



PARIS (Dispatches) – Tensions run high in Paris as demonstrators once again rallied in protest against the planned pension reform announced by French President Emmanuel Macron. Two days after more than one million people took to the streets, raising their voices against the government's proposed pension reforms, clashes erupted in the capital between police and demonstrators. Angry protesters started setting trash cans on fire, breaking traffic lights, and blowing up firecrackers. "Macron is stubborn, he is totally in the minority. There are 92 or 93 percent of people in the workforce who are opposed to this reform," a member of La France Insoumise (LFI) party said in the protests. At the front of the procession, some protesters smashed bank windows and cash machines and some other protesters threw garbage cans, bottles and smoke bombs, while chanting "Down with capitalism" and "Macron, we will fight till the end!" The protesters burned trash cans in the streets, as police forces beat the protesters with riot batons. According to the police headquarters, twenty arrests were also made in Paris. The protest against the pension reform was organized by 11 youth organizations and the left-wing La France Insoumise (LFI) party led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon. The LFI, the far-left New Anticapitalist Party, and the alliance of left-leaning political groups known as the New Ecological and Social People's Union were all represented by participants waving banners.

ATLANTA (Dispatches) – Violent protests have erupted in downtown Atlanta over the U.S. police killing of an environmental activist, with several demonstrators being arrested by the police. Environmental and social justice activists took to the streets on Saturday in the capital of the U.S. state of Georgia to protest the "cold blooded" police killing of 26-year-old Manuel Teran. An eyewitness at the rally reported that the demonstration started peacefully, then briefly turned violent after some protesters set a police car on fire, threw fireworks and rocks, and smashed buildings' windows. Atlanta Police Chief Darin Schierbaum announced at a news conference on Saturday night that six protesters had been arrested at the protest rally. Three businesses were damaged and a police car was set on fire, Schierbaum added. Of those who were arrested, several had explosives on them and do not live in the Atlanta area, or in Georgia, said Andre Dickens, Atlanta's Mayor. The protests came after Teran was shot and killed by police during a raid on Wednesday against environmental activists, who gathered to protest at the construction site of "Cop City", a massive law enforcement facility to be built inside Weelaunee People's Park.

LIMA (Reuters) – Peruvian police arrested over 200 people accused of illegally entering the campus of a major Lima university, while authorities in Cusco shut the Incan citadel of Machu Picchu and the Inca trail as deadly anti-government protests spread nationwide. Dozens of Peruvians were injured after tensions flared again as police clashed with protesters, with security forces in capital city Lima using tear gas to repel demonstrators throwing glass bottles and stones, as fires burned in the streets. Some 46 people have been killed in the weeks-long clashes and another nine in traffic accidents related to the barricades set up amid the protests. Alfonso Barrenechea, with the crime prevention division of the prosecutor's office, told local radio station RPP that arrested 205 people at the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos for illegally trespassing on the university's premises and for allegedly stealing electronic goods. A group of masked protesters stormed the campus and removed security personnel from the campus after taking vests and other equipment from them, the university said in a statement. In videos circulating online, an armored vehicle can be seen breaking down a door on the university campus to allow entry for security forces. In the Cusco region, the gateway to Machu Picchu, Glencore's major Antapaccay copper mine suspended operations on Friday after protesters attacked the premises - one of the largest in the country - for the third time this month.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – A new search of President Joe Biden's home in Wilmington, Delaware, by the U.S. Justice Department found six more items, including documents with classification markings, a lawyer for the president said in a statement Saturday night. Some of the classified documents and "surrounding materials" dated from Biden's tenure in the U.S. Senate, where he represented Delaware from 1973 to 2009, according to his lawyer, Bob Bauer. Other documents were from his tenure as vice president in the Obama administration, from 2009 through 2017, Bauer said. The Department of Justice, which conducted a search that lasted over 12 hours, also took some notes that Biden had personally handwritten as vice president, according to the lawyer. The president offered access "to his home to allow DOJ to conduct a search of the entire premises for potential vice-presidential records and potential classified material," Bauer said. Other classified government records were discovered this month at Biden's Wilmington residence, and in November at a private office he maintained at a Washington, D.C., think tank after ending his tenure as vice president in the Obama administration in 2017.

