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**FRANCE: TRAVEL CHAOS AS RAIL WORKERS HOLD RENEWED STRIKE AGAINST MACRON'S REFORMS**

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Train travel in France has been disrupted for a third time this month as SNCF workers protest against a planned overhaul. The strikes pose the biggest challenge so far to President Emmanuel Macron's reform plans.

French commuters and holidaymakers dealt with another day of disruptions to train services on Sunday as rail workers laid down their work to start the latest two-day protest at President Emmanuel Macron's planned overhaul of state-run railway company SNCF.

One out of every five high-speed TGV services was still running on Sunday, while in the regional network, two-thirds of trains were canceled. Six out of seven TGV trains and four-fifths of regional trains were affected during the last strike on Wednesday.

Train travel from France to Germany was also hit. A German railway spokesman said that just eight long-distance trains would travel between the two countries on Sunday.

SNCF predicts 43 percent of workers required for the network to operate normally would also strike on Monday.

The share is lower than last week, when 48 percent of workers walked out during the two-day strike on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Officials expect one in five high-speed trains, one in three suburban trains and three out of four international service trains to go ahead as scheduled on Monday.

### **Widespread resistance**

Train staff last week launched three months of nationwide rolling strikes in protest of the planned overhaul, with unions calling walkouts for two days out of every five until the end of June.

The planned reforms would include ending job-for-life guarantees and early retirement for rail workers. SNCF staff say they fear the plans in the end aim at privatizing the company, which still holds a monopoly on train travel in France.

Nearly two-thirds of the French public say they support the government in facing down the strikes, according to an Ifop poll published on Sunday in the Journal du Dimanche newspaper.

Macron, who came to power last May on the back of promises to modernize France's economy, is facing protests not only in the rail sector, but also among studentsopposed to a planned new selection system in higher education. Garbage collectors and other public workers have also held demonstrations.

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