



Drumbeat: March 17, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on March 17, 2010 - 9:05am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[China in "great leap forward" for gas](#)

(Reuters) - China's burgeoning gas demand has been a key driver for a swathe of projects to supply the clean-burning fuel -- but the speed at which it will shift away from coal and oil could still catch markets by surprise.

From Guangzhou's small eateries to porcelain mills on the city's outskirts, from its bus fleet to its shiny high-rise apartments in Beijing, gas is taking over from dirtier alternatives as the fuel of choice to cook, heat and transport.

Aluminum smelters in Inner Mongolia are shifting to gas from crude, and power generators in east China have dumped oil for gas.

After a tripling in consumption in the past decade, gas is set for a similar jump by 2020 to make up nearly 10 percent of total energy use, from the present 4 percent.

s with what is known as spare productive capacity --- oil wells that are ready to produce, but have been shut down because there is no market for their product.

[Iran tightens petrol rations as economic sanctions loom](#)

Iran has announced it will cut the volume of its cheap petrol ration by 25% to 60 litres per vehicle per month from 21 March.

Currently, each vehicle is allowed a quota of 80 litres of fuel at 10 cents a litre, with any amount needed on top of that priced at 40 cents.

[INTERVIEW - Oman to keep gas output steady in coming years](#)

MUSCAT (Reuters) - Oman LNG plans to keep its liquefied natural gas output steady at around 8 million tonnes a year for the foreseeable future but is ready to use its spare capacity to increase production if needed, the chief executive of Oman LNG said on Wednesday.

The non-OPEC Gulf Arab country is unlikely to cut gas production further, despite sagging global gas prices, and Oman LNG expects the market to recover in the next two years.

[US Gulf oil lease sale attracts \\$949 mln high bids](#)

HOUSTON (Reuters) - A central Gulf of Mexico oil and gas lease sale Wednesday drew \$949.3 million in high bids, with strong interest shown in both deepwater oil and shallow water gas tracts, the U.S. Minerals Management Service said.

[Lower gas prices pose threat to drillers: LNG imports could also depress price](#)

The prospect of falling prices for natural gas may take some of steam out of a recent pickup in activity in drilling and oilfield services in Canada, a report by investment dealer Raymond James said Wednesday.

Demand for drilling services has been recovering after a drought of several years and peaked in mid-February with 71 per cent of the rig fleet active, analyst Andrew Bradford said in the report.

[Suncor greeniest of oil sands operators, study finds](#)

CALGARY -- A part of Suncor Energy Inc.'s oil sands operation was ranked the most environmentally-friendly compared with eight of its competitors, according to a new study by an organization often critical of the industry.

The Pembina Institute released a report on steam-assisted gravity drainage projects Wednesday morning. SAGD, or in-situ, projects drill for bitumen in northern Alberta, rather than use more aesthetically unattractive mining techniques.

[British movie blasts Alberta oil sands](#)

Canada's oil sands were the target of a major public-relations offensive in Britain yesterday with the nationwide premiere of the film *Dirty Oil*, narrated by Canadian performer Neve Campbell, and the simultaneous release of a World Wildlife Fund report claiming a host of global ills --including four million child deaths annually from poor sanitation and other causes --could be prevented by diverting the billions being invested by oil giants in Alberta to UN health programs.

[Nestle says drops palm oil supplier after report](#)

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - Nestle, the world's biggest food group, said it had stopped buying palm oil from Indonesia's Sinar Mas due to concerns about rainforest destruction, following a similar move by consumer goods firm Unilever.

Nestle's announcement came after Greenpeace released a report on Wednesday which looked into how the company was sourcing palm oil.

[More Firms Join Desertec Solar Project](#)

Desertec – the ambitious \$550 billion dollar project to generate electricity for Europe and North Africa through large solar collectors arrayed in the Sahara desert – took a step closer to reality this week with the announcement that the Arizona-based solar manufacturer First Solar had joined the project.

