



Drumbeat: June 1, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on June 1, 2011 - 10:34am

[Scary signs for jobs](#)

A variety of one-time factors, including high oil prices earlier this year, Japan's earthquake and nuclear crisis, and severe weather including flooding and tornadoes in the South, have all taken their toll on American employers.

Add government layoffs to the mix, and the picture looks even worse. As federal stimulus dollars have petered out, state and local governments have cut jobs for six months straight.

That said, economists were still not expecting this much weakness.

[Oil Falls the Most in Three Weeks on Report That U.S. Employers Cut Hiring](#)

Crude oil dropped the most in three weeks after data showed that U.S. companies added fewer jobs than forecast last month and the expansion of manufacturing slowed, bolstering concern fuel demand growth will weaken.

[Higher oil price prompts increased drilling](#)

Higher-than-expected oil and gas drilling activity in western Canada led the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors Wednesday to increase its forecast for the total number of wells to be drilled in 2011.

It now expects the total to be 13,128, an increase of some 1,300, or 11 per cent over the 11,811 wells it anticipated in its project released in October.

[Philippines protests to China over oil rig plan](#)

The Philippines said Wednesday it had formally protested to Beijing over recent activity in disputed waters of the South China Sea and Chinese plans to anchor an oil rig there.

[Venezuela will keep sending oil to the United States](#)

The Minister of Energy and Petroleum of Venezuela, Rafael Ramirez, said today that his country will continue to send the 1.2 million barrels daily sold to the United States after that country announced sanctions against the Venezuelan state oil company (PDVSA).

"We are serious and we will continue sending this quantity, but the question is: Are they going to do damage to us with their measures to be able to guarantee the shipment of oil? It's something that we are going to determine, the Venezuelans and not the Americans," Ramirez said in a televised speech.

[Hopes fade for peaceful Arab transition to democracy](#)

Nearly four months ago, longtime Egyptian strongman Hosni Mubarak finally yielded to political reality and stepped down from power. Mubarak's fall -- coming on the heels of the ouster of neighboring Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali -- was seen by many as part of a domino effect.

The Arab world, it seemed, was finally on the brink of a peaceful democratic transition that had eluded the troubled region for generations.

Today, however, the promise of a peaceful Arab Spring appears to be yielding to the reality of a long, violent summer as dictators across the Middle East and North Africa draw a line in the sand and fight to maintain control of their countries.

[Breaking down Middle East and North Africa unrest, country by country](#)

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa have been swept up in protests against longtime rulers since the January revolt that ousted Tunisian strongman Zine El Abedine Ben Ali. In many cases, these demonstrations and movements have been met with brute force and escalated into seemingly unending violence.

We take a look at what's next for the 'Arab Spring' and look at the latest developments from each country and information on the roots of the unrest.

[Report: Syrian abuses could be 'crimes against humanity'](#)

(CNN) -- The Syrian regime has carried out a "systematic" series of abuses against protesters that could "qualify as crimes against humanity," and the United Nations must hold the government accountable, a leading humanitarian watchdog organization said Wednesday.

Human Rights Watch makes these assertions in a report titled "'We've Never Seen Such Horror': Crimes against Humanity in Daraa."

[Source: Missiles strike at Yemeni defectors' compound](#)

Sanaa, Yemen (CNN) -- Four missiles struck a compound where generals who defected from the Yemeni regime were meeting, a spokesman for the defected generals said Wednesday.

[U.N. atomic watchdog seen raising pressure on Iran](#)

(Reuters) - The U.N. atomic agency is voicing growing concern about possible military aspects of Iran's nuclear programme and Western envoys believe it may firm up its suspicions later this year, adding to pressure on Tehran.

[Farm boom missing Main Street](#)

Most farmers no longer buy cars, clothes and farm equipment in towns near them, local bankers and rural economists say. Most young people who leave for college don't move back. Like most small towns across the Midwest, Guthrie Center's population — 1,569 according to Census figures — is shrinking and getting older.

[Your Commute Is Killing You](#)

This week, researchers at Umea University in Sweden released a startling finding: Couples in which one partner commutes for longer than 45 minutes are 40 percent likelier to divorce. The Swedes could not say why. Perhaps long-distance commuters tend to be poorer or less educated, both conditions that make divorce more common. Perhaps long transit times exacerbate corrosive marital inequalities, with one partner overburdened by child care and the other overburdened by work. But perhaps the Swedes are just telling us something we all already know, which is that commuting is bad for you. Awful, in fact.

[OPEC seen ignoring West's call to act](#)

(Reuters) - OPEC is unlikely to bow to western pressure to officially raise oil output at its meeting next week, with members instead expected to act independently of the group, a Reuters poll showed on Wednesday.

