



## Drumbeat: October 22, 2011

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### [Half of North Sea oil remaining, says energy minister](#)

About half of North Sea oil and gas reserves have yet to be extracted, Energy Minister Fergus Ewing has claimed.

Mr Ewing said the amount left was beyond doubt, as he argued oil and gas would be a key element in the Scottish government's bid to "re-establish Scottish independence".

His remarks contrasted with a recent report by industry body Oil & Gas UK.

It suggested there could be as little as 14 billion barrels left.

This would mean Scotland has already exhausted almost three-quarters of its total reserves.

### [Population of world 'could grow to 15bn by 2100'](#)

The United Nations will warn this week that the world's population could more than double to 15 billion by the end of this century, putting a catastrophic strain on the planet's resources unless urgent action is taken to curb growth rates, the Observer can reveal.

That figure is likely to shock many experts as it is far higher than many current estimates. A previous UN estimate had expected the world to have more than 10 billion people by 2100; currently, there are nearly 7 billion.

...Roger Martin, chairman of Population Matters, which campaigns on population control, said that the Earth was entering a dangerous new phase. "Our planet is approaching a perfect storm of population growth, climate change and peak oil," he said. "The planet is not actually sustaining 7 billion people."

### [Saudi Arabia Faces Succession Planning After Death of Crown Prince Sultan](#)

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has died, setting in motion succession plans for the world's largest oil exporter.

Prince Nayef, born in 1934, is the most likely candidate for the crown prince position.

King Abdullah, who is 87, underwent surgery earlier this month to relieve back pain after traveling to the U.S. in November for three months of medical care.

### [Untested council key to orderly succession](#)

The death of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Sultan puts the spotlight on an untested system of succession set up by King Abdullah in 2006 to ensure stability in the world's top oil exporter. With turmoil engulfing other Arab powers, Saudi Arabia's ageing leadership stands as a force of continuity at the head of a country that holds more than a fifth of the world's crude oil. "The stability of Saudi Arabia is more important than ever," said Turad Al-Amri, a political analyst in Saudi Arabia. "All the countries around it are crumbling. The balance of power is changing in the Middle East.

### [Iraq Oil Output Capacity Jumps To 2.950 Million B/D -Oil Minister](#)

DEAD SEA, Jordan (Zawya Dow Jones)--Iraq's crude oil output capacity has jumped to a post-war record of 2.950 million barrels a day this month, the country's oil minister said Saturday.

Speaking on the sidelines of a World Economic Forum meeting in the Dead Sea in Jordan, Abdul Kareem Luaiby said, however, exports remain at 2.2 million barrels a day because of ongoing limitations at the country's export facilities.

### [Radical Muslim sect in northeast Nigeria shoots, kills state-run TV cameraman](#)

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria — Authorities in Nigeria say members of a radical Muslim sect in the northeast have shot dead a cameraman for the state-run television network after making a threat against journalists in the oil-rich country.

### [Diesel users facing fuel pinch](#)

With harvest season for row crops right around the corner, farmers will be paying more for diesel fuel — where they can find it.

North Dakota, and most of the Upper Midwest for that matter, is in the midst of a diesel fuel shortage with no sign of relief, at least in the short term.

Mike Rud, executive director of the North Dakota Petroleum Marketers Association, described the situation as “a huge shortage,” extending into Minnesota, South Dakota and Iowa.

“There’s just not enough product right now,” he said.

## [Sustainable energy not such a remote concept after all](#)

We still have a long way to go in the ultimate quest for energy sustainability, but the prize may yet be within our reach.

## [Want to invest ethically? Look to your own backyard](#)

Putting money into community projects could mean the local hydro-electric turbine or a stake in the village pub – and you could get a return on your cash too.

## [Who you gonna call? GrowthBusters!](#)

The new documentary *GrowthBusters: Hooked on Growth* explores why our economy and footprint and population can't keep on expanding forever. It features green luminaries galore -- Jane Goodall, Paul Ehrlich, Lester Brown, Raj Patel, Bill McKibben, Hunter Lovins.

