



Drumbeat: January 17, 2010

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Food Shortages Coming? Famed Investor Jim Rogers Thinks So](#)

A severe food shortage is on its way, according to well-regarded investor Jim Rogers. Food inventories are the lowest in decades and "[m]any farmers cannot get loans to buy fertilizer now, even though we have big shortages developing," Rogers said on CNBC.

For investors, that could mean a buying opportunity in commodities, in particular coffee and cotton, Rogers said. In fact, he says commodities are a much better buying opportunity than stocks right now.

For the rest of us, a food shortage could mean skyrocketing food prices. "Sometime in the next few years, we're going to have very serious shortages of food everywhere in the world and prices are going to go through the roof," he said.

northwest Pakistan, struggling to stay warm and keep his business alive despite five days without electricity.

Other shopkeepers join him and gather around the flames in the poor Badhber neighbourhood on the outskirts of northwest capital Peshawar, lamenting crushing power outages and gas shortages that have plunged them back in time.

[Iran hails OPEC output compliance as a "success"](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - OPEC members achieved a 66 percent compliance last year with agreed crude output targets, a senior Iranian oil official was quoted as saying on Sunday, describing it as a "success".

The producer group decided at a Dec. 22 meeting in Angola to keep its output policy unchanged, but faces a battle to crack down on those in its ranks who are failing to comply with quotas if it wants to drain fuel stocks.

[Iraq approves Shell oil deal in crucial step](#)

Iraq gave final approval Sunday to a deal by a Shell-led consortium to develop one of its largest oil fields, marking a crucial step toward the nation's postwar rebuilding by boosting the production of its most lucrative resource.

[Mexico reopens its oil ports closed due to poor weather](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico reopened two of its three main oil ports in the Gulf of Mexico on Sunday that were closed on Saturday due to poor weather.

[Power grid charges 'not unfair', says UK minister](#)

Charges imposed on Scots power firms for putting electricity into the national grid are fair, UK energy minister Lord Hunt has insisted.

The Scottish government said the current system, linked to the size of power stations and distance from big population areas, was unfair.

But Lord Hunt told BBC Scotland that a call to cut the charges would only increase costs to the customers.

[More Silly Trademark Claims: Peabody Energy Threatens "Clean Coal" Spoof Site](#)

The closing months of 2009 saw the beginning of an unfortunate legal dispute in which a trademark owner, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, ran to court to punish political activists for using its marks in a political parody. Sadly, less than a week into 2010, another trademark owner, Peabody Energy, is also using legal threats to attempt to silence criticism.

[The Greening of Oil](#)

Anchorage, Alaska - Anchorage-based Petroleum News has launched a new, international online magazine at www.greeningofoil.com.

Greening of Oil is a science-based publication that tracks the environmental footprint of fossil fuels, scrutinizing what is being done to make hydrocarbons a more earth-friendly energy source during what is expected to be a decades-long shift to cleaner and cleaner power.

[Food Shortages Coming? Famed Investor Jim Rogers Thinks So](#)

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[Venezuela oil output unhurt by power cuts - govt](#)

CARACAS (Reuters) - Venezuela's oil industry is untouched by electricity rationing that is causing blackouts across the OPEC nation, Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez said, adding that most oil operations have their own power supplies.

[Mexico shuts Gulf oil ports due to bad weather](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico closed two of its three main oil ports in the Gulf of Mexico on Saturday due to poor weather, the government said.

[IEA: Developed World Oil Demand Already Looks Weaker than Expected](#)

Some interesting commentary Friday morning from the International Energy Agency, which released its latest oil market outlook.

While the organization sees global aggregate demand basically unchanged from its last forecast, it's reducing its estimates for OECD demand, despite the harsh winter and attendant demand for heating oil.

[Tullow Tells Heritage It Will Pre-Empt Ugandan Sale](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Tullow Oil Plc, the U.K. explorer with the most licenses in Africa, told Heritage Oil Plc it will exercise pre-emptive rights to buy Ugandan assets jointly owned by the two companies.

Tullow will match a \$1.5 billion-dollar bid from Eni SpA to buy Heritage's share of Blocks 1 and 3A in Uganda's Lake Albert, company spokesman George Cazenove said today in a phone interview. Tullow plans to sell a stake in the blocks to another oil company, he said.

[Lawyer Withdraws Challenge to Virginia Gas and Oil Act](#)

A Southwest Virginia attorney withdrew his lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the Virginia Gas and Oil Act on Thursday, the day he read comments by a senior lawmaker that the action could jeopardize proposed reforms to the law this session.

