



Drumbeat: April 15, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 15, 2011 - 10:22am

[Small-scale farmers increasingly at risk from 'global land grabbing'](#)

New research on the global rush for agricultural land shows small-scale farmers increasingly at risk as land deals ignore local tenure rights.

Fresh evidence from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the former Soviet Union was presented last week at an international conference on "global land grabbing" convened by the Land Deal Politics Initiative and hosted by the Future Agricultures Consortium at the University of Sussex, where researchers revealed documentation of land deals amounting to over 80m hectares – almost twice what was previously estimated.

[Review of IMF analysis, "Oil Scarcity, Growth, and Global Imbalances"](#)

The International Monetary Fund recently released its latest World Economic Outlook (WEO), April 2011. Chapter 3 of this document is titled, "Oil Scarcity, Growth, and Global Imbalances" (36 pgs).

As far as this author is aware, the IMF has not done any previous work on peak oil, and the new Outlook seems to be the first acknowledgment by the IMF that the peaking of global oil production is a situation which could be both imminent and serious.

[The economy of energy](#)

Nepal is burning all its export earnings on petroleum from India.

[Chile focuses on non-hydro resources to avert energy crisis](#)

According to a report by the Agence France Presse (AFP), Chile could face electricity rationing because of this year's low rainfall. In an effort to avoid this, the South American nation is busy exploring alternative energy sources.

[A New Pickens Plan: Good for The U.S. or Just for T. Boone?](#)

Three years after unveiling his plan for U.S. energy independence, which won praise from environmentalists for its reliance on wind power, Texas oilman T. Boone Pickens is back with a proposal to convert the U.S. trucking fleet to natural gas. But as his new plan gains traction, questions arise over how green it really is.

[Nations Going Global on Drilling Standards](#)

Drilling regulators from a dozen countries on Thursday agreed to form a working group that could eventually develop global offshore drilling standards.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar suggested the idea at the end of a daylong summit on offshore drilling safety that focused on learning lessons from last year's Deepwater Horizon disaster, including a need for better ways to rein in runaway underwater wells.

['Fracking' Deemed Eco-Safe at Hearing](#)

Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Jeff Cloud told key U.S. senators that his agency's record on protecting water from pollution makes it clear that states, not the federal government, should regulate hydraulic fracturing.

[Africa poised to become energy powerhouse](#)

Africa could hold the key to solving the world's looming energy crisis but unlocking the continent's vast potential will not be easy.

As supplies of oil and gas from traditional sources diminish, international energy companies are pushing into increasingly volatile and environmentally-sensitive territory in their scramble to meet demand.

[Japan's crisis is a wake-up call for region](#)

The Fukushima nuclear disaster could force Arab countries to reconsider their strategies to balance energy use, as was the case in America and Europe.

[Japan energy crisis may force Sony to halt work](#)

Sony Corporation is contemplating temporarily shutting down its Japan premises and is considering changing its staff's working hours, to comply with energy-saving targets set by the Japanese government following the tsunami last month.

[MSCI report paints grim picture for nuclear industry](#)

The nuclear industry's future looks challenging after the Fukushima Daichii plant disaster in March, which saw its operator Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) lose 36% of its share price in the first 10 days of the crisis, according to MSCI ESG Research.

The report 'Implications of the Japanese Nuclear Disaster: An ESG Research Perspective', by Douglas Cogan and Jerome Le Page, says a much-anticipated nuclear renaissance could be curtailed as the world absorbs the lessons from the worst nuclear accident since the Chernobyl disaster 25 years ago.

[Kurt Cobb - The Road to Fukushima: The Nuclear Industry's Wrong Turn](#)

Nuclear researchers knew long ago that reactor designs now in wide use had already been bested in safety by another design. Why did the industry turn its back on that design?

[Nuclear neighbors: Population rises near US reactors](#)

WATERFORD, Conn. — Who's afraid of nuclear power? Not the American people, judging by where they choose to live.

A new map of data from the 2010 U.S. Census shows that the number of people living within the 10-mile emergency planning zones around nuclear power plants rose by 17 percent in the past decade, compared with an overall increase of less than 10 percent in the U.S. population.

