



Drumbeat: August 10, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 10, 2010 - 8:14am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Analysis: Surge in Chinese investment reshapes Brazil ties](#)

(Reuters) - Surging Chinese investment in Brazil is reshaping ties between the countries as companies seek to secure resources and tap the rising consumer class in Latin America's largest economy.

From virtually nowhere, China has rocketed to become the biggest foreign direct investor in Brazil this year with purchases ranging from iron ore mines to vast tracts of farmland and the electricity grid.

Following similar forays in Africa and other parts of the globe, Chinese firms backed by cheap state financing are seeking a permanent foothold in Brazil, aiming to diversify their income and meet Brazil's acute need for new infrastructure.

[New Orleans judge to oversee oil spill cases](#)

(Reuters) - A New Orleans federal judge was chosen on Tuesday to oversee civil lawsuits brought by injured rig workers, commercial fishermen and other plaintiffs stemming from the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

U.S. District Judge Carl Barbier of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana will handle oversight of the litigation, according to a special judicial panel.

[The Gulf spill: America's worst environmental disaster?](#)

So was the oil spill really "the worst environmental disaster" in U.S. history?

Disasters are hard to rank and tricky to compare, historians say, but they cite several calamities that rival or surpass the Gulf oil spill in terms of lives lost or affected.

[Wind Is Strong, But Natural Gas, Transmission Line Issues Loom](#)

"We're growing dramatically," Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory staff scientist

Ryan Wiser said of the wind industry's 2009 performance. "We're on a path to achieve much higher levels of wind." This is in stark contrast to wind's 2010 first half performance, which American Wind Energy Association CEO Denise Bode characterized as "dismal."

The 2009 Wind Technologies Market Report, by Wiser and Mark Bolinger of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL), describes a record-breaking 2009. Yet a 71 percent drop in installation in the first half of 2010 forebodes a completely different kind of year. Things will pick up in the second half, but the forecast is for a 20 percent to 45 percent year-on-year reversal. Careful scrutiny of the LBNL report turns up possible telltale signs of the turnaround that are an indication of things to come.

[Only 16 electric cars sold in Spain despite government push](#)

The good news: Spain's ambitious electric-car effort has spurred 16 times as many sales of electric cars this year as last. The bad news -- that's just 16, total, so far this year, vs. 1 last year, the Associated Press reports from Madrid.

[Burning Russia battles to defend nuclear sites](#)

MOSCOW (AFP) – Russia fought a deadly battle Tuesday to prevent wildfires from engulfing key nuclear sites as Prime Minister Vladimir Putin took to the air in a water-bombing plane to join the firefighting effort.

Two soldiers were killed by blazing trees as they strove to put out a fire dangerously close to Russia's main nuclear research centre, while workers were also mobilised to fight blazes near a nuclear reprocessing plant.

[Solving the world's hunger and obesity crises together](#)

About 30 years ago, a few key things happened that changed American and global agriculture.

First, our farms consolidated after the oil crisis of the 1970s and focused more on growing highly subsidized commodities such as corn, soy and wheat. Concurrently, we began to cut international agriculture development aid. Since 1980, U.S. development aid for African farmers has fallen by 85 percent.

With American farmers producing lots of excess corn, soy and wheat and farmers in the poorest parts of the world receiving less support, the way we've eaten here and around the world has changed in the past 30 years.

[Food Insecurity Rising in America](#)

Food insecurity is on the rise. In 2008, 14.6 percent of U.S. households fell into the food-insecure category at some point during the year—the highest rate since the Department of Agriculture started recording stats in 1995. At the same time, legislation to improve childhood nutrition is now making its way through Congress. Last week the Senate passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which provides \$4.5 billion over 10 years to bolster the government's child-nutrition programs, including school meals. The Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, a Christian nonprofit focused on ending hunger worldwide, has been closely following the legislation. He talked with senior writer Claudia Kalb. Excerpts:

[Gulf of Mexico oil to fall 120,000 bpd in 2011 - EIA](#)

(Reuters) - Crude oil output in the Gulf of Mexico should fall an average of 120,000 barrels per day next year mostly due to the six-month drilling moratorium, the top U.S. oil forecaster said on Tuesday.

[U.S. EIA forecasts higher China oil demand growth](#)

(Reuters) - The U.S. Energy Information Administration on Tuesday raised its forecast for China oil demand growth this year by 80,000 barrels per day to 650,000 bpd from the agency's prior estimate.

