

Directive aims to elevate construction standards and ensure transparency

Kuwaiti quality mark now required for key building materials

Awqaf Ministry OKs electronic notifications for investigations

Employees to receive summons with legal validity

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has announced the approval of electronic notifications for its employees to attend investigation sessions.

In this regard, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Bader Al-Mutairi explained that employees will now be notified electronically about the dates for attendance and summons for investigation sessions. Notifications will be sent through the ministry's portal application and the employee's registered email.

These electronic summonses will have the same legal validity and implications as traditional paper documents from the moment they are delivered electronically to the employees.

The summons will include details such as the name of the employee whose testimony is required to be heard, their legal position in the investigation (e.g., complainant, defendant, witness, technical specialist, or official), the place and time of the investigation, its subject, and the name of the investigator.

The direct supervisor of the employee will also receive an electronic notification to ensure they are aware of the requirement and to confirm the employee's attendance at the specified time. The employee will be held responsible for any legal consequences resulting from failure to attend as scheduled.



KUNA photo
The Jordanian Minister of Endowments, Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalilah, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan, Hamad Al-Marri, and the Jordanian Chief Justice, Abdul Hafez Al-Rabitah.

Kuwait opens mosque in Jordan

AMMAN, Sept 1, (KUNA): Jordan's Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and fHoly Sanctities Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalilah said on Thursday the brotherly bonds between Kuwait and Jordan are outstanding on all levels, thanks to much support by the two countries' political leaderships.

The minister made the statement while inaugurating a mosque in Amman, in the presence of Kuwait Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri

Dr. Al-Mutairi called for this procedure to be circulated electronically through the ministry's portal application. Employees are considered to have acknowledged and are bound by

and some officials.

Al-Khalilah expressed appreciation to Kuwait's Sheikh Abdullah Al Nouri Charity Society for its donation to the mosque.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Al-Marri said in a similar speech that cooperation between Kuwait and Jordan have been deep-rooted for decades, stressing the significance of partnerships in all fields between Kuwaiti and Jordanian institutions to serve two peoples' interest.

the summons upon reviewing it on the portal. The procedure will also be circulated to all ministry sectors through the usual methods to ensure compliance and proper implementation.

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: In a significant move to enhance the quality of building materials in Kuwait, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, who also serves as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Industry, has issued a new directive mandating that specific building materials must now carry the Kuwaiti Quality Mark to be approved for use.

The products affected by this decision include "Steel for concrete reinforcement - Part Two: Bars with protrusions," "Solid concrete bricks," "Technical specifications for building bricks - Part Four: Cellular concrete bricks," and "Portland cement."

The Decision No. 20/2024, was based on the recommendations made during the seventy-first meeting of the General Committee for Standardization, as well as other relevant ministerial decisions concerning the approval of technical regulations and Kuwaiti standard specifications.

Moreover, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has reiterated its call for all companies and holders of commercial licenses to ensure they register the actual beneficiary through the commercial registry portal.

This move is part of the ongoing efforts to enhance transparency and compliance within the business sector.

Al-Mashaan to meet with citizens

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The Ministry of Public Works has announced that Minister Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan will be available to meet with citizens next Monday from 9 to 11 am

at the Ministry's headquarters (ground floor).

To schedule an appointment, citizens must do it through the 'Mawa'ed' platform on the 'Sahel' application.

Compliance under scrutiny

MoE 'tightens rules' on school cafeteria products and pricing

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Maryam Al-Anzi, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities, has emphasized on the importance of adhering to the health requirements list for school cafeterias, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Ministry has also set specific selling prices for these items, which include juices, dairy products, biscuits, fresh fruits and vegetables, pies, sandwiches, and dried fruits.

She stressed that PAFN inspectors, as well as Technical Guidance for Activities, will conduct periodic visits to ensure compliance and that schools must cooperate with these inspections and ensure that all food sold meets the approved list and price regulations.

Additionally, schools are required to provide records of cafeteria operations and contracts with suppliers, particularly for pies and sandwiches.

Meanwhile, the ministry said for the 2024/2025 academic year, the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, has approved 25 companies to supply food products to school cafeterias.

The schools should not contract with companies selling soft drinks and wafers. All goods must be sold at prices not exceeding those set by the Ministry, except for full meal providers.

In response to any violations, schools will be given time to correct issues before facing potential fines. For any complaints or violations, schools will receive notifications and, if necessary, written reports will be submitted to the Director of the Educational Activities Department.

Foreign schools launch new year with full prep

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Several foreign and bilingual schools -- including Pakistani, Filipino and Indian schools -- started the school year 2024/2025 on Sunday, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources confirmed these schools have fully prepared to welcome around 255,140 students; indicating the Planning Unit at the Private Education General Department in the Education Ministry will soon issue its annual bulletin, stating the number of students enrolled in each school and the specified number of students in each class.

Sources said the foreign schools coordinated with their respective embassies regarding the distribution of textbooks. Sources affirmed these schools completed the maintenance and painting works, replaced damaged furniture and air conditioning units, fully equipped clinics and cafeterias, and provided adequate number of teachers and other employees like messengers, cleaners and bus drivers.

Regarding school uniforms, educational sources confirmed there are no current plans to amend the school uniform policy, refuting rumors about adopting alternative attire such as the "dishdasha."

CSC unveils training plan for 2024-2025

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The Administrative Development Sector at the Civil Service Commission has unveiled its comprehensive training plan for the 2024/2025 season, detailing 67 programs across six categories of government employees.

The breakdown is as follows -- senior category: 6 programs; middle category: 11 programs; supervisory category: 13 programs; executive category: 8 programs; specialized category: 15 programs and administrative development cadres category: 4 programs.

New female students advised to pick campus

PAAET approves cash equivalent for unused leave days to 60 professors

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The Association of Faculty Members at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) revealed that Director General of PAAET Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam issued a decision to disburse the cash equivalent of the unused leave days of 60 professors, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The association expressed appreciation for the tremendous efforts exerted by the authority's administration in ensuring the disbursement of the cash equivalent of the unused leave days of the abovementioned professors.

"We expect that the same decision will be issued soon for other batches of eligible colleagues, taking into consideration the diligence and dedication of those assigned at

the Faculty Affairs Department in completing procedures in this regard. They deserve praise and gratitude for the financial entitlement granted to the faculty members," the association stated.

On the other hand, PAAET advised the female students accepted into the College of Basic Education to activate their accounts on the 'Teams' platform and specify their preferred campus -- Ardiya, Jahra or Fahahel.

PAAET said the questionnaire is available to the students until the end of working day on Sept 5; indicating that if a student does not fill the questionnaire, she will be randomly registered in any of the campuses based on availability.