[Michael Klare: The planet strikes back](#)

It's not enough to think of Eaarth as an impotent casualty of humanity's predations. It is also a complex organic system with many potent defenses against alien intervention -- defenses it is already wielding to devastating effect when it comes to human societies. And keep this in mind: we are only at the beginning of this process.

To grasp our present situation, however, it's necessary to distinguish between naturally recurring planetary disturbances and the planetary responses to human intervention. Both need a fresh look, so let's start with what Earth has always been capable of before we turn to the responses of Eaarth, the avenger.

[For the lack of a few billion dollars, a BP renaissance falls apart](#)

Why at this point does it look like Bob Dudley's 11th-hour effort to resurrect BP's global image has failed? Because he and his Russian oligarch partners could not bridge more or less a \$10 billion difference in their respective valuations of their joint Russian oil company, according to people in the deal: BP offered \$27 billion to buy out their Russian partners, who wanted about \$35 billion.

[San Bruno blast: PG&E repair job turned frantic](#)

The events leading up to last year's deadly natural-gas explosion in San Bruno may have been set in motion when a repair crew "jostled" an electrical wire at Pacific Gas and Electric Co.'s Milpitas terminal, causing a power breakdown and a pressure surge on the utility's Peninsula pipelines, crew members told federal and state investigators.

[China calls on enriching Sino-Angolan partnership](#)

BEIJING - Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping met here on Friday with Manuel Domingos Vicente, President and Chief Executive Officer of Angola's state-owned oil company Sonangol, calling on the two sides to work together to further enrich the Sino-Angolan strategic partnership.

[John Michael Greer - Alternatives to nihilism, part 1: a dog named Boo](#)

It's easy to make fun of the excesses and eccentricities of the era: the air of well-scrubbed, fresh-faced innocence, say, that was so assiduously cultivated by the exact equivalents of those who now cultivate an equally artificial aura of sullen despair. Still, the 15% drop in America's petroleum consumption that took place between 1975 and 1985, coupled with equally sharp declines in other forms of energy use, might suggest that the John Denver fans of that time, with their granny glasses and dogs sporting brightly colored bandannas in place of collars, had something going for them that today's supposedly more sophisticated culture has not been able to match so far. The shift from the one to the other set of cultural themes may have more to do with that difference in outcomes than is often recognized, and that possibility is one that needs to be explored.

[Richard Heinberg: Specialization and globalization: Genies at our command](#)

Most of the specialization that has occurred since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution depended upon the availability of cheap energy. With cheap energy, it makes sense to replace human muscle-powered labor with the "labor" of fuel-fed machines, and it is possible to invent an enormous number of different kinds of machines to do different tasks. Tending and operating those machines requires specialized skills, so more mechanization tends to lead to more specialization.

But take away cheap energy and it becomes more cost-effective to do a growing number of tasks locally and with muscle power once again. As energy gets increasingly expensive, a countertrend is therefore likely to emerge: *generalization*. Like our ancestors of a century ago or more, most of us will need the kinds of knowledge and skill that can be adapted to a wide range of practical tasks.

[Food price hikes could push millions to poverty](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- As global food prices rise near record highs, the World Bank warned Thursday that further spikes could push millions more people deeper into poverty.

The organization that loans money to developing nations said its global food price index was up 36% in March from levels a year earlier. The increase was driven by sharp boosts in prices for corn, wheat, soybeans and other staples.

[Vegetable bandits strike as food prices soar](#)

The high price of produce, especially for tomatoes after the deep winter freezes, has attracted more than heightened attention from consumers. A ring of sophisticated vegetable bandits was watching, too.

Late last month, a gang of thieves stole six tractor-trailer loads of tomatoes and a truck full of cucumbers from Florida growers. They also stole a truckload of frozen meat. The total value of the illegal haul: about \$300,000.

[Gas spike feeds inflation pain](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- High gas prices caused inflation to rise at the fastest pace in more than a year in March.

The Consumer Price Index, the government's key inflation measure, rose 2.7% in March over year-earlier levels, according to Friday's report from the Labor Department. It was the biggest 12-month jump since December of 2009.

