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THE Champakkulam Moolam Boat Race, which is the beginning of the boat race season in the state, has been cancelled in view of the pandemic, signalling that the signature Champions Boat League (CBL) may also have to be abandoned.

Kuttanad Tahsildar T I Vijayaseenan on Wednesday said the Champakkulam boat race slated for July 4 would not be held this time. "The race is organised in memory of the idol installation at the Sree Krishnaswami temple in Ambalappuzha on every Moolam day of



Midhunam. The rituals will be held with less participation. A snakeboat will take part in the procession with one-third of oarsmen," he said. "In a snakeboat, around 100 oarsmen sit in rows in close proximity, which is against the social distancing norm. The race also attracts a huge crowd. So we are abandoning the race this time," he said.

The season witnesses more than 25 races in the backwaters of the state including the most popular Nehru Trophy Boat Race (NTBR). Last year, the state government launched the CBL starting with NTBR, but it now hangs in the balance. The NTBR is held on the second Saturday of August in Punnamada Lake in Alappuzha.

Tourism Department deputy director T G Abhilashkumar said there are very less chances of organising NTBR and CBL. Officials said the process of franchise acquisition of CBL teams has come to a halt due to the Covid crisis. Organising races with more than 100 rowers in each boat is difficult, said J V Jayaprasad, president of Pallathuruthy Boat Club. The club was the winner of the first CBL held last year.

"The club had signed an agreement with the owners of Nadubhagom chundan. However, we cannot go ahead with the agreement with rowers," Jayaprasad said.