



Drumbeat: April 20, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 20, 2011 - 10:24am

[Drilling fluid gushes from northern Pa. natural gas well into stream, forcing evacuation](#)

ALLENTOWN, Pa. — A natural gas well in rural northern Pennsylvania spilled thousands of gallons of chemical-laced water on Wednesday, forcing the evacuation of seven families who live nearby as crews struggled to stop the gusher.

Chesapeake Energy Corp. lost control of the Marcellus Shale well site near Canton, in Bradford County, at about 11:45 p.m. Tuesday, officials said. Tainted water continued to flow from the site Wednesday afternoon, contaminating a nearby stream.

[As gas prices soar, GOP uses Gulf oil-spill anniversary to blast Obama energy policies](#)

Wednesday marks the one-year anniversary of the explosion at the Deepwater Horizon offshore oil rig that killed 11 workers while letting loose a toxic tide of oil into the Gulf of Mexico that damaged the maritime environment, disrupted the livelihoods of commercial fishermen, and set back America's petroleum-drilling efforts.

[A look back at North Sea oil production projections](#)

How did the US DOE/EIA and I do in our projections of Norwegian and U.K. oil production for 2010? Table II shows the comparison.

[Gulf drilling delays fail to stem US oil flow](#)

US oil production this year is on course to rise, independent forecasters believe, in spite of delays to drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, as the boom in the onshore oil industry offsets the slowdown offshore.

[More Russian tankers to ply Arctic route despite cost](#)

MOSCOW, April 20 (Reuters) - Russia's Sovcomflot will ship 3-4 cargoes of stable gas condensate from northwest Russia to Asia via the Arctic sea this year on behalf of Novatek (NOTK.MM) a senior Sovcomflot official said on Wednesday.

"We are planning to ship between 300,000 and 400,000 tonnes this year," he told reporters on the sidelines of a conference on the Russian Arctic.

[Emarat petrol stations run dry in supply shortfall](#)

Petrol pumps at Emarat stations across Dubai have run dry after delivery problems at the company's depots hit fresh fuel supplies, station managers told Arabian Business.

After three days without supplies, workers said they have been forced to turn motorists away.

[Emarat operations to return to normal Friday, company says](#)

Abu Dhabi: The Dubai-based oil retailer Emarat said Wednesday all its petrol stations that suffered due to a shortage of fuel would return to normal operations by Friday.

In a statement issued through the WAM news agency, Emarat said the "shortage occurred due to logistics issues as a result of fuel tankers not arriving to the loading docks as per the delivery schedule".

[Sinopec Halts Fuel Exports on Shortage as Refiners Make Loss](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China Petrochemical Corp., Asia's biggest oil refiner, halted fuel exports to ease a domestic shortfall as high crude costs and price caps cause private refiners to cut back on production.

Sinopec Group, as the company is known, "stopped exporting to other regions apart from sustaining the basic resource needs of Hong Kong and Macau," it said in its online newsletter today. The Beijing-based company will run its refineries at full capacity and cut petrochemical production to boost output of gasoline and diesel for domestic use, it said.

[2 injection well companies request more time to study possible connection to Ark. earthquakes](#)

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. - The Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission says two natural gas exploration companies have agreed to extend the shutdowns of two injection wells as researchers study whether they are linked to a recent increase in earthquakes in central Arkansas.

[Deadlock over Iran oil and gas takes toll](#)

Oil and gas-rich Iran may shrug off the impact of US and European Union sanctions over its nuclear programme, but at the country's annual oil and gas exhibition it is clear that the measures are having an effect on its hydrocarbons sector.

[Libya unrest halts Elephant charge](#)

Fighting in Libya continues to hold up a planned share deal between Italy's Eni and Russian gas giant Gazprom.

[UAE's foreign minister says recent detentions of rights activists 'fully in line' with the law](#)

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — The United Arab Emirates' recent detentions of activists in the Gulf federation were carried out according to the law, said the country's foreign minister Wednesday, without specifying any charges.

The comments by Sheik Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan are the first from a senior federal official in the oil-rich country, a key regional ally of the United States, about reports that four prominent activists had been arrested.

[Putin 'surprised' by BP's Russian rumble](#)

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin "simply knew nothing" about factors which eventually derailed a planned \$16 billion tie up between BP and Rosneft.

[Ukraine, Russia begin talks on cutting down natural gas price - Azarov](#)

KIEV (Itar-Tass) - Ukraine and Russia have begun talks on cutting down the price for natural gas, Ukrainian Prime Minister Nikolai Azarov said Wednesday as he met with Thomas Mirow, the president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

[Russia's Transneft says may sue China's CNPC](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian oil pipeline monopoly Transneft said on Wednesday it may file a lawsuit against China's CNPC in a London court over what it said were underpayments for oil supplies.

The dispute, which escalated last month when news of the alleged underpayments first emerged, may undermine Russian attempts to secure a fresh landmark deal with China on natural gas supplies.