[Gasoline averaging \\$4 a gallon in 5 states](#)

NEW YORK — The average price of gasoline is now above \$4 per gallon in five states, and it could rise to that level in New York and Washington, D.C., this weekend.

The \$4 mark is a tough reminder for American drivers. The last time they saw prices that high was in the summer of 2008, just before the economy went into a tailspin. Retail surveys show that motorists are already starting to buy less fuel, yet the government still expects pump prices to keep climbing this summer.

['Freedom!': Thousands rally, demand further reform in Syria](#)

BEIRUT — Thousands of people chanting "Freedom!" held protests in several Syrian cities Friday, demanding far greater reforms than the limited concessions offered by President Bashar Assad over the past four weeks, witnesses said.

[Shell resumes operation in a Nigerian oilfield](#)

Royal Dutch Shell Plc.'s Nigerian subsidiary says it has resumed operation in a 200,000 barrel-per-day oil field in Africa's top oil producer.

Shell's Nigeria-based spokesman told The Associated Press Thursday that it would "ramp up production over the coming weeks" in its Bonga deep-water oil field.

[France to ditch NATO, embrace Russia if National Front comes to power](#)

The ultra-right National Front will pull France out of NATO and forge a privileged partnership with Russia if it wins next year's presidential election, its leader Marine Le Pen said on Wednesday.

"I believe that France's interests are in Europe, but in Great Europe, especially including its partnership with Russia," she said during a party congress.

[TNK-BP Russian partners seek offer from BP on Rosneft deal](#)

MOSCOW (AFP) – BP's Russian partners in TNK-BP said Friday that they were awaiting proposals from BP over its stalled Rosneft deal and denied plans to exit the oil giant's local joint venture.

[Ukraine state gas company head charged over Gazprom deal](#)

The head of Ukraine's state-owned gas company, Naftogaz, has been charged with abuse of office over the 2009 contract with Russian energy giant Gazprom, prosecutors say.

[Australia's Gas May Be Targets for Chinese Buyers, Wood Mackenzie Says](#)

China's national oil companies are likely to target Australian natural gas assets in 2011 through purchases of stakes in projects, according to Wood Mackenzie.

[Rand Paul Crusades Against Energy Efficiency Standards](#)

"I think that to be consistent with a free society, we should make them voluntary," Paul said of the standards, before launching the committee into a discussion of Ayn Rand's 1937 novel "Anthem" about individual choice.

Paul described a scene from the novel in which the protagonist discovers the incandescent light bulb and "he naively thinks that electricity and the brilliance of light would be an advantage for society." But when the protagonist takes the light bulb to the

society's elders, they crush it "beneath the bootheel of the collective," Paul said.

[Duke plans world's biggest battery](#)

Duke Energy Renewables plans to spend \$44 million to install a 36-megawatt battery system at its Notrees Wind Project in Texas.

It will be the world's largest power storage system for a wind farm once it is installed late next year, says Duke Renewables spokesman Greg Efthimiou. It's also the one of the largest used for any kind of power storage.

[High Costs Linked to Gaps Around Air-Conditioners](#)

After embracing environmentally friendly construction, Martin Dunn, a developer of affordable housing in the city, made a frustrating discovery: the energy that he hoped to save with improved insulation and efficient boilers was being siphoned off through gaps around the air-conditioners in apartment windows.

The warm air was escaping, substantially raising his utility bills. "It defeats the purpose of all the other improvements you've done," he said.

[How do we prepare for our future?](#)

As Americans and the world at large move toward a future in which the energy that powers our vehicles, our homes and our workplaces becomes more scarce and more expensive, more effort will have to be spent in producing the energy that remains available.

That will require more land and a greater proportion of society's total labor and investment, says an author, Richard Heinberg, who says societies are also doing poorly at preparing for that future.

[Commission passes Sustainability Plan](#)

Madison, WI - Following an abundance of public input, a city committee approved a preliminary plan outlining the city's sustainability initiatives with a five to three vote at a meeting Wednesday evening.

[In Minn., copper mining runs afoul of wild rice](#)

MINNEAPOLIS – Wild rice is sacred to the Ojibwe of Minnesota, but that may not be

enough to protect it from the promise of jobs that a new copper-nickel mining industry would bring to the state.

