

19 May 2024

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Weekly news roundup (18-22 June)

Publication date: 25 June 2018

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International

China has excluded LNG from a list [1] of more than 650 US products that will attract a new 25% import tariff, in a tit-for-tat response to a USD 50 billion trade tariff imposed by the Trump administration on Chinese goods over the weekend.

Global logistics firms UPS and DHL are investing heavily in natural gas-fuelled vehicles [2] to support their long-haul transport operations and cut emissions on both sides of the Atlantic.

Shell has announced a flurry of key asset sales in Malaysia, Norway and Thailand [3] as the Anglo-Dutch supermajor races towards its USD 30 billion divestment target.

US & Canada

US – California endured extreme power prices [4] in 2017 due to fluctuating renewable generation, highlighting the need for flexible backup capacity.

Law firm WeissLaw is investigating “possible breaches of fiduciary duty [5] and other violations of law” by Cheniere Energy Partners Holdings in its acquisition by majority stakeholder Cheniere Energy.

A lobby group formed to promote a controversial revenue-neutral carbon pricing proposal [6] in the US is reported to have attracted millions of dollars of funding from donors including major energy companies.

The US hydrocarbons industry is releasing 60% more methane [7] into the atmosphere than federal regulators estimate, a new study has found, raising concerns about the climate impacts of increased natural gas production.

Africa

Ghana – The CEO of state-backed Ghana Gas has reported that first gas from the Sankofa gas project [8], led by Eni, is expected to flow before the end of the month.

Asia Pacific

Indonesia – Inpex has awarded a pre-front-end engineering and design (pre-FEED) contract for work at its Abadi LNG project [9] to a consortium comprising Japan’s Chiyoda Corporation and Synergy Engineering.

Japan – Osaka Gas is working to restore piped gas supplies [9] to more than 110,000 customers in the Osaka region following a 6.1 magnitude earthquake.

South Korea – Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power has cancelled plans to build new nuclear reactors [10] and plans to shutter its second oldest nuclear plant early, prompted by government policy to eliminate atomic power over the next 40 years.

Australasia

Australia – ExxonMobil has unveiled plans to develop what could become the third LNG import terminal [11] on Australia's east coast, as energy companies work to avert looming gas shortages in the region.

Santos has awarded three separate front-end engineering and design (FEED) contracts for development of its Barossa offshore gas project [9].

The state government of Queensland has offered more than 44,000 sq km of land for exploration [8] across 29 areas, more than double the previous release, state officials have said.

Little or no risk of a gas supply shortfall [12] exists in eastern or south-eastern Australia until the end of the next decade, the Australian Energy Market Operator has said in a notable U-turn on previous gas deficit warnings.

Europe

EU – The European Commission has ruled that Luxembourg gave illegal tax benefits to Engie [13] and ordered the country to recover around USD 140 million from the French energy company.

The European Commission is investigating whether LNG supply agreements between Qatar Petroleum and European importers have hindered the free flow of gas [14] within the European Economic Area – potentially in breach of European antitrust rules.

Germany – The Federal Network Agency has approved a range of future electricity scenarios compiled by transmission system operators that forecast big gains for renewable and gas-fired generation [15] at the expense of coal.

Electricity TSO Amprion and gas grid operator Open Grid Europe plan to build the country's first industrial-scale power-to-gas plants [16] to help the country achieve its energy transition ambitions.

Italy – Eni has completed the sale of a 10% stake in the Shorouk concession [8] in Egypt's Zohr gas field and agreed to sell its stake in Eni Croatia to Croatia's INA-Industrija nafte.

UK – The Scottish government has been forced to clarify its stance on hydraulic fracturing [17] after a court ruled the administration's emerging policy did not amount to a ban on unconventional oil and gas extraction – contrary to statements made by ministers.

Naftogaz has served Gazprom an order to freeze assets in England and Wales [18] issued by the Commercial Court in London – despite a recent appeal ruling that threw into doubt the enforceability of the Stockholm Arbitration Court's February award in favour of the Ukrainian company.

Russia & CIS

Russia – Gazprom has scored an early "success" at the 2018 World Cup with the completion of a network of filling stations to fuel natural gas vehicles (NGVs) [19] ferrying people to football matches across Russia.



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