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BVI Covid Cases Surge to 821; Virus Kills 32-Year-Old Man; Another 5,000 Cases Projected; Curfew Tightened; Delta Strain Suspected

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TORTOLA, BVI By. VI CONSORTIUM

The government of the British Virgin Islands has tightened its [recently announced curfew](#) to begin at 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. daily starting today, following a surge of Covid-19 infections that nearly doubled the total confirmed cases to 821 from 480 in two days.

According to BVI Health Minister Carvin Malone, the virus is now impacting the BVI through community spread, meaning the source of infection is unknown. BVI health officials during a public briefing Thursday confirmed that twelve individuals had been hospitalized and 341 additional active cases had been confirmed, [leading to a total 821 active cases](#). Just on Tuesday,

[BVI reported 480 active cases.](#)

BVI officials had already put in place strict Covid-induced restrictions on almost every facet of daily activity on Tuesday. On Thursday, BVI Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ronald Georges confirmed the Covid-related death of a 32-year-old man, who passed while receiving care at the D. Orlando Smith Hospital in Tortola.

The government has advised the public that beginning today residents will be asked to restrict their movements. “Cabinet also decided that for fourteen days effective July 9, 2021, persons will be advised to limit their movement and stay at home where possible,” stated Mr. Malone, the BVI health minister, [during an address](#) Thursday.

The BVI government is projecting 5,000 new Covid cases as a result of the new surge, which BVI National Epidemiologist Harmonie Massiah said could last between four to six weeks.

A reason for the latest surge may be the presence of the Delta variant in the BVI, suggested Dr. Georges, though he added that the variant had not been confirmed by health officials.

The Delta variant, first detected in India, has been spreading rapidly around the world — including in the U.S. — and new data emerging from Israel show the variant infecting people who have been vaccinated.

According to the [Wall Street Journal](#), about half of adults infected in an outbreak of the Delta variant of Covid-19 in Israel were fully inoculated with the Pfizer Inc. vaccine. This reality prompted the Israeli government to reimpose an indoor mask requirement and other measures to contain the highly transmissible strain.

WSJ said preliminary findings by Israeli health officials suggest about 90 percent of new infections were likely caused by the Delta variant, according to Ran Balicer, who leads an expert advisory panel on Covid-19 for the government. Children under 16, most of whom haven’t been vaccinated, accounted for about half of those infected, he said.

Scientists say the Delta Covid strain, or B.1.617.2 variant, appears to have two advantages over earlier forms of the virus: it is more infectious and appears to be more effective at evading vaccines, though people who are fully vaccinated have significant protection against Covid.