



Drumbeat: July 21, 2012

Posted by [Leanan](#) on July 21, 2012 - 10:40am

[Pemex Forecasts Production Recovery to Snap Slump](#)

Petroleos Mexicanos, the world's fourth-largest oil producer, said it expects to turn around declining output in the first half to post its first annual increase in eight years.

Pemex, as the state-owned company is known, is set to meet its annual target of averaging more than last year's 2.55 million barrels a day and have "significantly larger numbers" by the end of 2012, Chief Executive Officer Juan Jose Suarez Coppel said today in an interview at Bloomberg's New York headquarters. The first-half average was 2.54 million barrels.

[Oil Drops for First Time in Eight Days on European Debt](#)

Oil fell for the first time in eight days on concern that European governments aren't doing enough to contain the worsening debt crisis, raising speculation that demand will slip.

Prices dropped from a two-month high as Spain's cost of borrowing rose to a record after euro-area finance ministers gave final approval to a bank bailout for the country. The dollar strengthened to the most in two years against the euro and U.S. equities slid for the first time in four days.

[Gasoline Cargoes to U.S. May Increase as BNP Sees Higher Demand](#)

Gasoline shipments across the Atlantic Ocean from Europe may increase after inventories of the auto fuel on the U.S. East Coast reached this year's low.

[Reliance Profit Declines on Refining Margin, Lower Gas Output](#)

Reliance Industries Ltd., operator of the world's biggest oil refining complex, reported profit slumped for the third straight quarter on declining natural gas output in India and reduced earnings from fuel sales.

[Iraq inaugurates prized southern oil field](#)

BAGHDAD – Iraq has inaugurated a prized oil field in its oil-rich south, the latest major step in developing the country's untapped energy resources.

Development of the 4.945 billion barrel Halfaya field is being led by China's National Petroleum Corporation, which along with partners Petronas from Malaysia and Total SA of France won rights to the location in Maysan province in late 2009.

[British company discovers large natural gas reservoir off Egyptian coast](#)

A British company operating off the coast of Egypt discovered a large natural gas reservoir, the Egyptian Ministry of Energy announced on Saturday.

The discovery by British Gas near Ras El-Bar reportedly contains 3.4 billion cubic meters of gas, according to Israel Radio.

[Explosion, fire shuts down Turkey-Iraq oil pipeline; PKK blamed](#)

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey -- An explosion and fire has shut down twin pipelines that carry oil from Iraq to the Mediterranean, an official said Saturday. No one was hurt in the blast.

...Officials blamed the attack on the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a Kurdish separatist group that has claimed responsibility for past attacks on the 600-mile pipeline.

[Over half of Iran parliament backs Hormuz blockade bill](#)

PanARMENIAN.Net - Just over half of Iran's parliament has backed a draft law to block the Strait of Hormuz, a lawmaker said on Friday, threatening to close the Gulf to oil tankers in retaliation against European sanctions on Iranian crude, Reuters said.

The assembly has little say in defense and foreign policy, where Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has the last word, but the law would lend political support to any decision to close the strait - a threat that Iran's foreign minister recently played down.

[Japanese government sources: Iran oil loaded on Tokyo-insured tankers](#)

Japan has reportedly loaded its first self-insured shipment of Iranian crude oil on two Japanese tankers following the implementation of a US-engineered European Union (EU) oil embargo against Tehran, PressTV reported.

The Japanese government inked deals with two domestic shipping companies earlier

this week to provide insurance cover for the country's two super tankers, which are to transfer a total of three million barrels of Iranian crude by the end of July, Japanese Industry and government sources told Reuters on Friday.

[Pertamina Must First Get Its House in Order](#)

State oil and gas company Pertamina is an important state asset. As the main player in a critical sector, it has been central to the development and growth of the industry in the past half-century.

Now Pertamina wants to spread its wings and grow into a major energy player in the country and the region. By this move, it intends to compete with the private sector in extracting coal and building power plants. But given its history and track record, we must ask if this is in the nation's overall interest.

[Second Japan nuclear unit resumes power generation](#)

TOKYO (Reuters) - Kansai Electric Power Co said its 1,180-megawatt No. 4 reactor at its Ohi nuclear plant resumed supplying electricity to the grid on Saturday, Japan's second nuclear unit to regain power since last year's Fukushima crisis led to the shutdown of all units.

The move came three days after the unit was restarted, and the reactor is set to begin full-capacity power generation around July 25-28.