## ['Revenge of the Electric Car' goes corporate](#)

Five years ago, the documentary *Who Killed the Electric Car* took the auto industry by storm. Now comes the sequel, *Revenge of the Electric Car*, and it is being embraced by the industry. The new film follows four companies' executives and their the development of their electric cars. They include General Motors' Bob Lutz and the Chevrolet Volt; Nissan's Carlos Ghosn and the electric Leaf; Tesla's Elon Musk and the creation of the electric roadster; and a startup firm headed by Greg Abbott in Culver City, Calif.

## [285 Indian girls shed 'unwanted' names](#)

MUMBAI, India (AP) – More than 200 Indian girls whose names mean "unwanted" in Hindi chose new names Saturday for a fresh start in life.

A central Indian district held a renaming ceremony it hopes will give the girls new dignity and help fight widespread gender discrimination that gives India a skewed gender ratio, with far more boys than girls.

## [Expert Says Quakes in England May Be Tied to Gas Extraction](#)

A British seismologist said Friday that two minor earthquakes in northwestern England “appeared to correlate closely” with the use of hydraulic fracturing, a method of extracting natural gas from wells that has raised concerns about environmental and seismological risks in the United States.

The scientist, Brian Baptie, seismic project team leader with the British Geological

Survey, said data from the two quakes near Blackpool — one of magnitude 2.3 on April 1, the other of magnitude 1.5 on May 27 — suggested the temblors arose from the same source. Cuadrilla Resources, a British energy company, was conducting hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, operations at a well nearby when the quakes occurred.

### [Saudi heir to throne dies in hospital](#)

The heir to the Saudi throne, Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdel Aziz Al Saud, died abroad Saturday, the country's royal court said in a statement carried by state television. The death of the prince opens questions about the succession in the critical, oil-rich U.S. ally.

### [Oil Rises First Time in Three Days on European Deal Optimism](#)

Crude oil rose for the first time in three days on hopes that European leaders will reach a deal to contain the region's debt crisis.

Futures gained 1.6 percent as European finance ministers met in Brussels today to lay the groundwork for an Oct. 23 gathering of government leaders on a solution to the debt crisis. Oil also rose after McDonald's Corp. (MCD) and Honeywell International Inc. (HON) reported profits that beat analyst estimates.

### [Gasoline Cargoes to U.S. Slide on High Prices at Pump, Weak Demand](#)

Gasoline shipments from Europe across the Atlantic Ocean will decline during the next two weeks because of rising fuel prices and weaker demand in the U.S.

Twenty-seven tankers were booked or due to be chartered for loading in the two-week period, according to the median estimate in a Bloomberg News survey of five shipbrokers, one owner and two traders yesterday. That's a decline of 6.9 percent from last week.

### [Russia, Kazakhstan may cancel oil export duties within CIS free trade zone](#)

Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov has said Russia and Kazakhstan have agreed to cancel oil export duties for participants in a free trade zone being created within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

### [Pricing transit gas via Ukraine at cost value 'unreasonable' - Gazprom](#)

Russia's gas giant Gazprom believes it "unreasonable" to lower the cost of gas transiting Ukraine to its cost value, Gazprom's Vice-Deputy Valery Golubyev told journalists on Saturday.

## [Debunking 4 oil industry myths](#)

Think high oil prices are good for global warming? Think we have reached peak oil, and Opec will have us over a barrel for ever? The U.K.-based Central For Global Energy Studies aims to dispel a few oil industry myths that many industry experts seem to take for granted:

## [The Great Green Energy Crack-Up](#)

History — of the U.S., Europe, the U.K. and its former dominions — repeatedly shows that environmental protection is a luxury good. When per-capita income reaches some threshold, the citizenry tire of opaque air and sleazy waters, various agencies and permanent bureaucracies sprout, and, as long as times are good, regulation is good.

## [Puerto Rico's Plan for Gas Pipeline Has Many Critics](#)

“I like the peace and tranquillity after so much time spent working and sacrificing,” said Luis Rodriguez Cruz, 59, who bought his home, nestled in the center of the island, for \$10,000 a few years ago, after a lifetime of factory work. “We came here for peace. Now we have to worry whether this thing will explode next to our house.”