[Shell investors call for clarity](#)

A UK coalition of institutional and private shareholders is calling on Royal Dutch Shell to provide transparency on risks associated with Canadian oil sands projects.

Over 140 fund managers, mutual funds, pension funds and individual investors co-filed a resolution, co-ordinated by social responsible investment campaign group FairPensions, in December 2009. Shell has since confirmed that the resolution is valid, and will be addressed in its annual general meeting on May 18.

[Guilt in Cisco fuel station fraud](#)

In a federal indictment released on Sept. 10 the five were accused of purposely altering fuel pumps at three stations located off I-95 exits and cheating fuel customers out of millions of dollars from 1995 to 2008. The indictment also charged them in a conspiracy to bribe a Georgia Department of Agriculture inspector.

The stations were popular stops for Nassau County residents because of their proximity and gasoline that cost about 20 cents a gallon less than here. But customers were overcharged because they did not receive a true gallon of gas.

[Sharon Asytk: The problem of community](#)

What I think Greer leaves out in this important conversation is the issue of time and energy and resources. The absent space of political and social engagement that Greer rightly points out is a result not just of a culture of autonomy, but of a culture of industrialism that demands the labor of everyone in a unified project - and leaves very little space for other work.

[Rob Hopkins: Why community might not need organising](#)

I do feel that there is something faintly patronising about the idea that we need to 'create community'. It is like a couple who move into a rural village and wonder why "nothing is happening here" and then alienate themselves by trying to start lots of things without just immersing themselves first and discovering what is already

happening there. Community is already there in most cases. It is not the consensual, huggy, 'let's have a shared dinner' kind of community that Findhorn specialises in. It is a more chaotic, far more diverse, stubborn and atomised kind of community. But it does exist. It is neither better, nor worse, just different.

[Pastors in Northwest Find Focus in 'Green'](#)

MILLWOOD, Wash. — State auditors told Millwood Community Presbyterian Church last summer to close its farmers' market on the church parking lot or the lot could no longer be claimed as tax-exempt. Without hesitation, the church kept the market and paid the \$700 in annual taxes.

Money is tight, but the locally raised beef and vegetables and, most important, the environmentally minded customers had become central to the 90-year-old church's ministry.

[Reinette Senum: An extraordinary Jane](#)

In 2004, after I educated myself on the theory of peak oil, I had my first internal paradigm shift. This altered the perception I held of our world and my place in it.

After absorbing the reality of peak oil, my initial instinct to take on a global issue, such as our world's oil addiction, seemed a tad-bit daunting.

I kept thinking of my miniscule self on this vast planet with a world population of nearly 7 billion people, and I couldn't help but ask myself, "What could one person possibly do?"

It was not until I read the book "The Tipping Point," and after doing a simple math equation, I realized that all I needed to do was create the world I wish to see in my very own backyard. "Tipping Point" author Malcolm Gladwell, highlighted that by reaching just 15 to 20 percent of a population, "the levels at which the momentum for change becomes unstoppable" is possible.

[Prediction: Clean Energy Will Not Happen for the Right Reasons](#)

I forecast that there will clear and terrifying indications sometime in the early part of this decade that we've been lied to about the size (not to mention security) of the world oil reserves. In particular, we will soon have indisputable data showing the failure of certain large oil fields.

[Two Simple Ways To Prevent Disaster](#)

The hard part is doing it, and determining who is responsible for doing it. And with

looming realities such as climate change, peak oil, and overpopulation – we will face a whole new level of devastating disaster unless we all work to eliminate poverty and heed the warnings of science.

[A Clear Coating. With Green Applications](#)

IMAGINE how great it would be if, after dinner, you could stack the greasy dishes, pots, pans and utensils in the sink and let plain old water rinse away the grime – with no help from detergents, and little or no scrubbing. Bye-bye, dishpan hands.

Plastic coatings under development may someday bring that moment to pass, rendering dinnerware, bathroom mirrors and even factory equipment sparkling clean with water alone.

The new materials may be appreciated not only by dish-washing family members, but also by environmentalists concerned about all of the soap that disappears down the drain. Detergents that end up in wastewater can cause algae to bloom, among other effects.

[The Philippines' ethanol mandate hits implementation 'roadblocks'](#)

The country's ethanol mandate should now be cruising at full speed, but implementation has slowed down as policy drivers seem heading in the wrong direction. Caution, because the way ahead could be a cliff.

The plan was borne out of the lavish twin goals of reducing the country's fossil fuel dependence and at shoring up cash-for-farming opportunities; yet, these hopes along with the policy are now teetering at the brink of – failure.

