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Blaze Engulfs Russian Online Retailer's Warehouse

By AFP

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Fire suppression efforts at the warehouse in St. Petersburg. **Emergency Situations Ministry**

A massive fire spread through online retailer Wildberries' warehouse in St. Petersburg on Saturday, Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry said, without any reported casualties.

Fires are relatively common in Russia due to old infrastructure or non-compliance with safety standards.

"In total, the fire spread through 70,000 square meters," Igor Ulubikov, an official at the St. Petersburg branch of the Emergency Situations Ministry, said on Telegram.

Firefighters brought the blaze under control but were still working on extinguishing it.

Footage published by the ministry showed huge clouds of smoke billowing from destroyed, snowed-in buildings.

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Almost 9 percent of Wildberries' orders were shipped from the warehouse, state-run agency RIA Novosti said, citing online retail expert Anton Bestugin.

The company owned by Russia's richest woman Tatyana Bakalchuk is one of the largest online marketplaces in the country and has enjoyed success across the former U.S.S.R.

It was founded in 2004 by Bakalchuk, who was then on maternity leave, together with her IT technician husband Vladislav.

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