



Drumbeat: March 21, 2010

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Academic Paper in China Sets Off Alarms in U.S.](#)

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ding figure in the UK industry taskforce on peak oil and energy security, said the meeting, to be held at the Energy Institute, showed a welcome new sense of urgency.

"Government has gone from the BP position – '40 years of supply left, the price mechanism works, no need to worry' – to 'crikey'," he said. "BP and others are telling us that, but you lot, Virgin, Scottish and Southern, and others are telling us something completely different. We do not know who to believe. Let's do a proper risk assessment with industry," he said.

[Venezuela punishes 80 firms for power use](#)

CARACAS (Reuters) - Venezuela announced on Sunday 24-hour power cutoffs for 80 firms that have failed to reduce electricity usage in the first punitive measures of a nationwide drive to save energy amid an electricity crisis.

Restaurants, liquor stores, hotels, gyms, car dealerships and a yacht club were on the list of companies in the capital Caracas that would have their power cut on Monday for failing to bring consumption down 20 percent, the state utility said.

The local unit of Japanese firm Sony Corp will be among those sanctioned.

[OPEC Output Ceiling Reached](#)

VIENNA — OPEC has less room to raise production as global oil use recovers because of Russia's increasing output, said Shokri Ghanem, head of Libya's delegation to the organization.

[Mexico closes Dos Bocas oil port on bad weather](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico closed its Dos Bocas oil port in the Gulf of Mexico on Sunday due to bad weather, the government said.

[RIL goes back to ONGC for Venezuelan oil block](#)

NEW DELHI: After the \$14.5-billion LyondellBasell takeover deal turned sour, Reliance Industries (RIL) has renewed talks with the ONGC-led consortium to pick up a stake in the Carabobo-1 oil block in Venezuela, a consortium member told ET.

[Gas prices expected to flatten](#)

ATLANTA (CNN) -- Prices at the pump are up nearly 9 cents in the past two weeks and a total of 18 cents in the past month, but the increase is likely to slow, according to a survey published Sunday.

[Institutional investors start to worry about challenges facing oil companies](#)

WITH the current state of the oil and equity markets, it may seem premature to think that the petroleum industry is about to hit the wall, whatever your opinion of peak oil and climate change.

But institutional investors from the US, Europe and Australia worth a combined \$US12.5 trillion (\$13.6 trillion) are sufficiently concerned about the significant challenges and potential threats to oil industry valuations that they are demanding greater disclosure on how these companies propose to manage the inevitable transformation to a low-carbon economy and the likely shift away from their end products.

[Kurt Cobb: Perry Mason and the climate change deniers](#)

Perhaps the best but certainly not the earliest example of the perpetual underdog defense attorney is Perry Mason, the main character of the eponymous television drama. Mason's fictional clients almost uniformly have the means, the motive and the opportunity to commit murder. And just as uniformly, Mason would unmask the real killer, often through clever cross-examination that exonerated his client. Combine this with the number of times television audiences have heard television judges explain to television juries that in order to convict they must find a defendant guilty beyond a

reasonable doubt, and you get a public primed to accept that *any* doubt is sufficient for acquittal.

The fossil fuel lobby has used this persistent and decades-long instruction to good effect. Most fossil fuel industry propagandists no longer claim there is no climate change since this position has become untenable in the face of overwhelming evidence. Instead, like Mason they point the finger at so-called "natural" warming as the true murderer of climate stability. They do not present any evidence of their own because they have none. (All their money is spent on propaganda.) They merely cite research from bona fide climate scientists which documents previous periods of climate change unrelated to human activity. This, of course, proves nothing.

[Can Russia be trusted with our uranium?](#)

A 2005 survey of 1200 Australians found that 56% of us believe that the International Atomic Energy Agency's nuclear 'safeguards' system is ineffective.

Barely half as many believe the system is effective.

[South Korea's Global Nuclear Ambitions](#)

Given the increasing concerns over global warming and peak oil theory, nuclear power has been championed as a clean and sustainable alternative for producing electricity. Nuclear power does indeed emit comparatively low levels of carbon dioxide, and can generate a large amount of electricity from a single plant. Nevertheless, the drawbacks are many. Notably, nuclear waste is so hazardous that it has to be carefully managed for several thousand years. The environmental consequences of accidents or attacks can be catastrophic, as seen from the Chernobyl disaster of 1986, and it is a relatively easy step to move from peaceful power generation to weapons development. Moreover, nuclear energy is itself derived from uranium, a finite resource albeit one which the IAEA expects to last for at least 80 more years even without new discoveries in technologies or deposits.

This paper assesses the development of the Korean nuclear power industry. It then shows why its clients in the Middle East want to harness nuclear energy and why they have chosen South Korea to lead this process rather than more experienced exporters such as France or the US-Japanese consortium. Finally, the article concludes with a brief outline of South Korea's global nuclear export strategy and a wider discussion of economic ties between South Korea and the UAE.

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[Aluminium producer Alcoa waiting for enough gas to revive expansion plans](#)

AUSTRALIA is attracting more than \$US130 billion (\$142bn) worth of investment in some of the world's richest natural gas fields to supply buyers in Japan and China.

