

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

7th Jul 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

Data predicts 2m UK summer COVID cases with 10m isolating

- Two million people could contract COVID this summer, potentially meaning up to 10 million must isolate in just six weeks, Guardian analysis shows, prompting warnings over risks to health and disruption to the economy.
- [The figures come as Sajid Javid, the health secretary, said England was entering 'uncharted territory' in its wholesale scrapping of lockdown rules from 19 July. New infections could easily rise above 100,000 a day over the summer, he said, more than at any point in the pandemic.](#)
- Javid announced that anyone who has been double-vaccinated will not have to isolate after coming into contact with a confirmed COVID case from 16 August, with under 18s also exempt. The rule for adults applies at least 10 days after their second dose. Anyone who has caught COVID must still isolate by law.
- The Guardian understands ministers were warned that waiving the requirements for contacts to isolate immediately on 19 July would result in cases being up to 25% higher than if waiting another four weeks to do so.
- But the decision to wait before dropping the self-isolation rule, combined with soaring cases amid further unlocking, has triggered growing concerns over the toll of long COVID and potential chaos for businesses forced to close because of staff absences.

Travel and UK hospitality

- A decision on travel rules is set to be made on Wednesday, with ministers reportedly favouring a policy that would take effect before August to waive quarantine rules for double-vaccinated passengers from amber-list countries to England.
- UK Hospitality called for extra measures to protect a sector where 60% of workers are 16 to 34 years old - meaning many will not have been double-vaccinated by mid-August. Demands for self-isolation were causing 'carnage' even at existing infection rates, the trade body said.
- Ministers accept a rise in cases is inevitable as the country unlocks but argue the pace of vaccination means it will not be accompanied by significant hospitalisations or deaths. The latest official data however, shows the number of people who are in hospital with COVID has increased by 38% in the past week to 1,988 - the fastest rate of increase since last October.
- Downing Street also regards a summer reopening as potentially less risky than delaying until the autumn when it could coincide with unvaccinated children returning to the classroom, and seasonal flu.
- Speaking in the House of Commons on Tuesday, Javid said he was 'very up front' about the trajectory for infections. 'This pandemic is far from over and we will continue to proceed with caution. But we are increasingly confident that our plan is working, and that we can soon begin a new chapter, based on the foundations of personal responsibility and common sense rather than the blunt instrument of rules and regulations,' he said.
- Coronavirus infections are currently running at just under 29,000 a day UK-wide, and the health secretary told MPs that modelling suggested the figure could reach 50,000 a day by 19 July and then 100,000 a day later in the summer.
- This would not overwhelm the health service, Javid said, because the vaccination programme

had become a 'wall' against mass severe illness and deaths: 'jab by jab, brick by brick, we have been building a defence against the virus.'

- But 100,000 cases a day would be unprecedented during the pandemic in the UK, which hit a daily peak of just over 81,000 in late December.

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/06/data-predicting-2m-uk-summer-covid-cases-prompts-health-fears>

Covid-19 UK: England and Wales recorded more deaths last year than anytime since 1918

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ONS data shows England and Wales recorded 73,766 Covid deaths last year — 12 per cent of all fatalities. Covid caused 12.1 per cent of all fatalities in England and Wales and was the leading cause of death in men. The countries recorded 607,922 total deaths in the year, their highest total in more than a century

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9760213/Covid-19-UK-England-Wales-recorded-deaths-year-anytime-1918.html>

Drug That Blocks Immune System Overload Reduces Covid-19 Deaths

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Combining two inflammation-blocking drugs reduces hospitalization and death from Covid-19 compared with a standard therapy, according to the World Health Organization. Adding drugs that block an immune protein called interleukin-6 to an already widely used treatment, corticosteroids, reduces the risk of death and the need for breathing assistance, the health agency said Tuesday in a statement. The recommendation was based on 27 trials involving almost 11,000 people.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-06/drug-that-blocks-immune-system-overload-reduces-covid-19-deaths>

Israel to ship 700K Pfizer doses to South Korea in swap deal

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Israel is sending 700,000 coronavirus vaccine doses to South Korea in exchange for a future shipment of vaccines from South Korea to Israel. Under the deal, Israel will transfer the Pfizer vaccines to South Korea in an effort to inoculate more of the Asian nation’s citizens this month. South Korea will send the same number of doses to Israel as early as September, the officials added. “This is a win-win deal,” Israel Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said in his statement. The agreement will “reduce the holes” in the vaccine’s availability. Jung Eun-kyeong, South Korea’s top infectious disease expert, confirmed the deal. She said the Seoul government will continue to pursue swap deals with other countries.

