

# European crisis a risk for all nations: IMF chief

AFP, Abuja

IMF chief Christine Lagarde warned yesterday that the European debt crisis posed a risk for "all economies of the world," as she met officials in Nigeria on her first visit to Africa as head of the fund.

"What is happening in advanced economies, particularly in Europe, is obviously of concern for everybody around the world at the moment," she said while meeting Nigerian Senate President David Mark.

"Because the severity of the crisis and the difficulty that the Europeans have in dealing with the crisis will have a ripple effect in all economies of the world."

The International Monetary Fund managing director said poorer nations, particularly those that rely heavily on Europe for trade and investment, should prepare themselves to endure any potential fallout.

"But what we are saying to all developing economies is beware of what is



happening in advanced economies at the moment," she said.

"Beware of the clouds that are accumulating at the European skies and make sure that you have enough reserves, enough resistance, enough cushion to actually weather the storm."

European Union finance ministers raced against the clock yesterday to meet a self-imposed deadline to raise 200 billion euros (\$260 billion) for new eurozone bailout funding.

The target figure and a 10-day deadline to deliver the cash pledges to the IMF was decided by EU leaders in the

early hours of a December 9 summit and effectively expires at midnight (2300 GMT).

The aim is to allow the Washington-based institution to come to the aid of eurozone countries in trouble.

"From the IMF perspective, we try to understand what the connections are, and how inter-connected the countries can be," Lagarde said when speaking of the risks to developing nations.

"And what we see is stalled growth in advanced economies with potential recession in some of the European Union countries, including my own country of course (France), and channels of contagions which can be different," she said.

"They can be financial channels because the banking system of European countries has scattered all over the map and they have subsidiaries and counterpart risks that are present."

The former French finance minister said the impact on trade and foreign direct investment were also areas of concern.



Evacuees queue up to receive food aid from government official in front of a church in Iligan City, in southern island of Mindanao, Philippines yesterday, two days after Typhoon Washi wrought havoc in the city.

PHOTO: AFP

## Israel frees 550 Palestinian prisoners

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel on Sunday freed 550 Palestinian prisoners, completing the second phase of a deal which saw Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit freed in October, Israeli and Palestinian officials said.

Officials and witnesses in the West Bank city of Ramallah said that the main contingent of freed prisoners entered the city on a fleet of 12 buses at around 10:00 pm (2000 GMT), where thousands of well-wishers awaited them at the Palestinian presidential headquarters.

A small group of 41 crossed at about the same time into the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip, where about 3,000 jubilant supporters gathered at the border, an AFP photographer said.

An Israeli prison official said that another two were taken to the border with neighbouring Jordan and two more were released at Atarot in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem.

"The International Red Cross Committee assisted in the process of conveying the prisoners," the Israeli military said in a statement.

It confirmed that 505 prisoners were transferred to the West Bank and 41 to the Gaza Strip with the remaining four taken to Jordan and east Jerusalem.

Among the 550 were six women and 55 minors aged 14-17, according to Unicef.

# Syria signs deal to let in Arab monitors

REUTERS, Cairo

Syria agreed yesterday to let Arab League observers into the country to monitor implementation of a deal it agreed last month to pull troops from protest-hit towns, free political prisoners and start talking to dissidents.

However, the executive head of the League said after the signing of a protocol on foreign observers that there was no immediate plan to lift sanctions that were imposed when Damascus at first refused outside monitors. Nabil Elaraby said observers would now determine whether Syria's government was complying.

"The protocol is a mechanism to go to Syria and move freely to ensure the implementation of the Arab initiative on Syria. What counts is good faith in implementation," Elaraby, the Arab League secretary-general, said. An advance party would head to Syria this week to prepare for the arrival of monitors.

President Bashar al-Assad's administration broadly agreed last month to the Arab League peace initiative aimed at defusing a violent confrontation that has left more than 5,000 dead.

But a refusal to let in outside observers had prompted other Arab states to

impose sanctions. And Assad's opponents have complained that troops are still present in some cities, fighting with Assad's opponents, while other elements of the peace accord have also not been implemented in full.

Speaking of lifting the Arab League sanctions, Elaraby told a news conference after the signing in Cairo: "This has not happened, as that would require another meeting."

He also said a meeting of Arab foreign ministers planned this week, and which had been due to discuss action against Damascus, would be "indefinitely postponed."



Syrian government supporters shout slogans during a pro-regime rally in Damascus yesterday. Damascus gives its agreement to an observer mission to monitor implementation of a deal to end nine months of bloodshed, an Arab diplomat told AFP

PHOTO: AFP

## Nationwide strike paralyses Nepal

AFP, Kathmandu

A second general strike in three days brought much of Nepal to a halt yesterday as protestors blocked roads and torched cars over the prison killing of a senior opposition party activist.