[Interview: Jim Sinclair on Gold and the World Financial System](#)

HRN: Would you say that inflation in food prices is indirectly driving oil prices higher?

Jim Sinclair: Oil goes right through from fertilizers to farm equipment to transportation and to food prices. The price of food is going to go even higher than we are seeing this year. The price of oil is headed decidedly higher. Peak Oil was a concept of the future. Now it's a concept of now. A car getting 25 miles per gallon will probably be too expensive for the average person to drive.

[Horizon: One year later](#)

TODAY marks the first anniversary of the explosion on the Deepwater Horizon, an exploratory rig drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, that triggered one of the largest oil spills in history. The full environmental and economic impacts of the spill can't be fully assessed at this point, but in general terms, we can say that the grimmest fears have not been realised, and the Gulf coast is on the road to recovery.

[Deepwater Horizon: One Year Later](#)

A year ago today, an explosion on Transocean's Deepwater Horizon ultra-deepwater semisubmersible, positioned at the Macondo Prospect in Mississippi Canyon Block 252, in the Gulf of Mexico, took the lives of 11 men and caused the largest marine oil spill in history.

[Gulf oil disaster still puzzles scientists](#)

(CNN) -- One year after the chocolaty crude started spewing out of the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico, leading to the largest accidental oil spill in history, scientists say they're still trying to piece together what's happening to the environment.

Some potential clues about the impact of the spill have made themselves known: dead baby dolphins and sea turtles; oiled brown pelicans; fish with strange sores; sticky marsh grasses; tar balls on beaches.

But the big picture hasn't come into focus yet.

[Dudley: The Lessons of Deepwater Horizon](#)

A year ago [Wednesday, April 20], the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded, killing 11 men and causing the largest offshore oil spill in U.S. history. At BP we regret that the accident happened and the impact it has had on the environment of the Gulf Coast and people living there.

[Offshore drilling: Slow comeback after BP](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- Oil drilling is returning to the Gulf of Mexico, but slowly.

One year after BP's Macondo well blew out -- claiming 11 lives and sparking a ban on deepwater drilling -- 11 new deepwater and 49 shallow water drilling permits have been issued, according to the federal agency that oversees offshore drilling.

[Dutch tighten precautions after Deepwater disaster](#)

DEN HELDER, Netherlands (AP) -- Dutch authorities say drilling operators and marine rescue units have three rapid-response exercises planned this year as part of lessons learned from the oil blowout in the Gulf of Mexico last year.

[Deepwater Horizon Spurs Development of Spill Prevention Systems](#)

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster in April 2010 prompted the creation of oil spill response systems for use in the Gulf of Mexico and in the North Sea. Two oil spill prevention systems are now available for oil and gas producers in the Gulf of Mexico, and a well capping device is currently under construction in the UK that will be used as part of the UK oil and gas industry's oil spill response efforts.

[One Year Later: Assessing the Lasting Impact of the Gulf Spill](#)

On the anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon explosion, the worst fears about the long-term damage from the oil spill have not been realized. But the big challenge is more fundamental: repairing the harm from the dams, levees, and canals that are devastating the Mississippi Delta and the Louisiana coast.

[Tepco Must End 'Whack-a-Mole,' Cover Fukushima Reactors as Typhoons Loom](#)

Tokyo Electric Power Co. must speed up plans to cover reactors at its crippled nuclear plant and drain tainted water to prevent more radiation leaks as Japan's cyclone season approaches, engineering professors said.

In 2004, eight cyclones passed over or skirted Japan's Tohoku region, where the Fukushima Dai-Ichi power station is spewing radiation after an earthquake and tsunami on March 11. The earliest was in May that year, according to Japan's weather agency data. The eyes of two storms passed within 300 kilometers of Tohoku last year, the data show.

[UN chief: More nuclear accidents are likely](#)

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) - The world must prepare for more nuclear accidents on the scale of Chernobyl and Japan's Fukushima Dai-ichi plant, the U.N. chief warned Wednesday, saying that grim reality will demand sharp improvements in international cooperation, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and others portrayed the growth of nuclear power plants as inevitable in an energy-hungry world as they spoke at a Kiev conference commemorating the explosion of a reactor at Ukraine's Chernobyl nuclear reactor 25 years ago.

[Out of Disaster, a Burst of Enthusiasm for Bicycling](#)

Mr.Kobayashi is director of the Bicycle Usage Promotion Study Group, a nonprofit organization that promotes usage of bicycles in Tokyo. Since March 11, when an earthquake devastated northern Japan and rattled the Tokyo metropolitan area, the streets of Suginami ward, where he lives, have teemed with wobbly bikers pedaling their way to work.

“The increase was sudden and visible,” he said during an interview.

[US hi-tech energy unit extends life in budget deal](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A high-tech U.S. research agency will get \$130 million for programs that could one day decrease the cost of solar power and lessen dependence on rare earth metals used for alternative energy, the U.S. energy secretary said.

The funding, which partially came from this month's federal budget deal, will go to five new programs at the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, or Arpa-E.