Online access improves student experience

KU library expands hours and services

By Abdulrahman Al Shimmari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: In an effort to enhance sustainable development and improve the quality of higher education, Dr. Nawaf Al-Mutairi, the Acting Director of Kuwait University, conducted an inspection of the University Student Library at the Shuwaikh campus to assess its readiness for the upcoming 2024/2025 academic year.

This visit emphasized the university administration's commitment to providing high-quality services to students and addressing any challenges faced by the academic and administrative staff.

Dr. Al-Mutairi highlighted that the library has extended its operating hours, now open from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm for two weeks at the start of the academic year, to better accommodate students.

Previously, the library only operated during morning hours. Additionally, the university has launched an online bookstore with home delivery services within one to two working days, ensuring that students have access to resources 24 hours a day.

This initiative also includes special provisions for students with disabilities, making the library services more accessible.

Assistant Vice President for Academic Support Services, Dr. Hamed Al-Furaih, noted that during the summer, the library introduced advanced services, including extended hours and an online store available from 8:00 pm to 8:00 am.

He also mentioned that students at Kuwait Uni-



Al-Seyassah photo
Dr. Nawaf Al-Mutairi, the Acting Director of Kuwait University, during an inspection of the University Student Library.

Dean resolves glitch

Students union urges for extra registration periods

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Muhammad Al-Rashoud, the head of the National Union of Kuwait University Students, has been addressing the fallout from the recent disruption of the electronic course registration system, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The technical issues prevented many students from registering for their courses at the designated times. Al-Rashoud met with Dr. Fadhel Aziz, the Dean of Admissions and Registration, to discuss the problem, its impact, and preventive measures.

Dr. Aziz clarified that the issue stemmed from a technical glitch in the Information Systems Center and assured that solutions were promptly implemented to protect students' rights.

Students who missed their registration due to the glitch will have the opportunity to enroll during the current third registration period and what he called the "pay force" period. Al-Rashoud has also advocated for an additional fourth exceptional registration period to ensure no student is disadvantaged.

He expressed gratitude to the Deanship of Admissions and Registration for their swift response and support in addressing the situation.

availability of various books and facilitating direct sales.

The electronic store has been activated, and students with disabilities can receive books at no cost, provided they present a university ID and academic schedule, in line with existing regulations.

albander
hotel & resort

September

Room Promotion

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 57.173 net	BHD 128.000 net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 65.000 net	BHD 145.000 net

Promo period from 1st September to 20th September 2024 Terms & conditions apply*

What's On



KIB's Summer Camp



Teaching children video game design skills and Python programming language

KIB successfully concludes its Life Academy Summer Camp for employees' children & relatives

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the successful conclusion of its KIB Life Academy Summer Camp for the second year, organized in collaboration with the international programming school Algorithmics Kuwait for the children of its employees and their relatives. This initiative reflects the Bank's strong belief in the importance of education and its commitment to providing young people with essential life skills that will benefit them in the future.

Commenting on the initiative, Siham AlKhorayef, Manager – Learning and Development at KIB, said: "This exceptional event provided a gateway for children to acquire fundamental skills in video game design and the Python programming language. We crafted the camp program to blend fun with education, offering the children of our employees and their relatives a unique learning experience filled with creativity and practical activities."

AlKhorayef added that KIB continues its pioneering efforts to invest in its employees and their families through an integrated and innovative approach, stating: "Through the KIB Life Academy Summer Camp, we aim to open new horizons for our employees' children and relatives, providing them with a unique opportunity

to develop their skills and enhance their abilities in a dynamic environment that fosters innovation and creativity. We are proud of what has been accomplished during this camp and look forward to more initiatives that support the growth and development of young minds."

The Summer Program lasted two weeks, during which the first group of children, aged 9-12, received various lessons on video game design. The sessions allowed participants to create their own 3D platformer game, expand their game functionalities with scripts, add landscapes and buildings, and create obstacles before finalizing their game designs.

Meanwhile, the second group, aged 13-16, focused on the introduction to Python, variables and strings in Python, data and conditional statements, the concept of loops, and a Chatbot project. At the end of the program, participants of both groups received a certificate of acknowledgment and a gift.

It is worth noting that KIB, as part of its comprehensive social responsibil-

ity program, is committed to supporting educational initiatives and community activities. This commitment reflects the Bank's strong belief in the importance of nurturing young Kuwaiti talents and encouraging them to pursue their aspirations.

About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait, KIB offers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.



Siham AlKhorayef



Photo during the program.

Bank partners with MoE and Anti-Corruption Authority 'Nazaha'

NBK opens registration for third season of Bankee program to boost financial literacy

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has officially opened registration for the third season of the Bankee program. This initiative is designed to enhance financial inclusion among students, with the goal of achieving lasting improvements in financial literacy across the community.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Anti-Corruption Authority "Nazaha," the Bankee program is NBK's pioneering initiative in Kuwait. This program is designed to familiarize students with fundamental economic concepts and practices, including earning, spending, saving, and financial obligations.

The program also seeks to instill essential values in students, such as honesty, integrity, personal development, responsibility, and cooperation. It aims to foster teamwork and raise a generation of Kuwaiti youth who appreciate the importance of financial stability and independence. By equipping them with the necessary financial skills and knowledge, the program contributes to the sustainable development and economic well-being of individuals and society.

Commenting on the launching of the third season of Bankee Program, Manal Al-Mattar, Head of Corporate Communications Group at NBK, said, "The program experienced exceptional success and strong engagement from schools, students, and parents last season. This enthusiasm led nu-



Manal Al-Mattar

merous public and private schools to sign up for the program this season, prompting us to increase the number of participating schools to 60." The program also features a classroom economy, a system that models the school as a microeconomy mirroring real-world economic systems. Bankee has also launched a new platform and website in both Arabic and English. This innovative and interactive approach utilizes a digital platform where students and teachers can conduct financial transactions using virtual currency called Bankoz. This setup enriches students' understanding of the value of work, money, and the importance of making informed financial decisions.

"The executive management team at NBK has underscored the program's significance through their school visits and oversight of its various phases over the past two seasons. These visits have been met with enthusiastic

Al-Mattar:

- This season, we have doubled the number of participating schools, reaching a total of 60.
- The impressive success of Bankee has led many public and private schools to seek participation in the program.
- Visits by our executive management to the schools have significantly

highlighted the program's value and generated substantial engagement.

- NBK collaborates with various state institutions to advance social development and foster growth and prosperity.
- Bankee is the first program of its kind in Kuwait, designed to introduce students to fundamental economic concepts and practices.

participation from parents, who have expressed great satisfaction with the noticeable improvements in their children's behavior and financial literacy," she added.