"We believe that North Africa is ideal for renewable energy technologies," said Pia Alina Lange, a spokeswoman for First Solar in an e-mail message. Ms. Lange said the company would contribute utility-scale photovoltaic technology and expertise as part of the project.

[Debunking the Myth of Peak Oil - Why the Age of Cheap Oil is Far From Over](#)

If I may, I would like to rebut or add a little objectivity to the flood of "Peak Oil" articles circulating around. When I see another crisis looming in the balance, and dramatized articles that warn of the "Dangers of Peak Oil," I must question the validity or how this will effect the world, the USA, and you and I personally, and if indeed a crisis is at hand.

["Neuroframing" the global warming issue won't win converts](#)

I share the belief of Rose and others at the symposium that global warming is bad and we should do something about it. But I've always disliked "framing" as a strategy for influencing the global-warming debate. Framing is just spinning, and neuroframing is spinning plus brain scans.

First of all, we don't need MRI studies to tell us that we're emotional, complicated creatures. Moreover, many people already view environmentalists as self-righteous and manipulative. This is a framing problem that neuroframing may exacerbate. The message is that environmentalists will go to extraordinary lengths—seeking guidance from cutting-edge brain science!--to help the dim-witted public see the world in the same enlightened way that environmentalists do.

[App helps shoppers make greener food choices](#)

To use the app, users use their mobile device's camera to scan the barcode on a food item. This calls up details about the product on their cell phone's display. The information could include the location of the farm where it was raised or grown, as well as its nutritional value, pricing history and other data.

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[Rare anger as Nigerian youths hit streets](#)

(CNN) -- Thousands of Nigerian youths took to the streets Tuesday in a rare display of public anger over issues ranging from infrastructure failings, fuel shortages and power blackouts that reflect growing pressure on the country's ailing president.

[India: Public Outrage over Cooking Gas Crisis in Orissa](#)

Bhubaneswar: People in Orissa are facing acute cooking gas crisis, which compounds their problems to a considerable extent. They are already suffering from a power crisis in the state during the scorching summer.

The cooking gas crisis has been attributed to the unauthorized sale of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial use. Most restaurants, food-cart owners, fast food joints and hotels use domestic cylinders to save cost.

[SIEA gets tougher..less power to those with outstanding bills](#)

SOLOMON Islands Electricity Authority (SIEA) is taking tougher action against customers with huge outstanding bills.

The authority said it is doing this because it needs money for fuel for its generators.

Solomon Islands Water Authority (SIWA), the biggest debtor with an outstanding bill of \$16 million, is the first to be targetted.

In a public notice, SIEA said since SIWA is unable to pay up, it is restricting power supply to them.

[OPEC Not Threatened By Russian Shipments to Asia](#)

VIENNA — Russia's rising crude shipments to Asian markets via the Pacific Ocean pose no threat to Middle Eastern producers' position as the largest suppliers to the region, OPEC members including top exporter Saudi Arabia said Tuesday.

Soaring oil demand from China and other developing Asian economies will absorb rising production from Russia and Iraq over coming years, Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi told reporters in Vienna, where the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries meets Wednesday.

[Offshore Energy Industry Bets on Central GOM](#)

The offshore energy industry continues to show interest in the Gulf of Mexico's Outer Continental Shelf, with 67 companies submitting 642 bids on 468 tracts that are being offered offshore Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama in tomorrow's Minerals Management Service Central Gulf Sale 213.

"The industry's interest in tomorrow's Central Gulf oil and gas lease sale demonstrates the importance of the deepwater Gulf to future energy development," said MMS Gulf of Mexico Regional Director Lars Herbst, who will preside over tomorrow's lease sale in the New Orleans Superdome.

[Russia may introduce export duty on timber - minister](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia may introduce export duties on timber if the United States and European countries introduce protectionist measures on oil, Natural Resources Minister Yury Trutnev said on Wednesday.