<https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-israel-south-korea-coronavirus-pandemic-health-3c11add5a6aef2e99e47975c2fa647c4>

'It isn't over': WHO warns against easing COVID curbs too soon

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The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned governments around the world against easing

COVID-19 restrictions too soon, saying countries that did so risked paying a heavy price for rushing back to normality. Speaking at a press briefing on Monday, the UN health agency's top emergency expert Mike Ryan said a new wave of infections could be round the corner and noted that for much of the world, the pandemic was just getting started.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/6/who-warns-against-easing-covid-curbs-too-soon>

Mass-testing reduced Liverpool COVID-19 cases by a fifth, study finds

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A mass rapid-testing scheme reduced COVID-19 cases in the English city of Liverpool by more than a fifth, researchers said on Wednesday, arguing it was an effective public health intervention despite concerns over accuracy of the devices. The community testing pilot scheme launched in November, and offered everyone in the city tests whether or not they had symptoms, in an attempt to find a new way to use testing to limit the spread of the coronavirus.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/mass-testing-reduced-liverpool-covid-19-cases-by-fifth-study-finds-2021-07-06/>

Tunisia to buy 3.5 mln doses of Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine

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Tunisia said it will buy 3.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine directly from Johnson & Johnson, amid sharp criticism of the government for the slow pace of its vaccination campaign. So far, only about 592,000 Tunisians have received the two doses of vaccine in the country of 11.6 million residents. After successfully containing the virus in the first wave last year, Tunisia is grappling with a rise in infections. It imposed a lockdown in some cities since last week, but rejected a full national lockdown due to the economic crisis

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/tunisia-buy-35-mln-doses-johnson-johnson-covid-19-vaccine-2021-07-06/>

Pfizer will reduce COVID-19 vaccine deliveries to Mexico for 2 weeks

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Pfizer Inc will reduce deliveries of its COVID-19 vaccine to Mexico for two weeks due to renovations at a Pfizer plant in the United States, Mexican deputy health minister Hugo Lopez-Gatell said on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-will-reduce-covid-19-vaccine-deliveries-mexico-2-weeks-2021-07-06/>

What next for the NHS Covid-19 contact tracing app?

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There's doubt over the future of the NHS Covid-19 contact tracing app for England and Wales, as the government prepares to relax restrictions in England on 19 July. But one advisor says the app has proved effective and urged the government not to drop it. Among the restrictions that the Prime Minister said would be scrapped in England is a requirement to check in at venues. Latest figures from the Department of Health show that there have been 25.8 million downloads of the app since its launch, though it is not clear how many people are still using it.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-57721963>

Covid-19: 'For us it's not freedom day, is it?'

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The end of England's lockdown rules on 19 July has been dubbed "Freedom Day" - but for some people, it's becoming a day to dread. "For us it's not freedom day, is it?" says Rosie Duffin, 74, from Fareham, in Hampshire. "It's 'becoming a hermit day' once again. It might be freedom for others, definitely not for us." The retired NHS worker has secondary breast cancer and is considered

clinically extremely vulnerable. Although she's been vaccinated, she says she was horrified when she heard that face masks may no longer be required. "It doesn't make sense really, does it?" she says. "I don't see the problem with wearing face masks. When it comes to my own protection, and the protection of others, surely it's a small thing to do."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-57643063>

S. Korea is to get 700,000 COVID-19 vaccines doses from Israel

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South Korea said it will receive 700,000 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech's coronavirus vaccine from Israel on loan this week, in an attempt to speed up immunisation following a surge in infections around the capital Seoul. More than 1,000 COVID-19 cases were reported as of 6 p.m. on Tuesday, the highest since December and hundreds more than the 746 cases posted on Monday, Yonhap news agency reported, citing South Korean government health officials.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/israel-south-korea-agree-covid-19-vaccine-exchange-report-2021-07-06/>

Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines open to young Australians by October: rollout commander

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Australians under the age of 40 could become eligible for Pfizer or Moderna coronavirus vaccines around September or October, the head of the rollout has revealed. Lt. Gen. John Frewen, who heads the federal government's COVID-19 vaccination task force, on Tuesday met with federal and state health authorities to "war game" problems with the vaccine program, the early stages of which were plagued by supply issues. He revealed that the government expects to have enough doses of the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines to make them available to people under the age of 40 from September to October.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2021-07/06/c_1310046105.htm

Crackdown on 'vaccine sommeliers' as Covid pandemic grips Brazil

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Cities across Brazil are clamping down on "vaccine sommeliers" who seek to cherry-pick their Covid shots despite the devastating epidemic still gripping Latin America's largest nation. More than half a million Brazilians have lost their lives to an outbreak the country's president, Jair Bolsonaro, stands accused of ruinously mishandling. Yet some citizens have shown themselves to be perplexingly selective about which brand of vaccine they receive. "We're pioneering a new occupation here in Brazil: the vaccine sommeliers," Rio's mayor, Eduardo Paes, complained last month amid mounting reports about over-picky residents turning down certain vaccines at health posts.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/06/crackdown-on-vaccine-sommeliers-as-covid-pandemic-grips-brazil>

COVID-19: Londoners who get first vaccine jab can win Euro 2020 final tickets, says mayor Sadiq Khan

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Londoners are being offered the chance to win tickets to the Euro 2020 final if they sign up for their first COVID jab. The city's mayor, Sadiq Khan, is putting up one pair of tickets for Sunday's final at Wembley, as well as 50 pairs for the fan zone in Trafalgar Square. To be eligible, people need to show proof they have been to a walk-in vaccination centre for their first dose, or have booked an appointment.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-londoners-who-get-first-vaccine-jab-can-win-euro-2020-final-tickets-says-mayor-sadiq-khan-12349729>

Covid: Why Boris Johnson's 'freedom day' is terrifying for millions

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There are millions of these frail people. For those whose immune systems are compromised or suppressed, the efficacy of vaccines is much reduced. For others among the frail, any residual risk of becoming infected is too great, because for them it is literally a matter of life or death. So when you hear politicians and others talking about the important freedom to choose not to wear a mask and not to keep a respectful distance from others, note that their freedom is felt as oppression by those who through no fault of their own are more at risk from this awful disease.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2021-07-06/covid-why-boris-johnsons-freedom-day-is-terrifying-for-millions>

Covid bubbles to be axed in England's schools

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Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said the system of sending "bubbles" of children home after a positive case would cease at the end of summer term. The bubble system had been necessary to limit virus spread but was now causing disruption to pupils' lives, he said. Teaching unions warned against easing rules as cases are still rising. The changes to schools guidance will take effect at the same time as the country eases restrictions and moves to stage four. This is expected to be on 19 July - with confirmation of this due next Monday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-57736739>

COVID-19: PM suffers backlash over plans to ditch rules on wearing face masks

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Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer has also warned that lifting all restrictions in one go would be "reckless" - and is calling for face coverings to remain mandatory on public transport. He said: "To throw off all protections at the same time when the infection rate is still going up is reckless. "We need a balanced approach, we need to keep key protections in place, including masks, including ventilation and crucially... proper payments to those who need to self-isolate." Dr Chaand Nagpaul of the British Medical Association said it was "increasingly concerning" for Mr Johnson to "decide to go full steam" on easing measures - despite warnings over rising hospital cases and deaths

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-pm-suffers-backlash-over-decision-to-ditch-rules-on-wearing-face-masks-12349608>

Sydney COVID lockdown call looms as new case numbers drop

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The premier of Australia's New South Wales (NSW) said on Tuesday she aims to decide within the next 24 hours whether to extend a COVID-19 lockdown in Sydney that is due to end on Friday as new infections dropped in the country's most populous state. Just 18 new locally acquired COVID-19 cases were detected in NSW on Tuesday, half of the previous day's number. But Premier Gladys Berejiklian said the decision would also take into account her administration's determination to make the current lockdown in the city of five million people the last, as it aims to step up vaccinations.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australias-new-south-wales-reports-18-new-local-covid-19-cases-2021-07-06/>

