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WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

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Ambassadorial selection on last lap after first open call

Officials sifted through 4,400 applications and shortlisted a few hundred for final stage of selection.

○ **ANIL GIRI**
KATHMANDU, JULY 21

The selection process for new ambassadors, which began a month and a half ago, has entered its final stage, with the foreign minister expected to make recommendations next week.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had on May 28 invited applications through an open call to fill vacant envoy positions in 13 countries, including India, China, the US, the UK, and Australia, and set June 5 as the deadline. More than 4,400 applications were received. After removing duplicate and incomplete applications, officials selected 2,700 before shortlisting a few hundred applications.

The shortlist was forwarded to Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal's secretariat for final consideration.

"Shortlisting was a Herculean task as one individual had submitted 94 applications through email and post," an official involved in the vetting process told the Post. He said Khanal was reviewing the CVs of prospective candidates, and recommendations for some ambassadorial appointments are expected to be made next week, said the official at the foreign ministry.

The final decision on the appointments will be taken after discussions among Prime Minister Balendra Shah, Rastriya Swatantra Party chief Rabi Lamichhane, Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle, Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal, and other top leaders of the ruling party. "However, our party is clear that the responsibility for the appointment solely rests with the government and the foreign minister," said an RSP leader.

Vetting cumbersome as single person submitted 94 applications by email and post, officials say.

As the government expedites the selection process, prospective candidates have initiated intense lobbying with various power centres and the ruling RSP. Stating that such lobbying would have no influence on the appointment process, an RSP office bearer said, "They should be based on merit, and the right person should get the opportunity."

Some missions have remained vacant since October last year. On October 16, the Sushila Karki-led government recalled Nepal's ambassadors to China, Germany, Israel, Malaysia, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, the US, the UK, and Japan. Around a week after assuming office, the Shah government on April 7 recalled six more ambassadors—Shankar Prasad Sharma (India), Chitralekha Yadav (Australia), Purna Bahadur Nepali (Sri Lanka), Shiva Maya Tumbahangphe (South Korea), Sumnima Tuladhar (Denmark), and Kapil Shrestha (South Africa).

"The government appears less concerned about appointing ambassadors despite enjoying a strong political mandate," said a Nepali diplomat.

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AFP/RSS

Security personnel detain Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi (centre) as he stages a sit-in calling for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resignation outside the latter's residence in New Delhi on Tuesday, a day after crackdown against protesting Cockroach Janta Party supporters.

Cockroach movement vows to keep demanding reforms after crackdown

Movement gained momentum after prominent activist Sonam Wangchuk, whose 3-week hunger strike became a symbol of the protests, was forcibly taken to a hospital by police.

○ **SHEIKH SAALIQ & SHONAL GANGULY/AP**
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Supporters of India's youth-led Cockroach movement demanding educational reforms and government accountability refused to leave their New Delhi protest site on Tuesday, a day after their thousands-strong march toward Parliament drew police tear gas, beatings and a new wave of sympathy from across the country.

The movement, now attracting professionals and families beyond students, represents a rare public chal-

lenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, reviving criticism over its handling of dissent and use of force to respond to protests.

Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi and dozens of his Congress party lawmakers showed their support on Tuesday with a sit-in outside Modi's residence before police forcibly removed them in a dramatic escalation.

Footage showed Gandhi, who had urged "every patriotic Indian who believes that our students should get justice" to join, resisting.

Government minister Jitendra Singh said Gandhi was told the loca-

tion was not "suitable for a sit-in."

Meanwhile, hundreds of protesters remained camped at Jantar Mantar, a designated protest site, under heavy police presence, saying they would stay until Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigns over alleged failures in India's examination system.

"We are going to continue our protest," said Abhijeet Dipke, founder of the Cockroach Janta Party, which emerged just two months ago as a satirical protest after a Supreme Court judge described India's youth as "cockroaches" but quickly evolved.

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Nepal government goes digital, service seekers go in circles

Recurring system failures are forcing citizens to wait for hours and make repeated trips for routine government services.

○ **PRAKRITI DAHAL**
KATHMANDU, JULY 21

At 85 years old, Sabitri Devi Udas, accompanied by her husband, made her way to the ward 31 office of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City in Shantinagar at 11 am on Monday. The new fiscal year had just commenced, and elderly citizens were flocking to local ward offices to renew their social security allowance identity cards. When she inquired about the renewal process, a municipal official offered a familiar, disheartening refrain: "The system [server] is down."