Al-Mattar emphasized that NBK is dedicated to leveraging its efforts and resources for effective collaboration with state institutions and civil society. The goal is to advance social development and enhance human resources, which are crucial for fostering growth and prosperity. The bank remains firmly committed to supporting the development of education through comprehensive support.

In its commitment to enhance the program's offerings, the program now has a presence on various social media platforms, including Instagram, Tik-

Tok, and YouTube. This expansion is designed to ensure that all participants can easily access and benefit from the program's content, activities, and events throughout the year.

NBK firmly believes in the significance of private sector initiatives and their role in partnering with government entities to provide young people with essential knowledge and skills. These efforts are vital for the well-being and prosperity of both individuals and society.

NBK received the Bronze Award from Qorus in the Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) category for Bankee Program. This accolade recognizes the bank's commitment to integrating sustainability and ESG standards into its activities.

IMA-YouthWing concludes 'Save Water, Energy Today' campaign across Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The IMA-YouthWing successfully concluded its impactful campaign, "Save Water, Energy Today and Save Life for Tomorrow," with final events held across three locations in Kuwait: Masjid-e-Maryam in Mahboula (Fahaheel Zone), Masjid-Al-Sabah in Farwaniya (Khaitan Zone), and Shirah Al-Suhayd in Salmiya (Salmiya Zone). The program, which aimed to emphasize the importance of resource conservation through the Verse "You will be accountable for all the Bounties you enjoyed" (Quran 102:8) and "Eat & Drink, but do not waste" (Quran 7:31), brought together community members from across the city.

The main speeches at each location reiterated the campaign's central message, urging attendees to reflect on their use of resources and to adopt more sustainable practices in their daily lives. The speakers emphasized the spiritual and ethical responsibility of conserving water and energy, drawing upon the teachings of the Quran.

During the program, the organizers provided a summary of the various activities that were undertaken throughout the campaign, which included:

- ***Filter Cleaning/Changing*:** Volunteers successfully cleaned and replaced filters in all three zones, covering a total of nine units across Kuwait, ensuring safe and clean water for the society.
- ***Stickers Pasting*:** Awareness stickers were posted in all prominent public areas, including mosques, parks, camps, and other locations, to

reinforce the message of conservation.

- ***Awareness Sessions*:** Conducted at public areas, parks, camps, beaches, and mosques, these sessions educated the public on the importance of conserving water and energy and provided practical tips for doing so.

- ***Twitter Campaign*:** The online campaign, which concluded on July 26, 2024, successfully engaged the broader society, spreading the conservation message across social media platforms and trending.

- ***Reel Competition*:** The event featured the announcement of the reel competition winner, who was awarded a gift for their creative contribution towards the campaign.

- ***Flyers Sharing*:** Informative flyers were consistently shared on social media platforms every alternate day from the start to the end of the campaign, providing the community with valuable insights on resource conservation.

- ***Short Videos Sharing*:** Throughout the campaign, short informative videos were shared on social media to further amplify the message and encourage societies participation.

The concluding programs in all three zones ended with a heartfelt vote of thanks, acknowledging the invaluable support and guidance from IMA, the cooperation from Kuwait Foreign Relations, and the contributions of all participants and well-wishers. To mark the conclusion of this successful campaign, food packets were distributed to all participants, reinforcing the spirit of humanity and care.



Photo during the campaign.

FAIPS secures five best delegate awards at prestigious Harvard Model United Nations

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School (FAIPS, DPS) has established itself as a center of academic excellence and leadership. The school consistently demonstrates its students' outstanding diplomatic skills at various Model United Nations conferences. This year, FAIPS again made history at the prestigious Harvard Model United Nations (HMUN) 2024, held in Bengaluru.

HMUN, organized by Harvard University, is renowned as one of the most prestigious Model United Nations conferences worldwide and draws over 1,000 delegates from around the globe.

The conference, known for fostering high-level debate on global issues, spanned 4 days, with delegates spending around six hours in committee work daily. Additionally, the conference featured social activities including the Talent Hunt, the Impact Initiative, and the Delegate Dance, during which two of our delegates delivered captivating performances.

FAIPS has been an integral part of HMUN for almost a de-



Photo during the campaign.

cade, and FAIPS achieved remarkable success this year too, securing an impressive five Best Delegate awards, one Honor-

able Mention, and four Diplomatic Commendations. Notable achievements include Fadel Kandapath and Aman Chandra

receiving the prestigious Best Delegate Award in the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), Saif Khan and Shreyash Mohapatra excelling as Best Delegates in the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), and Ayaan Gazali claiming the title of Best Delegate in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL). Aahil Dalwai was honored with the Best Delegate award in the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), while Bhawya Manchanda shone as the Best Reporter in the Press Corps.

Furthermore, Ajitesh Veeramachineni and Jatan Shah received an Honorable Mention in DISEC. Diplomatic Commendations were awarded to Aniket Tharun in the Court of Akbar, Rishi Chirpa in the World Health Organization (WHO), Krithika Karthikayan in Mexico 1994, and Zoya Kulsam in The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

ESPN to introduce custom 'SportsCenter' shows with AI

BRISTOL, Conn., Sept 1. (AP) ESPN is looking at using artificial intelligence to create personalized "SportsCenter" shows for subscribers to its flagship streaming service that is expected to launch in fall 2025, the network's chief executive said Wednesday.

The idea is one of several in the works that were discussed at a news conference by ESPN Chairman Jimmy Pitaro, including a "Where to Watch" guide that debuted on Wednesday on ESPN.com and the ESPN app.

The personalized "SportsCenter" would be reminiscent of a popular wrinkle that NBC Sports offered through its Peacock streaming service during the Olympics, where the voice of broadcaster Al Michaels was used to create highlights packages tailored to individual interests.

ESPN had few other details of how it is working to do something similar for its signature highlights show. The flagship streaming service is expected to include much of the programming on ESPN's main channel and some other offshoots, marketed to people who have abandoned cable or satellite TV subscriptions.

The "Where to Watch" feature is billed as an easy-to-use guide for sports fans to find where to watch any sports event on ESPN platforms and beyond, including broadcast, cable and regional sports networks and streaming services.

"Simplifying discovery of sporting events and where a fan can watch has become increasingly important as sports viewing has become fragmented

across networks and platforms," said Brian Marshall, vice president for sports product and technology for Disney Entertainment and ESPN.

ESPN said it is designed for fans to customize searches to prioritize their favorite teams and sports. Fans will be able to use the service to click to events, if they are pay television or ESPN+ subscribers. Some partner networks, including NESN and Monumental Sports, will also be included.