[Saudi's Arabtank boosts fuel storage at Yanbu](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia's Arabtank Terminal (ATTL) is boosting its oil storage capacity at the Red Sea coast port of Yanbu by 580,000 cubic metres, industry sources said on Wednesday.

The new storage facility will take capacity at the terminal to 851,200 cubic metres, of

which more than 90 percent is expected to be designated for oil products.

"This will be for oil mostly, and it will be segregated ... which is for both clean and heavy oil products," a source familiar with the project said.

[UK needs energy accord to attract investment-RWE](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - UK energy supplier RWE npower, has called for an agreement between the government, energy companies, and end-users to end uncertainty over investing in renewing Britain's ageing energy infrastructure.

[Ivanhoe drips red ink](#)

Ivanhoe Energy posted a wider-than-expected quarterly loss, hurt by lower benchmark crude oil prices.

[Hopkins details plan to truck natural gas](#)

FAIRBANKS Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor Luke Hopkins and local business leaders detailed a \$250 million project to truck natural gas from the North Slope to Fairbanks at public meetings Tuesday.

[Japan: Eco-cars go by, gas stations go under](#)

The spread of eco-friendly vehicles could spell doom for about two-thirds of the nation's 40,000 gas stations in the next decade, and, according to one observer, even render some rural communities uninhabitable.

More than 2,000 gas stations have been closing down annually in recent years, but this figure looks set to jump as more drivers opt for green cars that run on less fuel--or none at all.

[US asked to assist Pakistan in civilian nuclear technology](#)

ISLAMABAD : President Asif Ali Zardari Tuesday called upon the US to assist Pakistan in civilian nuclear technology to help the country overcome its energy crisis and bridge the trust deficit between the two countries.

[Nuclear Plan Faces Fallout From NGO](#)

An environmental group on Tuesday condemned lawmakers' decision this week to approve plans to build nuclear power plants in Indonesia.

Hikmat Soeriatanuwijaya, a campaigner for Greenpeace Southeast Asia, said it was too early for the country to go down the nuclear path.

"It is not the time yet" for Indonesia to turn to nuclear power to anticipate the energy crisis as fossil fuels are depleted, he told the Jakarta Globe on Tuesday. "We can try to seek other solutions because Indonesia is rich with renewable energy."

[Wanted: 500 employees for first nuclear plant](#)

ABU DHABI // Building nuclear power plants is comparatively straightforward. Staffing them is the real chore.

That was the message delivered yesterday by Ali al Zaabi, the head of the programme management office with the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (Enec).

[Obama's Nuclear Blind Spot](#)

The Obama administration has embarked on a high-stakes gamble: devoting billions of dollars to an expansion of nuclear power in the hope of winning Republican votes for a climate bill. But in its eagerness to drum up bipartisan support for one of the hardest sells on Obama's policy agenda, is the administration turning a blind eye to the financial risk?

[Mastery of rare-earth elements vital to America's security](#)

Karl A. Gschneidner Jr., a senior metallurgist at the U.S. Department of Energy's Ames Laboratory, today cautioned members of a Congressional panel that "rare-earth research in the USA on mineral extraction, rare-earth separation, processing of the oxides into metallic alloys and other useful forms, substitution, and recycling is virtually zero."

[The Case Against Biofuels: Probing Ethanol's Hidden Costs](#)

In light of the strong evidence that growing corn, soybeans, and other food crops to produce ethanol takes a heavy toll on the environment and is hurting the world's poor through higher food prices, consider this astonishing fact: This year, more than a third of the U.S.'s record corn harvest of 335 million metric tons will be used to produce corn ethanol. What's more, within five years fully 50 percent of the U.S. corn crop is expected to wind up as biofuels.

[Green renewables plunge 60% on emissions jitters](#)

UNCERTAINTY on emissions trading and the drop in value of renewable energy certificates has caused investment in renewables in Australasia to fall by more than anywhere else in the world.

