

Sports

Valencia put pressure on La Liga leaders, Atletico bounce back

Eighth straight win to close to within a point of Barca

MADRID: Valencia swept aside Leganes 3-0 yesterday as they continued their stunning form with an eighth straight win to close to within a point of La Liga leaders Barcelona.

Marcelino Garcia Toral's side also moved ahead of Barca as the league's top scorers with 30 goals in their first 11 games as Dani Parejo, Rodrigo and Santi Mina found the net. Barca can reopen a four-point gap at the top of the table when they host Sevilla later at the Camp Nou. "No one will go undefeated through 38 games, but we are going to enjoy the moment," said Marcelino. "In the dressing room there is no euphoria, there is realism and constant analysis."

"We know how difficult it will be to keep this up, it's practically impossible." After travelling to Espanyol following the international break, Valencia host Barca at Mestalla on November 26.

Parejo has been one of many players rejuvenated by Marcelino's arrival at Mestalla after two seasons in the doldrums for Valencia. The captain's clever free-kick that skidded underneath the Leganes wall got Valencia off to a perfect start on 14 minutes.

On loan Paris Saint-Germain winger Goncalo Guedes has been Valencia's star performer in recent weeks and the Portuguese was inches away from his fourth goal of the season when he struck the post early in the second period. The hosts had to wait until 19 minutes from time to seal the points with a blistering counter-attack that ended with Spanish international Rodrigo heading home Manchester United loanee

Andreas Pereira's cross.

And the team-spirit in this Valencia side was demonstrated when habitual penalty-taker Parejo let Mina take responsibility from the spot eight minutes from time to round off the scoring. "It was a phenomenal (gesture). They worked it out themselves and I prefer it like that," added Marcelino. "It goes to show the atmosphere there is within the group, which is the foundation for us to perform like this."

PARTEY BAIL OUT

By contrast, Atletico Madrid's struggle for goals continues but Diego Simeone's men were bailed out by Thomas Partey's 91st-minute winner in a 1-0 victory at Deportivo la Coruna. A 1-1 draw at home to Azerbaijani champions Qarabag all but ended Atletico's Champions

League campaign in mid-week amidst a run of one win in eight games.

And they suffered from a familiar lack of creativity at Riazor with Simeone even substituting star frontman Antoine Griezmann 10 minutes from time. However, a relieved Simeone punched the air in delight when Ghanaian midfielder Partey curled home Gabi's layoff

from a free-kick on the edge of the box to pass Griezmann and join Angel Correa as Atletico's top scorer this season on four goals.

Victory moves Atletico three points clear of cross-city rivals Real Madrid in third. The European champions aren't in action until today when they host Las Palmas. — AFP



VALENCIA: Leganes' Argentinian defender Ezequiel Munoz (L) vies with Valencia's Italian forward Simone Zaza during the Spanish league football match Valencia CF vs Club Deportivo Leganes SAD at the Mestalla stadium in Valencia. — AFP

Peerless Celtic break British unbeaten record

GLASGOW: French striker Moussa Dembele scored one and created another two as Celtic thrashed St Johnstone 4-0 to break their own 100-year British record of unbeaten domestic matches. The Scottish champions extended their domestic unbeaten record to 63 to eclipse the Celtic team of Willie Maley who won 62 league games unbeaten-pre-League Cup whilst the Scottish Cup was not played during World War I-between 1915 and 1917.

Brendan Rodgers's team are joint-third now in UEFA's all-time domestic unbeaten records list, alongside Moldovan side Sheriff Tiraspol. Gibraltar's Lincoln Red

Imps (88) — who ironically began Rodgers tenure last year with an embarrassing defeat in a Champions League first leg match-and Romania's Steaua Bucharest—who won the European Cup in 1986 and reached the final in 1989 — of the late 1980s lead with 104. "To have actually beaten what was a British record-and obviously Celtic were the holders of that already-means it's a truly special day for the players and the club," said Rodgers.

"It means everything. It's an incredible feat by the players and a wonderful example of professionalism," added the 44-year-old Northern Irishman. St Johnstone had been the last side to defeat Celtic on domestic duty back in May 2016, but they never looked like repeating that feat. Scott Sinclair opened the scoring in the 28th minute before Dembele added a second in the 72nd minute.

Steven Anderson turned a Dembele cross into his own net two minutes later before Olivier Ntcham added a late fourth. Celtic were unchanged from their Champions League 2-1 home defeat by Bayern Munich on Tuesday but they showed no signs of a European hangover as they quickly warmed to the task in the autumn sunshine. A sluggish St Johnstone, without a goal since 23 September,

went behind from Celtic's first corner of the match.

Stuart Armstrong fired the low corner to the centre of the penalty area where there was plenty of space for the unmarked Sinclair to fire the ball high into the net beyond the despairing Zander Clark. Celtic began the second half as they ended the first and came close to adding a second shortly after the restart.

An Armstrong corner in the 53rd minute was met by Dedryck Boyata but his looping header was nodded off the line by Aaron Comrie at the back post. Celtic doubled their lead when Dembele struck, the French striker started the move on the half-way line and burst into the box to get on the end of Armstrong's cut-back to finish confidently past Clark. Dembele proved to be a thorn in St Johnstone's side as he set up Celtic's third two minutes later. Australian midfielder Tom Rogic fed the ball to the striker on the left wing and his attempt to pick out Sinclair with a cut-back came off Saints defender Anderson and trundled into his own net.