Pitaro said that ESPN has talked to various leagues and commissioners about how ESPN streaming can be a potential solution for troubled regional sports networks in getting a specific team's games to its fans.

Solution

"We want to be at least part of the solution here," Pitaro said.

Venu Sports, ESPN's streaming partnership with Fox and Warner Bros. Discovery that was set to begin offering live sports events this fall has been put on hold after a federal judge earlier this month granted a preliminary injunction after a challenge by FuboTV. Venu Sports operators have been accused of violating antitrust laws.

"We respectfully disagree with the court decision," Pitaro said, adding ESPN believes it is giving another option to consumers.

ESPN also announced Wednesday that it has extended a rights agreement with the U.S. Tennis Association that would keep US Open coverage on the network, on ABC and streaming services through 2037.

Also:

NEW YORK: Veteran producer **Almin Karamehmedovic**, who's been the top behind-the-scenes executive at "World News Tonight" since 2014, has been named ABC News president, the network announced on Monday.

He replaces **Kim Godwin**, who retired after three years in May. Godwin faced some internal strife, in part, because she was an outsider: she came to ABC News from an executive role at CBS. Karamehmedovic, by contrast, has worked at ABC News since he was a freelance video editor based in **London** in 1998.

He covered many international stories for ABC News before moving to the US in 2008 and taking over as executive producer of "Nightline." "Almin has devoted his career to ABC News, mastering every role and elevating excellence in journalism by connecting with viewers in a very meaningful and profound way," said **Debra O'Connell**, the Disney News Group and Networks president who will be his boss.

The two leading network newscasts — David Muir's "World News Tonight" and "Good Morning America" — have both topped the network news ratings and it will be Karamehmedovic's job to maintain that.

Broadcast network news division presidents are among the most powerful positions in journalism, although their influence has faded in recent years with the attention paid to cable news networks and the more active role played by corporate overseers like O'Connell.

Television

Variety



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Brad Pitt, (left), and George Clooney in a scene from 'Wolfs.' (AP)

Film

Actors discuss streaming deals and theatrical release

Pitt, Clooney return to Venice for 'Wolfs'

VENICE, Italy, Sept 1. (AP) George Clooney and Brad Pitt returned to the Venice Film Festival on Sunday for the world premiere of "Wolfs."

Before hitting the red carpet, the Hollywood stars reflected on reuniting, the rise of streaming and Clooney's New York Times op-ed urging President Joe Biden to end his reelection bid.

Asked about the impact of his piece, Clooney said he'd not yet had to answer that question.

"The person who should be applauded is the president who did the most selfless thing anyone's done since George Washington," Clooney said. "All the machinations that got us there, none of that's going to be remembered. And it shouldn't be. What should be remembered is the selfless act."

Clooney continued: "It's very hard to let go of power. We know that. We've seen that all around the world. For someone to say, I think there's a better way forward? All credit goes to him."

Most of the discussion was focused on the film, however, an old school action thriller directed by Jon Watts, in which they play lone wolf fixers unhappy to have been hired for the same job to cover up a bloody mess involving a district attorney (played by Amy Ryan).

The film will have a limited theatrical release, starting Sept. 20, before hitting Apple TV+ on Sept. 27. Apple TV+ acquired "Wolfs" in a competitive bidding war, beating out both traditional studios and rival streaming services.

Deadline reported in 2021 that the understanding was that it would come with a robust theatrical release, something the stars may have also forfeited money to ensure, the trade publication said. Then, several weeks ago the streamer announced different plans: Theatrical would be limited. Streaming would be quick.

Clooney confirmed that they did forfeit some of their salaries to guarantee a theatrical release and that it's a "bummer" that it won't be wider than a few hundred theaters.

"We would have liked it, we wanted it. That's why Brad and I gave some of our money back," he said, adding that a report in the New York Times overestimated the dollar amount of their salaries by millions.

Far from being anti-streaming, however, Clooney said that everyone is simply finding their way during this revolution. There are bumps and mistakes, but there's also much more opportunities for actors, he said.

"Streaming, we need it, our industry needs it," Clooney said. "They also benefit from having films released ... and we're figuring it out, we haven't gotten it figured out yet."

Producer and Plan B executive Jeremy Kliner, who has worked with Pitt for over 20 years, said that they make films believing in their shelf lives, and that they're doing something worthwhile.

Pitt added: "I think we'll always be romantic about the theatrical experience but at the same time I love the existence of streamers ... it's a delicate balance. It'll right itself."

Regulars

Though both regulars at the picturesque festival on their own, with Clooney's premieres including "Gravity" and "Good Night and Good Luck," and "Ad Astra" and "The Assassination of Jesse James..." among Pitt's, only once have they walked the carpet together. No, it wasn't for an Ocean's film. It was in 2008, for the premiere of "Burn After Reading," the madcap Coen brothers' farce in which they share one memorable scene.

"In 'Burn After Reading' I got the extreme pleasure of shooting him in the face and I thought maybe we'd try it again 15 years later," Clooney said with a laugh.

The two teased one another about each other's age and relevance, with Clooney joking that Pitt is 74 and lucky to be working at his age. (Clooney, for the record, is 63. Pitt is 60.)

Pitt was waiting for a good idea to reunite with Clooney on screen and thought the idea of two cleaners who think they're the best sounded fun. Their years of working together made their banter, and overlapping dialogue, natural to do.

"As I get older, just working with the people that I just really enjoy spending time with has become really important to me," Pitt said.

When they got the script, they said Watts hadn't specified who was playing which part so Pitt and Clooney

got on the phone and figured it out for themselves.

Pitt arrived at the festival just days apart from his ex, Angelina Jolie, who received praise for her turn as opera singer Maria Callas in Pablo Larrain's "Maria" and left Italy for another festival soon after.

Pitt and Jolie had been romantic partners for a decade when they married in 2014. Jolie filed for divorce in 2016, and a judge declared them single in 2019, but the divorce case has not been finalized with custody and financial issues still in dispute. Several weeks ago, a Los Angeles court granted a petition from the third-eldest child of the former couple to legally change her name from Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt to Shiloh Nouvel Jolie.

The film's director, who catapulted from indies to the Tom Holland Spider-Man films, said in a director's statement that this film is him trying to get back to street level after "seven years of swinging from skyscrapers and jumping through multiverse portals." He was unable to speak about the film with his stars after testing positive for COVID-19.

"He flew all the way here and then he got COVID," Clooney said. "So now we're all going to get it."

Meanwhile, Jude Law plays an FBI agent investigating the violent crimes of a white supremacist group in "The Order," which premiered Saturday at the Venice Film Festival.

