

Oil and Gas News Briefs

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Korean investment in Louisiana LNG key agenda item in trade talks

(The Korea Times; Feb. 20) - A U.S. request for South Korea to invest in Louisiana's liquefied natural gas industry has emerged as a key agenda item in ongoing trade talks between the two countries. U.S. President Donald Trump's threat to boost tariffs on Korean goods back to 25% from 15% — the level agreed on in November — has been attributed partly to Seoul's rejection of that request. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Resources on Feb. 20 neither confirmed nor denied a report that Washington warned of the tariff hike after Korea refused to invest in Louisiana LNG export terminals.

Citing multiple government sources, the Dong-A Ilbo newspaper reported that Seoul's trade negotiators told their U.S. counterparts that it would be difficult to make decisions unless the National Assembly passes a bill to formalize Korea's planned \$350 billion investment in American industries. "Please excuse us for not going into specifics about discussions on U.S. investment projects," the ministry spokesperson said.

The government's working-level delegation sent to Washington on Feb. 18 included the acting head of the ministry's gas division, which oversees supply of LNG and liquefied petroleum gas. He was reportedly dispatched to discuss potential investments. Korea has taken a cautious stance on investing in the U.S. sector, citing uncertain profitability. Although private company POSCO plans to import Alaska LNG and supply pipe for the proposed Alaska project, the government has ruled out any sovereign-level investment in the project as well as any purchase of Alaska LNG by state-run Korea Gas.

Japan reselling more LNG, while using less of it

(Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis; Feb. 25) - Japan's resales of liquefied natural gas to foreign markets continued to reach new highs in fiscal year 2024, up nearly 15% compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, the country's domestic consumption of LNG marginally increased that year but has fallen by nearly 20% since FY2018, according to the latest LNG handling survey of 30 companies conducted by the Japan Organization for Metals and Energy Security (JOGMEC).

Due to declining LNG consumption at home, Japanese energy companies and trading houses are increasingly targeting overseas markets, aiming to capitalize on arbitrage opportunities and develop long-term relationships with customers abroad. The latest JOGMEC survey shows that 40% of all LNG volumes handled by Japanese companies are sold elsewhere, up from just 16% in FY2018. Yet Japanese companies and officials

have persistently lobbied foreign governments to facilitate the development of upstream gas production and LNG export projects, citing energy security concerns.

While Japanese companies often insist that investments in new gas and LNG infrastructure bolster energy security, the rapid growth of external trade and falling domestic demand suggest that these investments are designed to expand trading opportunities overseas. An IEEFA report in May 2025 found that Japanese companies resold between A\$11 billion and A\$14 billion worth of Australian LNG in 2024, with profits likely exceeding A\$1 billion. Nuclear restarts and the uptake of renewables in Japan are expected to further reduce LNG demand in the coming years.

U.S. to supply one-third of world's LNG by 2030

(Bloomberg; Feb. 24) - On this day 10 years ago, the U.S. liquefied and shipped its first cargo of shale gas in the modern era. The decade since that Brazil-bound shipment left Cheniere Energy's Sabine Pass terminal in Louisiana has transformed global energy markets. The U.S. has flipped decisively from a net importer to the world's biggest exporter of liquefied natural gas. That gives American LNG outsized geopolitical and commercial clout. Its importance is poised to grow further as new projects come online.

The surge in U.S. shipments has blunted Russia's ability to weaponize gas against Europe. It has handed President Donald Trump leverage in trade negotiations, while transforming LNG from a once-rigid business to a far more liquid global market — one that increasingly resembles oil. What sets American LNG apart is its flexibility. Cargoes are sold primarily on a free-on-board basis, meaning buyers take ownership at the export terminal and can ship the fuel to wherever prices are highest (by contrast, suppliers like Qatar tend to deliver LNG directly to the buyer's import terminal).

This has led traditional buyers, like Japan or China, to function essentially as traders — a trend supported by a proliferation of trading desks in Singapore and London with a key purpose of handling U.S. gas. Around the world, gas is emerging as the fuel of choice to complement intermittent renewables — and LNG is the agile form of gas that can easily be moved across borders without building huge pipelines. Today, roughly a quarter of global LNG supply comes from the U.S. By 2030 — with a wave of new projects launching exports — that share is projected to climb to about a third.

