Solaren Corporation wants to produce solar power in space. The location's got a lot going for it: there's sunshine 24/7 and the real estate is free.

But the challenges are huge. How do you get all the components in space and connect them once they're there? Scientists have spent decades trying to figure that out.

[That Tap Water Is Legal but May Be Unhealthy](#)

The 35-year-old federal law regulating tap water is so out of date that the water Americans drink can pose what scientists say are serious health risks — and still be legal.

[The spectre at the climate change feast](#)

Today the TaxPayers' Alliance is releasing a new report which sets out the huge and excessive burden that green taxes impose on families and business across the UK.

At the moment, 14 percent of domestic bill costs are the result of climate change policies. Increasing the price of energy hits the poor and elderly hardest - which, in turn, increases poverty and benefit dependency. At the same time, 21 percent of industrial electricity bills are the result of climate change policies. If we want to make our economy less dependent on financial services, driving up a major part of many manufacturing

firms' costs isn't the way to do it.

[Medvedev Signs Climate Doctrine as Copenhagen Prospects Fade](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Russia President Dmitry Medvedev signed a climate change doctrine for the world's largest supplier of oil and gas, even as prospects for a political agreement at a climate summit in Copenhagen fade.

"We realize that signing a global agreement in Copenhagen is virtually impossible," Arkady Dvorkovich, the president's top economic adviser, told reporters in Moscow today. "But we need a road map for the coming months so that we can reach an agreement."

[Clinton arrives in Copenhagen to stake US claim in deal of the century](#)

With Hillary Clinton's sudden appearance at the Copenhagen summit at its moment of crisis – and the prospect of billions in cash – America today lays claim to the role of lead broker in what could be the deal of the century.

Clinton's intervention, on a day that began with the Danish hosts of the talks saying they had given up hope of a deal, allows the US to claim a role in helping to unite countries that were turning on each other.

[Oil spikes, wiping out a week of price declines](#)

NEW YORK - Oil prices rose sharply Wednesday, wiping out a week's worth of declines after the government said supplies of oil and petroleum products dropped much more than expected.

[Six reasons why Earth won't cope for long](#)

4. Peak oil: This month, the International Energy Agency formally predicted global peak oil by 2020. Today, the world burns the equivalent of 82 million barrels of oil every day. Projected growth in energy demand will see this rise to almost 100 million barrels within a decade, but by then, output from the oilfields currently in production will have plummeted to barely a third of that. A massive energy gap is looming, and with discoveries having peaked in the mid-1960s, we are approaching the bottom of the cheap oil barrel. Non-conventional oil, renewables and nuclear will be nowhere near capable of bridging this energy gap in time. The oil shocks of the coming decade will be intense.

[Chevron lands Chubu gas deal, Gorgon sale near end](#)

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Chevron Corp said on Wednesday it closed a deal with Japan's Chubu Electric Power Co for about a fifth of the U.S. oil major's share of natural gas from the massive Gorgon project in Australia.

The Chubu deal includes a 0.417 percent equity stake and 1.44 million metric tons per year of liquefied natural gas from a \$40 billion-plus project that will initially produce 15 million tonnes annually.

[Paraguay-Brazil Energy Treaty Going Nowhere Fast](#)

ASUNCION, Paraguay (AP) -- It's been nearly five months since the presidents of Brazil and Paraguay agreed on a breakthrough deal to triple Paraguay's income from the world's second-largest hydroelectric dam, but the money won't be flowing anytime soon.

[U.S. Oil Production Is Now Up](#)

Mid-Continent shale may have as much as 500 billion barrels of oil (admittedly a wildly optimistic estimate but if so think Saudi Arabia). While it is true that much of this oil may not ever be recoverable, increasing prices and the aforementioned technology is rapidly improving the odds.

[Nigeria Orders 12 Fuel Cargoes to Cover Shortfall](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Nigerian National Petroleum Corp., the state-owned oil company known as NNPC, ordered 12 additional cargoes of oil products to deal with a shortfall.

The company is importing the fuel after 15 retailers didn't use licenses given them "some months back" to import oil products, the state-owned company said in an e-mailed statement, without specifying the cargo types, sizes or expected arrival.

