

25 Eller's overtime goal nets Caps' wild win over Sharks



26 Lyon roars as Australia crush New Zealand to sweep series



27 Nadal flawless as Djokovic made to sweat



Ronaldo hat-trick lifts Juventus

Ibrahimovic fails to fire Milan



TURIN: Juventus' Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo outruns defenders during the Italian Serie A football match Juventus vs Cagliari yesterday at the Juventus Allianz stadium in Turin. — AFP

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo scored his first Serie A hat-trick to lift Juventus top of the table with a 4-0 win over Cagliari yesterday as Zlatan Ibrahimovic was not enough for AC Milan as he made his debut in a goalless draw against Sampdoria.

Portugal forward Ronaldo struck for the fifth consecutive league game to move the champions back above Inter Milan in their first match since the Italian SuperCup defeat to Lazio in Saudi Arabia last month. "I'm happy with this first hat-trick. But the important thing is the team, which played very well," said Ronaldo.

"We had to win to go ahead and put Inter under pressure." Maurizio Sarri's side had been pegged back in the first half by the sixth-placed Sardinians

who have been pushing for a spot in the Champions League places this season but fell to their third consecutive defeat.

The second-half was all one-way traffic with 34-year-old Ronaldo breaking the deadlock just after the interval. He added a second from the penalty spot on 67 minutes then set up Gonzalo Higuain who came off the bench to strike a third on 81 minutes, before Ronaldo completed his hat-trick a minute later. Juve are three points ahead of Inter in the table with Antonio Conte's side travelling to Napoli later on Monday, looking to keep pace with the eight-time reigning champions.

Ronaldo's heroics overshadowed Swedish star Ibrahimovic's debut for Milan as he came off the

bench after 55 minutes against Sampdoria. The 38-year-old came on for Poland striker Krzysztof Piatek to deafening applause from the 58,000 crowd in his first appearance after rejoining the club last week.

But there was little else to cheer for the hosts who extended their winless run to three games and remain 12th in the table. "The disastrous defeat in Bergamo has remained within us," said Milan coach Stefano Pioli after the 5-0 loss to Atalanta last time out.

"It is a shame not to have won. Ibra's impact was absolutely positive. He immediately gave support, but the team is not yet used to his presence, we could look to him more. His physical prowess gives us some more solutions, but we lacked quality from

everyone."

Atalanta continued their fine form, closing to within a point of fourth-placed Roma, who lost 2-0 to Torino on Sunday, with another 5-0 rout, this time of seventh-placed Parma. The side from Bergamo were already three goals up before the break thanks to Alejandro Gomez, Remo Freuler and Robin Gosens, with Josip Ilicic adding a double in a nine minute second-half spell. New Fiorentina coach Giuseppe Iachini had to settle for a 1-1 draw against Bologna in his first game after taking over from Vincenzo Montella. The Tuscany side had lead for most of the game after Marco Benassi volleyed in on 27 minutes but Riccardo Orsolini grabbed a point for Bologna deep into injury time. — AFP

De Villiers wins Dakar second stage

NEOM: South African driver Giniel De Villiers won the second stage of the Dakar Rally yesterday while former Formula One world champion Fernando Alonso was "glad to be able to continue" after dropping two-and-a-half hours when losing a wheel.

Alonso suffered his first major problem in his maiden Dakar appearance when he ground to a halt when his near front wheel "completely ripped off". "He said sorry to us, I think he knew it was his fault," Toyota Overdrive boss Jean-Marc Fortin said.

"He had the necessary (equipment) to repair it but he first had to find the wheel because it had careered off into the dis-

ance," Fortin reported. "When they found it, it wasn't round but oval."

The 38-year-old Spaniard had downplayed his prospects of creating history by becoming the first F1 world champion to win the Dakar in the run up to Sunday's start of the 42nd edition. And realistically his chances now of reaching the podium look remote after just two days of the gruelling 7,500 kilometre desert odyssey.

When he finally made it across the finish line Alonso cut a relaxed figure, despite the wheel drama which he put down to being blinded by dust thrown up by cars ahead of him. "When you come on the Dakar you come for all the hazards it entails, today was one of them. I'm glad to be here and to be able to continue the rally," said the 2005 and 2006 F1 champion.

His Toyota teammate De Villiers, who lost 23 minutes when he finished 14th in Sunday's opening stage, bounced back strongly over the 401 kilometre-route, of which 367km were a special between Al-Wajh and Neom.

Many drivers had navigational problems and De Villiers took advantage of a mistake by long time stage leader Yazeed Al-Rajhi to guide his Toyota home in 3hrs 37mins 20secs. The 47-year-old crossed the line 3mins 57secs ahead of Orlando Terranova who now heads the overall standings in his Mini. The Argentinian, who was sixth in the opening stage, is almost five minutes ahead of fellow Mini driver Carlos Sainz.

Defending champion Nasser Al-Attiyah came in fifth on stage two and is six minutes off the lead while 13-time champion Stephane Peterhansel already trails by 13 minutes after a problem with his car's steering column.

On the motorcycles, Ross Branch won his first stage on the Dakar after a perfectly controlled day's riding. The Botswanan finished 1min 24secs ahead of 2017 winner Sam Sunderland who now leads the bikes category, 1min 18secs ahead of Pablo Quintanilla. Today, the rally heads out on a 489 km round trip which starts and ends in Neom. — AFP



NEOM: A helicopter flies as Toyota's driver Fernando Alonso of Spain and co-driver Marc Coma of Spain compete during the Stage 2 of the Dakar 2020 between Al Wajh and Neom, Saudi Arabia, yesterday. — AFP