Oil and Gas News Briefs
Compiled by Larry Persily
June 23, 2025

Longer-term effect on oil prices unclear after U.S. bombing of Iran

(The New York Times; June 22) - If the United States had acted a couple of decades ago to bomb Iran's nuclear weapons program, as it did on June 21, oil prices would have soared. But even though prices might jump when trading resumes this week, the longer-term effect is far less clear. Oil traders must weigh whether the American attack will lead to wider fighting that harms exports from the Persian Gulf, said Muyu Xu, senior Asia crude oil analyst at Kpler, a global commodities and shipping data firm.

Wider fighting could drive up prices if oil-loading facilities are damaged or tanker traffic is interrupted. There have been no major disruptions so far since the Israel-Iran conflict escalated this month, though Israel's air attacks did set fire to a refinery and refined products depot supplying Tehran. "Until now, we haven't seen a single barrel removed from the market," Xu said. Military action by Iran to interrupt the flow of oil would mostly harm China, which is closely aligned with Iran and buys nearly all of Iran's oil exports.

China buys a third of all oil coming out of the gulf, according to Kpler's data, and helped broker a rapprochement two years ago between Iran and Saudi Arabia, another big exporter of oil from the Persian Gulf. Iran's oil exports have declined steeply in recent years, although there was a partial rebound last year as China stepped up purchases from Iran. By contrast, the U.S. buys less than 3% of the oil coming out of the Persian Gulf, notably from northern Saudi Arabia. The U.S. became an overall net exporter of oil in 2020 as fracking technologies enabled a big increase in domestic production.

Iran will need to weigh risks of retaliation if it closes Strait of Hormuz

(Bloomberg; June 22) – U.S. airstrikes on Iran's nuclear facilities are sharpening the focus on one option Iran has yet to really deploy in the conflict: disrupting regional oil trade, especially through the critical Strait of Hormuz. Iran has over the years threatened multiple times to shut the strait — a narrow stretch of water through which a fifth of the world's oil supply flows each day. But in practice, Tehran has numerous less-drastic options at its disposal to calibrate a response that hurts its enemies while limiting the impact on allies like China, its biggest oil buyer.

A full closure of Hormuz for more than a few hours or days is a nightmare scenario that many observers think improbable. It would choke off flows and spike crude prices — JPMorgan analysts said by almost 70% — fueling global inflation and weighing heavily on growth. If it chooses to target oil in its retaliation against the U.S. strikes, Iran's coastline onto Hormuz gives Tehran an array of options, from lower-impact harassing of ships in the region, to the more extreme alternatives: attacking tankers with drones, mines or bombs to the point that the strait becomes impassable for commercial trade.

Iran may also ultimately avoid actions that impede oil flows — recent history is littered with examples where supply threats came to nothing. In whatever it does, Tehran will have to weigh the possibility of retaliation against its own energy infrastructure and the possibility that it could upset China if flows got disrupted. It will also have to consider the potential for retaliation against its own shipments, an important source of oil for China.

Mideast fighting could push China to boost energy self-sufficiency

(Financial Times; London; June 19) - Israel's attacks on Iran threaten to cut China off from critical oil-trading partners, highlighting its need for greater energy independence and disrupting Beijing's hopes for a bigger role in the region. For years, China has used its relationship with Iran to expand its influence in the Middle East, while making cheap Iranian crude, and Gulf supplies more broadly, a bedrock of the energy mix for the world's biggest buyer of oil.

"Of course, China is worried," said Gedaliah Afterman, an expert on China and the Middle East at the Abba Eban Institute for Diplomacy and Foreign Relations in Israel. "If this situation continues to escalate then they lose quite a bit, both in terms of their energy security and Iran as a strategic card that China holds." Since U.S.-led sanctions on Iran stepped up in 2018, Beijing and Tehran have strengthened ties. China has become Iran's most important economic lifeline, buying most of Iranian oil exports and supplying the country with electronics, machinery and nuclear power equipment.