[U.K. Says Carbon-Capture Projects to Add 100,000 Jobs](#)

Bloomberg) -- Prime Minister Gordon Brown's government said carbon-capture and storage projects may add 6.5 billion pounds (\$10 billion) a year to the U.K. economy and create 100,000 jobs by 2030.

[Methane May Be Building Under Antarctic Ice](#)

BALTIMORE — Microbes living under ice sheets in Antarctica and Greenland could be churning out large quantities of the greenhouse gas methane, a new study suggests.

In recent years scientists have learned that liquid water lurks under much of Antarctica's massive ice sheet, and so, they say, the potential microbial habitat in this watery world is huge. If the methane produced by the bacteria gets trapped beneath the ice and builds up over long periods of time — a possibility that is far from certain — it could mean that as ice sheets melt under warmer temperatures, they would release large amounts of heat-trapping methane gas.

[New report reveals the environmental and social impact of the 'livestock revolution'](#)

Global meat production has tripled in the past three decades and could double its present level by 2050, according to a new report on the livestock industry by an international team of scientists and policy experts. The impact of this "livestock revolution" is likely to have significant consequences for human health, the environment and the global economy, the authors conclude.

[Sorry, it's Malignant: Why Scientists Need a New Approach on Climate Change](#)

The doctor takes the time to explain why she thinks you have cancer, and the level of confidence she has in the test results. She explains the biological process of cancer, what's known about how it starts and how it spreads. Don't let your senses deceive you, the doctor warns. You may feel okay now, but this disease will kill you if nothing is done, and we've got to start fighting this right now.

Then she walks out without telling you what your treatment options are.

This is essentially what the scientific community has been doing to the public about climate change.

[Alaskans fear for their way of life](#)

Alaska's congressional delegation sponsored the legislation to settle a decades-old federal debt to Native Americans. In 1971, the federal government gave Sealaska rights to 375,000 acres in the Tongass National Forest as part of a deal with 13 native-owned corporations to settle land claims and make way for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

Sealaska says it wants to protect native villages by swapping adjacent land for land farther away.

The proposal allows for timber operations on up to 75,000 acres. It includes 250 sites throughout the sparsely populated region — sacred burial grounds and ancient hunting camps Sealaska would use for educational purposes and other spots where it plans tourist lodges and electricity-generation projects using tidal energy.

[Orange officials sue couple who removed their lawn](#)

Some Southern California cities fine residents for watering their lawns too much during droughts.

But in Orange, officials are locked in a legal battle with a couple accused of violating city ordinances for removing their lawn in an attempt to save water.

[Genetically modified foods get U.S. traction, global debate](#)

For more than a decade, two opposing views of the technology used for genetically engineering crops have fought for the hearts and minds of the world's farmers.

At best, they've come to a standoff.

[Food shortage 'the next global challenge'](#)

Climate change, rising fuel costs, water shortages: now experts are warning Australia's food producers have a new crisis to consider: Food Insecurity.

[China drought leaves millions short of water](#)

Millions of people face drinking water shortages in southwestern China because of a once-a-century drought that has dried up rivers and threatens vast farmlands, state media reported Wednesday.

The drought has gripped huge areas of Guizhou, Yunnan, and Sichuan provinces, the Guangxi region, and the mega-city of Chongqing for months, with rainfall 60 percent below normal since September, the Global Times said.

[Welcome to ecotopia](#)

It may come as somewhat of a surprise that I suggest utopian fiction, and especially a sub-genre called ecotopian fiction, as an avenue for us to engage with an ecologically-sound future. Obviously it's not the only way to imagine humanity's long-term survival on Earth - there is a great need for detailed technical and scientific blueprints - but for those of us who struggle to read non-fiction, ecotopian fiction may provide more accessible glimpses of possible futures.

