



Drumbeat: April 11, 2010

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Brown Said to Plan National Interest Test for British Takeovers](#)

(Bloomberg) -- British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's campaign program, to be published in two days, proposes a law giving the government the power to block foreign takeovers of infrastructure and utility companies, people familiar with the plans said.

The proposal will be announced as part of Labour's manifesto for the May 6 general election, according to the people, who declined to be identified because the announcement hasn't been made yet. It follows labor-union complaints about Kraft Foods Inc.'s takeover of candy-maker Cadbury Plc.

arly 10 million barrels per day," says the report, which has a foreword by a senior commander, General James N Mattis.

It adds: "While it is difficult to predict precisely what economic, political, and strategic effects such a shortfall might produce, it surely would reduce the prospects for growth in both the developing and developed worlds. Such an economic slowdown would exacerbate other unresolved tensions, push fragile and failing states further down the path toward collapse, and perhaps have serious economic impact on both China and India."

[One of the World's Biggest Oil Producers Is Going Bust](#)

Most Americans don't realize it, but Mexico is a major player in global oil production. According to the Energy Information Agency, it was the seventh largest oil-producing country in 2008. Mexico is the U.S.'s second-largest source of imported oil, behind Canada.

You read that correctly: We import more oil from Mexico than we do Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, or any other Middle Eastern country. You don't read about it much in the papers, but Mexico is a critical supplier to American drivers.

Now, Mexican oil officials like Georgina Kessel have a problem... one the entire world has: There are no easy barrels left.

[Bad weather drives Iraq oil exports lower](#)

Iraq, holder of the world's third- largest oil reserves, exported less crude in March than in the previous month because of faults tied to poor weather, an Oil Ministry official said.

[RRI Energy, Mirant Combine to Form New GenOn Energy](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Mirant Corp. and RRI Energy Inc. will combine their companies in a \$1.6 billion stock transaction to form the second-largest independent U.S. power producer, the companies said today.

[Aviation fuel shortage in Uganda now spreads to petrol](#)

The shortages experienced with AVGAS in recent weeks in Uganda have now spread to ordinary petrol, diesel, and even kerosene used in many households, all commodities needed to keep the country running. Inquiries about the national fuel reserves in Jinja, or a release of these reserves into the market to cushion off the effects of absent deliveries for the time being, have been met with stony silence by those asked, while one fuel company executive dismissed the question by saying: "Why don't you go to Jinja and check what government has in stock there?" before hanging up the phone, without answering even the question why his own market leader company once again let the country down by failing to bring in enough supplies. Government has meanwhile also confirmed that the national fuel reserves were dry as the facility "was being refurbished," leaving the entire nation reeling from the fallout of yet another fuel crisis.

[Daisetta fears unstable future after sinkhole](#)

They fear the sinkhole only a block from their fire station and high school could make their property worthless and jeopardize their future water supply. As a result, the Daisetta City Council and 230 residents have authorized a law firm — Watts, Guerra, Craft in San Antonio — to investigate and sue whoever was responsible.

In the first published report providing any explanation for the phenomenon, a Texas Commission on Environmental Quality adviser theorized injection disposal wells may be primarily responsible for destabilizing the area and creating a kind of quicksand 1,000 feet below that led to the collapse. These wells are used to dispose of saltwater and other nonhazardous oil field waste by pumping them into geological formations deep below the surface.

[New Mexico sinkhole gets US senator's attention](#)

U.S. Sen. Tom Udall said scientists are certain it's only a matter of time before a giant cavern in southern New Mexico will collapse and possibly take with it part of a highway, a trailer park and a major irrigation canal.

"It could be very devastating to the community. This could impact transportation, business, tourism and farming, among other things," Udall, D-N.M., told The Associated Press in a telephone interview Wednesday after being briefed on the situation by state and local officials in Carlsbad.

[Energy crisis forces Bangladesh to consider open pit mining](#)

Dhaka: Energy-starved Bangladesh plans to adopt controversial open pit mining at a major northwestern coal mine to maximise extraction despite controversies over the method, environmental damage and the displacement of thousands, officials and reports said.