Lawmakers and business interests are working to loosen Minnesota's water quality standards to make it easier to start copper mining in the northeastern part of the state, but it could come at an environmental price. The fight is being closely watched by the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, who fear that weaker standards could wipe out important natural stands of wild rice that provide food and medicine.

[T.V.A. Agrees to Shutter 18 Generators That Use Coal](#)

In a sweeping legal settlement, the Tennessee Valley Authority has agreed for the first time to reduce its overall capacity to generate coal-fired electricity, promising to close 18 of its coal-burning generators over the next six years while spending \$3 billion to \$5 billion on pollution controls on any remaining units that use coal.

The accord, announced Thursday by the Environmental Protection Agency, will bring about one of the most significant cuts in coal-fired power generation by any utility that relies heavily on coal in its fuel mix. The closings will eliminate 16 percent of the authority's coal-fired capacity, and the accord holds out the prospect that some or all of another 18 units will shut down as well, for a total loss of as much as a third of the authority's coal-burning capacity.

[Oil Heads for First Weekly Loss in a Month Amid Inflation, Demand Concern](#)

Oil headed for its first weekly decline in New York in a month, amid concern that this year's rally in prices is stoking inflation and starting to erode demand for fuel.

Futures pared earlier gains after Chinese data showed that inflation in the world's biggest energy user accelerated in March to the fastest pace since 2008. Total U.S. crude inventories rose 1.63 million barrels to 359.3 million last week as refiners slowed processing rates, the Energy Department said on April 13. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's chief said the alliance needs more attack jets to target Libyan ground forces as Muammar Qaddafi's troops continue their attacks.

[High gas prices hurting confidence, changing habits](#)

WASHINGTON — Rising U.S. gasoline prices have damaged confidence in the country's future and forced Americans to change their spending habits and lifestyles, a Reuters/Ipsos poll released Wednesday found.

The proportion of people who believe the United States is on the wrong track jumped 5 points to 69 percent from March, the poll found, the highest wrong-track figure in an Ipsos poll since President Barack Obama took office in January 2009.

More than six of every 10 Americans have cut back on other expenses and reduced

their driving as a result of the rising gas prices caused by tumult in North Africa and the Middle East.

[Iran says oil price 'logical', 'good for us'](#)

Friday there was no reason to consider global crude prices too high and described the oil market, which has been boosted by unrest in the Middle East, as "not extraordinary".

"The price depends on the oil market ...If you consider the price ...in the past 40 years, what we have today is a logical price," Massoud Mirkazemi told a news conference on the first day of an oil and gas conference in Tehran.

[China March oil demand up 11 pct on year, but off peak](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's implied oil demand grew by double digits for the sixth consecutive month in March, but was down from February as refineries scaled back runs on maintenance and soaring crude costs.

A jump in inflation to a 32-month high and strong first quarter growth reported on Friday underline how China's booming economy is pushing oil use.

[Singapore Airlines raises fuel surcharge as crude prices surge](#)

SINGAPORE - Singapore Airlines Ltd. says it will raise fuel surcharges for its flights after jet fuel prices increased more than 30 per cent since the beginning of the year.

[Over a Barrel \(part 1\)](#)

Contemplating the turmoil in the Middle East and the fears that it will spread and infect the price of oil, it is sobering to think back 40 years to the start of the 1970s.

The oil price in 1970 was no more than two dollars a barrel, less than one fiftieth of the \$100 price it has been hovering at in recent weeks (it went much higher in 2008).

[Over a Barrel \(part 2\)](#)

And then there is the fascinating question of whether oil discoveries have peaked ... so that we are now finding new oil at a slower rate than we are consuming it. The Peak Oil argument is vigorously debated, but it may well be that in a carbon averse world, we have used up the easy energy finds and the rest are going to be much more difficult to get at.

[Preparing for \\$3+ per litre fuel](#)

Australians will inevitably have to face the reality of higher fuel prices. Since the late 1940's when war-time fuel rationing ended and most people began driving cars, we have come to think of cheap abundant fuel as a right. Governments' policies have reduced fuel taxes far below real costs. Many of us now have a habit of driving alone in large over-powered cars (average occupancy 1.3 people and fuel consumption 11L/ 100 km). Our car fleet fuel consumption and emissions are quadruple what they would be if everyone used small efficient vehicles and carried an extra passenger.