Nigeria, which vies with Angola to be Africa's top oil producer, depends on imports to meet about 80 percent of daily domestic use of about 32 million liters of gasoline, diesel and kerosene. Output from four state-run refineries with combined capacity of 445,000 barrels of crude a day has been cut as militant attacks disrupted pipeline supplies from the Niger Delta oil region, according to the Petroleum Ministry.

[Road projects in Macomb and St. Clair counties shelved](#)

In news that should be surprising to no one, the state has been forced to postpone a long list of road projects due to continued declines in state gas tax revenues and now the state's inability to match federal dollars.

[The Need for Green Engineering](#)

Like putting a name to a face, as an engineer, I like to put real numbers on these challenges. So here are some sobering numbers. World energy consumption is around 11,294,500,000 tons of oil equivalents (TOE) and the UK share of that in 2008 was 212,000,000 TOE according to the BP Statistical Review of World Energy. Some sources calculate that world has used 1006 billion barrels of oil and that there is a little less than this left in the ground. In other words, we have passed “peak oil”. Whilst these figures are fiercely debated, there is no doubt that most of the easily accessible oil has been used and future reserves will be more difficult to access, they are deeper or in more challenging environments. The UK target for energy generation from renewable sources is 15% by 2020, with an interim target of 10% in 2010. In 2008, the proportion was just 2.3%.

Energy demand is only going to increase. World population continues to increase, and more of the world aspires to a western-style, energy hungry lifestyle. But when we are faced with this stark future, why aren't we adopting solutions more quickly. One reason could be the “endowment effect”. As a rule of thumb a new technology needs to be twice as good, 10%-20% improvements will not persuade most people to change.

[India: Govt offers \\$81 mln subsidy for wind power](#)

MUMBAI (Reuters) – The government will offer 3.8 billion rupees (\$81 million) in incentives to wind power projects that feed into the national grid, a move analysts believe will attract large companies.

The country ranked fourth in the world after Germany, Spain and the United States in grid-connected wind projects, with 9,587 megawatt (MW) of capacity in November 2008 that fed over 54 billion units of electricity to the grid, official data showed.

[India's Nuclear Power Plans \\$6.5 Billion Borrowing for Reactors](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Nuclear Power Corp. of India, the nation's monopoly atomic generator, plans to borrow as much as \$6.5 billion to fund six new reactors as the second fastest-growing major economy grapples with power shortages.

The state-run company will raise about 140 billion rupees (\$3 billion) from loans and bonds to build four 700-megawatt plants, Chairman Shreyans Kumar Jain said in a phone interview from Mumbai today. It will also seek about \$3.5 billion in loans for two 1,000-megawatt reactors it's developing in Kudankulam with Russia's Rosatom Corp., he said.

[Small engine shift signals big changes for buyers](#)

It's time to think small. Small engines, that is. As tough as it may be for some U.S. consumers to accept, the world's automakers -- including those selling cars in the United States -- are switching their emphasis to smaller, more efficient engines.

As we move into 2010, this means car buyers will find distinct changes in the nature and selection of engines being offered in showrooms.

Given the long lead times involved in the development of new powertrains, this shift in focus dates back even before the gas price crisis that slammed the U.S. market in 2008.

[Tesla Motors Opens South Florida Store](#)

DANIA BEACH, Fla.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Tesla Motors, the only automaker producing highway-capable EVs will open its doors in Dania Beach on Thursday and offer test drives of the world's leading electric vehicle throughout the weekend.

"South Florida is a strong market and strategic base for Tesla," said Tesla CEO Elon Musk. "The region is establishing itself as an environmental champion from solar street lights to promoting the advancement and adoption of electric vehicles."

[Volvo to trial methane-diesel in trucks](#)

In an effort to reduce fuel consumption and its environmental impact, Volvo Trucks will begin testing heavy duty diesel trucks fuelled by a combination of methane gas and diesel in 2010.

The testing will take place in the UK and Sweden and will start with a mixture of up to 70 per cent methane gas. The remainder will be a bio-mix diesel – fossil diesel mixed with diesel produced from renewable raw materials. The company hopes to run on up to 80-90 per cent methane gas once the technology has been refined and tested.

[Permaculture guru leads the way](#)

For Robyn, a sustainable lifestyle wasn't a choice she made later in life, it was something she grew up with.