[Korea to Build Research Reactor in Jordan](#)

A Korean consortium has won a contract from Jordan to build an atomic reactor for research and training purposes. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology said that the consortium received a letter from the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission on Thursday saying it won the international open bid.

[NASA public relations flap follows official to TVA](#)

TVA's new spokesman – brought in to help rehab its credibility after the coal ash disaster – was enmeshed at his previous job at NASA in a Bush administration controversy in which climate change scientists said they were censored.

[Hot cars in Detroit: Small, electric and sporty](#)

DETROIT (AP) -- More than any auto show in recent memory, the new cars rolled out this week out at the Detroit auto show will redefine what we drive in the future.

As the show opened to the public on Saturday, small cars that push the previous limits on gas mileage, performance, quality and looks took the spotlight.

But the show also features a fun gas-electric hybrid sports car and a just-plain-gorgeous convertible. And there's an electric car that soon you'll be able to buy.

[EU Nations Spar Over Climate Policy After UN Summit Deadlock](#)

(Bloomberg) -- European nations are struggling to hold a common line on climate policy after last month's failed United Nations summit in Copenhagen, with the U.K., Germany and France defending deeper emission cuts in the face of Italian and Polish resistance.

[World misled over glacier meltdown: Report](#)

LONDON: A warning that most of the Himalayan glaciers will melt by 2035 owing to climate change is likely to be retracted after the United Nations body that issued it admitted to a series of scientific blunders.

[Global warming bill kills state jobs](#)

Higher electric bills will not create jobs. Making gasoline more expensive will not create jobs. Significantly increasing the cost of doing business in Wisconsin will not create jobs. Taking more money from Wisconsin families will not create jobs.

Yet those outcomes are exactly what voters can expect if Wisconsin adopts Gov. Jim Doyle's proposed global warming legislation.

[Forget Harry Potter: Saci Lloyd thrills teenagers with a heroine who battles climate change and extremism](#)

Not many sixth-form teachers from east London can claim to have said "No" to Johnny Depp, but Saci Lloyd is getting used to her double life. By day, she teaches A-level students at an inner-city college: by night, she is one of Britain's most successful crusading authors.

Her first book, *The Carbon Diaries 2015*, shortlisted for the Costa Book Awards last year, already has a slavish following among teenagers in this country and in America. The futuristic story introduced the world to a hapless new heroine, Laura Brown, a

figure who now threatens to become as potent in the entertainment industry as Harry Potter.

[The Pulse: Forget the Scarf, but Think About the Frogs](#)

As Chicagoans basked in last week's relative warmth, they might have spared a thought for frogs. Above-freezing temperatures melt the city's roadside snowbanks, sending an annual average of 270,000 tons of road salt into the state's waterways and giving flora and fauna a super-sized serving of NaCl.

[Japan threatens action on China gas project: report](#)

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan warned China on Sunday that it would take action if Beijing starts gas production in a disputed field in the East China Sea, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported.

Although the two countries reached a broad agreement in 2008 on principles intended to solve the dispute by jointly developing gas fields, progress has been slow and Japan has accused China of drilling for gas in violation of the agreement.

Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada indicated to his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi at a meeting in Tokyo on Sunday that Japan might also start its own development in the disputed area, if China moves ahead with its gas production at the site, Kyodo reported, citing a ministry source.

The two ministers had heated exchanges, with Yang saying Okada's stance as not acceptable, Kyodo also reported.

[Crude Oil May Fall as Supplies Rise, Survey Shows](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil may fall next week on speculation that U.S. inventories will climb for a third week and as fuel demand declines, a Bloomberg News survey showed.

Seventeen of 41 analysts, or 42 percent, said oil will drop through Jan. 22. Thirteen respondents, or 32 percent, forecast an increase and 11 said prices will be little changed. Last week, 44 percent of analysts forecast a decline in futures.

[Energy drillers' outlook tinged by 2009 fallout](#)

Executives at oilfield services companies have struck a tone of cautious optimism to start the new year, hinting at some nervy months ahead as they try to regain their composure after a cataclysmic 2009.

With memories of last year's travails so fresh, service providers sense disbelief among big customers about the apparent recovery, even with U.S. crude oil trading at prices more than double the lows of early last year.

"Right now, they don't know why oil is at \$80," Marvin Migura, chief financial officer at deepwater well specialist Oceaneering International Inc (OII.N), told investors at a conference hosted by Pritchard Capital Partners.

This has led to hesitation among some bigger oil and gas companies about committing to major projects, he added.

