

## Sports

## Photo of the Day



RIO DE JANEIRO: Aaron Colton performs at Vidigal's favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## Hamilton launches diversity commission

LONDON: Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton is launching his own diversity body to attract more black youngsters into motor racing, insisting the "time for token gestures is over".

Hamilton, a powerful and influential voice in the current anti-racism movements sweeping the globe, is the only black driver in F1.

He said he was teaming up with Britain's Royal Academy of Engineering to launch The Hamilton Commission to help make motor racing "as diverse as the complex and multicultural world we live in".

"I've been fighting the stigma of racism throughout my racing career — from kids throwing things at me while karting, to being taunted by fans in black face at a 2007 Grand Prix, one of my first Formula One races," 35-year-old Hamilton said in an article in The Sunday Times.

"Despite my success in the sport, the institutional barriers that have kept F1 highly exclusive persist.

"It is not enough to point to me, or to a single new black hire, as a meaningful example of progress. Thousands of people are employed across this industry and that group needs to be more representative of society." The research partnership wants to encourage young black people to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Hamilton hopes that will then open up avenues for them to boost the number of minorities represented in Formula One. "The time for platitudes and token gestures is over," added the six-time world champion.

"I hope that The Hamilton Commission enables real, tangible and measurable change. "When I look back in 20 years, I want to see the sport that gave a shy, working-class black kid from Stevenage so much opportunity, become as diverse as the complex and multicultural world we live in." — AFP

# Alex Zanardi 'condition stable' but fears of brain damage

## 'He arrived with significant crano-facial trauma'

MILAN: Alex Zanardi, the former Formula One driver who became an inspirational Paralympic champion after having both his legs amputated in a motor racing accident almost two decades ago, was fighting for his life yesterday after a handbike crash with doctors telling reporters: "The neurological damage is serious".

Zanardi suffered serious head injuries with fears for his sight after losing control of his bike and colliding with a truck during a race in Italy on Friday.

The 53-year-old Italian was airlifted to hospital in Siena and underwent three hours of delicate neurosurgery before being placed in an artificial coma.

Zanardi remained "intubated and on artificial respiration" and his "neurological picture remains serious," doctors at the Santa Maria alle Scotte hospital said.

Dr Sabino Scolletta, head of the emergency department, said on Saturday afternoon that Zanardi was in a "stable condition".

"The clinical picture is good overall, even if it remains serious neurologically," said Scolletta, also referring to "eye injuries".

"There could be consequences for his sight. For this reason, we asked our ophthalmologists for thorough advice, but the assessment can only be made in the next few days," he explained.

Neurosurgeon Giuseppe Olivieri, who carried out the operation on Friday night, described Zanardi's condition as "very serious". "The conditions are stable, but the neurological damage is serious and uncertain, and instability and deterioration may be possible," Olivieri told journalists.

"He arrived with significant crano-facial trauma. "All the bones of the face are fractured. He also has

fractures on both sides of the frontal bone.

"At the moment, we are not talking about his neurological state. This is something that we will see later, when he wakes up and if he wakes up."

"The patient's situation is serious, that is to say that he can also die. In such cases, the improvements are slow, while the worsening can be brutal."

An investigation has been opened into the organisation of the 'Obiettivo tricolore' relay race in Tuscany.

Mario Valentini, coach of the Italian Paracycling national team, said Zanardi lost control of his bike on a hairpin turn and made "two rolls" before hitting an oncoming truck.

The truck driver later underwent tests for alcohol and drugs which were negative, his lawyer said.

### 'DON'T GIVE UP'

An icon in Italy, Zanardi's photo made the front pages of the country's three

sports newspapers on Saturday, despite the return of Serie A football later in the day after a three-month shutdown.

"Alex's Drama," headlined the Gazzetta dello Sport whose front page was dedicated to the four-time Paralympic champion.

"No Alex, no!" wrote Corriere dello Sport, while Tuttosport headlined: "Alex, Italy!" Messages of support poured in for the former Grand Prix driver who twice won the CART championship in the United States, before having both his legs amputated following an accident on the Lausitzring track in Germany in 2001.

He went on to win four gold medals on his handbike in the 2012 and 2016 Paralympic Games, and two silver medals, and multiple world championship titles.

a stolen lineout and swept more than 70 metres downfield with backs and forwards involved.

Thanks to a succession of penalties, the Hurricanes stayed in touch for much of the game and were level at 25-25 with 10 minutes to play, before the Crusaders found another gear and sealed the match with two late tries.

"Our discipline was pretty poor in the first half," Crusaders captain Codie Taylor said. "We gave away countless penalties and a yellow card and that's something we have to look at. Against New Zealand teams you can't afford to do that."

Hurricanes skipper TJ Perenara said the Crusaders' precision could not be faulted. "They pounced on opportunities in the first half ... and scored off all of them which is a sign of a quality team," he said.

"In the second half we got ourselves in the hunt, it was 25-25 at one point, but we gave away a couple of penalties and ended up at the other end." At half-time, the Crusaders led 19-15 from three tries, two of them converted, to four penalties and a drop goal by Jackson Garden-Bachop for the Hurricanes.

