

Post 5th September, 2015

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

1. After dipping below \$40, the price of the barrel jumped to above \$50 only to fall back to \$46. It has swung higher this week. Part of the reason for this jump is the news given in the next item.
2. As the low price of oil has hit the economies of the OPEC producers themselves, some more than others, recently for the first time the OPEC newsletter has signaled that they would be prepared to talk to rival suppliers for ending the turf war they have been engaged in. This may be a good sign.
3. The prolonged low oil price of oil has prompted major players to take appropriate action so as to protect their profits and investor payouts. For example, Total has geared up the sale of its Scottish gas terminal and interests in two pipelines for £585 m to Midstream Partners.
4. This week ConocoPhillips announced the layoff of 500 employees in Calgary as part of its decision to reduce its workforce by 1800 jobs. This includes another 500 jobs from their Houston office. Penn West Petroleum also announced the layoff of 400 employees, most of them from their Calgary office. This has been a major layoff in one week.

In my post last week, I had written about professional certification for practicing geoscientists and engineers in Canada, but the response indications I got from my facebook friends are that not many seemed to be interested in it. I find a lot of merit in that process and so had thought of sharing it.

Anyhow, this week I have tried to tow a different line. Read on to find it out.

Have you ever wondered why ladies wrist watches are smaller in size than gents' wrist watches?

Here is my take on this:

Barring exceptions, ladies wrists are usually smaller, and keeping in line with femininity, ladies wrist watches have traditionally been made smaller in size. The trend has changed somewhat in recent days with many ladies wearing bigger-sized watches. Of course the latest trend in gents' watches is also for wearing the big ones. But still there seems to be a demand for smaller watches, for if you go to a showroom for buying a watch, there is usually a whole section with a variety of smaller-sized watches. Besides in my chats with female friends, I have been told many ladies seem to prefer wearing small-sized watches as they look more elegant.

If the ladies watches happen to come with precious metal jewelry accessory, then you would expect them to come in smaller sizes. In fact in the early days, the elite class in European

countries would have their ladies wear small watches on bracelets. I believe this tradition has continued down the ages.

Does anyone have a better explanation?

Another similar question that comes to mind is 'why are ladies umbrellas smaller in size than gents' umbrellas?'

Come to think of it, it seems unfair that if both the male and female are of the same stature, the female uses a smaller umbrella and in doing so gets drenched. Again, I think the answer has to do with how it all originated. The early umbrella was made from ribs of animals, such as whalebones, etc., mounted on a strong stick, and covered with a cotton fabric which was waterproofed with wax. Such umbrellas were big in size, and a smaller version was later used for protecting the rajas and the maharajas or 'important' people when out in the open (seeking protection from rain and sun). Some of those kinds are still seen on fancy floats that we see at public functions. Gradually, as such umbrellas became popular, smaller versions were produced, but were still heavy for carrying around.

Later, as people became more and more conscious of the uses of umbrellas for protection from rain and sun, smaller and easily manageable sizes began to be produced. The really lighter umbrellas with thin nylon fabric were first made in France, and these looked very elegant. This further led to still smaller umbrellas that the ladies could easily carry around and use them as sun shades (not the dark glasses). Of course, the modern ladies umbrellas with very fine synthetic fabric in colourful designs, being lightweight and folding are more convenient for carrying around in bag purses.

So much for this week!

Till the next post, stay safe and happy!