[Criticism flares up over gas waste](#)

Fuel subsidies, international sanctions and fractious politics are among the reasons the Middle East continues to flare more gas than any other region except Russia.

[Obama says U.S. must be cautious about oil reserve](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – President Barack Obama, in an ABC interview aired on Friday, said the United States must be "very careful" about releasing oil from its Strategic Petroleum Reserve at a time of uncertainty in the Middle East.

"We are monitoring the situation very closely. The strategic petroleum reserve was designed for when oil actually shuts off," Obama told ABC.

[Republicans push bills to boost offshore oil drilling](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – Republican lawmakers in the House of Representatives on Wednesday pushed a trio of bills through a congressional committee that would boost offshore oil drilling and ease some regulations on oil companies.

Republicans said the bills would reverse the Obama administration energy policy of the last two years that they claimed has reduced domestic oil production and made the United States more reliant on foreign suppliers and vulnerable to oil price spikes.

[AP: Pa. accused of rubber-stamping gas permits](#)

ALLENTOWN, Pa. – Pennsylvania environmental regulators say they spend as little as 35 minutes reviewing each of the thousands of applications for natural gas well permits they get each year from drillers intent on tapping the state's lucrative and vast Marcellus Shale reserves.

And the regulators say they do not give any additional scrutiny to requests to drill near high-quality streams and rivers even though the waterways are protected by state and

federal law.

[Time for energy suppliers to prove they are not the bad guys](#)

The energy industry has been ineffective in framing the public debate on the role of energy and the environment. It is time we collectively took the bull by the horns and turned this narrative around in our favour.

[Qaddafi Taunts West as NATO Seeks More Attack Planes](#)

A request by NATO's chief for more ground attack aircraft to target Muammar Qaddafi's forces was rejected by the U.S. and France as the Libyan leader was shown on state television pumping his fists in the air through the open sunroof of a silver SUV in Tripoli.

[Gadhafi's daughter sends defiant message](#)

TRIPOLI, Libya – From her father's compound, struck by U.S. bombs exactly 25 years ago, Moammar Gadhafi's daughter sent a defiant message early Friday: Libya was not defeated by airstrikes then and won't be defeated now, she told a cheering crowd.

[While the Saudi elite looks nervously abroad, a revolution is happening](#)

The Saudi regime is under siege. To the west, its heaviest regional ally, the Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak, has been ousted. To its north, Syria and Jordan are gripped by a wave of protests which shows no sign of receding. On its southern border, unrest in Yemen and Oman rages on. And troops have been dispatched to Bahrain to salvage its influence over the tiny kingdom exerted through the Khalifa clan, and prevent the contagion from spreading to Saudi Arabia's turbulent eastern provinces, the repository of both its biggest oil reserves and largest Shia population.

[Arab People strive for Political Change and New Leadership](#)

The oil-based economy is not for ever and peak oil stage is already in place. Therefore, the illusion of prosperity is seen as short lived concept of the few living in palaces not viable with the people. History tells us that all the Arab glory and progress was intermittently linked with the message of Islam and following the Divine system as a way of life. That led the Arabs to achieve success in Southern Europe for more than 800 years of the Islamic civilization in Al-Andulus- Spain. The Arabs were the most advanced civilization in Europe while the European were enriched in witchcraft, slavery, dynastic warfare and gladiatorial games and torture- these were the competing identities of those who subsequently occupied the Islamic world by force, not by democratic persuasion. The Arab rulers are greedy and ignorant and not equipped with knowledge and wisdom to have public communication and establish people to people

contacts and relationships.

[Japan, Oil and the Fragility of Globalization](#)

Sometimes it takes an earthquake followed by tsunami accompanied by a nuclear meltdown to catch people's attention.

Improbable events not only make the world go around but expose what is rotten.

And I suspect the Great Sendai Earthquake will go down in the annals of human history as just one of a series of unfortunate events that helped to illuminate the world's downward energy spiral.

