

Who will blink first — Indians or Kiwis?

It's a toss-up between Karthik and Vijay Shankar for the No. 4 slot; first big test for New Zealand



Intense focus: Virat Kohli has a batting stint at the nets under the watchful eyes of coach Ravi Shastri ahead of the Kiwi clash. • AP



K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR
NOTTINGHAM

The centre-square here at Trent Bridge was layered with multiple sheets on Wednesday. The ground staff scurried around, extending the covers, keeping an eye on the feathery rain that oscillated between persistence and the long pause. During one such break, the Indian team trained, not full-tilt but a gingerly trot.

The forecast hints at a few showers during Thursday's World Cup match featuring Virat Kohli's men and New Zealand. Ambiguity is linked only to the weather, while thankfully the other realm of confusion centred around Shikhar Dhawan was effectively dismantled. Batting coach Sanjay Bangar said that a final decision on Dhawan's availability would be taken only after 12 days and that rules out the injured opener with a bruised left-thumb from India's next set of four games.

The team-management is hoping that the southpaw would be fit in time for the big clash against England on June 30. As a consequence, K.L. Rahul will pair up with Rohit Sharma atop the order and, in the middle, either Dinesh Karthik or Vijay Shan-

kar would step in. Both had a long strike at the nets, only against throw-downs, as the outfield was deemed too soft for the regular bowlers to pound their feet.

In good shape

Except for the bad news about Dhawan, India is in good shape, having won against South Africa and Australia. Most of its cogs moved in unison and, with the skies remaining damp, it remains to be seen if Kohli would prefer speedster Mohammed Shami over spinner Kuldeep Yadav.

The venue is Stuart Broad's home ground and is known for a fair bit of bounce, though in recent times, especially in ODIs, the turf has gifted a bounty of runs — England scored 481 for

six against Australia last June.

India will be wary of New Zealand and Kane Williamson's men are known to punch above their weight in ICC tournaments. The Kiwis step in after registering three wins against Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The fast bowlers, especially Lockie Ferguson and James Neesham, have been among the wickets and more importantly, in the warm-up joust against India at the Oval on May 25, New Zealand rode on the exploits of seamers Trent Boult and Neesham to skittle out the Men in Blue for 179. New Zealand won the game by six wickets.

It would be a bit extreme to invest meaning into a practice skirmish which largely served as an exploratory exercise for teams to finalise

India vs New Zealand - a World Cup timeline

1975, MANCHESTER

Abid Ali's rearguard, in the company of the tail, took India to 230 in 60 overs. But Glenn Turner (114 not out) took the Kiwis over the line with four wickets and seven balls remaining

1979, LEEDS

Asked to take strike, the Indian batsmen never got going and were bundled out for 182. With openers John Wright and Bruce Edgar adding 100, New Zealand breezed home in 57 overs, losing just two along the way

1987, BENGALURU

Tottering at 21 for three, Sidhu (75) re-erected the innings. Cameos from Kapil 72* (58b) and More 42* (26 balls) powered India to 252. Though Rutherford (75) and Jones (64) threatened to take it away, Maninder and Shastri bowled India to a 16-run win

1987, NAGPUR

Needing to win big to avoid playing Pakistan in the semifinal in Lahore, India found heroes in Chetan Sharma, who performed the first hat-trick in the World Cup and the first by an Indian in ODIs. Gavaskar then slammed his only ODI ton (103 n.o. 88b, 10x4, 3x6) as he and Srikanth (75) ensured the hosts cruised home in 32.1 overs, losing just one wicket



1992, DUNEDIN

India stuttered to 230, riding on the shoulders of Tendulkar (84) and Azharuddin (55). Crowe's brilliant move — having Greatbatch go full throttle in the first 15 overs — worked as the opener smashed 73 off 77 balls. The ice-cool Jones, with an undefeated 67, took the hosts home with four wickets and 17 deliveries remaining



1999, NOTTINGHAM

Deciding to bat first, riding on Ajay Jadeja's 76 India made 251. Then Matt Horne (74) and Roger Twose (60 not out) piloted the Kiwis to victory with five wickets to spare in the 49th over and qualify for the semis