An adaptation of Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt's nonfiction book "The Silent Brotherhood," Nicholas Hoult was cast as Robert Jay Mathews, the charismatic leader of the group, which was considered the most radical hate group since the Ku Klux Klan. Their crimes, including bank robberies and armored car heists that the group was using to fund an armed revolution, led to one of the largest manhunts in FBI history, in 1983.

"What amazed me was it was a story I hadn't heard about before," said Law, who also produced. "It like a piece of work that needed to be made now."

He added: "It's always interesting finding a piece from the relative past that has some relationship to the present day."

Law made the trip to Italy with his director, Justin Kurzel, and co-stars Hoult, Jurnee Smollett and Tye Sheridan for the premiere.

Features

ARABIC TIMES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2024

NEW YORK: Fatman Scoop, the hip-hop artist who topped charts in Europe with "Be Faithful" in the early 2000s and later lent his distinctive voice and ebullient vibe to hits by artists including Missy Elliott and Ciara, died after collapsing on stage at a show in Connecticut, according to officials and his family. He was 53.

The cause of his death wasn't immediately clear.

He was performing at **Hamden Town Center Park** when he collapsed Friday evening, town chief of staff **Sean Grace** said Saturday. Mayor **Lauren Garrett** posted on Facebook that he had a medical emergency. Concertgoers and paramedics tried to aid the artist, who was taken to a hospital, she said.

His family said in an Instagram post that "the world lost a radiant soul, a beacon on stage and in life."

With a gravelly voice and dance-floor-friendly sensibility, Fatman Scoop was a mainstay of club playlists around the turn of the millennium. But if the world knew him as the "voice of the club," his family cherished him as "the laughter in our lives, a constant source of support, unwavering strength and courage," his relatives said.

"His music made us dance and embrace life with positivity. His joy was infectious and the generosity he extended to all will be deeply missed but never forgotten," they added, saying he leaves a legacy "of love and brightness."

Born **Isaac Freeman III**, Fatman Scoop was from New York City's Harlem neighborhood and broke out with 1999's "Be Faithful." That started as a minor success in the US took off in Europe with a 2003 re-release, hitting No. 1 on the singles charts in the UK and Ireland.

The next year, he appeared on the U.K. television series "Chancers," in which musicians mentored artists who wanted to make it in the US, the BBC reported. He also was a contestant on "Celebrity Big Brother 16: UK vs USA," which was filmed in the UK and aired in 2015.

Scoop - sometimes stylized as Fat Man Scoop or FatMan Scoop - collaborated with Elliott on "Lose Control," a 2005 song of the summer that also featured Ciara. The track won a short-form music video Grammy at the 2006 award show. (AP)

□ □ □

KOLKATA, India: An epic version of the Indian National Anthem, conceptualized by Grammy-winner **Ricky Kej** with Kolkata-based cultural activist **Sundeep Bhutoria**, Trustee, Prabha Khaitan Foundation, as the associate producer, has set a new landmark, by entering the Guinness Book of World records



Ciara

Scoop

as the 'Largest Singing Lesson', featuring a choir of nearly 14,000 tribal children from Odisha, who performed together at the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.

The video also features living musical legends of India - Pandit **Hariprasad Chaurasia, Rakesh Chaurasia, Amaan & Ayaan**

Ali Bangash, Rahul Sharma, Jayanthi Kumaresh, Sheikh & Kaleshabi Mahabooob, Giridhar Udupa and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of UK.

"This project is a true celebration of India's unity in diversity and marks a significant achievement in the realm of musical collaboration and cultural representa-

tion. The collaboration of such legendary artists with thousands of children from Odisha sends a powerful message to the world about the strength of our cultural heritage. It has been an honour to be part of this historic moment," said Sundeep Bhutoria, who has been promoting India's cultural heritage, globally. (AP)

People & Places

Music

Tech and tradition

Senegal's beatmaker empowering women

DAKAR, Senegal, Sept 1, (AP): In a classroom at the House of Urban Culture, tucked away in the narrow streets of Dakar, Senegal, Aminata Thiam claps her hands in time with a beat she created on her computer.

"You just have to find the loop that you want. Cut it, duplicate the sample, and then add your effects," she says.

She is teaching a beatmaking class to five young women, each working intently on beats of their own on the computers in front of them.

Thiam, 31, is a beatmaker, one of only a few women in Senegal who call themselves such. Their discipline is the art of "making beats, making rhythms." Thiam says. She traces a line from American DJs like Afrika Bambaataa and DJ Kool Herc, credited as among the founders of hip-hop, to beatmakers today.

Those DJs made beats in the 1970s and '80s using synthesizers or by isolating specific beats in a song and playing them on a loop by switching between two record players. "Now when we talk about beatmaking, we are talking about doing this with a computer," Thiam says, crediting technology - including the advent of software - with democratizing the art.

The House of Urban Culture sees a rotating crew of anyone and everyone part of Senegal's burgeoning hip-hop scene - rappers, slam poets, skaters and even the graffiti artists whose works adorn the walls. The center that opened in 2018 hosts rap concerts and beatboxing festivals, and offers free training in everything from DJing to photography in an effort to transform young people's interest in hip-hop into professions.

Thiam's stage name is "Myamy the Ay Girl," a mixture of English and Wolof that means "the girl who can." She was first drawn to beatmaking as a student a decade ago in Dakar, where a beatmaker had installed a studio at her university. She later trained with a program called Hip Hop Akademy, which now partners with the House of Urban Culture.



Thiam

Equality

Her current class here is only open to women - a necessity, she says, if there is to be any kind of equality in the field.

"Not just for music, but for audiovisual work, for cinema," she says, emphasizing that knowing how to make music on a computer isn't just applicable to hip-hop.

Although widespread access to computers has made beatmaking more accessible, the reliance on technology has also created a barrier inhibiting many of her students from continuing their work after the course has ended.

"In one household you may find that almost all of the men have a computer, but the women might only have a phone," she says. According to the 2020 GSM Association Mobile Gender Gap Report, women in Senegal's urban areas have almost the same access to the internet as men, but much less financial autonomy: Only 26% of women have bought their own smartphone, compared to 68% of men.

Djeneba Sylla, 21, is a singer who wanted to take Thiam's class to learn how to make her own music.

"For the time being I don't have a computer. But I hope to have it by the end of the class," Sylla says. Thiam has started a campaign to raise money for her students.

The question of accessibility looms over much of the House of Urban Culture's work in Senegal. Amadou Fall Ba was the center's coordinator for 10 years, and now works with the city of Dakar on an initiative to create more public spaces for young people in an aim to make hip-hop more accessible.