All 13 oil analysts and traders surveyed by Reuters predicted the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) would roll over its current output agreement, untouched since the group's record cut in December 2008.

"They will simply sit on the fence with oil back near \$100 barrel," said Harry Tchilinguirian, head of commodity markets strategy for BNP Paribas.

[A new golden age for fossil fuels? Huh?](#)

Natural gas is cheap and clean, but hardly the answer to our energy needs. It just buys us time.

[Special report: If Monterrey falls, Mexico falls](#)

MONTERREY, Mexico (Reuters) – Mario Ramos thought it was a bad joke when he received an anonymous email at the start of this year demanding \$15,000 a month to keep his industrial tubing business operating in Monterrey, Mexico's richest city and a symbol of progress in Latin America.

Sitting in his air-conditioned office looking across at sparkling office blocks dotting the mountains on that morning in January, he casually deleted the email as spam.

Six days later, the phone rang and a thickset voice demanded the money. Ramos panicked, hung up and drove to his in-laws' house. It was already late and he had little idea what to do. Then, just after midnight, masked gunmen burst onto his premises, set fire to one of his trucks, shot up his office windows and sprayed a nearby wall with the letter "Z" in black paint, the calling card of Mexico's feared Zetas drug cartel.

"They were asking for money I could never afford," said Ramos by telephone from San Antonio, Texas, where he fled with his family the next day. "I should have taken the threat more seriously, but it was such a shock. I couldn't quite believe this could happen in Monterrey."

[Iraq's Oil Export Revenue in May Increases to Most This Year](#)

Iraq, holder of the world's fifth- largest oil reserves, exported 2.23 million barrels of oil a day in May, with record revenue this year of \$7.4 billion, said Falah al-Amri, chairman of the State Oil Marketing Organization.

Iraq sold crude at an average price of \$108 a barrel last month, he said today in a telephone interview from Baghdad.

[Libya's oil chief Ghanem defects, now in Rome](#)

ROME (Reuters) - Libya's National Oil Corp head Shokri Ghanem said on Wednesday he had defected from Muammar Gaddafi's government but had not yet decided whether to join anti-Gaddafi rebels.

Speaking at a news conference in Rome organised by the Libyan ambassador, who has also defected, Ghanem said he had left his job because of the "unbearable" violence in Libya.

[Petrol shortage continues in Sharjah](#)

SHARJAH — Petrol shortage in some Sharjah fuel stations continued to worry motorists on Tuesday even as they sought an immediate solution to the problem.

Mohammed Ammar, who went to Enoc station in Muliha Road around 1pm on Monday, was told that no fuel was available. “My Tank is empty and I can’t drive around searching for a gas station. What should I do, and where should I go?” He asked.

[FACTBOX-Key political risks to watch in Zambia](#)

LUSAKA (Reuters) - Zambia, Africa's top copper producer, has enjoyed peace and stability compared with many countries in southern Africa but an election this year and a possible energy crisis is clouding its immediate outlook.

[Nigerians Want Jonathan To Tackle Power Supply](#)

Some civil servants in Abuja on Tuesday, called on President Goodluck Jonathan to fulfil his campaign promises by addressing electricity and unemployment problems in the country.

The civil servants who spoke with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) said that the President should endeavour to tackle the energy crisis, corruption and also effect the payment of the N18,000 minimum wage to workers.

[FACTBOX-Key political risks to watch in Tanzania](#)

DAR ES SALAAM (Reuters) - Tanzania is expected to unveil plans this month to tackle a chronic energy crisis and rein in inflation, while keeping an eye on political unrest in some parts of the country.

The east African country's 2011/12 budget reading is due on June 8. Concerns over an economic slowdown this year have prompted several parliamentary committees to reject pre-budget plans from a number of government ministries and demand more public investment in infrastructure projects.

[Energy Bills Put 'Fracking' On Different Tracks](#)

Two energy-related bills making their way through the legislature underscore the excitement and the anxiety that energy exploration engenders in this state.

Their official titles notwithstanding, one bill might well be called the Go Slow bill and the other the Hurry Up bill.

[Alpha's purchase of troubled Massey coal company gets OK](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Shareholders have approved coal producer Alpha Natural Resources' \$7.1 billion takeover of rival Massey Energy (MEE).

Massey sought buyers due to financial and regulatory problems following the April 2010 explosion that killed 29 miners at its Upper Big Branch mine in southern West Virginia.