2003, CENTURION

Once Zaheer Khan sent back Craig McMillan off the second ball of the match, it was a procession as the Kiwi batters couldn't come to terms with the Indian attack comprising Zaheer, Srinath, Nehra and Harbhajan. Despite losing three quick wickets, Kaif (68*) and Dravid (53*) chased down 146 with ease

Compiled by R. Narayanan

THE FACE-OFF					
India vs New Zealand					
TRENT BRIDGE					
HEAD-TO-HEAD					
	Matches	Ind	NZ	Tied	NR
Overall	106	55	45	1	5
World Cup	7	3	4	0	0

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1, 2 & SELECT 1 (SD & HD), 3 P.M.

Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, M.S. Dhoni, K.L. Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja, Kedar Jadhav, Dinesh Karthik, Hardik Pandya, Vijay Shankar, Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Shami, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav and Shikhar Dhawan.

Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Colin Munro, Jimmy Neesham, Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Tim Southee, Henry Nicholls, Mitchell Santner and Ish Sodhi.

Umpires: Marais Erasmus and Paul Reiffel; Third umpire: Bruce Oxenford; Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle.

Match starts at 3 p.m. IST.

Bangar backs Rahul to come good

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR
NOTTINGHAM

Soft-spoken Sanjay Bangar's biggest cricketing moment occurred under the English skies. In the third Test at Leeds (Headingley) during the 2002 series, Bangar excelled as a make-shift opener. He scored a 68 and, more importantly, shared a 170-run second-wicket partnership with centurion Rahul Dravid. It validated Sourav Ganguly's brave decision to bat on winning the toss and the base was set for a fine triumph.

Shot at the top

Back to the United Kingdom, albeit in a new role as India's batting coach, it is now Bangar's turn to bolster the confidence of another player, who too has been pitch-forked into the opener's role. With Shikhar Dhawan ruled out with an injured left-thumb, it is but inevitable that K.L. Rahul will get a shot at the top of the order against New Zealand here on Thursday.

Speaking to the media on Wednesday, Bangar backed



K.L. Rahul... moving up • AP

Rahul to perform well and said that the ability to play across the line-up augurs well for the Karnataka batsman. "The advantage of playing in various situations is that you understand the game a lot better. If you look at the history of the game, some players have been very versatile.

"Here you can take his namesake Rahul Dravid, who batted at various positions, and it actually helped the team big time. It's a mental adjustment and any player, who is able to do that requires a lot of skill but ultimately it will enhance the position that he will bat in, and it will also help the team's cause," Bangar said.

In good rhythm

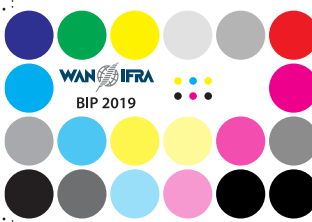
The former Railways cricketer also emphasised that despite the spectre of rain and disrupted practice schedules, India is in good rhythm: "When you come to England, you expect these things. So far, we have been lucky that we haven't had a game affected by the weather. So let's keep our fingers crossed. We have had a fair time to prepare ourselves because we spent a lot of time before our first match. The bowlers are in good rhythm and you don't really want to risk bowlers [at practice] in conditions where it's not really firm."

Haven't decided on the eleven: Taylor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NOTTINGHAM

Ross Taylor said that New Zealand is prepared for all kinds of weather-induced contingencies. Ahead of Thursday's World Cup game against India, Taylor spoke to the media. Excerpts:

The playing eleven: There's a full 15 to choose from. We can't look too far ahead but there are obviously different permutations if the weather does play a part, be it a reduced game or a 50-over game.



Wet weather blues: England is a beautiful place, but it's not famous for good weather. There's still a long way to go in this tourna-

ment and I am sure there's going to be rained out games. There are times when forecasts have been wrong as well.

The pitch: Traditionally, it can favour the batters but I am sure the bowlers are going to have a little bit there. It hasn't seen the sun and we will have to wait and see what happens.

But first and foremost, it's a great place to play cricket, and I am sure any time we play India at a neutral venue, there will always be more Indian supporters than New Zealand.

Tim Southee's fitness: He is fine. All 15 are in contention.