[Ray LaHood: An energy-secure system must be a priority](#)

Every time gas prices rise, families and businesses feel the pinch. Outraged politicians habitually respond with a lot of talk, but little action. When nothing gets done, the people they serve still are stuck with the bill. During my three decades in Washington — as a staffer, as a Congressman, as part of President Obama's cabinet — I have watched it happen over and over again.

Today, however, the cost of standing pat is greater than ever. Our economy is just beginning to generate growth and create jobs after the worst recession in memory. And sustained increases in oil prices could end up not only hitting families in their pocketbooks but also setting back our economic recovery.

[The truth about American exceptionalism](#)

Indeed, to me there are two American exceptionalisms. One is the exceptionally favorable circumstances the United States found itself in at its founding and over its first

200 years. The second is the exceptional way in which we have squandered those advantages, in the process creating a value system singularly antagonistic to the changes needed when those advantages disappeared.

Americans did not become rich because of our rugged individualism or entrepreneurial drive or technical inventiveness. We were born rich. Ann Richards' famous description of George Bush Sr. as an individual is equally applicable to the United States as a whole, "He was born on third base and thinks he hit a triple."

[Sharon Astyk: The sustainable marriage](#)

I get emails more or less constantly on this subject: "I want to prepare for peak oil/live more sustainably/change my life to deal with climate change and my spouse (and/or the rest of my family) don't want to, or don't think it is important enough."

This is something I've heard over and over - marriages struggling when partners have different ideas about what the right thing to do is. I've known several that have broken up over this issue, and a couple of others that are teetering on the brink.

[Lester R. Brown: Let No Man Say It Cannot Be Done](#)

We need an economy for the twenty-first century, one that is in sync with the earth and its natural support systems, not one that is destroying them. The fossil fuel-based, automobile-centered, throwaway economy that evolved in western industrial societies is no longer a viable model—not for the countries that shaped it or for those that are emulating them. In short, we need to build a new economy, one powered with carbon-free sources of energy—wind, solar, and geothermal—one that has a diversified transport system and that reuses and recycles everything. We can change course and move onto a path of sustainable progress, but it will take a massive mobilization—at wartime speed.

[Research and Markets: Energy for a Sustainable World: From the Oil Age to a Sun-Powered Future Gives an Extensive Overview on Nuclear Energy Among Others](#)

DUBLIN--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Research and Markets has announced the addition of John Wiley and Sons Ltd's new book "Energy for a Sustainable World: From the Oil Age to a Sun-Powered Future" to their offering.

An easy read, balancing the pros and cons, this book surveys the energy issue from a broad scientific perspective while considering environmental, economic, and social factors. It explains the basic concepts, provides a historical overview of energy resources, assesses our unsustainable energy system based on fossil fuels, and shows that the energy crisis is not only a tough challenge, but also an unprecedented opportunity to become more concerned about the world in which we live and the society we have built up.

[Special Report: China set to unearth shale power](#)

(Reuters) - China has spent tens of billions of dollars buying into energy resources from Africa to Latin America to slake the unquenched thirst for fuel from its growing industry and burgeoning cities.

But China may have more energy riches under its own soil than policy makers in the world's second-largest economy ever dared imagine.

Just over a year ago, Beijing awakened to a technology revolution that has unlocked massive reserves of gas trapped within shale rock formations in the United States.

[Arab gas guzzling threatens global energy balance](#)

NEW YORK/DUBAI — Middle Eastern demand for its own oil could be a bigger threat to the global energy balance than unrest in the region — at least long term. Rising demand at home threatens to limit Saudi Arabia's key role as the world's swing producer and could spell structurally higher prices for global markets.

A Saudi official this month expressed unusual public concern about the nation's energy use. Oil consumption, boosted by car use and air conditioning, has risen by half in the past decade to an estimated 2.7 million barrels per day (bpd) this year. Saudi Aramco, the national oil group, reckons demand could reach 8.3 million bpd by 2030.

Currently, after exports and domestic consumption, Saudi has spare capacity estimated at 2.8 million bpd — a crucial buffer amounting to about 3 percent of global oil consumption. Aramco's forecast suggests that could be fully absorbed by domestic demand this side of 2025.

[Belarus economy appears to unravel in wake of terror attack, crackdown](#)

A week after a powerful bomb killed 13 people in a Minsk subway station, and President Alexander Lukashenko warned of stiff punishment for anyone who spreads "panic," Belarus's state-guided economy appears to be unraveling. Now, worried Belarussians are emptying shop shelves of durable goods and line up outside banks in hopes of converting their rubles into dollars or euros.

[U.S. fears Cuba oil drilling, Mexico suggests talks](#)

(Reuters) - A top U.S. official said on Thursday they were concerned about Cuba opening its offshore waters to oil drilling, while Mexico, which has a boundary dispute with the island nation, said the three countries should try to work out differences.

"For us it is an issue of concern," said U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar about drilling in Cuban waters. "Obviously, because it's located 60 miles off the coast of Florida ... it's

an issue that we're monitoring carefully."