[Nuclear Cleanup Plans Hinge on Unknowns](#)

TOKYO — Even before the troubled Fukushima nuclear plant has been brought under control, two conglomerates vying for contracts in an eventual cleanup are estimating that the effort could take 10 years — or 30.

[Tokyo Electric to boost power supply, still short of demand](#)

TOKYO (Reuters) - Tokyo Electric Power Co said it will be able to supply more electricity than previously expected during the peak summer months by using gas turbines and tapping hydro power, but it will still be short of projected demand.

Japan is scrambling to ease a power shortage that could hobble the economy after last month's devastating earthquake and tsunami shut down several nuclear and thermal stations including Tokyo Electric's crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

[Dai-ichi Life:will consider if Tokyo Elec asks for loan](#)

(Reuters) - The president of Japan's Dai-ichi Life Insurance , the top shareholder in beleaguered nuclear operator Tokyo Electric Power Co , said on Friday his company would give serious consideration if the power utility asked for a loan.

[Japan nuke plant operator to compensate evacuees](#)

TOKYO — The operator of Japan's tsunami-damaged nuclear plant said Friday it would pay an initial \$12,000 for each household forced to evacuate because of leaking radiation — a handout some of the displaced slammed as too little.

[Merkel Faces Nuclear Exit Bill as States Exert Pressure After Japan Crisis](#)

Chancellor Angela Merkel faces a bid by members of the upper house of parliament to force her to abandon nuclear power as she tries to rally German state leaders behind an overhaul of energy policy by the middle of May.

[T.V.A. Considers Improvements for 6 U.S. Nuclear Reactors](#)

WASHINGTON — The Tennessee Valley Authority said Thursday it was considering millions of dollars of improvements to protect its six nuclear reactors from earthquakes and floods.

[Peak Uranium - And Other Threats To Nuclear Power](#)

We have nearly all heard about Peak Oil despite doubts on very basic elements like how we define “oil” compared with oil condensed from natural gas, but the possibility of there simply not being enough uranium to keep present and planned reactor fleets going is new.

The case for Peak Uranium is made by several nuclear experts, such as Dr Michael Dittmar of CERN.

[Resistance to Jaitapur Nuclear Plant Grows in India](#)

While the government vows to push ahead — citing India’s energy needs — Indian newspapers recently reported that the environment minister wrote Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to question the wisdom of large nuclear installations. And a group of 50 Indian scientists, academics and activists has called for a moratorium on new projects. “The Japanese nuclear crisis is a wake-up call for India,” they wrote in an open letter.

[BP Alaska president pleads for lower state taxes](#)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (Reuters) – Alaska must lower its state oil production taxes to attract the investment needed to boost dwindling flow in the Trans Alaska Pipeline System, the president of BP's Alaska unit told a pro-industry group Thursday.

[A year on, Gulf still grapples with BP oil spill](#)

VENICE, La./WAVELAND, Miss. (Reuters) – When a BP oil rig exploded and sank in the Gulf of Mexico last April, killing 11 workers, authorities first reported that no crude was leaking into the ocean.

They were wrong.

[Search for tar balls, answers a year after BP oil spill](#)

GRAND ISLE, Louisiana (AFP) – A year after the worst maritime oil spill in history sullied the US Gulf Coast, men armed with shovels and a big yellow excavator are still digging up the sandy beach of Grand Isle, Louisiana in search of sticky tar balls.

"We'd like to tell people it's over, but the oil will still wash up every time it storms," said Jay LaFont, Grand Isle's deputy mayor.

[Factbox: Gulf oil spill was among world's worst](#)

(Reuters) - April 20 marks the first anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico that spewed more than 4 million barrels of oil (168 million gallons/636 million liters) into the ocean in three months in the world's worst ever accidental offshore oil accident.

