



## Drumbeat: April 28, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 28, 2010 - 9:04am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Pakistanis Living on Brink, and Often in the Dark](#)

LAHORE, Pakistan — The Taliban may be plotting bombings, and the economy is on the brink. But these days, the single biggest woe tormenting Pakistanis is as basic as an electric light bulb.

Pakistan is in the throes of an energy crisis, with Pakistanis now enduring about 12 hours of power cuts a day, a grueling schedule that is melting ice, stopping fans and enraging an already exhausted populace just as the blast furnace of summer gets started.

In an effort to stem that frustration, Pakistan's government held an emergency meeting last week, bringing together top bureaucrats from across the country. But instead of easing the problem, it aggravated it, ordering power-saving measures that seemed calculated to smother some Pakistanis' last remaining pleasures.

ell persist and Pemex does not think it will be able to squeeze much more crude from KMZ, which is currently pumping near 850,000 bpd, putting an increasing burden onto the troubled Chicontepec project to sustain Mexican production capacity.

"At best, the recent stabilization will last throughout the year; at worst, it could end in the coming months," said Eurasia Group's Allyson Benton in a recent research note.

### [Saudi Arabia global oil exports to wane post-2010](#)

Saudi Arabia's long-standing status as a swing producer of crude oil could be drawing to a close according to the head of national oil company Saudi Aramco.

Global oil exports from Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer alongside Russia, will start to wane in the coming years as domestic demand surges and spare capacity drops, warned Khalid al-Falih, chief executive officer of Saudi Aramco in a speech published on the company's website.

Domestic energy demand is expected to increase by almost 250%, from about 3.4 million barrels per day (b/d) in 2009 to about 8.3 million b/d by 2028, which will eventually affect the country's ability to export oil, he said.

## [Power and prudence](#)

A stark warning has been issued over energy use in the Kingdom. Saudi Aramco boss Khalid Al-Falih has warned that on present trends, in terms of oil equivalent, in the next 18 years energy demand here is destined to soar by almost 250 percent. That will mean a sharp fall in hydrocarbon earnings as fully 3 million barrels a day is diverted from exports to the domestic market.

## [Experts suggest Kingdom develop renewable energy](#)

ALKHOBAR: A Saudi Aramco executive has shared a bold vision of the future in which renewable and nuclear energy power the Kingdom's domestic economy and massive solar farms in the Rub Al-Khali feed into an intercontinental Eurasian electrical grid.

## [PIW: China's crude oil imports rose nearly 29 per cent in March](#)

Angola overtook Saudi Arabia as China's largest crude oil supplier in March, a month in which China's imports rose to their second highest level on record, according to Petroleum Intelligence Weekly.

## [Sinopec's Profit Jumps 39.9% on Resurgent Economy](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China Petroleum & Chemical Corp., Asia's biggest oil refiner, reported a 39.9 percent jump in first-quarter profit, matching estimates, as a resurgent economy boosted fuel demand.

## [Nigeria oil disruption due to "major attack"-source](#)

PORT HARCOURT, Nigeria (Reuters) - A Nigerian oil supply disruption at Brass River was due to a "major attack" on a pipeline causing a serious oil spill, an industry source told Reuters on Wednesday.

## [Lukoil Pumps Russia's First Oil From Caspian Sea](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OAO Lukoil, Russia's largest non- state oil company, began commercial output at the Korchagin field, marking the start of crude production in the Russian part of the Caspian Sea.

"The company needed 15 years for today to come," Chief Executive Officer Vagit Alekperov said during a ceremony at an offshore platform at the deposit attended by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Lukoil has spent more than 40 billion rubles (\$1.4

billion) to bring the field on stream, he said.

### [Russian PM Putin: zero duty possible for Caspian oil](#)

ASTRAKHAN, Russia (Reuters) - Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday he would consider exempting Caspian Sea oilfields from paying an export duty.

