



- The oil price traded high this week amidst indications of tightening supply from Libya, Algeria and Venezuela. These reports were also supported by news from Baker Hughes this week that the total number of active oil and gas drilling rigs fell by 3. OPEC has kept about 1.2 mb/d off the market since the beginning of this year. Added to this, US sanctions have reduced the supply of oil from Venezuela and Iran. Expected further is the decision by President Trump if US granted waivers to eight countries to import Iranian oil should expire or continue. A hardline approach by US could knock off more oil from the

market. The only dampening factor was the news from EIA on Wednesday this week about an increase in crude inventories but did not have any significant impact on the crude oil prices. Higher employment in the US and optimism about US-China trade talks approaching a deal were other factors influencing a stronger crude price. OPEC appears to be watching all developments and will take a call if the production need to be increased before the agreed June deadline.

- Saudi Aramco has raised \$12 billion from its debut international bond issue, with maturities ranging from 3 to 30 years. Aramco and its bankers had been gathering support for this offering for some time. This money is being raised for the purchase of a \$69 billion majority stake in the domestic petrochemical giant Sabic. Such an initiative also helps Saudi Arabia to diversify from oil. An initial public offering of Aramco was postponed last year. Saudi Arabia has valued Aramco at \$2 trillion, while not all investors are convinced that it is worth that much.

So much for the industry news this week.

For the lighter side this week

No two individuals in the world are alike. Many times, we come across twins looking almost identical, and we tend to mix them up. In such cases, even though there may be subtle differences in their faces, smiles, lips, we do not notice them. In such cases the distinctive features such as finger prints irises can be used for individual identification. To this list we can also add the shape of the human ear for its identification.

The shape of the human ear does not change, though it may grow in size with age, or the lobe may descend a little. It is similar to the changes in the face, that we may see as an individual ages, some biometric changes may be seen in the irises, and for those individuals engaged in labour work, the finger prints could become faint or rubbed off. More recent developments in terms of image ray transforms seek out curved features and 3D scanning techniques that build a detailed model of the ear, ear shapes can be identified with 99.6% accuracy. Women tend to have smaller ears than men but the ridges and bumps on the ear are unique and so different, which can be identified with accuracy.

As we hear, the main individual identification comes from the genes, the molecular units of heredity, which contain the information for making chemicals such as proteins in our bodies. Genes are made of a chemical called DNA or deoxyribonucleic acid. The DNA stores information in the form of chromosomes, one set is inherited from the birth mother and the other set from the birth father. Chromosomes determine how one grows, looks like, etc. The combination of chromosomes is different for different individuals and even for siblings. Even identical twins share very similar genes but have different DNA. Such differences develop due to environmental factors or from unique changes due to what are known as epigenetic factors, or the chemical markers that attach to genes, in some cases shutting genes off and in other cases increasing their productivity.

But as bottom-line, apart from DNA, other unique human identifications also include the shape of the ear. This I found to very interesting, and that is why I am sharing it here.

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

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