[BP's relief well work delayed by 2-3 days-U.S. gov't](#)

(Reuters) - BP Plc's work on its relief well in the Gulf of Mexico will be delayed two to three days due to the threat of stormy weather, the government's top official for the spill response said on Tuesday.

"There's going to be a delay of two to three days until the weather passes," Retired Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen told a media briefing.

[Oil reserves are plentiful, says Aramco chief](#)

The head of Saudi Aramco has brushed aside 'peak oil' concerns, saying the world has plentiful supply of oil and gas, with a vast quantity of known reserves yet to be tapped and additional resources still to be discovered.

Speaking at the Oxford Energy Forum, Saudi Aramco President and CEO Khalid A. Al-Falih said that off-and-on fears that the world's oil resources are about to be exhausted are baseless, according to a report by Saudi Press Agency.

Al-Falih said geological evidence proved that the energy-hungry world can still bank on between 6 and 8 trillion barrels of conventional oil and natural gas liquids and about 7 trillion barrels of unconventional oil.

[Analysis: O&G Reserves Grow Despite Upstream Spending Decline](#)

All categories of upstream spending declined in 2009 and total costs incurred fell 47 percent from \$139.8 billion in 2008 to \$73.4 billion in 2009, Ernst & Young reported in its U.S. E&P Benchmark study of the exploration and production results of 50 companies from 2005 to 2009.

Spending was impacted by the declines in oil and gas prices and by lingering issues in the credit markets. Total costs incurred plummeted in 2009 by 47 percent from \$139.8 billion in 2008 to \$73.4 billion in 2009.

[Petroleum items' scarcity looms as floods shut Parco](#)

KARACHI: The flood-hit Pak Arab Refinery, the country's largest in terms of production, could lead to a shortage of petroleum products if the plant remained shut for too long, industry officials have warned.

Parco, known as the mid-country refinery because of its location at Mahmood Kot in Punjab, had to be closed on Saturday after floodwater entered its plants. The 100,000 barrels per day refinery meets most of the requirements of Punjab and Khyber-Pukhtunkhawa.

[Pakistan Flood Halts Gas Production From Qadirpur](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Pakistan's production of natural gas from the Qadirpur field was halted after the area was submerged by flood waters, adding to the country's power shortage.

"Gas supply has stopped from Qadirpur and this has increased the shortfall of fuel, increasing the electricity deficit by 1,500 megawatts a day," Raja Parvez Ashraf, minister for power, told reporters in Islamabad today.

[Pakistan floods drown economy hopes](#)

KARACHI - The floods scouring through Pakistan, in a catastrophe that may be bigger than the combined effect of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2005 Kashmir and 2010 Haiti earthquakes, are throwing into doubt all forecasts for an economy already struggling to survive amid terrorism, high inflation and widespread grinding poverty.

The political outlook is also increasingly dark. President Asif Ali Zardari is facing heavy criticism after being in the United Kingdom and France while flood waters ripped a 1,000 kilometer path of destruction from the far northwest to southern Sindh province. The standing of the military, which is spearheading relief efforts, has by comparison climbed. Religious groups are also welcomed by desperate citizens for the help they are providing.

[Gasoline Declines After Reports Signal Slowing Fuel Demand in China, U.S.](#)

Gasoline fell as reports that U.S. worker productivity slipped in the second quarter and China's oil imports dropped indicated declining fuel demand.

Gasoline sank as the Labor Department reported that the measure of employee output per hour decreased at a 0.9 percent annual rate, the first drop since the end of 2008. China, the world's biggest energy consumer, reduced net imports of crude- oil in July from a record high in June.

"Risk is coming off the table as people fear slowing growth in the U.S. as well as China," said James Cordier, portfolio manager at OptionSellers.com in Tampa, Florida.

[Gulf oil spill raises fears about economic future for Mexico](#)

WASHINGTON – The Mexican government hasn't said much about the BP oil spill. Some analysts tie the reticence to an awareness that the spill holds worrying implications for Mexico's economic future.

"The spill compromises Mexico's strategy" for restoring its sagging oil production, said Lourdes Melgar, an energy consultant who worked in Mexico's Secretariat of Energy. "The cost will be higher and the regulations more stringent."

[PDVSA all lies?](#)

In the past years, Venezuela's oil company PDVSA has been under a lot of heat due of its lack of credibility in the amount of oil production it reports, this year has come under scrutiny on its grand scheme of Orinoco's belt investments by foreign companies, and just last week PDVSA has come up with a very questionable financial review for its performance in 2009. The reality is that it looks like PDVSA is lying in everything it said, here are some recent opinion articles that stress this point.

