

TEHRAN -- Iran and India on Monday reaffirmed their resolve to fight all forms of terrorism in order to establish peace, stability and security in the region.

The two sides issued a statement at the end of the one-day visit of Ajit Duval, the Indian national security chief's to Tehran and his meeting with Iran's security chief Ali Shamkhani. They said they are committed to increase cooperation for the purpose of joint confrontation with regional and global challenges.

MANILA (AFP) -- Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said ahead of a summit with U.S. President Joe Biden on Monday he will not allow his country to be used as a "staging post for any kind of military action" as tensions between Washington and Beijing increase over the Taiwan Strait. Aboard an aircraft en route to Washington, Marcos also told reporters on Sunday that he will not encourage any "provocative action" by any country that will put at risk the peace and security of the Philippines. Marcos has recently allowed the United States to use additional Philippine military bases, a move that China took as Manila interfering in Taiwan's affairs.

Viewpoint

INSTC All Set to Pay Rich Dividends for Iran

Iran Successfully Tests Homegrown Plane Engine



TEHRAN – Iranian industrial experts on Monday successfully tested a homegrown aircraft engine as President Ebrahim Raisi paid a visit to Iranian energy and infrastructure conglomerate MAPNA on the occasion of International Labor Day.

During the visit, the power component and the engine control system of the aircraft were tested.

The engine and its control system have been fully designed and manufactured by the domestic technicians at MAPNA using reverse engineering.

The president also visited an exhibition of technological achievements in various sectors, such as the thermal and renewable energy power plants, oil and gas industry, railroad transportation, aircraft engines, electric vehicles, health products and water industry.

The president also saw a high-tech F-class Iranian gas turbine and a homegrown locomotive,

dubbed MAP 24, in the exhibition.

MAPNA is the largest Iranian contractor for steam, gas and combined cycle and renewable power plants.

Relying on its engineering capabilities and infrastructure as well as its experiences in the area of developing gas turbines, the group has decided to enter the aviation industry.

Its air division has been tasked with repairing and testing aircraft engines and designing and manufacturing engine parts based on international standards by using domestic experts and the latest technology. The group aims to boost Iran's aviation fleet.

Last year, MAPNA conducted the first-ever live testing of a passenger plane engine which it had repaired. The conglomerate also unveiled a mobile test stand for aeroengines designed and manufactured by its experts.

UN: Sudan 'Near Breaking Point'

KHARTOUM (AFP) – Gun battles and explosions again rocked Sudan's capital Monday despite the latest truce agreed between warring generals as the United Nations described a humanitarian catastrophe.

The chaos and bloodshed, now in their third week, have sparked an exodus of tens of thousands of Sudanese to neighboring countries including Egypt, Chad and Central African Republic.

Hundreds have been killed and thousands wounded since fighting erupted on April 15 between Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Millions of Sudanese unable to afford the inflated prices required to escape the battles have sheltered in their homes with dwindling food and water and frequent power cuts, as fighter jets thunder through the sky on raids that have drawn heavy anti-aircraft fire.

Warplanes struck northern areas of the capital, a witness told AFP, while another reported "armed clashes in central Khartoum".

Burhan and Daglo have violated multiple ceasefires and extended the latest by 72 hours late on Sunday.

While foreign nations have evacuated thousands of their citizens by air, road and sea, around 50,000 Sudanese have fled overland to neighbors, said the UN.

"Today I have no food for my children and no means of work," one refugee, Mahamat Hassan Hamad, a tailor, told AFP, trying to hold back tears. "My sewing machines were taken by the attackers." He blamed the RSF who "destroyed everything in their path."

The United Nations refugee agency said it was bracing for "the possibility that over 800,000 people may flee the fighting in Sudan for neighboring countries".

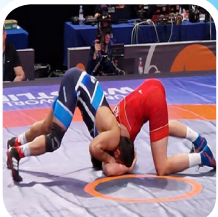
"We hope it doesn't come to that, but if violence doesn't stop we will see more people forced to flee Sudan seeking safety," UN-HCR chief Filippo Grandi said in a tweet, adding to UN alarm over what the world body calls a catastrophic humanitarian situation sparked by

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Iran Defends Confiscation of U.S. Oil Tanker



Greco-Roman Wrestlers Win Two Gold Medals in Champions Cup in Turkey



Teen Martyred in Troops' Raid, Settlers Brutally Beat Palestinians



Huge Demos in France Give Way to Fiery Clashes



Protesters clash with security forces in Paris on May 1, 2023.

PARIS (AFP) – Protesters clashed with security forces across France on Monday as more than one million people took to the streets for labor day to vent their anger against President Emmanuel Macron's pension reform.

Unions had been hoping for a vast turnout across France for the May 1 protests to further rattle Macron, who has been greeted by pot-bashing and jeers as he toured the country seeking to defend the reforms and relaunch his second mandate.

Macron last month signed a law to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64, despite months of strikes against the bill.