[Haley Barbour to testify on Gulf oil spill at House hearing](#)

Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour (R) is slated to testify on Thursday at a House committee hearing examining the issues affecting residents of last year's Deepwater Horizon oil spill, which left 11 dead and leaked 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

[China slows its runaway high-speed rail expansion](#)

In his State of the Union Address in February, President Obama suggested that China was outpacing the United States in transportation technology. He cited China's development of high-speed rail as something the United States must emulate and called for \$53 billion in spending to create a U.S. network of high-speed rail lines.

But China has hit the brakes on its expansion in the past three months as critics question the value and safety of bullet trains, which have been expensive to build and maintain.

[Richard Heinberg: The China Bubble: Demographics: Old/Young, Rich/Poor, Urban/Rural](#)

China's older workers have largely been left behind in rural villages, or pushed from their urban homes into apartment blocks on cities' outskirts to make way for new apartments and office buildings occupied by younger urbanites and the companies hiring them. Age discrimination is a fact of life.

All of this will gradually change as China's work force ages. Within a generation, the average age of a Chinese worker will be higher than that of an American worker.[1] One of China's leaders' biggest fears, expressed repeatedly in public pronouncements, is that the nation will grow old before it grows rich (Japan, in contrast, got rich before it grew old).

To avoid this fate, China is trying to grow its economy as fast as possible now, while it still can.

[DECC model highlights inconvenient energy truths](#)

For those of us with an anorak in the closet, the government's new online energy planning tool, the 2050 Pathways Calculator, has provided hours of perplexing fun. The goal is to cut British climate emissions 80 percent by mid-century while keeping the lights on, through choices about levels of demand, modes of transport, generating technologies and so on. But this is no game.

The Department of Energy and Climate Change clearly intends us to confront the many uncomfortable trade-offs inherent in our energy predicament, but two conclusions in particular are inescapable and troubling.

[German nuclear phase-out is bad news for Britain](#)

When Europe's largest economy announces it is phasing out nuclear energy, the rest of the world has to pay attention. In what amounts to the biggest coup yet for the green lobby, Germany has said it will be nuclear free by 2022.

The news has sent shockwaves across the world, with sceptics questioning whether such an ambitious target is possible without widespread blackouts - and energy companies threatening legal action.

[Germany's denuclearization shot in Russia's arm](#)

Russian influence is the big gainer from Germany's decision to stop producing nuclear power. The losers are eastern and central European states including Lithuania, Poland and Hungary, and American influence.

[Offshore wind energy: The benefits and the barriers](#)

Clearly wind power cannot immediately replace the energy we still must generate from the oil and gas produced on the outer continental shelf. But America's unwillingness to clear the way for permitting a proven, commercially scalable, clean source of energy is a major black eye for a nation that purports to be a leader in technological development.

[Surrey pushes for alternative fuels](#)

VANCOUVER -The Surrey, B.C., city council passed a fuel initiative this week that requires all new service stations provide at least one alternative fuel source -- such as hydrogen, compressed natural gas, or electric recharging -- in addition to conventional gasoline, diesel and propane.

[Financing Renewables](#)

London, UK -- A swathe of natural disasters topped off by Japan's earthquake and tsunami will undoubtedly see insurance companies hike premiums in a bid to claw back cash after some big payouts, so Fraser McLachlan argues that developers will have to work harder still to cut costs in both Europe and further afield.

[Challenges to increasing U.S. vehicle fuel mileage](#)

As we enter the summer driving season and national gasoline prices approach \$4 per gallon, Americans again are placing more emphasis on mileage when considering a new car purchase.

In this column, we will discuss the impact the growth of renewable energy has had on national fuel mileage calculations. You may be surprised to learn that the increased consumption of ethanol could present a challenge to manufacturers.

[My expensive run-in with Zipcar's flawed damages rule: Zipcar's 'simple' rental rules have one big flaw: What happens when a car is damaged between reservations?](#)

I again wrote back immediately, and again received no response. Meanwhile, Zipcar charged our account for the \$750. It was taken from my friend's account immediately -- which was a debit card linked to her bank account.

A word of warning: If you use Zipcar, make sure your account uses a real credit card. That would have given my friend a chance to dispute the charge with her credit-card company, instead of having it unexpectedly vaporized from her checking account by Zipcar.

[ASPO-USA Asks: "What Are We Missing?" - Part 2](#)

There are so many challenges facing us as a result of Peak Oil and related issues that it is easy to miss something important. ASPO-USA asked more than 50 leaders on Peak Oil to share what they felt was the most critical issue we've all been missing, the thing every one of us should be talking about - but aren't. The answers were eye-opening, and have started a discussion that continues. This is the second in a three part series (first available here), in place of a traditional commentary, Peak Oil Review will run a range of perspectives on this issue - from geologists to food experts, from social critics to scientists - what are we missing? Where should we be putting more attention, more resources? All of us miss things - but between so many working minds, we have a better chance of covering the expansive ground that we have to address. We thank all of our contributors for expanding our vision!