### [The Desirable Barrel](#)

Major changes in transportation to the US and modifications to US refineries have made the Canadian commodity extremely desirable. As a result, the differential paid for Canadian light compared to Canadian heavy is holding firm near historic lows. The differential has averaged about C\$8 per barrel for the last year. To put that in perspective, as recently as late 2008 conventional heavy sold briefly for 45% less than Edmonton Par. That wasn't a profitable environment.

By contrast, the market today is a bit like a winery selling this year's plonk for 14% less than a vintage wine. Like plonk compared to fine wine, heavy oil is intrinsically less valuable than Edmonton Par, the Canadian standard for light oil. In most refineries, after all, heavy feedstock results in less high-value-added gasoline and more low-value-added asphalt.

But the big US refining complexes are changing that. "It's a matter of adding vessels to the refinery," according to Steven Paget; he is vice president for energy infrastructure at First Energy Capital. "Those longer-chain hydrocarbons need more work to break up, but new pipelines from Canada are accessing the refineries at Wood River (Illinois) and Cushing (Oklahoma)." Those refining complexes have the capacity to break heavy oil into lighter feedstock. "Therefore the (narrow) differential becomes minimal or close to equivalent to actual operating cost."

### [Phil Flynn: Crude gets slammed on S&P downgrades](#)

In the beginning of the financial crisis oil soared towards \$147 a barrel and I attempted to explain that things were amiss. The price-move in oil was out of line with the five-year average price increase that already reflected stunning oil demand growth. I was scoffed at by some when I suggested that the spike in oil might lead to demand destruction. That the world economy had not "decoupled" from the U.S. economy and that no matter what, Europe and China would consume oil even if the U.S. banks started to fail. The naysayer and the blindly bullish say that the price move was just a function of peak oil and the prices would continue to soar higher and that price would have little impact on demand.

### [Saudi Aramco plans to lift refining output by 1.5m bpd](#)

Saudi Aramco plans to proceed with plans to boost its 3.7 million barrel a day refining capacity by 1.5 million barrels a day even as it struggles to find joint venture partners to help build the plants.

### [Saudi Arabia Leaves May LPG Prices Unchanged to Spur Demand](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Saudi Arabian Oil Co., the largest supplier of liquefied petroleum gas to Asia, left prices for cargoes loading in May unchanged to spur demand.

Saudi Aramco, as the state-owned company is known, kept its price for propane supplies at \$725 a metric ton, said an official who asked not to be identified, citing company policy. The Dhahran-based producer left butane levels unchanged for a second month, at \$715 a ton.

### [Construction starts on major East Texas gas gathering system](#)

Tenaska Capital Management, LLC (TCM) announced the commencement of construction of TPF II East Texas Gathering, LLC (ETG), a major high capacity natural gas gathering system with multi-market capacity to serve the Haynesville shale formation in East Texas.

### [Chevron wants unused film on Ecuador dispute](#)

Chevron Corp. has gone to court seeking the unused footage from a documentary film about the \$27 billion lawsuit against the oil company in Ecuador.

### [Brussels pollution curbs could trigger UK energy crisis, warns CBI](#)

Britain could be forced to close 14 power stations if a proposed European directive becomes law, a move that would drastically cut power supplies and endanger energy security, the Confederation of British Industry has warned.

### [Battle for Electric Cars Heats Up with Ambitious Battery Swapping Project](#)

TOKYO--We're used to "buying minutes" on our cellphones. Suppose we did the same with our cars, and instead of owning the batteries in our electric cars, paid for the time we used them? And suppose instead of waiting six to eight hours to recharge our car's battery pack, we simply swapped it out for a fresh one? That's the concept behind the globally oriented but California-based Better Place EV charging company, which this week inaugurated the world's first EV battery swapping program (in partnership with

the Japanese government), for Tokyo taxis.

## [5 arrested in Boulder anti-coal protest](#)

Five people were arrested today by Boulder Police officers and Boulder County sheriff's deputies during a protest at the Valmont Industries Inc. coal plant at 1800 63rd St.

