

**CONCOURS INTERNE DES 23 ET 24 FEVRIER 2015
POUR LE RECRUTEMENT DE CONTRÔLEURS DES DOUANES ET DROITS
INDIRECTS**

Branche du contrôle des opérations commerciales et d'administration générale

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(Durée 15 minutes – Coefficient 2)

US to study Cuba's lung cancer vaccine: What the world can learn from Castro's health service

American researchers are about to be given access for the first time to a breakthrough lung cancer vaccine developed in Cuba, in what could be one of the most significant benefits to the US of improving relations with the Communist state.

The closed-off Caribbean nation is emerging from a 55-year rift with the US, and the historic shift in diplomatic standing is set to give American scientists their first glimpse at the medical breakthroughs developed in Cuba during that time. [...]

How has Cuba had such success?

[...] During the economic blockade by the US and after a string of serious disease outbreaks, Cuban leader Fidel Castro made biotechnology and medical research a key priority for the allocation of limited government funds. The country ranks lung cancer as its fourth biggest cause of death, thanks at least in part to a love of good cigars.

Candace Johnson, CEO of the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, said: « *They've had to do more with less, so they've had to be even more innovative with how they approach things. For over 40 years, they have had a preeminent immunology community.* »

Why is this only happening now?

The opening up of Cuba's medical breakthroughs comes as part of a wider improvement in relations with the US [...]. But the specific decision to allow Cimavax to be studied in the US comes after a trade mission to Cuba led by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo [...]

So what does Cuba get in return?

As part of the deal, Manhattan-based company Infor will provide healthcare software to a Cuban university. Infor CEO Charles Phillips said he was « *surprised and impressed in the level of expertise they have in healthcare technology* » during the trade mission, when a deal was agreed.

But if the thawing of relations continues, the boost to the Cuban economy and potential for US investment could be coupled with the state's immunology expertise to produce yet more breakthroughs. [...]

Thursday 14 May 2015, THE INDEPENDENT,
by Adam Withnall

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Japan aims to harness space solar energy

Japanese scientists are developing a spacecraft that will have a square screen of solar panels measuring more than 1.2 miles along each side and use microwaves to beam energy down to Earth. Researchers from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency are working with Japan Space Systems to solve one of the enduring problems associated with the most common form of renewable energy ; it does not work at night and is inefficient in bad weather.

Solar panels that are not affected by weather and gathered by a Space Solar Power System (SSPS) positioned to constantly face the sun are able to generate an estimated 10 times as much power as Earth-based solar panels.

« We estimate that one SSPS unit will be able to generate around the same amount of energy as one nuclear reactor », Daisuke Goto, an engineer with the JAXA research team, told The Telegraph. « So while this SSPS will not solve mankind's energy problems entirely, we hope it will contribute as a future energy source. »

The concept of a space-based solar energy system emerged in several countries in the 1980s, including the United States, but it faced some daunting technological challenges and was eclipsed by other projects. [...]

In an experiment in March, Japan Space Systems succeeded in converting 1.8 kilowatts of electricity into microwaves and transmitting it over a distance of more than 180 feet to an antenna where it was converted back into electricity. The research is focusing on microwaves because they travel in a straight line and can penetrate even thick clouds, Mr Goto said.

Another major consideration is the receiver on Earth that will « capture » the energy, with the scientists' proposals including a receiver as much as one mile in diameter floating on the sea and linked to the power grid.

Equally challenging will be the task of transporting the components for the SSPS into space and assembling them. Maintenance and repairs will need to be carried out by robots and the scientists are hoping that each craft will have an effective lifespan of 40 years. Despite the recent breakthroughs, experts believe it will be at least 30 years before the first SSPS is ready to go into operation.

12 May 2015 – THE DAILY TELEGRAPH,
By Julian Ryall in Tokyo

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Smugglers ; old activity, new phase

The European Union is a « single market »; since 1992, goods have been able to move freely from one country to another. But this has not stopped the ancient tradition of cross-Channel smuggling ! For almost a thousand years, the cross-Channel trade in contraband has been a lucrative business, often involving criminal gangs; but in recent years, its nature has changed...

March 28th 1690. It is dead of night; in the small creek near Dymchurch, a village on Romney Marsh, a dark boat approaches a well-hidden landing stage. [...] some thirty figures emerge from the bushes and approach the water. A horse and cart appear from nowhere, and the work begins. In the space of quarter of an hour, the boat's cargo is totally unloaded, carried up the bank and loaded onto the cart [...]. The cargo, a hundred barrels of finest cognac, is on its way to a hiding place, for later dispatch to London. The smugglers have succeeded again; as they usually do. For in this part of south east England, smuggling is a lucrative business, and has been so for centuries. [...] The eighteenth century saw the climax of the smuggling trade; it also saw its worst horrors. During this century, when Britain really began to expand as an inter-national trading nation, the rise in imported goods was spectacular; so too was the rise in the number of different products on which the government imposed taxes. [...]

