



## Drumbeat: April 18, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 18, 2011 - 10:00am

### [Analysis: Oil companies go solar to tap hard-to-get supplies](#)

(Reuters) - Soaring oil prices are turning some energy companies into accidental environmentalists: They are building clean, solar-powered systems to pull crude out of their aging wells.

But this is no public relations move by big polluters seeking to green their images. Having spent heavily on energy-intensive technology to increase output from depleted fields, companies including Chevron Corp and Berry Petroleum Co are using solar power to lower the cost of creating steam that is injected into the wells to improve the flow of heavy oil.

Yes, in this instance going solar is actually going cheaper. While electricity generated by solar panels is more expensive than that created by fossil fuels, using the sun to heat water and create steam for so-called enhanced oil recovery costs less than natural gas, even at today's low prices.

### [Sasol's Plan For North American Shale Gas: Turn It Into Diesel](#)

Are you worried about Peak Oil, or just convinced that America's continued reliance on imports of foreign oil is a road to ruin? Well Pat Davies has a technology for you. Davies is chief executive of South African energy giant Sasol. The company is the world leader in making diesel fuel out of feedstocks other than oil—namely natural gas and coal—and has high hopes for someday transforming North America's abundant shale gas into cheaper, cleaner car juice.

### [Ukrainian court cannot cancel gas agts with Russia -- Yanukovich](#)

KIEV (Itar-Tass) -- Ukrainian courts cannot cancel gas agreements with Russia, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich said.

The jurisdiction of Ukrainian courts does not cover Russia's activities. "This is why the question of court proceedings concern only the Ukrainian side in this case," he said at a joint press conference with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso on Monday, April 18.

### [Dubai to Continue to Use Natural Gas as Country's Main Source for Power](#)

Dubai will continue to use natural gas as a main fuel for power generation even as the second- largest sheikhdom in the United Arab Emirates tries to develop new sources of electricity, a government official said.

### [B.C.'s curious energy double standard](#)

VICTORIA - The controversy over the proposed Northern Gateway oil-sands pipeline highlights a unique perspective in British Columbia on fossil fuels -- bring on the gas, but not the oil.

### [Azerbaijan declined to increase oil production above 55 million tons a year](#)

Baku, Fineko/abc.az. Azerbaijan has revised the value of peak oil production in the country, which was previously estimated in 60 million tons a year.

Khoshbakht Yusifzade, first vice-president of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR), has claimed that thereby a goal is set to ensure a longer period of stable high oil production.

### [Syrian forces kill as many as 24, opposition source says](#)

(CNN) -- Syrian security forces killed as many as 24 people over the past two days in areas where anti-government protests have been under way, an opposition source said Monday.

Some of the victims were killed in Talbisa when security forces fired on mourners at a funeral Sunday, opposition sources said.

### [Spokesman: Horror in Misrata grows with fresh shelling, little aid](#)

Tripoli, Libya (CNN) -- The nightmare in Libya's war-torn city of Misrata intensified Monday amid more shelling on the city and desperate measures to get medical care, an opposition spokesman said.

"The aid coming from outside is not enough. There is no hospital," said the spokesman, who wanted to be identified only as "Mohammed" for safety reasons.

### [BP's \\$20 billion fund barely tapped](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- The fund established to compensate Gulf Coast residents in the aftermath of last year's massive BP oil spill said Monday it has paid out \$3.8 billion so far.

### [BP Sued by Pointe Au Chien Indian Tribe Over Spill Damage, Fishing Losses](#)

BP Plc was sued by the Pointe Au Chien tribe over claims the Indian group's ancestral lands and fishing grounds in southern Louisiana were devastated by the 2010 oil spill.

The tribe "has suffered loss of use of its historical and cultural lands, including tribal cemeteries, Indian mounds, shell middens and traditional fisheries," according to the complaint, filed in federal court in New Orleans on April 15.

### [AP Enterprise: BP is looking strong a year later](#)

NEW ORLEANS (AP) -- It's hard to tell that just a year ago BP was reeling from financial havoc and an American public out for blood.

