

Cristiano Ronaldo's latest night out didn't end well after he was caught urinating in the street. He was spotted leaving Saint Tropez's club Le Quai on Monday, before using the street as the toilet, with his actions drawing the attention of the police. Despite his friends standing guard nearby and hiding behind a car, port security guard agents were quick to spot the star and he looked sheepish as he was given a stern talking to



Serbia's Novak Djokovic (L) extends a consolatory hug to Rafael Nadal after beating the Spaniard in straight sets during the French Open quarterfinal at Roland Garros on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Andy meets Novak in semis

Nadal, Federer bite the dust

AFP, Paris



Andy Murray beat David Ferrer 7-6 (7/4), 6-2, 5-7, 6-1, in the French Open quarterfinals on Wednesday to set up a last-four showdown with Novak Djokovic.

Third seed Murray made it 15 consecutive wins on clay this year by beating the number seven seed Ferrer and make it a disappointing day all round for Spain following nine-time champion Rafael Nadal's defeat to number one seed Djokovic earlier.

Murray becomes the first British player to reach the semifinals at Roland Garros on three separate occasions having previously been knocked out in the last four in 2011 and 2014.

In a remarkable first set on Court Suzanne Lenglen there were six breaks of serve—three apiece—before Murray eventually won it in a tiebreak.

Murray then took the second 6-2, breaking his opponent twice, and looked set to go on and secure victory with the minimum of fuss. The Scot was 3-0 up in the third set before he let the 2013 runner-up back into the match.

First Murray failed to convert a match point at 5-4 up on Ferrer's serve and then he was broken in the next game as the Spaniard forced a fourth set.

However, he could not maintain the fightback and the 28-year-old Murray ran away with the set, taking it 6-1 to seal victory after three hours and 16 minutes on court.

Meanwhile, Djokovic crushed nine-time champion Rafael Nadal 7-5, 6-3, 6-1 in their quarterfinal clash, condemning the great Spaniard to just his second defeat in 72 matches at Roland Garros.

It was world number one and top seed Djokovic's first win over defending champion Nadal in seven meetings in Paris, avenging his

defeats in the 2012 and 2014 finals.

It also eased Djokovic, who fired 45 winners to Nadal's 16, closer to a first French Open title and the completion of a career Grand Slam.

Earlier on Tuesday Stan Wawrinka knocked Roger Federer out of the French Open quarterfinals to set up a last-four clash with home hope Jo-Wilfried Tsonga. Wawrinka, the eighth seed, beat his more illustrious Swiss compatriot Federer in three sets 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

Fourteenth seed Tsonga was taken to five sets by Japanese fifth seed Kei Nishikori before prevailing 6-1, 6-4, 4-6, 3-6, 6-3.

Federer, the second seed and 2009 champion at Roland Garros, had only ever lost twice in 18 previous meetings with Wawrinka but was well beaten on a windy Court Suzanne Lenglen.

The 17-time Grand Slam champion proved incapable of breaking his opponent's serve at all over the course of a match that lasted two

Help sought to save Tanvir

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national footballers urged the well-offs of the society and the football fraternity to come forward to help former national footballer Tanvir Chowdhury, who is fighting for his life at the Square Hospital after a road accident on May 19.

Tanvir, a brilliant dribbler who played for Sheikh Russell KC and Muktiyoddha Sangsad among the top-flight clubs and received the man-of-the-tournament award in the 2003 Nitol Tata National Football League, suffered grave injuries during the accident on May 19 as he was travelling on his motorbike from Natore to Dhaka.

Deputy minister for youth and sports Arif Khan Joy, former national coach Shaiful Islam Manik, former national captain Aminul Haque, star footballers Alfaz Ahmed, Golam Gaus, Zakir Hossain, Motiur Munna, Hasan al Mamun and others urged everyone to help Tanvir during a press conference at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Those willing to help can contribute to the account No. 2438101092757, Pubali Bank, Naya Paltan branch,

NEW RACE post-Sepp era

AFP, Zurich



Sepp Blatter's shock resignation opened up a new race Wednesday to become president of FIFA with a mission to reform football's scandal-tainted world body.

The names of UEFA president Michel Platini, Prince Ali bin al Hussein, who challenged Blatter in a vote last Friday, and Portuguese football great Luis Figo were immediately pushed forward.