Smuggling has never stopped, and today there are still active smugglers in operation; their methods, however, have changed. [...] Most contraband now comes in hidden in personal luggage, or in legally imported consignments of goods; containers from Columbia, or trailers from Turkey, for instance.

But in the event, the worst form of modern smuggling across the Channel is the smuggling of people; or « people trafficking » as it is often called. The last twenty years have seen a massive increase in the number of people from distant countries trying to enter Britain illegally. [...]

The coming of the Single European Market has changed the nature of smuggling, and the customs men still remain vigilant. So do the coast guards. The fight against smugglers may not be the same as it once was; but if the coast guards ceased to exist, the door would be open to the new age of smuggling. It is certain that a new generation of smugglers would quickly make the most of it!

LINGUAPRESS

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The end of Britain as we know it

This election will be remembered as the one that rescued the career of David Cameron, the British prime minister, who was publicly contemplating his own exit from politics only two months ago. It will also be remembered as the election that abruptly ended the career of the Labor Party leader, Ed Miliband, who had confidently carved his electoral promises onto a large piece of limestone only last week. Above all, it will be remembered as the election that every single major pollster got wrong : All the dire talk of hung parliaments, minority coalitions and the intervention, even, of the queen has vanished with the emergence of a solid Conservative majority. But long after these various dramas are forgotten, it might also be remembered as the election that marked the beginning of the end of Great Britain, at least in the form that we now know it.

[...]

This election may also be the beginning of the end of Great-Britain-as-we-know-it in another sense, too. In 2013, Cameron promised that he would, if reelected, hold a referendum on Britain's membership in the European Union. He also promised, somewhat more vaguely, that he would first "renegotiate" that membership. Even today nobody knows what that means, for Cameron has never explained it. Nor has he ever sought European allies or partners to help him in that process, and this isn't the best moment to begin. The rest of Europe's leaders are involved in a complex financial negotiation with Greece, are forging a strategy toward Russia, are facing an enormous illegal migration crisis on its southern coasts — and aren't collectively enthusiastic about launching into a long, painful negotiation with Britain.

[...]

By Anne Applebaum, May 10th, 2015
The Washington Post

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China's Exports Unexpectedly Fall 6 Percent

BEIJING — China's exports unexpectedly fell 6.4 percent in April from a year earlier, while imports tumbled by a deeper-than-forecast 16.2 percent, fueling expectations that Beijing will quickly roll out more stimulus to avert a sharper economic slowdown.

April imports tumbled 16.2 percent from a year earlier, following a 12.7 percent drop in March that highlighted tepid domestic demand as the world's second-largest economy slows.

That left the country with a trade surplus of \$34.13 billion for the month, the General Administration of Customs said on Friday.

Analysts polled by Reuters had expected exports to rise 2.4 percent in April from a year earlier, and predicted imports would fall 12 percent.

"This is bad. I expect an interest rate cut this weekend," said economist Tim Condon at ING in Singapore. *"This is going to make 7 percent (GDP) growth hard to attain. It looks like the weakness in the first quarter wasn't transitory. It's persistent."*

Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang was quoted by Xinhua state news agency as saying last month that authorities must arrest China's export slowdown lest it further dampen economic growth.

The central bank has lowered interest rates and banks' reserve requirement ratio thrice in three months since November in a bid to stoke the economy, and most analysts had already expected it to loosen policy again on both fronts in coming months.

Buffeted by lukewarm foreign and domestic demand, China's trade sector has wobbled in the past year, adding to pressure on the slowing economy and unsettling policymakers.

Earlier this week, China's trade minister said the devaluation of currencies by some countries has led to sharp gains in the yuan, hurting the competitiveness of Chinese exports.

[...]

International New-York Time,
By REUTERS MAY 7, 2015

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Italian Navy finds wreckage of sunk migrant boat where hundreds perished

Rome (CNN)The Italian Navy says it has found the underwater wreckage of a boat – overloaded with migrants – that capsized off the coast of Libya, killing hundreds.

The boat that sank on April 19 is part of a larger crisis that Europe is facing. Thousands of migrants from war-torn parts of the Middle East and Africa set sail toward Italy in hopes of gaining a foothold into the rest of the EU.

The Italian Navy estimates 800 people died when the boat capsized.