The oil giant at the center of one of the world's biggest environmental crises is making strong profits again, its stock has largely rebounded, and it is paying dividends to shareholders once more. It is also pursuing new ventures from the Arctic to India. It is even angling to explore again in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico, where it holds more leases than any competitor.

### [Challenges abound to control crippled reactors](#)

Can Tokyo Electric Power Co. bring the four troubled reactors at its Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant under control within six to nine months as it announced Sunday? What challenges must it overcome before achieving its avowed goals?

### [Unsung bedrock of prosperity](#)

Modern agriculture would be inconceivable without phosphate fertilizers - and it needs more and more of them. Experts warn of an imminent phosphorus shortage. But not Roland Scholz from the Institute of Environmental Decisions. For him, the main problems are the open phosphorus cycle and non-sustainable resource management.

### [Eco-luxe products: Low impact, high price](#)

Eco-luxe is chic. It's luxurious. It's beautiful. It's conscious. And yes, it can be very expensive.

## [The Anti-Immigration Crusader](#)

WASHINGTON — Three decades ago, a middle-aged doctor sat outside his northern Michigan home and saw a patch of endangered paradise.

A beekeeper and amateur naturalist of prodigious energy, John Tanton had spent two decades planting trees, cleaning creeks and suing developers, but population growth put ever more pressure on the land. Though fertility rates had fallen, he saw a new threat emerging: soaring rates of immigration.

Time and again, Dr. Tanton urged liberal colleagues in groups like Planned Parenthood and the Sierra Club to seek immigration restraints, only to meet blank looks and awkward silences.

“I finally concluded that if anything was going to happen, I would have to do it myself,” he said.

Improbably, he did. From the resort town of Petoskey, Mich., Dr. Tanton helped start all three major national groups fighting to reduce immigration, legal and illegal, and molded one of the most powerful grass-roots forces in politics. The immigration-control movement surged to new influence in last fall’s elections and now holds near veto power over efforts to legalize any of the 11 million illegal immigrants in the United States.

## [Is the oil market really oversupplied?](#)

The only thing more surprising than the comment from Ali Naimi, the Saudi oil minister, that the oil market is oversupplied, is how seriously the market appears to have taken it. The oil price has dipped sharply today, according to some at least, because of Naimi’s comments.

## [US- Markets react to softening crude demand scenario](#)

(MENAFN - Arab News) Perceptions are beginning to change - impacting the crude oil markets - rather significantly.

There are concerns whether the current oil market rally is finally coming to an abrupt end.

Mid last week, oil prices dropped to the lowest level this month, with pundits underlining that high oil prices are destroying fuel demand in the US and elsewhere.

US gasoline demand has dropped for six straight weeks, reported MasterCard SpendingPulse.

## [Kuwait Oil Min: Oil Market Oversupplied; Agrees With Saudi's Naimi](#)

KUWAIT CITY (Zawya Dow Jones)--Kuwait's oil minister said Monday he agreed with

comments made a day earlier by his Saudi counterpart that world crude oil markets are oversupplied.

"There is sufficient oil supplies in the market," Sheik Ahmad Al Abdullah Al Sabah said at the sidelines of a meeting of Asian energy ministers in Kuwait.

### [How BP got into another fine mess](#)

The immediate cause of BP's latest Russian crisis is the ruling last month of an arbitration panel in Switzerland. But its roots spread all the way to the Gulf of Mexico, and as far back as the company's last but one chief executive. And it all reflects the company's floundering attempts to secure production growth in a world of dwindling oil resources.

### [Pakistan Seeks LNG Imports on 'Urgent Basis,' Adviser Says](#)

Pakistan will seek imports of liquefied natural gas on an "urgent basis" as it struggles to overcome energy shortages that have crippled the economy.

"Pakistan can't meet energy demands without LNG imports," Asim Hussain, the government's petroleum adviser, said today at a news conference in Islamabad. "LNG imports are the only short-term solution for economic survival."