[PDVSA to Sell \\$3 Billion of Dollar Bonds in Fourth Quarter, Barclays Says](#)

State oil company Petroleos de Venezuela SA will sell \$3 billion of bonds in the fourth quarter, Barclays Plc said.

[Ivanhoe drops on high costs](#)

Canadian heavy oil producer Ivanhoe Energy reported a wider-than-expected quarterly loss, hurt by higher general and administrative expenses.

[BP stops drilling on relief well due weather](#)

(Reuters) - BP Plc on Tuesday suspended work on a relief well aiming to bore into its blown-out Gulf of Mexico oil well because of bad weather, a spokesman said.

[Lester Brown on rising temperatures and rising food prices](#)

ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2010, at 11 a.m. EDT, in advance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's world grain harvest estimate on Thursday, environmental analyst Lester Brown will discuss the heat and drought currently decimating Russia's grain crops, what Russia's loss on grain exports means for world food prices and how this calamity foreshadows future climate-related crises.

[Call to ban corn-based ethanol production](#)

China's biggest non-state oil enterprise urged the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) to impose a ban on using corn to produce ethanol fuel.

Zhao Youshan, chairman of the Oil Flow Commission of the China General Chamber of Commerce, told the *Beijing Times* that they have submitted a letter to the NDRC in an attempt to ban corn-based ethanol production, because it has pushed up corn prices at home and turned China into a corn-importing country in the first half of this year from previously a corn-exporting country.

[China will Produce 15 million Green Energy Cars in 2020](#)

China's annual production of clean energy automobiles, including electric cars, hybrid energy vehicles, hydrogen fuel cell cars and solar cars, will increase to 15 million units by 2020, a Chinese newspaper said on Tuesday (August 10, 2010).

[Unstoppable Rise in Kazakh Uranium Production](#)

LONDON (IDN) – The central Asian republic of Kazakhstan, which laid claim to being the world's top uranium producing country in 2009, surpassing both Canada's and Australia, is continuing to make giant strides.

The country, greater than Western Europe, has 15 percent of the world's uranium resources. In 2009, it contributed almost 28 percent of the world production in 2009.

[Suniva Chief Argues Solar Sky Isn't Falling](#)

The up-and-coming solar panel maker Suniva has expanded its plant near Atlanta three

times and is sold out of its 2010 capacity of 170 megawatts. The company has applied for a Department of Energy loan to build a 400-megawatt plant in Michigan and Suniva Chief Executive John Baumstark says he could sell all that out too.

So from where he sits, all the worry on Wall Street (as chronicled by the likes of me) about collapsing panel prices and the end of profitability for solar panel makers is much ado about nothing. "I'm just not seeing it," he says.

[Bare-knuckled environmentalism won't save the planet](#)

A renewable energy breakthrough is, perhaps, decades away. Climate-change activists' calls for lawmakers to hasten the process are wasting our time and money.

[Atlantic Hotter Than Before Katrina, Boosting Storm Forecasts](#)

William Gray, who pioneered seasonal hurricane forecasting at Colorado State University 26 years ago, rings a bell each Aug. 20 and tells colleagues, "I have been appointed by Chicken Little to inform you that the heart of the hurricane season has begun."

This year, Gray and meteorologists at the U.S. National Hurricane Center say there's more reason for concern that the sky will fall than any time since 2005, when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. At least 15 more "named" storms with winds of 39 miles per hour or more will develop before the 2010 season ends, Colorado State researchers predict.

[Crude Declines on Signs of Slowing Fuel Demand in U.S., China](#)

Oil fell in New York on signs that fuel demand in the U.S. and China, the two largest energy consumers, is faltering as the economic recovery slows.

Crude fell below \$80 a barrel for the first time in a week after a report showed that confidence among U.S. small businesses fell in July to the lowest level in four months. An Energy Department report tomorrow is likely to show that gasoline inventories remain near their highest in six weeks, according to a Bloomberg survey, even as the summer driving season reaches its peak. China's crude imports slumped 15 percent in July from June, preliminary government data showed.

[China's Crude Imports Fall From Record as Slower Economy Curbs Fuel Demand](#)

China, the world's biggest energy consumer, reduced net imports of crude-oil in July from a record reached in June as slower economic growth curbed fuel demand.

Net crude purchases fell to 18.8 million metric tons, or 4.5 million barrels a day, from an

all-time high of 22.1 million tons the previous month, according to preliminary data released today by the Beijing-based General Administration of Customs. This compares with 19.2 million tons in July last year.

