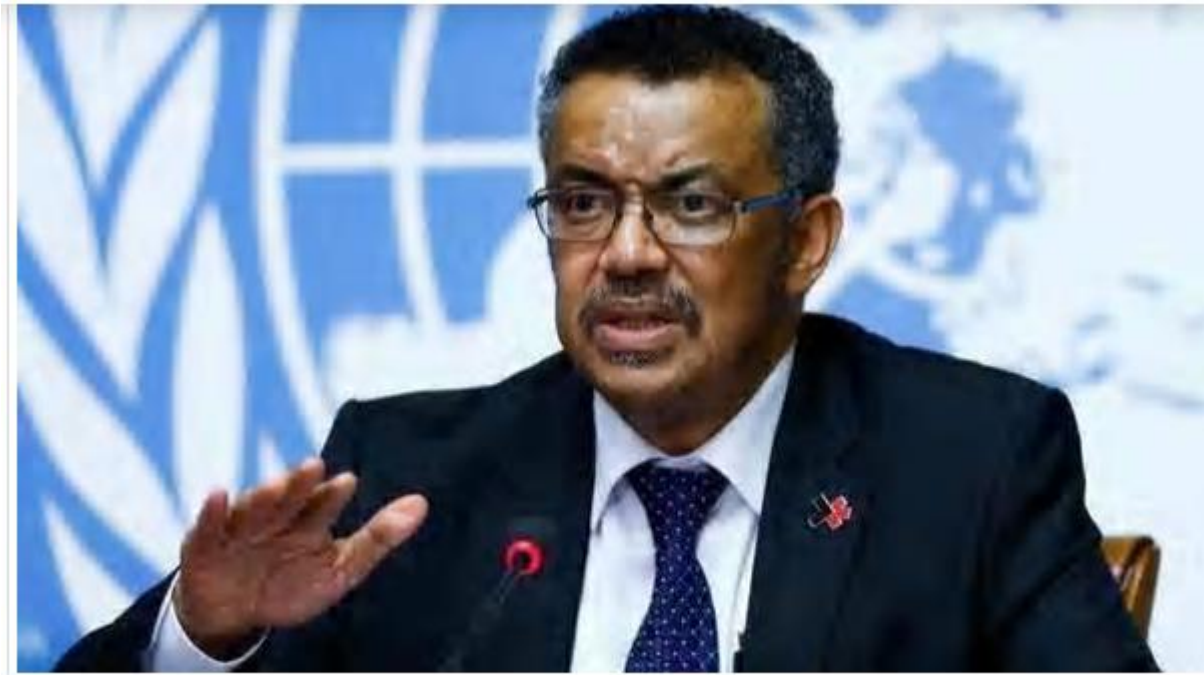


Covid worst global health emergency: WHO

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More than 16 million cases have now been reported , with more than 640,000 deaths. (Reuters)

Covid-19 “continues to accelerate” with a doubling of cases over the last six weeks, World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Monday, describing the pandemic as the worst health emergency faced by the UN agency.

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Only with strict adherence to health measures, from wearing masks to avoiding crowds, would the world manage to beat the pandemic, Tedros said at a virtual news briefing in Geneva. “Where these measures are followed, cases go down. Where they are not, cases go up,” he said, praising Canada, China, Germany and South Korea for controlling outbreaks.

Vietnam is evacuating 80,000 people, mostly local tourists, from the central tourism hot spot of Danang after three residents tested positive for the coronavirus over the weekend, the government said on Monday.

The Southeast Asian country is back on high alert after authorities on Saturday confirmed the first community infections since April, and another three cases on Sunday, all in or around Danang.

The UK has said it will pause reporting on coronavirus deaths while it reviews how they are counted. Last week, the government said deaths in England were attributed to coronavirus if the deceased had had the disease at any time. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland would only record deaths as virus-related if the patient had a positive test within the preceding 28 days.

Citing his own obesity, Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday launched a campaign to encourage Britons to exercise as new evidence showed that overweight people being infected by coronavirus are more likely to die or develop severe illness.

The drive includes doctors prescribing cycling or running to patients, dedicated cycle lanes and pedestrianisation of more areas in cities across the UK, ban on junk food advertisements on television and online before 9pm, and cigarette pack-like calorie warnings on food items.

“Since I recovered from coronavirus, I’ve been steadily building up my fitness. I am at least a stone down. But when I went into ICU, when I was really ill, I was way overweight,” Johnson said.

In Singapore, scientists have developed a method to improve the speed of obtaining Covid-19 laboratory test results in 36 minutes or by up to four times.

The new method, developed by scientists at the Nanyang Technological University’s (NTU) Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, has demonstrated a way to improve “the speed, handling time and cost of Covid-19 laboratory tests”, the university said. The test, which can be done with portable equipment, could also be deployed in the community as a screening tool, it said.

Muslim pilgrims have started arriving in Mecca for a drastically scaled-down hajj, which begins on Wednesday. It normally draws around 2.5 million people. This year, Saudi Arabia’s hajj ministry has said between 1,000 and 10,000 people already residing in the kingdom will be allowed to perform the pilgrimage. Two-thirds of those pilgrims will be from among foreign residents in Saudi Arabia and one-third will be Saudi citizens.

China reported the largest number of domestic infections in more than four months. Of the 61 infections reported on Monday, 57 were local cases.

The coronavirus pandemic “continues to accelerate”, with a doubling of cases over the last six weeks, says WHO chief Tedros Ghebreyesus.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/covid-worst-global-health-emergency-who/story-HqsIOcOC8o5JZjkRCTufTN.html>