### [Assad's promises fail to quell Syrian protests](#)

Violent clashes with government forces erupt across the country as thousands of Syrians take to the streets in defiance of a warning by President Bashar Assad, who a day earlier had offered to enact reforms.

### [Bahrain protests will go nowhere while the US supports its government](#)

The Al-Khalifa family, who control Bahrain, has cracked down on dissent with little condemnation from the west.

### [Libya's oil company protests to OPEC about Qatar](#)

(Reuters) - Libya's National Oil Corporation has written to OPEC to complain about help fellow member Qatar is giving to Libyan rebels, sources familiar with the matter said on Monday.

The complaint by Shokri Ghanem, the chairman of NOC, hints at rising political tension as a result of the Libyan crisis within the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, which pumps more than a third of the world's oil.

## [How Libya Saps America's Power](#)

Here's what America's worst enemies like Iran and North Korea are spouting on the international circuit about Libya: If the vaunted and mighty NATO and the U.S. can't humble that weirdo Col. Gaddafi and his pint-size army, "what do we have to worry about?"

## [One year after spill, where's the oil?](#)

One year ago this week, an oil-rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico touched off a deep-sea leak amounting to 2.5 million gallons of Louisiana light crude every day for months. In all, nearly 207 million gallons (4.9 million barrels) of oil are thought to have gushed from the leak, along with huge volumes of methane. So what's happened to all those petrochemicals over the past year? The answer is surprisingly complex and contentious.

## [Corbett vows to keep gas drillers from poisoning water](#)

HERSHEY — Gov. Tom Corbett today said he will not allow Marcellus shale drillers to "poison the water" but defended his decision not to levy a tax on gas extraction.

## [Entergy Corp. sues to keep Vermont Yankee open](#)

MONTPELIER, Vt. — Entergy Corp. has filed a lawsuit in Vermont to keep the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant open past 2012.

The New Orleans-based company has federal approval to keep the plant running until 2032, but it so far has been unable to secure state approval.

## [Portland Is The Only City In America That Is Ready For The Energy Crisis](#)

Portland, Oregon is now far enough along in its transition away from oil that by 2015 one can imagine this city being able to market and sell its own example to the rest of the world.

Most of Portland's longstanding initiatives, from public transport and the integration of the bicycle, to city agriculture, water and waste management, and use of technology are solutions that will be seen not as discretionary but necessary by mid-decade.

## [Kurt Cobb: Do the world's contemplative religious traditions demonstrate a path to sustainability?](#)

Within nearly all the great religions of history we find contemplative traditions which espouse the curious principle that foregoing excessive wealth and consumption (and therefore energy use) will actually make one happier. As a general rule these traditions advocate eating only what one needs to be healthy; exercising to maintain physical vigor (but not excessive strength); studying to attune oneself to the subtleties of nature and of the mind; and shielding oneself from the distractions of daily life. All this, they claim, will result in a fuller, more joyful existence.

### [Preparing for the future](#)

His premise is not yet one that national policymakers and politicians are buying into, but more than 25 people listening via teleconferencing hookup Saturday in Salina showed they were convinced by a show of hands.

"We are at a fundamental turning point in world history," said Richard Heinberg, senior fellow-in-residence at the Post Carbon Institute and author of 10 books, including the soon-to-be-released "The End of Growth: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality."

### [Oil shortages and environmental decline could create 'global quagmire': military report](#)

KINGSTON, Ont. — The planet is running out of oil and heading toward a future that could trap Canada in a violent spiral of decline in the economy and the environment, a special research unit within the Canadian military is predicting.

This "global quagmire" is one of four possible future scenarios advanced by the six members of the team who are developing a plan for the army of tomorrow based on existing scientific research and analysis.

### [Crude Market Is 'Oversupplied,' Saudi Arabia's Oil Minister Al-Naimi Says](#)

Saudi Arabia's Oil Minister Ali al- Naimi said the global "market is oversupplied" with crude even as the world's largest oil producer cut output last month by more than 800,000 barrels a day.

