



Drumbeat: December 24, 2011

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[Shale Boom Heralds Fifth Year of Gas Declines](#)

Booming U.S. natural gas production from shale formations and slowing demand from households, factories and power plants are poised to send prices down for an unprecedented fifth year in 2012.

Gas may tumble 8.2 percent from its 2011 average next year, as output rises 2.8 percent to a record 67.72 billion cubic feet a day, according to the Energy Department. Demand will probably climb 1.7 percent, after a 1.8 percent increase this year, the department said in its Dec. 6 Short-Term Energy Outlook.

"It's been practically impossible to turn off the shale- gas tap," Adam Sieminski, chief energy economist at Deutsche Bank AG in Washington, said in a telephone interview Dec. 14. "Industrial demand has been rising, but it's not enough."

[Oil Futures Cap Biggest Weekly Gain in Two Months on U.S. Economic Data](#)

Oil in New York rose, capping its biggest weekly gain in two months, as U.S. economic reports signaled that growth in the world's biggest crude-consuming country will accelerate.

Futures gained 6.6 percent this week, the biggest gain since Oct. 28, as durable goods rose in November by the most in four months. Initial jobless claims fell to the lowest level since April 2008 and leading indicators advanced more than forecast last month, data showed yesterday.

[OPEC has "gentleman's" deal on Libyan output: Libya](#)

CAIRO (Reuters) - Libyan Oil Minister Abdulrahman Ben Yazza said on Saturday there was a "gentleman's agreement" in OPEC to accommodate Libya as it lifts oil production back to levels before a civil war this year hit output.

"There is a gentleman's agreement to accommodate Libyan production," Ben Yazza told reporters on the sidelines of an Arab oil ministers meeting in Cairo.

[Saudi Crude Output Likely To Fall In December Vs November - Source](#)

CAIRO (Zawya Dow Jones)--Saudi Arabia, which produced 10.047 million barrels of crude oil per day in November--the highest level in three decades, is likely to produce less this month, an official from the world's largest oil exporter said Saturday.

"It is likely to be lower this month, but it could rise again in January if demand rises," the official, who declined to be named, told Zawya Dow Jones.

[Libya Says Oil Output Tops One Million Barrels a Day as Industry Recovers](#)

Libya, holder of Africa's biggest oil reserves, is now pumping "more than a million" barrels a day as the oil industry recovers from months of armed conflict, the chairman of its state-run National Oil Corp. said.

The country will resume normal oil production by the middle of next year, Nuri Berruien told reporters in Cairo today, where he attended a meeting of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, or OAPEC.

[Author Daniel Yergin on U.S. Need for a 'Diversified Energy Portfolio'](#)

Amid concern over tensions and violence in Iraq and Syria, oil prices rose to nearly \$100 a barrel Friday. Jeffrey Brown discusses the ongoing hunt for untapped reserves of energy and how the demand for energy has shaped political and economic change around the globe with Daniel Yergin, author of "The Quest" and "The Prize."

[Politics Stamps Out Oil Sands Pipeline, Yet It Seems Likely to Endure](#)

A presidential vow to kill the pipeline if Congress rushes a decision will hardly be a death knell, officials say.

[Iran begins 10-day naval navy drill in international waters near strategic oil route](#)

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's navy began a 10-day drill Saturday in international waters near the strategic oil route that passes through the Strait of Hormuz.

The exercises, dubbed "Velayat 90," could bring Iranian ships into proximity with U.S. Navy vessels in the area.

[Syria says oil output cut by third due to sanctions](#)

CAIRO: Syrian Oil Minister Sufian Alao said on Saturday that his country's oil

production had fallen by about 30 to 35 percent as a result of sanctions imposed on Syria over its nine-month crackdown on anti-government protests.

[Syrian opposition blames regime for suicide bombings](#)

(CNN) -- President Bashar al-Assad's government blamed terrorists Saturday inside and outside of Syria for dual bombings that struck the country's capital on Friday. But the opposition called the attacks the work of the regime.

The allegations by both sides come amid one of the bloodiest periods during the months-long uprising, raising questions about whether observers from the Arab League arriving in Syria can do anything to stem the growing violence.

[Moscow protest draws tens of thousands](#)

MOSCOW (AP) – Tens of thousands of demonstrators on Saturday cheered opposition leaders and jeered the Kremlin in the biggest show of outrage yet against Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's 12-year rule.