The Israel-Iran crisis comes amid a tectonic shift in China's energy mix. The country has for decades been the world's biggest oil user. China is now racing to boost its energy independence, requiring a massive increase in renewable energy and electrification of the country's transport and manufacturing base. A boom in solar and wind has taken renewables' share of electricity power plant capacity to 56% last year, up from one-third a decade ago. The "key takeaway" from the crisis, said Neil Beveridge, head of Asia-Pacific research at Bernstein, will be China doubling down on its self-sufficiency drive.

Iran rushing to export as much oil as it can to maintain revenues

(Bloomberg; June 19) - Iran is racing to get its oil out into the world, a sign of the unusual logistical steps that Tehran is undertaking as the U.S. mulls joining Israel in bombing the Persian Gulf state. Oil is gushing out of Iran's ports and onto oceangoing tankers, ensuring revenues would continue — at least for a while — if shipments are disrupted. Despite the surge in exports, storage tanks at the nation's critical export terminal at Kharg Island are brimming with crude.

The oil storage sites at Kharg Island have floating roofs that rise and fall as they empty and fill, meaning it's possible to get clues from satellite images as to just how much they're holding by examining their shadows. And what images from June 11 show is that, for almost all of the large tanks, the roofs were well below the top of the walls. In short, the reservoirs were only partly full. Fast forward by a week, and a photo from June 18, several days after Israel began its attacks, shows there are no such shadows, indicating that the roofs are now at the top of the walls and the reservoirs are brimming.

That's not what you'd expect, given that Iran has been driving up its exports. If exports are well above normal, then tanks should be emptying — unless Iran is directing even more crude into the tanks. Iran can store about 28 million barrels at Kharg, according to a 2024 report from S&P Global Commodity Insights. Iran's oil exports have spiked since the nation came under attack from Israel. It exported an average of 2.33 million barrels a day in the five days after the attacks began, according to TankerTrackers.com. That's a jump of 44% compared with the average for the year through to June 14.

U.S. shale production a 'game changer' for politics and market

(Bloomberg columnist; June 20) - Few noticed earlier this month, but there was a symbolic crack in the world's geopolitical map. Everyone's attention at that point was on the nuclear talks between Tehran and Washington. In the oil market, some looked at a major shift: For just a week in early June, the U.S. didn't import a single barrel of Saudi crude — a feat only seen once before in half a century.

The timing is fortuitous. On June 9, President Donald Trump received a call from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying war against Iran was imminent. Since the first oil crisis in 1973-1974, generations of U.S. politicians have dreaded a similar call, fearful of the risks around oil. There are hardly any certainties in the global economy but one of the few is that Mideast conflict means higher energy prices. In U.S. politics, too, there are few certainties, but one is that Americans hate expensive gasoline.

These days, however, Washington can worry less about such constraints. The U.S. shale revolution has transformed America into the world's largest oil producer, elbowing out Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iran and every member of the OPEC+ cartel. This freedom from Mideast oil offers Trump a chance to redo U.S. foreign policy in a volatile region in ways his predecessors could have only dreamed — without having to fear a recession.

The shale revolution has been a "game changer for oil markets, prices and energy security," Fatih Birol, the head of the International Energy Agency, said. Today, the U.S. pumps more than a fifth of the world's total oil. It's worth repeating: Two out of 10 barrels worldwide are made in the USA. The last time the country had such a large share of the global market was 55 years ago. Saudi Arabia and Russia come in well behind.

Asia nervous that Israel-Iran fighting could affect LNG supplies

(Bloomberg; June 19) - Asia, the world's fastest-growing market for liquefied natural gas, was expected to import more and more from the Middle East. It's a prospect that encouraged expansions among big producers Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Now, an escalating conflict between Iran and Israel is forcing a rethink. For most buyers, the biggest concern centers around the Strait of Hormuz and the threat to navigation. Last year, roughly a third of all LNG to Asia went through the waterway.

