

MARKET UPDATE

02/05/2022

U.S. natural gas production growth wanes as need arises

U.S. natural gas production growth is waning at the same time many countries are looking for new suppliers to help break their dependence on Russian gas after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The United States is already the world's largest producer of natural gas. But the two mainstays of production - the Appalachian region and West Texas - are seeing growth slow, with companies blaming lack of adequate pipeline infrastructure, despite prices near 14-year highs.

Oil down \$1 on China growth worries, while EU weighs Russian crude ban

Oil prices fell on Monday in holiday-sapped trade in Asia as concerns about weak economic growth in China, the world's top oil importer, outweighed fears of potential supply stress from a looming European Union ban on Russian crude.

Brent crude futures fell \$1.13, or 1.1%, to \$106.01 a barrel at 0511 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures fell \$1, or 1%, to \$103.69 a barrel. Markets in Japan, India and across Southeast Asia were closed for public holidays on Monday.

BOJ says fuel, food-driven gains to keep propping up Japan inflation

Japan's consumer inflation will continue to face upward pressure later this year from rising electricity bills and food prices, as the recent surge in commodity prices hits the economy with a lag, the central bank said on Monday.

As Japanese utilities set electricity bills based on the average import cost several months before, the upward pressure from rising energy costs will continue to prop up consumer inflation in the second half of the fiscal year that began in April, the Bank of Japan (BOJ) said.



Japan consumer confidence edges up in April, first rise in six months

Japan's consumer confidence index nudged up in April to mark its first increase in six months after the end of COVID-19 curbs in late March, but inflation expectations hit a record for the third month in a row.

A Cabinet Office survey showed the sentiment index for general households, which includes views on incomes and jobs, was at 33.0 in April, up slightly from 32.8 in March.

"Consumer sentiment turned positive as COVID-19 cases fell further and as the lifting of curbs paved the way for a reopening of the economy," a government official told a media briefing

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