

Real life iron man!



Gravity founder Richard Browning fields questions about his personal flight suit at a TED Conference in Vancouver, Canada,

Vancouver
British inventor Richard Browning lifted off from the shore of Vancouver Harbor on Thursday in a personal flight suit that inspired references to comic superhero 'Iron Man.'

Using thrusters attached to his arms and back, Browning flew in a circle and hovered a short distance from the ground, captivating attendees at a prestigious TED Conference.

The personal flight suit is capable of propelling wearers much higher and faster, according to its creators.

"The hypothesis was that

the human mind and body, if properly augmented, could achieve some pretty cool stuff," the extreme athlete and engineer said at the gathering a short time earlier.

Browning told of experimenting with various numbers and arrays of essentially miniature jet engines on his limbs.

Along the way, he said, there were more than a few crashes to the ground.

"The whole journey was about trying and failing, and learning from that," Browning said.

The first reasonably stable,

six-second flight with the gear inspired his team to press on.

His startup, Gravity, formally debuted about a month ago with an early-version suit called Daedalus.

A 55-second video clip of the suit in action has logged more than a million views since being posted on YouTube about three weeks ago.

Browning said he is already getting interest from investors and some in the British military who told him they had given up on the flight feature of an 'Iron Man' suit until seeing his human-propulsion gear.

"I don't think anyone is going to be going down to Wal-Mart with it or taking anybody to school for quite a while, but the team at Gravity is moving it along," Browning said.

He dreams of a flight suit that one day will allow its wearer to launch from a beach, soar along the coast and then perhaps hop into a helicopter in the air to continue their journey.

Browning has already seen the early-version flight suit compared to 'Iron Man' armour worn by Marvel Comics character Tony Stark, but stressed that his goal is firmly rooted in the real world.

He also described the project as part of a personal journey, inspired by an engineer father with a love for flying machines, but who died when he was just a teenager. (AFP)



Browning lifts off

British inventor takes flight in 'Iron Man' suit

US passes one-week stopgap to avoid govt shutdown

Washington

The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a stopgap spending bill yesterday, sending it to the Senate, which will need to pass it ahead of a midnight deadline to avert a US government shutdown.

The bill extends current levels of funding until May 5, giving lawmakers in the Republican-controlled Congress one week of breathing room to hash out a broader measure that would fund government operations through September 30, the end of the fiscal year.

The measure was on its way to clearing the House with broad bipartisan support.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer signaled that his Democrats were prepared to not set up procedural roadblocks that would jeopardize the measure's passage before the deadline.

"We're willing to extend things for a little more time," Schumer told reporters on Friday.

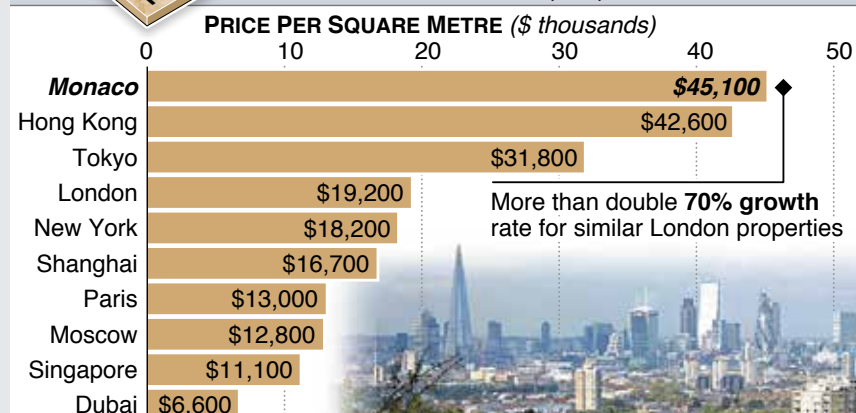
Once it passes Congress, the bill would go to Donald Trump's desk for his signature, avoiding what would be a colossal embarrassment on the 99th day of his presidency if the government were allowed to slide into a partial shutdown.

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