



Drumbeat: February 20, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on February 20, 2010 - 9:32am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Total Workers Start Shutdown at French Oil Refineries](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Total SA refinery workers on strike at six plants across France began shutting crude-processing operations and warned of fuel shortages in the coming days.

“The shutdown process has started,” Michael Crochet- Vourey, a company spokesman based in Paris, said by telephone. The process of halting refining operations may take a few days, he said.

Workers at Total’s six French refineries and seven out of 31 fuel-storage depots walked out for a third day to protest the permanent closure of oil processing at the idled Flanders plant near Dunkirk. Employees have criticized Total’s decision to scale back refining in Europe while expanding in the Middle East, according to the Confederation Generale du Travail union.

[Yemen's water crisis eclipses al Qaeda threat](#)

SANAA (Reuters) - Yemeni water trader Mohammed al-Tawwa runs his diesel pumps day and night, but gets less and less from his well in Sanaa, which experts say could become the world's first capital city to run dry.

[India: Who pays for fertilisers?](#)

Last year, we saw the unfortunate spectacle of fertiliser riots, and sale under police protection. The issue of food inflation is related to low food productivity. Ultimately, we want more food production per acre of land, and that requires increase in productivity. (We can no longer simply increase land acreage under cultivation.) This means we need more fertilisers produced, and sold at a remunerative price, enough to attract new investment. We will need to protect the small farmer with a targeted cash subsidy (as done in NREGA, or perhaps using the UID).

[This isn't Falklands II](#)

Just as historical tragedy replays as farce, black gold often turns to fool's gold. Before doing anything silly, Kirchner's Argentina might be best advised to wait and see whether there is anything worth fighting over.

[A Close Look At OPEC Strategy Reveals That They're 100% Short-Term Focused, And Sure Of Peak Oil](#)

OPEC's 'management' is also concerned with short term profits, but not for the same reason. The more far-sighted OPEC personalities and/or theoreticians have as an ultimate goal the use of oil incomes to reconfigure the economic structure of OPEC economies - i.e. to move from being producers of petroleum to producing oil products and petrochemicals, and to a certain extent beyond. An intention of this nature logically means restricting the production of oil.

Assuming that every barrel of oil reserves that is not produced now will be produced later, many of these 'future' barrels will be transformed into oil products (e.g. naphtha), and a large fraction of these items into petrochemicals. As the last Shah of Iran mentioned, "crude oil is too precious to be burned up in the air."

[OPEC unlikely to raise output ceiling in March - Iran](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - OPEC is unlikely to raise its output ceiling at its next meeting in March, a senior Iranian oil official said on Saturday.

"It seems unlikely that OPEC members would make any decision towards an increase in the organization's output ceiling in their next meeting," Iran's OPEC governor Mohammad Ali Khatibi was quoted as saying on state news agency IRNA.

[Bangladesh: Prioritise renewable energy](#)

GOVERNMENT is learnt to have been preparing to frame a renewable energy policy for the country. The exercise needs to be expedited in view of the severe energy crisis the country is facing. A seminar in Dhaka recently on the prospects of renewable energy in Bangladesh revealed that the country has the potential to produce 10,000 mw of electricity on a sustainable basis from the solar source alone. This figure is well above the current total effective demand for electricity. The government through its fiscal measures should further encourage the development of solar energy.

[Are New Types of Reactors Needed for the U.S. Nuclear Renaissance?](#)

Ongoing problems with nuclear waste might resurrect plans for reactors that would leave less of it.

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[Oil Rises to Five-Week High on Fed Rate Gain, French Strike](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil climbed to a five-week high after the Federal Reserve’s discount-rate increase signaled an extended economic recovery and as a strike at Total SA refineries in France cut fuel output.

[Oil May Breach 200-Week Average, Test Highs: Technical Analysis](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil is poised to settle above its 200-week moving average today, positioning it to test new highs at \$84 to \$86 a barrel.

It would be the third time in six months that the most- active oil futures price has breached the technical-resistance level on its way up. Oil rose to a one-year high of \$82 a barrel on Oct. 21 after breaching the average in the week ended Oct. 16. It rose to a 15-month high of \$83.95 on Jan. 11 after breaking through in the week ended Dec. 25.

[Peak Oil Crisis](#)

Knowledge on the oil potential of Saudi Arabia is limited to its own press releases. Unlike the North Sea, information is not public. Yes, the oil potential is there and Saudi Aramco is investing heavily to boost its production. However, the bottleneck is the energy demand of the country itself. Saudi Arabia depends on natural gas to produce electricity. Electricity is used to power the water injection pumps to maintain oil production. It is not possible to maintain production rates without sufficient water injection. Since several years projects are initiated for boosting the gas production. Oil is in the ground but it takes time to reach the targeted production rates until the on-going projects are completed.

[Falklands oil row threatens British banks](#)

ARGENTINA is preparing to target British banks with links to the new oil drilling ventures off the coast of the Falkland Islands.