After nearly a week of war, Tehran hasn't disrupted flows and hasn't indicated it will. Shipments continue as normal. But that hasn't eased anxiety among Asia's big LNG importers, all of whom have been ratcheting up energy-security efforts and diversifying since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 upended the market. And they are beginning to act. Across Asia, LNG traders have been checking on available supply in case they have to procure more shipments.

While this hasn't resulted in any emergency purchases from more nearby suppliers such as Australia, it's a hint of early preparations already afoot. Qatar has asked tankers to wait outside the strait until they're ready to load, and Japanese shipper Nippon Yusen KK instructed vessels to maintain safe distances from the shore while navigating in Iranian waters. Another concern for buyers is that escalating attacks may shut down Israeli gas exports to Egypt and Jordan, or cut Iranian flows to Turkey, thus forcing those customers to buy additional LNG — tightening the market and pushing up prices.

Asia's LNG imports down 16 million tonnes in first half of the year

(Reuters columnist; June 19) - Imports of LNG into Asia have declined by a record amount during the first half of 2025, as slowing economic growth and trade tensions with the U.S. cooled demand for the fuel. The only exception so far in 2025 has been Taiwan, which luckily for liquefied natural gas exporters is primed to substantially lift its gas dependence following the closure of its last remaining nuclear reactor last month.

As Asia imports roughly two-thirds of all global LNG supplies, this widespread demand downturn in such a key region has placed several LNG exporters under strain and has led to a 16% fall in Asia LNG spot prices so far this year. Five of the six largest LNG importers so far in 2025 are in Asia: Japan, China, South Korea, India and Taiwan. Between them, those countries have registered a collective 16-million-tonne drop in LNG imports during the first half of the year compared to the same months in 2024.

Taiwan has notched up a modest 100,000-tonne increase in LNG orders from a year ago, Kpler data shows. But Taiwan's appetite for LNG could climb further in the months ahead. The main driver of gas demand potential is the need for power firms to replace the electricity lost from the recent closure of Taiwan's last remaining nuclear reactor. Unit 2 of the Maanshan reactor was disconnected from Taiwan's grid around the middle of last month, which marked the end of a 40-year run for nuclear power in Taiwan.

Power firms have been planning for the nuclear shutdown for months and steadily reduced nuclear-powered electricity generation accordingly. Gas-fired power, coal plants and solar have covered the loss of nuclear, but Taiwan's utilities will likely need to increase generation from all available resources to meet system demand needs.

Global banks increased financing of fossil fuel projects in 2024

(Wall Street Journal; June 17) - Global banks significantly increased their financing for coal, oil and gas projects last year, according to a new report by climate advocacy groups, marking a reversal at a time when lenders are backtracking on climate pledges. The world’s largest lenders committed $869 billion to companies conducting business in fossil fuels in 2024, according to the Banking on Climate Chaos report published June 17. This was 23% higher than 2023. The report, in its 16th edition, is coauthored by a group of nonprofits including the Rainforest Action Network and Sierra Club.

The surge raises questions about the financial sector’s commitment to climate goals. The report draws on data from the world’s 65 largest banks by asset size and their financing activities to around 2,730 companies that are active across the fossil-fuel life cycle, from exploration to combustion. The financing includes bond and share issuances, project and corporate loans, and revolving credit facilities.

U.S. lenders continue to dominate as the largest financiers: JPMorgan Chase led the pack, providing $53.5 billion in funding last year, followed by Bank of America with $46 billion and Citigroup with $44.7 billion. These three, along with Barclays — the sole European bank in the top dozen — saw the largest absolute increases in their fossil-fuel financing, each growing by more than $10 billion last year. Nearly half of 2024 financing went to U.S.-based fossil-fuel companies, the world’s largest producers of oil and gas.

The report, which tracks $7.9 trillion in fossil-fuel financing since 2016, notes that last year’s increase was partly due to a retreat from climate action by banks, with many watering down exclusion policies and delaying decarbonization targets.