In light of the BP Plc oil spill nearly a year ago, the U.S. is now worried that Cuba is unable to ensure its offshore drilling will be safe. Lax U.S. government oversight was faulted in the BP disaster.

[First LNG super tanker docks in England](#)

(Reuters) - One of the world's largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) tankers docked at Isle of Grain terminal on Wednesday for the first time, terminal operator National Grid and importer Centrica said.

Qatar's Bu Samra, which can carry 265,000 cubic metres of LNG, is the first Q-Max tanker to arrive at the terminal in Kent since a new jetty allowed them to dock in December 2010.

[Russia woos gas buyers on Balkan tour](#)

OHRID, Macedonia—Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is in Macedonia, and invited the tiny Balkan country to consider joining in the proposed South Stream gas pipeline project.

[Exclusive: Gaddafi's Libya dodges fuel sanctions via Tunisia](#)

(Reuters) - Muammar Gaddafi's government is circumventing international sanctions to import gasoline to western Libya by using intermediaries who transfer the fuel between ships in Tunisia.

One intermediary company, Hong Kong-based Champlink, previously unknown to the oil trading community, has sought a transaction for fuel delivery into Libya, and European oil traders said they had been approached by other such firms.

[Ecuador says oil firms to invest \\$450 mln in 2011](#)

(Reuters) - Private oil companies will invest \$450 million in Ecuador in 2011, the OPEC member's Oil Minister Wilson Pastor said in a radio interview on Wednesday.

The South American country has total annual crude output of around 470,000 barrels per day, making it the smallest producing member of OPEC.

[Is it unfair to tar all oil drillers with the same brush?](#)

Is the industry suggesting that it should go back to work without a reliable blowout preventer? Interestingly, the answer is yes. Gary Luquette, Chevron's president for North America exploration and production, has said he hopes the report on the Macondo blowout preventer doesn't halt the permitting process. He says "the best way to deal with a blowout is never to have one." Well, that's certainly true. ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson suggests that Macondo was a mere black swan event, by which he suggests let's get back to work. But he seems also to get the definition a bit turned around -- if we've learned anything in recent years, it's that black swan means a high impact occurrence that, though highly unexpected and improbable, can and does happen with devastating impact.

[US oilman accused of bribing Jordan official to win contract](#)

A member of Jordan's royal family is accusing an American oilman and former GOP fundraiser of bribing the Jordanian government to facilitate his fuel shipments through the country to U.S. forces in Iraq.

[Japan's energy crisis: What crisis?](#)

As an example of excess, the famously luxurious Japanese toilet with sprays and dryers accounts for an amazing 4% of household-energy use, according to the trade ministry. Yet even the prime minister's office has not yet turned them off. Avoiding microwaves, irons, hairdryers and other appliances at peak times could shave 1.4GW off demand, according to the Institute of Energy Economics.

[Chile faces up to its energy crisis](#)

According to some estimates, the world now consumes four times as much energy as it did four decades ago. And there are experts that warn this demand could triple in the next 40 years. It is no surprise then than some regions of the world are experiencing an energy crisis as they struggle to accommodate this rising demand.

Chile is no exception. According to a rationing decree published by President Sebastian Pinera, Chile's Central Interconnection System, or SIC as it is commonly known, is struggling to cope with demand in three central regions of the South American country.

[Cars in Nepal line up for scarce fuel in shortage](#)

KATMANDU, Nepal - A fuel shortage in Nepal's capital has forced cars, trucks and buses to line up for rationed gasoline and diesel. The country's latest energy crisis comes after the state-owned importer failed to pay its Indian supplier.

Few stations in Katmandu had any fuel to sell Tuesday. Those that were open limited sales to between about 1 and 5 gallons (5 and 20 liters) per customer.

[Energy crisis: Ministry backtracks on offshore LNG terminal](#)

ISLAMABAD: A month after the government announced its support for an offshore import terminal for liquefied natural gas, the newly appointed Adviser to Prime Minister on Petroleum Senator Asim Hussain on Monday ruled out gas import through a deep sea terminal.

[Power consumption limit eased in Tajikistan](#)

The regime of power supply in Tajikistan which was toughened about a month ago has been eased due to rising water levels in the Vakhsh River.

[Generating the Unlikeliest of Heroes](#)

DOHA, QATAR — Persuading the Indian immigration authorities to grant entry visas to illiterate African grandmothers who claim to be trainee solar engineers is no easy task.

Yet, Sanjit Bunker Roy, an Indian educator, has, since 2005, succeeded in bringing 140 such women to the Barefoot College, a school he founded in 1972 in Tilonia, a village in Rajasthan State, about 95 kilometers, or 60 miles, from the state capital, Jaipur.

[A provocative work of social science fiction](#)

LOUTH'S Riverhead Theatre embraces the dark side of comedy on Wednesday, April 27.

Dean Gibbons And The Knowledge Of Death is based on claims of evolutionary psychology and is set amidst the twin threats of peak oil production and climate change.