Most new U.S. gas pipeline capacity delivers to Gulf Coast for exports

(U.S. Energy Information Administration; Feb. 25) - Natural gas pipeline projects completed in the United States in 2025 increased capacity by approximately 6.3 billion cubic feet per day, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Most of the capacity, 85%, or 5.3 bcf per day of this new capacity, is dedicated to delivering gas to

the southcentral U.S., which includes the Gulf Coast where much of the nation's growing natural gas demand, particularly from liquefied natural gas, is concentrated.

Approximately 65% of the total pipeline capacity built in 2025 consists of intrastate pipelines, continuing the recent trend of intrastate pipeline builds outpacing interstate capacity additions. These pipelines operate primarily within state lines and are therefore not subject to the jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The new intrastate capacity built in 2025 largely functions as gathering systems, which are essential for transporting gas from producers into the wider transmission system.

Two such projects completed in 2025 expanded pipeline capacity by a combined 3.5 bcf per day to connect flow from the gas-producing Haynesville shale formation in Louisiana to the Gillis Hub in southeastern Louisiana. The Louisiana Energy Gateway project added 1.8 bcf per day, and the New Generation Gas Gathering system added 1.7 bcf. Both were in service as of October 2025. In addition, three other projects expanded pipeline capacity for delivery to growing demand centers on the Gulf Coast.

Permian gas set record with negative prices 12 days in a row

(Reuters; Feb. 23) - U.S. spot natural gas prices for Feb. 23 at the Waha Hub in the Permian shale in West Texas closed in negative territory for a record 12th time in a row as pipeline constraints trap gas in the nation's biggest oil-producing basin, forcing some energy firms to pay others to take gas associated with their oil production. Analysts have long said negative prices were a sure sign that the Permian region, which spans West Texas and eastern New Mexico, needs more pipelines.

More pipes are on the way later this year, but not soon enough to handle all the gas coming out of the ground. Permian production has hit record highs every year since 2013, rising to 27.6 billion cubic feet per day in 2025 — enough to supply about a quarter of U.S. demand. The U.S. Energy Information Administration projected Permian production will rise to 29 bcf per day in 2026 and 29.6 bcf per day in 2027. Energy firms in the Permian have been willing to take some losses on gas because they can make up for those with the profits from selling oil.

Negative prices were not very common a decade ago when environmental rules were less strict and many drillers could flare or burn off some of their unwanted gas. But in recent years, that gas has become increasingly valuable as a fuel to generate electricity used by power-hungry U.S. data centers and for export via pipeline to Mexico and as liquefied natural gas to markets around the world. In the cash market, average prices at the Waha Hub fell to minus \$4.56 per million Btu for Feb. 23 — a record 12th day in a row that Waha prices closed below zero. The prior record was 10 days in June 2025.

German energy company open to buying more U.S. LNG

(S&P Global; Feb. 23) - Uniper remains open to expanding its exposure to more LNG from the U.S., even as it seeks to diversify its portfolio, the German energy company's chief commercial officer for gas and LNG told Platts, part of S&P Global Energy. "We have not reached the peak" of Uniper's interest in U.S. LNG, Charbel Abi Daher said in an interview on Feb. 20. The European Union has dramatically deepened its reliance on U.S. LNG while phasing out Russian gas in recent years.

In 2025, the U.S. supplied about 60 million tonnes of the superchilled fuel to the EU, according to data from S&P Global Energy CERA. This was about 57% of the EU's total imports that year, marking the first time on record that the EU sourced more than half of its annual imports from one country. Some European players have begun to fret that the Continent is repeating the mistake of relying too much on one gas supplier by shifting from a heavy Russian dependency to a heavy U.S. one, particularly amid creaking relations in the wake of President Donald Trump's recent push to acquire Greenland.

However, the Uniper executive downplayed such worries. Abi Daher said he sees a "low probability" that political turbulence threatens LNG trade. "They need markets and consumers, and we need their gas." Uniper, however, is struggling to navigate the EU's methane emissions regulation, according to Abi Daher. The landmark law mandates that LNG and other fuel imports meet emissions reporting standards for their cargoes from 2027. It's proved a bugbear for both buyers and sellers inside and outside the EU, who have criticized what they see as impractical data collection and reporting mandates.