Hoping the system would come back online, she stayed put. Every so often, she walked to the counter and asked, "Has the system started working?" Each time, the staff shook their heads: "Not yet, mother." By 3 pm,

after four hours of fruitless waiting, she had run out of patience. "What kind of system is this that cannot be restored even after hours?" she lamented. It was her second fruitless trip to the ward office for a simple administrative procedure, having spent hours there on Friday under identical circumstances.

Seventy-eight-year-old Narwada Devi Sharma, who came from Old Baneshwar alongside her two daughters, faced much the same ordeal. Suffering from severe knee joint pain that makes mobility painful, waiting all day in an overcrowded office proved agonising. "We stayed hoping the work would get done," she said.

"After waiting for four hours, they simply told us to go home and return another day. I don't know when I will be able to manage another trip, as I cannot travel alone and must coordi-

nate with family members."

The plight of these elderly citizens exposes the massive gulf between the official rhetoric of digital governance and the ground reality across the country.

For years, successive administrations have touted the vision of a 'Digital Nepal', promising that migrating public services online—ranging from digital land records, e-payment portals, and online application forms to digital mapping and electronic asset-freezing systems—would eliminate middlemen, bolster transparency, and end the necessity of standing in physical queues.

These promises were renewed recently when the newly formed government led by Balendra Shah released a 100-point priority checklist for administrative reform.

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POST PHOTO: DIPESH DARSHANDHARI

Chaos at the Bhaktapur office of Department of Transport Management after the system 'went down'.

Alone at home, together on screen

As more young Nepalis build lives abroad, aging parents are relying on daily video calls to stay connected while grappling with the loneliness of an empty home.

○ **ARATI PAUDEL**
KATHMANDU, JULY 21

Every evening, Kamal Nath Dahal waits for the same thing.

It is not a visitor at his door. It is not the sound of footsteps in his hallway.

It is the glow of a mobile phone screen.

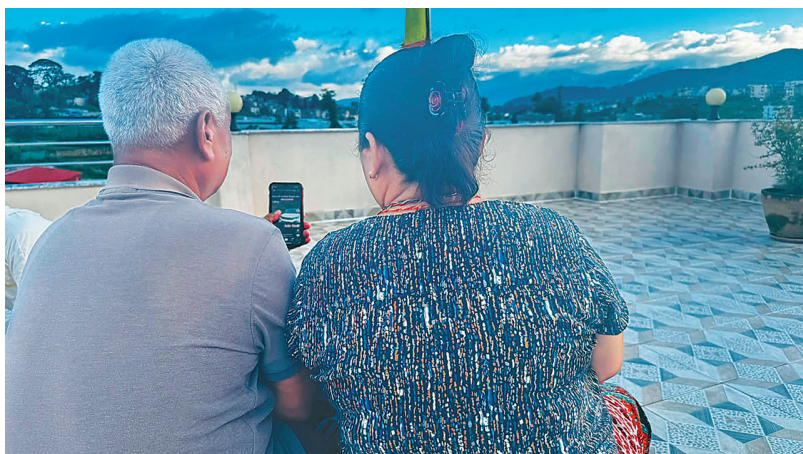
When his sons, daughters-in-law and three-year-old granddaughter appear on the screen from Japan, the quiet room where he lives alone in Kathmandu suddenly feels less empty.

For a few minutes, the distance between Nepal and Japan disappears.

Dahal asks about their day. He watches his granddaughter's expressions. He listens to his sons' voices.

Then the call ends, and the silence returns.

The 68-year-old from Melamchi, Sindhupalchok, has built a routine around that silence. Each morning, he performs his prayers, prepares his



POST PHOTO

meals, reads books, listens to the news and goes about his work.

"Work is the one thing that keeps

my mind busy," he said.

But staying occupied does not erase the feeling of missing his family.

The little girl responds.

"Ba."

He smiles.

He has taught her other Nepali words too—"Aama" (mother), "Kaka" (uncle) and "Kaki" (aunt). He worries that children growing up abroad may lose their connection to their family's language and culture.

"Wherever children live, I want them to remember their country and their language," he said.

His sons have invited him to visit Japan several times, but he has not been able to go.

His bigger hope is different: that one day they return home.

"Foreign countries are places to learn, not places to spend your entire life," he said. "Work there, gain experience, but invest in your own country."

For now, the phone screen is his window into the lives of the people he loves. But his real wish remains

unchanged.

"One day, I hope my sons return to Nepal permanently, and we can sit together in the same kitchen and eat again."

Dahal's story is becoming increasingly common.

As thousands of young Nepalis leave for education, employment and better opportunities abroad, many parents are growing older in homes where their children's voices now arrive through a screen.

In Pokhara's Ratnachowk neighbourhood, 69-year-old Saraswati Maharjan lives among reminders of the family she misses.