In Paris, protesters threw projectiles at police and broke windows of businesses such as banks and estate agents, with security forces responding with tear gas and water cannon, AFP correspondents said.

One policeman, hit by a Molotov cocktail, has suffered severe burns to the hand and to the face, Paris

police told AFP. The police said 46 people have been arrested in the capital alone so far.

Police had been given a last-minute go-ahead to use drones as a security measure after a Paris court rejected a petition from rights groups for them not to be used.

Police used tear gas in Toulouse in southern France as tensions erupted during the demonstrations, while four cars were set on fire in the southeastern city of Lyon.

In the western city of Nantes, police also fired tear gas after protesters hurled projectiles, AFP correspondents said. The windows of Uniqlo clothing store were smashed.

"Even if the vast majority of demonstrators were peaceful, in Paris, Lyon and Nantes in particular the police face extremely violent thugs who came with one objective: to kill cops and attack the property of others," said Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin on Twitter.

The CGT union said 550,000 people had turned out in Paris for the protests and 2.3 million across France. Government estimates, likely to be far lower, are due later.

Macron and his government have tried to turn the page on the months of popular discontent, hoping to relaunch his second term after the reform was signed into law.

"The page is not going to be turned as long as there is no withdrawal of this pension reform. The determination to win is intact," said CGT chief Sophie Binet at the Paris protest.

"The mobilization is still very, very strong," added Laurent Berger, head of the CFDT union. "It is a sign that resentment and anger are not diminishing."

Monday marked the first time since 2009 that all eight of France's main unions have joined in calling for protests.

Radical ecological activists from Extinction Rebellion earlier sprayed

orange paint on the facade of the glitzy Fondation Louis Vuitton museum in Paris, which is backed by the LVMH luxury goods giant.

In a separate action by a different environmental protest group, activists sprayed orange paint around the Place Vendome in central Paris, known for its jewelry shops, targeting the facade of the ministry of justice.

France has been rocked by a dozen days of nationwide strikes and protests against Macron and his pension changes since mid-January, some of which have turned violent.

When Macron attended the final of the French football cup on Saturday, he was met with activists waving red cards.

Almost three in four French people were unhappy with Macron, a survey by the IFOP polling group found last month.

Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, with Macron's support, invoked in March the controversial article 49.3 of the constitution to ram the pension reform through parliament without a vote in the hung lower house.

In the Place de la Republique where the march started in the French capital, a huge vest with the slogan "Macron resign" was fixed to the giant statue symbolising the French republic at its centre.

"The law has been passed but has not been accepted, there is a desire to show discontent peacefully to have a reaction in response that shows a certain level of decency," said Celine Bertoni, 37, an academic in the central city of Clermont-Ferrand.

"I still hope that we are going to be told it will be withdrawn," she added.

May Day demonstrations took place across Europe, including Spain where flag-waving demonstrators joined more than 70 rallies under the slogan: "Raise wages, lower prices and share profits".

UK Nurses Hold Their Biggest Strike So Far

LONDON (Dispatches) -- Historic strikes by nurses in the UK's NHS over pay and working conditions mirror the struggle of many health workers in other European countries.

Nurses in England staged their biggest strike so far on Monday, with the walkout affecting intensive care, emergency rooms and cancer wards for the first time as part of a dispute over pay.

Health unions, ministers and National Health Service (NHS) bosses are due to meet on Tuesday to discuss the government's offer of a 5 percent pay rise for 2023-24 and a lump sum of at least £1,655 (£1,884) to top up last year's salary.

Unions say wages, especially in

the public sector, have fallen in real terms over the past decade, and a cost-of-living crisis fuelled by double-digit inflation has left many struggling to pay their bills.

Annual gross salaries of hospital nurses in the UK increased by 10 percent in nominal terms but fell by 6 percent in real terms between 2010 and 2019, according to a dataset released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The UK is not the only country in which health workers went on strike over the past year.

In Spain, thousands of health personnel, including doctors working in emergency services, were on strike in November. Be-

sides a considerable increase in their wages, they requested more staff and more resources.

In France, health workers joined protests in several cities last June with similar demands.

In Turkey, health personnel went on strike for better pay and work conditions last year. They took to the streets in several Turkish cities in July to call for more action to prevent violence after a cardiologist was shot dead by a patient's relative.

According to the Turkish Medical Association, thousands of Turkish doctors have left their posts to work abroad over the past decade. They mostly prefer to move to Western countries, es-

pecially Germany.

Health personnel, particularly hospital nurses, have worked ceaselessly during the COVID-19 pandemic. In many European countries, they are demanding better wages, improved working conditions, and more resources.

There are significant differences in nurses' salaries across Europe.

In 2020 or the closest year with available data, official annual gross salaries in hospitals ranged from about €11,880 in Lithuania to €101,151 in Luxembourg, according to the OECD. The dataset includes 25 European countries.