Twenty-eight people were rescued from the doomed ship, and told investigators of the cramped conditions on the boat. Only 24 bodies were recovered in the area where the boat sank.

Among those who survived are the boat's suspected pilot and his assistant. Both were arrested.

Italian prosecutors ordered an investigation into why the boat sank, and the nation's Navy confirmed on Friday that it had found the wreckage in the Mediterranean Sea, about 85 miles north of the Libyan coast, at a depth of 375 meters.

The Navy recorded the wreckage on video, and the prosecutor's office confirmed it was the boat that sank on April 19.

Many corpses could be seen in the first and second decks of the shipwreck, the Navy said.

The boat's pilot may have caused the migrant ship to tip over because of a navigation error, or the boat simply may have been overcrowded, according to an earlier statement from the prosecutor's office.

A third theory is that the King Jacob, a cargo ship that came to the migrant boat's aid, caused it to capsize either by touching it or producing a big wave that tipped it over. A spokeswoman for the United Nations refugee agency offered this possibility after interviews with survivors.

The prosecutor's office has said the King Jacob had nothing to do with the sinking of the migrant ship, but it noted on Friday that the wreckage showed damage to the boat's bow and left side.

By Hada Messia and Livia Borgese, CNN
May 8th, 2015

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Americans fat and thin

One of the things that most surprises Europeans who set foot in the USA for the first time is the huge number of fat people. Not just « fat » people, such as one finds all over Europe too, people who are just a little bit overweight and happy to be so; but people of sometimes massive proportions [...]. Even children. Fifty years ago, Americans were not overweight in the way they are today; so what is it that has brought about this change?

Obesity is a problem in all communities, but particularly among ethnic minorities.

According to statistics from the American Center for Disease Control, at least a third of all Americans today can be considered obese. Worse still, 21% of young people between the ages of 12 and 19 [...] are obese, compared to only 6% in the 1970s.

Obesity has become a real national disease, which particularly afflicts the poorer part of the population. 50% of black women and 48% of Hispanic women are obese. The problem also tends to be worse in small towns and rural areas than in the big cities; there are not a lot of obese people in New York, for instance, where traveling by car can take such a long time that it is often much faster to go on foot, and many people live in old apartment blocks with no elevator.

Obesity is definitely a disease of modern America, which began to develop in the 1960s following a fundamental change in lifestyles. Americans stopped walking and taking part in sport; nowadays, everything can be done by car, and even suburban and small town banks offer drive-thru tellers. Sport and physical education programs that used to be compulsory in high schools and universities have generally become optional, and kids now spend most of their time in front of the television or playing video games. When they go to the movies, they stuff themselves with pop-corn. [...]

For millions of Americans, the longest walk they ever do is the walk round the shelves of their supermarket.

[...]

LINGUAPRESS

by Nicole Bernheim

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Beekeepers in Australia invent “revolutionary” hive

Two beekeepers in Australia have invented what is believed to be the world's first hive that allows fresh honey to be collected without having to disturb the bees and with no threat of stings.

Credited with « revolutionising » beekeeping, Cedar Anderson and his father Stuart [...] spent a decade creating a contraption which they say is « easier on the beekeeper and on the bees ».

The pair began selling their invention on a crowdsourcing site and raised \$1.7 million (£1.1 million) in the first 24 hours. « *It is incredible – I am shocked,* » Stuart Anderson, 60, a former social worker, told The Telegraph. « *I didn't anticipate how many people must have been hovering, waiting for something like this.* »

The father and son team – both amateur inventors – come from a long line of backyard beekeepers near the popular surfing and tourist destination of Byron Bay in northern New South Wales. Their contraption, called the Flow Hive, consists of plastic artificial honeycomb cells in which the bees leave honey before sealing the cells with wax. A lever then splits the wax and turns the cells to create zigzagging channels for the honey to flow out via a tap into a trough below.

Mr Anderson said his grandfather would « rob » honey from hives in trees on neighbouring properties and his father began keeping bees legally in the garden. He and his son have long kept hives in their backyard – handing out honey to friends – and began searching for a better way to extract the honey. [...]

The pair initially searched through global patents and discovered that no device existed. The closest was a device which someone applied for in the 1920s but it was never invented ; in any case, according to Stuart Anderson, the plans were flawed and would not have worked. [...]

The next challenge for the duo will be to fulfil the incoming orders – more than 4,000 in the first 12 hours. They hope to begin sending out the first hives in June but will try to find larger overseas manufacturers, possibly in the United States. [...]

By Jonathan Pearlman in Sydney

23 Feb 2015 - THE DAILY TELEGRAPH (UK)