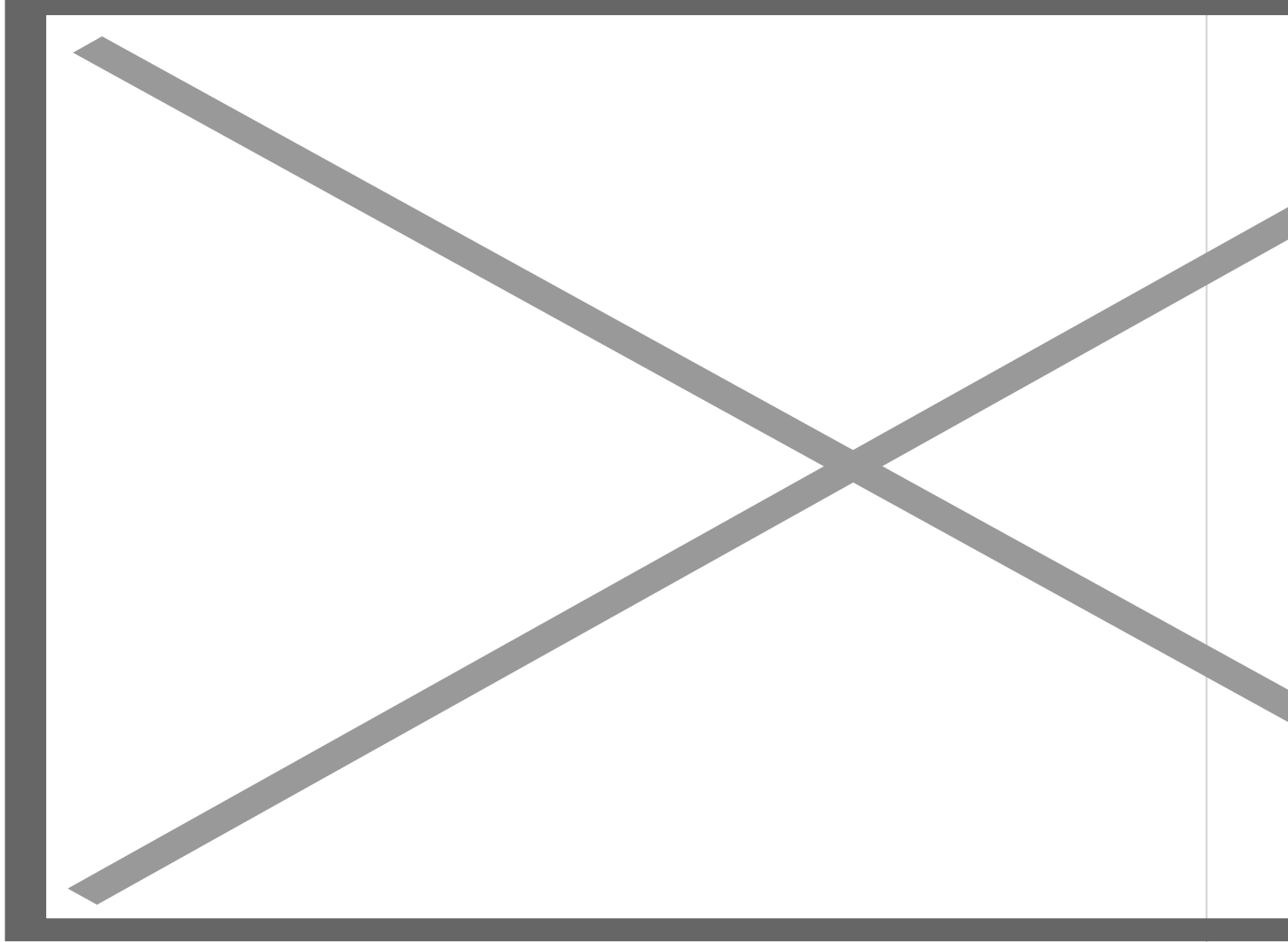


British prime minister fears spread of France's sad COVID situation to UK

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Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson tours the Lakeland Forum COVID-19 vaccination center on March 12, 2021 in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland. (Photo by AFP)

London, April 2 (RHC)-- UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has warned of the possible spread of what he described as the “very sad” COVID-19 situation in France to the United Kingdom. “I’m afraid you can see what’s happening in France... It’s very sad actually - it’s very very sad,” Johnson said. “When they get it in France and they get it bad, two or three weeks later it comes to us.”

According to France’s Health Ministry, 50,659 new coronavirus cases were reported in the country on Thursday and 308 new related deaths were recorded in hospitals, bringing the total tally of fatalities in hospitals to 69,904.

Health Minister Olivier Veran told France Inter radio that his country could reach the peak of the third wave of the pandemic in seven to 10 days with the new restrictions announced on Wednesday by French President Emmanuel Macron.

Macron on Wednesday ordered France into its third national lockdown in an attempt to prevent hospitals being overwhelmed, despite his previous defiance of the advice of scientists and his pledges of keeping the euro zone’s second largest economy as open as possible.

Amid the surge in the number of cases, many states are mulling imposing fresh restrictions on the movement of people.

India has also decided to delay big exports of AstraZeneca’s COVID-19 shot made in its territory by the Serum Institute of India (SII) to make sure it could meet local demand, two sources told Reuters last week.

According to the head of Africa’s disease control body, the Indian move is expected to undermine the African Union’s plans to vaccinate 30-35% of the continent’s population by the end of the year.

India’s temporary hold on major exports of the shots “will definitely impact our ability to continuously vaccinate people,” the director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, John Nkengasong, said at a news conference in Addis Ababa.

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