

And now, Wimbledon also succumbs to the pandemic

The Championships cancelled for the first time since World War II

REUTERS
LONDON

The Wimbledon tennis championships were cancelled for the first time since World War II as the coronavirus pandemic wiped another blue-riband sports event off the calendar on Wednesday.

While the decision had looked inevitable for some time, since the virtual shut-down of world sport and the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics, Wimbledon had been one of the few events not to have been officially cancelled or postponed.

Emergency talks

But after emergency talks between the various stakeholders over the last few days, the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) announced that it was impossible for the grasscourt Grand Slam, scheduled for June 29-

“So sad to hear @Wimbledon won't take place this year. Last year's final will forever be one of the happiest days of my life!”

SIMONA HALEP
Defending women's champion

July 12, to take place. “It is with great regret that the main board of the All England Club and the committee of management of the championships have today decided that The Championships 2020 will be cancelled due to public health concerns linked to the coronavirus epidemic,” the AELTC said in a statement.

“The 134th Championships will instead be staged from June 28 to July 11, 2021.”

Federer, Serena aghast “Devastated,” tweeted eight-time champion Roger Feder-

er, while Serena Williams, who has won the tournament seven times, said she was ‘shocked’ by the momentous decision. The French Open, due to be held from May 24 to June 7, has been postponed and controversially rescheduled by the French tennis federation for September 20 to October 4, shortly after the end of the U.S. Open.

Former Wimbledon champion Amelie Mauresmo doubts whether either tournament will be played though. “I think we’re going to have to draw a line under

the 2020 tennis season,” Mauresmo said on Twitter this week.

Limited options

Unlike the French Open which is played on clay, Wimbledon’s scope for rearranging the start date was extremely limited.

While Centre Court and Court One boast a roof, playing elite level tennis outside on grass would have been extremely challenging in late summer or autumn with a lack of light and problems caused by dew forming on the surface late in the day.

Shortening the format of the tournament, or playing behind closed doors, would also have proved extremely unpopular with the players.

Wimbledon has been held every year since 1946 after a six-year hiatus because the country was at war.



Locked out: Yet another blue riband sports event became a victim of the coronavirus pandemic, with Wimbledon – the premier grass court event in the world – deciding to host it next year. • GETTY IMAGES

Nine years on, Dhoni at the crossroads

Time running out for the World Cup-winning skipper

CRICKET

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

The stands were a blaze of light. In the middle, though, M.S. Dhoni shone the brightest.

His bat speed and dextrous wrists had combined wonderfully as he sent a full ball from Nuwan Kulasekara for the maximum over long on in the maximum city. You can freeze the frame.

The stunning shot brought an entire nation to life. India had, on April 2, won the 2011 World Cup at Mumbai’s iconic Wankhede Stadium.

Bold move

Dhoni was captain courageous in a big game – the summit clash – promoting himself ahead of the in-form Yuvraj Singh when the contest was delicately balanced at 114 for three; India was chasing a challenging 275 against the gallant Sri Lankans.

And along with a resilient Gautam Gambhir (97), he first ran like a panther between the wickets and then cut loose in what was a brutal onslaught.

Dhoni’s 79-ball unbeaten 91 had guided India to a raucous six-wicket triumph. And the spectators swung to the rhythmic beating of the drums as if there was no tomorrow.

Outside, there were traffic jams. The skipper was the toast, made all the right moves.

That was then; Dhoni at the height of his powers. Now, the scenario is different. Time waits for no one and Dhoni is pushing 39. Deep down Dhoni realises that his best days are be-



For posterity: M.S. Dhoni’s six to bring World Cup glory is one of the enduring images of Indian sport. • FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

hind. But then, he still has the eye of the tiger.

Had not Martin Guptill scored a sensational direct hit in the 2019 WC semifinal, he and India might have had a different story to tell.

Dhoni, on 50, was lining himself for the big hits. India was in doldrums at 92 for six, when he rallied with an inspired Ravindra Jadeja to keep the Men in Blue in the hunt. Under the circumstances, the criticism that Dhoni came under was harsh and without reason.

In the IPL, he has whipped up spectacular mo-

ments in the last two seasons, making the impossible possible. And he still possesses the fastest hands behind the stumps.

Yet, the odds are loaded against a Dhoni comeback for the World Twenty20 with the Coronavirus pandemic putting a huge question mark over the IPL and a stage for the CSK skipper to conjure blitzkriegs and put himself in India contention.

The luminous star of 2011 now finds his career at the crossroads. Will there be one final Dhoni hurrah for India?

