



Drumbeat: April 14, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 14, 2010 - 9:25am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Gazprom shrugs off shale gas 'threat'](#)

Russian giant Gazprom today said it expected to boost its gas output substantially over the next three years, despite increasing competition from alternatives such as shale gas.

Chief executive Alexei Miller said the company expected to produce 565.5 billion cubic metres of gas in 2013 compared to a projected 529 Bcm this year and 461 Bcm in crisis-hit 2009.

"Obviously, the planned output is defined by the positive dynamics of gas consumption both on the domestic and international gas markets, for example, in Europe," Reuters quoted Miller saying on Russian television.

He added that the forecast 2013 production is expected to reach a record high in 13 years and exceed volumes extracted in pre-crisis 2008 when the company produced 551 Bcm.

ure climate changes may mitigate or compound Arctic energy development impacts.

Information also will be gathered as Shell Exploration Inc. drills three wells on its Beaufort and Chukchi sea leases this summer, Salazar said. "If we are to responsibly develop energy resources in frontier areas of the OCS, especially in the Arctic's extreme environment, we must support exploration activities, gather the science needed, and listen to affected communities," he said.

[The Peak Oil Crisis: China's Latest Drought](#)

We all need to pause for a minute and consider the possible implications of the droughts that are engulfing China. One of these is in the north -- Inner Mongolia, and the second more serious one covers most of southwestern China.

If the weather patterns revert to normal and the May monsoons come on schedule in the next month or so, then all should be well and we, along with 60 million or so Chinese farmers, can stop worrying. But these are not normal times and even the disappearance of the El Niño in the central Pacific may not bring enough rain to mitigate the situation. Then, there could be serious trouble not only for the Chinese and southeast Asian peoples, but for the rest of us as well.

[Calculating agriculture's phosphorus footprint](#)

Biologist John Lott of McMaster University, in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, and colleagues there and at the University of Sydney, Australia, point out that when food scarcity increases, instability in society increases. Given that the majority of the food we eat is from cereals and legumes, the phosphorus cycle is a critical element of food security. Phosphorus is essential for crop plant growth, but soils become depleted as it is removed from the land when the grain and seeds are harvested.

The researchers have analysed nine years of data on total dry cereal grain and total dry legume seed production, production of barley, maize, rice, soybean and wheat grains/seeds, yields, area farmed, the tonnage of phosphorus and phytic acid removed in these crops and the elemental phosphorus applied as mineral fertilizers to all plant crops.

The world estimate of the elemental P removed with the dry seed/grain and fleshy fruit crops that contain seeds is in the range of 56-71% of the elemental phosphorus applied as mineral fertilizer for all purposes worldwide. Depending on the soil type, considerable amounts of phosphorus may become unusable by plants, the team explains.

[Saudi oil use to grow steeply](#)

Saudi Arabia has emerged as the second-biggest source of global oil demand growth after China.

Higher oil consumption in the Arab world's biggest economy is forecast to account for 11.7 per cent of global expansion this year, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said.

[Bennetts' renewed energy for oil game](#)

His take on energy options, particularly for vehicles, is pragmatic. Biofuels make sense, as they can be distributed through the existing infrastructure. Hydrogen doesn't, as it needs a duplicate distribution system. The electric car is not as good as it looks from a total life cycle perspective, he says. Peak oil? We are not even close. If there are 100 known barrels of oil in the ground, we are only tapping 30 of those and can get to another 20 with current technology, Bennetts says.

"That will change over time and you can add that we will discover other oil on top of that. One of the big variables is that no-one really knows how much oil is in the Middle East. This peak oil theory comes down to the numbers and nobody knows all the numbers."

[Hawaii stuck over a barrel](#)

There's an interesting conversation going on right now at the Legislature over the idea of substantially raising the tax on imported oil — the so-called "barrel tax" — from today's nominal 5 cents a barrel to a buck-five a barrel.

Originally conceived as a way to generate money that would help Hawai'i move away from its independence on imported oil, the barrel tax has now morphed into another way to raise money to balance the overall budget. We all have to buy gas, right?

It might take a bit of political courage, but lawmakers should return to original principles: The only way we are ever going to get ourselves off the imported oil lifeline is to develop our own alternatives. And that ain't cheap.