Cheniere looks to more long-term LNG supply deals with Japan

(S&P Global; June 18) - Cheniere Energy, the biggest U.S. LNG exporter, is looking to sell more LNG to Japan after its recent maiden long-term supply deal with the country, Anatol Feygin, chief commercial officer, told Platts, part of S&P Global Commodity Insights, on June 18. The comments come a week after JERA, the largest Japanese LNG importer, announced the signing of a non-binding heads of agreement (HOA) to buy up to 1 million tonnes a year of LNG for more than 20 years from Cheniere's Corpus Christi LNG terminal in Texas or its flagship Sabine Pass export terminal in Louisiana.

"It is very important for us to ultimately conclude the transaction with JERA. As you know, it is an HOA, and we will work very hard to convert that into a binding agreement in the coming months," Feygin said in an interview on the sidelines of the Japan Energy Summit & Exhibition in Tokyo. He said Cheniere had previously not been in a position to transact with Japanese companies for a number of reasons. "Usually, it has been because the buying pattern of companies here has not coincided with our timing on projects and volume availability."

"We have very healthy discussions with other Japanese companies, and we hope that our portfolio of Japanese offtakers does not begin and end with JERA," he said. Following on Japan's 7th Strategic Energy Plan in February, Cheniere sees support for LNG for power demand for artificial intelligence and electrification, after the previous plan's "too pessimistic" power demand outlook. Cheniere is pursuing expansions of its Sabine Pass LNG terminal in Louisiana and Corpus Christi plant in Texas.

Japan's LNG demand could grow to power AI centers

(Reuters; June 19) - Japan is back in the spotlight for liquefied natural gas producers as the boom in artificial intelligence, rising costs for cleaner energy and a new national energy plan drive appetite for long-term LNG deals. While purchases by China, the world's biggest LNG importer, are expected to fall this year, buyers in No. 2 Japan are securing long-term supply deals again, including a potential landmark deal with Qatar.

Japan's LNG imports had fallen for a decade as nuclear power plants, idled after the 2011 Fukushima disaster, restarted and as renewable energy sources increased. Data centers are expected to use enormous amounts of power to sustain the AI boom, while Japan's 7th Strategic Energy Plan in February identified gas as a realistic transition fuel for the nation's goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

"We had expected that electricity demand in Japan would decline, but the growth of data centers is bending that curve," Yukio Kani, global CEO of JERA, the country's top power generator and LNG buyer, told Reuters. "Rising costs have also dimmed prospects for alternative fuels like hydrogen and ammonia, Kani said.

In Japan's energy plan, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry forecast annual LNG demand would fall to between 53 million and 61 million tonnes in 2040 if it met its emissions reductions target, from 66 million tonnes last year. But in a risk scenario where decarbonization technologies lag, METI forecast demand could instead rise to 74 million tonnes. The plan calls for public-private cooperation to secure long-term contracts for the fuel, given price volatility and supply disruption risks.

Japanese LNG buyer signs unusual winter-only supply contract

(Reuters; June 20) - Japan's biggest power generator, JERA, and Australia's Woodside Energy have signed a deal for Woodside to supply JERA with liquefied natural gas during the winter months, the companies said on June 20. The heads of agreement was signed at the LNG Producer-Consumer Conference, co-hosted by Japan's industry ministry and the International Energy Agency in Tokyo.

Under the deal, Woodside will supply about 200,000 tonnes of LNG annually during the December to February period, starting in fiscal year 2027, a JERA spokesperson said, adding that the deal is for five years. The agreement is unusual in that it covers only three months of the year instead of the full year, which a regular term contract would cover, Yuya Hasegawa, a director at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said at a press conference. He also said the deal would provide flexibility, allowing JERA not to take supplies when there is no need due to warmer-than-usual winter conditions.

Hasegawa said the ministry hoped Japanese companies would consider similar deals with other suppliers. "If it spreads to other sources, it may lead to a reinforcing of Japan's stable procurement," he said. JERA, jointly owned by Tokyo Electric Power and Chubu Electric Power, is Japan's largest LNG buyer.