The French striker wasn't finished as he then teed up substitute Ntcham to rifle a low strike past Clark with just a minute left as Celtic finished in style. — AFP

Burnley flying after win at Southampton, boost for Bournemouth

LONDON: Burnley's remarkable start to the season continued as they moved level on points with Premier League champions Chelsea thanks to a 1-0 victory at Southampton yesterday. Sam Vokes pounced late on for Sean Dyche's side to move them into sixth spot with 19 points-the same as Chelsea, who host Manchester United on Sunday, and Arsenal.

Burnley have already won three league matches on the road this season compared to one in the whole of last season. "I am delighted to be where we are but there are a lot of challenges coming our way and the group know we will have to work hard for every point we get," Dyche, who has been linked with the vacant

Everton manager's job, told the BBC.

"We still have to fight for every chance we get but we are willing to do the graft." Liverpool can move back above Burnley into sixth place with victory at West Ham United in the late kickoff.

Bournemouth grabbed a last-gasp winner at Newcastle United to move out of the bottom three, above Swansea City who slumped to a home defeat by Brighton and Hove Albion.

Steve Cook sealed Bournemouth's 1-0 win with a 90th-minute header while Brighton's 1-0 win in south Wales came courtesy of Glenn Murray's first-half shot. Swansea have lost three in a row in the Premier League and were booed off at the end as they fell to 18th place with eight points from their opening 11 matches.

Huddersfield Town beat struggling West Bromwich Albion 1-0 at home to stay safely in mid-table-Dutchman Rajiv van La Parra deciding it with a curling shot just before halftime. The hosts hung on in the second half after having defender Christopher Schindler sent off in the 57th minute. West Brom are without a win in nine Premier League games and, after an impressive opening to the season, are only two points above the relegation zone. — Reuters



NEWCASTLE: Newcastle United's US defender DeAndre Yedlin (top) vies with Bournemouth's English midfielder Marc Pugh during the English Premier League football match between Newcastle United and Bournemouth at St James' Park. — AFP

Blistering Munro ton helps NZ to level series

RAJKOT: Opener Colin Munro smashed a career-best 109 not out to help secure New Zealand's series-levelling 40-run victory in the second Twenty20 International against India yesterday. Munro smacked seven sixes and as many boundaries in his 58-ball blitz to help New Zealand post a commanding 196-2 in a match they needed to win to stay alive in the three-match contest.

India, who won the preceding one-day series against New Zealand, wobbled early in their chase and eventually managed 156-7 despite skipper Virat Kohli's defiant 65. Thiruvananthapuram hosts the decider on Tuesday.

Munro and Martin Gupthill gave New

Zealand a flying start after skipper Kane Williamson opted to bat at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Rajkot. The openers tore into the Indian attack during their 105-run stand in 11 overs.

Gupthill clobbered three sixes in his breezy 45 before being dismissed by Yuzvendra Chahal. Munro brought up his fifty in 26 balls and was on 79 when Chahal dropped him at deep cover. The opener took 54 balls to complete his second Twenty20 century.

Debutant Mohammed Siraj claimed his maiden international wicket when the paceman dismissed rival captain Kane Williamson for 12. India's reply got off to a contrasting start with the hosts losing both their openers inside the first two overs of their innings.

Kohli and Shreyas Iyer raised 54 runs for the third wicket before Munro struck, dismissing Iyer for 23. Mahendra Singh Dhoni (49) struck three sixes but the mounting run rate prompted Kohli to try to accelerate and he perished in the process.

Paceman Trent Boult claimed 4-34, while spinners Ish Sodhi and Mitchell Santner also bowled tidy overs. — Reuters



RAJKOT: New Zealand's Colin Munro bats during the second Twenty20 cricket match against India in Rajkot. — AP

Live		Matches on TV	
		(Local Timings)	
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE			
Tottenham Hotspur v Crystal Palace	15:00	beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Manchester City v Arsenal	17:15	beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Chelsea v Manchester United	19:30	beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Everton v Watford	19:30	beIN SPORTS HD 1	
SPANISH LEAGUE			
Levante v Girona	14:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Celta de Vigo v Athletic de Bilbao	18:15	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Real Sociedad v Eibar	20:30	beIN SPORTS HD 7	
Villarreal v Malaga	20:30	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Real Madrid v Las Palmas	22:45	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE			
Internazionale Milano v Torino	14:30	beIN SPORTS HD 4	
Fiorentina v Roma	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 7	
Juventus v Benevento	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 1	
Lazio v Udinese Calcio	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 8	
Chievo Verona v Napoli	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 4	
Cagliari Calcio v Hellas Verona	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 8	
Atalanta v Spal	20:00	beIN SPORTS HD 4	
Sassuolo Calcio v Milan	22:45	beIN SPORTS HD 4	
GERMAN LEAGUE			
Koln v Hoffenheim	17:30	beIN SPORTS HD 5	
Wolfsburg v Hertha Berlin	20:00	beIN SPORTS HD 5	
FRENCH LEAGUE			
Nice v Dijon	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Olympique Marseille v Caen	19:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Metz v LOSC Lille	19:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Saint Etienne v Olympique Lyonnais	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6	