He says hip-hop came to Senegal through the country's middle class, "people who had TVs, who could watch the private channels, who could watch what was happening in the US." It eventually made its way to the masses, and he says that now, 80% of the stars in Senegal's larger urban culture scene are from working-class neighborhoods.

Women are still severely underrepresented though, he said.

"Mentalities have changed a little bit, but we are still in a conservative country. A young woman who is 25 or 30 years old who isn't married - there is a strong social pressure on her," he described.

In Thiam's beatmaking class, the room is silent, each student lost in a different world underneath noise-canceling headphones. After six weeks of classes, the students are now able to produce beats of their own. They produce mostly modern hip-hop beats, though less refined than what Thiam can throw together in minutes in the studio.

As they continued working, Thiam stepped outside in the courtyard to speak about her own history. She says there are only three women working as beatmakers in Senegal - often producing beats for Senegalese rappers, but also making an income as sound technicians for concerts and stage productions. She hopes that the more women who are active in the art, the more other women will be inspired to start.

"If we train women who are capable of going far in this industry, this will encourage other women to join us," she said.

She added that, in Senegal, women in music are often encouraged to sing or join a choir, things seen as acceptably feminine.

"I always liked music, but I didn't want to be a singer," she said. "I wanted to do something different."

Also:

LOS ANGELES: DJ and dance producer Zedd is back with an album after nearly a decade, "Telos." The first single is the appropriately titled "Out of Time" featuring Bea Miller, a dreamy tune with atmospheric strings that builds into a dancefloor banger. Zedd has revealed that he started writing "Out of Time" way back in 2015 but was never able to finish it. That changed with Bea - "her voice added an emotional depth that completed the song. 'Out of Time' really encapsulates the DNA of the Telos album, which is why I chose it to be the song that introduces this new era," he says.



Members of K-pop group Blackswan pose during 2023 Newsis K-EXPO in Seoul, South Korea, Aug. 23, 2023. (AP)

Music

Docu reveals high cost of stardom

'Idols' exposes demands of K-pop

SEOUL, South Korea, Sept 1, (AP): An Apple TV+ documentary series, "K-pop Idols," premiered Friday, offers an intimate look at how the K-pop industry is embracing diversity while grappling with challenges in a field that demands perfection.

The six-part series features Korean American star Jessi and up-and-coming K-pop bands like Cravity and Blackswan, documenting the highs and lows of their careers.

K-pop is known for its blend of vocals with precise choreography.

Blackswan members Fatou and Nvee told The Associated Press they practice up to 10 hours daily, including choreography and vocal sessions before the "comeback" season which refers to a string of events to promote their latest songs.

The grueling practice starts early. Once under contract, K-pop trainees enter a system that includes classes in manners, language, dance, and choreography. As of 2022, there were 752 K-pop trainees under entertainment labels, according to a Korea Creative Content Agency report.

Despite recent pushback against the perennial "dark side of K-pop" narrative, the documentary shows that some industry problems persist.

Former Blackswan member Youngheun said members had a curfew and were not allowed to drink or date. "We even had to report when we were getting our nails done and going to the convenience store in front of our house," she shared in the documentary.

Rigid control extends to diet.

Blackswan member Gabi is seen eating a meal of egg, chicken breast and what resembles sweet potato sticks during her trainee period. "I am dieting because Mr. Yoon (the label's head

told me I need to lose weight," Gabi said.

The pressure applies to boy bands, too.

Cravity member Wonjin shared that he was given two weeks to lose weight to join the label. "I would eat like one egg a day (...) I lost about 7kg," he said in the documentary.

Bradley Cramp, one of executive producers of the documentary, noted that such restrictions exist in other competitive industries as well.

"I honestly don't know one idol or elite sports athlete or entertainer that doesn't deal with the issue of diet and self-image and mental health to some degree or another," he told The Associated Press.

The documentary also touches on K-pop's new challenge: embracing diversity.

Following BTS' international success, K-pop labels have been actively recruiting foreign talents, which sometimes brings unfamiliar challenges.

Expansion

In the documentary, Yoon Deung Ryoung, the founder of Blackswan's label DR Music, struggles to settle internal conflicts among members, which later escalated to online clashes between fans.

"If the company says, 'don't fight,' they won't fight," he said, referring to traditional K-pop groups. He added that he can't control a "multinational group" the same way because of language and cultural differences. There are currently no Korean members in Blackswan after member changes.

With K-pop's global expansion, fundamental questions about the essence of K-pop remain.

"In a K-pop group, if there are

no Korean members, I feel like it's just a K-pop cover group, isn't it?" Blackswan's former Korean member Youngheun said in the documentary.

However, Cravity's Hyeongjun disagrees. "If foreigners come to Korea and sing in other languages, I am not sure if I can call that K-pop, but since they (Blackswan members) are active in Korea and use Korean, they are K-pop."

Cramp said social media has impacted K-pop's ecosystem in various ways, including creating a "symbiotic relationship" between K-pop stars and fans, and forcing stars to live their lives "under a microscope."

Also:

LOS ANGELES: "I'm a big fan of appreciation," the Cactus Blossoms' brothers Jack Torrey and Page Burkum sing on "Keep Walkin'," a cut from their new album.

That sounds like the cue for a compliment: "Every Time I Think About You" might be the duo's best record yet.

Torrey and Burkum have built a career on classic sibling singing, but on the new album, harmony vocals are only part of the charm.

Handsome melodies make these 10 songs shimmer; there's also an elemental but sturdy '50s-style structure to uncluttered arrangements framed by tuneful electric guitars. Even the instrumental solos are catchy.

"Every Time I Think About You" will be released Friday, coinciding with the Minnesotans' Grand Ole Opry debut. The new songs are rooted in country and the blues (with lyrics referencing Jimmie Rodgers and Howlin' Wolf), ensuring a tasteful mix of savory with their familiar sweetness.



Emma Laird poses for photographers at the photo call for the film 'The Brutalist' during the 81st edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Sunday, Sept. 1. (AP)



Louise



Verrett

Variety

HELSINKI: Social media influencers, reality stars and TV personalities were among the guests at the Norwegian king's eldest child, Princess Märtha Louise, married an American self-professed shaman on Saturday in a wedding ceremony following three days of festivities.

The 52-year-old Märtha Louise and Durek Verrett, who claims to be a sixth-generation shaman from California, tied the knot in the picturesque small town of Geiranger, one of Norway's major tourist attractions located on a fjord with stunning views.

Following festivities that started on Thursday, the actual wedding ceremony took place in a large white tent set up on a lush lawn. Guests told media outlets that Norwegian and US artists performed at the event along with a gospel choir and a singer representing Norway's indigenous Sámi people.