[In the world, at the limits to growth](#)

We imagine this country is in crisis, yet crisis is relative. Most people in the world would envy our material austerity and be thankful for our endlessly 'collapsing' health service.

But with our expectations thwarted and in the anxiety of uncertainty, we are focussed inward. Yet we remain as deluded as ever.

[The Role of Religious Congregations in Promoting a Steady State Economy](#)

Proponents of a steady state economy could get a boost from religious congregations. Very thoughtful and insightful people are now writing about the urgent need to transition to a steady state economy. However, good ideas from deep thinkers in this day and age are often insufficient to overcome the power of entrenched lobbies such as the oil, timber, and mining industries, as well as those in the financial sector who specialize in offshore tax havens and dubious finance schemes of the kind portrayed in the Oscar-winning film *Inside Job*.

[As food prices spike again, aid agency warns cost of staples will double in 20 years](#)

AMSTERDAM — As food costs spike for the second time in three years, an international aid agency predicts the price of some staples such as corn will double in the next 20 years amid a permanent crisis caused by rising demand, flat crop yields and climate change.

The report by Oxfam released Tuesday said the demand for food will grow 70 to 90 percent by 2030, without factoring in the impact of climate change. Increasingly frequent droughts, floods and changes in agricultural patterns from global warming will add pressure to what the agency calls an already broken system.

“The food system is buckling under intense pressure from climate change, ecological degradation, population growth, rising energy prices, rising demand for meat and dairy products and competition for land for biofuels, industry and urbanization,” Oxfam said in its report, “Growing a Better Future.”

[Peak Oil, Peak Water, Peak Resources, Peak Planet: Building a Currency for the 21st Century](#)

The fascinating *Peak Planet* panel at the Aspen Environment Forum today brought out many examples of resources under stress, and areas where the human appetite and footprint – large and growing – is taking us into uncharted waters in terms of local and global environmental change.

[Oil Trades Near Three-Week High; MF Global Says \\$105 Possible](#)

Oil traded near the highest in three weeks on speculation shrinking U.S. crude supplies and Europe’s steps to stem its debt crisis will boost fuel demand.

Futures gained 2.1 percent yesterday and rose as much as 0.6 percent today as analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News predicted U.S. inventories dropped last week. EU leaders will decide on additional help for the Greek economy by the end of this month, according to Jean-Claude Juncker, head of the group of euro-area finance ministers. Prices may

rise to \$105 a barrel in “a few days”, MF Global Holdings Ltd. said today.

[Russia, Qatar Face Pressure to Scrap Gas Link to Oil Prices as Crude Jumps](#)

Russia and Qatar are under growing pressure from Europe’s biggest utilities to scrap a 40-year-old system that links natural-gas prices to oil after Brent crude’s 23 percent surge this year.

[Jeff Rubin: China, not U.S., key to global oil demand](#)

What’s more important to world oil demand - gasoline prices in the U.S. that are nearly \$4 a gallon, or power rationing in China?

To Americans, of course, it’s the former. But to world oil markets, the latter may be a far more significant indication of where oil prices will be heading this summer.

[Elusive Oil Will Boost Prices](#)

For my money, however, a lion's share of the price hikes involve fundamental changes in where and how we retrieve crude oil -- along with the manner in which those changes may expand. While I'm agnostic regarding scary thoughts about peak oil, we've clearly moved light years from the days when we could simply turn a drill bit to the right in West Texas or the shallow-water Gulf of Mexico and transport the resulting crude to the appropriate refinery.

But how things have changed! For instance, if you paid attention to *The Wall Street Journal* last week you have more than an inkling that the members of Big Oil are now being forced to head for many of the world's least hospitable places and fight challenging technological conditions for success in producing black gold. For instance, the Arabian Peninsula and other Middle East garden sports not long ago typically released a treasure trove of desirable light crude with very little coaxing. However, they're now testing the technological mettle of the major oil companies that seek to produce the "thick as molasses" heavy oil from the wells.

[Oil Prices: Oil Market Fundamentals vs. Speculation](#)

The question is what is the reality? The structure of the oil market is such that all producers outside Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) produce oil up to the maximum production capacity. OPEC is acknowledged to be the swing producer in the oil market. Therefore, the closer world oil demand reaches OPEC production capacity of around 32 MBD, probability of oil price increases become higher. It is at this time that the speculators enter into the market and push prices higher and make speculative profit. However, when there is excess production capacity in OPEC of more than 30 percent, price declines and eventually settles at the level that is defined

by market forces, or OPEC's price target . The decline is further re-enforced by speculative selling.