[Beautiful Photos of a Community Tackling Peak Oil](#)

When Al Jazeera did a feature on Transition Town Totnes, they showed the world a town that was taking on peak oil and climate change through community action. But for a slightly more off beat, surreal view of this initiative, check out photojournalist Ed Thompson's visual essay on Transition Town Totnes. From owls on railway station platforms through allotment gardens to solar panels on roofs, there are some beautiful and often unexpected shots.

[The Peak Oil Crisis: Killing Off the Recovery](#)

Since the middle of February oil prices have increased by some \$22 a barrel. As the U.S. currently consumes just over 19 million barrels of oil a day, that means collectively we

are now spending about \$420 million a day more filling up our fuel tanks than we were two months ago.

Now some of us are wealthy enough to absorb this increased expenditure without a second thought, and some just tuck the added cost away on their credit card statements in hopes there will come a day when they can afford to pay it off. For most however, these higher fuel costs, and of course the higher food and nearly-everything-else bills that go with it, are being covered by foregoing other expenditures that are not an essential part of our lives.

[Why the world oil supply decline will be faster than anyone expects](#)

The man who invented peak oil, M. King Hubbert, got a few things wrong. Indeed, he was too optimistic.

The Oil Drum's Gail Tverberg pointed out some problems with the Hubbert Curve in a presentation this week at the 3rd Biophysical Economics Conference.

[Insight: A 'Peak Oil' sceptic?](#)

I am somewhat sceptical about 'Peak Oil', specifically the notion that there will be a supply-side peak in oil production in this current decade.

[Those Wild And Crazy Peak Oil Contingencies And Indicators](#)

Spiking oil prices are a walk in the park compared to what America's Joe Six Packs will be smacked with if Peak Oil turns out to be real. Tune in here for a sneak preview.

[The Oil Weapon is Wielded](#)

The final possibility is that the Saudis are using oil as a weapon. They've done this before. One of the more interesting theories about the cold war is that it wasn't Ronald Regan, Margaret Thatcher, or John Paul II that defeated the Soviet Empire. It was Saudi Arabia! Check out the chart below and you'll see what we mean.

[Dubai considers exporting LNG](#)

Two years after receiving its first imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG), Dubai may seek to develop export capacity so it can become a trading and transportcentre for the fuel.

[Many Hit by Spill Now Feel Caught in Claim Process](#)

BAYOU LA BATRE, Ala. — By October, Tim Nguyen found that his work in a Mississippi shipyard was no longer paying the bills. His hours had been cut back, part of the general ebb of work along the Gulf Coast after the terrible summer of BP.

Mr. Nguyen went to an office of the Gulf Coast Claims Facility, which was set up to administer BP's \$20 billion fund for coastal businesses and residents.

He was told he could not file a claim. A law firm he had never heard of had already filed one in his name.

[UK's first urban cable car to start work in summer, but how green will it be?](#)

The mayor of London has announced work will start shortly on what is being hailed as the UK's first urban cable car. But despite claims that the system will boast green credentials, the scale of the project's potential carbon emissions savings remains unclear.

[Program targets energy-hog homes in Nashville](#)

Keith and Camilla Spadafino have an attractive 1940s Inglewood home with energy-efficient windows and a colorful garden, but they've learned a secret side of their house — for free.

[Russia Builds An Arctic Brigade](#)

With the growing oil and natural gas discoveries along Russia's northern border, the government has ordered the formation of a special brigade of arctic troops to patrol the vast region, and be ready to deal with any problems that might require military force up there. The 8,000 troops in the Arctic Brigade will be stationed in the Kola Peninsula, near the borders with Finland and Norway. The Kola Peninsula has long contained key air, naval and army bases. The new brigade will be ready for duty by the end of the year.

[Kenya, Uganda protest as maize prices skyrocket](#)

Food prices are rising across the globe, driven in part by the higher transport costs that accompany rising oil prices. The World Bank said last week that food prices are 36 percent higher today than a year ago, and are pushing people "deeper into poverty."

But no region has been hit harder by rising food costs than Africa over the last three months. Wheat costs 87 percent more in Sudan. Rice is up 30 percent in Chad. Maize has risen at least 25 percent in Uganda, Somalia, Mozambique and Kenya.

[Oil up above \\$109 on signs of strong US demand](#)

Oil prices rose above \$109 a barrel Wednesday after a report showed U.S. gasoline supplies fell for a second week, suggesting higher fuel costs haven't yet curbed demand.

A weaker dollar — which makes oil cheaper for investors holding other currencies — and rising equity markets in Asia and Europe also helped boost oil markets.

[Jeff Rubin: When will we see demand destruction for oil?](#)

How high must oil prices go before they start killing the very demand that feeds them?

Everybody from the International Monetary Fund to the International Energy Agency (IEA) is warning of dire economic consequences if today's triple digit oil prices persist.

Curiously though, the IEA, which is warning of a potential global recession due to today's oil prices, is also predicting an almost a one-and-a-half-million-barrel-a-day increase in world demand this year. And judging by their recent track record, this forecast, like the one it made early last year for 2010, will once again be on the light side.

