Dubai launches home tests for coronavirus

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Dubai on Friday launched a mobile testing service to carry out free coronavirus screening at home for the elderly and most vulnerable, after slightly easing strict confinement measures.

The new "Mobile Laboratory Units" are converted ambulances fitted

with auto-sterilisation equipment, thermal scanners and safe storage cabins for samples, state news agency WAM said.

They will "play a key role in reducing pressure on hospitals amidst the COVID-19 crisis and help protect people at high risk," it said.

Dubai and fellow members of the United Arab Emirates decided Thursday to reopen malls, cafes and restaurants and to ease lockdown restrictions imposed last month to prevent the spread of the illness.

The measures were timed for the start Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

The UAE has declared more than 9,000 cases of the COVID-19 illness, with 64 deaths.

Dubai had been the only emirate that imposed a total curfew, while the other six members of the federation had restricted movement at night.

Dubai has also authorised public transport, including its metro, to resume services from Sunday.

Residents are however required to wear face masks at all times, with violators to be fined 1,000 dirhams ($272).

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