"Our production in February was 9,125,100 barrels a day," al-Naimi said, as he arrived in Kuwait for a conference. "In March, it was 8,292,100 barrels. It will probably go a little higher in April. The reason I mention these numbers is to show you the market is oversupplied."

Saudi Arabia's spare production capacity is about 3.5 million barrels a day, and its total capacity is 12.5 million barrels a day, he said today.

### [OPEC worried by high oil price, patchy global recovery](#)

(Reuters) - High oil prices represent a potentially major burden for importers with global economic recovery still fragile, leading OPEC ministers said on Monday.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi, a day after confirming the kingdom slashed oil production by more than 800,000 barrels per day (bpd) in March due to weak demand, warned of continued weakness in the global economy.

### [Oil Declines in New York After Saudi Arabia Says Market Is 'Oversupplied'](#)

Oil declined for the first time in four days in New York after Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest exporter, said the global market has adequate crude supplies.

Futures slipped as much as 1.4 percent after Saudi Arabia's Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said yesterday the "market is oversupplied." Crude fell 2.8 percent last week on speculation price gains spurred by conflicts in the Middle East will curb economic expansion. The world economy is being hurt by "very high" oil prices, said Nobuo Tanaka, the International Energy Agency's executive director.

### [Gallon of gas now tops \\$4 in six states and D.C.](#)

WASHINGTON — Add New York to the growing list of states where gas prices are topping \$4 per gallon.

On Sunday, the Empire State became the sixth state to top \$4 for the average price of a gallon of gas, joining Alaska, California, Connecticut, Hawaii and Illinois, according to AAA's Daily Fuel Gauge. The average price of gas also rose to more than \$4 per gallon in Washington, D.C., on Saturday.

The next states to join the list could be Michigan, which has gas for \$3.95 per gallon on average, and Indiana, where the average price is \$3.94. Nevada, Washington and Wisconsin are close behind.

### [Some gas stations are starting to charge \\$5 a gallon](#)

As gas prices continue to rise, we're starting to find isolated instances of stations charging \$5 for a gallon of regular.

### [Gas spike tab hits \\$100 billion](#)

In the latest sign inflation is tapping the brakes on the recovery, gas-price increases have practically wiped out Americans' winnings from last year's tax holiday.

So says Goldman Sachs. The firm cut its first-quarter U.S. growth projection Friday for the second time this month, warning that the price of gasoline – up to \$3.83 a gallon on

average at the latest reading – could undermine consumer spending and slow an already laboring economy.

"A key reason for concern is the sharp rise in gasoline prices so far in 2011 — nearly 70 cents per gallon — which is siphoning off household income at a run rate equivalent to \$100 billion per year," writes economist Andrew Tilton.

### [Gasoline Prices Slow U.S. Recovery 'Modestly,' Geithner Says](#)

U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner said high gasoline prices will hamper the U.S. economy as the recovery continues.

Geithner acknowledged that gas prices have risen "quite a lot," partly in response to tensions in the Middle East and North Africa. He also cited concerns that Japan's nuclear disaster is calling the future of nuclear power into question.

### [Why high gas price effects may be different this time](#)

"In 2008 we spent 12 months with gas above \$3," and that resulted in notable changes in consumer spending choices, says David Portalatin of NPD Group. "Nearly half reduced their gas consumption by consolidated shopping trips, 29% cancelled or modified vacations, 25% found alternatives to driving. The more sustained price spike, the greater the impact."

Perhaps because consumers have traveled this road before, some analysts say this time around the impact may not be as pronounced across middle-class and higher-income consumers as it was in 2008.

### [Halliburton Profit Rises on North American Oil Output Increase](#)

Halliburton Co., the world's second-largest oilfield services provider, said first-quarter profit climbed as rising oil prices led to increased efforts to find oil and natural gas in North America.

