



Drumbeat: July 7, 2012

Posted by [Leanan](#) on July 7, 2012 - 10:31am

[45 Dead in Russian Storms, Crude Oil Shipments Halted](#)

MOSCOW - At least 45 people died and thousands of houses were flooded after torrential rains, storms and landslides hit Russia's Krasnodar region near the Black Sea, a local police spokesperson told Reuters on Saturday.

Novorossiisk, Russia's largest Black Sea port, halted crude oil shipments on Saturday, a spokesperson for oil pipeline operator Transneft told Reuters.

"In Krymsk district 34 died, 11 more bodies were found in Novorossiisk and Gelendzhik. Police is beefing up its presence to prevent mass looting," police spokesperson Igor Zhelyabin said.

The Emergencies Ministry said an average month's rain has fallen in the region within just a few hours.

Some photos [here](#).

[Crude Declines for Second Day After Employment Report](#)

Oil fell for a second day after a report showed U.S. employers hired fewer workers than forecast in June, increasing concern that slower economic growth will reduce demand for oil.

[No let up in Saudi, US oil shipments](#)

NEW YORK (RTRS): Saudi Arabia maintained crude oil shipments to the United States in June near their highest level since 2008, data showed, despite a serious glitch that has crippled its newly expanded joint-venture refinery in Texas.

[Total's \\$20 Billion 2012 Investment Aided By Oil Price, CEO Says](#)

Total SA (FP)'s plan to invest \$20 billion this year and more in 2013 will be aided by oil prices at about \$100 a barrel, said Chief Executive Officer Christophe de Margerie.

The current price of oil is "good for long-term investment, for long-term vision of what we need to develop," the executive told reporters today at a conference in Aix-en-

Provence, France.

[Norway Oil Unions Meet With Employers Following Government Push](#)

Striking Norwegian oil workers and their employers will meet today at 5 p.m. in an effort to resolve a strike that threatens to halt all oil and gas from western Europe's largest crude exporter.

"Both parties know where we are and know the issues, but we've accepted the minister's appeal to discuss it once more," Jan Hodneland, chief negotiator of the Norwegian Oil Industry Association, said in a telephone interview. Discussions may last through Monday, he said.

[Turkmenistan aims to produce 449 bcm natgas in 2012-16](#)

ASHGABAT (Reuters) - Turkmenistan, holder of the world's fourth-largest reserves of natural gas, plans to produce a total of 448.7 billion cubic metres (bcm) of the fuel in 2012-16, state media reported on Saturday, in a rare disclosure of such data in the reclusive nation.

[Peak theories 'trashed'](#)

PEAK theories - peak phosphorus, peak oil, peak potassium - are, in the words of Mick Keogh, being "trashed by the cold, hard and ruthless rules of economics".

[We are nowhere near hitting 'peak oil', because we keep inventing new ways of extracting the stuff](#)

Inventing fracking does not mean just extracting gas from Pennsylvania or oil from the Bakken. It means prospecting the whole planet again for such deposits. New technologies mean we have invented whole new planets to explore for resources.

This does not apply only to peak oil or peak gas. There are those out there who worry about peak copper, peak indium and even peak tellurium (an odd one when we use 125 tonnes a year and there's 120 million tonnes in the crust). None of these are geological problems, they are all plain and simple economic ones.

[Japan mulls buying disputed islands in E.China Sea](#)

(Reuters) - Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda said on Saturday that the government is considering buying islands in potentially gas rich territory claimed by both Japan and China, in a move likely to anger Beijing.

[BP excluded from onshore field bidding](#)

"It remains unclear why BP was not invited, the sources say, but the decision will almost certainly have been approved at the highest levels in Abu Dhabi," the report said.

"Whatever the precise reason, it represents a humiliating snub for the UK major."

[Libyans vote in 1st parliamentary election since Gadhafi's ouster amid fears of violence](#)

TRIPOLI, Libya — Jubilant Libyan voters marked a major step toward democracy after decades of erratic one-man rule, casting their ballots Saturday in the first parliamentary election after last year's overthrow and killing of longtime leader Moammar Gadhafi. But the joy was tempered by boycott calls, the burning of ballots and other violence in the country's restive east.

[Iran renews threat to close vital oil route Strait of Hormuz](#)

TEHRAN // Iran will close the strategic Strait of Hormuz at the entrance to the oil-rich Gulf only if its crude revenues are seriously threatened, its top military commander said in remarks reported on Saturday.

"We have plans to close the Strait of Hormuz because military commanders must have plans for any situation," armed forces chief of staff General Hassan Firouzabadi said late on Friday, according to ISNA news agency.

[Iran plans to sell oil via consortium, evade ban](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - Iran has reached agreements with European refiners to sell some of its oil through a private consortium, an official said on Saturday, a move designed to circumvent sanctions intended to put pressure on Tehran to halt its disputed nuclear programme.

[Why Kenya made an about-turn on Iran oil deal](#)

The fear of severe US sanctions forced the government to cancel an oil deal with Iran.

Although officials interviewed refused to comment on the actual sanctions the United States had threatened to slap on Kenya, the Sunday Nation has learnt that they ranged from being cut off from the American financial system and the freezing of exports and grants to Kenya with far-reaching implications for the economy.

[Ex-Progress Directors Say Duke CEO Switch Was 'Deceit'](#)

Three former Progress Energy Inc. board members said they would have voted against Duke Energy Corp.'s takeover had they known that Duke's chief executive officer would remain in charge of the combined companies.