As I said, with the weather around, we don't want to pre-empt anything, but if there are shortened games and what not, that's something the coach and captain will have to decide at the time, but we haven't made a decision on our final 11.

In Boult, the Indian top-order faces a challenge



Succeeding in long tournaments like the World Cup is not just about performing well in matches, but also about squad depth. How good are your replacement players, in case of an injury layoff?

We do not know the full extent of Shikhar Dhawan's injury yet, but it looks like he will stay with the squad in England. As it stands now, he will miss at least one match. In Dhawan's absence, K.L. Rahul should open the batting — he has the skills, and it is a wonderful opportunity to show the world how good he is. As for the No. 4 spot,

my choice would be Kedar Jadhav.

I'll go with Ravindra Jadeja as the replacement player, especially if it is a brown, dry pitch. Jadeja can whack it with the bat, and he's a very good bowler and fielder.

On Dhawan's injury, if it was really bad, it would have been operated on by now.

You can learn how to bat with a broken finger. We've all done it. You have equipment specialists now who can fix an extra bit of padding on your gloves. You can also take a little injection to get through the pain.

I'm involved with the design of different safety components — PVC, sweat band — used in batting gloves. Not many guys are pulling out of games with broken fingers these days. In my time, you learnt to put up with the pain. Dhawan is a tough nut, and as an opener, he will be used to getting hit on the fingers.

I get the feeling that if In-

dia had the final or semifinal coming up, Dhawan would have played.

Perhaps the team management wants to play safe, and look after Dhawan for the latter stages of the tournament.

In Trent Boult, the Indian top-order faces another concern. Boult is a strike bowler, with a good record against India.

You have to be mindful of the ball swinging back in and getting the leg-before decision.

I have no doubt that Ravi Shastri would have summoned many left-arm pacers to bowl in the Indian nets. They would have been asked to bring the ball back in with the brand new ball.

The good news is that Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and every other Indian batsman is in great nick. Apart from the Dhawan setback, everything is going very well for India.

(Tune in to Select Dugout on Star Sports Select 1)

Ton-up Warner delights; Australia survives scare

Amir's brilliant five-for checks the run-surge towards the end

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
TAUNTON

David Warner was not his usual destructive self but effective nevertheless, his first international century (107) since completing the ball-tampering ban, setting up Australia's 41-run win over Pakistan in the World Cup

here on Wednesday. Australia looked set for a total in excess of 350 while Warner and captain Aaron Finch (82) were at the crease, but Mohammad Amir (five for 30) staged a comeback with his best ODI bowling figures to bowl the defending champion out for 307 in 49

overs. Pakistan's innings ended at 266 in 45.4 overs but not before the duo of Sarfaraz Ahmed and Wahab Riaz gave the Australians a scare with a rearguard action that revived the hopes for a while. Pakistan was at one

stage tottering at 160 for six in the 30th over.

Next assignment

AUSTRALIA: June 15 vs Sri Lanka, The Oval, 3 p.m.
PAKISTAN: June 16 vs India, Old Trafford, 3 p.m.

Where they stand

Team	Mat	Won	Lost	NR	PTS	NRR
New Zealand	3	3	0	0	6	2.163
Australia	4	3	1	0	6	0.570
England	3	2	1	0	4	1.307
India	2	2	0	0	4	0.539
Sri Lanka	4	1	1	2	4	-1.517
West Indies	3	1	1	1	3	2.054
Bangladesh	4	1	2	1	3	-0.714
Pakistan	4	1	2	1	3	-1.796
South Africa	4	0	3	1	1	-0.952
Afghanistan	3	0	3	0	0	-1.493

*till the Australia-Pakistan match on June 12

INNINGS SCAN

AUS	PAK
2	1
27	23
6	7
146	80
(1st)	(3rd)
6.26	5.82

PROGRESSION

AUS	PAK
56/0	51/1
122/0	110/2
191/2	160/6
256/4	230/7
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TOP SHOWS

For	Batting	Bowling
Australia	Warner 107 (111b, 11x4, 1x6)	Cummins 3/33 (10)
Pakistan	Hafeez 46 (49b, 3x4, 1x6)	Amir 5/30 (10)



Driving force: David Warner's well-paced century helped Australia run up a 300-plus score against Pakistan. • AP