[Fizzy assets](#)

Let us return to that key narrative, or story, which enables a bubble to expand. The narrative can take various forms, ranging from a scare (the world is on a Malthusian path of peak oil or agricultural products) or a promise of salvation (the dollar and other fiat currencies are doomed, so only hard assets like gold will retain value) to a seductive, new era promise (the internet heralded a paradigm shift of immeasurable technological promise). Often, the hopes and dreams of the latter type of tale are based on an innovation, which cannot exactly promise how useful the new development will prove to be.

[James A. Baker III - Cut the red tape: Free up oil drilling in Alaska](#)

After months of oil rigs sitting idle in the Gulf of Mexico, when some producers left to drill in foreign waters, vital energy production there is finally resuming. Once again, federal regulators are approving necessary permits there — a good sign for the U.S. economy, American jobs and energy security.

But even more domestic offshore drilling will be required if our country is to increase its stable and secure energy. One reasonable place to accomplish that goal lies beneath the waters off of Alaska's northern shores. According to government estimates, that area holds approximately 27 billion barrels of oil, more than the individual petroleum resources of all but eight countries. It also contains 132 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, enough to supply the United States for six years. With our demand for oil and natural gas expected to increase during the coming decades, we cannot afford to leave that energy untapped. Responsibly developing Alaska's immense resources has the potential to mark a new chapter in America's energy future.

[Everything you've heard about fossil fuels may be wrong](#)

Are we living at the beginning of the Age of Fossil Fuels, not its final decades? The very thought goes against everything that politicians and the educated public have been taught to believe in the past generation. According to the conventional wisdom, the U.S. and other industrial nations must undertake a rapid and expensive transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy for three reasons: The imminent depletion of fossil fuels, national security and the danger of global warming.

What if the conventional wisdom about the energy future of America and the world has been completely wrong?

[Natural gas: Our savior or methadone for the masses?](#)

Shell oil executives didn't get any slack Tuesday at the Aspen Environment Forum despite being one of the major sponsors of the event.

In two separate sessions, serious questions were raised about the viability of using natural gas as a "bridge fuel" between more carbon-intensive fossil fuels and renewables – inadvertently putting Shell officials on the defensive.

[NY attorney general suing feds over gas drilling](#)

ALBANY, N.Y. – The federal government should conduct a full environmental review that weighs potential damage to the welfare of people in the Delaware River watershed and the drinking water quality for millions of New Yorkers before allowing natural gas drilling in the region, the state's attorney general said in a federal lawsuit filed Tuesday.

[Texas may soon make 'frack' chemicals public](#)

HOUSTON – Texas could soon become the first state to require drilling companies to publicly disclose the chemicals they use to crack tight rock formations in their search for natural gas.

Legislation approved Sunday night in the Texas House could prompt the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other states to make similar rules. The governor hasn't indicated whether he'll sign it.

[Mexico's Pemex sues US firms over fuel smuggling](#)

MEXICO CITY, June 1 (Reuters) - Mexico's state-run oil company Pemex is suing 11 U.S. companies for buying up to \$300 million of fuel stolen by drug gangs and smuggled across the U.S.-Mexico border, court documents showed.

[Centrica leaves key gas field idle](#)

Centrica has decided not to restart production in one of Britain's biggest gasfields because of increased taxes on energy companies.

[Gazprom: To Reach Pre-Crisis Output 2013, Sees Increase In 2014](#)

MOSCOW -(Dow Jones)- Russian state-controlled natural gas monopoly OAO Gazprom expects to reach its "pre-crisis production level" in 2013, for which it needs to put the Yamal field on-line in 2012, the company's Deputy Chief Executive Alexander Ananikov said Wednesday.

[China, Russia expect progress in gas co-op](#)

MOSCOW - China and Russia have signed an agreement in gas cooperation and expected further progress in this field, Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan said on Tuesday.

When meeting with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin after the seventh round of the Sino-Russian energy negotiators' meeting, Wang said China hopes the two sides could make further essential progress in gas talks as soon as possible.

[Russia FinMin says no gas tax hike for independents](#)

(Reuters) - Russian Finance Minister said on Wednesday that the state will not increase mineral extraction tax for independent gas producers, the government web site said.