[U.S. Energy Law Should Boost Natural Gas Trucks, Pickens Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- T. Boone Pickens, the billionaire energy hedge-fund manager, said U.S. lawmakers should try this year to "jumpstart a natural-gas vehicle industry" instead of passing a greenhouse-gas trading measure he opposes.

"Natural gas is an excellent example of how we can create green jobs," Pickens, chairman of Dallas-based BP Capital LLC, said today in testimony prepared for a hearing of the House Ways and Means Committee.

[Gazprom shrugs off shale gas 'threat'](#)

Russian giant Gazprom today said it expected to boost its gas output substantially over the next three years, despite increasing competition from alternatives such as shale gas.

Chief executive Alexei Miller said the company expected to produce 565.5 billion cubic metres of gas in 2013 compared to a projected 529 Bcm this year and 461 Bcm in crisis-hit 2009.

"Obviously, the planned output is defined by the positive dynamics of gas consumption both on the domestic and international gas markets, for example, in Europe," Reuters quoted Miller saying on Russian television.

He added that the forecast 2013 production is expected to reach a record high in 13 years and exceed volumes extracted in pre-crisis 2008 when the company produced 551 Bcm.

[Musings: Gas Prices Reflect Little Worry over Hurricane Forecast](#)

Last week's price action of natural gas futures suggested there is little concern among

buyers about the potential for a more active hurricane season disrupting available gas supply from the Gulf of Mexico. Gas prices bounced around the \$4 per Mcf level most of the week, responding to news about the upcoming revision to the EIA's 914 survey of domestic gas production and gas storage inventory data rather than recognition that the latest Colorado State University (CSU) hurricane forecasting team had boosted their estimate of the number of tropical storms, hurricanes and major hurricanes.

[Energy Analyst Sees Stable Oil Prices Ahead](#)

It's not necessarily politics, but we in the U.S. have been losing ground.... The United States, according to the Energy Information Administration, we're producing today the same amount of oil that we were producing in 1947. Our demand grows, and there grows our dependence on foreign oil....

We forgot about the [Gulf of Mexico], we forgot about areas in the United States where we could go and explore for oil.... We will never recover our position of where we were 10, 15, 20 years ago. But at least in my opinion we can stop this slide where our share of foreign oil continues to increase. At least we can freeze it.

The amount of oil that we bring in from Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador and Mexico is larger than the amount of oil we bring in from Saudi Arabia. Our emphasis should be the Western Hemisphere.... I think Brazil is going to be our new energy friend in the Western Hemisphere.

[U.N. sanctions will not harm Iran oil industry, minister](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - U.N. sanctions would have no impact on Iran's oil industry, the SHANA news agency quoted the country's oil minister as saying on Wednesday.

[Sinopec May Buy Stakes in Two Petrobras Oil Blocks, Estado Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China Petrochemical Corp. may buy stakes of about 20 percent in two Brazilian oil blocks owned by Petroleo Brasileiro SA, O Estado de S. Paulo reported, without saying how it got the information.

[Brazilians buy into hunt for LNG](#)

BRAZIL'S national oil company, Petrobras, has joined the hunt for the next round of liquefied natural gas export projects in waters off Western Australia.

[BP eyes new Indonesia oil exploration](#)

JAKARTA (Reuters) - Several oil companies, including Inpex Corp of Japan and BP are looking for new oil and gas exploration blocks in Indonesia, an official at Indonesia's mines and energy ministry said on Wednesday.

[Shell shuts Nigeria EA, defers 100,000 bpd output](#)

ABUJA (Reuters) - Royal Dutch Shell said on Wednesday it had suspended the production of around 100,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) at its EA field off Nigeria which was temporarily shut down for repairs.

[Foreign firms eye more Aramco engineering deals](#)

KHOBAR, Saudi Arabia (Reuters) - Foreign engineering firms hope new partnerships with Saudi companies will increase their chances of winning deals from state oil giant Saudi Aramco, industry sources said on Tuesday.

[Foreigners freed in Niger delta](#)

Four foreign construction workers have been released five days after being abducted in Nigeria's oil-rich River State.

Police could not say if a ransom was paid for the release on Wednesday of the three Syrians and one Lebanese.