SCOREBOARD AUSTRALIA VS PAKISTAN

AUSTRALIA
Aaron Finch c Hafeez b Amir 82 (84b, 6x4, 4x6), David Warner c Imam b Afridi 107 (111b, 11x4, 1x6), Steven Smith c Asif b Hafeez 10 (13b, 1x4), Glenn Maxwell b Afridi 20 (10b, 2x4, 1x6), Shaun Marsh c Malik b Amir 23 (26b, 2x4), Usman Khawaja c Riaz b Amir 18 (16b, 3x4), Alex Carey lbw b Amir 20 (27b, 2x4), Nathan Coulter-Nile c Sarfaraz b Riaz 2 (3b), Pat Cummins c Sarfaraz b Hasan 2 (6b), Mitchell Starc c Malik b Amir 3 (6b), Kane Richardson (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-10, w-6, nb-3): 19; Total (in 49 overs): 307

FALL OF WICKETS
1-146 (Finch, 22.1 overs), 2-189 (Smith, 28.4), 3-223 (Maxwell, 33.4), 4-242 (Warner, 37.5), 5-277 (Khawaja, 42.1), 6-288 (Marsh, 44.3), 7-299 (Coulter-Nile, 46.2), 8-302 (Cummins, 47.3), 9-304 (Carey, 48.3).

PAKISTAN BOWLING
Amir 10-2-30-5, Afridi 10-0-70-2, Hasan 10-0-67-1, Riaz 8-0-44-1, Hafeez 7-0-60-1, Malik 4-0-26-0.

mins 53 (75b, 7x4), Fakhar Zaman c Richardson b Cummins 0 (3b), Babar Azam c Richardson b Coulter-Nile 30 (28b, 7x4), Mohd. Hafeez c Starc b Finch 46 (49b, 3x4, 1x6), Sarfaraz Ahmed run out 40 (48b, 1x4), Shoaib Malik c Carey b Cummins 0 (2b), Asif Ali c Carey b Richardson 5 (8b), Hasan Ali c Khawaja b Richardson 32 (15b, 3x4, 3x6), Wahab Riaz c Carey b Amir 45 (39b, 2x4, 3x6), Mohd. Amir b Starc 0 (2b), Shaheen Afridi (not out) 1 (6b); Extras: (lb-4, nb-1, w-9): 14; Total (in 45.4 overs): 266.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-2 (Zaman, 2.1), 2-56 (Azam, 10.5), 3-136 (Imam, 25.1), 4-146 (Hafeez, 26.6), 5-147 (Malik, 27.3), 6-160 (Asif, 29.6), 7-200 (Hasan, 33.5), 8-264 (Riaz, 44.2), 9-265 (Amir, 44.4).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING
Cummins 10-0-33-3, Starc 9-1-43-2, Richardson 8-4-0-62-2, Coulter-Nile 9-0-53-1, Maxwell 7-0-58-0, Finch 2-0-13-1.

Toss: Pakistan.
Man-of-the-Match: David Warner.

Australia won by 41 runs.

GRV — standing out in a galaxy of stars

The legendary batsman is a huge hit among Kannadiga fans with his World Cup commentary

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
MUMBAI

There is a galaxy of cricketers at the Star Sports Studios here commentating on the World Cup in various languages. Anil Kumble, Dean Jones, Scott Styris, Brian Lara, and Kevin Pietersen live it up with their anecdotal and predictive discussions in The DugOut.

The regional viewers are treated to excellent stuff from the likes of Venkataspathy Raju, L. Sivaramakrishnan, L. Balaji, Manoj Tiwary, Vijay Bharadwaj, Kiran More, Nikhil Chopra, Mohammad Kaif, R.P. Singh, Ranadeb Bose, and Saurashish Lahiri.

But the one man who is held in awe and sought after most is G.R. Viswanath, who is a huge hit with his Kannadiga fans. The legendary batsman, who played 91 Tests and hit 14 centuries, each a gem, teams up with Bharadwaj and G.K. Anil Kumar, with enriching comments on



Legendspeak: G.R. Viswanath and G.K. Anil Kumar regaling viewers with their Kannada commentary for the World Cup. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

cricket from his time.