[Gas prices likely to hold steady through August](#)

Motorists planning a late-summer getaway should find gasoline prices little-changed through August.

An oil price rally caused the week-over-week increase, but prices aren't likely to rise much more because supplies are still ample and demand hasn't improved much this summer, analysts say.

[Petrol prices up £7 a tank on last year](#)

Petrol prices are up by 14p a litre, or £7 a tank, compared with this time last year, amid warnings of further increases over the summer holidays.

[Commodities to Tumble as Consumer 'Blob' Eats Credit](#)

Commodities may skid 43 percent over the next 16 months, returning to the four-year low of February 2009, as deflationary concerns commandeer financial markets and drain credit, said Walter J. Zimmerman Jr., the chief technical analyst at United-ICAP in Jersey City, New Jersey.

[What's Really Driving The Price Of Oil?](#)

The Internet tends to be a Wild West of opinions on investing, but I think some of the best work actually documenting and comparing the various sources of information on energy and petroleum is over at The Oil Drum. Now, to be clear, they don't claim to be an unbiased news source; their bent is pretty firmly in the peak oil camp. But they regularly feature dissenting voices and academic debate, and consolidate raw data, regardless of whose point it makes.

One of the site's best regular features is the Oilwatch, a monthly consolidation of new oil statistics. Cruising through last week's issue, I was struck by this chart:

[Saudi Arabian Oil to Supply Full Volumes to Asia for Loading in September](#)

Saudi Arabian Oil Co., the world's largest state-owned oil company, will supply full contractual volumes of crude to Asia for loading in September, according to refinery officials.

[U.S. Refiners Cut Oil Processing Rates, Analysts Estimate](#)

U.S. refiners probably cut back on crude-oil processing last week as profit margins sank to the lowest level in five months, a Bloomberg News survey showed.

Refineries probably ran at 90.7 percent of nationwide capacity, down 0.5 percentage point from the prior week, the median of 11 analyst estimates showed before a government report tomorrow. The margin for refining oil into the motor fuel, based on New York futures prices, fell to \$7.505 a barrel yesterday, the lowest level since Feb. 17.

[China Builds Biggest Fuel-Oil Blending Base at Daya Bay, Chinanews Reports](#)

China started building what would become its biggest fuel-oil blending center at Daya Bay in the southern province of Guangdong, Chinanews reported, without saying where it got the information.

[S. Korean firm hits oil reserves in northern Iraq](#)

SEOUL (AFP) – South Korea's state-run petroleum company said Tuesday it has discovered crude oil reserves in two blocks it is exploring in northern Iraq.

The Maeil Business Newspaper said the reserves in the Bazian and Sangaw North blocks in the Kurdistan autonomous region are estimated to total two billion barrels.

[Brazil seeks high crude price in oil swap-report](#)

SAO PAULO (Reuters) - The Brazilian government should charge Petrobras as much as possible for crude reserves to be used in an oil-for-shares swap to maximize benefits for the nation, the head of the country's energy regulator said in comments published on Tuesday.

[ONGC eyes Rosneft joint bid for Russia fields - paper](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) – State-run Oil and Natural Gas Corp has proposed to Russian major Rosneft that the two jointly bid for strategic Trebs and Titov fields in the Arctic north, Vedomosti reported on Tuesday.

[Iraq oil hub Basra hoping to see its share of wealth](#)

Most of Iraq's oil exports come from the fields around Basra, but residents complain they have seen little benefit.

A recent series of huge oil deals that Baghdad struck with global firms to develop its vast reserves has generated much hype as oil and service companies build bases in Iraq's desert.

[Iran threatens to drop trade in 'filthy' foreign currencies](#)

Iran planned to stop all trade and oil exports in dollars and euros in retaliation against Western sanctions over its nuclear program, a top official said Tuesday.

"We are going to remove dollar and euro from our foreign currency basket and replace them with [Iranian] rial and all other currencies of the countries which accept to cooperate with us," leading economic daily newspaper Doniye e-Ektesad quoted First Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi as saying. "These currencies are filthy, and we will no longer sell our oil in dollar and euro," Rahimi reportedly told a meeting of education officials.

[Iran scraps second LNG project: report](#)

TEHRAN (AFP) – Iran has scrapped a second liquefied natural gas (LNG) project which was to be executed by French energy giant Total, a report said on Monday, after a similar facility to the Anglo-Dutch Shell was recently dropped.

