Twitter Thread by Robert Peston



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The important difference between AstraZeneca's relationship with the UK and with the EU, and the reason it has fallen behind schedule on 50m vaccine doses promised to the EU, is that the UK agreed the deal with AZ a full three months before the EU did - which gave...

AZ an extra three months to sort out manufacturing and supply problems relating to the UK contract (there were plenty of problems). Here is the important timeline. In May AZ reached agreement with Oxford and the UK government to make and supply the vaccine. In fact Oxford...

had already started work on the supply chain. The following month AZ reached a preliminary agreement with Germany, the Netherlands, France and Italy, a group known as the Inclusive Vaccine Alliance, based on the agreement with the UK. The announcement was 13 June. BUT the EU...

insisted that the Inclusive Vaccine Alliance could not formalise the deal. The European Commission insisted it should take over the contract negotiations on behalf of the whole EU. So were another two months of talks and the contract was not signed till the end of August...

What is frustrating for AZ is that the extra talks with the European Commission led to no material changes to the contract, but wasted time on making arrangements to make the vaccine with partner sites. The yield at these partner sites has been lower than expected. The problem...

is in the course of being sorted. AZ say it is working 24/7 to make up the time and deliver the quantities the EU wanted. It says its contract with the EU - as with the UK - was always on a "best effort" basis, because it was starting from scratch to deliver unprecedented...

amounts for no profit. AZ is not blaming the EU. But it does not understand why it is being painted as the "bad guy" given that if the deal had happened in June, when Germany, the Netherlands, France and Italy wanted it done, most of these supply issues would already...

have been sorted. A pro-EU source at the company says "I understand Brexit better now".

PS According to AZ, the EU claim that it pays less to AZ per dose, and that is why AZ "works harder for the UK than for the EU", is "completely incorrect". It charges the same price to all buyers, wherever they are in the world, subject to small adjustments due to local costs