HSBC and Barclays are thought to be on a list of firms that could be hit in revenge for the exploration, which Buenos Aires claims is a "violation of sovereignty".

[Saudi Aramco: Has 4 Million B/D Spare Crude, Output 12 Million B/D](#)

"We still have 4 million spare capacity--although in the current climate this is very expensive to maintain--but it's a reflection of global responsibility to maintain [a] reliably supplied market at all times," said Dawood Al-Dawood, Aramco vice-president for marketing, supply and joint-venture coordinator, on the sidelines of the International Petroleum Week conference lunch in London.

[Exelon Says More Cuts Not Needed as Demand Returns](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Exelon Corp., the biggest U.S. utility owner by market value, won't expand spending cuts as power demand returns, President Chris Crane said.

[Russia: Iran's non-cooperation 'very alarming'](#)

Moscow: Russia's foreign minister said he is "very alarmed" over Iran's failure to prove its nuclear program is peaceful, suggesting Moscow may be closer to acceding to Western demands for new UN sanctions against Tehran.

Sergey Lavrov's deputy said later on Friday, however, that Russia was still against crippling sanctions, returning to the traditional rhetoric Moscow has used for its "partner" and business ally.

[China's daily power generation up 30% over Spring Festival](#)

BEIJING: China's daily electricity generation during the week-long Spring Festival holiday rose nearly 30 percent year-on-year, figures from the power dispatch center of State Grid Corporation of China revealed Saturday.

[US panel OKs trade probe against China drill pipe](#)

A US trade panel on Friday narrowly approved a Commerce Department investigation

into charges Chinese companies are selling oil well drill pipe in the United States at unfairly low prices.

The US International Trade Commission voted 3-3 that there was a reasonable indication US producers were threatened with injury by the imports.

[A second hydrocarbon boom threatens the Peruvian Amazon](#)

A rapid and unprecedented proliferation of oil and gas concessions threatens the megadiverse Peruvian Amazon. The amount of area leased is on track to reach around 70% of the region, threatening biodiversity and indigenous people. This is one of the central conclusions from a pair of researchers from the Institut de Ciència i Tecnologia Ambientals (ICTA) of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), and the Washington DC-based NGO Save America's Forests, who have, for the first time, documented the full history of hydrocarbon activities in the region and made projections about expected levels of activity in the near future.

[British Gas profits surge 50% as cash-strapped elderly freeze](#)

British Gas faces a backlash as it prepares to announce a 50 per cent surge in profits on the back of a winter of crippling energy bills.

The UK's largest supplier, with 15.7million customers, has made profits of more than £550million in the past year.

Thousands of elderly, meanwhile, have been unable to afford to keep warm during the coldest winter in 30 years.

[PG&E Expects to Spend Up to \\$35 Million on Ballot Initiative](#)

(Bloomberg) -- PG&E Corp., owner of California's largest utility, will spend \$25 million to \$35 million in 2010 on a statewide ballot initiative that would require two-thirds voter approval for local governments to enter the electricity business, a company spokesman said.

[Deciding Today on Energy for Tomorrow](#)

In his State of the Union address, President Obama talked about "making tough decisions about opening new offshore areas for oil and gas development."

When it comes to respectfully developing America's abundant oil and natural gas resources--including areas in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS)--there's nothing tough about this decision. We should be developing America's Outer Continental Shelf, and we

should be doing it now. It's a huge win for America. Here's why.

[Lithuania Eyes Korean Nuclear Reactors](#)

Korea is seeking to export nuclear reactors to Lithuania. A nine-member Lithuanian government delegation arrived in Seoul on Wednesday and is talking to relevant government ministries here, including the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, about purchasing reactors. The delegates include Lithuania's Defense Minister Rasa Jukneviene and Vice Minister of Energy Romas Svedas.

"The Lithuanian government is planning to build two nuclear power plants by 2018, and it is interested in Korean-made reactors, which are cheap and safe," a Korean government official said.

[Ohio coal group challenges EPA on greenhouse gases](#)

COLUMBUS -- The Ohio Coal Association has joined a fast-growing list of business and industry groups and states that are challenging the federal government's finding that pollution from cars, power plants and factories is dangerous to humans.

[Why Climate Scientists Are Hurting Their Cause](#)

Climate scientists who play fast and loose with the facts are imperiling not just their profession but the planet.

[Climate scientists defend global warming evidence](#)

Some global warming skeptics say the computer models that simulate future climate change can be wrong.

Walter N. Meier, a climate scientist, agrees.

"They tend to be underestimating" how quickly global warming is melting arctic sea ice, Meier said. The models "can be wrong in both directions."

[Can Condoms Help Save Polar Bears?](#)

An environmental group is distributing hundreds of thousands of free condoms with hopes that it will educate the public about the impact of human overpopulation on endangered species.

The condoms are enclosed in colorful packaging bearing images of endangered species like polar bears, jaguars and the Puerto Rico rock frog. The images are accompanied by slogans like “Wrap with care, save the polar bear,” and “Cover your tweedle, save the burying beetle.”



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