[UN warns of contamination due to leaking Niger Delta oil wells](#)

Geneva/Abuja - Hundreds of oil well leaks caused by thieves in Nigeria's Niger Delta could be setting off an environmental catastrophe, the United Nations warned Tuesday.

'This is not directly comparable to the spills that occurred in the Gulf (of Mexico),' said Mike Cowing, from the UN's environmental programme (UNEP) in Geneva. 'But we have a serious and profound problem.'

[BP moves to well kill and kicks off compensation fund](#)

MIAMI/HOUSTON (Reuters) – BP advanced on the final lap toward permanently killing the source of the world's worst offshore oil spill and kicked off a \$20 billion compensation fund with a \$3 billion deposit on Monday.

A relief well being drilled by BP is on track to start a definitive "bottom kill" shutdown of the crippled Gulf of Mexico well this week, unless an approaching weather system disrupts the timing, the top U.S. oil spill response official said.

[Bermuda insurance market foots hefty bill for rig loss](#)

Bermuda's insurance industry will have to foot the bill for at least \$137.4 million for the damage caused by the Deepwater Horizon oil platform spill in the Gulf of Mexico, according to the companies' second-quarter earnings reports.

[As oil spill ends, are Gulf Coast economic woes just beginning?](#)

BP says it will stay for years, but some oil spill relief operations are winding down. The loss of BP jobs, along with the drilling moratorium, could mean tough times for the Gulf Coast.

[Simmons, energy investment banker, dies in Maine](#)

An autopsy by the state medical examiner's office concluded Monday that he died from accidental drowning with heart disease as a contributing factor.

[Matthew Simmons, Who Said Global Crude Production Has Peaked, Dies at 67](#)

“In the history of the petroleum era, Matt Simmons will be remembered for calling attention to ‘peak oil,’” T. Boone Pickens, chairman of BP Capital LLC, said in an e-mailed statement. “You had to admire his advocacy and his ability to focus on the need to better prepare for a new energy future.”

Emergency medical workers responded to Simmons's home a little before 10 p.m. local time yesterday, said John Dietter, a crew chief in North Haven, Maine. The official cause of death is drowning, and he was found in a hot tub, said Tara Harrington, medical associate at Maine's Office of Chief Medical Examiner.

[Oil's Cassandra dies but his questions live on](#)

Peak Oil has lost its leading prophet with the death of Houston banker Matt Simmons. Since many nations refuse to share detailed oil data it may be years before his warnings of ebbing production are vindicated — or discredited. But his crusade for more information on supplies is as urgent as ever.

[Matthew Simmons, peak oil proponent, dies at 67](#)

The energy world lost one of its most provocative thinkers this weekend: Matthew Simmons, a former investment banker and adviser to President George W. Bush, who died of a heart attack at his home in Maine last night.

For the past five years, Simmons, 67, had been the premier pessimist in an industry that, on the main, tends towards optimism. He was arguably the most thoughtful and

influential advocate of the idea that the world's steadily increasing appetite for petroleum would lead to peak oil -- the point at which production capacity can no longer ramp up to accommodate increasing demand -- and that it would happen sooner rather than later.

[Matthew Simmons, Noted Energy Banker, Dies at 67](#)

The death of Matthew R. Simmons, the founder of Simmons & Company International, a boutique energy investment bank, has stunned the tight-knit energy banking community.

[Some peak oil followers dispute Simmons Macondo statements](#)

Some followers of the peak oil theory had recently taken issue with comments by leading proponent Matt Simmons, who died Sunday, over the effects of the Macondo spill and had begun to question his credibility.

...Art Berman, a geological consultant and contributor to the Oil Drum blog, a leading web platform of the peak oil school, stressed that his "abiding feeling" for Simmons was one of "great respect. Obviously it's a loss of a great voice and a great leader," he said.

[Robert Bryce - Death of A Gentleman: Matthew Simmons Dead at 67](#)

Matt Simmons was hard working. He loved to talk about energy issues and weigh in on big subjects. He was passionate about his work. But more than all of that, he was a real gentleman. I will miss him.

[SPECIAL FEATURE: A Conversation With Matt Simmons](#)

The famed investment adviser and author of *Twilight in the Desert* shares his views on the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, peak oil, and his newest passion, renewable energy.

[China, on cusp of superpower, faces environmental strain](#)

BEIJING — This year, China will leapfrog Japan to become the second-biggest economy on Earth, behind only the USA, predicts Ting Lu, a China economist with Bank of America-Merrill Lynch. Next month, China starts broadcasts on CNN and other networks of an image-boosting commercial featuring stars such as basketballer Yao Ming and China's first astronaut, Yang Liwei.