The five joined about 20 protestors from the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center who gathered around 12:55 p.m. to protest against use of coal at the plant by Xcel Energy. Officials said they did not know whether the five were associated with the Peace and Justice Center.

## ['Soul of a Citizen,' Volunteers Can't Solve Our Problems: For Every House Habitat Builds, 100s More Are Homeless](#)

A Stanford student once explained how he'd learned more from his community volunteering than from all his courses in school. "I hope that one day," he concluded, "my grandchildren will get to have the same experience working in the same homeless shelter that I did." Friends gently reminded him that they were working for a future when people in a country this wealthy wouldn't need to sleep in shelters. The student meant no harm, but his words raised a question about the relationship between long-term change and the volunteer work that so many of us do in our communities.

## [Parsing McKibben: If There Be Sorrow](#)

On last Thursdays Earth Day Bill McKibben had a stark message for the world ***"Forty years in, we're losing."***, while PBS's American Experience gave us ***"Earth Days: The inspiring story of the modern environmental movement."***

Huh? Are we talking about the same planet? Yes we are, there is no contradiction. PBS is talking about the past and what has been achieved, McKibben is talking about where we are and what we need to achieve. They are referring to different things, and hence have a completely different perspective.

## [Pakistanis Living on Brink, and Often in the Dark](#)

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started.

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### [Pakistan to shutter gas filling stations](#)

LAHORE, Pakistan (UPI) -- As part of the government's energy conservation drive, Pakistan's compressed natural gas filling stations across the country will be closed every Tuesday.

Energy retailers criticized the government's decision but Petroleum Ministry officials insist the move will help generate electrical power, The News International reported Tuesday.

### [Govt. traders reach conditional agreement on 8pm](#)

The Sindh government and the business community of Karachi, following marathon meetings on Tuesday at the Governor House and Chief Minister's House, reached at a conditional agreement to shut shops at 8pm. The agreement comes into force with immediate effect, but is premised on the Karachi Electric Supply Company (KESC) not resorting to power loadshedding during trading hours.

### [Britain to aid Pakistan's energy sector](#)

LAHORE, Pakistan (UPI) -- Britain's Deputy High Commissioner in Pakistan Peter Tibber has discussed Pakistani energy needs with Punjab's Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif.

International News Network reported Tuesday that Sharif told Tibber that Pakistan's energy crisis is serious and that shortages of electricity are having a negative impact on the country's industry, agriculture and trade.

### [U.S. Govt Investigates Deepwater Horizon Incident](#)

As they emphasized the importance of continued vigilance and interagency coordination in the joint response to the Deepwater Horizon incident in the Gulf of Mexico, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today laid out the next steps for the investigation that is underway into the causes of the April 20 explosion that left 11 workers missing, three critically injured, and an ongoing oil spill



that the responsible party and federal agencies are working to contain and clean up.

### [Conoco exits 2nd big ticket Meast deal in month](#)

The withdrawals would likely make it tough for Conoco to land future work in two of the world's top oil exporting countries Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

"Both Aramco and ADNOC have been quite annoyed by Conoco," said Samuel Ciszuk of IHS Global Insight. "They are used to people being very grateful. (But) They have been the ones that have had to face a partner not moving forward. That has put a strain on a lot of relationships."

### [Total, Kuwait Discuss Heavy-Oil Project, China Plant](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Total SA, Europe's third-biggest oil company, is in talks with Kuwait to develop heavy-crude deposits using advanced technology to extract fuel from fields in the country's north.

The company, Europe's largest refiner, is also considering joining a planned refinery project in China, Total Chief Executive Officer Christophe de Margerie said today. China Petroleum & Chemical Corp. and Kuwait are seeking to build the plant in the southern city of Zhanjiang.

### [Can world's largest laser zap Earth's energy woes?](#)

Livermore, California (CNN) -- Scientists at a government lab here are trying to use the world's largest laser -- it's the size of three football fields -- to set off a nuclear reaction so intense that it will make a star bloom on the surface of the Earth.