Viswanath, who recently turned 70, is immensely popular because of his humility. As one of the officials connected with the project remarked, "He is much-

loved, much respected. Viewers, who have hardly heard him all these years, feast on stories of his time." He is the superstar among stars of contemporary cricket.

Not the one to talk about his batting, he can, when prompted repeatedly, recall most of his important innings with minute details, the shots he played to herald each century, his best and disappointing moments.

Missing 100 Tests sometimes ranks him but Viswanath, in his words, has "moved on."

For someone like Tiwary, every break has to be spent with Viswanath.

"I first interacted with him at a NCA (National Cricket Academy) camp and have been a huge fan of him since.

"For us, not watching him play obviously is a huge disappointment but I have heard stories about his batting from his colleagues. I am lucky to be able to spend time with such a legend," said Tiwary, who does revisit some of Viswanath's innings which are available on YouTube.

His wrists were his strength. "I developed

strong wrists in order to play the square drive and square cut because other shots would not fetch me boundaries. The ball would not reach the fence. I worked on making my wrists strong."

Much to the chagrin of the bowlers who would suffer at his hands, for Viswanath had the reputation of dominating the attack on hostile pitches.

Master of square cut

One reminded him of an iconic image from his career, feet in air, playing a rasping square cut.

"Against Michael Holding. Off the second new ball (at Port of Spain in 1976)."

He recalls that epic victory against the West Indies as the audience around him sits facinated, the storytelling spilling into late evening with no trace of fatigue on the legendary veteran's face. We retire with a promise of more from the humble man, who is fondly referred as the original God of Cricket.

USA hopes to go all the way

India up against Japan in semifinals

HSF

UTHRA GANESAN
BHUBANESWAR

Before the Hockey Series Finals began here, when someone asked USA captain Ajai Dhadwal if his team was hopeful of going all the way despite strong competition from higher-ranked Japan, Poland and South Africa in its group, he simply smiled and said, "that's the plan."

The plan has worked perfectly for the side, even though it lost Dhadwal to a rib injury in the very first game.

USA drew with Asian Games champion Japan and upset South Africa to end on top of Pool B and earn a direct entry to the semifinals.

"The exciting thing about HSF is that it brings teams that are not as high ranked an opportunity to compete against the best in the world. Rankings matter but they are not the be and end of everything, it's important to keep your head down and try and get results with the strategies that you come up with," Dhadwal told *The Hindu* in an interaction.

Heartening results

For a team that has to not just fight for quality competition but also resources with other sports and the women's national team — that finished fifth at Rio — the results here have been heartening.

But what is more important, says Dhadwal, is the fact that the sport is spreading out of its traditional image of a subcontinental sport



Goal! Mexico's Ruben Martinez scores past the Uzbekistan defence. *BISWARANJAN ROUT

and making inroads into other communities.

"I think it is really important because then it will generate more number of those who want to play.

"On the West Coast Tom Harris very much pioneered hockey and even started the hockey ground at the Moorepark College.

"Pretty much half our team grew up playing in that area, plus there is a predominant population of non-subcontinental guys playing on the East Coast as well, so it's diversifying," Dhadwal said. Harris, incidentally, is in town for the tournament.

Part-timers

Like most other hockey players across the world, the USA team is made up of part-timers who earn a living doing other things.

Dhadwal himself is an assistant coach with the women's team at Rutgers University in New Jersey, although he was born and raised in Los Angeles and picked up the stick at five fol-

lowing in his father's footsteps, who played for Delhi and Indian Railways before moving abroad.

USA on Friday would take on South Africa for a spot in the final after the African champion beat Russia 2-1 in the quarterfinals on Wednesday to keep its Olympic dreams alive.

The other quarterfinal saw Japan thrash Poland 6-2, three of its goals coming in the third quarter, to set up a clash with host India in the last four.

The last time the teams met — at the Azlan Shah Cup — India had won 2-0.