Back at ground level, though, in what remains a developing country, China's people and government are struggling to deal with a series of natural disasters that some environmentalists believe are the deadly, man-made consequences of favoring economic

growth over environmental protection.

[New Jersey Halts Oyster Restoration Project](#)

Oysters, which can act as natural water filters but also absorb toxins from their habitat, present something of a Catch-22: scientists say that growing them could play a major role in returning the bay to health, but state regulators, obliged to prevent dangerous seafood from reaching consumers, say the water is too polluted to allow it.

[Portugal Gives Itself a Clean-Energy Makeover](#)

LISBON — Five years ago, the leaders of this sun-scorched, wind-swept nation made a bet: To reduce Portugal's dependence on imported fossil fuels, they embarked on an array of ambitious renewable energy projects — primarily harnessing the country's wind and hydropower, but also its sunlight and ocean waves.

Today, Lisbon's trendy bars, Porto's factories and the Algarve's glamorous resorts are powered substantially by clean energy. Nearly 45 percent of the electricity in Portugal's grid will come from renewable sources this year, up from 17 percent just five years ago.

[Palm oil giant hits back at Greenpeace](#)

AFP - Indonesia's biggest palm oil producer says it has been cleared of allegations made by environmental group Greenpeace that it had destroyed high conservation-value forests on Borneo.

A report commissioned by SMART, part of the Singapore-listed Sinar Mas agri-business group, found that it was not to blame for widespread destruction of Borneo's forests as repeatedly alleged by Greenpeace, the company said on Tuesday.

[Butter Holds the Secret to the Latest Biodiesel Fuel](#)

Butter is not the fuel of the future, but it is possible to churn perfectly good diesel fuel out of it.

"It was something we wanted to show could be done," said Michael J. Haas, a research biochemist at the United States Department of Agriculture.

[Wind farm projects begin moving](#)

Electricity Supply Board (ESB) has announced two major advances in its Northern

Ireland wind farm portfolio.

Work on the Curryfree wind farm project in County Londonderry begins this week and is due to be completed by August next year.

[Lithium: The Next Frontier in Alternative Energy](#)

With peak oil occupying the minds of energy experts and the Gulf oil spill acting as a painful reminder of the dangers posed to the environment by our unquenchable thirst for fossil fuels, a rejuvenated interest in alternative energy is sweeping the nation. Electric and hybrid vehicles are currently the most viable alternative to gas-powered engines, and Lithium-Ion batteries are the most viable means of powering them.

Lithium, the lightweight silver-white alkali metal that stores energy in lithium-ion batteries, has been attracting growing attention from automotive and energy companies over the past several years and the mineral's meteoric rise to global prominence is seemingly set to continue unabated as a new generation of electric cars begins rolling off the assembly line.

[Book Review – Power Grab](#)

It's been a year and a half since President Obama took office and there are definitely mixed emotions on how effective he has or hasn't been. One area where many people have been critical is with regards to his green policies. One such critic is Christopher Horner, who has written a book with the central theme that Obama's green policies are the worst thing that has happened to our country over the past two years. *Power Grab, How Obama's Green Policies Will Steal Your Freedom and Bankrupt America*, has two major tenets: that climate change is a farce, and that the green policies and programs that are being developed to curb climate change will ruin our lives and our country.

[EPA clamps down on cement plant pollution](#)

After 12 years and four lawsuits, the Environmental Protection Agency on Monday for the first time set rules governing how much mercury and other pollutants existing cement plants can release.

The agency says the rules will cut mercury emissions by these plants by 92%, particulate matter by 92% and sulfur dioxide by 78%, saving \$7 to \$19 in public health benefits for every dollar in costs.

[Iceberg as a Metaphor for Inaction](#)

Greenland as a whole is rapidly warming, and its vast ice sheet has lost more than 1.5 trillion tons of ice over the last decade, studies show.

And according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2010 is on its way to becoming the hottest year in the modern instrument record.

But scientists are divided over whether the formation of the new “ice island” should be directly attributed to global warming, as Andy Revkin reports at the Dot Earth blog.

[Rice yields falling under global warming](#)

Global warming is cutting rice yields in many parts of Asia, according to research, with more declines to come.

Yields have fallen by 10-20% over the last 25 years in some locations.

The group of mainly US-based scientists studied records from 227 farms in six important rice-producing countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, India and China.

This is the latest in a line of studies to suggest that climate change will make it harder to feed the world's growing population by cutting yields.



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