Photographs of her parents, daughters, sons-in-law and grandchildren cover the walls of one room in her two-storey house.

Her elder daughter has lived in Japan for 13 years. Her younger daughter lives in Janakpur.

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APF steps in to mould 11-year-old prodigy Sajani Tamang

APF FC secures the future of the 11-year-old viral sensation, committing to her education and training as she embarks on an elite footballing journey.

NAYAK PAUDEL
KATHMANDU, JULY 21

A small girl wearing Argentina's iconic number 10 jersey stepped onto the football ground premises at the Armed Police Force headquarters in Halchowk, Kathmandu, on Sunday. She was received like a celebrity—national team mainstays and age-group players associated with APF FC lined up to welcome her and make her feel right at home.

The 11-year-old prodigy, Sajani Tamang, had travelled around 180 kilometres from her hometown in Devchuli Municipality, Nawalpur district, to begin a life-changing chapter. Recognising her extraordinary raw talent, APF FC—Nepal's most decorated women's football club—has brought the youngster into their fold, committing to board, mentor and train her into one of the country's finest players.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SANTOSH SHRESTHA
Sajani Tamang

Nepali women's football is currently experiencing an unprecedented surge in popularity, fueled by strong national team performances and the international success of stars like Sabitra Bhandari 'Samba', Preeti Rai, Anjila Tumbapo Subba and Rekha Poudel. Now, Tamang is emerging as the next captivating story in Nepali women's football.

Tamang first captured the nation's imagination when the country was busy with the FIFA World Cup. Videos of her effortlessly dribbling past opponents double her size and firing in long-range screamers went viral. What started as digital buzz, however, has quickly turned into a concrete



Sajani Tamang (centre) is pictured with players and coaching staff of APF FC at the football ground in APF's headquarters at Halchowk, Kathmandu, on Sunday.

PHOTO: APF FOOTBALL CLUB/FACEBOOK

path toward elite football.

"We cannot sign an official contract with Sajani because she is a minor right now," APF women's head coach Jibesh Pandey told the Post. "But we will be covering her education and stay at the best boarding school nearby. We could not enrol her at APF's school because it will be far. She is a very bright student as well, so we are looking for the best. Studying nearby will allow her to join regular training."

Pandey added, "Sajani is also coachable. When I saw some flaws in her passing, I gave her some guidance. And she took it so well and mitigated the mistake in the next passes."

Tamang's journey with football

Tamang, 11, started playing with the ball in Devchuli around five years ago. And her life changed a couple of months ago when Devchuli Municipality conducted a 60-day grassroots training camp.

"Bimal, one of the local coaches, saw Sajani play at a ground nearby her house," said Prakash Kafle, member secretary at the Sports Development Committee of the municipality. "And he called her to

join the 60-day camp." The camp was organised to create a U16 football team for an inter-municipal tournament in the district.

Tamang amazed everyone who saw her play—during the training and the tournament. She helped her municipality win the title and was adjudged the player of the tournament. It was her videos of the tournament that went viral.

"I often visit tournaments scouting young talents," said Santosh Shrestha, the man who uploaded Tamang's videos on social media. "She was so great with the ball. And that too at such a tender age. I had never seen an 11-year-old with that dedication and determination towards the game."

Tamang, who is good with both her feet, hails from a struggling family. Her parents are working as migrant workers—her father is in Saudi Arabia and her mother in Kuwait. She currently stays with her grandparents.

"Sajani's father has been a migrant worker for a long time. Her mother went to Kuwait not long ago," Shrestha informed. "They are extremely happy after finding out that Sajani was approached by APF."

Sajani's love for Messi and Preeti Rai

Tamang had a clear choice of the clothes she wanted to wear when she would go to APF's football ground. She reached there with her idol Lionel Messi's jersey.

"Sajani was extremely excited to visit APF's ground and meet with players and coaches. Her biggest desire has been to meet Preeti Rai," Shrestha said. "When a call was arranged with Preeti while she was in Halchowk, her happiness knew no bounds."

Rai, Nepal's midfield maestro, is currently playing for Preah Khan Reach Svay Rieng FC in the Cambodian Premier League.

In a vlog uploaded by former national captain Anjila Tumbapo Subba, Tamang could be seen happy when she met national players like Subba, Gita Rana, Renuka Hamal, Pratikshya Chaudhary and Man Maya Damai alongside APF's senior and underage players.

"After she met these great players and had a talk with Preeti, Sajani has been saying that she will only join APF," Shrestha said.