FOOTBALL

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

David Robertson has faced his fair share of challenges in his three years as head coach of Real Kashmir Football Club, but the latest predicament may be the toughest one yet.

Having endured through the security lockdown and communications blackout imposed in Jammu and Kashmir last year, Robertson is now stranded in a Srinagar hotel on account of the ongoing lockdown to tackle the coronavirus pandemic threat.

With commercial international flights suspended, Robertson, son Mason (who

plays for Real Kashmir FC) and wife Kim are waiting on the United Kingdom government to employ evacuation measures to take them back home to Scotland.

Give support

The Robertson family is particularly worried about David’s mother, who was recently diagnosed with cancer. “My mother, who lives in Aberdeen, just finished her second chemotherapy session. If anything were to happen, it would be just horrible. I want to be close to her – to support her at this tough time. My dad is caring for her, but he is not in the best of health either. My siblings drop off groceries outside their home. It’s a



David Robertson. • FILE PHOTO: NISSAR AHMAD

tough situation, all over the world,” Robertson told *The Hindu* from a Srinagar hotel run by Real Kashmir co-owner Sandeep Chattoo.

“We’ve contacted the British High Commission in New Delhi to help us return

home. It could be a few days, few weeks – it is a case of sitting and waiting. We also have (English winger) Kallum Higginbotham, four players from Africa and a few U.K. coaching staff with us here in Srinagar. All foreigners are facing a similar situation,” Robertson, a former Rangers FC and Leeds United player, said.

Tougher to handle

Robertson stated that the latest restrictions have been tougher to handle than the security lockdown and communications blackout.

“It is never easy in Jammu and Kashmir. That’s why I keep coming back – there are so many challenges to tackle. Last season was

tough (due to the security lockdown and communications blackout), as we did not have internet and could not call home. But at least the team was together, and we could play football,” Robertson said.

Grateful to owner

The 51-year-old is grateful to Chattoo for his support. “Chattoo is staying here with us in the hotel. He is away from his family as well. There are around 20 hotel staff with us here; no one is allowed in and out. We’re all helping each other. There is a lot of responsibility placed on Chattoo. He’s doing everything possible to keep all of us comfortable,” Robertson said.

COVID-19 IMPACT

HI, AIFF to contribute ₹25 lakh each

NEW DELHI Hockey India and the All India Football Federation on Wednesday pledged to donate ₹25 lakh each towards the PM-CARES Fund. “The love, care and support from countrymen has provided us motivation throughout. Hence, now is the time to pay back our country in whatever manner we can,” said AIFF president Praful Patel. “In these difficult times, it is the absolute need of the hour to come together as a nation to help fight the crisis and fulfil our duties as responsible citizens. It was a unanimous decision taken by the Hockey India Executive Board,” HI president Mohd. Mushtaq Ahmad said. PTI

Sourav Ganguly visits Belur Math, donates 2000kg rice

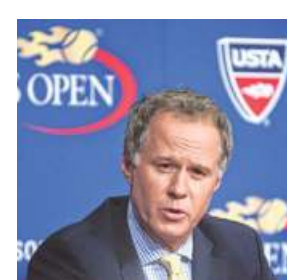
KOLKATA BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday visited Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission, in Howrah to extend his helping hand to the needy

people during the COVID-19 outbreak. “Visited belur math after 25 years... handed over 2000kgs rice for the needy,” tweeted the 47-year-old. Earlier, Ganguly, along with a rice company, had provided rice worth ₹50 lakh for the poor people.



Former US Davis Cup captain Pat McEnroe tests positive

NEW YORK Davis Cup-winning former US captain Patrick McEnroe said on Tuesday he has tested positive for coronavirus but is feeling well and no longer has symptoms. The younger brother of seven-time Grand Slam singles champion John said he and his family had been self-



quarantined for more than two weeks, and advised others to do the same as a safety measure. AFP

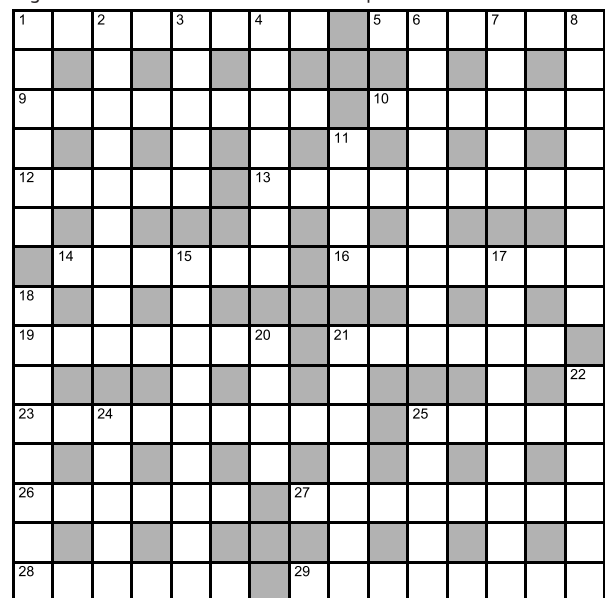
Buttler to auction World Cup final shirt for hospital appeal