[Iraq to establish 4th state oil company](#)

Iraq's Cabinet says, it has approved the establishment of a new state-owned oil company to oversee developments of fields in central Iraq.

A statement issued late on Tuesday after a Cabinet meeting says, the government has earmarked \$85,000 for the initial startup costs of the Midland Oil Co. It did not say, when it would start operating. The new company is expected to help ease the burden from the North, South and Maysan oil companies that are currently overseeing the 10 major oil projects awarded to western oil companies last year.

[Cut line losses, heads of power firms told](#)

ISLAMABAD: A meeting between federal ministers and international creditors held here on Tuesday warned the heads of public sector power companies to reduce their system losses by 2 per cent by June this year and speed up recovery of huge receivables to minimise energy crisis or be ready to face consequences.

[Massive power outages continue amid protests](#)

LAHORE - Despite strong protests on the 5th consecutive day on Tuesday against massive power outage, Pakistan Electric Power Company (PEPCO) is continuing 14 to 16-hour load shedding across the Punjab.

Prolonged and unannounced power outages are badly affecting the small business and industrial operations besides multiplying the miseries of the public during hot weather.

[Electricity generation from coal soon: minister](#)

SENIOR Provincial Minister Raja Riaz Ahmad has said that both federal and provincial government are making efforts to overcome the energy crisis since various power generation projects are under completion in Punjab.

Raja Riaz ahmad said the Punjab government was initiating a project for generating electricity from coal in Dera Ghazi Khan. He said the coal would be purchased from Balochistan for this project. He said the construction of small dams in Potohar area for thermal power was underway. He said the federal government was also considering generating electricity from solar energy.

[‘China should help Pakistan in overcoming energy problem’](#)

ISLAMABAD: Energy shortage in the country has become a growing problem for the economic growth and China should come forward to help Pakistan in overcoming the energy crisis for smooth promotion of manufacturing and industrial activities. Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Zahid Maqbool said this on Tuesday while exchanging views with a four-member delegation of Chinese entrepreneurs who called on him at ICCI led by Hubei Dayu Electric Group of China Chairman Wang Yicai. He said Pakistan was endowed with tremendous amount of alternative energy resources including hydro, coal, wind, solar and energy waste potential. However, combination of Chinese capital and expertise and Pakistani talent was the best option to fully exploit these renewable energy resources.

[People pushed to the wall due to unannounced outages](#)

ISLAMABAD: Students, patients, commuters, workers in public and private organizations, shop owners and industrialists all have complained of having been suffering for a few weeks from power outages due to mismanagement on part of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO).

[India: Power shortages haunt economy](#)

Peak and basic power shortages continue to pose a challenge to economic managers. And, more worrying is the fact that there is no let up in rising power deficit.

Fuel shortages and slippages in capacity addition seems to have aggravated the problem for industry users, retail domestic consumers and farmers. Peaking shortages rose to 13.3 per cent in 2009-10 hinting at a time when prime minister Manmohan Singh has proposed an action plan to move to double-digit economic growth in next 2-3 years.

[Is Uganda heading to a fuel crisis?](#)

Fuel shortage and high prices have continued to haunt Uganda for weeks running. Apparently, poor delivery infrastructure particularly the unfinished pipeline is making the situation worse. The weakening shilling, transport and insurance premiums due to sea piracy at the Gulf of Aden were cited by Energy Minister Daudi Migereko, as the cause of the fuel shortage in October 2008.

[Future of energy lies in coal](#)

A high profile international conference yesterday recommended open-pit coal mining for Bangladesh, and urged the government to ease up the bidding and purchasing mechanism in the power sector to encourage private investment.

[Oklahoma lawmaker defends wire money transfer tax](#)

OKLAHOMA CITY — An Oklahoma legislator who wrote a law imposing new fees for wire money transfers defended the measure Monday after a Mexican congressman assailed it as "discriminatory and immoral."

Mexico's House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution last week urging government agencies, including state-run oil company Petroleos Mexicanos, known as Pemex, to stop buying products from Oklahoma because of its tax on wire money transfers.

