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London, November 24 (RHC)-- British Prime Minister Boris Johnson unveiled a 56-page COVID Winter Plan to Parliament on Monday, effectively replacing the second lockdown with a “tougher” version of the old tiered system of restrictions.

The prime minister’s announcement to the House of Commons comes ahead of the lifting of the English lockdown on December 2nd when restrictions are set to be significantly eased. Under Johnson’s new plan, non-essential shops, hairdressers, gyms and leisure facilities will be able to reopen for business across the whole of England.

According to the the new 3-tier system, different regions of England will be subjected to varying degrees of restrictions depending on the level of infections in their area.

Under the toughest Tier-3 system all pubs, bars and restaurants must close except for delivery, takeaway and drive-through services. Hotels and indoor entertainment venues must also close in those areas.

Johnson told Parliament that he expects to announce on Thursday (November 26) which areas of England will fall into which tier, a decision that according to the PM will be based on “local infection rates” and “pressure on hospitals.” “I’m sorry to say we expect that more regions will fall at least temporarily into higher levels than before,” the prime minister informed MPs in the House of Commons.

More broadly, Johnson warned that the next few weeks will still prove to be a “hard winter” and “Christmas cannot be normal.” But on a more positive note, the British prime minister also said the country had “turned a corner and the escape route is in sight.”

"We must hold out against the virus until testing and vaccines come to our rescue and reduce the need for restrictions," Johnson concluded.

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