"My folks were very resourceful people. They grew up during the Depression on dairy farms here on the North Coast... We had a standard quarter-acre backyard (in Inverell) but it was full of vegie gardens and fruit trees and chickens and ducks and a few hives of bees and a milking goat that we used to tether to mow the neighbours' lawns. Before we got town water we had a 2000-gallon tank we had to survive on. Water was seriously

rationed; half a cup for brushing your teeth. So having a high degree of self reliance was something I grew up with and thought was normal,” she said. “When I finished schooling I spent a few years in Sydney and then went travelling, and that was my real education. What I found particularly fascinating was village culture and the different ways people farmed... I lived for three-and-a-half years in Bavaria not far from Munich. The last of the old traditional farmers were still there farming in their old ways with the rotational crops. The only change was that horses had been replaced with tractors. The only thing they were importing onto their farms was the diesel for their tractors. Their animals provided all the nutrients for the crops.”

[Oil on canvas](#)

Whether seen on the walls of the Corcoran Gallery in Washington or in the accompanying book published by Steidl, the photographs in Oil bring the viewer face to face with huge and troubling questions. How can we go on producing on this scale? How can we go on consuming like this? Aren't we at the point where we say, OK, enough is enough? Is it sustainable, the level of luxury and lavishness to which we have become accustomed? In short, how many more of these high-concept, high-value Edward Burtynsky productions can we take?

[Climate Wizard makes large databases of climate information visual, accessible](#)

A Web tool that generates color maps of projected temperature and precipitation changes using 16 of the world's most prominent climate-change models is being used to consider such things as habitat shifts that will affect endangered species, places around the world where crops could be at risk because of drought and temperatures that could cripple fruit and nut production in California's Great Central Valley.

Climate Wizard, a tool meant for scientists and non-scientists alike, is being demonstrated by The Nature Conservancy in Copenhagen, Denmark, in conjunction with the climate summit underway there. It also is the subject of a presentation Tuesday, Dec. 15, at the American Geophysical Union meeting in San Francisco and a paper just released online by the Public Library of Science's PLoS ONE with Evan Girvetz as lead presenter and lead author. Girvetz worked on Climate Wizard during postdoctoral work at the University of Washington's School of Forest Resources and just accepted a job with The Nature Conservancy.

[U.S. Dairy Industry Plans 25% GHG Emissions Cut by 2020](#)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy are working together to help the U.S. dairy industry reach its goal to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 25 percent over the next decade. One part of the strategy is to turn methane gas from livestock manure into electricity.

[GOP's global warming rumble: Sarah Palin v. Arnold Schwarzenegger](#)

San Francisco – The Sarah Palin-Arnold Schwarzenegger clash over climate change pits two Republican stalwarts in a tiff that brings to the fore the divisions within the GOP on environmental policy and global warming.

[Spy agencies keep an eye on changing political climate](#)

Australia's spy agencies are giving top priority to the United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen to give Prime Minister Kevin Rudd a critical negotiating advantage.

Intelligence and diplomatic sources have told The Canberra Times that Australia's spy agencies, especially the top-secret Defence Signals Directorate, collected and channelled intelligence on the negotiating positions of other countries before the global climate change talks.

[Loopholes in climate deal could render it useless](#)

WWF's headline statistic is that industrialised nations may walk away from Copenhagen having signed up to a promise to cut their emissions by as much as 20 per cent from 1990 levels, when in truth they have written themselves a cheque to increase emissions by 5 to 10 per cent.

Unless the loopholes are fixed, says Stephan Singer, global energy policy director for WWF, Copenhagen could become a polluter's charter.

[Most throw cold water on China warming theory](#)

But some historical meteorologists suggest that China has prospered during periods when temperatures are higher than normal and that climate change may not be a bad thing after all.

[Scientists warn of 30ft rise in sea level due to 2C of global warming](#)

GLOBAL warming of only 2C could lead to sea-level rises that would submerge the Netherlands and Bangladesh, a report in the journal Nature has warned. Scientists at Princeton and Harvard universities in the United States carried out a new analysis of the geological record of the Earth's sea level.

Their research revealed that the polar ice sheets are vulnerable to large-scale melting, even under moderate global warming scenarios. According to the analysis, an additional

2C of global warming could commit the planet to 20ft to 30ft (about six to nine metres) of sea-level rises over the long term.

Coastal areas where hundreds of millions of people live would be inundated, the US scientists warned.



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