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Workers at France's Nogent nuclear plant vote 24-hour strike, others may follow suit - trade union

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Workers at the French CGT union are staging a 24-hour strike over labor law reforms at Nogent-sur-Seine nuclear plant, located about 100 kilometers from Paris. Other nuclear facilities' employees are mulling joining the strike.

"It will start tonight at 2100 (1900 GMT) and last 24 hours," CGT spokesman Laurent Langlard told Reuters on Wednesday.

"Our goal is not to bring down the network," general secretary of the CGT-Energie de l'Aube, Arnaud Pacot, told Francetv Info. The union says the No. 2 reactor will undergo *"a charge drop to the blackout [a shutdown]"*, the No. 1 reactor has already been stopped due to a technical problem.

Once stopped, it will take 3 to 5 days to restart. A spokesman for EDF [French electricity provider] told AFP that it was *"difficult"* to predict the consequences of such a move.

CGT (General Confederation of Labor) is a national trade union center, one of the five key unions in France. Trade unions in France are known to have strong support among workers, and are able to mobilize employees very rapidly.

The announcement comes amidst a major fuel crisis that is hitting the country due to a massive strike. As of Monday, about 1,600 gas stations were running out of fuel, six out of eight oil refineries were blocked, and five out of around 100 fuel depots affected. French motorists have been queuing in panic to fill up their tanks at service stations that still operate.

The French authorities began by saying there is no fuel crisis in the country, but then France's oil industry federation admitted that they had started using strategic oil reserves against the refinery blockade.

The reserves would last for three months, Union Francaise des Industries Petrolieries (UFIP) President Francis Duseux told RMC radio.

Nogent-sur-Seine nuclear facility is to the south-east of Paris.

France derives about 75 percent of its electricity from nuclear energy.

Over the past two months, since the new labor legislation was adopted, France has been engulfed by violent protests : more than 1,000 people have been detained during clashes with police, and about 300 police and several protesters hurt, according to officials.