[Europe Urged to Share Power Across Continent](#)

BRUSSELS — Renewable energy in Europe should be generated and distributed on a continental scale to make the greatest contribution toward reducing greenhouse gases, according to a report that raises significant challenges for a fragmented region.

The report, to be released Tuesday, was compiled by the European Climate Foundation, a group financed by philanthropic organizations, using studies carried out by McKinsey,

a consulting firm.

[Irish government agrees electric car charging infrastructure](#)

The definitive agreement includes the development of a nationwide electric car charging infrastructure by ESB, the supply of electric cars by the Renault-Nissan Alliance from 2011, and government policies and incentives that will support the widespread adoption of such vehicles.

The Irish government will provide grants of €5,000 for those who purchase electric vehicles. The government said that Irish buyers of electric vehicles will be exempt from Vehicle Registration Tax. The Irish government's target is for 10 per cent of Ireland's vehicles to be electric by 2020. This agreement with Nissan-Renault will see 2,000 cars on Irish roads by 2011.

[Obama Wins Backing for Nuclear Security Goal as Summit Ends](#)

(Bloomberg) -- President Barack Obama won commitments from 46 nations to lock down nuclear material and keep it out of the hands of terrorists. The next test will be how far global leaders will go to carry out their pledges.

[Education Meets Inspiration at Upcoming Living Future](#)

Leaders in the green building industry with the most cutting-edge ideas and information are coming to Seattle May 5-7th to speak, lead sessions and engage in deep conversations in an intimate setting with those determined to make a difference in the built environment.

..."We chose James Howard Kunstler as our opening keynote speaker because he shares our vision: the vision of immediate and radical change in the built environment, and building that moves us closer to our goals of social and environmental justice," said Jason F. McLennan, CEO of the Cascadia Region Green Building Council.

[The Index of Life](#)

But here is the problem. More and more I'm beginning to be influenced by some of my doomsday colleagues who have become frighteningly convincing that the combination of Peak Oil and Global Warming means that life will, from now, only get worse. Your children, and, certainly, theirs, they say, will descend into mediocrity, and worse. Renewable energy? Not sufficient, according to their analysis. Toss in hopeless governance, and they might have a few good points.

[Part 1: First Change - the Long Emergency](#)

Even with the election of Barack Obama, we Americans stand in the cross hairs of ominous social and environmental change in the early years of the 21st century. Each day, media reports stream into major networks as they expose ‘symptoms’ erupting across the planet. Water shortages, ozone pollution, species extinction, gridlocked traffic, energy crisis and other calamities dominate the news.

With so many events hammering us from all angles? Who can we believe? What’s really going on? Who gets down to brass tacks to explain it all?

[Part 15: Overpopulation In 21st Century America Running Out Of Energy That Drives Civilization](#)

To show how much energy oil provides the U.S. annually, Michael Brownlee of www.transitionbouldercounty.org provided an astounding graph of one cubic mile of oil. That’s how much oil humans burn around the planet each year! That equals to the same amount of energy provided by 52 nuclear power plants built every year for 50 years or 104 operating coal-fired electrical plants built every year for 50 years or 32,000 wind turbines built every year for 50 years—and in continuous operation—or 91,250,000 solar panels built every year for 50 years.

In other words, oil produces dramatically incredible amounts of energy that we cannot and will not be able to duplicate in the coming years.

[Study Says Overuse Threatens Gains From Modified Crops](#)

Genetically engineered crops have provided “substantial” environmental and economic benefits to American farmers, but overuse of the technology is threatening to erode the gains, a national science advisory organization said Tuesday in a report.

[Dong, Shell, Probe Possible Flaw at U.K.’s Offshore Wind Parks](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Royal Dutch Shell Plc, Centrica Plc and Dong Energy A/S are investigating a possible design flaw that may lead to offshore wind turbines sinking into their foundations on the ocean floor.

[Too big to succeed! Bill McKibben’s new book, Eaarth](#)

I just finished Bill McKibben’s newest book, Eaarth: Making A Life On A Tough New Who Planet, and I am giving it three thumbs up. The book chillingly catalogs how the

human enterprise has remade the face of the planet – and in the process created what could be a terrifying future. But it also offers hope. And part of that hope is really not even debatable: the end of growth.