[A 'war zone' emerges during Yemen protest](#)

(CNN) -- Security forces in Yemen's capital assaulted thousands of marchers with gunfire, water cannons, and tear gas Saturday, eyewitnesses and activists said.

"Everyone here is screaming, blood and tear gas (is) everywhere. Saleh's forces are shooting with snipers. They are blocking streets and attacking women, tearing their hijabs. It's a war zone out here, smoke is everywhere. Soldiers also have batons," protester Murad Merali told CNN.

[Crowds mass in Cairo's Tahrir Square in protest of army](#)

Cairo (CNN) -- Thousands gathered in the Egyptian capital on Friday in a mass demonstration against the country's armed forces and its heavy-handed treatment of protesters, which has since drawn international condemnation.

Protesters could be seen erecting tents in Cairo's Tahrir Square, a location widely considered the epicenter of an uprising that brought down Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak earlier this year.

[Shell Says Oil From Bonga Facility Leak 'Continues to Thin'](#)

Royal Dutch Shell Plc (RDSA) said oil that leaked from its 200,000 barrel-a-day Bonga

field in Nigeria “continues to thin.”

“Surveillance and aerial photos show the spill is breaking up into patches surrounded by clear water,” Shell said in a statement on its website. “The spill remains offshore. We continue to monitor its movement using satellite imagery and vessels in the zone.”

[The Smart Grid Solution: Giving Consumer Control Of Their Energy Use](#)

Rather than building new power generation to meet the rising demand for energy, utilities are increasingly turning to the latest smart grid technology to help reduce energy use during peak consumption times. These programs will profoundly change how all American households and businesses think about and consume energy. Once invisible to most people, electricity consumption is now poised to enter our day-to-day lives, driving deeper awareness and potential savings for all utility customers.

[No fanfare for Christmas among Amish](#)

Christmas is the biggest holiday on the Amish calendar and Michigan is home to 11,000 Amish, one of the largest populations in the country. But in keeping with the Amish way, it's a simple Christmas for simple folks -- and an about-face from the Christmas excess that abounds in so many households this time of year.

[Food bill: a vote-winner and budget-buster](#)

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - Plans to expand the multi-billion dollar food subsidy programme are a likely vote-winner for the ruling Congress party as it heads into key local elections in 2012, but could worsen strained finances as a flagging economy crimps revenue.

[More young people see opportunities in farming](#)

The young entrepreneurs typically cite two reasons for going into farming: Many find the corporate world stifling and see no point in sticking it out when there's little job security; and demand for locally grown and organic foods has been strong enough that even in the downturn they feel confident they can sell their products.

[Book Review: *Folks, This Ain't Normal*](#)

You are almost certain to disagree with some of Joel's ideas. *Folks, This Ain't Normal* runs the gamut in controversial topics. He touches on politics, religion, the environment (including global warming), sustainable agriculture, big business, peak oil, taxes, protectionism, meat eating, government regulation, women's role in farming (he told me to my face he's "sexist") and likely a few more subjects that will get your blood boiling. But this is not your usual liberal-conservative political banter.

[Greening business will help both the economy and the planet](#)

The phrase "It's the economy, stupid" was first used by Bill Clinton in his 1992 election campaign. It's very apt now. It could be slightly rewritten to read "It's the stupid economy" that has saddled many countries with huge debts and unsustainable use of resources. As our financial debts have built up, so have our debts to nature – registered on nature's ledger as the loss of topsoil, forests, fresh water and biodiversity, and the instability of the global climate. We need to remember that the most important things in life – air, water, soil, energy, biodiversity – are the things that keep us alive.

[Mining Companies Back Friend's Bid for Senate](#)

Representative Denny Rehberg of Montana has been an aggressive advocate for the coal and minerals mining industry, a big employer in Montana.

[How to raise money and ecological awareness](#)

Norway's DNV made its name in the 1800s as a ship inspector. Now it checks bonds for environmental credentials.

[Floods, heat, migration: How extreme weather will transform cities](#)

While findings vary from region to region, it forecasts an overall increase in this century of coastal and river floods, extreme weather events and a global temperature rise of between 3-5C, if emissions are left unchecked.

According to climate change experts, cities from New York in the U.S. to Dhaka in Bangladesh are likely to be heavily affected.



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