

# American Express Middle East announced as official partner of Jewellery Arabia 2025

Manama

American Express Middle East is proud to announce its role as the Official Partner of Jewellery Arabia 2025, taking place from November 25 to 29 at Exhibition World Bahrain. Organized by Informa Markets, Jewellery Arabia is recognized as one of the largest and most prestigious consumer exhibitions for jewellery and watches in the Middle East, bringing together over 650 renowned brands from more than 30



countries.

This sponsorship reflects American Express Middle East's commitment to delivering exclusive benefits and elevated luxury experiences for its Card Members who can earn up to 30% off at selected merchants\*. Centurion and Platinum Card Members will have access to the exclusive Amex Lounge near the West Entrance in between the main exhibition halls 5 and 6, where they will indulge in unique activities including perfume layering and bespoke watchmaking experiences.

Sabine Khalil, Vice President of Marketing at American Express Middle East, commented: "Jewellery Arabia is one of the

most distinguished events in the Kingdom's calendar, and we are always thrilled to continue our support as Official Partner of Jewellery Arabia 2025, reinforcing our dedication to providing our Card Members with unparalleled value and premium experiences."

Mohammed Ebrahim, General Manager at Informa Markets, organizer of the exhibition, commented: "We are delighted to have American Express Middle East again with us this year as the Official Partner. With this sponsorship, we continue to elevate the luxury shopping experience and make this year's event even more spectacular for American Express Middle East's Card Members."

# Pele's brand acquired by family business of Neymar Jr.

AFP | Sao Paulo, Brazil

Iconic footballer Pele's brand came under the ownership of another prominent Brazilian athlete, Neymar Santos Jr., after the company owned by his father said Tuesday it had bought the rights to use it.

Neymar Santos Sr., owner of NR Sports, announced the news at the Pele Museum in Santos, the coastal Brazilian city made famous by the legendary late player.

"We are proud to reach this milestone," Santos Sr. said, adding that "I think it's a very strong brand. We want to enhance its identity and bring it into the present."

The terms of the purchase were not disclosed due to confidentiality agreements with the previous owner, US-based Sport 10, but Brazilian media reports said the deal was worth



An effigy of late Brazilian football legend Pele is pictured at the Pele Museum after the announcement of the acquisition of Pele's brand by NR Sports in Santos, Sao Paulo, Brazil

\$18 million. Widely considered to be the best soccer player of all time, Pele, born Edson Arantes do Nascimento, helped lead his home country of Brazil to three World Cup victories in 1958, 1962 and 1970.

Though the Brazilian legend died in December 2022, his daughter Flavia was at the ceremony for his brand's new owners.

"There are no words to describe the emotion of bringing back a brand that is the soul, humanity, love. It's priceless... as his daughter, I feel honored and happy," she told AFP.

In a statement, NR Sports called the acquisition a "repatriation" of "one of the greatest symbols in the history of the global sport." "It represents a decisive step towards the preservation, expansion, and enrichment of the legacy of the King of Football."

# Hong Kong housing estate fire kills at least 13, still burning



An onlooker takes photos as a major fire engulfs several apartment blocks at the Wang Fuk Court residential estate (background) in Hong Kong's Tai Po district

AFP | Hong Kong, China

A huge fire engulfed a Hong Kong residential estate and killed at least 13 people on Wednesday, with firefighters saying they were blocked from reaching some of the people seeking help.

The fire, which started in the afternoon and was still burning late into the night, was the deadliest in decades in Hong Kong, which has some of the world's most densely populated and tallest apartment blocks.

Massive flames first took hold on bamboo scaffolding on several apartment blocks of Wang Fuk Court, which contains nearly 2,000 flats in eight towers and was reportedly undergoing estate-wide maintenance.

An AFP reporter heard loud cracking sounds, possibly from the burning bamboo, and saw thick plumes of smoke billowing from the buildings as flames and ash reached high into the sky.

A 65-year-old resident nicknamed Yuen said he had lived in the estate for more than four decades and that many of his neighbours were elderly and might not be mobile.

"The windows were closed because of the maintenance, (some people) didn't know

there was a fire and had to be told to evacuate via phone calls by neighbours," Yuen told AFP.

"I'm devastated, there is loss of property and loss of life, and even a firefighter has died."

Nine people died at the scene and four more, including a 37-year-old firefighter, were certified dead at hospital, the government said late on Wednesday.

A police officer at a temporary shelter told AFP it was unclear how many people were unaccounted for because residents were still trickling in late into the night to report missing family members.

Sections of charred scaffolding fell from the burning blocks and flames could be seen inside apartments, sometimes belching out through windows into the night sky, casting an eerie orange glow on surrounding buildings.

"The temperature at the scene is very high and there are some floors where we have been unable to reach people who requested help, but we will keep trying," said Derek Armstrong Chan, the deputy director of fire service operations.

He said the fire likely spread from one building to another due to the wind and drifting debris, although he added authorities are investigating the cause of the blaze.

# China likely to bid on building new Panama Canal ports

AFP | Panama City, Panama

China is among parties interested in bidding to build two new ports on the Panama Canal, its administrator said Tuesday, despite US talk of retaking control of the vital trade route.

US President Donald Trump made the threat earlier this year, alleging that China controls the strategic waterway because Hong Kong-based CK Hutchison Holdings operates existing ports at either end -- Cristobal on the Atlantic, and Balboa on the Pacific.

The firm agreed in March to transfer control of both ports



Taiwanese cargo ship Yang Ming sailing out of the Panama Canal on the Pacific side in Panama City

to a conglomerate led by US-based BlackRock, but the deal -- viewed with suspicion by China -- has not been finalized.

The Central American country is hoping to attract \$8.5 billion in investment over the next decade to expand port capacity,

and to build a gas pipeline and a new reservoir, among other projects.

In addition to new ports, the project envisions the construction of a gas pipeline and a new reservoir.

"We have to be open to participation of all interested parties," and solicit "the broadest possible competition," canal administrator Ricaurte Vasquez told journalists. He said all parties would bid on an equal footing.

He declined to speculate about a possible increase in tensions with the United States if the projects were awarded to Chinese firms in the future.

The Panama Canal Authority, which has begun meeting with interested parties ahead of the bidding process, plans to award contracts for the two terminals in late 2026 and begin operations in 2029.

Hong Kong's Cosco Shipping Ports and Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL) are among international players that have

expressed interest -- along with Singapore's PSA International, Taiwan's Evergreen, German Hapag Lloyd, Denmark's Maersk and France's CMA Terminals.

Panama's five main ports are all located near the canal and are operated by concessionaires from the United States, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore.

The 80-kilometer canal is used mainly by the United States and China and carries five percent of the world's maritime trade. The United States built and operated the Panama Canal for a century before handing control to Panama on the last day of 1999.