The results: 7-8 place: Mexico 4 (Yamil Mendez, Roberto Garcia, Maximiliano Mendez, Alexander Palma) bt Uzbekistan 3 (Gaybullo Khaytboev, Ruslan Satlikov, Okhunjon Mirzakari-mov); QF: Japan 6 (Koji Yamasaki 2, Kenta Tanaka, Kenji Kitazato, Shota Yamada, Hirota Zenda) bt Poland 2 (Mikolaj Gumny, Mateusz Hulboj); South Africa 2 (Ruan Julius, Nqobile Ntuli) vs Russia 1 (Georgii Arusiia).

USA slams 13 past Thailand

Sweden starts off with a win

WOMEN'S WC

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
REIMS

The United States began its trophy defence in scintillating style with a 13-0 Women's World Cup thrashing of Thailand in a ruthless demonstration of strength to potential quarterfinal opponent and host France.

Three-time champion USA scored 10 goals in the second half on Tuesday as it eclipsed Germany's 11-0 win over Argentina in 2007 and shattered its own previous tournament best of 7-0.

Alex Morgan starred with five goals, Rose Lavelle and Samantha Mewis netted twice each and Lindsey Horan, Megan Rapinoe, Mallo-ry Pugh and Carli Lloyd also

got on the scoresheet in an embarrassingly one-sided Group F encounter watched by more than 18,000.

The Americans hit back after at suggestions they could have eased up and saved 34th-ranked Thailand from complete humiliation.

"This is a world championship so every team that is here has been fantastic to get to this point. To be respectful to opponents is to play hard against opponents," said USA coach Jill Ellis.

Morgan now has 106 goals for her country.

The results: Group F: Chile 0 lost to Sweden 2 (Asllani 83, Janogy 90+4); USA 13 (Morgan 12, 53, 74, 81, 87, Lavelle 20, 56, Horan 32, Mewis 52, 54, Rapinoe 79, Pugh 85, Lloyd 90+2) bt Thailand 0.



Running riot: Megan Rapinoe, right, and Alex Morgan were unstoppable in the USA's massive win. *AP

Verratti comes to Italy's rescue

Goal glut in Germany and France wins

EURO QUALIFYING

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Italy needed a late winner from Marco Verratti to defeat a determined Bosnia-Herzegovina 2-1 in Euro 2020 qualifying on Tuesday, while Germany and France piled up the goals in lopsided victories.

Edin Dzeko fired Bosnia in front in Turin, but Lorenzo Insigne equalised shortly after half-time and Verratti curled home on 86 minutes to earn a fourth win in as many attempts for Roberto Mancini's side in Group J.

"I expected the difficulties, but we showed the strength and the conviction to overturn it," said Mancini. "The important thing is that we are first in the group."

Rebound

World champions France rebounded from last weekend's defeat in Turkey with a trouble-free 4-0 win away to minnows Andorra.

He retained just four of those who began Saturday's 2-0 loss in Konya, handing first international starts to Kurt Zouma, Clement Lenglet and Leo Dubois.

Kylian Mbappe opened the scoring with a chipped finish on 11 minutes, with Wissam Ben Yedder and Florian Thauvin adding to their lead. Zouma bundled home a fourth on the hour as France reclaimed top spot in Group H after Iceland beat Turkey 2-1 in Reykjavik.

Iceland draws level

Two headers in the first half by centre-back Ragnar Si-



Winning strike: Marco Verratti, right, celebrates with Giorgio Chiellini after scoring the clincher. *AFP

gurdsson saw Iceland draw level on nine points with France as well as Turkey, for whom Dorukhan Tokoz scored a consolation.

Germany made light work of Estonia as Serge Gnabry and Marco Reus fired it to a thundering 8-0 victory in Mainz.

Gnabry and Reus scored two goals each, with Leon Goretzka, Ilkay Gundogan, Timo Werner and Leroy Sane also on target, as Germany ran riot to seal a third win from three games in Group C.

Perfect start

Belgium extended its perfect start to Group I with a 3-0 defeat of Scotland in Brussels.