Pfizer vaccine less effective against delta variant

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A study conducted in Israel found that the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is somewhat less effective against the more infectious delta variant, though it was still found to be effective at preventing severe illness. As The Wall Street Journal reports, the Pfizer vaccine protected 64 percent of immunized people during an outbreak of the delta variant, a sharp drop when compared to the 94

percent of people it had previously been shown to protect. However, the shot was still 94 percent effective at preventing severe illness, a slight decrease from the 97 percent that were kept from experiencing severe illness previously.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/public-global-health/561627-pfizer-vaccine-less-effective-against-delta-variant>

Singapore Probes Teen's Cardiac Arrest After Pfizer Covid Vaccine

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Singapore's government recommended that vaccinated people avoid strenuous physical activity for a week after getting the shots, as a few cases surfaced of mostly young men experiencing heart problems from receiving jabs while a teenager suffered from cardiac arrest. The Health Ministry updated its guidance on Monday for all those seeking vaccinations, particularly adolescents and men below 30 years, to avoid strenuous exercise for week after either the first or second dose as a "further precautionary measure." Initially, it was a 12-24 hour period for refraining from exercise and on June 11, it was extended to one week after getting the second dose.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-05/singapore-investigates-cardiac-arrest-of-vaccinated-teenager>

'Long Covid' Will Surge Among Young, England's Chief Medic Warns

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So-called long Covid is set to soar among younger people in England when remaining coronavirus restrictions are lifted, England's chief medical officer warned. Chris Whitty said that while he expected deaths to be "much lower" proportionally compared to previous waves, long Covid remains "a worry." "Since there's a lot of Covid at the moment and the rates are going up, I regret to say I think we will get a significant amount more long Covid -- particularly in the younger ages where the vaccination rates are currently much lower," he said at the Local Government Association's virtual conference Tuesday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-06/long-covid-will-surge-among-young-england-s-chief-medical-officer-warns>

When Lifesaving Vaccines Become Profit Machines for Drugmakers

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Covid vaccines are emerging as a \$100 billion-plus business in 2021. U.S. drugmakers Moderna Inc. and Pfizer Inc. are poised to benefit the most, along with China's Sinovac Biotech Ltd. and Sinopharm Group Co. All told, governments and nonprofits have invested at least \$10 billion into vaccines from Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca Plc, Pfizer's German partner BioNTech SE, and others, researchers at the London School of Economics and Political Science and other institutions estimated in a February report. Including advance purchase deals that ensure a market for companies' products, public investment in Covid vaccines climbs to more than \$50 billion, the Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva found.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-06/when-lifesaving-vaccines-become-profit-machines-for-drugmakers>

Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Protects Against Delta Variant, Company Reports

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The Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine is effective against the highly contagious Delta variant, even eight months after inoculation, the company reported on Thursday — a finding that should reassure the 11 million Americans who have gotten the shot. The vaccine showed a small drop in potency against the variant, compared with its effectiveness against the original virus, the company said. But the vaccine was more effective against the Delta variant than the Beta variant, first identified in South Africa — the pattern also seen with mRNA vaccines.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/health/coronavirus-johnson-vaccine-delta.html>

More than 125 people who attended a Texas church camp test positive for COVID-19

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Over 125 people who attended a Texas church camp in late June have now tested positive for COVID-19. All of the about 400 people who attended the camp are believed to have been exposed to it.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/more-than-125-who-attended-a-texas-church-camp-test-positive-for-covid/ar-AALOAFs>

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Out of the Covid-19 pandemic, two Americas are emerging: One protected by vaccines and the other still vulnerable to infection -- and experts say progress made across the entire US is being threatened by low-vaccinated regions. "We're already starting to see places with low vaccination rates starting to have relatively big spikes from the Delta variant. We've seen this in Arkansas, Missouri, Wyoming ... those are the places where we're going to see more hospitalizations and deaths as well, unfortunately," Dean of the Brown University School of Public Health, Dr. Ashish Jha, told CNN. "And any time you have large outbreaks, it does become a breeding ground for potentially more variants."