The opposition-called strike closed businesses across the country as protestors on major highways enforced a ban on road traffic by attacking cars and burning tyres.

"We arrested 27 protesters, most in Kathmandu, and a coffee shop and five vehicles were damaged in the capital," police spokesman Binod Singh said.

In towns throughout the country, government offices, banks and vehicles were vandalised, he said.

A local television station reported that thousands of people were stranded at a major road access point to Kathmandu, where buses were being denied entry.

## Strict diet could save brain from aging

AFP, Washington

Eating less may keep the mind young, according to Italian scientists who reported yesterday they have discovered the molecular process by which a strict diet may save the brain from the ravages of age.

The research, published in the US journal the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, is based on a study of mice that were fed a diet of about 70 percent of the food they normally consumed.

Scientists found that the calorie-restricted diet triggered a protein molecule, CREB1, that activates a host of genes linked to longevity and good brain function.

"Our hope is to find a way to activate CREB1, for example through new drugs, so to keep the brain young without the need of a strict diet," said lead author Giovambattista Pani, researcher at the Institute of General Pathology, Faculty of Medicine at the Catholic University of Sacred Heart in Rome.

Researchers have previously discovered that mice on diets show better cognitive abilities and memory, less aggression, and tend to avoid or delay Alzheimer's disease. But they have not known exactly why.

"CREB1 is known to regulate important brain functions as memory, learning and anxiety control, and its activity is reduced or physiologically compromised by aging," said the study.

Mice that were genetically altered to lack CREB1 showed none of the same memory benefits if they were on a low-calorie diet as mice that had the molecule, and showed the same brain disabilities as mice that were overfed.

## Tribunal rejects SQ Chy's

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His pleas include allowing application of the Evidence Act and Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) in the trial, foreign counsels in his defence and live broadcast of his trial, defining crimes against humanity, and giving him 11 months to make preparation for the case.

The tribunal headed by Justice Nizamul Huq rejected Chowdhury's first petition that sought application of the Evidence Act, 1872 and CrPC Act, 1898 in his trial proceedings.

It said the three-member tribunal had been formed under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, and according to the act, the Evidence Act and the CrPC Act are not applicable in trial proceedings.

It also rejected Chowdhury's petition for allowing foreign lawyers to defend him, and said only Bangladesh Bar Council has the authority to give such permission.

The tribunal said it may allow foreign counsels to defend him on permission from the Bar Council. However, both the defence and the prosecution may seek advice from foreign lawyers.

The court also turned down Chowdhury's another

petition for allowing live broadcast of his trial saying there is no such instance anywhere in the world.

The court, however, said parts of the proceedings can be recorded, and broadcast in the media later.

Chowdhury's petition seeking 11 months for making preparation for the case was rejected as the tribunal found it "absurd" that both the defence and the prosecution should get the same amount of time for preparation.

The tribunal's rules of procedure say the defence will get at least 21 days for preparation after formal charges are pressed, said the court.

It also rejected Chowdhury's petition for defining "crimes against humanity", saying the term has been defined clearly in the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act.

However, if necessary, the tribunal may seek references from judgements in other countries.

Chowdhury's another petition that said the tribunal should be guided by the international covenants signed by Bangladesh also got rejected.

The tribunal said the matter rests with the govern-

ment, not with the tribunal, and the government is to decide whether to follow the covenants or not.

Meanwhile, the tribunal accepted a petition from Supreme Court lawyer Md Boduazzaman, whom the tribunal appointed to represent Chowdhury, seeking permission to meet his client in jail.

It asked the lawyer to fix a date and time, and inform it.

The tribunal appointed Boduazzaman as Chowdhury's counsel on December 12, as the BNP leader did not appoint any lawyer to defend him.

Chowdhury, however, denied accepting Boduazzaman as defence lawyer.

"He is not my lawyer. I will represent myself," he said from the dock.

Shahinur Islam, registrar of the tribunal, said if the court allows Chowdhury may represent himself or appoint his defence counsel.

Five Jamaat and two BNP leaders including SQ Chowdhury face charges of crimes against humanity.

Nearly 30 lakh Bangladeshes were killed and two lakh Bangladesh women violated by the Pakistan occupation forces and their Bangladeshi collaborators during the nine-month Liberation War.

## Strike called Dhaka plan

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bus and truck owners and workers' bodies at Nathullahbad central bus terminal. Alamgir Hossain Alam, secretary of Barisal Bus Malik Samity (owners association) chaired the meeting that condemned the government's indifference to their demands.

The owners and workers demanded repairing and proper maintenance of the existing roads before the government builds any new bridges or highways.

Leaders of the associations said everybody blames transport workers for accidents but nobody considers the 'battered condition of the unplanned roads and highways of the region.'