### [Sinopec Said to Seek \\$3.8 Billion of Loans for Acquisitions, Refinancing](#)

China Petrochemical Corp., known as Sinopec Group, is seeking \$3.8 billion of five-year term loans from lenders, according to two people familiar with the matter.

### [Desire plunges on unsuccessful Falklands well](#)

(Reuters) - British oil explorer Desire Petroleum said it had not found oil at its latest

well in the Falkland Islands and would need further funds for future drilling, wiping over half the value off its shares.

Desire's disappointing well result is a further blow for the company as it comes on the back of a string of unsuccessful results, but it should not dent the remote British territory's chances of becoming a new oil province, say analysts.

### [ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson chats with Maria Bartiromo](#)

**Q: But in terms of supply and demand, is there enough oil and gas in the world today, or are prices high because of speculation? And how long would you expect them to stay elevated?**

A: The markets are well supplied today. If you look at inventory levels here in the U.S. and around the world, they are in a strong condition. So supply is not the issue. What's reflected in the price is the uncertainty around what might happen in the months or years ahead if there are further interruptions in supply. That is because of what you are seeing around the world in some oil-rich regions. It really is at what cost is it going to take to replace that supply if it is lost. And that's what's reflected in the market.

### [Sri Lanka - Sobering thought: Crude oil at \\$100 per barrel!](#)

With high oil prices, as a developing nation where do we go from here seems to be the timely question?

As we started to smell the sweet success associated with the post-war economic development and as we were getting ready to bring back the glory days, there seems to be a dark cloud zooming in. Energy, being the front runner of the economy, we see yet another oil price increase during the last week.

### [China regions face power shortage even before summer peak](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - Central China's Hubei province has joined a growing list of regions facing coal shortages, with a warning on Monday that it is very likely to start rationing power this month if coal supplies remain tight and low water stocks continue to curb hydropower generation.

China has warned that power shortages this summer could be the worst for years, with power generation and transmission systems unable to cope with rising demand. The east, north and south of China are likely to be hit the hardest.

### [Years of the Modern](#)

The biggest wildcard among the Fourth Turning catalysts is Peak Oil. The modern industrial world is completely dependent upon cheap accessible oil. Globalization, consumerism, suburban sprawl, food production and distribution, and all means of transportation are dependent upon cheap abundant oil. Peak world oil production has occurred. Demand will outstrip supply going forward at an ever increasing rate. Various levels of chaos will ensue as the realization of this fact becomes evident to everyone.

### [Rebels in Ajdabiya Repel Attack by Qaddafi Forces as Libyan Fighting Rages](#)

Libya's rebels, fighting mainly from pickup trucks mounted with machine guns, repelled an attack from Muammar Qaddafi's forces on the city of Ajdabiya.

Qaddafi loyalists had earlier shelled Ajdabiya, about 160 kilometers (100 miles) south of the rebel stronghold of Benghazi, Mustafa Gheriani, spokesman for the rebels' National Transitional Council, said in an interview.

### [Libyan rebel oil chief: No immediate new oil sales](#)

BENGHAZI, Libya—Libyan rebels will not sell any additional oil until production resumes from two key fields that suffered battle damage in the breakaway east, the region's top oil official said Monday.

The repairs -- which rebels say could be completed in weeks -- are a priority for opposition forces that are counting on oil revenues to maintain the fight against Moammar Gadhafi's stronger military.

### [U.S. secretly backed Syrian opposition groups, cables released by WikiLeaks show](#)

The State Department has secretly financed Syrian political opposition groups and related projects, including a satellite TV channel that beams anti-government programming into the country, according to previously undisclosed diplomatic cables.

### [Yemen Opposition Turns Down Gulf Plan as Police Fire on Crowd](#)

Yemen's opposition coalition rejected a plan by six Gulf states to end unrest in the Arabian country, saying that the swift departure of Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh isn't negotiable.

Before talks began in Riyadh yesterday, police in Yemen used live ammunition, tear gas and water cannon to disperse tens of thousands of protesters marching in the capital, Sana'a, injuring at least 100, according to Abdulmalik al-Yusufi, a doctor at a field clinic along the protest route.