[Why Conservative Christians So Often Fail the Common Good \(Part 2\)](#)

We want now to offer some possible ways to resolve the riddle, posed in part 1 of this article, of why so many evangelical and fundamentalist Christians -- people who clearly honor the Bible -- so often disregard the two requirements that are central to the biblical vision of the kingdom of God, namely peacemaking and justice for the poor.

Most of the answers to this riddle are rooted in the fact that millions of conservative Christians in the United States read the Bible through a variety of American perspectives that are utterly foreign to the biblical text. And they read the Bible in this way because they so often identify the kingdom of God with the United States of America. Based on that conviction, many confuse the principles of the Bible with the principles of the Constitution, biblical morality with capitalism, defense of the Christian religion with militarism, and fidelity to the kingdom of God with patriotism. Indeed, they often view the Bible as a manual on how to live one's life as a good American. With those convictions, it's no wonder they read the Bible through distinctly American perspectives.

[Maybe we're the problem](#)

Paul Lazarsfeld, the great sociologist who died in 1976, co-authored an article naming this problem more than half a century ago. Too much information, he said, can lead to "narcotizing dysfunction."

In other words, a voting public besieged by a plethora of details and inside baseball will just feel helpless and apathetic. We might know a lot, and that makes us feel good, but we let knowledge become a substitute for action.

[Climate change's Hail Mary](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) -- The horse trading over climate change law is in full swing, and Senators are trying to appease interests on both sides of the aisle.

In the next couple of weeks, lawmakers are expected to unveil an unprecedented proposal that combines more oil and gas drilling with a cap on greenhouse gases and a tax on gasoline.

[OPEC Agrees for Fifth Time to Leave Quotas Unchanged](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OPEC, content with oil prices exceeding \$80 a barrel, decided for the fifth time since 2008 to keep its production limits unchanged, even as some members voiced concern that supply may be too high.

Ministers from OPEC's 12 member countries agreed to stand by the output quota as expected at their meeting today in Vienna, according to Libyan delegate Shokri Ghanem.

[Oil Rises After OPEC Says Demand Rising, U.S. Pledges Low Rates](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil rose for a second day after OPEC officials said demand is growing and U.S. Federal Reserve authorities repeated their pledge to keep the main interest rate near zero.

"OPEC says demand is increasing; this is positive for oil," Roland Stenzel, a crude and carbon trader at E&T Energie Handelsgesellschaft mbH, said from Vienna. "Low interest rates will keep the economy on track."

[Phil Flynn: You've Got A Friend](#)

When your down and troubled and you need a helping hand and nothing oh nothing is going right. Just close your eyes and think of Ben and soon he will be there to brighten even your darkest night. You've got a friend! The Fed has been the oil bull best friend but is that friendship going to start to become a little strained. With a better than expected jobs report and dissension within the committee the possibility of laying the groundwork for change is in the language in the much debated Fed Statement is rising. Let's face it oil has been dependant on Fed policy and for all intents and purposes it has been a one sided relationship. Now with the Fed feeling pressure to change the language about rates staying low for an extended period oil bulls may have their dreams of \$85 or \$90 dollar barrel oil squashed despite the illusion of their peak oil fantasies. Oh yes there are some that are betting on a change in the language even though the majority

think things will not change but any hint of a softening in Fed resolve will be a big blow to oil bulls.

[Crude Oil Is Poised to Test \\$90 a Barrel: Technical Analysis](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil may head toward \$90 a barrel if it breaks a resistance level at \$82, according to a technical analysis by Auerbach Grayson, a brokerage in New York.

[Charles Maxwell Predicts Oil - \\$75. in 2010](#)

Weedon & Co., oil analyst Charles Maxwell, was on Pimm Fox's, Bloomberg Radio Show on Friday. Charles Maxwell thinks that \$75 a barrel, will probably be the average price for oil this year for these reasons:

['Shale creates uncertainty'](#)

Shale gas has created insecurity in what used to be a safe market, a top Statoil executive said today.