[Blame High Oil Prices on Speculators and Bernanke](#)

Americans think they know whom to blame for high gas prices. The usual culprits are people who drive too fast, inefficient engines, OPEC, and even China. Sure, those are all factors, but that's like blaming the housing bubble on the lumber industry or a surfeit of carpenters. It's no great mystery who is responsible for higher gas prices. As I and others have written in the past, the biggest culprits are the speculators gaming the futures markets to line their own pockets. We know all that. What might come as a shock is that they are being enabled by the Federal Reserve.

[Ukraine asks Russia to switch to rubles in gas payments](#)

Ukraine has asked Russia to switch to rubles for payments for energy products supplied to the ex-Soviet republic, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday.

"The ruble is getting increasingly stronger in former Soviet republics. Today our Ukrainian partners are requesting us to switch to settlements in rubles for energy products," Putin said in his annual address to parliament.

[Vladimir Putin reveals plan to boost Russia birth rate](#)

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has unveiled plans to reverse Russia's declining population.

The government will spend 1.5tn roubles (\$53bn; £33bn) on raising the birth rate and extending life expectancy.

[NATO Sees Limit to Airstrikes' Power to Stop Qaddafi Forces](#)

A NATO commander said “there is a limit” to the alliance’s ability to stop the Libyan regime’s shelling of Misrata, as the U.K. sent a team of military advisers to assist rebels fighting to end Muammar Qaddafi’s 42- year rule.

[Libyan Rebels Hail U.K. Military Help as NATO Air Campaign Meets Obstacles](#)

Libyan rebels struggling to topple Muammar Qaddafi’s 42-year-old regime welcomed the U.K.’s decision to send military advisers to help them gain an edge in their fight as NATO’s air campaign remains beset by limitations.

The British government said yesterday it’s sending officers to assist the rebels’ communications and logistics. France will also send military advisers to Libya, the BBC reported, without saying where it got the information. French President Nicolas Sarkozy meets today in Paris with Mustafa Abdel Jalil, head of Libya’s Interim Transitional National Council.

[In new Yemen clashes, attackers kill 1 protester](#)

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — A Yemeni opposition activist says a gunmen on motorcycles opened fire at hundreds of demonstrators camped out overnight in a western port city, killing one and wounding several protesters.

[Syrian authorities arrest opposition figure](#)

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian rights activists say authorities have arrested a leftist opposition figure at his home during an overnight raid.

Mahmoud Issa’s arrest in the central city of Homs came a few hours after the government on Tuesday announced an end to nearly 50 years of emergency rule. The reviled legislature gave the regime a free hand to arrest people without any charges.

[Syria's Cabinet Endorses Draft Decree to Lift 48-Year-Old Emergency Law](#)

Syria’s Cabinet endorsed a draft decree to lift a 48-year-old emergency law, the main demand of protesters challenging President Bashar al-Assad’s rule.

[Can tech make a dirty fuel clean?](#)

Fort McMurray, Alberta (CNN) -- This is Drew Zieglansberger's dirty little secret: a huge metal tube that's filled with a roaring natural-gas flame.

"Here's the big culprit," Zieglansberger said, yelling over the squeal of the industrial process, which is used to melt oil out of the ground here in northern Canada. "We're burning natural gas to get out something like bitumen (oil). We know that, but I wanted to show you anyway. It's a massive amount of energy we use to create the steam."

[Oil 'matriarch' takes trouble in stride](#)

Fort McMurray, Alberta (CNN) -- Mayor Melissa Blake's favorite spot in this oil sands boomtown used to be an island at the convergence of two rivers.

From the intersection of the Clearwater and Athabasca, the 41-year-old, third-term mayor could peer into two worlds: the "burgeoning metropolis" of Fort McMurray, which has grown at a breakneck pace since oil companies started mining for crude up here in the late 1960s, and Canada's boggy forests of pine, birch and spruce.

"Now it's a golf course hole," Blake said.

[The BP Oil Spill, One Year On: Forgetting the Lessons of Drilling in the Gulf](#)

It took just a couple of days for Admiral Thad Allen to realize how disastrous the well blowout at the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig would prove to be. On April 20 last year, the well being drilled by the BP-owned rig suddenly kicked back, spurting oil and gas up the drilling pipe and setting the Deepwater Horizon aflame in the Gulf of Mexico. Crew ran for the lifeboats and even leaped into the fiery waters of the Gulf; 11 of them would die. By the time Coast Guard rescue boats arrived on the scene, the \$560 million drilling rig already appeared unsalvageable, and on April 22 the Deepwater Horizon sank. "We did not know then the full impact of the spill or the results, but we knew then it would be a catastrophic event," Allen told TIME.