## [What Happened to the Arab Spring? Ask Saudi Arabia.](#)

The Arab Spring appears to have been overwhelmed by a deep frost that might just kill all of the revolutionary buds. With the exception of Tunisia the revolutionary zeal has been either co-opted by the old established ruling class, Egypt is currently ruled by a 75 year old general who has never shown any predilection for democracy and individual freedom. The army has actually imprisoned a blogger for having assumed that it was his natural right to express his point of view.

## [Protests in Nigeria's north over Jonathan poll win](#)

(Reuters) - Security forces deployed on the streets of Nigeria's northern cities Monday to try to contain protests by youths angered at results showing President Goodluck Jonathan won the presidential election.

Votes counted from all but one of Nigeria's 36 states showed Jonathan, the president from the southern oil-producing Niger Delta, had beaten Muhammadu Buhari, a former military ruler from the Muslim north, in the first round.

## [Chemicals Were Injected Into Wells, Report Says](#)

WASHINGTON — Oil and gas companies injected hundreds of millions of gallons of hazardous or carcinogenic chemicals into wells in more than 13 states from 2005 to 2009, according to an investigation by Congressional Democrats.

The chemicals were used by companies during a drilling process known as hydraulic fracturing, or hydrofracking, which involves the high-pressure injection of a mixture of water, sand and chemical additives into rock formations deep underground. The process, which is being used to tap into large reserves of natural gas around the country, opens fissures in the rock to stimulate the release of oil and gas.

## [Analysis: After BP spill, U.S. drill permits slow to a trickle](#)

(Reuters) - Nearly a year after BP Plc's Gulf of Mexico oil spill spurred a shutdown of new U.S. deepwater oil and gas drilling, offshore regulators have begun to approve a trickle of new permits.

But the 10 new wells that have received permits from the newly created U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management so far this year pale in comparison to the rate of permitting in prior years, according to a Reuters analysis of permits.

## [Regulation of Offshore Rigs Is a Work in Progress](#)

WASHINGTON — A year after BP's Macondo well blew out, killing 11 men and spewing

millions of barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, the much-maligned federal agency responsible for policing offshore drilling has been remade, with a tough new director, an awkward new name and a sheaf of stricter safety rules. It is also trying to put some distance between itself and the industry it regulates.

But is it fixed? The simple answer is no. Even those who run the agency formerly known as the Minerals Management Service concede that it will be years before they can establish a robust regulatory regime able to minimize the risks to workers and the environment while still allowing exploration offshore.

### [Scientists: Gulf health nearly at pre-spill level](#)

BAY JIMMY, La. – Scientists judge the overall health of the Gulf of Mexico as nearly back to normal one year after the BP oil spill, but with glaring blemishes that restrain their optimism about nature's resiliency, an Associated Press survey of researchers shows.

### [Mystery illnesses plague Louisiana oil spill crews](#)

Robichaux, an ear, nose and throat specialist whose office an hour's drive southwest of New Orleans is nestled on a roadside marked with handwritten signs advertising turtle meat for sale, says he is treating many of the local patients in their homes.

"Their work ethic is so strong, they are so stoic, they don't want people to know when they're sick," he said.

"Ninety percent of them are getting worse... Nobody has a clue as to what it is."

### [Wyoming's Boom Poses Challenges For Obama](#)

Economists say administration policies to reduce imported energy, along with higher commodity prices, are bolstering what Wyoming has to offer — natural gas and oil, coal so near the surface it can be harvested without underground mines and endless wind for electricity turbines.

Just last month, Mr. Obama's interior secretary, Ken Salazar, came to Wyoming to announce the timetable for billions of dollars in new coal leases near Gillette, in the state's northeast corner. Some coal industry boosters saw that as a strong signal of support — coming less than two weeks after the Japanese earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis — for traditional energy as the backbone of the national supply.

But many other residents here say they still see Mr. Obama as the enemy of Wyoming's mineral bounty.

