France coronavirus death toll jumps 186 to 860: minister

23 March 2020

The coronavirus has killed another 186 people in France, the health minister said on Monday, bringing the death toll in the country to 860.

Health Minister Olivier Veran said that 19,856 people had been registered as testing positive for the virus in France, with a total of 8,675 hospitalised of whom 2,082 people are in intensive care.

Officials believe that the published number of those infected largely underestimates the real figure, as only those showing severe symptoms are usually tested.

France has been in lockdown for almost week, with only essential trips outside allowed, in a bid to halt the acceleration of the virus' spread.

"We all hope this confinement will have a strong, visible impact soon on the coronavirus. We all know that this confinement is essential," Veran said.

"It is a difficult situation. But we are not losing hope," he added.

Meanwhile, local authorities said 20 people had died in a single old people's home in the Vosges region of eastern France—one of the areas worst hit in the country—possibly due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Four more doctors have died after contracting the coronavirus in France, officials said on Monday, bringing the total who have lost their lives in France to five.

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