

Messi lashes out at Barca over Suarez exit



Lionel Messi (L) and Luis Suarez during a match (file photo)

Reuters | Barcelona

Lionel Messi has launched his latest attack on Barcelona's hierarchy by criticising the way the club treated strike partner Luis Suarez, who left for La Liga rivals Atletico Madrid this week.

Captain Messi, who threatened to leave Barca last month and recently hit out at club president Josep Maria Bartomeu's leadership, said Uruguayan Suarez was harshly treated.

New coach Ronald Koeman called Suarez several days after getting the job to inform the striker, who had one year left on his contract, that he was no longer wanted.

Bartomeu had left 33-year-old Suarez - the club's third-highest scorer of all time - off a list of players he considered not for sale in the aftermath of the 8-2 defeat to Bayern Munich in the Champions League in August.

"You deserved a farewell befitting who you are: one of the most important players in the history of the club, achieving great things for the team and on an individual level," Messi wrote on his official Instagram account yesterday.

"You did not deserve for them to throw you out like they did. But the truth is that at this stage nothing surprises me anymore."

Suarez had paid tribute to Messi in his farewell news conference on Thursday, recalling that everyone had told him the Argentinian was difficult to get on with, but declaring they had become best friends as well as prolific strike partners.

"It will be strange to see you in another shirt and even stranger to come up against you on the pitch," Messi said.

"I had already begun to imagine it but today I went into the dressing room and it truly dawned on me.

Shaw shines as Delhi inflict 44-run defeat on Chennai

Sent into bat, Delhi Capitals made 175 for three and then restricted Chennai Super Kings to 131 for seven to keep their winning run intact

● Delhi registered their second consecutive win in the Indian Premier League

ANI | Dubai

All-round team performance by Delhi Capitals guided them to 44 runs victory over Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) here at the Dubai International Stadium yesterday.

Chasing a moderate target of 176, CSK openers Shane Watson and Murali Vijay played cautiously and had a 23-run partnership. All-rounder Axar Patel provided the first breakthrough as he bagged Watson (14) in the fifth over.

Faf du Plessis joined Vijay in the middle but the latter failed to convert the start and was dismissed by pacer Anrich Nortje in the last over of the powerplay.

Vijay scored 10 runs off 15 balls. Rituraj Gaikwad (5) came in to bat at number four but failed to impress with the bat. He was sent back to the pavilion



Delhi Capitals' Prithvi Shaw plays a shot

after getting run out in the 10th over.

Kedhar Jadhav and Faf built the innings and stitched a 54-run partnership for the fifth wicket.

Jadhav scored 26 runs off 21 balls before he was caught in front of the wickets by Nortje in the 16th over.

CSK skipper Dhoni joined Faf in the middle and had a brief 15-run partnership.

CSK required 65 runs in the last three overs to win the game.

In the 18th over Shimron Hetmyer dropped Faf on 41 but

on the next ball, he was caught behind the stumps by Rishabh Pant.

Kagiso Rabada scalped the crucial wicket for Delhi Capitals. Faf scored 43 runs off 35 balls.

Ravindra Jadeja and Dhoni then had a 17-run stand and the duo failed to put their side over the line. Rabada got rid of Dhoni in the last over. Dhoni scored 15 runs.

Jadeja scored 12 before he was picked by Nortje on the last ball of the match. Sam Curran remained unbeaten on 1 run.



Both teams wore arm-bands to honour cricketer-commentator Dean Jones who died of a cardiac arrest Thursday at a Mumbai hotel

For Capitals, Rabada bagged three wickets while Nortje scalped two wickets.

Earlier, Prithvi Shaw and Rishabh Pant played knocks of 64 and 37* respectively as Delhi Capitals posted a total of 175/3.

Put in to bat first, Delhi Capitals got off to a good start as openers Prithvi Shaw and Shikhar Dhawan put on 94 runs for the first wicket. The partnership between both batsmen saw Shaw bringing up his half-century as well.

