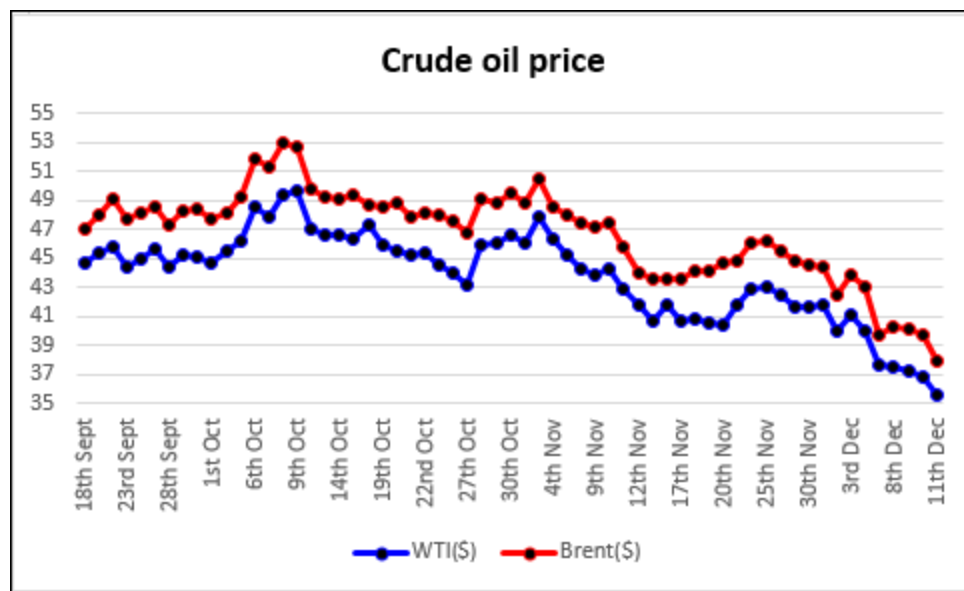


Post 12th December, 2015

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



1. Oil prices fell under \$36 this week after an IEA (International Energy Agency) report said that the global oversupply of crude is likely to continue until later next year.
2. The OPEC decision to continue to pump oil at record levels (31.8 mb/d) is hurting the non-OPEC producers as well as the US shale industry. The result is every day we hear dismal news of layoffs or cuts in company spending announced for the following year.
3. Though according to Baker Hughes the rig count this week has fallen by 21 to 524, the maximum in two months, but over the recent past the oil producers have become more efficient in that they have enhanced supply with fewer rigs.
4. Considering the current economic scenario, ConocoPhillips has cut its 2016 capital budget to \$7.7b, which is down 55% compared with 2014 capital spending, and 25% down from the 2015 expected capital spending.
5. Similarly, Chevron has reduced its 2016 capital budget by 24% (from 2015) to \$26.6b.
6. Last week Schlumberger had announced more job cuts, which added to 20,000 already done in 2015. Baker Hughes has cut over 16,000 jobs, while Halliburton cut about 18,000 jobs. Such large number of layoffs will eventually lead to shortage of experienced hands very soon, as the industry starts looking up, whenever that happens.

For the lighter side this week:

We are all familiar with buffet lunches. Have you ever wondered how the term 'buffet' came into use? I was reminded of this during the buffet meals that were served at the SPG Conference, which I attended last week, and so explored.

In fact the term originated long back some time in the 16th century, when in Swedish reference was made to a side-table where guests would gather around for a pre-dinner drink. Later, in the 18th century the term buffet as we know now was the French reference to side-boards where food would be served for visiting guests. Gradually, this reference changed from furniture to the manner in which it was served in that food would be laid out in one place, and the guests would serve themselves up to their liking and choice. Eventually, the term was accepted in English language as well, somewhere in the middle of the 20th century, and is now in common usage.

There are many variations in the format in which buffet meals are served. Personally, I prefer buffet meals to the more formal format of ordering specific dishes. It is the choice of food that the buffet offers as well as the quantity that one needs, which make it convenient.

I am sure you do the same.

Did you know the highest temperature ever measured on the Earth is 56.7°C, at Death Valley, California?

So much for this week!

Till the next post, stay safe and happy!