Petronas will send first cargo of Canadian LNG to Japan

(Reuters; June 20) - An executive from Malaysian state energy firm Petroliam Nasional said on June 20 that the first cargo from its portion of supply from the LNG Canada project will be delivered to its customer, Japanese city gas provider Toho Gas, in July. Petronas is one of five partners in the liquefied natural gas export project nearing completion in Kitimat, British Columbia. Shell is the lead on the project, with partners Korea Gas, Mitsubishi, PetroChina and Petronas. At completion, the LNG terminal is designed to produce nearly 14 million tonnes per year.

FERC now can authorize construction while gas projects are in court

(Oil & Gas Journal; June 20) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission can authorize construction of natural gas projects even in the face of ongoing legal challenges, under new orders issued June 18. The commission also expanded the number of smaller gas projects eligible for streamlined permitting by increasing the cost threshold for projects eligible for the blanket certificates by over 50%. FERC said the moves were necessary to expedite natural gas infrastructure development.

“As the demand for electrical power continues to grow, getting more gas generation built is critically important and that means we must get gas infrastructure to supply that generation built more quickly as well, so that we can provide consumers with reliable power,” FERC Chairman Mark Christie said in a statement. The one-year waiver of an existing rule could save developers time and reduce their costs because FERC will no longer block construction if a project’s certificate is pending legal action.

During the one-year waiver of an existing rule, FERC is seeking public input on its proposal to permanently remove the section. Meanwhile, the new blanket certificate policy allows FERC to grant routine pipeline construction, modification, acquisition, operation and abandonment activities for projects costing less than $62 million without needing a specific case-by-case certificate for each activity. The previous cost threshold for no-notice certificates was $41 million. Blanket authorizations limit opportunities for public protests, public review and landowner.

Crowley operates reflagged tanker to deliver U.S. LNG to Puerto Rico

(The San Juan Star; Puerto Rico; June 19) - Gov. Jenniffer González Colón celebrated on June 18 the arrival in Puerto Rico of the American Energy, the first U.S.-flagged liquefied natural gas carrier in decades. Colón said she did not want to depend on foreign ships to bring such a critical product. For the first time, there is a maritime route to bring gas to the island, she said. Crowley commenced operations of the LNG carrier to transport U.S.-sourced gas to Puerto Rico.

Crowley and Naturgy entered into a multi-year agreement that provides for the regular delivery of U.S. LNG to Naturgy’s power station in Peñuelas. The 900-foot-long Crowley-owned carrier American Energy has a capacity of 34.4 million gallons of LNG per voyage, about 2.8 billion cubic feet of natural gas. At capacity, each delivery of LNG aboard American Energy, which departed from Port Sabine on the Gulf Coast of Texas late last week, provides enough energy to power 80,000 homes for a year.

The ship was built in France in 1994. The U.S. does not have any LNG tankers that meet the requirements of the 1920 Jones Act, but Crowley was able to reflag the American Energy under a Jones Act exemption that allows ships built before 1996 to undergo reflagging, according to Andres Rojas, LNG analyst with S&P Global Commodity Insights. The ship will be crewed by U.S. mariners, Crowley said.

Louisiana LNG project developer gets go-ahead from FERC

(Reuters; June 18) - Commonwealth LNG said on June 18 it has received a final order from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission authorizing its 9.5 million-tonne-per-year liquefied natural gas export project on the Calcasieu Ship Channel in Louisiana. The FERC final order follows a conditional export authorization by the U.S. Department of Energy, enabling Commonwealth to target a final investment decision later this year.

The project aims to begin LNG production by 2029 and has gained traction through binding long-term agreements with global buyers such as Glencore, Japan's JERA and Malaysia's Petronas. The developer has said project construction costs would total just under $5 billion. The facility is projected to create 2,000 construction jobs at its peak and 270 permanent roles once operational.