The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's formula for cooking up a sun on the ground may sound like it's stolen from the plot of an "Austin Powers" movie. But it's no Hollywood fantasy: The ambitious experiment will be tried for real, and for the first time, late this summer.

### [Indian biofuel efforts falter](#)

NEW DELHI (UPI) -- Indian efforts to cultivate jatropha as an alternative biofuel have stalled.

The Business Standard reported Tuesday that the Indian government had hoped that jatropha could replace one-fifth of India's diesel consumption by next year. The government consequently identified 98 million acres of available land where jatropha

could be cultivated.

### [Their earthly concerns](#)

Bill McKibben and Anna Lappé are bringing the battle to save the environment to your house, with books making the case for adjusting the ways we think, live, and eat right now if we are to avert a global crisis.

### [What drove oil prices in 2009](#)

It wasn't speculators, and it wasn't fundamentals - at least, not short-term fundamentals.

The key to understanding what has driven crude oil prices since the financial crisis began, according to a new paper by Bassam Fattouh, is what oil market participants *chose to believe about long-term fundamentals*.

The Oxford Institute of Energy Studies fellow, who wrote a [long paper](#) [PDF] for the world's energy ministers last month on how oil prices (covered more briefly by us) are determined, argues that 2009 had two unusual characteristics...

### [Oil Volatility Sinks as Shortage Concern Eases](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil volatility is falling to the lowest level in almost three years as brimming stockpiles and rising OPEC investment in production capacity eases concern of shortages.

### [Peak Everything?](#)

When you really need something, it's natural to worry about running out of it. Peak oil has been a global preoccupation since the 1970s, and the warnings get louder with each passing year. Environmentalists emphasize the importance of placing limits on consumption of fossil fuels, but haven't been successful in encouraging people to consume less energy—even with the force of law at their backs.

But maybe they're going about it all wrong, looking for solutions in the wrong places. Economists Lucas Bretschger and Sjak Smulders argue that the decisive question isn't to focus directly on preserving the resources we already have. Instead, they ask: "Is it realistic to predict that knowledge accumulation is so powerful as to outweigh the physical limits of physical capital services and the limited substitution possibilities for natural resources?" In other words, can increasing scientific knowledge and technological innovation overcome any limitations to economic growth posed by the depletion of non-renewable resources?



## [Green or Not So Green?](#)

*By the year 2000, if present trends continue, we will be using up crude oil at such a rate...that there won't be any more crude oil. You'll drive up to the pump and say, 'Fill 'er up, buddy,' and he'll say, 'I am very sorry, there isn't any.'"*

Ecologist Kenneth Watt made that statement on the inaugural Earth Day in 1970. The "peak oil" warning has been going on long before that, but here we are ten years after Watt's deadline and we're globally consuming 85 million barrels of oil per day with increasing amounts of proven reserves each year. Three decades ago, proven oil reserves were 645 billion barrels; five years ago it was 1.28 trillion and in 2009 it was 1.34 trillion. Yet the push to transition to renewable, allegedly cleaner sources of energy has never been stronger. The question to ask is: why?

## [Peak Oil Investments I'm Putting My Money On: Part IX, The Methadone Economy](#)

If the measure of success for alternative fuels is the ability to continue to live in suburbs and commute in multi-ton boxes of metal on congested freeways for hours each day, then alternative fuels will fail. No alternative fuel has the existing infrastructure, supply potential, energy density, and low environmental impact that we would need to replace oil without changing our unsustainable lifestyle.

Peak oil may mean the end of bigger and bigger cars driven farther and farther on more and more congested roads. Peak oil may mean the end of suburban life as we know it. Yet life as we don't know it does need not be a vision out of Mad Max. Peak oil will mean changes, some for the better, some for the worse.