MOGADISHU (Reuters) – At least five people were injured in a blast on Sunday at the gates of the mayor's office in Somalia's capital Mogadishu and gunfire continued to sound, a member of the ambulance service and a witness said. Somalia's militant group Al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the attack. Abdulkadir Abdurahman, director of Aamin Ambulance Services, told Reuters that ambulance staff had so far evacuated five injured people from the scene of the blast. Gunfire was still ongoing in the area and it was difficult for ambulances to access the area, he said. "We were in the office and we were deafened by a blast, we ran out, gunfire followed," Farah Abdullahi, who works in the mayor's office, told Reuters. The mayor's office is located in the local government headquarters building in a well guarded area of Mogadishu. Roads in the area have concrete barriers and multiple roadblocks. The building is about one and a half kilometers away from Villa Somalia, the president's office.

Russia Warns of Global 'Catastrophe' Protesters in Warsaw Rap Poland's Backing for Ukraine



A screenshot from a video depicting the protests in Warsaw, Poland, on January 21, 2023

WARSAW (TASS/Reuters) – Hundreds of people took part in an anti-war protest in Warsaw, slamming Poland's involvement in Ukraine's war and the government's support for Ukraine in its battle with Russia.

Participants of the 'This is not our war' march, who protest against the involvement of Poland and the Poles in the Ukraine conflict, took to the streets in Warsaw on Saturday.

As the organizers of the protest pointed out in the leaflets calling to join the rally, Polish politicians and media "are relentlessly pounding the Poles' heads and hearts with war propaganda."

"The patriotic movement of fellow countrymen, bearing in mind our tragic history of 1939-1945 strongly protests against bellicose rhetoric. There must be peace in Poland, and those who are prodding us into taking part in somebody else's war should be held accountable," they said.

The protesters came to downtown Warsaw waving the flags of Poland and carrying banners proclaiming "This is not our war," "Stop the Americanization of Poland", "We want to live in peace."

In recent months, European citizens' calls have been growing louder on the U.S. and European countries to stop supporting Ukraine with military supplies. Moscow

says the raft of military supplies to Kiev stretches the war even longer.

Late last year, there were protests in Italy and France as people rocked the streets of the capitals to protest against the countries' membership in the U.S.-led NATO military alliance.

A close ally of President Vladimir Putin said on Sunday that deliveries of offensive weapons to Kyiv that threaten Russia's territories will lead to a global catastrophe and make arguments against using weapons of mass destruction untenable.

Vyacheslav Volodin, speaker of the Duma - Russia's lower house of parliament - warned that the United States and NATO's support of Ukraine is leading the world to a "terrible war".

"If Washington and NATO countries supply weapons that will be used to strike civilian cities and attempt to seize our territories, as they threaten, this will lead to retaliatory measures using more powerful weapons," Volodin said on the Telegram messaging app.

"Arguments that the nuclear powers have not previously used weapons of mass destruction in local conflicts are untenable. Because these states did not face a situation where there was a threat to the security of their citizens and the territorial integrity of the country."

U.S. Media Rocked by Layoffs Amid Economic Gloom

WASHINGTON (AFP) – From CNN to the Washington Post, U.S. media are facing tough times, as a series of outlets have announced layoffs this winter amid fears of an economic downturn.

Vox Media, owner of the Vox and The Verge websites as well as the landmark New York Magazine and its online platforms, announced Friday it was letting go seven percent of its staff.

The news follows layoffs at CNN, NBC, MSNBC, BuzzFeed and other outlets.

In a memo to staff, Vox Media CEO Jim Bankoff announced "the difficult decision to eliminate roughly seven percent of our staff roles across departments due to the challenging economic environment impacting our business and industry."

The memo, which was confirmed to AFP by Vox Media, said the affected employees were going to be notified of being let go within the next 15 minutes. That would mean some 130 out of the group's 1,900 staff.

