

Lifestyle

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A woman forms bubbles at Lhoknga beach, Aceh province.— AFP

BTS fans get chance to manage their idols in new game

A million fans of K-pop boy band BTS have signed up to have the singers at their fingertips when a mobile game about them is released this week, according to reports. "BTS World"-set to be released in 176 countries in 14 languages on Wednesday-is a role-playing game where the user is the band manager, recruiting and training the musicians and guiding the group in their quest for stardom. Managers and agents are the driving force behind the K-pop industry, exerting extensive control over their stables of stars, rather than musicians forming bands themselves and working to get spotted.

BTS have developed a global following in recent years, becoming the first K-pop group to top charts in the US and Britain with a string of sold-out shows in Los Angeles, Chicago and London's Wembley Stadium. The floppy-haired musicians, whose ages range from 21 to 26 and who often sport earrings and lipstick, appeal to a generation that feels comfortable with the idea of fluid gender identity.

Their hit single "Boy With Luv" broke the YouTube record for the most views in 24 hours, with 74.6 million hits when it was released in April. "BTS World" includes exclusive photos and videos of BTS and video calls with the band members. Using another mode within the game, a player can select a BTS member to go back to his childhood and a life away from the stage - perhaps even as a strawberry farmer. The demand for the app has prompted its publisher Netmarble-South Korea's biggest

mobile-app creator-to plan a new game featuring the septet which is in its "early stages", a company executive told AFP.

Netmarble could not disclose the number of users who have pre-registered for the game, the official said, but South Korean reports estimated the figure to be around one million. The verified Twitter account of "BTS World" has 1.3 million followers, with each of its 90 posts retweeted hundreds of thousands of times. "I don't play mobile games but I can't wait for BTS World," said Jessica Kim, a 33-year-old fan in Vancouver who travelled twice to Los Angeles to attend BTS concerts. The game is free to download, but users can pay to speed up the process-each time a mission is cleared, a new BTS video or photo is unlocked. BTS-or Bangtan Sonyeondan, which translates as Bulletproof Boy Scouts-maintain close relationships with their fans, flooding social media with selfies, videos and tweets in Korean and English.

Their popularity has translated into billions of dollars in profits for their company, Big Hit, which is even collaborating with Barbie maker Mattel for BTS dolls. South Korean performers such as Psy-whose 2012 hit "Gangnam Style" became the first video to top a billion views on YouTube-have previously broken into Western markets, but none have achieved BTS' sustained success.— AFP



A man walks past an advertisement for the role-playing game 'BTS World' at a subway station in Seoul yesterday.— AFP

Pamela Anderson splits with 'monster' French World Cup-winning boyfriend



In this file photo Marseille's defender Adil Rami (left) and US actress Pamela Anderson arrive to take part in a TV show in Paris.— AFP

Former "Baywatch" star Pamela Anderson has revealed she has broken up with France World Cup-winning defender Adil Rami, calling him a "monster" who "scammed" her. Anderson's two-year romance with the Marseille player 18 years her junior has been closely followed in France, especially when Rami became a cult hero of the 2018 World Cup campaign in Russia despite not playing a single minute. But the couple's romance appears to have ended abruptly, with Anderson accusing Rami of cheating on her.

"The last (more than) 2 years of my life have been a big lie," Anderson, 51, said on Instagram. "I was scammed, led to believe... we were in "big love"?" "I'm devastated to find out in the last few days that he was living a double life." The actress and model said Rami "used to joke about other players who had girlfriends down the street in apartments close to their wives. He called those men monsters. But this is worse. He lied to all... He is the monster." Rami's representatives did not reply to AFP when asked to respond to Anderson's claims. Anderson has two sons from a previous relationship with Motley Crue rocker Tommy Lee.— AFP

Argentine filmmaker Martel to chair Venice film fest

Argentine filmmaker Lucrecia Martel will chair the jury of the 76th edition of the Venice Film Festival, organizers of the world's oldest movie gala said Monday. "It is an honor, a responsibility and a pleasure to participate in this celebration of cinema, of humanity's immense desire to understand itself," Martel said in a statement. The 52-year-old has directed four critically acclaimed feature films: 2001 drama "The Swamp", adolescent flick "The Holy Girl" (2004), psychological thriller "The Headless Woman" (2008) and period drama "Zama" (2017). "Four feature films and a handful of short films, in just under 20 years, have made Lucrecia Martel the most important Latin American director and one of the greatest in the world," said the festival's director Alberto Barbera.

"In her films, the originality of her stylistic research and the rigour of her staging are at the service of an uncompromising vision of the world, dedicated to exploring the mysteries of female sexuality, group and class dynamics,"



Argentine filmmaker Lucrecia Martel

he added. The jury chaired by Martel at the festival, which opens August 28, will award eight prizes including the famous Golden Lion. In the past few years Venice has played host to several films that have gone on to win at the Oscars, including Alejandro Inarritu's "Birdman" (2014), Thomas McCarthy's "Spotlight" (2015) and Alfonso Cuarón's "Roma" (2018).—AFP

Bill Murray to get Lifetime Achievement award at Rome fest

A-list star Bill Murray is to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Rome Film Festival while director Ron Howard will unveil a documentary about Italian opera singer Luciano Pavarotti, organizers said Monday. Murray, 68, who starred in films including Ghostbusters (1984), Groundhog Day (1993) and Lost in Translation (2003), will also host a public talk at the festival, which runs from October 17 to 27 in the Italian capital.

The award will be presented by American Wes Anderson, who directed the actor in "The Grand Budapest Hotel" and "The Life Aquatic". The festival, now in its 14th year, will also feature a talk with director and producer Ron Howard, the man behind "Apollo 13" (1995) and "The Da Vinci Code" (2006), who will present his documentary on legendary tenor Pavarotti, who died in 2007. His flick will be released this summer in US and British cinemas.— AFP