[Gazprom says tax increase will hit output](#)

(Reuters) - Gazprom's output will decline if the Finance Ministry goes through with new proposals to increase its tax burden through a rise in output levies, the deputy chief executive of the Russian export monopoly said.

[Turkmenistan offers to boost gas exports to Russia](#)

Turkmenistan says it is willing to substantially increase the volume of natural gas exports to its traditional customer, Russia.

[Total sees Indonesia gas output falling 11 pct in 2012](#)

(Reuters) - Total said on Wednesday that its gas output from Indonesia is expected to fall 11 percent in 2012 to 2.119 billion cubic feet (bcf) per day.

[Marathon Oil buys Texas oil fields for \\$3.5B](#)

NEW YORK (AP) -- Marathon Oil will spend \$3.5 billion in cash to snap up oil and natural gas fields in Texas as the company boosts exploration and production in a highly targeted and energy rich region.

[Iraq Says Signed Contract With Kogas to Develop Akkas Field](#)

Iraq signed an agreement with Korea Gas Corp. (036460) to begin developing the Akkas natural-gas field, an Oil Ministry official said, ending seven months of delays in progress at one of the country's biggest deposits of the fuel.

[Shell back in Qatar in shift toward gas](#)

DOHA// A little more than a decade after quitting the Gulf state, Royal Dutch Shell is back in Qatar for the long haul.

The emirate that shares the world's largest gas deposit with Iran is a "new heartland" for Shell as the company shifts its operational focus ever more towards gas, said Peter Voser, the chief executive of Europe's biggest petroleum group.

[Shell, Rosneft in talks for Russian arctic](#)

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (UPI) -- Royal Dutch Shell said Russian oil company Rosneft was interested in jointly exploring the hydrocarbon potential in Russia's arctic waters.

Shell Chief Executive Officer Peter Voser said following talks with Rosneft last week that both could look at "a multitude" of opportunities in the Russian arctic. Some of the blocs included in the talks had been set aside by Rosneft for British energy company BP, the Financial Times reports.

[Iran, Armenia agree to boost energy ties](#)

TEHRAN (AFP) – Iran and Armenia have signed a memorandum of understanding to boost cooperation on oil, gas and electricity and expand their commercial and industrial ties, Iranian media reported Tuesday.

[Iran oil output 'may drop drastically by 2015'](#)

TEHRAN (AFP) – Iran's oil production may fall to 2.7 million barrels per day within five years unless 150 billion dollars is invested in its energy sector, a top official said in a report on Monday.

[Desire Petroleum upbeat in Falklands](#)

LONDON (UPI) -- A new oil find in the Falklands could mark a turnaround for prospects in the area following disappointing 2010 results, the chairman of Desire Petroleum said.

Desire Petroleum said it was fast-tracking data from new prospects in the Falklands. New data are expected toward the end of the year, though preliminary information suggests encouraging results.

[Explosions and street fighting in Yemen capital](#)

SANAA (Reuters) - Explosions ripped through a northern area of Yemen's capital on Wednesday as a powerful tribal group backing the ouster of entrenched President Ali Abdullah Saleh battled his security forces.

[Yemen's Saleh likely out of power this year - report](#)

(Reuters) - President Ali Abdullah Saleh is unlikely to stay in power through 2011 but violence in Yemen will increase while he clings on, a report said on Wednesday.

[India, Pakistan fail to break ice on glacier](#)

NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan failed on Tuesday to break ice on how to demilitarize the world's highest battlefield in the Himalayan region in a sign of how far apart the nuclear-armed rivals are even on less contentious issues.

Defense secretaries from both countries held two days of closed-door talks in New Delhi on how to agree on withdrawing troops from the financially costly , mountainous no-man's land above the Siachen glacier and defining the official border.

[Western push on Syria may spark divisive IAEA debate](#)

(Reuters) - Western states are pressing ahead with a drive to report Syria to the U.N. Security Council over suspected nuclear activity, despite misgivings among some other countries and a last-ditch bid by Damascus to thwart the move.

[Iran votes to take Ahmadinejad to court](#)

IRAN'S parliament has voted in favour of taking Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to court over what politicians say is a violation of the country's constitution stemming from the president's move last month to declare himself caretaker oil minister.

The vote in the conservative-dominated assembly today is its latest action against Ahmadinejad since the president in April publicly challenged Iran's highest authority, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

[S.Africa union declares wage dispute in oil sector](#)

(Reuters) - South Africa's labour union Solidarity said on Wednesday it had declared a wage dispute in the country's petroleum sector after negotiations failed.

[World's Greatest Power Thieves Keep 400 Million Indians in Dark](#)

To run his fan, lamp and small television, Sikander strings a homemade wire hook over power cables outside his one-room New Delhi house, helping perpetrate the world's biggest energy heist.