LNG export project in Texas asks FERC for more time for expansion

(Pipeline & Gas Journal; June 20) - Freeport LNG is requesting a 40-month extension from federal regulators to complete the long-delayed Train 4 liquefaction unit at its Texas export terminal, citing setbacks from a 2022 explosion and the subsequent yearslong recovery process. In a letter filed June 18 with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Freeport asked to move its in-service deadline from Aug. 1, 2028, to Dec. 1, 2031, stating it needs more time to finalize financing and resume construction.

The proposed Train 4 would add additional liquefaction capacity to Freeport’s LNG export facility on Quintana Island in Brazoria County. The developer emphasized that restoring full operations of the existing liquefaction units after the 2022 incident took precedence over advancing the expansion with a fourth train. With the terminal now fully operational as of May 21, at more than 15 million tonnes per year of LNG, it is refocusing efforts on commercializing the expansion.

“Certainty regarding Freeport’s ability to complete project construction by the in-service deadline is essential to commercialization of the project,” the company said in the FERC filing, adding that it has spent $111 million to date on Train 4 development and has retained an engineering, procurement and construction contract with Kiewit Energy. Freeport said the 48 to 56 months required to build the facility, paired with ongoing market engagement, make it impossible to meet the current schedule. It noted longer procurement lead times for equipment and materials are also contributing to delays.

IEA says LNG supply chain needs to do more to cut CO2 emissions

(Bloomberg; June 20) - The world's liquefied natural gas supply chains spew roughly 350 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent a year — more than Italy's annual emissions. For roughly $100 billion, that footprint could be cut by 60%, according to the International Energy Agency. The proposal identifies low-cost opportunities that would significantly decrease LNG's climate footprint: Cutting methane leaks alone could bring down annual emissions by close to 90 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent, or 25% of total LNG emissions, the IEA said. Half of that reduction could be realized at no net cost.

The report found that, on average, LNG results in about 25% less emissions than coal globally. However, the report emphasized that gas producers and LNG operators need to be more ambitious about cutting emissions. The emissions intensity of LNG is about two-thirds more than that of regular natural gas, the agency said. "Comparing LNG only to coal sets the bar too low," the authors said. "Those making an environmental case for LNG need to focus on minimizing its emissions intensity; it is not enough just to surpass the emissions performance of the most carbon-intensive fuel (coal)," the report said.

About 70% of the emissions were from vented or combusted CO2, while the remaining 30% was from methane releases, the IEA said. The study analyzed emissions from production through the supply chain to regasification. It didn't consider combustion by end users. If the IEA proposal was implemented globally, it would add about $1 per million Btu to the delivered cost of LNG, the agency estimated.

Japan strengthens efforts to reduce methane emissions from LNG

(Bloomberg; June 20) - Japan is strengthening efforts to curtail methane emissions from liquefied natural gas as it sticks with a fossil fuel that's accelerating climate change. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said it will collaborate with the United Nations' Oil and Gas Methane Partnership 2.0 program and MiQ, a methane certification non-profit, to verify emissions from LNG imports into Japan.

The announcement on June 20 was made after a three-day energy summit in Tokyo where government officials urged energy importers to secure gas past 2050 — the deadline Japan has set for net-zero emissions. The country is the world's No. 2 LNG importer, and several of its largest buyers are considering 20-year supply deals with projects starting after 2030, people familiar with the talks said.

The partnership is an expansion of Japan's Coalition for LNG Emission Abatement Toward Net-Zero initiative. The government is also looking at technologies such as carbon capture and storage — unproven at scale — to mitigate emissions from burning LNG and meet its midcentury climate targets. Global LNG supply chains spew roughly 350 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent a year — more than the annual emissions of Italy, the International Energy Agency said in a report on June 20. For roughly $100 billion, that climate footprint could be cut by 60%, according to the report.

Korean shipbuilder stops LNG tanker contracts with Russian shipyard

(gCaptain; June 19) - South Korean shipbuilder Samsung Heavy Industries has terminated a contract to build icebreaking LNG carriers in partnership with Russia's Zvezda shipyard. The ships were intended for transport of liquefied natural gas from Novatek's flagship Arctic LNG 2 project. In total, Samsung had been contracted to build hulls for 15 ice-class Arc7 carriers. It delivered hulls for the first five vessels from a 2019 contract to Zvezda before Western sanctions placed the cooperation on hold. None of the vessels, however, have been commissioned.