### [Quake-hit Chiba refinery restart to take time -PAJ](#)

(Reuters) - Cosmo Oil Co's quake-hit 220,000 barrels per day Chiba refinery will likely not be up and running for some time, taking much longer than a rival refinery which is due to restart in summer, the head of the Petroleum Association of Japan said on Monday.

### [Japan needs more LNG, buys to push up long-term price](#)

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan needs to buy more liquefied natural gas (LNG) even after securing 4 million tonnes of additional fuel from top producer Qatar, which is likely to push long-term prices higher and reduce cargoes available for Europe.

Top LNG importer Japan is battling to minimise power shortages in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake and subsequent tsunami in March that knocked out more than 9 gigawatts of nuclear power supply.

### [Robot in Japanese reactors detects high radiation](#)

TOKYO (AP) — Readings Monday from a robot that entered two crippled buildings at Japan's tsunami-flooded nuclear plant for the first time in more than a month displayed a harsh environment still too radioactive for workers to enter.

### [Tokyo Electric Unveils Six-Month Plan to Cool Reactors, End Nuclear Crisis](#)

Tokyo Electric Power Co. set out a plan to end the crisis at its tsunami-damaged Fukushima Dai-Ichi power plant, the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl, within six to nine months.

A sustained drop in radiation levels at the plant is expected within three months, the company known as Tepco said yesterday in a statement. Following that, a cold shutdown, where core reactor temperatures fall below 100 degrees Celsius (212 degrees Fahrenheit), may be achieved within six months, it said.

### [Unlike BP, Japan's crisis-hit TEPCO has little to sell](#)

(Reuters) - Like oil-leaking BP plc a year ago, disaster-whipped Tokyo Electric Power is mulling a fire sale of assets to help pay compensation claims against its Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Unlike BP, which had a valuable bag of oil and gas fields to hawk, Asia's No.1 utility has little to sell.

### [The post-quake nuclear dilemma](#)

Four years ago, a disaster such as the one at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station would have served to back up the British politician Chris Huhne's position on atomic energy.

"Ministers must stop the sideshow of new nuclear power stations now," he said on his campaign website in 2007. "Nuclear is a tried, tested and failed technology and the government must stop putting time, effort and subsidies into reviving this outdated industry."

But today Mr Huhne, the UK energy secretary, finds himself trying to moderate public discussions on nuclear power, which apparently will have to remain a key part of his country's energy mix.

### [For Energy-Starved India, Japan's Crisis Raises Hard Questions](#)

About 40 percent of the country's 1.2 billion people live off the grid, and most of the rest, excluding the well-off residents of a few big cities like Mumbai and New Delhi, cannot count on having power 24 hours a day. Many industries must rely extensively on diesel generators to keep their operations going.

### [Chernobyl nightmare haunts world 25 years on](#)

KIEV (AFP) – The world next week remembers 25 years since the worst nuclear accident in history at Chernobyl, haunted by fears that the Japan earthquake has shown again the risk of atomic power sparking apocalypse.

### [Nuclear still main alternative to oil: ex-IAEA chief](#)

DUBAI (AFP) – The former head of UN atomic agency voiced confidence Sunday in nuclear energy as the only real alternative to oil despite a potential "setback" in the sector due to Japan's current disaster.

"Today, nuclear power is the only real alternative to fossil fuel as a source of a reliable supply," said Egyptian Mohamed ElBaradei, speaking at the opening of the Dubai Global Energy Forum.

### [Italy's Last Reactor Town Goes Solar in Fight Against Nuclear](#)

Montalto di Castro, the town where Italy's last nuclear plant was built before a two-decade ban, is fighting against a return to atomic power and staking its future on solar energy by hosting Europe's largest photovoltaic park.

### [GM shows off its new super-cheap car for China](#)

If you're wondering what General Motors is up to China, here's a fresh example. It's the new Baojun 630 sedan, which debuted last week at the Shanghai auto show.

Apparently, the midsize Baojun 630 has one truly appealing quality: It's cheap.