"The cables are right there, it's really easy to take it," said Sikander, 26, who uses only one name and earns less than \$2 a day cleaning people's ears on the streets of the Indian capital. "You have to be very careful when it rains because you can get electrocuted tying the wires together."

About one-third of the 174 gigawatts of electricity generated in India annually is either stolen or dissipates in the conductors and transmission equipment that form the country's distribution grid, Power Secretary P. Uma Shankar said in an interview.

[IAEA Says Japan's Nuclear Regulators Need More Oversight After Fukushima](#)

Japan's nuclear regulators need more powers to prevent a repeat of the Fukushima disaster, which was triggered by insufficient defenses against the March earthquake and tsunami, the International Atomic Energy Agency said.

[In Japan, a Culture That Promotes Nuclear Dependency](#)

As Kashima's story suggests, Tokyo has been able to essentially buy the support, or at least the silent acquiescence, of communities by showering them with generous subsidies, payouts and jobs. In 2009 alone, Tokyo gave \$1.15 billion for public works projects to communities that have electric plants, according to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Experts say the majority of that money goes to communities near nuclear plants.

And that is just the tip of the iceberg, experts say, as the communities also receive a host of subsidies, property and income tax revenues, compensation to individuals and even "anonymous" donations to local treasuries that are widely believed to come from plant operators.

[Tokyo Electric's Financial Aid Is Risk for Japanese Bank Ratings, S&P Says](#)

Japanese banks' credit ratings are at risk if they forgive loans made to Tokyo Electric Power Co., the operator of a stricken nuclear power plant, Standard & Poor's said.

In a worst-case scenario, debt waivers combined with deterioration of other loans because of the country's record earthquake could negatively affect the ratings on some banks, S&P said in a statement today.

[The hollowing out of Japan's auto industry](#)

It doesn't take much to bring an automotive assembly line to a halt, according to John Mendel, CEO of Honda's U.S. subsidiary, even "something as small as a speedometer needle."

It's a lesson the automaker has had driven home after the earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan on March 11, killing tens of thousands and all but shutting down the country's auto industry for the better part of a month. Since then, shortages of various parts and components, some as small a speedometer needle, have forced a sharp cutback in production by Japanese automakers.

[German nuclear cull to add 40 million tones CO2 per year](#)

LONDON (Reuters) – Germany's plan to shut all its nuclear power plants by 2022 will add up to 40 million tones of carbon dioxide emissions annually as the country turns to fossil fuels, analysts said on Tuesday.

The extra emissions would increase demand for carbon permits under the European Union's trading scheme, thereby adding a little to carbon prices and pollution costs for EU industry.

[Jordan expects to receive bids next month for nuclear reactor](#)

Jordan is pressing ahead with plans for its first nuclear power plant despite concerns that private investors will be put off by regional instability.

The kingdom expects to receive bids next month from foreign partners to build its first reactor.

[Explaining the Emirates' nuclear plans to the public](#)

Entering the lobby of Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (Enec), the government company building the country's first reactors, is a bit like visiting a toy store.

A model of the power plant to be built in Abu Dhabi's Western Region includes miniature cars, palm trees, spent-fuel pools and reactor cores. Nearby, visitors can examine a replica of uranium fuel rods that are to provide the emirate with up to a quarter of its electricity by 2020.

The model is part of the company's tools in bringing the public on board with its ambitious plan, which envisions the first two reactors being online in the next seven years. Fahad al Qahtani, the acting director for external affairs and communications, explains Enec's strategy.

[UAE weighs options for nuclear waste disposal](#)

One option under discussion is an underground cave to be shared with other nations from the region that could hold radioactive uranium and plutonium for thousands of years.

[R.I.P. Reaganomics Revolution: 1981-2011](#)

Whether it's the BP Gulf spill, four-buck gas, oil-driven inflation, "peak oil" warnings, domestic political pressure to drill baby drill, that requiem to "The Oil Age" in Foreign Policy, or the oil giants' ads bragging about what good guys they are, a big bubble is blowing.

[The Big Fix](#)

Spreading outward from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to Wall Street and the White House, the focus of Josh and Rebecca Tickell's docu "The Big Fix" is less on the crude-oil pollution of water than on the corporate contamination of democracy. Alternately gutsy and preachy, specific and scattered, the righteously angry pic risks alienating those who could be galvanized by its proof of Big Oil's corrupting omnipotence, at least in the overlong cut that screened at Cannes. For the Tickells, containing the spillage of info could result in a leaner, meaner, more marketable and less exasperating work of cine-activism.