[A Conversation with Thad Allen, the Hero of the Gulf](#)

Thad Allen was just a few weeks away from retiring as the commandant of the Coast Guard when the Deepwater Horizon exploded on April 20, 2010, beginning the worst oil spill in U.S. history. Allen — who had also run much of the response to Hurricane Katrina — was later made national incident commander of the Unified Command for the oil spill. That title meant he was in charge of the often unruly government-industry team charged with shutting the blown well and marshalling defenses against the oil. Now retired and a senior fellow at the Rand Corp., Allen spoke to TIME's Bryan Walsh about the blowout, BP's schizophrenia and the future of offshore drilling.

[Day of remembrance: 1 year after Gulf oil disaster](#)

NEW ORLEANS – Relatives of some of the 11 men who died aboard the Deepwater Horizon oil rig are flying over the Gulf of Mexico on Wednesday, back to the epicenter of the worst offshore oil spill in the nation's history.

Meanwhile, on land, vigils were scheduled in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida to mark the spill.

[Obama vows to restore Gulf Coast one year after spill](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) – President Barack Obama on Wednesday vowed to do "whatever is necessary" to restore the Gulf Coast on the anniversary of the BP rig explosion, which caused the worst maritime oil spill in US history.

"The events that unfolded on April 20, 2010 and the oil spill that followed underscores the critical link between the environment and economic health of the Gulf," Obama said in a statement.

"My administration is committed to doing whatever is necessary to protect and restore the Gulf Coast."

[U.S. says it will strengthen offshore drilling rules](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – The U.S. Department of the Interior will propose new rules to strengthen offshore oil drilling safety, the top offshore regulator said on Tuesday.

[BP chairman: deep-sea drilling must go on](#)

The chairman of BP has told a Swedish newspaper that the oil giant never considered abandoning deep-sea drilling after the disastrous oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico last year.

Carl-Henric Svanberg says despite the risks of such operations, halting them "doesn't feel like a logical conclusion" after the Deepwater Horizon blowout because "50,000 holes have been drilled in the Gulf of Mexico and this was the first time things went this wrong."

[AP IMPACT: 3,200 Gulf wells unplugged, unprotected](#)

More than 3,200 oil and gas wells classified as active lie abandoned beneath the Gulf of Mexico, with no cement plugging to help prevent leaks that could threaten the same waters fouled by last year's BP spill, The Associated Press has learned.

[Fishermen in battle for BP oil spill compensation](#)

VENICE, Louisiana (AFP) – The calls for more documents came day and night to the seafood dock just up the road from one of BP's main staging areas in its fight against the Gulf oil spill.

Some 400 pages of tax records and invoices later, the Vietnamese refugees who have been buying seafood from local fishing boats for 22 years got a letter saying their claim for compensation was denied.

[BP oil spill fund administrator defends his work](#)

Kenneth Feinberg says the Gulf Coast Claims Facility has paid out \$3.8 billion of a \$20-billion fund and is 'doing what's intended.' Residents say the process has been slow, baffling and unfair.

[EU plans to hammer oil giants for coastal pollution: source](#)

BRUSSELS (AFP) – EU energy commissioner Guenther Oettinger is preparing legislation to force oil-drilling companies to pay for pollution caused up to 200 nautical miles off European coastlines, a source said Tuesday.

[Pa. wants to end gas-drilling wastewater discharge](#)

HARRISBURG, Pa. – Amid criticism from environmentalists and growing concern from scientists, Pennsylvania on Tuesday asked the state's booming natural gas industry to halt disposing of millions of gallons of contaminated drilling wastewater through treatment plants that discharge into rivers and streams.

[Japan mulls limited access to zone near nuke plant](#)

TOKYO (AP) – Authorities may for the first time ban access to the evacuation zone around Japan's crippled nuclear plant, citing concerns Wednesday over radiation risks for residents who may be returning to check on their homes.

[Tepco to Start Compensating Evacuees From Near Stricken Nuclear Reactors](#)

Tokyo Electric Power Co. said it will start compensating residents evacuated from areas around its crippled nuclear power station, as the government pledged support for the company's aid plans.

Tepco, as the company is called, will begin distributing claim forms today and payments will be made as soon as possible, spokesman Tetsuya Terasawa said at a briefing in

Tokyo. Initial compensation totaling about 50 billion yen (\$602 million) was promised by the utility last week.

[U.S. Engineers Cite Lengthy Cleanup in Japan](#)

Veterans of the Three Mile Island cleanup said that a much larger task faced the Japanese engineers who are trying contain and secure the damaged Fukushima Daiichi reactors. And Three Mile Island took 14 years.

[IAEA chief defends nuclear energy](#)

(AP) CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR POWER PLANT, Ukraine (AP) — The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, speaking at the site of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion, says that accident and the Japanese nuclear crisis do not undermine the value of nuclear power.

[Czechs Wedded to Nuclear Boost Utility CEZ as Germany's Atomic Age Wanes](#)

Some couples dream of a sunset wedding on a beach. Jana Sistikova and Antonin Pazdera exchanged their vows at a nuclear power station's visitor center near the Czech Republic's border with Germany.

