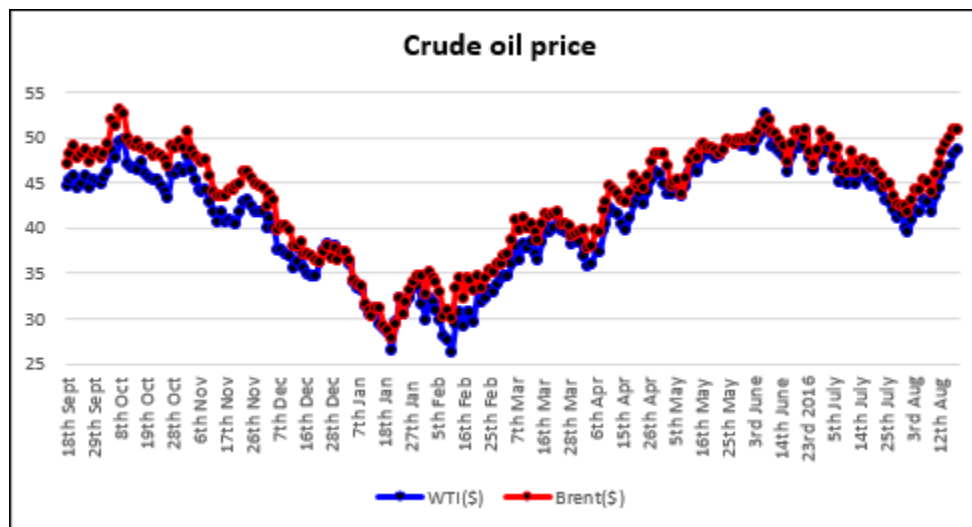


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- The crude oil price rallied last week in response to a couple of developments. According to the EIA, the US commercial crude oil inventories, excluding those in the Strategic Petroleum Reserves, fell 2.5 mb during the week ending August 12th, compared with the previous week. The second development is that the OPEC officials have hinted about a probably production freeze at the next meeting of the International Energy Forum in Algiers in late September 2016. This has resulted in the crude oil prices looking up over the last week, even though some skeptics cite a similar proposal discussed at the last OPEC meeting in April which went nowhere.
- According to Chakib Khelil, a former OPEC executive and head, as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Russia are producing at their maximum capacity and have gained their market share, time is right for an output freeze agreement to take place in Algiers next month.
- Saudi Arabia usually exports less oil from June to September, due to its internal requirement of burning more crude oil for generating electricity to meet the extra demand for air-conditioning during the sweltering summer. In June 2016, Saudi Arabia exported 7.46 mb/d of crude and 1.37 mb/d of refined petroleum products. The combined output has risen to 10.55 mb/d from 10.27 mb/d in May 2016. The enhanced production is seen by some as attempts by Saudi Arabia to maintain its market share or avoid losing it.
- There were reports recently that the Nigerian government had reached an agreement with the militant group (Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)), and that the crude oil production disruptions would reduce. Apparently, the militant group had not carried out any major attacks in May/June this year, and so the crude oil production rose to 1.6 mb/d in June. But the militant activity has resulted in more disruptions in July, which are a consequence of no comprehensive agreement between the Nigerian government and the NDA. The country's crude oil production may not go beyond 1.5 mb/d for the rest of 2016. Nigeria was Africa's largest oil producer until early 2016, when it was overtaken by Angola's crude oil production.

- After the US lifted the 40 year ban on exports of crude oil late last year, over 87 mb/d of crude and condensate have been shipped to 17 countries in the first half of 2016, including Canada (53.5 mb/d), Curacao (8.68 mb/d) and Netherlands (6 mb/d).
- So much for the industry news this week.

For the lighter side this week

Recently, I stumbled across a strange observation or a fact in that flowers or plants grow faster when they are exposed to music. As I started researching this topic I found that while many researchers/experts have found this to be true, it is still a debatable topic. Nevertheless, here is what I have found.

Experiments conducted by scientists have shown that when plants or flowers are exposed to music, similar to what we hear and enjoy, they grow more quickly. The plant seeds seem to germinate faster as the music serves to offer some form of stimulation, which is similar to the ones they receive from the natural environment, such as light and heat. Some researchers have experimented with the different types of music and played with different instruments, but the main result is that plants indeed grow faster by more than 25% than the regional average.

The idea behind the fact can be explained: sound waves travel in the form of pressure waves, i.e. compressions and rarefactions, and we hear them as they fall on our ear drums. Such sound waves are also picked up by the plants, and the protoplasm, i.e. the living matter in plants and animals; sound waves tends to speed up the movement of the protoplasmic cells. The result is an improved performance in terms of nutrient production, and thus a quicker growth. Just as human ear is averse to hearing jarring music or noise, louder music can have a detrimental effect on plants.

The music does not affect just the plants, but also the soil as well, as the bacteria or nutrient production there helps better root development of the plants leading to higher growth.

The experiments have been conducted with various kinds of music, i.e. western and Indian, classical and jazz, with and without repetition, but the basic conclusion stands unchanged, i.e. music therapy enhances productivity in plants.

Now isn't this interesting. I wasn't aware of this till recently.

Did you know?

.. that *the just human finger prints are unique, similarly, the human tongue prints are also unique?*

That is no two tongues are the same. This fact was not known for long, and could be used for individual identification.

I hope you find these interesting.

So much for this week! Till the next post, stay safe and happy!