[India keen to buy Australian mines](#)

In 1799 a barque named The Hunter was loaded with coal in Newcastle and dispatched to the British colonial province of Bengal. Legend has it that that shipment to the subcontinent was Australia's first ever export.

Now, more than 200 years later, Australian coal sales to India are booming and the state-owned mining giant, Coal India Limited, is hunting for Australian coal investments to help avert a worsening energy crunch in one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

[Scourge of the rainforests](#)

The renewable-energy industry faces new controversy after a Northamptonshire firm became the latest to win planning permission to burn tropical palm oil to make electricity.

Chelveston Renewable Energy has been told it can build a bio-oil power station on a disused RAF bomber base near Wellingborough.

Such projects have infuriated environmentalists who say the burgeoning market for such oils is accelerating the destruction of tropical rainforests as they are cleared for biofuel plantations.

[New fuel could solve fusion](#)

Imagine if you could generate electricity using nuclear power that emitted no radioactivity: it would be the answer to the world's dream of finding a clean, sustainable energy source.

That is the great hope raised by researchers who believe they have found a radical new path to the ultimate goal of solving the world's energy crisis through nuclear fusion power, as detailed in a paper published in the journal *Energy and Environmental Science*.

[Kurt Cobb: Will the post-oil future be bicycle-free?](#)

U. S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood may soon be nominated for heresy-of-the-year award for an impromptu speech at the 2010 National Bike Summit last month. In that speech he said federal transportation policy will no longer favor automobiles over bicyclists and walkers.

As anyone who regularly rides a bicycle knows, this change is big precisely because automobiles and bicycles share much of the same infrastructure. But this very fact may bode ill for the bicycle in a post-oil future.

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[Oil production . . . Britain's crude awakening](#)

It came as a surprise that last month Britain's Energy Minister summoned a meeting of business leaders to discuss the Government's response to a decline in global oil production should it actually be imminent.

Just last summer, the UK Government formally rejected the notion that the demand for oil would soon overtake available supplies leading to much higher prices and global economic disruptions.

[No Substitute for Oil on the Horizon](#)

TER: Are you suggesting there is no tangible visible substitute on the horizon at this time?

ML: It's interesting to look at the hypothesis of using natural gas. It is becoming very visible, and a lot of respected people in industry are pointing that out. However, when you look at the ramifications of building out infrastructure in places like Pennsylvania, where there are no pipelines or gas plants, it takes a while to build those up. Then more importantly, the infrastructure needed to supply transportation throughout the United States is significant and it will take a long time for that to be put in place. So that day may come, but I don't think that date is visible at this point.

[Hugo Chávez cries sabotage, while his critics just cry 'Bananas'](#)

It sounded like a Frederick Forsyth plot transplanted to South America: Colombian spies in league with the US infiltrated Venezuela to sabotage the electricity supply, sow chaos and topple President Hugo Chávez. Venezuelan authorities arrested eight Colombians last week and accused them of subversive acts against the country's energy infrastructure. They allegedly had photographs of electricity substations, transmission systems and highways.

[Shareholders may fail to drag BP out of tar sands but have won moral victory](#)

BP will almost certainly see off a resolution at its annual meeting next week from 140 shareholders asking it to produce a report by next year about its tar sands activities.

City investors have rallied around BP's management, but the level of protest is too significant to ignore. A number of large overseas investors backed the resolution, as did about 5,000 individuals who participated in an internet drive to enfranchise pension fund members organised by lobby group FairPensions and supported by the *Observer*.

[Occidental to boost Oman crude production in 2012](#)

MUSCAT (Reuters) - Occidental Petroleum Corp will boost its crude production in Oman by 50 percent to 150,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 2012, senior company executive Bill Albrecht said on Sunday.

The fourth-largest U.S. oil and gas company currently produces from the Mukhaizna field in Oman.

[Valero Finally Sells Refinery](#)

Post-closure, Valero will continue to supply its customers by entering into a terminaling agreement with the new owner. This deal will make incremental cash flow for the company, management said.

