

# Massive **fire** hits Ajman market

- **Reportedly the fire started at around 6.30pm**
- **A hospital was evacuated**
- **The souq was not open at the time of the fire**
- **No injuries reported**
- **Blaze brought under control at about 9pm**

Agencies | Dubai

A large fire broke out yesterday evening at a market in the emirate of Ajman in the United Arab Emirates, according to local media reports and a source present at the scene.

The witness told the fire, which was earlier reported by *The National* and *Gulf News* newspapers, was being tackled by emergency services.

“Ajman firefighters have cordoned off the site and used water and foam in extinguishing the blaze which has broken out in many shops therein,” sources told *Khaleej Times*.

“Four civil defence centres are involved in fighting the big inferno,” the sources said.

Local officials could not immediately be reached for comment or confirmation, and no statements were carried by state media.

Footages posted to social media show thick plumes of smoke billowing into the sky above the surrounding area.

The souq was not open at the time of the fire.

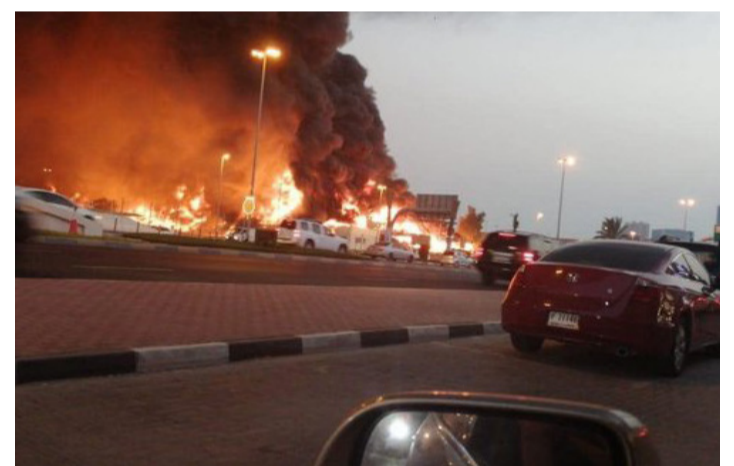
Reports say it has been shut down for “several months” as part of coronavirus safety measures.

The Iranian souq is located near Ajman Speciality Hospital and opposite a separate fruit and vegetable market.

“Workers at the neighbouring market described how flames quickly engulfed the area. The medical facility was evacuated as a precautionary measure due to



Pictures of the fire shared by @urrsove\_ and @Sochangane



The Iranian souq is “home to dozens of traders” and “a popular attraction in Ajman, drawing visitors from across the Emirates, according to the National

the proximity of the raging fire,” *the National* wrote.

“[C]ivil defence teams have diverted traffic” towards the

industrial area “until the blaze can be brought under control,” Dubai’s *Khaleej Times* reported.

*Al Arabiya* tweeted that four specialised teams of firefighters have been deployed to extinguish the fire quoting Civil defence officials who spoke to a local newspaper *Al-Roeya*.

Reportedly the fire started at around 6,30pm yesterday.

The flames, locals said, could be seen from afar.

The cause of the fire is unknown as of now.

*The National*, quoting a Fresh Meat store vendor opposite to the souq, said the police was alerted of the fire by him.

Ajman Civil Defence team told National that the blaze had been brought under control at about 9 pm.

They were assisted by crews from Dubai, Sharjah and Umm Al Quwain.

An investigation is ongoing into the cause of the fire, officials said.

## Virus kills leading Brazil indigenous chief Aritana

- **Aritana was known for fighting to protect the world’s biggest rainforest**

AFP News

One of Brazil’s leading indigenous chiefs, Aritana Yawalapiti, died yesterday of respiratory complications caused by COVID-19, his family said.

Aritana, 71, a chief of the Yawalapiti people in the Amazon, was known for fighting to protect the world’s biggest rainforest and the rights of the indigenous peoples who live there.

“He was a great advocate in the struggle to preserve and perpetuate his people’s culture for future generations and a tireless activist against the effects of deforestation,” his family said in a



Indigenous chief Aritana, pictured in 2003 with Queen Sofia of Spain, was known for fighting to protect the Amazon rainforest

**22,000** indigenous people have been infected and 633 have died in Brazil, according to the Brazilian Indigenous Peoples’ Association

statement.

Known for sporting his traditional feather headdress, jewelry and body paint even at meetings with international dignitaries, Aritana was diagnosed with the new coronavirus about two weeks ago, after having trouble breathing.

He was taken from his village in the Xingu indigenous reserve to a hospital in the town of Canarana, in the west-central state of Mato Grosso.

When his condition deteriorated,

he was transferred to an intensive care unit in the city of Goiania, capital of the neighboring state of Goias.

Medics had to transfer him by road across the remote region for a nine-hour trip during which he was hooked up to oxygen tanks. He was then put on a ventilator in the ICU.

It is not clear whether his body will be transported back to his village, his nephew, Iano Yawalapiti, said.

That has been a sensitive issue for indigenous communities hit by COVID-19. In some cases, international dignitaries, authorities struggling to contain the spread of the virus have prevented indigenous families from taking their deceased loved ones’ bodies home for traditional burial rites.

COVID-19 has hit especially hard among the region’s indigenous groups, who have a history of vulnerability to outside diseases.