## [Jim Rogers: This Bull's Horns Just Got Longer](#)

### **Do you subscribe to the peak oil theory?**

I have no idea. I know that known reserves of oil are in decline. There's not much question about that. There may be gigantic amounts of oil out there somewhere, but we don't know where. But even if it's there, if it's in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, that's not doing us much good because it will take decades and staggering amounts of money for it to come onstream. I know that known reserves of oil have peaked, yes. But whether total reserves of oil have peaked, I have no way of knowing—I'm not a geologist and I'm not smart enough.

## [Oil Falls a Third Day on Rising Supplies, European Debt Concern](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil fell for a third day on signs that U.S. inventories are continuing to increase while credit-rating downgrades on Greece and Portugal fanned concerns that global fuel demand recovery may stall.

A U.S. government report today may show crude-oil and gasoline stockpiles held by the world's biggest energy consumer rose for a second week, according to a Bloomberg News survey. Yesterday the industry-funded American Petroleum Institute reported a 5.3 million barrel gain in crude supplies for the period, while MasterCard Inc. said gasoline demand was at its lowest level in 10 weeks.

"If the situation with Greece gets worse, probably \$80 won't stay as the floor," said Hannes Loacker, an analyst at Raiffeisen Zentralbank Oesterreich in Vienna. "Demand won't be too much affected, but the euro is, and sentiment is leading to higher risk aversion. It's sentiment-driven."

#### [U.S. May Sell LNG to China on Surplus, Standard Chartered Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The U.S. may supply liquefied natural gas to China as cheaper output costs outweigh transportation charges, making the U.S.-produced fuel competitive, Standard Chartered Plc said.

#### [Colombia's Northeast Oil Pipeline Damaged by Bombs, Xinhua Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Colombia's Rio Zulia-Ayacacho oil pipeline in the northeastern part of the country was damaged by bombs caused by rebel forces, the Xinhua news agency reported, citing unidentified officials.

#### [BP to Be Paid in Crude for Iraq Investment Costs, Hayward Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- BP Plc will be paid in crude for its investment costs in an Iraqi contract that offers about the same rate of return as other projects worldwide, Chief Executive Officer Tony Hayward said.

#### [Russia, Norway strike deal in Arctic](#)

OSLO - In a surprise move, Norway and Russia agreed Tuesday to evenly divide a long-disputed area in the Barents Sea, a promising oil and gas region in the Arctic made more accessible by global warming.

#### [Russia-Ukraine pact leaves EU all at sea](#)

Russia's new deal with Ukraine on the Black Sea Fleet and gas prices, ratified in

Ukraine's parliament on Tuesday, has profound bilateral significance, as well as for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and even Europe. It ratifies long-term Russian gains at the expense of all the other players and continues to solidify Moscow's claim to possess a sphere of influence in the former Soviet Union.

### [ConocoPhillips Said to Pull Out From Adnoc Shah Gas](#)

(Bloomberg) -- ConocoPhillips, the third-largest U.S. oil company, will announce later today that it's pulling out of the \$10 billion Shah sour-gas project with Abu Dhabi, according to a person familiar with the situation.

### [Iran Oil Industry Bullish Despite Lukoil Exit](#)

Iran says following a decision by major Russian oil firm Lukoil to halt all activities in the country that its oil industry can cope without foreign expertise. The Islamic republic was prepared for the move and Russia is still considering a role in Iranian oil and gas projects.

### [Shell Earnings Beat Estimates as Production Rebounds](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Royal Dutch Shell Plc, Europe's biggest oil company, posted a 57 percent increase in earnings after production climbed for the first time in more than three years following startups in Brazil and Russia.

### [PetroChina Expands Overseas Operations, Raises Output](#)

(Bloomberg) -- PetroChina Co., Asia's biggest company by market value, expanded overseas operations and ramped up production in the first quarter as domestic demand rebounded.

"The scale of operations continued to expand and rapid growth in the overseas oil and gas business was achieved," PetroChina said yesterday as the country's largest energy company reported a 71 percent jump in first-quarter profit.

