

# Thousands of people protest Greece austerity

Angered by the economic situation plaguing their country, more than 5,000 Greeks gather in Athens to protest the Government's austerity policies

The crowd has gathered in response to an online campaign inspired by recent turnouts in Spain. More than 15,000 people crowded in the main squares in the northern port city of Thessaloniki, the mainland cities of Patras, Larissa and Volos and the cities of Rethymno and Hania on the southern Mediterranean island of Crete. The protests were inspired by a similar mobilisation in Spain, although the Greek version showed no inclination for a sit-in.

Such protests are something of a rarity for Greece as they are not linked to a particular party and not organised by labour unions. Despite receiving a 110bn Euro bailout last year from the European Union and International Monetary Fund,

Greece is again on the brink of insolvency as efforts to meet tough targets are being hampered by a deep recession, high unemployment and weak revenues.

Athens had received a warning from the EU that it would get no further aid unless there was broad political consensus, as was the case in Ireland and Portugal. Ignoring one of the main conditions for further aid, Greece's opposition parties have so far rejected the new package of austerity measures, saying that further belt-tightening policies agreed in return for the emergency bailout will have negative repercussions on the economy. Inspectors from the IMF, EU and European Central Bank have asked Greece to speed



People protest during a rally against a new austerity package

up reforms, which would clear the way for the next loan instalment of 12bn Euros to be given to the cash-strapped country as part of a 110bn Euro emergency bailout.

Greece announced a new round of austerity measures totalling 6bn Euros as part of a mid-term programme, including accelerating privatisations of Government holdings and tax hikes as part of EU-IMF

conditions for the release of the next loan tranche in June. Athens said it is determined to raise 50bn Euros by 2015 through the privatisations of the country's two biggest ports, as well as OTE Telecom and Hellenic Portbank. But the European Central Bank has warned against such a move and rating agencies have said they would consider it a 'credit event,' or default.

## Alcohol-related hospital admissions reach record level

**Number of alcohol-related hospital admissions in England tops 1m for the first time**

Admissions have increased by 12 percent between 2008-09 and 2009-10, including liver disease and mental disorders due to alcohol abuse as well as some cancers, accidents and injuries. Nearly two in three cases were men. Earlier this year, the charity Alcohol Concern predicted the number of admissions would reach 1.5m a year by 2015. Professor Sir Ian Gilmore, the Chair of the UK Alcohol Health Alliance, said, "While total alcohol consumption has fallen in recent years it is likely that the number of abstainers in England is increasing, but those who do drink continue to do so in a harmful and destructive way."

## Christine Lagarde announces IMF candidacy

**Christine Lagarde announces her candidacy to be the next IMF Head**

The French Finance Minister had been an early favourite to replace Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who resigned to fight sex assault charges in New York. Ms. Lagarde has the sup-



port of much of Europe but emerging countries have called the tradition of a European always leading the IMF 'obsolete.' "If elected, I will give the IMF all my experience as a lawyer, a director of enterprise, a minister and a woman," she said. If chosen, she would be the first woman to head the IMF in its 65 year history.

## Cosmic distance record 'broken'

**A cataclysmic explosion of a huge star near the edge of the observable Universe may be the most distant single object yet spied by a telescope**

Scientists believe the blast occurred a mere 520m years after the Big Bang. This means its light has taken a staggering 13.14bn years to reach Earth. The event, which was picked up by NASA's Swift in April 2009, is referred to by astronomers using the designation GRB 090429B (the 'GRB' stands for 'gamma-ray burst'). "It would have been a huge star, perhaps 30 times the mass of our Sun," said lead researcher Dr. Antonino Cucchiara from the University of California, Berkeley.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Six tombs open for public in Egypt

## Six ancient tombs newly opened to the public

**Minister of State Zahi Hawass opened to the public six ancient Egyptian tombs dating back to the Tutankhamun era, following their restoration**

Mr. Hawass unveiled the tombs of Saqqara, south of Cairo, to the press saying they had been 'meticulously' restored and that glass plates were used to protect the funerary frescoes. Two of the tombs, which are over 3,000 years old, were built as the final resting place for the treasurer of Pharaoh Tutankhamun, Maia, and the Commander in Chief of his army, Horenheb.

Horenheb succeeded Tutankhamun as pharaoh, becoming the last ruler of the 18th dynasty. His wife is

buried in his tomb as when general Horenheb reached power he erected a tomb for himself in the Valley of the Kings in Luxor.

Mr. Hawass, who was named minister of antiquities last month and was Head of the Supreme Council of Antiquities and later Minister of State under ousted President Hosni Mubarak, was sentenced on April 17th to serve a year in jail. But the sentence over his refusal to implement a court decision in a land dispute has been suspended until an appeal ruling.

Egypt says it has lost 2.27bn Dollars in crucial tourism revenues in the three months since the uprising and deadly street protests which overthrew Mr. Mubarak.

## Missouri releases list of missing after tornado

**The US state of Missouri has released a list of more than 230 people missing since a devastating tornado struck the city of Joplin**

The list is shrinking as people are located, and officials hope others have simply failed to contact relatives. The tornado killed at least 125 people, injured 750 and wrecked as much as a third of the city, making it one of the most destructive in US history.

Another series of tornadoes struck Oklahoma, Arkansas and Kansas, killing at least 16 people. Oklahoma authorities discovered the body of a three year old boy who went missing after a tornado struck his home.

Search teams in Joplin, Missouri, home to 49,000 people, have scoured the wreckage for survivors. However, by last Thursday, authorities began weighing when to begin using bulldozers and other heavy kit to clear debris — a step that would indicate no more survivors were expected to be found. Joplin Fire Chief, Mitch Randles, said, "We've had stories from earthquakes and tsunamis and other disasters of people being found two or three weeks later, and we are hopeful we'll have a story like that to tell." Those leading the search effort say it is impossible to know how many people are truly missing, since many may have simply left the area and not been in contact with relatives.



Shelley Henderson (L) is helped by family and friends