

UAE considers reopening malls after virus shutdown

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The UAE is considering the reopening of its shopping centre such as Dubai Mall, one of the world's largest, closed because of the coronavirus pandemic

The United Arab Emirates said Thursday it is looking into reopening its massive shopping malls, a month after they were closed as part of measures to curb the spread of coronavirus.

The restrictions have hit businesses hard, particularly retailers who had expected to cater to a rush of Ramadan shoppers.

Health ministry and crisis authorities have requested a study into "the possibility of reopening commercial centres with their private sector partners while taking into consideration health requirements", the official WAM news agency reported.

The move comes as Muslims prepare for the holy month of Ramadan, during which believers fast from dawn to dusk and traditionally gather around a family or community meal each evening.

Officials in the emirate of Dubai, whose vast [shopping](#) centres serve as its economic lifeline, said they were considering reopening malls "with necessary measures and precautions", according to local reports.

Dubai's shopping centres include Mall of the Emirates, which has its own indoor ski slope, and Dubai Mall which is one of the world's largest and lies next to Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest structure.

Dubai, which has been under a 24-hour lockdown, will also reportedly allow limited social gatherings of up to 10 people during the fasting month but those attending must still continue to practise social distancing.

The UAE has so far recorded more than 8,000 cases of the novel [coronavirus](#), including 52 deaths.

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