### [Question of the Day: Should the U.S. expand offshore oil drilling?](#)

#### **Should the U.S. expand offshore oil drilling?**

An oil spill was caused after a Transocean Ltd. rig drilling for British Petroleum in the Gulf of Mexico off the Louisiana coast caught fire and sank. It is the worst such accident in the Gulf in more than 25 years. The administration wants to expand oil and gas exploration in the mid-Atlantic as far north as Delaware.

### [Jeff Rubin: Drilling and spilling for all the oil that's left](#)

America's dream of greater energy independence is rapidly turning into an ecological nightmare. Instead of filling empty gas tanks, BP's Deepwater Horizon well miles offshore is oozing thousands of barrels a day of oil, already covering an area over 1,900 square miles (3,000 square kilometres) in the food-rich waters of the Gulf of Mexico. With no way of shutting off the valve, which is now buried 1,900 metres below the sea, a \$2-billion seafood industry is threatened, not to mention the billions more in damage to coastal real estate values and the potential devastation to wetlands and the wildlife they contain if the growing slick washes ashore.

Most forms of unconventional oil and gas (including, by the way, shale gas) are invariably very hard on the environment. Although tar sands production draws most of the world's criticism, we are quickly discovering that deep-water wells and the pressure surges they engender run the risk of wreaking even greater ecological and environmental devastation.

### [GoM accident fallout limited to BP, so far](#)

The Coast Guard helpfully noted that the industry is better prepared now to contain these spills than with that accident, but as the FT's Lex column writes, the timing was particularly unfortunate for BP ahead of its first quarter results on Monday. The column observes, though, that this "does not look like another Texas city".

But as many of the oil majors delve into deepwater Gulf of Mexico production and the administration is proposing to open up more offshore areas for drilling, the implications go beyond BP.

### [Foreign Policy: What Happens To Oil After The Spill?](#)

A recovery effort is currently underway to clean up a massive oil slick caused by the explosion of the oil rig Deep Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico last week. The leaking well is gushing more than 1,000 barrels of oil a day into the gulf and has already created a slick covering about 28,600 square miles. The U.S. Coast Guard and oil giant BP -- which had the rig under contract -- are trying to contain the slick before it reaches the coast of Louisiana. But after the recovery workers remove the oil from the water, what do they do with it?

### [Coast Guard sets match to spill](#)

The US Coast Guard will start a controlled burn-off of oil leaking from the Macondo well,

in the US Gulf of Mexico, within the next two hours, a Coast Guard spokesman confirmed.

### [Gulf businesses wait as oil creeps toward coast](#)

BILOXI, Miss. (AP) — This time, it's not a hurricane that threatens to wreck their livelihoods — it's a blob of black ooze slowly making its way toward the Gulf Coast.

Hotel owners, fishermen and restaurateurs are keeping anxious watch as an oil slick spreads from a wrecked drilling rig site like a giant filthy ink blot. Forecasters say it could wash ashore within days near delicate wetlands, oyster beds and pristine white beaches.

### [How 2006 Mine-Safety Law Led to 'Broken' U.S. Regulation System](#)

(Bloomberg) -- A West Virginia mining disaster claims lives. Congress pledges to pass legislation to crack down on mine operators.

That was four years ago. Following an explosion this month that killed 29 West Virginia coal miners, history may be repeating itself. Safety advocates say they hope the reaction this time doesn't follow the pattern.

### [Gas Saving Tips](#)

Regardless of the world's geopolitical situation, we need to bear in mind that oil is not an infinite resource; in fact, it appears we have already hit peak oil. Aside from the bloodshed that our love of black gold wreaks upon our species, our addiction to oil has also seen massive amounts of damage being inflicted on our environment.

### [Oman, UAE ink power grid agreement](#)

The agreement, which followed a memorandum of understanding on electricity, will allow both countries to exchange power resources to fuel socio-economic development through linking their electricity grids. The project will secure enough electricity to meet demand for urban and industrial expansions.