Woodside says some high-cost LNG projects may not proceed

(Bloomberg; Feb. 24) - A forecast global glut of liquefied natural gas may weigh on prices, but demand growth is strong and supply additions aren't certain, according to Australia's biggest LNG producer. "New supply may place downward pressure on prices," Woodside Energy Acting CEO Liz Westcott said in an interview on Feb. 24. However, "expectations of a sustained or structurally disruptive oversupply should be considered with caution," she said.

The International Energy Agency and BloombergNEF are predicting that new LNG plants in North America and the Mideast may see the market move into oversupply as early as this year. Despite the increased global output, more than 50 countries are now able to import the fuel and the market is becoming more liquid, she said. Furthermore, some projects higher on the cost curve aren't proceeding, she said. Those include an LNG project in Louisiana that was abruptly halted late last year by Energy Transfer.

There is "continual change in the supply," Westcott said. Woodside has its own U.S. project — Louisiana LNG — and is assessing the potential of adding a fourth and fifth liquefaction train. It also is seeking to sell down a further 20% in the massive plant. In its

home country of Australia, Woodside plans to bring the Scarborough gas project online in the December quarter of this year, which will also add to supply.

Amid weak Asian demand, Australian LNG goes to Eastern Canada

(Bloomberg; Feb. 24) - Australia is shipping LNG much farther than its main buyers in Asia as demand for the superchilled fuel in the region falters. Eastern Canada is set to receive its first Australian shipment of the fuel on the Maran Gas Hector on Feb. 25, according to ship-tracking data compiled by Kpler that goes back to 2008. The journey is unusually long, with the tanker traveling around 16,000 miles to reach its destination.

The shipment comes as Australia increasingly looks outside its key markets in China, Japan and elsewhere in Asia to find buyers of uncontracted LNG. A cargo from the exporter arrived in Turkey over the weekend, the first since at least 2017, according to data compiled by Bloomberg, while another went to Chile this year. Demand in Asia remains weak, with LNG shipments to China — the biggest importer of the gas — dropping 11% in 2025. Some of the nation's buyers are reselling cargoes, adding to subdued spot demand from Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

Europe, which competes with Asia for supply, has been more attractive, as LNG imports hit a 10-month high in January during an unusually cold winter.

Oil market waiting for facts, not probability, to push prices higher

(Bloomberg; Feb. 23) - Oil has had the strongest start to a year since 2022, in large part thanks to fears of a fresh conflict in Iran that have offset concerns about a looming supply glut. But it will take an actual supply disruption, something that has been absent from many past conflicts, to keep the rally going. Geopolitical concerns have helped drive an 18% gain in Brent crude so far this year, with futures now above \$70 a barrel.

Traders are preparing for further moves in the market, with Brent skewed in a deep bias toward bullish call options, which benefit buyers when prices rise. Volatility has surged to an eight-month high, showing crude's erratic swings aren't likely to let up. But it's unclear how much further oil can go from here until there is a major development, refiners and traders say — likely one that goes beyond the Israeli strikes last June.

Any attack, whether a heavy assault or a limited warning to push Tehran to compromise, will come with a knee-jerk reaction, of course. But last year's experience suggests that sustaining higher prices at a time of ample supply requires actual oil flows — from Iran or the wider region — to be affected. When Israel fired missiles and tension escalated over several days last year, prices did rise, but the surge faded quickly. There's much

more Iranian oil on the water now, too. A lasting surge in prices from this point requires more than probability or chance. It will require fact.

Saudis reportedly boost oil exports in case U.S. strikes Iran

(Reuters; Feb. 25) - Saudi Arabia is increasing its oil production and exports as part of a contingency plan in case any U.S. strike on Iran disrupts supplies from the Middle East, two sources familiar with the plan said on Feb. 25. The Saudi government media office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the plan. Last year, Saudi Arabia lifted oil exports in June by around 500,000 barrels per day, shipping more crude to overseas storage, just as the United States attacked Iranian nuclear sites.