But it seems domestic customers, particularly in Western Australia, will have to wait.

Aluminium producer Alcoa, for one, is waiting for enough gas to revive its expansion plans.

[The Philippines: Order freeze of oil prices anew](#)

LAKAS-Kampi-CMD Rep. Mikey Arroyo of Pampanga is asking President Arroyo to order the freeze of prices of oil products similar to the executive order (EO) she issued last year when Typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng devastated large parts of the country.

The President's son said, “[In light of] the threat of a weekly oil-price hike looming right before our eyes amid the worst El Niño phenomenon to hit the country in years, a presidential order on the freeze of oil-product prices might be in order.”

[The Philippines: Energy Exec warns: Be ready to pay 3X for your electricity](#)

If Malacañang's quick fix solution for the power crisis in Mindanao pushes through, consumers could pay as much as three times what they're now paying for electricity.

[Indian Oil May Raise Gulfsands Bid After Rejection, FT Reports](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Indian Oil Corp. may increase its bid for Gulfsands Petroleum Plc after the London-based company yesterday rejected the unsolicited takeover offer, the Financial Times reported, citing unnamed people.

[Aramco named energy company of the year](#)

DAMMAM: Saudi Aramco has been named Energy Company of the Year for its commitment to a cleaner environment, its investment in bringing new energy streams online and its long-range vision promoting reliable supply for the future.

Now in their 23rd year, the awards are made by Hart Energy Publishing and will be presented on March 24 in Phoenix, Arizona.

[Books offer insight into powerful world of energy](#)

Climate change, energy crisis and eating locally are just a few of the terms that crop up on a regular basis in our media and everyday conversations. There's no dearth of books on greening our lives, and here a few of the most recent and most informative.

[Stuart Staniford: The net energy of pre-industrial agriculture](#)

It's also clear that modern biofuel EROEI's are in the same range as pre-industrial agriculture, and therefore are completely unsuited to support an industrial civilization.

[Talk Deeply, Be Happy?](#)

Would you be happier if you spent more time discussing the state of the world and the meaning of life — and less time talking about the weather?

It may sound counterintuitive, but people who spend more of their day having deep discussions and less time engaging in small talk seem to be happier, said Matthias Mehl, a psychologist at the University of Arizona who published a study on the subject.

[Are US Marines Expendable?](#)

Deploying US Marines in uninhabited desolate terrain in Afghanistan to secure an area where oil pipelines get built may be considered crucial to the national security of the United States.

After all, oil is vital to keep our cars running, our airplanes flying, our homes heated and our tanks, ships, helicopters and other military vehicles operating. But what remains inexcusable are plans to bivouac more than 3,000 US Marines in a single compound in hostile territory.

[Is Petronas on the right track?](#)

Many nations blessed with rich resources have enjoyed economic booms, but many have also been cursed by it. So what is Malaysia's standing among the world matrix of oil-producing nations, and how well are we managing our oil revenue?

[Cyclone knocks out power to 55,000](#)

Helicopters are checking the condition of power lines in north Queensland as 55,000 homes and businesses remain without power, Ergon Energy says.

Cyclone Ului caused extensive damage to power infrastructure when it crossed the coast near Airlie Beach in the Whitsundays early today, packing winds of 200km/h and washing a dozen boats onto the rocks.

[Ports still closed in wake of cyclone Ului](#)

Coal terminals in north Queensland remain closed after ex-Tropical Cyclone Ului dumped more than 350 millimetres of rain on the region.

North Queensland Bulk Ports staff are inspecting the Dalrymple Bay terminal, south of Mackay, and the Abbot Point terminal near Bowen, south of Townsville, but no major damage has been reported.

[Gas The Next Fuel To Fire Australia's Boom](#)

KARRATHA, Australia -- First gold, then coal and iron ore. Now, a new bonanza is about to be unleashed from beneath Down Under: Australia's got gas.

Projects being ramped up to tap huge undersea fields off the country's northwest could quadruple Australia's exports of liquefied natural gas in the next few years and turn it into what the country's resources minister has called an "energy superpower."

[In rural north-central Pa., hope for more jobs from natural gas](#)

COUDERSPORT — The economy in rural north-central Pennsylvania has ebbed and flowed with the region's natural resources.

Lumber once made people rich in a part of the state so desolate it's been nicknamed "God's Country." A little further west, the oil boom that began more than 150 years ago brought some prosperity.

Now a rush on natural gas stored deep underground in the sprawling Marcellus Shale formation has brought hope of more jobs that could help the economy in a region with

some of the highest unemployment rates in Pennsylvania.

[Oil India, Indian Oil Said to Have Made Gulfsands Rejected Bid](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Oil India Ltd. and Indian Oil Corp. jointly made the bid for Gulfsands Petroleum Plc that the U.K. company with assets in Syria and the Gulf of Mexico rejected last week, three people familiar with the matter said.