### [Lotus Re-Engineers Toyota Venza, Saves 38% Weight For 3% Cost](#)

For most of us, there are few cars on the market less exciting than the Toyota Venza. But a Venza re-designed by Lotus? Still a Venza--except that it's 38 percent lighter and only 3 percent more expensive. Still not moved? Imagine the savings applied to your

favorite mass-market sport sedan or coupe. Things start getting exciting.

## [7 Hybrid Cars: Will They Save You Money On Gas?](#)

For those who want a greener commute, the most practical existing option is still hybrid vehicles, which combine gas with electric battery power. There are a number of these vehicles on the market and most of them use significantly less fuel than a comparable non-hybrid car. Unfortunately, at their elevated cost, that doesn't make them cheaper to drive in most cases. Oil and gas industry analysts aren't predicting a rise in oil prices just yet, but if you're set on buying a hybrid, whether for the environment, your pocketbook or as a hip accessory, read on to find out which cars will provide the most value over a comparable non-hybrid model and how long it will take before you start getting more value out of your hybrid at current national average gas prices.

## [Steve LeVine - The humble battery: 210 years later, the breakthrough we still await](#)

The battery could be a shoo-in for the most confounding of all technologies. Invented in 1799 by Alessandro Volta, it not only has yet to be perfected, but has operated all along on essentially the same chemical principles. Were that it were different: If engineers could figure out how to store sufficient electricity in a sufficiently small, light, safe container, there would be a cascading revolution -- in super-utilities, electric cars, laptops and mobile phones. With the possibility of a trillion-dollar industry at stake -- if consumers en masse decide that they want plug-in hybrids, for instance -- engineers and scientists from the Silicon Valley to Japan, China and Korea are manically working on the technological challenge.

## [EDF's Proglio Takes Global Water Battle With Mestrallet Nuclear](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Henri Proglio and Gerard Mestrallet, the Frenchmen who run the world's biggest utilities, fought for a decade to win water contracts around the world. Now, the rivalry goes nuclear.

Proglio took the helm at state-controlled Electricite de France SA in November, charged with spearheading the nuclear power producer's push into Asia and North America as France bids to build reactors overseas. At GDF Suez SA, an energy and water group built on France's former natural-gas monopoly, Mestrallet wants to promote a reactor design that may compete with his larger rival.

## [\\$30m is feeding a quest for nonfossil fuels](#) - Cambridge firm scores big backing to produce mystery ethanol-maker

Alternative fuel maker Joule Unlimited Inc. has raised \$30 million in venture funding, the largest such deal this year for a clean technology company in New England,



according to the National Venture Capital Association.

### [The Consumption Conundrum: Driving the Destruction Abroad](#)

Our high-tech products increasingly make use of rare metals, and mining those resources can have devastating environmental consequences. But if we block projects like the proposed Pebble Mine in Alaska, are we simply forcing mining activity to other parts of the world where protections may be far weaker?

### [T-Solar Postpones IPO, Blaming Doubt Over Power Rates](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Grupo T-Solar Global SA, the world's biggest owner of solar-panel installations, postponed its initial public offering in Spain, saying the government has generated regulatory uncertainty that hurt investor confidence.

### [Canoe believe it ... candidate Lydia takes to the water to battle for votes](#)

Would-be Totnes MP Lydia Somerville decided to take the greenest route she could find to canvass villagers in the village of Stoke Gabriel.

So the Green Party candidate and her eight-strong campaign team clambered into a huge voyageur canoe at Tuckenhay Creek and paddled across the River Dart to disembark in riverside Stoke Gabriel.

### [Soil Production of CO<sub>2</sub> May Decline As World Warms](#)

Contradicting earlier studies showing that soil microbes will emit more carbon dioxide as global warming intensifies, new research suggests that these microbes become less efficient over time in a warmer environment and would actually emit less CO<sub>2</sub>. The research, published in the journal Nature Geoscience, could have important implications for calculating how much heat-trapping CO<sub>2</sub> will accumulate in the atmosphere as temperatures rise.



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