[Aramco-Sumitomo seek firms interest for JV expansion](#)

Long-term growth in petrochemical demand in China has encouraged Aramco and Sumitomo to consider moving forward with the estimated 25 billion Saudi riyals (\$6.67 billion) expansion.

[Vietnam and Saudi Arabia to strenghten oil and gas ties](#)

Saudi Arabia and Vietnam have signed agreements to increase cooperation in the oil and gas sectors.

The Saudi Press Agency reports this includes possible Saudi investment in Vietnamese refineries.

[China Said to Halt Imports of Argentine Soybean Oil](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China stopped approving permits to import soybean oil from Argentina, four executives familiar with the halt said, as a trade rift widens between the biggest buyer and largest supplier of the commodity.

[Ontario Issues \\$8 Billion in Renewable Energy Contracts](#)

An Ontario government agency yesterday announced \$8 billion in new renewable energy deals under the province's bulked up feed-in tariff program, with 184 wind, solar, hydro and landfill gas projects winning long-term contracts to provide a total of about 2,500 megawatts of green power.

While the announcement is good news for the environment, provincial ratepayers will end up spending about \$300 more per year on their electricity bills, according to The Globe and Mail.

[Target, Whole Foods expand recycling to cork, electronics](#)

Target says it's launched recycling stations this week at all 1,740 U.S. stores, and Whole Foods Market announced drop boxes for recycling wine corks at its 292 stores.

[Developing a 'Water Battery' for Trees](#)

According to the World Health Organization, 1.2 billion people – or almost 1 out of 5 people in the world – are without access to safe drinking water. And even in areas with

access, 70 percent of water withdrawn from fresh groundwater sources is used for agriculture.

But using groundwater to grow crops and trees doesn't make sense to Pieter Hoff, a Dutch inventor. Not only are traditional irrigation techniques inefficient because most of the water is lost to evaporation, Mr. Hoff says, but water can be easily captured from the atmosphere to grow just about anything.

To prove his point, Mr. Hoff retired from the lily and tulip export business in 2003, established his company, AquaPro, and devoted himself to the development of the Groasis Waterboxx, which he says will grow food crops and trees even in the driest places on earth.

[Tribes of Amazon Find an Ally Out of 'Avatar'](#)

VOLTA GRANDE DO XINGU, Brazil — They came from the far reaches of the Amazon, traveling in small boats and canoes for up to three days to discuss their fate. James Cameron, the Hollywood titan, stood before them with orange warrior streaks painted on his face, comparing the threats on their lands to a snake eating its prey.

“The snake kills by squeezing very slowly,” Mr. Cameron said to more than 70 indigenous people, some holding spears and bows and arrows, under a tree here along the Xingu River. “This is how the civilized world slowly, slowly pushes into the forest and takes away the world that used to be,” he added.

[Scientists turn to Inuit traditions to collect data on Arctic weather](#)

OTTAWA — Using traditional Inuit weather knowledge passed down through generations, environmental scientists have uncovered new data on Arctic climate change.

[Rupert Murdoch, CEO of Fox News believes global warming will be catastrophic](#)

Rupert Murdoch has been claiming that his corporation is sensitive to climate change and that global warming will be catastrophic if allowed to continue. It sounds like he is incredibly disconnected from his own News organization. All the Fox News commentators scoff at global warming, calling it the biggest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people.

[Abu Dhabi faces climate change flood threat - expert](#)

A leading US academic will tonight warn that Abu Dhabi must invest in research and infrastructure if it is to combat the risk of flooding due to climate change.

David Holland, director of the Center for Atmosphere Ocean Science at New York University, told *Arabian Business* that the rise in sea levels is “accelerating” and that the UAE capital is “among the dozen or so major cities in the world that are precisely at sea level”.

[UN urges for progress as climate talks enter final day.](#)

BONN (AFP) – Another failure in the quest for a treaty on climate change would cripple trust in the United Nations' ability to tackle global warming, the UN's climate pointman warned as new talks ground into their final day Sunday.



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