This is the first time Tamang has



come to Kathmandu. She also visited Dasharath Stadium, the home of Nepali football, on Monday evening before heading back home. And she was also welcomed at the National Sports Council by vice-chairman Bishal Shrestha, who is also a former national footballer.

"APF's coach Bijay KC reached out to me after seeing Sajani's videos," Santosh Shrestha said. "APF covered the transportation and stay of Sajani, her grandmother and brother, and myself. We reached our home today [Tuesday] morning."

A future secured

It is not that Tamang did not receive any offers from other clubs before APF.

"Tokha Bhagawati and some other clubs had also approached to recruit Tamang," said Set Bahadur Pun, president of Nawalpur District Football Association. "But when I heard that she is joining APF, it was a big moment for the district. I feel that Tamang's future is secured now. She has made the whole district proud."

APF is currently the dream of emerging Nepali women footballers because it is where Samba, Rai, Subba, and many others began their football careers. Most of the national team players are associated with the club, making them the dominant force in women's football.

"Her [Sajani] happiness is our happiness," Tamang's grandmother said in the video uploaded by Subba.

"All of us want her to have a good future. She is saying that she does not want to return home after meeting the players."

According to Shrestha, Tamang's mother and father are also equally relieved after finding out that APF will look after their child.

"I talked with Sajani's parents before bringing her to Kathmandu," Shrestha said.

"They say they are happy and relieved because APF will certainly take good care of her."

APF is still searching for a good school with a hostel for Tamang.

"Once the school is finalised, she will be called back to Kathmandu," said head coach Pandey. "It is then that her proper training will begin."

For Tamang, whose football journey started just five years ago on local pitches in Devchuli while her parents worked overseas to support the family, the leap to Halchowk is nothing short of life-changing.

As APF FC finalises her schooling and accommodation, Tamang is preparing to make the Capital her permanent home. Standing alongside national mainstays and inspired by her idols, the girl in the Argentina number 10 jersey is no longer just an internet sensation. She is now officially on the path toward becoming the future of Nepali women's football.

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Use this energy to review your commitments, pay off debts, and connect deeply with someone you love. Leo season kicks off this afternoon, putting you in playful spirits throughout the coming weeks. Now is also the ideal time to hone creative skills and chase your passions.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Playful interactions will seem extra romantic and elevating. These vibes can also help you gain recognition within creative realms, so don't be afraid to showcase any projects you've been working on.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

A gentle yet efficient energy helps you find a productive flow. Be cognizant of what you hope to accomplish within the realms of wellness, work, and the home. Educational pursuits will satiate your busy mind and provide a healthy ego boost.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Focus on connections and simple pleasures that help balance the mind, and don't be afraid to flirt. Financial affairs move in your favor throughout the coming weeks, making it the ideal time to set monetary goals.

LEO (July 23-August 22)

Invest in your home, take in some fresh air, and recognize what brings you a sense of security. Enjoy the popularity boost that accompanies your birthday season, and recommit to personal goals. Cater to any daydreams that emerge, writing down visions as they arise.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22)

Peers will be drawn to your soft and harmonious energy. These vibes can help you move past the surface to enjoy more intimate and meaningful interactions. If there's someone you've been hoping to break the ice with, now is a good time to connect.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)

The universe asks you to recommit to your dreams. Visualize your wishes coming to fruition in great detail, leaning into the law of attraction. You'll have a knack for meeting the right people throughout the coming weeks.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)

Loving vibes circulate throughout your community, creating a welcoming sense of unity. Valuable connections can emerge from unsuspecting sources if you lead with an open heart. Circle in on one or two goals, devoting yourself to these causes throughout the coming weeks.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)

Use this energy to reflect on your relationship goals and whether personal cycles must be broken to ensure the stability of present and future connections. Embrace the free spirit within, unapologetically seeking adventure and growth.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)

Explore new scenery to increase your chances of crossing paths with kindred spirits. These vibes might also inspire you to play matchmaker or share contacts with industry allies. Romantic or business partnerships may form throughout the coming weeks.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)

Be mindful of who you can rely on, and find ways to elevate and support one another. Professional aspirations significantly benefit from these vibes. Put more energy into your romantic life throughout the coming weeks.

PISCES (February 19-March 20)

Loving interactions will feel like a spiritual experience this morning. If you've been on the hunt for a mate, use this energy to tell the universe exactly what you're looking for. Try to keep an open mind in case your higher power has something else in store.