[Jeff Rubin: Does Canada really want to be an energy Superpower?](#)

A lot of things go along with being an energy superpower — a super currency, for example. Eight years ago, when oil cost barely \$20 per barrel, the Canadian dollar fell to almost 61 cents against the greenback. With oil now reaching four times that price, the currency is nearly at par with the U.S. dollar, and tomorrow, when oil prices are back in triple-digit range, the Canadian dollar will trade at a healthy premium.

Like it or not, Canadians had better get used to the fact that their money has turned into a petro-currency.

[Pakistan, Iran sign deal on natural gas pipeline](#)

ISLAMABAD (Reuters) – Pakistan has signed a deal with Iran paving the way for the construction of a much-delayed pipeline pumping Iranian natural gas to the energy-starved South Asian country, officials said on Wednesday.

The \$7.6 billion project is crucial for Pakistan to avert a growing energy crisis already causing severe electricity shortages in the country of about 170 million.

[Angola may open oil bids round in 2011-minister](#)

VIENNA (Reuters) - Angola could re-open a bidding round for oil exploration next year, Oil Minister Jose Botelho de Vasconcelos said in an interview in Vienna on Tuesday.

"The signals sent by the economy last year led us to withhold some bidding rounds," he told Reuters. "We have a process that was suspended in 2008. We hope to re-open it at the right time, maybe next year. 2011 could be better."

[Iraq Will Increase Oil Reserves, Al-Shahristani Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Iraq will increase its estimate of crude reserves, Oil Minister Hussain al-Shahristani said.

The level "is going to go higher, we're revising it now," al-Shahristani said in Vienna today.

[Nigeria says bombing will not stop amnesty program](#)

YENAGOA, Nigeria (Reuters) – Bombing by Nigeria's biggest militant group in its oil delta this week will not derail an amnesty deal meant to restore security to Africa's largest energy industry, government and security sources said on Tuesday.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) detonated two bombs outside a government building in the oil city of Warri on Monday as officials met for talks about implementing the terms of the amnesty.

[Reliance Said to Be in Talks to Buy Atlas Shale Asset](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Reliance Industries Ltd., the owner of the world's largest fuel-making complex, is in talks with Atlas Energy Inc. to invest in the U.S. natural-gas producer's shale assets, a person familiar with the negotiations said.

[India Said to Propose Sovereign Fund for Oil Assets](#)

(Bloomberg) -- India, with \$254 billion of foreign-exchange reserves, may create a sovereign wealth fund to help state companies compete for overseas energy assets with China, a government official said.

The oil ministry has formally asked the finance ministry to set up a fund using a part of the reserves, the official said, declining to be identified because a decision hasn't been reached. The size of the fund is yet to be determined, he said.

[Hyundai Heavy to Win 79% More Oil, Gas Orders in 2010](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Hyundai Heavy Industries Co. expects to win at least 79 percent more oil and gas equipment orders this year as the world's biggest shipyard reduces its dependency on shipbuilding.

"There is a chance we could exceed our order target" of about \$4.2 billion, Kang Chang June, executive vice president of Hyundai Heavy's offshore and engineering division, said in an interview at the company's Ulsan, South Korea headquarters yesterday. Net income from the division is expected to be similar to last year's figure of 300 billion won (\$265 million) to 400 billion won, he said.

[Voser Says Shell Must Control Spending as Industry Costs Rise](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Royal Dutch Shell Plc Chief Executive Officer Peter Voser said industry costs have started to rise and the company will use technology to control spending as it invests \$100 billion to boost production.

"Costs have not come down as much as we hoped for, and some of them are now rising again," Voser said in an interview with Bloomberg Television broadcast today. Shell's challenge is to be "more speedy in terms of technology implementation."

[Coal Beats Solar as Analysts Favor Peabody While Subsidies Drop](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Wall Street's contribution to the debate on how to curb global warming: Buy coal, sell solar.