"It was fantastic! It was Hollywood meets Geiranger," Norwegian TV personality Harald Rønneberg described the colorful ceremony to public broadcaster NRK. "It was gospel and love. We laughed, we clapped, and we were touched. It was absolutely beautiful." (AP)

BEIJING, China: In Beijing's Forbidden City, once the sprawling palace to China's Ming and Qing emperors and their legions of guards and servants, steady streams of visitors wearing historical costumes pose for portraits, in a fashion of centuries gone by.

It's a phenomenon seen around heritage sites across China, inspired by comic book conventions and the Japanese passion for cosplay, but with additional nationalistic and cultural dimensions.

Though the historical veracity of the frocks and cloaks may not be guaranteed, they draw their inspiration from Chinese painting, theater and art, especially that

of the Qing, China's last dynasty that was known for its relative prosperity and cultural advances through trade in silk and porcelain.

During this time, China expanded its empire and its art and paintings flourished, as did clothing and textiles. Men and women wore full length elaborately



Sydney Sweeney poses for photographers upon arrival at the Armani Beauty event during the 81st edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Saturday, Aug. 31, 2024. (AP)

embroidered silk robes and women wore hairpieces encrusted with flowers, pearls and gemstones.

The Qing fell in 1911 and following decades of warfare, power was seized by the Communist Party, which sought to grind out all vestiges of China's imperial past. (AP)

ANTWERP, Belgium: The city palace of Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens is partly reopening this weekend, allowing Antwerp to show off the life and work of perhaps its most famous citizen.

The Rubens House may not have as many paintings as Madrid's Prado museum or the canvas surface spread around the port city's Cathedral of Our Lady. But if there is any place that Rubens himself felt more at home, it was his own house in Antwerp looking out over his garden.

While the core of the house remains closed until at least 2030 for ongoing renovations, the dazzling new welcome center and the redesigned garden will open doors on Friday.

What it lacks in actual paintings - a self-portrait is the only major piece on view during the renovations - it hopes to make up in atmosphere, exuding the spirit of the master who bought the house in 1610 and made it his studio and workshop, which gave birth to many of his masterpieces. (AP)

DDI expands research on immunity and type-2 diabetes: Dr. Al-Zaid

Kuwait uses various means to stem diabetes complications

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI) is a leading national establishment devoted to avert and control diabetes through diverse means.

The institute conducts scientific research, works out innovative programs, provides comprehensive education for improving life of the patients and control disease in the country, said Dr. Fawaz Al-Zaid, Senior Scientist and Head of Bioenergetic and Neurometabolism, in a statement to KUNA.

Dr. Al-Zaid, recently designated as a member by the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) - which consists of 10 members from various countries, revealed



KUNA photo
Dr. Fawaz Al-Zaid, researcher and head of the Department of Bioenergetic and Neuroscience at the Dasman Diabetes Institute.

that work was underway to look into how immunity issues lead to type-2 diabetes.

These researches, including laboratory imaging and genetic sequencing are intended to fathom the relationship between immunodeficiency and diabetes, he said, indicating aspiration to adopt new treatment methods to stem infections and side-effects of the disease second type, such as cardiac and liver illnesses.

Other studies in the process look into impact of stress, anxiety, depression on the response to treatment of type-1 diabetes, Dr. Al-Zaid said.

Turning to his EASD membership, Dr. Al-Zaid said he was hon-

ored with this title in admiration of the significant contributions he had given in the diabetes researches at the global level. "This membership gives me a unique opportunity to contribute to recommendations in the realm of diabetics' care and the researches at the international level."

"I look forward to contribute to the association tasks at the international level, representing Kuwait and the Gulf region in this sector."

He revealed that the EASD had formed an international board to broaden its task in the diabetes researches, deepen cooperation at the international level and establish bonds with all stakeholders at the

national and regional levels.

Dr. Al-Zaid said that his election is an evidence of the institute commitments to boost researches to find new treatments for diabetes. The doctor added that he would seek to enhance the communications with the relevant regional and international organizations.

The senior scientist said that he has been focusing on interaction between immunity and metabolism in the advanced stage where the disease affects adipose tissues, the liver and the nervous system.

Dr. Al-Zaid is holder of an HDR from the Royal College of Physicians, London, and a member of several European medical associations.

640,000 kids targeted

Polio vaccinations drive starts in war-torn Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip, Sept 1, (AP): Palestinian health authorities and United Nations agencies on Sunday began a large-scale campaign of vaccinations against polio in the Gaza Strip, hoping to prevent an outbreak in the territory that has been ravaged by the ongoing Israel-Hamas war.

Authorities plan to vaccinate children in central Gaza until Wednesday before moving on to the more devastated northern and southern parts of the strip. The campaign began with a small number of vaccinations on Saturday and aims to reach about 640,000 children.

The World Health Organization said Thursday that Israel has agreed to limited pauses in the fighting to facilitate the campaign. There were initial reports of Israeli strikes in central Gaza early Sunday, but it was not immediately known if anyone was killed or wounded.

Hospitals in Deir al-Balah and Nuseirat confirmed that the campaign had begun early Sunday. Israel said Saturday that the vaccination program would continue through Sept. 9 and last eight hours a day.

Gaza recently reported its first polio case in 25 years - a 10-month-old boy, now paralyzed in the leg. The World Health Organization says the presence of a paralysis case indicates there could be hundreds more who have been infected but aren't showing symptoms.

Most people who have polio do not experience symptoms, and those who do usually recover in a week or so. But there is no cure, and when polio causes paralysis, it is usually permanent. If the paralysis affects breathing muscles, the disease can be fatal.

Population

The vaccination campaign faces a host of challenges, from ongoing fighting to devastated roads and hospitals shut down by the war. Around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people have been displaced within the besieged territory, with hundreds of thousands crammed into squalid tent camps.

Health officials have expressed alarm about disease outbreaks as uncollected garbage has piled up and the bombing of critical infrastructure has sent putrid water flowing through the streets. Widespread hunger has left people even more vulnerable to illness.

"We escaped death with our chil-

dren, and fled from place to place for the sake of our children, and now we have these diseases," said Wafaa Obaid, who brought her three children to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah to get the vaccinations.

Ammar Ammar, a spokesperson for the U.N. children's agency, said it hopes both parties adhere to a temporary truce in designated areas to enable families to reach health facilities.

"This is a first step," he told The Associated Press. "But there is no alternative to a cease-fire because it's not only polio that threatens children in Gaza, but also other factors, including malnutrition and the inhuman conditions they are living in."

