

Global coronavirus cases rise above 13 million, WHO sounds alarm

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Coronavirus infections rose above 13 million across the world on Monday, according to a Reuters tally, climbing by one million in just five days in a pandemic that has killed more than half a million people.

World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said there would be no return to the old normal for the foreseeable future, with too many countries headed in the wrong direction.

“The virus remains public enemy number one,” he told a virtual briefing from WHO headquarters in Geneva.

“If basics are not followed, the only way this pandemic is going to go, it is going to get worse and worse and worse. But it does not have to be this way.”

The Reuters global tally, which is based on government reports, shows the disease is accelerating the fastest in Latin America. The Americas account for more than half the world’s infections and half the deaths.

Parts of the world, especially the United States with more than 3.3 million confirmed cases, are still seeing huge increases in a first wave of COVID-19 infections, while others “flatten the curve” and ease lockdowns.

Some places, such as the Australian city of Melbourne and Leicester in England, are implementing a second round of shutdowns. Chinese-ruled Hong Kong, albeit with a low 1,522 cases, is to tighten social distancing measures again amid growing worries about a third wave.

The United States reported a daily global record of 69,070 new infections on July 10. In Brazil, 1.86 million people have tested positive, including President Jair Bolsonaro, and more than 72,000 people have died.

The U.S. state of Florida reported a record increase of more than 15,000 new cases in 24 hours on Sunday, more than South Korea’s total since the disease was first identified at the end of last year. Florida tallied 12,624 new cases on Monday.

Coronavirus infections were rising in about 40 U.S. states, according to a Reuters analysis of cases for the past two

weeks compared with the prior two weeks.

Yet U.S. President Donald Trump and White House officials have repeatedly said the disease is under control and that schools must reopen in the autumn.

“The president and his administration are messing with the health of our children,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on CNN’s “State of the Union” programme.

“We all want our children to go back to school, parents do and children do. But they must go back safely.”

Hungary has imposed new restrictions on cross-border travel as of next Wednesday in order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus after a surge in new cases in several countries, Prime Minister Viktor Orban’s chief of staff said on Sunday.

The leader of the Spanish region of Catalonia called on residents of an area that has seen a surge in coronavirus cases to stay at home despite a ruling by a judge who threw out a mandatory lockdown order for the district of 160,000 people.

Spain, which has been one of the European countries worst hit by the coronavirus, lifted nationwide confinement last month, when the pandemic seemed to have come under control.

Since the first cases were reported in China around the new year, it took three months to reach one million cases. It has taken just five days to climb to 13 million cases from 12 million recorded on July 8.

India, the country with the third-highest number of infections, has been contending with an average of 23,000 new infections each day since the beginning of July.

Slideshow (2 Images)

In countries with limited testing capacity, case numbers reflect only a smaller proportion of total infections. Experts say official data likely under-represents both infections and deaths.