[Green paranoia on parade](#)

The first thing you have to understand about Bill McKibben--the environmentalist and author whose new book, subtitled Making a Life on a Tough New Planet, the National Post excerpted Tuesday--is that he is a conspiracy theorist.

Most environmentalists are.

[Obama Seeks Local Action for Earth Day](#)

President Obama today urged Americans to honor the upcoming 40th anniversary of Earth Day by acting to improve the environment around them and launched a Web site, Whitehouse.gov/EarthDay, compiling citizens' success stories.

[Start-Ups Win With Plans to Displace Disposables](#)

Companies that provide environmentally sensible alternatives to old, destructive forms of lighting, batteries and paper goods won top awards at a business-plan competition held this weekend in Washington, D.C., by the William James Foundation, an organization that encourages socially responsible for-profits.

The grand prize of \$6,000 and additional in-kind business services went to NURU Energy, which is also known as NURU Lights. The company makes rechargeable lights and portable power generators that are designed to displace the lanterns and carbon-emitting kerosene fuel still used in off-grid villages in developing nations.

[Oil prices and not pressure groups can force BP to change its strategy](#)

BP could, no doubt, do without the hassle of such run-ins. It insists its tar sands extraction processes are cleaner than those of the worst polluters in Canada – and points out that it also spends huge sums developing alternative energy technologies.

The bottom line, however, is the bottom line: with the oil price creeping slowly but inexorably upwards once more, oil sands are a profitable resource.

[BlueNext Pushes 'Swap Backs' of Used CO2 Credits After Halt](#)

(Bloomberg) -- BlueNext SA, heeding complaints from investors stuck with emission credits that can't be used again in Europe, said it helped arrange "swap backs" to repair the exchange's reputation after a three-day trading halt.

[Don't Think That Cap-and-Trade Is Over](#)

Carbon trading, also known as cap and trade, is on the cusp of generating mammoth amounts of money for governments — money that could start flowing just in time to help nations emerge from the worst financial crisis in a generation.

The prospect of those earnings is one of the key reasons that nations are determined to stick by carbon trading, despite the setbacks and scandals.

[Rio Tinto to Congress: Get going on carbon pricing](#)

One of the world's biggest energy companies also is a big backer of putting a price on carbon.

On Wednesday, Rio Tinto, the parent company of Kennecott, will tell the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming why it wants sensible climate-change regulation -- whether a carbon tax, cap-and-trade or some other pollution-fighting policy -- to bring more certainty to its business.

[Canada reports drop in greenhouse gas emissions](#)

OTTAWA — The federal government is reporting to the United Nations that Canada's greenhouse gas emissions were down in 2008 because of slower economic activity and less reliance on coal-fired power.

[EXCLUSIVE - China's top oil firms sell gasoline to Iran - trade](#)

DUBAI/SINGAPORE (Reuters) - State-run Chinaoil has sold two gasoline cargoes for April delivery to Iran, industry sources said on Wednesday, stepping into a void left by fuel suppliers halting shipments under threat of U.S. sanctions.

Beijing, which has close economic ties with Tehran, has resisted sanctions proposed by Western powers on Iran's energy sector that aim to press the Islamic Republic to curb its nuclear programme.

[Germany hopeful China will back Iran sanctions](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) – Germany was hopeful Tuesday China will support new sanctions on Iran over a disputed nuclear program as the United States reportedly pledged to help Beijing secure oil supplies if Tehran retaliated.

"I see a positive development, even if it is moving slowly and we can't say whether it will lead to sanctions," German Chancellor Angela Merkel told reporters, adding "I'm very hopeful."

[Oil up to near \\$85, breaking 5-day losing streak](#)

Oil prices rose to near \$85 a barrel Wednesday, breaking a five-day slide as rising global stock markets and a weaker dollar boosted investors' appetite.

[Crude Oil Shatters Record Volume in Nymex Trading](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil futures trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange, the world's most actively traded commodity contract, reached a volume record today.

Oil trading on the Nymex was estimated at 1.42 million contracts, the equivalent of 1.42 billion barrels of oil, Mary Haffenberg, a spokeswoman for CME Group Inc., the world's largest futures exchange and the owner of Nymex, said in an e-mail. The official total will be released tomorrow, she said.