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/06/health/us-coronavirus-tuesday/index.html>

Thailand leaked memo raises concerns over Sinovac vaccine's efficacy

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A leaked health ministry document has prompted calls in Thailand for medical staff inoculated against Covid-19 to be given a booster of an mRNA vaccine, after it included a comment that such a move could dent public confidence in China's Sinovac Biotech's vaccine. The internal memo, which included various opinions, was reported by local media and shared widely on social media. It was confirmed by Thai Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul as being authentic. It included a comment from an unnamed official who recommended authorities do not give a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine to frontline health workers, because such a move would be "admitting that the Sinovac vaccine is not effective.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/05/asia/thailand-sinovac-vaccine-efficacy-intl-hnk/index.html>

Morepen Laboratories produces test batch of Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine

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The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF, Russia's sovereign wealth fund), and Morepen Laboratories, one of the leading manufacturers of pharmaceutical products in India, today announced the production of the test batch of the Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine in an exclusive facility in state of Himachal Pradesh. The first batch will be shipped to the Gamaleya Center for the quality control. RDIF and Morepen Laboratories signed a cooperation agreement in June 2021 and are actively implementing the technology transfer.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/morepen-laboratories-produces-test-batch-of-sputnik-v-coronavirus-vaccine-121070601088_1.html

COVID-19 cases up in nearly half of US states: analysis

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COVID-19 cases are trending upward in nearly half of all states in the U.S., according to a new analysis of Johns Hopkins University data by USA Today. Coronavirus infections in Alaska and

Arkansas more than doubled in the last week, according to USA Today. Cases in South Carolina and Kansas have increased by more than 50 percent. The number of individuals hospitalized with COVID-19 spiked by almost 30 percent over the July 4 weekend in a hard-hit Missouri area, according to USA Today's analysis.

<https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/561641-covid-19-cases-up-in-nearly-half-of-us-states-analysis>

As Tokyo Olympics approach, virus worries rise in Japan

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The pressure of hosting an Olympics during a still-active pandemic is beginning to show in Japan. The games begin July 23, with organizers determined they will go on, even with a reduced number of spectators or possibly none at all. While Japan has made remarkable progress to vaccinate its population against COVID-19, the drive is losing steam because of supply shortages. With tens of thousands of visitors coming to a country that is only 13.8% fully vaccinated, gaps in border controls have emerged, highlighted by the discovery of infections among the newly arrived team from Uganda, with positive tests for the highly contagious delta variant. As cases grow in Tokyo, so have fears that the games will spread the virus

<https://apnews.com/article/africa-japan-tokyo-2020-tokyo-olympics-olympic-games-9fbd360e4524dca0b25140e60ebda389>

Indonesia copes with oxygen shortages as COVID cases quadruple

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Indonesia is struggling with one of Asia's worst coronavirus outbreaks as new cases more than quadrupled in a month, prompting a critical shortage of oxygen in several areas. At least 33 people died at a hospital in Yogyakarta when its supply ran out over the weekend and the government on Monday asked oxygen producers to send all their supplies to hospitals and clinics.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/5/indonesia-cope-with-oxygen-shortages-as-covid-cases-quadruple>

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<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-06/fiji-reels-from-record-covid-cases-as-pacific-threats-increase>

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The Delta variant is ripping through parts of the US, causing more than 80% of new COVID-19 infections in four states, data shows. The highly infectious Delta variant accounts for more than 80% of new coronavirus infections in Kansas, Arkansas, Connecticut, and Missouri, according to data compiled by Scripps Research's Outbreak.info. In Missouri, more than 96% of new cases are caused by Delta, the data showed on Tuesday — the highest percentage of any US state.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/delta-variant-in-us-covid-infections-states-kansas-arkansas-missouri-2021-7>

Luxembourg prime minister in 'serious but stable' condition in hospital with Covid-19

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Luxembourg's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel remains in "serious but stable" in hospital after contracting Covid-19, his spokesperson said Tuesday. Bettel, 48, is breathing on his own and is awake, his press attaché Liz Thielen told CNN. The Prime Minister tested positive just over a week

ago on June 27 following a European Union summit and was hospitalized Sunday for additional tests and analysis. Bettel received his first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine on May 6, and had been due to receive his second dose in a couple of days, Thielen said.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/06/europe/luxembourg-xavier-bettel-hospital-update-intl/index.html>