[The triple crunch won't be pretty. But will it banish our economic torpor?](#)

There is now potential for not just one crisis but three: ATMs freeze up, the planet warms up and the lights go out.

[Localization -- Necessary, But Not Sufficient](#)

A recent HuffPost article by Tom Zeller on our research spawned hundreds of comments, most of them critical. These commentators incorrectly believe that we think localizing food systems is a waste of time. What our results show is that localization seen as food miles alone is not a solution to the complex problems of our food system -- we need to think in broader and deeper terms.

[Should Transition Movement Leave Politics at the Door?](#)

As the massive impact of just one Transition group has shown, this community-led response to peak oil and climate change is having very real influence on how villages, towns and cities around the world operate—and it is often doing so by avoiding the

traditional realm of political activism, instead focusing on grass-roots projects and inclusive, community-focused initiatives. But some in the movement feel like this is a mistake. Voices are being raised that suggest that unless Transition embraces political activism, it risks being sidelined and becoming irrelevant. So could political activism help take Transition to the next level, or would it ensure that it will forever be a niche movement for a self-selecting group of people.

[Town Meeting wraps up](#) (Amherst, MA)

Residents will now in most areas of town - excluding business and educational areas - be able to raise up to 12 chickens and/or rabbits without having to apply for a special permit. Instead they will register with the Board of Health and be subject to an initial inspection by animal welfare officer Carol A. Hepburn. She will then inspect the animals once a year.

University of Massachusetts professor John M. Gerber led the move to change the bylaw. "We just presented the facts. This is no big deal," he said.

He does not expect a flurry of chicken coops, but the bylaw makes it easier to have them.

While it took a lot to get the bylaw changed, Gerber said as an educator he enjoyed having conversations with people about the local food movement, global warming and peak oil "to raise awareness ... we can take personal actions."

[Money Blows in to a Patch of Oregon Known for Its Unrelenting Winds](#)

MORO, Ore. — It pays to live in Sherman County: \$590 a year.

In this sparsely populated landscape south of the Columbia River Gorge, annual checks for that amount are local residents' share of a windfall brought by the growing wind energy industry. In an area otherwise dominated by wheat farms, hundreds of 300-foot wind turbines now generate electricity and cash.

"Wind is the only thing that is going to save rural Oregon," said Judge Gary Thompson of Sherman County Court, "especially since all the timber is gone and the sawmills and all that are closing down. I think what it is is a breath of fresh air."

[Groundwater Depletion Is Detected From Space](#)

IRVINE, Calif. — Scientists have been using small variations in the Earth's gravity to identify trouble spots around the globe where people are making unsustainable demands on groundwater, one of the planet's main sources of fresh water.

They found problems in places as disparate as North Africa, northern India, northeastern China and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley in California, heartland of that state's \$30 billion agricultural industry.

[The Good News: Climate Change Doesn't Matter Anymore](#)

My provocative title represents the increasing awareness that we don't need to believe in climate change to do the right thing when it comes to energy. Of course, climate change is a real threat to us and our environment. But there are many highly valid reasons to become more energy efficient, conserve energy through behavior change, and transition to renewables – entirely independent of climate change concerns.

[Greenland's Shifting Climes and Settlers](#)

In the 10th Century, Erik the Red led Icelandic Vikings westward onto the pasturelands of southwestern Greenland, opening the way to the first European colony in the Americas a generation later. While the Norse settlement of North America was unsuccessful at the time, the livestock farmers of Greenland established a stable society of devout early Christians that flourished for the better part of 400 years. And then they vanished.

[Canada has 'more to lose than it realizes': global warming report on Arctic](#)

Canada's fabled Northwest Passage will not open up to shipping anytime soon, according to a study that warns global warming is a double-edged sword for northern transportation.

“And Canada is going to be feeling the harsh edge of the sword more strongly than other Arctic states,” says Scott Stephenson, lead author of the study that forecasts that the Northwest Passage will be the last Arctic shipping route to become ice free.

[EU: Greenhouse gas emissions fell in 2009](#)

BRUSSELS (UPI) -- Greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union plunged by 7.1 percent in 2009 due to the recession and use of renewable energy, the European Environment Agency says.

However, preliminary figures for 2010 indicate emissions were on the rise again with the economic recovery, the agency said Tuesday.

[Off the Pedestal: Creating a New Vision of Economic Growth](#)

The idea of economic growth as an unquestioned force for good is ingrained in the American psyche. But a longtime environmental leader argues it's time for the U.S. to reinvent its economy into one that focuses on sustaining communities, family life, and the natural world.



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