The previous record for physically delivered oil futures in pit and electronic trading was 1.12 million contracts set on April 9, Haffenberg said.

[OPEC: Demand for crude down this year](#)

VIENNA (AP) - OPEC expects less demand for its oil this year, reflecting a world economy that's still struggling.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries forecasts that it will need to put 100,000 barrels less crude on the market in 2010 than it did last year.

[OPEC's oil price aspirations edge higher, again](#)

LONDON -- Oil has risen above OPEC's comfort zone of \$70 to \$80 a barrel and the group is showing no sign yet of wanting to cool the rally, suggesting its price aspirations are creeping upwards.

Any further rise in prices, which are up almost 70 percent from a year ago, could dismay consumer countries and feed into higher energy costs for businesses and consumers at a

time of fragile economic recovery.

[Oil to Set High 'Within a Week': Technical Analysis](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil is poised to rally after a five-day decline and will set its highest price for this year at near \$88 a barrel "within a week", National Australia Bank Ltd. said.

[Consumer Prices in U.S. Rise 0.1%, Core Is Unchanged](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The cost of living in the U.S. rose in March, while prices excluding food and energy were unexpectedly unchanged, indicating tame inflation is accompanying the economic recovery.

[China Raises Diesel, Gasoline Prices 4.6% on Crude](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China, the world's second-largest energy user, will increase gasoline and diesel prices by as much as 4.6 percent starting today after global crude costs climbed.

[Venezuela pay dispute halts 12 oil drilling rigs](#)

CARACAS (Reuters) - Contract workers have stopped work over pay paralyzing 12 drilling rigs operated by foreign service companies in eastern Venezuela, state oil company PDVSA said on Tuesday.

PDVSA said the stoppage by 800 workers that began on Monday had not affected oil production as the 12 rigs were not yet producing. The stoppage could affect future production.

[Shipping: Oil tanker titan plans to break the ice on Arctic route](#)

Ever since Admiral Makarov, the commander of the Tsar's fleet, sailed the world's first ice-breaker on its maiden voyage in 1899, Russian mariners have dreamt of cutting a shipping lane through the Arctic seas to the north of their great land mass.

Circling the top of Russia, the fabled northern passage could provide a short cut between Europe and the Pacific, halving the distance of marine routes through the Suez Canal.

Sovcomflot, Russia's state shipping company, plans to sail an oil tanker from the White Sea to Japan this summer, marking the start of seasonal oil exports along the full length of the northern route.

Led by ice-breakers, the 18-day voyage will highlight Sovcomflot's mastery of Arctic navigation, just as the search for hydrocarbons in polar regions heats up.

[Syria: Raising the Bar](#)

Syria's oil and gas sector is gearing up for a rejuvenation of sorts, with the minister of oil, Sufian Alao, announcing recently that the government expects oil production in the country to rise this year following 13 years of steady decline. The announcement came as the Syrian hydrocarbons sector prepared to welcome 265 companies from 41 countries to the Seventh Syrian International Oil and Gas Exhibition (SYROIL 2010), held in Damascus April 5-8.

[PetroChina's Qinghai Fields Unaffected by Earthquake](#)

(Bloomberg) -- PetroChina Co.'s oil and gas fields in Qinghai were unaffected by a magnitude 6.9 earthquake that hit the province this morning, said an official at the Qinghai unit of the nation's biggest oil company.

"We're currently unaffected by the earthquake because our fields are far away," Zong Yiping, the unit's general manager, said by mobile phone. He said the fields were about 700 kilometers (435 miles) away from the epicenter of the quake.

[Massey Mine Citations Mistakenly Didn't Lead to Warning Letter](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The Massey Energy Co. coal mine in West Virginia where 29 workers died last week in an explosion received eight citations that were erroneously logged by regulators in a way that kept the site from being added to a safety watch list, U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis said.

[Documents show continual dangers in West Virginia mine](#)

The operator of the West Virginia coal mine where 29 miners were killed last week exposed workers to potentially fatal or disabling conditions nearly 300 times since late 2008, records show.

More than 1,100 pages covering more than 700 citations released by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) give the most comprehensive picture yet of the Upper Big Branch Mine, where an April 5 explosion caused the worst U.S. mining disaster since 1970.