CSK finally got the breakthrough in the 11th over as Dhawan (35) was adjudged leg-before wicket while trying to play a reverse sweep off the bowling of Piyush Chawla.

Bottas on top, Hamilton second in Sochi practice runs

AFP | Sochi

Valtteri Bottas continued his habit of being fastest yesterday when he topped the times for Mercedes in both opening practice sessions at the Russian Grand Prix.

The Finn clocked a best lap in one minute and 33.159 seconds around the Olympic Park circuit to outpace his team-mate and runaway championship leader Lewis Hamilton by two-tenths of a second in the second session.

The two Mercedes men were more than a second clear of third-placed Daniel Ricciardo of Renault despite enduring a difficult day of off-track excursions on the slippery track.

Bottas, who is 55 points adrift of the six-time champion in this year's title race, knows he has to take advantage of his opportunity at one of his favourite circuits to keep his challenge alive - while Hamilton is bidding to equal Michael Schumacher's record of 91 Grand Prix wins.

It was the sixth Friday in a row that had seen Bottas topping the times - and at a track where he claimed his maiden win in 2017 and where Mercedes are unbeaten, having won all six events since the inaugural race in 2014. Hamilton has won four times and former team-mate Nico Rosberg won in 2016 on his way to claiming the title.

In front of a meagre scattering of fans to witness practice, with 30,000 due to attend Sunday's



Valtteri Bottas steers his car during practice

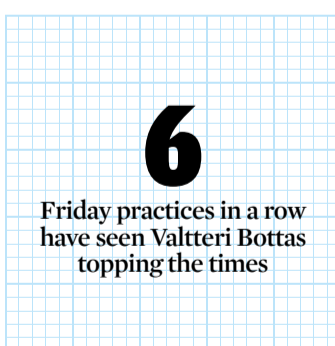
race, Carlos Sainz was fourth ahead of his McLaren team-mate Lando Norris and Sergio Perez of Racing Point.

The Russian race will be the first major sports event to be run in front of a significant crowd in the Covid-19 era.

Max Verstappen was down in seventh for Red Bull ahead of Charles Leclerc in the leading Ferrari, Esteban Ocon of Renault and four-time champion Sebastian Vettel in the second Ferrari.

Bottas had earlier topped the times in opening practice for the sixth time in a row while Hamilton, having damaged his tyres, was only 19th.

The second session was run in warm late summer sunshine



with an air temperature of 28 degrees at the Black Sea resort city as Romain Grosjean led the way in his Haas.

Norris soon went fastest for McLaren before the Finn took over with 1:36.065 on his hard compounds before Hamilton took command - the defend-

ing champion going 1.1 seconds quicker in 1:34.890 on mediums.

As the field switched to soft compound runs, Mercedes continued to set the pace, Hamilton improving to 1:33.786, one-tenth ahead of Bottas, before the Briton locked up heavily under braking at Turn 13.

It was clearly not an easy day for anyone on the smooth and slippery surface, but Bottas avoided a similar fate and trimmed his time to 1:33.519 and go top by two-tenths.

These difficulties continued to challenge the leading drivers with Verstappen spinning twice and Hamilton, again, going off-track at Turn 13 where he was followed by Bottas, who locked up, but recovered.

Ganna claims Italy's first world time trial crown on home soil

TDT | Manama

Filippo Ganna became Italy's first time trial world champion yesterday by pipping Belgium's Wout Van Aert on home soil in Imola.

Van Aert was 26 seconds behind the 24-year-old Team Ineos rider with Switzerland's Stefan Kueng trailing by 29 seconds in third place.

Former Tour de France champion, and Ganna's fellow Ineos rider, Geraint Thomas was fourth with 2019 winner Rohan Dennis in fifth.

This year's worlds have been shortened to four races from Thursday to Sunday and



Filippo Ganna

moved from Switzerland to Imola in Italy because of local Covid-19 restrictions.

On Thursday, the US' defending champion Chloe Dygert crashed out allowing the Netherlands' Anna van der Breggen to claim the women's event.

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