### [Tata: Building an auto empire in India](#)

The Indian car market is small -- one-sixth the size of China's -- but growing just as fast. Tata wants to use its vast potential as a platform to transform Tata Motors from a regional powerhouse into an international automotive player. In the past 24 months he has taken three audacious steps in that direction. First, Tata unveiled the Nano, which aspires to be nothing less than a people's car for the developing world. With a beginning price of \$2,900, it is designed to lure India's growing middle class away from their bicycles and motor scooters and into safe family-size, weatherproof vehicles. Nano got off to a rocky start but is gathering speed. It could open big export opportunities that Tata hopes will eventually include the U.S. and Europe.

### [Decision Looms for Laos Dam, but Impact Is Unclear](#)

On Tuesday the four countries that share the lower reaches of the Mekong River will announce whether they agree to the construction of a controversial dam, a decision that could forever alter the character and natural diversity of one of the world's longest and most bountiful rivers.

### [Couple builds solar-powered home with help from Google](#)

Using Google SketchUp, a 3-D modeling program usually used by architects, engineers and other design professionals, the couple drew the plans for their home and all of its high-tech, low-environmental-impact features on a computer screen.

"Woodworkers say measure twice and cut once. We did that with SketchUp . We designed it to a quarter of an inch," Philippe Jeanty said.

### [Is this sci fi - or the near future?](#)

Our grandkids will lead the lives of the gods of mythology. Zeus could think and move objects around. We'll have that power. Venus had a perfect, timeless body. We'll have that, too. Pegasus was a flying horse. We'll be able to modify life in the future.

### [Crusader sows seeds of change](#)

It was former US vice-president Al Gore's "inconvenient" advice which put Mr Molloy on his vegetable crusade.

"He talked about how people went from denial to despair, but in fact should stop in the middle," he said.

Mr Molloy developed the idea of a community garden.

### [New climate change case headed to Supreme Court](#)

WASHINGTON – The Obama administration and environmental interests generally agree that global warming is a threat that must be dealt with.

But they're on opposite sides of a Supreme Court case over the ability of states and groups such as the Audubon Society that want to sue large electric utilities and force power plants in 20 states to cut their emissions.

### [Scientists want climate change early-warning system](#)

(Reuters) - A better monitoring network for greenhouses gases is needed to warn of significant changes and to keep countries that have agreed to cut their emissions honest, scientists said in papers published Monday.

"What we're hoping to do is see if the warming is feeding the warming, particularly in the Arctic," said Euan Nisbet, a specialist in methane emissions at the University of London.

### [FACTBOX-Australia's greenhouse emissions rise 0.5 pct in 2010](#)

(Reuters) - Australia's greenhouse gas emissions grew 0.5 percent in the year to December 2010 to 543 million tonnes, matching a long-term pattern of growth, government estimates showed on Monday.

Following is a snapshot of the estimates released by the government on Monday. The 2010 figures do not include emissions from land use change, such as deforestation.

### [Arctic's Icy Coastlines Retreat as Planet Warms](#)

In the high latitudes, climate change projections must take a new factor into account: Ice. In the Arctic, the loss of sea ice is likely to have dramatic repercussions, including greater erosion, which can present problems for the people and economic activity in this region, according to two new reports.

Sea ice is disappearing from Arctic waters at an unprecedented rate — more rapidly than predicted by the most extreme projections in the most recent assessment report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, according to the researchers.

### [Arctic coasts slipping away](#)

A quarter of the Arctic's permafrost coastline is suffering from erosion due to climate change. The impact on settlements, shipping, oil and gas installations and coastal infrastructure is likely to grow.

'Arctic coastal erosion is reaching up to 20 metres a year in places, though on average it is half a metre a year. What we are seeing is likely to affect enormous areas in the future,' said Hugues Lantuit, a geologist at the Alfred Wegener Institute, Germany's top polar science institution, and one of the lead scientists in the decade-long study. 'We have to reckon on rapid changes in a system that has been stable for millennia.'



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