[North Carolina to Probe Duke Takeover of Progress Amid CEO Exit](#)

North Carolina is investigating Duke Energy Corp. (DUK)'s \$17.8 billion takeover of Progress Energy Inc. after the company unexpectedly changed its chief executive officer.

"This significant management change within hours after the merger has put the company on credit watch, so we need to get to the bottom of this to make sure we protect consumers," North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper said yesterday in an e- mailed statement.

[Barge Flaws Delay Shell Alaska Drilling, Coast Guard Says](#)

Royal Dutch Shell Plc's drilling off Alaska's north coast will be delayed until August as the company waits for ice to clear and modifies a spill-response vessel to meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements.

[Trees, above-ground wires biggest culprits in power outages](#)

Power outages, especially those that last for days, prompt anger toward companies that own and maintain electrical systems, but the industry and the people who study it say it is largely reliable and improving as utilities move toward "smart" technology that makes it easier to anticipate, identify, isolate and repair problems. Satellites provide key information. Drones and crawling robots could soon make those tasks easier.

Still, they say, the reasons many outages take days to overcome are remarkably prosaic: unpredictable weather, trees that topple on power lines and the manpower and time needed to repair them. Another factor: the high cost, passed on to consumers, of burying those lines to make them less vulnerable.

[Con Edison, Union To Resume Talks Saturday As NYC Broils In Heat Wave](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Contract talks between Consolidated Edison Inc and locked-out union workers concluded late Friday while replacement crews struggled to end brownouts in Brooklyn and the Bronx as New York City sweltered in a prolonged heat wave.

[Lawmaker sees Salton Sea as hub for algae program](#)

The Salton Sea's future has one of the state's top lawmakers seeing algae-green.

Assembly Majority Leader Charles Calderon is sponsoring a bill to “authorize, but not require” the state Secretary of Natural Resources to establish an algae production program on the Salton Sea in Imperial County.

[Calif. lawmakers OK billions for 1st U.S. high-speed rail line](#)

SACRAMENTO, California (AP) – California lawmakers approved billions of dollars Friday in construction financing for the initial segment of what would be the nation's first dedicated high-speed rail line connecting Los Angeles and San Francisco.

[Bike sharing stokes conflict between drivers, cyclists](#)

The battle between car drivers and bicyclists is becoming more pronounced as bike-sharing programs spread across the country.

The programs, in which people rent bicycles for short periods of time from self-service kiosks, have grown in Portland, Washington, D.C., Miami Beach and other metropolitan areas. And in each of those places, city officials say the influx of new bikers — including many tourists and first-time riders unaccustomed to local traffic patterns — can lead to safety problems that are hard to blame on just bicyclists, pedestrians or motorists.

[Making Way for More Bikes in National Parks](#)

The service’s stated aim is to promote a healthy way to explore park areas where motor vehicles are not allowed. As the rule in the Federal Register noted, bicyclists already use “trails, fire roads, abandoned railroad right-of-ways and canal towpaths.”

The Park Service said the new rule would expand bicycle access “while preserving the service’s responsibility to prohibit bikes in wilderness and other areas where they would have significant impact on the environment or visitor safety.”

[First casualty of greenhouse gas rules may be Texas plant](#)

Developers targeted 2013 to begin operating a new power plant fueled by the carbon-rich leftover from nearby oil refining in Corpus Christi.

The Las Brisas Energy Center will not be ready by then, however, and there are doubts the project will be built at all, making it the latest flash point in a long fight between Texas and the Environmental Protection Agency.

[Soot Pollution Standards Pose Challenge to Cities](#)

HOUSTON — In a laboratory at Rice University, a small machine hums, drawing in outside air through a tube and analyzing its soot content.

“We can tell when someone walks by with a cigarette,” said Robert Griffin, an associate professor in the department of civil and environmental engineering.

Nonsmokers also breathe in soot, sometimes known as particulate matter. It is a type of pollutant that increasingly concerns scientists as they uncover new links to heart and lung problems.

[Getting Crops Ready for a Warmer Tomorrow](#)

Given that most rice grows in hot countries, fiddling with its genes to make it into a C4 plant could boost its yield by 50% and cut its nitrogen needs, transforming world food supply. This is the goal of the C4 Rice Project at the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines. It takes heart from the fact that C4 "technology" has emerged naturally in many different lines of plants, so why not put it in rice, too?

[Mohamed Nasheed, Former Maldives President, Calls For U.S. To Embrace Climate Change Reality](#)

Mohamed Nasheed, former president of the Maldives, has some words of climate change warning for the United States: "You can't pick and choose on science."

[How Climate Change Is Worsened by Attacks on the Public Sector, Science and Regulation](#)

The real difference between the Global South and the North in facing this problem is that, in the Global South, government — the public sector — has been systematically dismantled, on the orders of the IMF and the World Bank through structural adjustment programs, state assets have been privatized, and state capacity has been diminished. And so, people fall back, in the face of extreme weather, on their own devices, which in places like Kenya and Afghanistan are cheap AK-47s and raiding your neighbor's cattle or turning to the drug trade. But in this country, there is still, despite a generation-long assault on the public sector and on government, which is picking up pace now, as we all know—there still is a public sector.

And at these moments, another thing that's missing from these discussions is not just the word "climate change," but the words "public sector." I mean, who's out there fighting these fires? It's the public sector, you know? Where do people go when there are these cooling centers? It's the public sector. It's public schools, which are currently being privatized in Philadelphia. This assault on the public sector must be linked to climate change.



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