



The News

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by Emma Phillips

The French people should not be punished twice and have the New Year's weekend spoiled as well. These are the words of the head of the SNCF Jean-Pierre Farandou ahead of crunch time talks with unions tomorrow morning. Potential train chaos lies ahead over the Christmas weekend with SNCF controllers on strike. 200,000 rail users will see their trains cancelled right when it's the holiday. Meanwhile, government spokesperson Olivier Véran has urged those on strike to "stand down" from the movement and respect the "legitimate request" from the rest of the population to end the strike over Christmas.

200 people gathered for a white march this morning in Vaulx-en-Verin to remember the ten people, including four children, who died nearly a week ago in a fire in a residential building. The bereaved families and their neighbours joined the march before observing a minute's silence in front of the building where the blaze broke out. The investigation is still underway to determine what caused the fire.

After a two year wait, the Covid vaccine from Sanofi is available in pharmacies from today. The booster which is 100% French is recommended for those over 18 as well as those who may have been reluctant about mRNA messenger vaccines. Europe has purchased 70 million doses of the Sanofi vaccine.

After his trip to the United States, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met with his Polish counterpart today. Poland is a strategic ally for Ukraine, with the majority of arms deliveries transiting through the country. Meanwhile, the Russian army says it is concentrating its efforts on capturing the entire Donetsk region in the east of Ukraine.

Greek MEP Eva Kaili is awaiting a major decision in the Qatargate case this evening. A Belgian court will decide if the MEP can be released from prison and placed under electronic surveillance. Eva Kaili is facing charges in an investigation into corruption involving Qatar. She continues to claim she is innocent.

And finally, les Bleus are back on the podium in the FIFA rankings. The French team have moved up a place after reaching the final of the World Cup to be world number three. World Cup winners Argentina are second and Brazil remains at number one. The stand

out is the Moroccan team, who after making it to the semi-finals in Qatar have leaped from 22nd to 11th place.