

# *French Rail Workers Extend Strike After Talks Fail*

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Paris, June 13 (RHC)-- Railway workers in France have held a protest rally and extended their strike for another day after their negotiations with the government ended without an agreement.

The French railway workers staged the massive rally in the French capital, Paris, on Thursday and announced that strikes will continue into Friday. The strike, which began on Tuesday evening, was initially supposed to last 24 hours. However, it has twice been extended as talks between several unions and Transport Minister Frederic Cuvillier failed to yield results.

The massive strike has reduced the number of France's in-service trains by more than half, causing major problems for French commuters. The strike has disrupted traffic around Paris and other major cities.

France's state-owned SNCF railway company announced that only one out of every two or three high-speed TGV train will be running during the strike. According to reports, in addition to regional trains, links to other countries are expected to be also hit by the walkout.

Warnings were also issued that taxi drivers in Paris would also go on strike, adding to travel chaos in the capital city.

The strike takes place just a week before France's lower house of parliament examines the proposed railway reforms to tackle the sector's soaring debt, which is estimated at about \$54 billion USD. The

reforms include plans for more competition among French rail services. However, unions argue that the measures will not help contain the debt.

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