The unsolicited approach was “wholly inadequate,” Gulfsands said March 19, without giving details. The bid was at 350 pence a share, the Financial Times reported yesterday, or 10 percent above the March 19 closing price. That would value the London-based company at about 400 million pounds (\$601 million), the newspaper said. The offer may be increased, it said.

[Kuwait to conduct 'oil lake' treatment forum](#)

KUWAIT: A scientific forum is to be held here between March 22 and 25 on reviewing the latest techniques in treating and containing Kuwait's 'oil lakes' and rehabilitating war-ravaged environments generally. The forthcoming event was announced on Friday by Khalid Al-Mudhaf, the head of Kuwait's Central Committee on War-Damaged Environment Rehabilitation Projects, who revealed that the event will be held under the sponsorship of Minister of Oil and of Information Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah.

[How green are railways?](#)

There is a general view that railways are green whilst all other modes of engine powered travel are not. This is a strange view. Trains need diesel or electric engines to pull them, which in their turn generate emissions including CO2. If we wish to see how much more efficient railways are than cars, buses, coaches, ships, planes and other powered transport, we need to do a proper audit. The figures which result show it all depends. It all depends how the electricity was generated and how the double inefficiency of the power station and the electric engine works out. It all depends how new or old the train is, how efficient it is and how many people are on it.

[Australian cities need radical changes](#)

AUSTRALIA circa 2050: population 35 million, climate change-induced rising sea levels have flooded the Gold Coast region, apartment blocks are used to grow food and people commute in monorail pods above the sea.

In another city, Australians live on floating island pods with apartments both below and above sea level, the population has shifted from land to the sea because of the skyrocketing value of disappearing arable land. Climate change has also forced many

Australians to move inland and create new cities in the outback, relying on solar power to exist in the inhospitable interior.

These are just a few urban scenarios by some of Australia's leading architects shortlisted for "Ideas for Australian Cities 2050-plus" to be staged at this year's Venice Architecture Biennale.

[Sea view](#)

But as well as being a potential cause of devastation, Rayner believes the ocean could also provide a solution to climate change and an impending peak-oil situation. 'The UK doesn't have many resources left to exploit in terms of hydropower from rivers; it's not a great place for solar; and there are lots of issues with onshore wind,' he said. 'The decision to adopt offshore wind to hitting that target is a pretty sound one. But if you think about the scale of these things, each one is as big as the London Eye, so there are some big engineering challenges to delivering that.'

[Transition Bloomington helps neighborhoods re-imagine themselves](#)

Imagine that you're driving a car across the vast spaces of an enormous desert, and your gas tank is exactly half empty. This is the perfect time to consider your options for continuing onward or finding shelter; you wouldn't want to wait until the tank is nearly empty.

This is the situation the world faces with peak oil: half of all the world's petroleum reserves have been used up. The U.S. Department of Energy's 2005 Hirsch Report noted that peak oil will pose enormous challenges to our economy and lifestyle, and that mitigation efforts will be necessary to ease the transition to a world characterized by scarce oil.

[Stewart L. Udall, 90, Conservationist in Kennedy and Johnson Cabinets, Dies](#)

Stewart L. Udall, an ardent conservationist and a son of the West, who as interior secretary in the 1960s presided over vast increases in national park holdings and the public domain, died on Saturday at his home in Santa Fe, N.M. The last surviving member of the original Kennedy cabinet, he was 90.

[Renewed Support for an Everglades Land Deal, but Cost Is Still in Question](#)

MIAMI — Gov. Charlie Crist reaffirmed his commitment this week to the \$536 million purchase of 73,000 acres of land from United States Sugar, declaring that it would heal both the Everglades and the coastal estuaries that are vital to Florida's tourist economy.

But with its original plan to borrow money for the deal being questioned by internal auditors, the state water district responsible for the acquisition has begun to explore alternatives that could require severe cuts to restoration projects already in motion — and the sale of a reservoir — or a renegotiated, smaller purchase.

[California Tribe Hopes to Woo Salmon Home](#)

SAN FRANCISCO — On Friday night, more than two dozen Native Americans embarked from here on a spiritual mission to New Zealand, where they will ask their fish to come home to California.

The unusual journey centers on an apology, to be relayed to the fish on the banks of the Rakaia River through a ceremonial dance that tribal leaders say has not been performed in more than 60 years.

[Life below the melting Himalayan glaciers](#)

In a land steeped in Buddhist tradition, the people of the Tibetan Plateau look at the effects of climate change through a different prism than is currently being used in America. Whereas in America, climate and energy legislation is being held hostage until lawmakers can figure out a way to preserve our materialistic culture, in Tibet, the idea that nothing will get better until we get rid of our materialistic culture permeates.

Reports of inaccuracies surrounding the melting of Himalayan glaciers by 2035 in an IPCC report on climate change caused an uproar in the ranks of the opposition to energy reform in the United States where, within certain ranks, the entire field of climate science was relegated to junk status; but the realities of climate change look quite different on the physical plane than they do in the cognitive one.

[Top climate officials urge progress at Mexico summit](#)

CANCUN, Mexico (AFP) — The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has listened to and learned from recent criticism, but the threat of global warming is real and must be tackled, the group's head said Saturday.



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