Romelu Lukaku headed in an Eden Hazard cross on the stroke of half-time and bagged a second early in the second half, with Kevin De Bruyne thumping home

another at the death. **The results: Group C:** Germany 8 (Reus 10, 37, Gnabry 17, 62, Goretzka 20, Gundogan 26-pen, Werner 79, Sane 88) bt Estonia 0; Belarus 0 lost to Northern Ireland 1 (McNair 86). **Group E:** Azerbaijan 1 (Shey-daev 29) lost to Slovakia 5 (Lotboka 8, Kucka 27, Hamsik 30, 57, Hanco 85); Hungary 1 (Patkai 80) bt Wales 0. **Group H:** Iceland 2 (Sigurdsson 21, 32) bt Turkey 1 (Tokoz 40); Andorra 0 lost to France 4 (Mbappe 11, Ben Yedder 30, Thauvin 45+1, Zouma 60); Albania 2 (Cikalleshi 66, Ramadan 90+3) bt Moldova 0. **Group I:** Kazakhstan 4 (Kuat 45+1, Fedin 62, Suyumbaev 65, Islamkhan 79) bt San Marino 0; Russia 1 (Ionov 38) bt Cyprus 0; Belgium 3 (Lukaku 45+1, 57, De Bruyne 90+2) bt Scotland 0. **Group J:** Liechtenstein 0 lost to Finland 2 (Pukki 37, Kallman 57); Italy 2 (Insigne 49, Verratti 86) bt Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 (Dzeko 32); Greece 2 (Zeca 54, Fortounis 87) lost to Armenia 3 (Karapetyan 8, Ghazaryan 33, Barseghyan 74).

Heat wave forces rescheduling

Matches to start at 8 a.m.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR

The breaks extended beyond stipulated time and the players were barely able to stand or walk off the turf but at the end of their draining encounter, Mexico came out 4-2 winner over Uzbekistan in the classification match for the last two places at the Hockey Series Finals at the Kalinga Stadium here on Wednesday.

The conditions, however, forced the International Hockey Federation to implement its warm weather policy in the second half of the game played early in the morning and also reschedule the morning games for Friday, advancing the timing by 45 minutes.

With severe heat wave conditions continuing across the entire state of Odisha and the meteorological department warning of the situation continuing for the next couple of days, the FIH announced that Friday's first game — match for 5th place — will begin at 8 a.m. instead of the scheduled 8.45 a.m. Al-



Tough conditions: Mexico team members resort to ice packs and cold water to beat the heat. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ready, the organisers had avoided any match in the 3rd and 4th quarters. In the past, the warm weather policy was applied at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio as well.

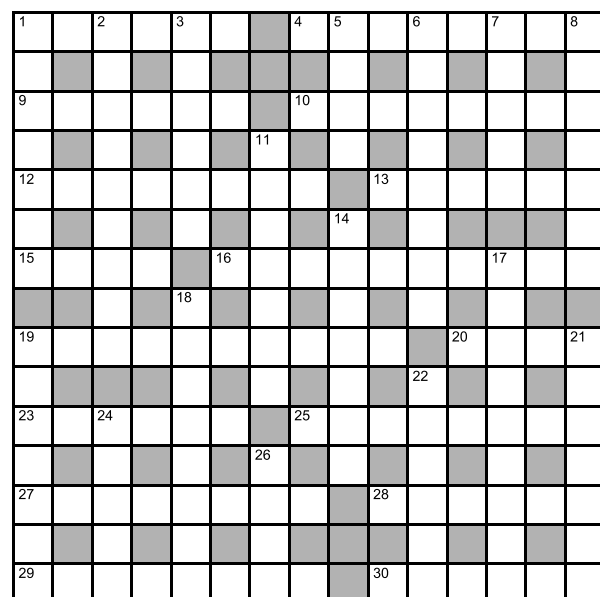
"In order to adjust to the current high temperatures affecting Bhubaneswar and considering that the welfare of athletes, fans, volunteers, officials and everyone involved is paramount, the FIH... implemented its warm weather policy (on Wednesday)," it said.

Accordingly, the quarter-break is extended to four minutes instead of two and an additional 1-minute break is

given after seven-and-half minutes of play in the 3rd and 4th quarters. In the past, the warm weather policy was applied at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio as well.