[Mexico: A Bad Case of the Blues](#)

A recent visit to Mexico City found Mexicans despondent. From distinct backgrounds and with differing political perspectives, Mexicans moaned. Unemployment at the historic rate of 6.2% and a 9% fall in the economic activity index, dwindling oil resources and Standard & Poor's downgrading of Mexican investments left the economic elite and street vendors sulky. Drugs and crime remain an issue, although the lurid and frequent assassination of mayors, police officials and journalist was concentrated in specific areas. In the rest of the country, kidnapping, robbery and extortion affected ordinary citizens more than President Calderon's War on Drugs.

[Tragedy averted in Lagos ... As soldiers foil bid to burst NNPC pipelines](#)

A disaster which could have deepened the acute fuel shortage currently being experienced in the country was averted weekend by the men of the Nigerian Army Operation Pipeline Protection, also known as OP MESA, who foiled the bursting and vandalization of NNPC pipelines laid through Peace Estate in Egbe-Idimu Development Council Area, Lagos.

[Bangladesh: 'Sustainable use of energy resources needed' to mitigate energy crisis](#)

To ensure sustainability through gradual mitigation of energy crisis, the government should make immediate arrangements for sustainable use of energy resources, along with facilitating usage of high quality anthracite coals for power generation, said expert, reports UNB.

"The country has a big reserve of high quality Anthracite coal... the government should facilitate the production of electricity utilising this natural resource," said Dr Mohammed Ataur Rahman, Director of the Programme on Education for Sustainability of International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT).

[Rights group critical of Houston Marathon sponsor Chevron expelled from expo for criticism](#)

HOUSTON (AP) — A group of human rights advocates with a booth critical of the Chevron Houston Marathon's title sponsor was expelled from the marathon expo Friday for painting the company "in a negative light."

Steven Karpas, the managing director of the Houston Marathon Committee, said runners from Rainforest Action Network were setting up a booth with "very anti-Chevron placards and pamphlets that absolutely painted Chevron in a negative light," so he had them booted from the expo.

[Solar power project to light up a million people's lives](#)

KATHMANDU: Energy needs of over a million people in 21 mountainous districts of the country will be met with the generation of electricity with solar-power technology.

The Renewable Energy Project (REP), with support of the European Union, is going to support installation of 769 solar PV systems with total generation capacity of 800 kilowatt peak, 38 solar thermal systems and 14 solar hot water systems.

[8 big challenges for European railfreight](#)

The economy MOST railfreight managers will be relieved to see the back of 2009. According to DVB Bank Land Transport Research, the industry witnessed a 29% collapse in volumes last year as the effects of the financial crisis began to hit hard. DVB predicts that Fret SNCF, France, will lose euro600 million, while Trenitalia Cargo will have a deficit of more than euro300 million, and Europe's largest railfreight operator, DB Schenker Rail, more than euro200 million.

A third of the wagon fleet and 20% of locomotives are out of use, while wagon orders went into freefall in the first half of the year, down 83% year-on-year. The market for locomotives is also reeling from an 80% plunge in orders.

[Action urged for Maine's energy future](#)

BANGOR, Maine — Given the fact that 80 percent of Maine homes are still heated with oil — and that Mainers pay the highest electricity rates in the nation, once income is factored in — it's clear the state must find more efficient ways to live and do business if it is to thrive in the future.

Compounding the crisis are the state's aging housing stock and cold winters, participants noted Friday during a gathering focused on energy efficiency held on the University of Maine campus.

[Higher Temperatures Can Worsen Climate Change, Methane Measurements from Space Reveal](#)

ScienceDaily — Higher temperatures on the earth's surface at higher latitudes cause an increase in the emission of methane, a greenhouse gas that plays an important role in global warming. Therefore, higher temperatures are not just a consequence of climate change but can also worsen cause of it, conclude climate researchers in an article published in *Science*.

[Australian water crisis offers clues for California](#)

When California water officials look into the future, many of them see Australia: a vast, arid continent that has been suffering through drought for more than a decade. Severe shortages have prompted Australia to implement strict water-saving measures throughout the country. It has required residents to use less water in their homes, caused government to build large-scale desalination plants and led farmers to implement drip irrigation systems.

Australia, it seems, could offer a model of how to adapt in California, where, despite this weekend's rains, the state remains in a third year of drought -- a drought many water officials expect not only will continue but continue to be exacerbated by a growing population and climate change considerations.

[Seeing The Effects Of Climate Change \(PHOTOS\)](#)

Sometimes as we go about our daily lives, climate change can seem abstract, and not something we think we are experiencing on a daily basis. However, our planet is rapidly being altered and the physical signs of this shift can't be ignored. These photos reveal how the world has already been impacted and what kind of changes we can expect in the future if we continue with our carbon-intensive ways.



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