The plan this year is similar to 2025, according to the two sources. Saudi Arabia is raising oil output for contingency purposes to boost exports, the sources said. The kingdom will dial back on the plan if no disruption happens and will produce less oil later to keep in line with its OPEC+ quotas, one of the sources said. Iran, which produces over 3% of global oil, has pledged to retaliate against any strikes, potentially putting at risk other oil flows from the Middle East.

More than 20 million barrels of crude, condensate and fuels pass through the Strait of Hormuz daily, including volumes from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait as well as gas from Qatar. Saudi Arabia, OPEC's top producer, has intervened in markets for decades to provide more oil during disruptions or cut back if it felt the market was oversupplied.

Iran loads more oil and condensate aboard tankers

(Wall Street Journal; Feb. 24) - Iran's crude loadings have surged to multiyear highs this month as geopolitical risks build ahead of a third round of nuclear talks with Washington. Loadings of Iranian crude and condensate to aboard tankers jumped to nearly 27 million barrels last week, or about 3.78 million barrels a day — almost three times the recent weekly average — according to data provider Kpler.

So far this month, loadings have climbed to about 2.3 million barrels a day, up 50% from the prior three-month average of 1.54 million barrels a day. If sustained, the pace would mark Iran's strongest monthly loading rate since 2018, before nuclear-related sanctions were reimposed. The surge has coincided with a sharp increase in satellite-navigation interference near Iran's Assaluyeh petrochemical hub, distorting tracking signals and complicating monitoring efforts, analysts at Kpler said. While most of the loadings were conducted "dark," the data provider said it verified the activity using satellite imagery.

Meanwhile, more Iranian barrels are accumulating offshore. Kpler estimates Tehran's oil-on-water storage has reached a record near 200 million barrels, driven by higher

loadings and softer demand from China, Iran's largest buyer. China's imports of sanctioned Iranian crude and condensate have been averaging about 1.2 million barrels a day so far in 2026 — down 14% from 2025 levels, Kpler data showed.

Russian, Iranian oil producers offer larger discounts to attract buyers

(Bloomberg; Feb. 25) - Russian and Iranian oil producers are offering deepening discounts as they compete for the same limited group of Chinese buyers after India retreated from purchases. India's imports from Russia could drop by 40% from January levels to around 600,000 barrels a day, according to a scenario from Rystad Energy. Much of the displaced cargoes are now heading east, spurring a price war with Iranian suppliers that have long been favored by China's private refiners.

Russia's Urals grade is selling at around \$12 a barrel below Brent, according to traders, compared with a \$10 discount last month. Iranian Light is going for as much as \$11 less than the global benchmark, they said, asking not to be named as they're not authorized to speak to media. That's widened from \$8 to \$9 in December. The independent Chinese refiners have acted as the oil market's pressure valve, absorbing barrels shunned by others. But their capacity is finite and they only account for around a quarter of the country's processing capacity and are subject to government import quotas.

With China unable to fully soak up the displaced crude, unsold oil is piling up in Asian waters and Russia and Iran are running out of options. The Kremlin has already been forced to curb output, depriving it of funds for its war in Ukraine. Iran, meanwhile, is trying to ship as much oil as it can as it girds itself for a potential attack by the U.S. "Chinese private refiners cannot take in much more as their capacity is likely maxed out," said Jianan Sun, an analyst at Energy Aspects, pointing to sanctioned barrels building up in both onshore and offshore storage.

Russia's oil and gas revenues decline due to discounted prices

(Reuters; Feb. 24) - The money Russia earned from exporting oil and gas dropped over the past 12 months, even as the country's oil exports increased in volume, according to data released on Feb. 24, the fourth anniversary of Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russia relies heavily on energy revenues to support its war in Ukraine — a link that has led Western countries to impose increasingly strict sanctions on Russian fuel, seeking to weaken the country's military effort.

An analysis published by the nonprofit Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air found that Russia's revenues from oil, gas, coal and refined product exports totaled 193 billion euros (US\$228 billion) in the 12-month period ended Feb. 24, down by 27% from the comparable period pre-invasion. While Russia's gas exports have collapsed since

2022, sanctions have so far not dented Russia's oil export volumes — but, rather, forced Moscow to sell oil at lower prices.