Journalists who were laid off from other organizations in recent weeks have also taken to Twitter to express anger, dismay, or gratitude to their colleagues, while beginning to look for a new job.

While the media layoffs were not as dramatic as those rocking tech giants such as Microsoft and Google, which announced Friday it was cutting 12,000 more jobs, they were a consequence of falling advertising revenue amid a gloomy economic climate, said Chris Roush, dean of the School of Communications at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut.

"For a lot of them, they grew and expanded on the expectation that they were going to be able to grow their audience, or either readers or viewers to a certain level," Roush told AFP. "And

that just hasn't happened and is unlikely to happen given what's happening in the economy."

Newsroom employment has seen a steady decline in the United States, falling from 114,000 to 85,000 journalists between 2008 and 2020, according to a 2021 study by the Pew Research Center, with local media hit especially hard.

"Journalism has been under pressure for a long time, and a number of companies seem to think this is an opportunity time to reduce their labor costs - hurting both journalists and journalism," the Writers Guild of America, East said in a statement to AFP.

A similar announcement is dreading at the Washington Post, where CEO Fred Ryan warned last month that "a number of positions" will be cut in the following weeks, adding that the layoffs would affect "a single digit percentage of our employee base" of some 2,500 people. Hires for other positions can continue, the paper said.

The Washington Post Magazine, the paper's Sunday supplement which won two Pulitzer prizes, was shut down in December as part of what executive editor Sally Buzbee described in a memo as the paper's "global and digital transformation."

And Vision Media CEO Nancy Dubuc announced to her staff Friday that the company is up for sale.

In recent months, CNN has laid off an estimated several hundred workers out of a total of some 4,000 people, according to U.S. media. CNN would not confirm those figures to AFP.

The cuts took place as the company underwent a restructuring following a merger between Warner Media, which includes CNN and HBO Max, and Discovery. The merger resulted in the creation of the Warner Bros. Discovery mega conglomerate.

Chomsky: World Racing Toward 'Irreversible' Nuclear Disaster



A security person standing in front of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Leading American political analyst and philosopher Noam Chomsky says the world is racing toward an "irreversible" disaster due to an increasing risk of nuclear war, a failure to address climate challenges, and a diminished ability of great powers to tackle international problems rationally

In an interview with RT on Saturday, Chomsky recalled that in recent years the Doomsday Clock, which reflects how close humanity is to nuclear Armageddon, has moved closer to Midnight, which symbolizes the extinction of humanity.

Chomsky, a Laureate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Arizona, said humanity's main concerns are "an increasing threat of nuclear war" and "a very severe and growing threat of destruction of the climate."

He added that the latter problem per-

sists because "states are not doing what they know they must do to solve this crisis."

Chomsky also raised concern over "the deterioration of an arena of rational serious debate and deliberation" combined with "the collapse of democratic forces" around the world.

"All three have gotten considerably worse during the past year, and unless there's a sharp reversal, we'll simply be heading for a precipice, falling over, irreversible, and not in the long distant future," he warned.

Chomsky's comments came after former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev said that those who want to see Moscow defeated in Ukraine, ignore the fact that "a loss by a nuclear power in a conventional war may trigger the start of a nuclear war."

Medvedev, who now serves as deputy chairman of President Vladimir Putin's Security Council, said, "Nuclear pow-

ers have never lost major conflicts on which their fate depends."

Russia and the United States, the largest nuclear powers, hold around 90% of the world's nuclear warheads.

Previously, Chomsky said the rising tension between Russia and the United States might lead to a nuclear war that could cause the end of mankind.

"The U.S. has just sharply increased; it quadrupled military expenses on its side. The Russians are doing something similar. There are constant near collisions, jets coming close to colliding with one another... That threat is escalating and very serious," Chomsky added.

Chomsky said tensions between Moscow and Washington have put the world on the verge of "termination for the species."

He said the symbolic Doomsday Clock of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, which represents a countdown to possible global catastrophe, is moving closer to Midnight.