LONDON England’s Jos Buttler is auctioning the shirt he wore in last year’s dramatic World Cup final win in support of hospitals treating the coronavirus. All proceeds will go to the

Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals’ charity. “To help with their fundraising effort I’m going to be donating this shirt, which is the shirt I wore in the World Cup final last year, signed by all the players who were members of the squad,” said the 29-year-old ‘keeper. AFP

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12899

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



ACROSS

- Note to oneself to leave out a residue (8)
- Mark around a line – it has no direction (6)
- A cold urn recast to a heating pot (8)
- Joins with Tesla perhaps on energy savings primarily (6)
- Left one article to be flexible (5)

- (set by Lightning)
- Change religious instruction, replacing chapter on time devoted to pleasure (9)
 - Old copper mostly abundant in round window (6)
 - Newton breaks through after some time with new light source (7)
 - Traitor’s primary motive for disloyalty (7)
 - Military unit surrounding Uruguay’s capital (6)
 - Heartless chap cutting plant to deal with rotating device (9)
 - Conduct a meeting with position of authority (5)
 - Periodically make illegal housing area (6)
 - Attack a new vision in a bad way (8)
 - Must rend your masks to be fashionable (6)
 - Certain that society can break agreement (8)
- ### DOWN
- Remember recreation with everyone (6)
 - Necessity protecting old long walrus for one (9)
 - Overt about primarily gentle push (5)
 - Gradually progresses in orbits missing radius (7)
 - Vessel’s inner coat deformed (9)
 - Machine removed end of one club (5)
 - By mistake new tenors are producing echoing sounds (8)
 - Spoken with morale partly (4)
 - Ultimate support for a military situation against overwhelming odds (4,5)
 - Auctioned building for schooling program (9)
 - Deer bitten at the tail by insect becomes motionless (8)
 - PM leaving after midday (4)
 - Rely on saint entering church to purify (7)
 - Cut partially dried fruit by diameter (6)
 - Managed grand European series (5)
 - Charge to go around a seaside land (5)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12898

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | S | E | W | T | B | U | | |
| F | O | R | K | G | L | A | S | U |
| W | I | G | G | U | T | L | | |
| C | L | I | N | I | C | E | I | N |
| C | U | R | A | E | | | | |
| B | I | G | A | P | P | L | E | |
| N | R | | | | | | | |
| S | T | R | E | T | C | H | T | S |
| E | L | O | C | H | L | R | F | |
| D | R | O | P | I | N | A | T | H |
| T | R | E | A | S | U | R | E | |
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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Free from partiality

Parikshit is impressed by the Lord’s leelas in His various incarnations. But at times he begins to wonder if the Lord, who is free from partiality, is also overtly favourable to the devas. He raises this doubt to Suka after listening to the Vritrasura episode, said Sri B. Sundarkumar in a discourse. Vritra is a ferocious asura but is also a devotee of the Lord. Then why did the Lord not protect him against Indra who defeated him? Suka points out that the Lord transcends all gunas and is free from all passions and partialities commonly found in jivatmas. But He assumes the power of Yogamaya by which He is manifest as the two opposing forces. He is reflected in the attributes of Prakriti like the sun reflected in water and fire in fuel. But He is the master of the gunas. By His Sankalpa He can create into existence everything through the instruments of Prakriti and Purusha.

He also gives them His manifestation called Time. When Time favours satva, He allies with the satva dominated devas and destroys their enemies, the asuras. Then Suka recalls the strange incident of Sisupala’s salvation that everyone present at the Rajasuya Yaga conducted by Yudhishtira witnessed with wonder and amazement. Was not this Sisupala a sworn enemy of Krishna? To understand the rationale of this, one has to go back to their previous lives, their actions, behaviour, etc. Jaya and Vijaya who were in the exclusive and exalted service of the Lord at Vaikunta as gatekeepers had to be born on earth as asuras for three births before they could attain the Lord.

Each individual is repeatedly born in many spheres being driven by the force of karma and in this way involvement in samsara continues as a chain reaction. He has to face the consequences of karma in every birth until salvation.