Russia's revenues from crude exports in the past 12 months decreased by 18%, year-on-year, CREA said. At the same time, crude export volumes remained 6% above pre-invasion levels. In response to Western sanctions, Moscow has redirected most of its seaborne crude to China, India and Turkey, often relying on a “shadow fleet” of aging, uninsured tankers to circumvent Western sanctions. But tougher restrictions could hit Russian fuel exports harder this year.

U.K. imposes new sanctions to squeeze Russia's oil revenues

(Bloomberg; Feb. 24) - The U.K. has announced new sanctions on Russia's shadow oil fleet as it ramped up efforts to squeeze energy revenues funding the Kremlin's war in Ukraine. Britain targeted 175 companies in the 2Rivers network, according to a statement from the foreign office Feb. 24, which coincided with the fourth anniversary of Russia's invasion. It also sanctioned Transneft, one of world's largest oil pipeline companies, which it said was responsible for moving over 80% of Russia's oil exports.

Bloomberg in October reported on how the 2Rivers network, linked to Azerbaijan traders Etibar Eyyub and Tahir Garayev, has been instrumental in keeping hundreds of millions of barrels of Russian crude flowing despite international sanctions imposed in response to the war. The network of offshore companies, previously known as Coral, rapidly grew in stature before sanctions imposed by the European Union and U.K. since 2024 damaged its ability to operate.

The sanctions have had the effect of increasing the cost of each trade and causing Western banks, insurers and professional services firms to largely avoid them so they themselves don't also come under the eye of the authorities, according to people with direct knowledge of the operations. The sanctions have forced the network to pay higher insurance premiums, accept longer and more opaque shipping routes, and reduce its price per barrel as brokers, refiners, storage operators and ports either refused to trade with them or raised costs to protect themselves, the people said.

Oklahoma gas industry official calls for tax relief

(Houston Chronicle; Feb. 22) - February hasn't been kind to Oklahoma's energy sector, as two major companies announced their intentions to move to Texas. The president of an Oklahoma natural gas trade association is speaking out about the state's recent losses to the Lone Star State. "Despite clutch-your-pearls comments from elected locals and business development officials who really should know better, Oklahoma will

remain a highly specialized oil and natural gas economy," wrote Petroleum Alliance of Oklahoma President Brook A. Simmons in a Feb. 17 letter to the Oklahoma Legislature.

Simmons said Oklahoma has been served "a wake-up call" with the pending moves of Devon Energy and Expand Energy to Houston. In his letter, Simmons added that raising taxes on oil and gas production have led to a net loss in "advanced industry" jobs over a recent five-year period, and ultimately, these marquee-level exits. "As one oil and natural gas CEO said, 'The Houston skyline is a monument to poor public policy decisions in Louisiana and Oklahoma,'" Simmons wrote.

Simmons proposes the state offers tax relief to oil and gas companies, double down on gas over renewable energy sources including wind and solar, and encourage greater investment in the industry. These changes could keep more energy companies from leaving the Sooner State, Simmons said. "Tulsa and Oklahoma City have lost the race to become 'The Energy Capital of the World,' but we can be better at who we are and learn from our neighbor south of the Red River," Simmons wrote.

[U.S. Supreme Court agrees to hear landmark climate damages lawsuit](#)

(The Colorado Sun; Feb. 23) - The U.S. Supreme Court agreed on Feb. 23 to hear a landmark climate change case brought by Boulder and Boulder County, Colorado, against Big Oil, possibly offering a final word on whether local communities can seek payback for global warming damages through the courts. The Colorado Supreme Court said communities could at least try; oil industry executives and conservative lawmakers have demanded a U.S. Supreme Court shutdown of the idea ever since.

Opponents of the Colorado effort have predicted a conservative court majority would reject the idea that judges can decide who pays for the impacts of global warming. "The Supreme Court's decision to review Boulder's climate lawsuit is a decisive step toward resolving conflicting rulings nationwide and reaffirming that climate policy belongs with elected policymakers, not the courts," said Phil Goldberg, special counsel to the trade group Manufacturers' Accountability Project.