Inspectors repeatedly found dangerous conditions such as inadequate air, faulty fire extinguishers, exposed wiring, malfunctioning communication systems, inaccurate gas monitors and water as deep as 4 feet "that could result in drowning."

[South Korea to Require Companies to Set Energy-Saving Targets](#)

(Bloomberg) -- South Korea, Asia's fourth-largest polluter, said companies should set annual energy-saving and greenhouse gas-reduction plans to help the government's efforts to combat global warming.

Companies will face fines of as much as 10 million won (\$8,969) if the targets aren't met, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy said in an e-mailed statement today.

[Transportation's bicycle policy hits potholes](#)

WASHINGTON - Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, a weekend bicyclist, might consider keeping his head down and his helmet on. A backlash is brewing over his new bicycling policy.

[Some 'Energy Star' Appliances May Not Be That Green](#)

The tax benefits are aimed at encouraging homeowners to replace outdated and energy-hungry furnaces and appliances. But Kuperszmid-Lehrman tells NPR's Steve Inskeep that not all of the newer models skimp on power consumption.

"We found, particularly, problems with refrigerators," she says of tests *Consumer Reports* conducted on certified products.

The magazine reported that two of the refrigerators it tested used about 50 percent more energy than the numbers on their labels. Another pair used 39 percent more and 33 percent more.

[Becoming Peak Oil Aware: Part 1](#)

I was in shock last week.

After looking over the latest entries to top my 9 Things We'll See Down the Back Side of Peak Oil list, I came across a comment that blindsided me.

...It wasn't some clever or humorous poke at life after peak oil. Rather, it was a simple question that stood out from every other e-mail I had received.

In a nutshell, the poor guy had never even *heard* of peak oil.

[Peak Oil Investments I'm Putting My Money On: Part VI, Barriers to Substitution](#)

One great advantage gasoline and diesel have over most of the proposed alternatives is an extensive infrastructure. In addition to an extensive pipeline network, we also have a large number of competing fueling stations. If a new fuel requires new fueling stations, like natural gas and hydrogen, or charging points and (potentially) battery swapping stations (electricity), it may not be enough to make sure that enough filling stations exist for would-be drivers to make long trips. If there is only one national network of filling stations, drivers will likely become concerned that the lack of competition will mean that they overpay for fuel.

[On Being a 21st Century Peasant](#)

“Here’s all I’m trying to say: The planet on which our civilization evolved no longer exists,” asserts environmentalist Bill McKibben in his new book, *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*. “The earth that we knew—the only earth we ever knew—is gone.” According to McKibben, we are about to find ourselves living on a much less friendly planet he calls “Eaarth.” Why? Because the climate is about to get really freaky due to man-made global warming and we’re also about to run out of oil—the apocalypse, courtesy of Peak Temperature and Peak Oil combined. McKibben is no stranger to environmentalist jeremiads, having declared *The End of Nature* back in 1989 due to global warming and the rise of biotechnology. Twenty years later he’s declaring the end of civilization, at least, as we know it.

[UK: Why is there no talk about immigration?](#)

No sensible person is calling for a policy of no immigration. It is the scale of population change, which over the past decade has transformed parts of Britain, that voters wish to make an election issue. A continuation of mass immigration on roughly the present scale will bring the population of the UK to 70 million in 20 years – and the growth won't stop there, unless we are prepared to control drastically the size of net migration. Immigration will account for 70 per cent of this population increase. This is what needs to be tackled.

[Ethanol industry steps up lobbying as clout wanes](#)

For years, ethanol fuel derived from corn was almost politically untouchable, thanks to powerful advocates on Capitol Hill. The ethanol industry has consequently exploded over the last decade, thanks to government subsidies and incentives.

But skepticism about ethanol is rising, prompted by fluctuating food prices and an organized campaign by anti-ethanol advocates to discredit the industry.

[Washington Sues to Revive Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Plan](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Washington state, home to a former U.S. nuclear-weapons plant undergoing cleanup, sued the Obama administration to stop it from abandoning plans for the Yucca Mountain radioactive waste repository in Nevada.

[College to open new biomass facility](#)

POULTNEY — As a college freshman, Brett Duggan set out to get his school to put its money where its mouth was.