[UAE nuclear plant gets construction green light](#)

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates – The United Arab Emirates geared up Wednesday to begin construction of its first nuclear energy plant after the oil-rich country's nuclear regulator gave its blessing for work to begin.

The green light by the UAE's Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation will make the seven-state federation the first country in more than two and a half decades to begin building its first nuclear power plant.

[100 million miles in the Chevy Volt – Is it time to consider a more electrified car?](#)

No, that's not a typo. In the next couple of days, owners of the Chevrolet Volt will have driven a cumulative 100 million miles. That is more than 200 round trips to the moon.

Why is this significant? When the Chevrolet Volt was first conceived in 2006, and finally put into traffic in 2010 after four years of development and testing, one of the key questions was whether this radically new automotive propulsion architecture would be

reliable. How frequent would repairs be in the first 150,000 miles? How about in the first 400,000 miles?

[Test Drive a Volt, Please! -- How GM's Pitch Backfired](#)

The news wasn't good. Michael at Onstar couldn't find me any recharging sites near my destination. Or near my home for that matter. There were a couple Nissan Leaf dealerships with recharging capability, but they wouldn't help out a guy with a GM car. All that Onstar could offer me were some plug-in spots in back corners of San Francisco airport. Call me lazy, but my commitment to the environment doesn't run deep enough to loiter around an airport at 9 p.m.

[E.P.A. to Consider Relaxing an Air Pollution Rule](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency announced on Friday afternoon that it would review its new standards for mercury, soot and other emissions for a handful of proposed new coal-burning power plants.

The review will delay the implementation of the regulation for the new plants for at least three months while experts determine whether the emissions limits may safely be relaxed.

[Andes water scarcity: Impact of population growth](#)

"Despite all the uncertainty of the future impact of climate change, the impact of population growth is much bigger," said Wouter Buytaert of Imperial College London, an environmental engineer and lead author of the study. This could mean harsher times ahead for millions including the 7.6 and 2.2 million inhabitants of the fast growing cities of Lima and Quito.

[The heat is on](#)

I wonder why there hasn't been more philanthropical focus on prizes. Prizes have proven effective in generating innovation, perhaps most notably in kickstarting private space flight and research into autonomous vehicles. As many billions as there are floating around among men with a clear interest in using their wealth for good, why haven't a few established a handful of billion-dollar prizes for major zero-emission innovations, or smaller, but still massively lucrative prizes for stepwise innovations?

Perhaps prizes for new energy sources couldn't be expected to do much good; after all, there's already lots of money to be made from such innovations. But for technologies that would safely turn greenhouse gases in the air into something inert? There's little market for that at the moment, and a prize could make a great deal of difference.

[Is Science the Answer to Global Warming?](#)

The problem with the Manhattan Project approach is that we're already doing it. The original Manhattan Project cost about \$2 billion over five years, which amounted to roughly 0.2% of GDP over the same period. That's equivalent to \$30 billion per year today. It's true that we don't spend that much on federal research alone, but public and private investment combined is probably close to that figure already.

As for prizes, I've never been able to get as excited about them as the geekosphere in general. Autonomous cars are getting close to reality because the technology has finally reached a critical level. I doubt that the various prize programs really had that much to do with it. And space flight? The prizes worked great — but only after the federal government had spent 50 years and hundreds of billions of dollars developing all the basic technology.

[Searching for Clues to Calamity](#)

So far 2012 is on pace to be the hottest year on record. But does this mean that we've reached a threshold — a tipping point that signals a climate disaster?

[The Flames of Ocean Acidity](#)

The age of fossil fuels has changed the oceans dramatically. What many might not know is that the oceans absorb about one-third of all human-caused carbon dioxide emissions. And while this has saved us from even more rapid climate change, few people realize the true effect this has had on our seas. The recent heat waves, droughts, floods and super derechos are only a fraction of the extreme weather we could expect to see if the oceans weren't around to help us out.

But this grand favor the ocean has done to slow climate change has come at a cost to ocean health. The absorption of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels has substantially altered the ocean's basic chemistry. In the hundred plus years since the Industrial Revolution, ocean waters have become, on average, 30 percent more acidic.

[Five times as much oil and coal and gas as climate scientists think is safe to burn](#)

It is certain that we'll never be able to approach Maugeri's numbers in terms of what we can actually extract from unconventional resources. But just the attempt of doing so may be more than sufficient to ensure our destruction as a civilization and perhaps also as a species.



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