Established in 1947, the founders of the Doomsday Clock, who are advised by 18 Nobel Laureates, said that the clock stood at three minutes to midnight, due to "[un]checked climate change, global nuclear weapons modernizations, and outsized nuclear weapons arsenals."

Russian President Vladimir Putin stated in December that nuclear tensions had risen because of the war in Ukraine.

Putin warned that the Ukraine war could go on for a long time. He also spoke about the risk of a nuclear war but added that Russia has not "gone mad" and sees its own nuclear arsenal as a purely defensive deterrent.

Burkina Faso Ends Ties With French Troops, Orders Departure

OUAGADOUGOU (AP) – Burkina Faso's government late Saturday ordered hundreds of French troops to depart the West African country within a month, following in the path of neighboring Mali.

National broadcaster RTB made the announcement, citing the official Agence d'Information du Burkina. The news agency said the decision had been made Wednesday to end the presence of France's military on Burkinabe soil.

Protesters took to the streets of the capital, Ouagadougou, last week to call for the ouster of the French ambassador and the closure of a French military base north of the capital. About 400 French special forces soldiers are currently based there, France 24 reported.

The move by Burkina Faso's government comes five months after France completed its withdrawal from Mali after nine years alleged fighting extremists alongside regional troops. Many of those are now based in Niger and Chad instead.

The number of French troops in Burkina Faso is far smaller than it was in Mali — 400 special forces, compared to more than 2,400 sol-



People gather in Ouagadougou to show their support to Burkina Faso's new military leader Ibrahim Traore and demand the departure of the French ambassador.

diers. They are deployed under the pretext of fighting terrorist groups, which have killed thousands of people and displaced more than two million.

After the second coup there last year, anti-French protesters began urging the government to instead strengthen ties with Russia. Mali already has hired Russian forces from the Wagner Group.

Saturday's announcement was

welcomed by those who had lost patience with France.

"Despite their presence on Burkinabe soil with huge equipment and their power at the intelligence level, they couldn't help us defeat terrorism," said Passamde Sawadogo, a prominent civil society activist and reggae singer. "It therefore was time for us to get rid of them, and that's what the transition government is doing with a lot of boldness."

India Blocks Documentary on Modi's Role in Gujarat 'Ethnic Cleansing'

NEW DELHI (AFP) – India's government said it has blocked videos and tweets sharing links to a BBC documentary about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's role during deadly 2002 sectarian riots.

The British broadcaster's program alleges that the Hindu nationalist Modi, premier of Gujarat state at the time, ordered police to turn a blind eye to the orgy of violence there that left at least 1,000 people dead, most of them Muslims.

Kanchan Gupta, a government spokesman, tweeted on Saturday that the Indian government used emergency powers under IT rules to block the documentary and its clips from being shared on social media.

Orders were also issued to Twitter to block over 50 tweets with links to YouTube videos.

Created by BBC, the two-part documentary, the first part of which aired on January 17, tracked Modi's early years as a politician and later climbing through the ranks within the infamous Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP).

Before becoming the prime minister of India in 2014, Modi held the chair of the chief minister of the western state of Gujarat from 2001 to 2014.

The documentary puts light on the previously unpublished report that raises questions about Modi's actions during the

religious riots that had broken out after a train carrying Hindu pilgrims the day before was set on fire, killing 59.

The victims, mostly Muslims were mercilessly butchered during the 2002 Gujarat riots in February, which lasted for three days, and is considered one of the worst incidents of violence in India since its independence in 1947.

For the first time, a documentary has revealed a UK government report into the communal riots. The UK report said the events had "all the hallmarks of an ethnic cleansing," the documentary showed.

"Modi had played a proactive part in pulling back police and in tacitly encouraging the Hindu extremists. That was a particularly egregious example of political involvement to prevent police from doing their job to protect the Hindus and the Muslims," Jack Straw, the former foreign secretary of UK who held office during the riots, is heard saying in the documentary.

The report also claimed there was widespread rape of Muslim women during the 2002 violence.

It added that the riots' objective was to "purge Muslims from Hindu areas"; something critics today have said has become state policy under the BJP's Hindu nationalist agenda.