Peabody Energy Corp., the biggest coal producer, is rated a "buy" by 79 percent of analysts, while 44 percent recommend First Solar Inc., the largest maker of thin-film solar panels. The Stowe Global Coal index of 38 coal producers has gained 3.8 percent in 2010, and the Bloomberg Global Leaders Solar index of 38 solar module and component makers dropped 17 percent.

While investors including T. Boone Pickens and Warren Buffett are pushing cash into green technologies, the tilt toward Peabody and away from First Solar is the widest in two years. It reflects a sense that government support for reducing air pollution may be waning, said Kevin Landis, whose Firsthand Alternative Energy Fund outperformed the solar index this year.

[N.Z. Coal Imports Jump to Three-Year High as BlueScope Buys](#)

(Bloomberg) -- New Zealand coal imports climbed to the highest in three years in the

fourth quarter as BlueScope Steel Ltd. brought in Indonesian supplies to feed its plant during strikes at local mines.

[On the barrel](#)

Publishing houses have thrived on the wickedness of oilmen and their mucky trade. About a hundred years ago Ida Tarbell's 1904 trailblazing dissection of the business methods of John D Rockefeller led directly to the US government breaking up the Standard Oil monopoly. In recent times Lisa Margonelli took us to the people, pipelines and the politics that bring us fossil fuel.

When Tom Bower turns to the driving force of our economies, the book is always worth a look.

[Khosla Says Clean-Energy Investors Should Beware of IPO Rush](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Investors should beware of stock offerings from clean-technology companies this year that lack a long-term technology edge and rely too much on government aid, said Vinod Khosla, the biggest U.S. investor in green startups.

"There will be Googles in this business, but before there is a dot-com rush, investors should ask questions," Khosla, 55, said in an interview. "My objective is that good companies get funding and that, with the bad ones, people know what questions to ask."

[Obama's High-Speed Rail Support is Too Little Too Late For A Peak Oil World](#)

I can never decide which is sadder: the Obama Administration's token 12-15 billion dollars for national railways, or, the greenblogger, transportblogger, and mainstream media's belief we're pursuing a new rail policy. The United States has for years been piled high with unfunded rail projects, just waiting for a green light. But the 12-15 billion allocated so far will, at best, provide nothing more than seed money for mega projects like high-speed rail while neglecting the myriad smaller projects across the country. In the same way the Obama Administration has no energy policy, they have no transport policy.

[Africa's Largest Wind Project Advances](#)

Kenya's Lake Turkana Wind Power project – set to become Africa's largest wind farm – looks to be back on track after securing financing through a new shareholding structure.

[China Surpassed U.S. as Biggest Investor in Renewable Energy](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China replaced the U.S. as the biggest investor in renewable energy for the first time in five years as the Asian nation raced to meet rising demand for power and reduce carbon emissions.

China invested \$34.5 billion in wind turbines, solar panels and other low-carbon energy technologies in 2009, Bloomberg New Energy Finance said today in London. The U.S. spent about half as much last year, or \$18.6 billion, slipping to second.

[Offshore Wind a Boon to the Shipping Industry](#)

With ocean-going trade slackening amid the global recession, shipping companies and shipyard operators in Europe are finding the offshore wind industry to be a welcome ally in weathering the bad times.

In a deal struck earlier this month, for example, the shipping giant Maersk has agreed to lease about 100,000 square meters of its Lindo shipping facility on the Danish island of Funen — about 10 percent of the total area of the shipyard — to Skykon Offshore, a maker of wind turbine foundations.

[Navy's Energy Reform Initiatives Raise Concerns Among Shipbuilders](#)

The secretary of the Navy's announcement last fall of several initiatives to wean the sea service off fossil fuels has generated excitement but also some trepidation among energy researchers and defense contractors.