Sites

The vaccinations will be administered at roughly 160 sites across the territory, including medical centers and schools. Children under 10 will receive two drops of oral polio vaccine in two rounds, the second to be administered four weeks after the first.

Israel allowed around 1.3 million doses to be brought into the territory last month, which are now being held in refrigerated storage in a warehouse in Deir al-Balah. Another shipment of 400,000 doses is set to be delivered to Gaza soon.

The polio virus that triggered this latest outbreak is a mutated virus from an oral polio vaccine. The oral polio vaccine contains weakened live virus and in very rare cases, that virus is shed by those who are vaccinated and can evolve into a new form capable of starting new epidemics.

The war in Gaza began when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250 hostages. Around 100 remain in captivity, about a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not say whether those killed were fighters or civilians. The war has caused vast destruction across the territory, with entire neighborhoods wiped out and critical infrastructure heavily damaged.

The United States, Egypt and Qatar have spent months trying to broker a cease-fire and the release of the remaining hostages, but the talks have repeatedly stalled and a number of sticking points remain.

Preteen girls are using anti-ageing products they see on social media

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Sept 1, (AP): When she was in fifth grade, Scarlett Goddard Strahan started to worry about getting wrinkles.

By the time she turned 10, Scarlett and her friends were spending hours on TikTok and YouTube watching influencers tout products for achieving today's beauty aesthetic: a dewy, "glowy," flawless complexion. Scarlett developed an elaborate skin care routine with facial cleansers, mists, hydrating masks and moisturizers.

One night, Scarlett's skin began to burn intensely and erupted in blisters. Heavy use of adult-strength products had wreaked havoc on her skin. Months later, patches of tiny bumps remain on Scarlett's face, and her cheeks turn red in the sun.

"If I had known my life would be so affected by this, I never would have put these things on my face," says Scarlett, who recently turned 11.

Reactions

Scarlett's experience has become common, experts say, as preteen girls around the country throng beauty stores to buy high-end skin care products. Girls as young as 8 are turning up at dermatologists' offices with rashes, chemical burns and other allergic reactions to products not intended for children's sensitive skin.

"When kids use anti-aging skin care, they can actually cause premature aging, destroy the skin barrier and lead to permanent scarring," says Dr. Brooke Jeffy, a Scottsdale, Arizona, dermatologist.

More than the physical harm, parents and child psychologists worry about the trend's effects on girls' mental health. Extensive data suggests a fixation on appearance can affect self-esteem and body image and fuel anxiety, depression and eating disorders.

The skin care obsession offers a window into the role social media plays in the lives of today's youth and how it shapes the ideals and insecurities of girls in particular. Girls are experiencing record high levels of sadness and hopelessness. Whether social media exposure causes or simply correlates with mental health problems is up for debate. But to older teens and young adults, it's clear: Extended time on social media has been bad for them, period.

Young girls' fascination with makeup and cosmetics is not new. Neither are kids who hold themselves to idealized beauty standards. What's different now is the magnitude, says Kris

'Harm is more than skin deep'

Experts urge simple skincare for preteens

NEW YORK, Sept 1, (AP): Girls are bombarded on social media with advice from influencers touting elaborate skin care routines with high-priced serums, mists and creams. But what is the right skin care routine for preteens?

Simple is best, dermatologists say. Before puberty hits, most kids only need three things: a gentle cleanser, a moisturizer and sunscreen.

"That's it. Full stop. You don't need anything else," says Dr. Sheilagh Maguiness, a Minneapolis-based dermatologist.

She and other dermatologists around the US have seen growing numbers of teen and preteen girls using anti-aging skin care products. In some cases, the adult-strength products have damaged young girls' skin. And the obsession with achieving the looks they see online has raised concern about the impact on their mental health.

Many of the popular products from Drunk Elephant, Glow Recipe and others - which can cost \$70 or more - contain active ingredients like retinols and hydroxy acids intended for mature skin that can irritate young faces and damage the skin barrier. Experts say they are unnecessary and a waste of money for children.

"I hear all day, every day from all my patients who have children in their

teens, and younger, that they are so fixated on all of these skin care products and TikTok trends and they've gone overboard," says Dr. Dendy Engelman, a dermatologist in Manhattan.

Here's what dermatologists say about what's safe for young skin and how families can navigate the fast-growing trend.

Teens and preteens don't need anti-aging products. Even the Personal Care Products Council, the trade association for cosmetics companies, says: "Anti-aging products are generally unnecessary for younger skin."

For tweens, dermatologists recommend brands of cleansers and moisturizers like Cetaphil, CeraVe and La Roche-Posay that are commonly available in drug stores.

Hormones

As puberty kicks in, teenagers might need to address skin issues brought on by hormonal changes like acne, excess oil, dark spots, blackheads and more.

If an issue seems serious, it's best to consult a dermatologist.

When introducing a new product, especially if it contains a harsh ingredient, go slowly.

"If they really want to use a product and see what all the fuss is about say, 'How about we do a skin test before you rub it all over your face,'" says

Maguiness, a professor of pediatric dermatology at the University of Minnesota. Dab a bit on the inner arm for a few days, and if there is no reaction, then maybe it's OK to try on the face.

Signs of an allergic reaction can range from redness, itchiness, flaking of skin, burning or stinging to patches of tiny bumps.

"Those are all signs to stop using a product," says Dr. Carli Whittington, a dermatologist at the University of Indiana School of Medicine. Continuing use of products that cause irritation can lead to more severe skin damage.

Often, kids don't realize that trendy products they are using contain harmful ingredients.

Dr. Brooke Jeffy in Scottsdale, Arizona, had an 11-year-old patient with a severe rash around her eyes. The child had been using a retinol eye cream that caused irritation and itchiness. The reaction worsened as she continued using it and scratched at her skin.

"She was using an eye cream for a condition she didn't have and has now created this dramatic problem that is going to take months to resolve," said Jeffy, one of many dermatologists now on TikTok and Instagram trying to debunk harmful social media trends with posts on "Do's and Don'ts" for tween skin care.

The beauty industry has been cashing in. Last year, consumers under age 14 drove 49% of drug store skin sales, according to a NielsonIQ report that found households with teens and tweens were outspending the average American household on skin care. And in the first half of 2024, a third of "prestige" beauty sales, at stores like Sephora, were driven by households with tweens and teens, according to market research firm Circana.

The industry has acknowledged certain products aren't suitable for children but has done little to stop kids from buying them. Drunk Elephant's website recommends kids 12 and under should not use their anti-aging serums, lotions and scrubs. That guidance is on the site's FAQ page; there are no such warnings on the products themselves.

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