As the wedding party filed past the four giant concrete cooling towers of the Temelin atomic plant on a cold April day, the newlyweds applauded CEZ AS's plans to start building two more reactors at the site.

[AP IMPACT: Asia nuclear reactors face tsunami risk](#)

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — The skeleton of what will soon be one of the world's biggest nuclear plants is slowly taking shape along China's southeastern coast — right on the doorstep of Hong Kong's bustling metropolis. Three other facilities nearby are up and running or under construction.

Like Japan's Fukushima Dai-ichi plant they lie within a few hundred miles of the type of fault known to unleash the largest tsunami-spawning earthquakes.

[Radiation: A Literary Analysis](#)

Nevada is home to the largest nuclear bomb test site, and the proposed host for a nuclear waste repository. The scientists and engineers, the corporate executives, the lawyers and the elected officials have all had years to chew over how and why Nevada was selected, but now comes a new analysis, from an English major.

“Bombast: Spinning Atoms in the Desert,” published late last year by a nonprofit group in Reno, the Black Rock Institute, is a trip through what the author, Michon Mackedon, calls “nuclear colonialism.”

[EDF Advances After France Sets Nuclear Power Price at Level Utility Wanted](#)

Electricite de France SA shares jumped after the French government matched the price requested by the utility for the sale of its nuclear power to competitors.

[Study Emphasizes Importance of China's Transition to Electric Cars](#)

A STUDY prepared for the World Bank Transport Office in Beijing released today makes clear the urgency of China's transition to electric cars. According to “The China New Vehicles Program: Challenges and Opportunities,” prepared by PRTM, a management consulting firm, China's soaring consumption of imported oil could stifle the country's economy, while emissions from petroleum-powered vehicles could choke its cities with air pollution.

[Chevron builds solar plant at NM tailings site](#)

A subsidiary of oil giant Chevron Corp. and a sister company announced Tuesday they have completed one of the largest concentrating photovoltaic solar power plants in the nation at a tailings site in northern New Mexico.

[Solar on the Water](#)

PETALUMA, Calif. — Solar panels have sprouted on countless rooftops, carports and fields in Northern California. Now, several start-up companies see potential for solar panels that float on water.

[A 'Smart' Grid Will Expose Utilities to Smart Computer Hackers](#)

A year ago, an unidentified computer intruder tried to penetrate the Lower Colorado River Authority's power generation network with 4,800 high-speed log-in attempts that originated at an Internet address in China, according to a grid official's confidential memo that was leaked to the media.

And that was probably just an amateur's work, says David Bonvillain, vice president of Accuvant LABS, a cybersecurity consulting firm based in Hanover, Md.

[Programs aim to keep elderly from being isolated after their driving days end](#)

A wave of Americans face the end of their driving lives and communities around the USA are working to keep seniors mobile and avoid depression-inducing isolation that often accompanies the end of driving.

[Builders offer green tract homes with nearly zero utility bills](#)

To stand out in a still-sluggish housing market, major builders are starting to sell affordable tract homes that come with solar panels and nearly zero utility bills.

[10 best green buildings? Architects pick 2011 winners](#)

Buildings that conserve water and energy and use recycled, non-toxic materials don't have to look like boring boxes. To see jaw-dropping possibilities, check out the American Institute of Architects 2011 winners for sustainable architecture.

[Just how green is your city?](#)

If you want to know how green your city is, just look at your trash area. Is there one lonely can? Or are there multiple, colorful bins for different types of waste?

[Volunteer gardeners share their bounty with food banks](#)

The community garden takes up about an acre along Route 50. People get the gardening space for free. In return, Carroll requests they donate part of what they grow to a food bank and that they use organic methods.

"Last year, we donated more than 500 pounds of vegetables to the local charities," Carroll says. "We'll be able to donate much more this year. One of the gardeners has a neighbor whose parents lost their jobs. She takes food to them."

[A City Feels Spurned as EPA Heads to the Suburbs](#)

Earlier this month, the administration signed a lease to move more than 500 of the EPA regional office's employees to the Applebee's building, which was emptied out and sold after the company changed hands.

That plan has rankled the government of Kansas City, which is losing a major employer, as well as advocates of "smart growth," who argue that EPA isn't practicing what it preaches.

[EPA Scores 100 Percent On Sustainability And Energy Goals](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has released its fiscal year 2010 scorecard on sustainability and energy performance. EPA is meeting or exceeding all the federal goals to decrease energy use per square foot; reduce potable water use per square foot; lessen fleet petroleum use; establish inventories of direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions; incorporate sustainable building practices; and increase renewable energy use.

[U.S. Supreme Court Signals Rejection of State Climate-Emissions Lawsuits](#)

The U.S. Supreme Court signaled skepticism about a lawsuit by six states seeking to force five companies including American Electric Power Co. to cut their emissions of the gases that contribute to climate change.

[Rising sea levels trigger disasters in China - Xinhua](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - Gradually rising sea levels caused by global warming over the past 30 years have contributed to a growing number of disasters along China's coast, state news agency Xinhua said on Wednesday.



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