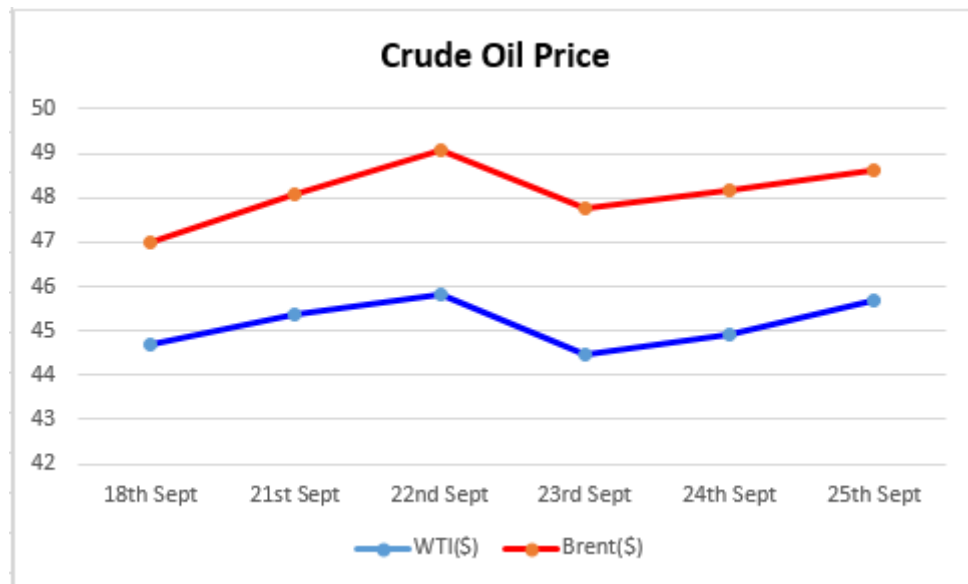


Post 26th September, 2015

Some of the news items for this week are as follows:

1. There has not been much of a fluctuation in the price of the barrel this week as the graph below shows.



2. Cristina Pinto, the executive manager for exploration and production at Petrobras said this week that we have been 'surfing the great wave of \$100 per barrel', but going forward we may not get to it, and that if we get to \$70 a barrel, we should be happy. This may well come out to be true.
3. Even if the price of the barrel comes back up to \$50, there are many projects that are on hold for not being economically viable at this price and may not go forward. This includes not only the unconventional oil projects but the conventional ones as well, as for example the deep water projects. That would again mean less employment. Check it out at:
[http://www.rigzone.com/news/oil_gas/a/140701/50 Oil Will Cut Budgets New Projects to a Sliver of Previous Estimates](http://www.rigzone.com/news/oil_gas/a/140701/50_Oil_Will_Cut_Budgets_New_Projects_to_a_Sliver_of_Previous_Estimates)
4. As a result of the present downturn, more layoffs are coming. TransCanada informed its employees this week that senior leadership positions and retirements are coming, as a cost-reduction measure. Halliburton (service company), Cenovus (O & G company), Statoil (O & G company) and Caterpillar (construction and mining equipment company) may face more employee reductions too. This does not sound good because our industry will lose experienced individuals who may look for different careers, given the fact that the present downturn appears headed for a longer draw.

So much of all this for the present. For the lighter side, I have decided to share with you this, this week.

Talking about smart phones, let us try and list some of the most common activities that we can perform on them. They could put down as checking emails or messages, manage calendars, make phone calls, check social media platforms, surfing the internet (read news or access information), listen to music, watch videos, play games, take photos, use it for GPS, checking weather, and of course making contacts in emergencies. The order here is in no priority, but all these activities can be performed 24/7 with just one device. All these activities have benefitted us or changed the way we live or work. When I came to Canada, I did not have a cell phone, and so I have experienced firsthand how this change has come about. No doubt it has improved our overall efficiency and brought ease of use for various applications in our lives, there are some downsides too.

- If you go to a restaurant for lunch or dinner, you will see people bending down and checking their emails, or messages, or are messaging, or surfing the internet. Some have their headphones on and are isolated from others. May be it is a good way to cut off the ambient noise in the restaurant during peak hours and listen to Bollywood songs instead.
- Earlier, we would try and remember information by making concerted mental efforts at retaining it. Now our attitude has changed and we tend to forget some of the information as we know that it can be retrieved easily.
- Smartphones are limiting people interactions and in some cases are alienating people.
- They are distracting. In meetings, the sudden buzz or a startling musical jingle disturbs the chain of thoughts that the participants are maintaining. Some participants start checking messages/emails.
- Smart phones are addictive.

Individuals should make use of smart phones and other gadgets for gaining information and improving efficiency. Agreed, they are a must these days, but how you use them is very important. If you allow them to take over your other interests and hobbies, as is happening in many cases, you stand to lose. A few obvious things that come to mind are as follows:

1. Our ability to carry out simple arithmetic mentally will erode gradually, if we are going to use the smart phone calculator all the time.
2. Remaining addictive to the smart phone and letting it take over your life could lead to long-term health problems. For example, if the time that you should be spending exercising is spent on the smart phone browsing the internet, then that is a bad choice you are making.
3. Going to bed with your smart phone, and checking messages in the middle of the night disrupts the deep sleep that our body needs, and if maintained for longer time can have health problems.

4. Not keeping your smart phone in a silent mode during a meeting or a lecture is distracting and you do a disservice by indulging in such behavior. It is disrespectful as well.
5. The time that you should be interacting with people, should not be spent on your smart phone.

Finally, as a message, especially for my younger friends, smart phones should be used as convenient devices, but do not let them take over your lives, which would be pathetic. Observe self-discipline while using your smart phones; switch them off or put them on silent mode while in any meeting, do not check your phone too often such that it becomes your habit. You will be acting responsibly if you do this, and also inspire others to do the same.

With regard to my last post, my good friend John Fernando pointed out to me that though women on the average have higher number of cells in their olfactory bulbs, which helps them with a better sense of smell, what I had not mentioned was that women have smaller brains than men. I wasn't aware of this, and so quickly googled it and found to my surprise that women indeed have smaller brains than men (by about 8%). This of course does not go against them, as their brains work more efficiently than men, so that the overall intelligence is the same for men and women. Check it out at the following link.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/mar/4/womens-brains-smaller-mens-used-more-efficiently/>

So much for this week!

Till the next post, stay safe and happy!