

UK set to remove final COVID curbs, despite Delta variant surge



London subway opens up

London, July 5 (RHC)-- British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to announce a further relaxation in coronavirus restrictions in England, despite a surge in daily cases linked to the Delta variant, saying people must learn to live with the virus and “exercise judgement” as they go about their daily lives.

Johnson is reportedly ready to move ahead with the final stage of the four-step plan out of lockdown and “restore people’s freedoms” when he speaks at a news conference on Monday. Step four, which is scheduled to come into effect on July 19, will mean the removal of mask-wearing rules, the end of social

distancing and the return of large-scale events.

“Thanks to the successful rollout of our vaccination programme, we are progressing cautiously through our roadmap,” Johnson said in a statement ahead of the announcement on Sunday. “Today we will set out how we can restore people’s freedoms when we reach step 4.

“But I must stress that the pandemic is not over and that cases will continue to rise over the coming weeks. As we begin to learn to live with this virus, we must all continue to carefully manage the risks from COVID and exercise judgement when going about our lives.”

The move to relax the rules looks set to go ahead even though coronavirus cases have risen to their highest level since January. The number of daily cases reached 24,248 on Sunday with 15 deaths.

As of July 4, more than 78 million doses of the vaccine had been administered across the UK, with 63.4 percent of adults receiving two doses, the government said.

The British Medical Association (BMA) has expressed concern about removing all measures to curb the spread of the virus given the surge in the Delta variant. Chaand Nagpaul, the BMA chair, told Sunrise Radio on Sunday that the government should continue with “sensible targeted coronavirus measures” and act on “data not dates” when making their decisions in order to protect people’s lives.

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