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Paris, March 16 (RHC)-- France will likely be hit with further restrictive measures in the next few days in a bid to curb the country's rising COVID-19 infection rate, French President Emmanuel Macron warned on Monday.

"We will have to take in the days to come, no doubt, new decisions," Macron said during a summit with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. The French president said his officials were working quickly on deploying new measures, because the virus is the "master of time."

He added that any new restrictions must take into account multiple factors, including the protection of the most vulnerable, the education of young people, the health system and the economy.

The president of the Ile-de-France region, which surrounds the French capital, warned on Monday of a "very violent third wave" of infections as the area's case rate approached 400 per 100,000 people. If the rate in the region hits 400 cases per 100,000 it could be placed into a weekend lockdown, as has happened with Nice and Dunkirk.

Local media have reported that some Covid-19 patients have already been flown from Paris to the southern region of Occitanie because the capital's intensive care wards are almost at full capacity due to its high infection rate.

On Sunday, France posted 26,343 new COVID-19 cases, a decrease from the 29,759 reported on Saturday, according to health ministry data. Macron also announced that France would become the latest European nation to suspend its rollout of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine due to fears the jab may cause blood clotting.

The suspension will last for at least 24 hours, pending a new opinion by the EU's drug regulator, the European Medicines Agency, which is expected on Tuesday.

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