"It was very hot and not the best of playing conditions. The organisers did their best to ensure player safety, but when you take unscheduled breaks, it affects the rhythm and tempo of the match. But weather is beyond control for anybody," Mexican coach Pol Moreno admitted.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12651



ACROSS

- Meagre artist draws out a prickly fish (6)
- On Fools' Day, beds trees (8)
- Nonsense acting with a loud laugh (6)
- Turn Asia around to welcome European (8)
- Run out of fluorine? Iodine could be substituting (2,4,2)

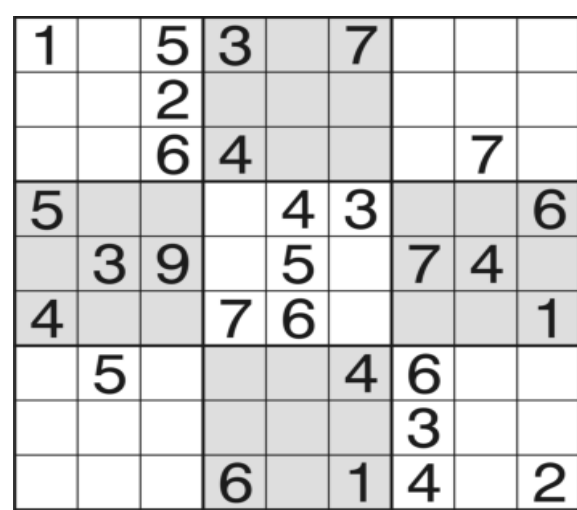
- Jam emptied out pending close of breakfast (6)
- Leather from yak's used for tailor-made tops (4)
- Bad co-stars spoiling TV shows (10)
- Sharing surname with cold and disgusting Mongolian (10)
- Posh car hired for money (4)
- Cryptic message on hot image being circulated (6)
- Royal buses assemble here? (8)
- It is possible that aid is distributed over different years (1,4,3)
- Trims the edge off dry fruits (6)
- Try 50-50? (2,6)
- Wail loudly to snatch her fruit (6)

DOWN

- Show house's substandard, not fine (7)
- Well-dressed lecturer delivered fulfilling drills (2,4,3)
- Sour food for the losers? (6)

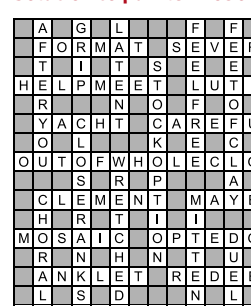
(set by Scintillator)

SUDOKU

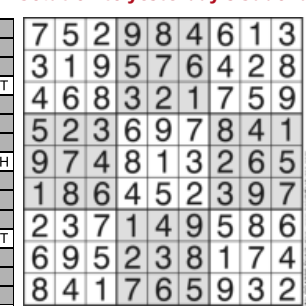


DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12650



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



FAITH

Supremacy of bhakti

The Bhagavata Purana highlights bhakti marga as an easy means for spiritual progress and God realisation. The Lord Himself explains the supremacy of Bhakti and surrender in the episode of Ambarisha and Durvasa, pointed out Sri B. Damodhara Dikshitar in a discourse. The Lord speaks at length on the exclusive bond that is established between Him and His devotees. He is always subservient to His devotees who seek Him for His sake alone and do not desire anything else from life. Such devotees cannot be let down at any cost, He says. The pious are His heart and He resides forever in their hearts.

Ambarisha typifies the true devotee, steeped in his experience of faith and devotion to the Lord. This confers on him peace and tranquillity. He does not entertain hatred or attachment towards people, places and objects of the world. He lives, acts and thinks in a righteous manner with his whole being totally dedicated to the Lord. Ambarisha's act of taking a sip of sacred water as a token for completing the Ekadasi vrata he had undertaken is seen as a lapse in hospitality on the king's part and Durvasa gives vent to his anger. He creates an ogre to kill Ambarisha. The Sudarshana chakra, a gift from the Lord, acting as His deputy takes charge of the situation, kills the ogre and chastises the sage by giving him a terrible chase. Though it is the Lord's Chakra, He cannot recall it at the moment since He has not aimed it on Durvasa. Only Ambarisha can control it. So Durvasa gets back to Ambarisha and expresses regret for his anger.

Another aspect of the Lord's nature is also revealed in this episode. Though the Lord has no enemies, is always free from partiality and bears no grudge against any being. He cannot bear to see any devotee of His being wronged.