Here are some other major oil spills and leakages:

[Factbox: BP's oil spill cleanup response in numbers](#)

(Reuters) - Last year on April 20, BP's deepwater Macondo well ruptured in the Gulf of Mexico, killing 11 workers on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig and spilling more than 4 million barrels (168 million gallons/636 million liters) of crude oil into the sea. It took three months for the company to plug the well and efforts to clean-up the oil continue. Below is a breakdown of the year-long response by the numbers:

[Factbox: Oil spill claims paid total \\$3.8 billion](#)

(Reuters) - The Gulf Coast Claims Facility, created to compensate people and businesses for damages related to BP Plc's Gulf of Mexico oil spill, has paid \$3.8 billion in claims since the organization took over the process from the oil company on August 23.

[BP faces angry oil spill protesters at AGM](#)

LONDON (Reuters) – BP's annual shareholder meeting was disrupted by campaigners protesting against the oil giant's role in the Gulf of Mexico spill, while investors registered their disapproval with big votes against directors.

[AP Enterprise: Experts fear another oil disaster](#)

NEW ORLEANS – With everything Big Oil and the government have learned in the year

since the Gulf of Mexico disaster, could it happen again? Absolutely, according to an Associated Press examination of the industry and interviews with experts on the perils of deep-sea drilling.

The government has given the OK for oil exploration in treacherously deep waters to resume, saying it is confident such drilling can be done safely. The industry has given similar assurances. But there are still serious questions in some quarters about whether the lessons of the BP oil spill have been applied.

[Oil spill victim feels forgotten](#)

BATON ROUGE — The panic attacks have mostly stopped, and the debilitating pain has thinned to longing and a dull ache.

But the hurt lingers for Michelle Jones, who lost her husband, Gordon Jones, to the explosion aboard the Deepwater Horizon rig a year ago next Wednesday.

[Glencore turns to familiar names for board roles](#)

LONDON (Reuters) – Glencore, the Swiss commodity trader, named former BP Chief Executive Tony Hayward to lead a five-strong team of independent directors, as it launched a flotation that could top \$12 billion.

[Options for a new energy scenario](#)

Even if the finite nature of the resource stocks is not the only factor that influences oil prices, speculation also plays a role in this process: peak oil, that is the point in time when oil production cannot be increased despite maximum efforts, will be reached in the near to medium-term future – indeed, some analysts believe that it has already been reached. This development is further exacerbated by the increasing energy hunger of the emerging states, particularly in Asia, with their large populations. Moreover, the energy problem is irrevocably linked with that of global warming. All of the available data point to the fact that anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide, a large proportion of which are generated by the combustion of fossil fuels, contribute considerably to climate change.

[Sunnyside Neighbors Preparing for the 'Long Emergency'](#)

In the wake of the tragic earthquakes and resulting tsunami in Japan, many in Oregon have expressed concern about what to do if a similar disaster were to strike here. But what is to be done about disasters that don't unfold so suddenly? Neighborhood and citywide groups have been preparing not just for conventional natural disasters but also for the gradual, somewhat unknowable effects of climate change. When it comes to long-term disasters, these groups stress the importance of traditional emergency preparedness, but they also place great emphasis on the group responsibility of

communities to gather and plan together.

[California tosses out solar power plant lawsuit](#)

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) – California's supreme court refused to consider a lawsuit filed by an influential environmental group seeking to delay construction of a solar plant because it might harm rare plant and animal species.

[ARPA-E Is Poised to Put Products on the Grid](#)

ARPA-E, the government's incubator for high-risk energy inventions, has its first graduate in the electricity area — a new energy storage technology — and on Thursday it announced a preliminary agreement to get it tested.

[Europe can make 30% emissions cuts, EU figures show](#)

A 30% cut in greenhouse gas emissions is possible by 2020 if Europe meets its efficiency targets, according to the maths used by Climate Commissioner Connie Hedegaard.

But no-one in the Commission will say this publicly for two reasons.

[Weather Satellites on the Chopping Block](#)

As my colleagues Eric Lichtblau, Ron Nixon and I report in summary form in Thursday morning's paper, the budget deal moving through Capitol Hill slashes funds that the Obama administration requested for a satellite program considered vital for the nation's weather forecasting. That raises the prospect of less accurate forecasts and other problems, some of them potentially life-threatening, starting in 2016.

[The best remedy for the price of gas](#)

By requiring automakers to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 6% a year, the Obama administration could help clean the air, slash our oil addiction and save American motorists billions.



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