Boulder and Boulder and San Miguel counties sued Suncor and Exxon Mobil in 2018 over their contributions to climate change. The lawsuit followed examples in New York and California. It was the first instance of the fight moving inland, and a precursor to dozens of lawsuits since. Suncor operates the Commerce City refinery that emits large amounts of carbon dioxide and has also been fined repeatedly by state officials for other pollution violations. Boulder officials said they hope the Supreme Court will allow the case to proceed so that Colorado courts can address the issues.

Kuwait looking to sell \$7 billion stake in its oil pipelines

(Reuters; Feb. 24) - National oil company Kuwait Petroleum Corp. has held early stage talks with a large group of potential investors over the sale of a \$7 billion stake in its crude oil pipelines, three sources familiar with the matter said, following similar moves by Gulf peers Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. BlackRock, Brookfield Asset Management, EIG Partners and buyout group KKR are among those that have shown interest, the sources said.

Also showing interest are Chinese state enterprises China Silk Road Fund and China Merchants Capital, along with I Squared Capital and Macquarie Infrastructure Partners, the sources said. The transaction is structured with around \$1.5 billion in equity and the remainder financed through debt, the three sources said.

Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, KPC's deputy chairman and chief executive, is leading a steering committee overseeing the process, which sources described as being managed with close, hands-on oversight, with the committee convening every few weeks to monitor progress. "We are studying the possibility of leasing and re-leasing (oil) pipelines in the country," Al-Sabah told reporters in September. "The pipelines are assets owned by KPC and do not generate direct financial returns. If there is an opportunity to secure additional financing through these assets ... then welcome."

Oil industry exec says \$70 per barrel 'is the sweet spot'

(Reuters; Feb. 24) - The oil industry needs crude prices to rise and sustain at \$70 per barrel in order to grow output, executives said on Feb. 24. U.S. oil production can be maintained at its current level in the \$60 to \$65 price range, said Vicki Hollub, CEO of U.S. oil producer Occidental, during an Energy Aspects conference in Washington.

Benchmark Brent crude declined about 19% last year, pressured by concerns about a global oversupply of oil and uncertainty about U.S. trade policy. U.S. President Donald Trump has called on oil companies to enter Venezuela and boost production there. Oil executives have warned that additional supply would squeeze profits and lead to less drilling, not more. "We are going to need \$70 oil to continue to grow," Hollub said.

Scott Sheffield, founder of Pioneer Natural Resources, which was acquired by Exxon Mobil in 2024, echoed the comments, warning that production from the Permian Basin in the U.S. would drop off if crude prices declined to about \$50 per barrel. A price range of \$50 to \$55 per barrel "is when people are going to start reducing investments in the Permian," Sheffield said, adding that "\$70 is the sweet spot."

[Abu Dhabi national energy company expands overseas](#)

(The New York Times; Feb. 25) - Until Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber was tapped to overhaul Abu Dhabi's national energy company, it had been content to rake in the cash from large, low-cost oil fields. His mandate was to modernize the company, known as ADNOC, to make sure it could continue to sustain the economy and geopolitical ambitions of the United Arab Emirates. Al Jaber, who was appointed in 2016 by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, then the crown prince, has helped put ADNOC on the map as a global deal maker, establishing the Emirates as a brasher rival to Saudi Arabia.

"He's totally transformed the company and the way that the oil sector is managed," said Ben Cahill, a director at the Center for Energy and Environmental Systems Analysis at the University of Texas. ADNOC has plans to expand into renewable energy projects as most other oil giants are backing away. Al Jaber said he wanted to transform ADNOC "into a globally competitive energy company." Now ADNOC, which was founded in 1971, is pushing beyond oil, a risky phase for the company.

It aims for international acquisitions, especially in natural gas, where it aspires to be in the top five suppliers globally, and chemicals, renewables and other sectors. Al Jaber said ADNOC is open to participating in the development of gas resources in Venezuela, where the United States is trying to drum up investment after forcibly removing the South American country's president and taking control of its energy industry. Through ADNOC's acquisition arm, XRG, which Al Jaber set up in late 2024, the company is buying into a Texas liquefied natural gas export project called Rio Grande LNG.