More than 80 percent roads in Barisal division are in a sorry state, which forces transport workers risk their lives while the owners incur huge loss due to high maintenance cost of their vehicles, he said.

Jahangir Hossain, district president of Truck Owners Association, Narayan Chandra Das, organising secretary of Truck Workers Association, and Shah Alam, secretary of Barisal Sarak Paribahan Sramik Union, among others, also addressed the meeting.

Md Johurul Hoq, chief town planner for Rajuk, said they are sincerely trying to implement the Dap which will expire in 2015. "Rajuk has proposed making the next plan," he said.

The finalised Dap was published in official gazette in June last year. But its execution was soon made subject to a 'final' review by a seven-member cabinet body, in the face of fierce opposition from the real estate developers including two lawmakers.

Poba Chairman Abu Naser Khan alleged that state-run Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) is more engaged in acquiring the lands of ordinary people to develop different residential plots for the wealthy and those influential.

Rajuk should give up its role as a real estate firm and must oversee development control, said Syed Mahbulul Alam, director of the WBB Trust.

Md Shawkat Ali Khan, vice president of BIP, among others, spoke.

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Though a single bus can carry the passengers of 40 private cars, the Dap encourages the latter, he said, by banning non-motorised vehicles.

He also observed that construction of flyovers would not solve traffic congestion in the city.

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পাওয়ার গ্রীড কোম্পানী অব বাংলাদেশ লিঃ  
**POWER GRID COMPANY OF BANGLADESH LTD.**  
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)  
Institution of Engineers Bangladesh, New Bhaban (4th floor) 8/A, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.  
Web: www.pgcb.org.bd  
Date: 18 December 2011.

**INVITATION FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR CONSTRUCTION OF (1) PGCB HEAD OFFICE BUILDING -Lot-1 (2) PGCB TRAINING CENTRE BUILDING-Lot-2**

- Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) Limited is going to build (1) PGCB HEAD OFFICE BUILDING OF 20 (twenty) storey having each floor area approximately 2000 sqm. with two car parking basements at Rampura PGCB NLDC premises ( 2 ) PGCB TRAINING CENTRE BUILDING OF 10 (ten) storey having each floor area approximately 500 sqm. with two car parking basements at PGCB Agargoan 230/132 kv Sbstation premises subject to limitations imposed by RAJUK/CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY from PGCB own fund.
- For these above works, PGCB is pursuing consultancy services from local well experienced consulting firms. These consultancy services include the preparation of Topography Survey Report, Sub-soil Investigation, Detailed Architectural Drawings, Modeling, Civil Structural Design & drawings, Electrical & Sanitary Design & Drawings, Fire Protection System Design & Drawings, Estimate, Preparation of Bid Document, Evaluation of Bid Document. All the designs are to be prepared following Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) and other relevant International Codes. The services will also include supervision of all the relevant construction works.
- The expected duration for the proposed
  - PGCB HEAD OFFICE BUILDING-Lot-1 is 36 months (Phase- 1 Completion of all sorts of design and Construction up to Six storey)
  - PGCB TRAINING CENTRE BUILDING-Lot-2 is 30 months (Phase-1, completion of all sorts of design and Construction up to Six storey)
- The Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) is now inviting proposals from eligible consulting firms /companies to expresses their interest in providing the services. The EOI shall be submitted in firm/company's letterhead pad and must include information regarding their qualification (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions and availability of appropriate skilled Personnel, etc to perform the above services.
- The consulting firms/companies shall have experiences of rendering consulting services for at least two 15 (Fifteen) storied aesthetically beautiful building including two car parking basement floors during last 10 (ten) years against EOI for (1) PGCB Head Office Building-Lot-1 and at least two 10 (ten) storied aesthetically beautiful building including two car parking basement floors during last 10 (ten) years against EOI for (2)) PGCB Training Centre Building - Lot-2.
- The EOI submitted by the consulting firms/companies will be evaluated for selection to issue RFP in favor of them considering firm/ company profile, past experiences, relevant technical personnel in accordance with the procedures set out by PGCB.
- The interested consulting firm may obtain further information if necessary from the address below from 09.00 am to 05.00 pm, local time :  
General Manager (P&D)  
Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB)  
Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) Bhaban (New), 3rd Floor  
Ramna, Dhaka-1000.  
Tel: +880-9553663, 9550514, 9560064, 9558054  
Fax: +880-2-7171833, E-mail: info@pgcb.org.bd

The EOI shall be submitted for (1) PGCB HEAD OFFICE BUILDING - Lot-1 and (2) PGCB TRAINING CENTRE BUILDING-Lot-2 separately in two sets (one original and one copy) for both the cases in sealed envelopes, to the address mentioned in clause 7 by 15.00 pm local time on or before 15th January'2012.

Company Secretary