With that, Mr. Rodriguez pointed to the red markings on a cement curb near his property, denoting the path of a proposed \$450 million natural gas pipeline that will cross the mountains here. The pipeline, which has provoked demonstrations on the island and widespread opposition over environmental and safety concerns, would run 92 miles from Peñuelas in the south, across the mountains to the island's northern coast, then east to San Juan.

## [Virginia: Nuclear Reactors Expected to Reopen Soon](#)

The North Anna nuclear reactors in Mineral, the only ones shut down by the Aug. 23 earthquake on the East Coast, will probably be allowed to reopen within weeks, a senior official of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said Friday. After a two-month, \$21 million inspection, staff engineers told the commission at a two-hour briefing that the plant suffered only cosmetic damage.

## [After a Quake, 2 Yardsticks for Nuclear Inspectors](#)

“The licensee has made a good case that the safe shutdown earthquake is not a good measure,” said George Apostolakis, one of the five commissioners. And the reports that the ground motion exceeded what the plant was designed to withstand “creates a problem with perceptions,” he said.

Commission staff members generally agreed, but some said they despaired of explaining

the measure they would prefer, known as the “cumulative absolute velocity,” a single number that integrates both the force of the shaking and its duration.

### [Maryland Governor Wants Wind, Solar Power to Compete With Gas](#)

Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley asked utility regulators who are soliciting bids to build 1,500 megawatts of new power plants to evaluate renewable energy projects and not restrict the process to natural gas.

### [Solyndra Stiffed Lobbyist, Trying to Sway U.S.](#)

Solyndra LLC, the solar-panel maker that collapsed after getting a U.S. loan guarantee, hired a Washington lobbying firm weeks before its bankruptcy in what may have been a last-ditch effort to sway U.S. lawmakers investigating the company.

The Glover Park Group LLC did \$20,000 of work for Solyndra after registering as its lobbyist in July, according to documents filed yesterday. Solyndra never paid the firm, according to Joel Johnson, a Glover Park managing director.

### [Beacon’s Flywheel Power Storage System May Avoid Solyndra’s Fate](#)

Beacon Power Corp. (BCON), a struggling energy storage company that’s received \$43 million in backing from the U.S. program that supported the failed Solyndra LLC, may get a lifeline from a regulatory ruling.

### [Fisker, electric carmaker backed by \\$529 million U.S. loan, balks at Solyndra comparison](#)

An electric car company backed by more than a half-billion dollars in Department of Energy loan guarantees has missed early manufacturing goals and has gradually pushed back plans for U.S. production and the creation of thousands of jobs.

### [Brazil’s Cheap Energy Stymies Cane Investments, Bradesco Says](#)

Falling electricity prices in Brazil are hindering investments in new sugar-cane mills, an analyst at Banco Bradesco SA (BBDC4) said.

### [Ruling Backs Forest Service in Limiting Roads in the Wild](#)

DENVER — More than a decade after the Clinton administration proposed cordoning off tens of millions of acres of public lands in the West from road development, setting off a ferocious debate about wilderness and human uses of the land, a federal appeals court in

Denver upheld the government's authority on Friday in a sweeping rejection of the opposition.

### [Are Dead Trees More Combustible Than Live Ones?](#)

Mr. Jolly studied the Saddle Complex fire on the border of Montana and Idaho. In one day alone, the fire burned 17,000 acres. "For a year like this year, not in extreme drought, it's really uncommon" for a fire to burn that much, he said. "It was equally as intense as a normal crown fire but happened under moderate conditions."

"And crown fires happen faster than expected" in these largely dead forests, he added.

### [Bleak Prospects for Avoiding Dangerous Global Warming](#)

The bad news just got worse: A new study finds that reining in greenhouse gas emissions in time to avert serious changes to Earth's climate will be at best extremely difficult. Current goals for reducing emissions fall far short of what would be needed to keep warming below dangerous levels, the study suggests. To succeed, we would most likely have to reverse the rise in emissions immediately and follow through with steep reductions through the century. Starting later would be far more expensive and require unproven technology.



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