As an alumnus approaching his one-year reunion, 22-year-old Duggan will return to Green Mountain College next week to see the end of what he and nine other students started.

The environmental liberal arts college will cut the ribbon at its new biomass plant on April 22 — Earth Day. The \$5.8 million facility will produce 20 percent of the school's electricity but 85 percent of its heat, with 4,400 tons of wood chips displacing 200,000 gallons of heating oil.

[Sunny-Side Up in Washington](#)

Incredibly, in the short time since installing an extensive rooftop photovoltaic array, a system which utilizes and displays four separate vendors' styles and methods of converting sunlight to electricity, the benefits have become manifest.

Of those benefits, perhaps the most immediate, according to store partner and CFO Bob Whelan, "Our electricity bill has gone down by about one-third."

[Could Huge Solar Blimps Haul Cargo Fast and Clean at 30,000 Feet?](#)

Could a solar-powered dirigible be the cargo ship of our peak-oil, carbon-constrained future? If the inventor of the patent pending High Speed Solar Airship is correct, the future of long haul cargo combines solar powered transmission married to centuries-old dirigible technology.

[Jeff Rubin: Think the EPA will help cut emissions? Think again](#)

Your engine may be a lot more efficient than your dad's old gas-guzzler from the 1970s, but chances are you burn just as much gasoline on the road over the course of a year as he did. You, like your fellow North American drivers, eat up all the energy efficiency gains made in engine and materials technology over the last thirty years by driving ever-larger, ever-faster vehicles loaded with more and more energy-consuming

features. And to top it all off, you drive your vehicle about a third more than your parents did, in large measure because you commute so much further every day than they did.

Raising CAFE standards won't force us to burn less oil or emit less carbon. But the pump prices that will come with the triple-digit oil prices that are just around the corner will make us do both. And, for good measure, those same pump prices should easily enable the auto industry to reach the new bar set for corporate average fuel economy.

[Mexican Climate Envoy Says Kyoto Protocol May Be Extended](#)

(Bloomberg) -- United Nations negotiators are seeking to extend and complement the Kyoto Protocol on global warming rather than replacing it, Mexico's special envoy Luis Alfonso de Alba said.

[Senate Road for 'Energy Only' Bill Isn't as Easy as Some Would Hope](#)

The bipartisan support enjoyed by the energy-only bill is countered by its bipartisan opposition, and it is hard to add up the needed 60 votes to move controversial legislation in the Senate. So, the balancing act for the scaled-down bill could be every bit as tricky as finding a "grand bargain" to pass a climate bill.

One leading industry analyst says without a strict limit on greenhouse gas emissions, the bill collapses.

[Some Republicans say open to climate bill](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – Some prominent Republican senators expressed openness on Tuesday to a U.S. climate change bill that might be introduced next week and that would need bipartisan support to have any chance of advancing.

[Senate Leader Set to Take Command of Climate Bill](#)

Next week, Reid will be handed the reins of the bill to cap greenhouse gas emissions while expanding domestic oil, gas and nuclear power production. His challenge could not be tougher. Along with the climate measure, he must juggle a packed Senate agenda that includes Wall Street reform, a Supreme Court nomination and more economic recovery plans. Reid is also facing perhaps the toughest re-election campaign of his career this fall.

[Calif. climate law could help poor, minority areas](#)

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California's attempt to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions can have additional benefits for poor and minority communities long plagued by dirty air if state regulators take their needs into account, according to a report released Wednesday.

The findings by professors at three California universities found that oil refineries, power plants and cement kilns, which are among the state's most prolific emitters of greenhouse gases, also release other chemicals that threaten public health.

The plants that pose the highest health risks are disproportionately located in industrial communities inhabited by the poor and people of color, the report found.

['No deliberate malpractice' in climate row: review](#)

LONDON (AFP) – A review of the work of one of the world's leading climate research centres, launched after a major scandal last year, concluded Wednesday there had been no deliberate scientific malpractice.

[Studies agree on a 1 meter rise in sea levels](#)

Recent studies agree that sea level will rise by roughly one meter over this century for a mid-range emission scenario. This is 3 times higher than predicted by the IPCC.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).