Kimi Antonelli becomes Formula One's youngest-ever world champion – title at 20 with Mercedes

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News

By finishing third at the Mexico City Grand Prix at the Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez on 1 Nov 2026 (early 2 Nov IST), Mercedes' Italian driver Andrea Kimi Antonelli clinched the 2026 F1 Drivers' World Championship with four rounds still to go. Aged 20 years and 68 days, he became F1's youngest-ever world champion, breaking the record of Sebastian Vettel, who won in 2010 aged 23. Max Verstappen (Red Bull) won the race, with Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari) second. He is Italy's first champion since Alberto Ascari in 1953.

Key facts

Date / venue	1 Nov 2026 – Mexico City GP (finished 3rd); 4 rounds left
Driver	Andrea Kimi Antonelli – born 25 Aug 2006, Bologna (Italy)
Team	Mercedes – debuted in 2025 (Australian GP) replacing Lewis Hamilton
Age record	20 years 68 days; previous – Sebastian Vettel (2010, aged 23)
Other records	First champion born in the 21st century; youngest championship leader and youngest pole sitter (China GP)
Italy	Third Italian champion – Farina (1950), Ascari (1952, 1953)

Background

- History: the F1 World Championship began in 1950; the first race was at Silverstone (England) on 13 May 1950. The first world champion was Italy's Giuseppe 'Nino' Farina (Alfa Romeo). The 2025 champion was Lando Norris (McLaren).
- Governance: F1 is governed by the FIA (Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile), founded in 1904 and headquartered in Paris. Motorcycle racing has a separate body, the FIM.
- Sci-tech: new F1 rules from 2026 – the 1.6-litre V6 turbo-hybrid power unit splits power roughly equally between the combustion engine and electric power, running on 100% sustainable fuel. Converting braking kinetic energy into stored electrical energy is called energy recovery.
- India: the Indian Grand Prix was held at the Buddh International Circuit, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, in 2011–2013; Sebastian Vettel won all three. Indians in F1 – Narain Karthikeyan (2005 Jordan; 2011–12 HRT) and Karun Chandhok (2010 HRT; 2011 Lotus).

Tamil Nadu link: India's first F1 driver, Narain Karthikeyan, was born in Coimbatore (14 Jan 1977); he debuted for Jordan at the 2005 Australian GP, and his 4th place at the 2005 US GP earned 5 points – still the only F1 points by an Indian driver; Padma Shri 2010. The Madras Motor Race Track is at Irungattukottai near Chennai, and a 3.5 km street circuit around Chennai's Island Grounds hosted India's first night street race (Formula 4) in 2024.

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