After Garden-Bachop landed another penalty soon after half-time when Jack Goodhue was sent to the sin bin, the Crusaders tightened their discipline and restricted the Hurricanes to a sole try while scoring two more of their own.

For the Crusaders, Reece, Braydon Ennor, Goodhue, Richie Mo'unga and David Havili all scored tries. Mo'unga landed four conversions and two penalties.

The Hurricanes points came from a try to Asafo Aumua while Garden-Bachop kicked five penalties, a drop goal and a conversion. — AFP

## Clinical Crusaders cane Wellington in five-try Super Rugby romp

WELLINGTON: Super Rugby champions Canterbury Crusaders returned to action with their trademark efficiency yesterday when they put away the Wellington Hurricanes 39-25 in New Zealand's domestic version of the competition.

It was five tries to one for the visiting Crusaders, whose performance was blighted only by a high penalty count. The Crusaders are the dominant side in the southern hemisphere club championship, winning it for the past three seasons, and were again looking the side to beat before Super Rugby was halted by the coronavirus pandemic in mid-March.

They had a bye when the five New Zealand sides launched their own tournament called "Super Rugby Aotearoa" last week, in front of unrestricted crowds. But despite being sidelined for more than three months they were immediately into their stride and scored inside two minutes against a Hurricanes side desperate to bounce back from their loss last week to the Auckland Blues.

All Blacks wing Sevu Reece dived over in the corner after a brilliant handling move that started from



ROME: File photograph taken on April 2, 2017, former racing driver and paracyclist, Italian Alex Zanardi takes part in the 23rd Marathon of Rome. Ex-Italian Formula One driver Alex Zanardi, who won four Paralympic gold medals after having both legs amputated in a motor racing accident, was seriously injured, in a crash while competing in a handbike race in Italy. — AFP

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte wrote on Twitter: "Courage Alex, don't give up. All of Italy is fighting with you."

"I am so anxious and frightened about Alex Zanardi that I'm holding my breath. I am his fan. I am his friend," tweeted former world Formula One champion Mario Andretti.

"Please do what I'm doing and pray pray for this wonderful man." Former Formula One world champion Fernando Alonso posted an image of Alex on his handbike: "Come on champion," with Brazilian driver Felipe Massa saying: "I pray for you".

"Fight as you know how to do it, Alex. You are a very great man, courage," tweeted in Italian Charles Leclerc who drives for Ferrari.

Zanardi raced for Jordan, Minardi and Lotus in Formula 1 in the early 1990s before switching to the CART championship in the United States where he was series champion in 1997 and 1998.

He returned to F1 with Williams in 1999 before heading back to the CART series. "Alex is one of life's truly inspirational people and as we all know, a fighter through and through. Stay strong and Forza Alex," his former Williams team wrote on Twitter. — AFP

## Nick Hockley looks to reset Australia cricket

SYDNEY: Interim Cricket Australia chief Nick Hockley says he intends to repair broken relationships and ensure everyone is "pointing in the right direction" again after accepting the top job at the troubled organisation.

The Englishman assumed the hot seat last week after Kevin Roberts resigned barely halfway through his tenure over simmering anger at his handling of the coronavirus crisis.

Roberts laid off most of Cricket Australia's staff and tried to slash budgets to state bodies and players, arguing revenues would be hit hard by the virus.

But there was widespread pushback after it became clear that most of Australia's home season, including a lucrative Test series against India, was likely to go ahead.

Hockley has his hands full working to appease players and staff. "I feel like I want to sit down with every single person," he said.

"I'm just really keen to find out how everyone's feeling, in the first instance, and I'm starting to understand that," he added in a Q&A on the Cricket Australia website.

"Everyone wants a solution and every bit of clarity we can get really helps. The challenge is that time is of the essence to sort all that out. And we owe it to

the game to sort it out."

A day after Roberts quit, Cricket Australia axed 40 jobs, or some 15 percent of staff, aimed at saving Aus\$40 million (US\$27.6 million).

The governing body said it was concerned about further financial shocks this year, with smaller crowds expected and extra spending on safety measures to keep COVID-19 at bay.

All planned Sheffield Shield and Twenty20 Big Bash League matches will continue but Australia A tours and Cricket Australia XI games have been put on hold. There is also uncertainty over whether Australia can host the T20 World Cup this year in the midst of the global pandemic.

Hockley, who was the T20 World Cup chief, said it was important to "get everyone pointing in the same direction".

"And I'm pretty clear on the priorities, which are getting the teams back to work, reaching out to all our stakeholders and coming together, and focusing on delivering this summer."

An international search is underway for a permanent appointment, with a range of candidates touted in the local press from former England captain Andrew Strauss to ex-Australian football chief David Gallop. Hockley, who worked on the 2015 Cricket World Cup organising committee and before that with the 2012 London Olympics team, was circumspect when asked if he wanted the job full-time.

"My approach throughout my entire career has been to focus on doing the best job I can with what I've been tasked with, and the future will look after itself. And I'll continue the same approach," he said. — AFP