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CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Blue Note's Don —
- -tat-tat
- Norse god
- Colorize
- Antelope
- Decorative jar
- Wall pier
- "20,000 Leagues" writer
- Annexes
- Ladybug
- Places to dine
- "I'm all —!"
- Red gem
- Crunchy veggie
- Removed wrinkles
- Bud
- Think logically
- Proboscis
- Verse works
- New Zealand parrot
- Irish Gaelic
- "Yours, — and Ours"
- Clergyman
- Anchorman
- Koppel
- Puncture
- Memorable periods
- For just one
- Solar plexus
- After-dinner drinks

- Got close to
- Peru's capital
- Setting
- Certain
- Amino —
- English composer
- Black, poetically
- Commanded
- Items for rowers
- Moines

DOWN

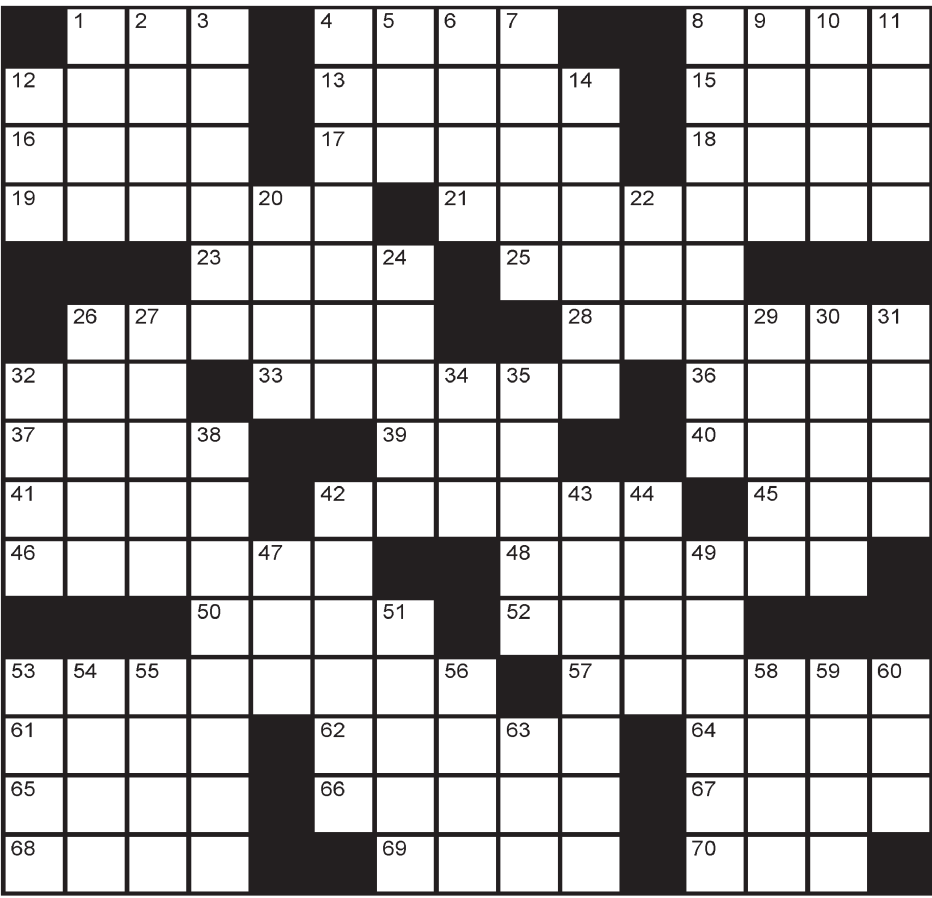
- Champagne
- Poker stake
- Said
- Undo
- Beer type
- Vetch seed
- Wintour and Paquin
- Cooked too long
- Surrealist painter
- Ait
- Loch — monster
- Barfly's bill
- Keep in custody
- Hiding place
- Go wrong
- Fast food beverage
- Wheel spokes
- Coeur d'—
- Compass point
- Letters
- Act

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED



6-12-26 © 2026 UFS, Dist. by Andrews McMeel for UFS

- and circumstance
- "Gimme justa —"
- Horse opera
- Sing a love song to
- Cookbook entry
- First things
- Memory alone
- Boulder
- Stopped
- Word of greeting
- Spill the beans
- Costa —
- In the company of
- "The Forsyte —"
- Bumpkin
- Love god
- Quiet room
- Sedan



SUDOKU

4	1	8	6	9	2	7	3	5
2	5	3	4	7	1	6	9	8
7	9	6	3	5	8	2	4	1
1	8	2	9	3	6	4	5	7
3	4	5	8	1	7	9	6	2
6	7	9	5	2	4	1	8	3
5	3	1	2	6	9	8	7	4
8	6	7	1	4	3	5	2	9
9	2	4	7	8	5	3	1	6

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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		9		1				
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8			2			5	6	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