Samsung signed additional contracts with Zvezda in 2020 and 2021 to supply hull blocks and equipment for 10 more ice-breaking LNG carriers, as well as seven ice-class shuttle tankers, at a total value of $3.5 billion, with $2.04 billion coming from the gas carriers. Last year, Zvezda unilaterally terminated the deals due to contract default and demanded repayment of about $800 million. Samsung claimed force majeure, arguing it had to suspend work on the vessels in 2022 due to U.S. and South Korean sanctions.

The company filed an arbitration request with Singapore's arbitration court in July 2024 following Zvezda's termination. With no resolution in sight and mounting sanctions, Samsung has now moved to cancel the two contracts. It plans to sue the Russian yard for damages. "The fundamental cause is the illegal termination of the contract by the shipowner. We are in the process of assessing the damage caused by the unlawful cancellation," Samsung said on June 18 in a stock market filing.

Russia sends first summer LNG cargo to China on northern route

(Reuters; June 20) - Russia's Yamal LNG plant, operated by Novatek, has dispatched its first cargo of liquefied natural gas this season via the Northern Sea Route to China, the Kommersant daily newspaper reported on June 20, citing Kpler data. It said the Arc 7 ice-class tanker Georgiy Ushakov left the port of Sabetta on June 19 and has been moving eastward along Russia's Arctic shore.

The route, challenging due to thick ice and cold weather during the winter season, has gained more importance over the past few years as Europe, once the largest buyer of Russia's fossil fuels, imposed a number of sanctions against Moscow over the war in Ukraine. Russia is sending more of its gas to China, increasing its use of the Northern Sea Route to cut the shipping time on eastbound cargoes to China's import terminals. Even during the summer, the route can still have ice, requiring ice-class tankers.

Malaysia may need to import LNG to meet growing domestic demand

(S&P Global; June 17) - Malaysia, a prominent global liquefied natural gas exporter, is preparing for a scenario where it may have to import LNG to meet its own needs, Petroliam Nasional, or Petronas, president and CEO Tengku Muhammad Taufik Tengku Aziz said June 17. "We are already actually preparing for this scenario," he said at a press briefing during the Energy Asia 2025 conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

In Malaysia, electricity demand is growing at about 6.5% annually, and "it is not just us who has to prepare for the onset of this uptick in electricity demand," Taufik noted. "It was also shared during a recent forum where we had CEOs of energy utilities come in." Petronas is "working to get a third regasification terminal up and running" while continuing to retain an advantaged position to export LNG to its long-term partners for their energy security, he said. Much of its gas exports are under long-term contracts.

Canadian judge rejects challenge against floating hotel at LNG site

(Squamish Chief; British Columbia; June 20) - A federal judge has turned down a legal challenge against Woodfibre LNG over a regulatory agency's approval to repurpose a cruise ship for housing workers brought in to build a liquefied natural gas facility near Squamish, British Columbia. The advocacy group Citizens for My Sea to Sky had sought a judicial review of the decision that granted the company the ability to amend its environmental authorizations to accommodate the parked ship, dubbed the "floatel."

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada had approved Woodfibre LNG's request under the federal Environmental Assessment Act. In court, My Sea to Sky argued that decision was unreasonable and failed to properly address the risk of gender-based violence that arises when a large number of construction workers are housed near small or remote communities. The group also claimed the decision breached procedural fairness by failing to hold a public comment period before making the decision.

In his decision released June 20, Justice Sébastien Grammond found the federal agency had acted reasonably. The judge also rejected the notion that procedural fairness had been breached, ruling there was no legal duty to allow the public to weigh in on the matter. Woodfibre is building a gas liquefaction and export facility at the site of an abandoned pulp and paper mill. Construction is estimated to be completed by 2027. The $5 billion project is designed to produce 2.1 million tonnes per year of LNG.