Much of the hope for reducing the Navy's oil dependency rests on the shoulders of the biofuel and renewable energy sectors, both of which are in their nascent stages.

Scientists worry that the Navy's ultimate goals, including sailing a green fleet in 2016 and powering half of its energy needs through alternative energy sources in 2020, are too aggressive.

[The Parable of the Electric Bike](#)

Imagine an electric bike. Zipping through the city. Surging up hills without gasping for breath. Riding in business dress and arriving fresh and dry. Healthy, moderate exercise. No traffic jams. Free parking. Huge load-hauling potential. Near-free fueling. Zero emissions. Breeze in your face. Appealing! So, why haven't they caught on? In this five-part series, Alan Durning looks at the future of electric bikes in the Northwest.

[A Compostable Chips Bag Hits the Shelves](#)

One of the obvious environmental downsides of eating chips is the packaging. Billions of bags hit dumpsters every year.

To address this, the chip giant Frito-Lay has just introduced what it is calling the first “100 percent compostable” chip bag, for its multigrain SunChips brand.

[Ruling Will Let Farms Harvest Modified Beets](#)

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A federal judge on Tuesday said farmers could harvest their genetically engineered sugar beets this year, ruling that the economic impact would be too great if the crop were to be destroyed.

The judge, Jeffrey White of the United States District Court in San Francisco, also ruled that the environmental groups, including the Center for Food Safety, waited too long to request that the crop be yanked from the ground and barred from the market.

Nearly all sugar beets planted are genetically engineered and the crop accounts for half the nation’s sugar supply.

[Duke’s Rogers Says He Invests Assuming Carbon Rules](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Duke Energy Corp. Chief Executive Officer Jim Rogers said he makes investments expecting that the power company’s carbon emissions will become regulated.

“Every decision I make today I make it with the assumption that there’s been carbon legislation in the U.S. and there’s a worldwide treaty,” Rogers said today in a television interview at the Bloomberg New Energy Finance conference in London. A U.S. law isn’t likely this year, he said.

[UV exposure has increased over the last 30 years, but stabilized since the mid-1990s](#)

(PhysOrg.com) -- NASA scientists analyzing 30 years of satellite data have found that the amount of ultraviolet (UV) radiation reaching Earth's surface has increased markedly over the last three decades. Most of the increase has occurred in the mid-and-high latitudes, and there's been little or no increase in tropical regions.

...The primary culprit: decreasing levels of stratospheric ozone, a colorless gas that acts as Earth's natural sunscreen by shielding the surface from damaging UV radiation.

[Can behavior save enough energy to save earth?](#)

While Congress dickers over a bill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Rep. Brian Baird, D-Wash., is taking an outside-the-box approach.

Baird wants his colleagues to understand how much behavioral changes can reduce energy use. No wonder. He's a licensed clinical psychologist and author of two books in his field.

[Bolivia summit to seek global climate change referendum](#)

LA PAZ (AFP) – An alternative "people's conference" on climate change in the Bolivian city of Cochabamba in April will seek to advance an international global warming referendum, organizers said.

"The only thing that can save mankind from a (climate) tragedy is the exercise of global democracy," said Bolivia's United Nations Ambassador Pablo Solon, a key organizer of the summit.

[Govt ads banned over climate change claims](#)

LONDON (AFP) – Advertising watchdog has banned two government adverts for overstating the threat from climate change, it said on Wednesday.

[Climate Change: In Canada, No News Is Bad News](#)

UXBRIDGE (IPS) - Canada's climate researchers are being muzzled, their funding slashed, research stations closed, findings ignored and advice on the critical issue of the century unsought by Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government, according to a 40-page report by a coalition of 60 non-governmental organisations.

"This government says they take climate change seriously but they do nothing and try to hide the truth about climate change," said Graham Saul, representing Climate Action Network Canada (CAN), which produced the report "Troubling Evidence".

"We want Canadians to understand what's going on with this government," Saul told IPS.



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