



News Briefs

December 14, 2008 - December 20, 2008

Muslim leaders visit Israel on trip to enhance understanding

Dec. 18 - A diverse group of French Muslim leaders visited Israel this week on a five-day trip organized by Washington-based non-profit organization, Project Interchange, to enhance understanding of Israeli society. The guests on the trip included Jeannette Bougrab, a member of the French Administrative Supreme Court, police chief Mohamed Douhane, a Muslim Journalist, politicians, prominent community activists, and successful Muslim business people. They were accompanied by President Nicolas Sarkozy's advisor for North Africa, Near and Middle East, Boris Boillon; the President's senior advisor on Middle East North Africa, Francois Touazi; Valerie Hoffenberg, director of the American Jewish Committee in France, and a City Councilor of Paris. During their stay the guests visited Jewish, Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, and toured an Arab-Jewish school in Kfar Kara.

KPMG VC survey names Israel among target regions for 2009

Dec. 18 - Results of a recent KPMG survey found that venture investors do not see the IPO market improving for at least a year, and that only a small portion of portfolios are poised for exit in 2009. While overall investment levels are expected to be lower, respondents expected 2009 funding to be targeted toward key geographic regions and industry segments. Respondents indicated China, India and Israel will be most attractive for venture capital, with clean tech, life sciences, mobile and digital entertainment remaining hot industries. KPMG conducted the survey in collaboration with AlwaysOn.

City of David deploys surveillance system

Dec. 18 - Video surveillance project deployed in City of David Advanced wireless broadband solutions provider RADWIN today announced that its WinLink 1000 wireless video transmission system has been deployed at the historic City of David in Jerusalem. To ensure the safety of thousands of annual visitors, and prevent crime and vandalism, over 150 video cameras were deployed. The RADWIN system transmits video from the cameras back to a central control center where a security team can detect and respond to events in real time. RADWIN has installations in over 110 countries around the world.

Tourism to Israel hits all-time high

Dec. 17 - More tourists visited Israel in 2008 than ever before in the country's history, according to new statistics from the Ministry of Tourism. From January to November 2008, 2.8 million tourists visited Israel - an increase of 35 percent over the same period last year, and 10 percent more than in 2000, the previous record-breaking year, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics. Of the 2.8 million tourists who visited Israel since the start of the year, 2.4 million stayed longer than one day (26% more than 2007), and 436,000 were one-day visitors, twice as many as the same period last year. "2008 will end as Israel's all time record year for tourism," said Tourism Minister Ruhama Avraham-Ballia. "This success is of fundamental importance, as income from tourism registered significant increases this year, reaching 25 billion shekel and thousands of new employees began working in the tourism industry."

Topical dermatology drug developer Sol-Gel opens new plant

Dec. 17 - Israeli pharmaceuticals company Sol Gel Technologies, unveiled new state-of-the-art facilities for the development of innovative topical dermatology drugs yesterday. The new plant, at the Weizmann Science Park in Ness Ziona, includes sophisticated research, development and analytical laboratories, pilot production facilities as well as management offices. They are part of the company's strategic decision to focus on pharmaceutical products and topical drugs. "We are now completely geared up to expand our current collaborations and develop our own products," said Dr. Alon Seri-Levy, Sol-Gel's CEO. The company, which was founded in 1997, is currently collaborating on the development of a new generation of anti-acne kits.

US investors pump funds into Israeli medical software company

Dec. 16 - Israeli medical software company, Rcadia Medical Imaging, has raised \$3.3 million in investment from US fund, BioVentures Investors and US company, 20/20 HealthCare Partners. The Haifa based company has developed a software technology for the automated analysis of coronary CT angiography, which enables doctors to quickly identify and diagnose patients who need further evaluation for severe coronary artery disease. Founded in 2005, the company plans to use the new capital to set up a US office to support North American sales and marketing. The company's COR Analyzer has already been installed in 10 locations around the world.

Israeli doctors give gift of sight to Cameroon child

Dec. 16 - A four-year-old boy from Cameroon has had his sight restored by doctors at Wolfson Medical Center in Holon, Israel. The boy, found in an abandoned sewage canal in Yaounde, Cameroon's capital, was blind in one eye and had only minimal sight in the other because his corneas had turned opaque. Doctors in Cameroon lacked the medical facilities to carry out the operation, and sent him to Israel. Doctors Itamar Yeshurun and Hagai Avizemer at Wolfson removed the opaque cornea and transplanted a new one there instead. They also transplanted healthy tissue into the other eye to improve its surface. The boy has now returned to Cameroon, and his vision is greatly improved. Israeli ophthalmologists now plan to transplant a new cornea on the other eye as well.

J&J's \$438m acquisition of Omrix okayed

Dec. 16 - Israel's Antitrust Authority has approved Johnson & Johnson's acquisition of Omrix Biopharmaceuticals for \$438 million. Omrix manufactures and develops products in two areas: biosurgery and passive immunotherapy. The company's proprietary technology purifies proteins from plasma while preserving their full range of biological activities. Omrix has been developing unique biosurgical devices with J&J subsidiary Ethicon. The company also supplies several countries with treatments for immune deficiencies and infectious diseases, and for potential biodefense applications.

Yoggie's USB security system takes top gadget spot

Dec. 15 - Yoggie Security System's USB token Gatekeeper Pico has been listed as a top gadget in The Gadget Show's Gadget of the Year 2008, after Apple's iPhone 3G and Nintendo's Wii Fit. Yoggie's security mini-computer blocks Internet threats and boosts computer performance by off-loading security software. Yoggie's founder is Shlomo Touboul, founder of Finjan and developer of the first hardware-based personal security computer solution. Gatekeeper Pico also made InfoWorld's 2008 Geek Gadget Gift Guide.

Drug delivery developer TransPharma gets CE Mark approval

Dec. 15 - TransPharma Medical has received European CE Mark approval for ViaDerm, its transdermal drug delivery device. ViaDerm is a handheld electronic control unit that uses radiofrequency to create micro-channels in the skin which allow drug delivery via patch. "CE approval... brings us closer to offering an accurate delivery of biologics, thus avoiding injections," said CEO [Dr. Daphna Heffetz](#). In June, TransPharma inked a \$35 million deal with Eli Lilly for an osteoporosis treatment.

Bill Gates cites Israeli breakthroughs in Einstein Award speech

Dec. 14 - Bill Gates, founder and chairman of Microsoft Corp. has been awarded the first Einstein Award by Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The award was presented at an American Friends of the Hebrew University dinner in New York; \$1.5 million was raised to help fund advanced plant and animal science research at the university's Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment in Rehovot. In accepting the Einstein Award, Gates cited specific breakthroughs by Hebrew University, such as drip irrigation and water treatment, which have dramatically improved the human condition.