They were quickly joined in the mix by legendary Brazilian midfielder Zico and highly-experienced South Korean official Chung Mong-Joon, both of whom said they were considering making a run at the job.

But no figure made an official declaration. "There will be jostling for position. The election will take time," commented one FIFA executive member in the hours after the 79-year-old Blatter gave in to pressure to stand down over a bribery scandal that hit the football body.

French football legend-turned-politician Platini is the best known of the potential runners.

The 59-year-old, three time winner of the Ballon d'Or, established his administrator credentials as organiser of the 1998 World Cup. He has headed UEFA since 2007.

Platini decided last year not to run against Blatter in the election on Friday. He did not rule out an attempt in 2019 however.

But Platini's own re-election in April to a new term in charge of the wealthiest and most powerful of football's regional confederations could also hold him back from a bid for FIFA.

Platini praised the "difficult" and "brave" decision made by Blatter to stand down. But he gave no sign of his own intentions.

Jordan's Prince Ali, who was a FIFA vice president until Friday when he lost the presidential election to Blatter, made it known through a spokesman that he is "ready" for football's top job.

"As for new elections, Prince Ali is ready," Sala Sabra, vice-president of the Jordanian football federation which the prince heads up, told AFP.

The prince, Sabra added, was already "to take up the presidency immediately" if asked.

Blatter: Four years late and murky

AKHTAR HUSAIN KHAN



As Joseph Blatter declared stepping down as president of the Federation of International

Football Associations (FIFA) on Tuesday amid the brouhaha of US-led corruption investigation, the first thing that strikes the mind is that people should know when to leave.

When Blatter got embroiled with Qatar's Mohammed Bin Hammam in the build-up to the same FIFA presidential elections in 2011 and duly got elected unopposed after the Qatari's cloudy exit, and eventual life ban from 'all football-related activities', that was the time for announcing his departure. He did not and dangled on to the post for four more years to fight the next election and now got embroiled in things the whole world has come to detest. He has not been charged with any wrong-doing as yet, but after the US investigators said Blatter was also in being investigated, there was hardly any earth beneath his feet.

People at top positions should leave at the pinnacle of their achievement, not when mired in controversy. Blatter's announcement has been four years too late.

At 79, and physically perfect and strong as most Europeans would be, Swiss-born Blatter was definitely the best possible option for FIFA over the years. Asian and African countries came to like him. There is a part in the Bangladesh Football Federation headquarters named 'Blatter Corner'.

Blatter, along with Joao Havelange

before him, brought the World Cup to Asia and Africa. However, apart from the question of timing of one's exit, one fundamental question that few people are discussing is the moral ground of electing a paid employee of a voluntary organisation as its president. This turns the definition of voluntarism on its head.

Blatter started serving FIFA in the mid-seventies and then became its paid General Secretary in 1981 under the affectionate tutelage of president Joao Havelange, the Brazilian. During Havelange's 24 years of FIFA presidency, Blatter got all the focus into the so-called third world and was part of the Brazilian's inner-team that made FIFA the big money organisation and omnipresent body that it is today. Blatter carried on Havelange's work over the last seventeen years with aplomb and dexterity, but that does not take away the basic question of his election in 1998 when he succeeded Havelange: should world football heads have elected a paid employee as its president. It is rumoured, Havelange was out teach a lesson to Lennart Johansson of Sweden, the then UEFA president, who was out to displace him by putting in his own protégée in the FIFA post.

Allegations of corruption in FIFA elections are not new. When Havelange became FIFA president in 1974 as the first non-European displacing the English Sir Stanley Rous, there were gossips that 'brown envelopes were passing on to black hands'. The obvious reference was to African and some Asian votes. However Havelange made FIFA the

organisation that it is today and the work was carried on by his successor Blatter. The World Cup, the competition that is at the centre of FIFA, expanded from 16 teams to the current 32; and suggestions have been afloat that it should be stretched to 36 or even 40. Africa and Asia got more places and they repaid it through successive election victories for Havelange and Blatter.

Europe will have an axe to grind in the coming months till the FIFA election next December or January. Like the England-Australia-India axis in cricket, Europe has been the powerhouse of world football, being



the cradle of most money and top leagues. First through Johansson and now through Platini, it will definitely try to stage a comeback, but managing a 209-member electorate spread in six continents only through European eyes and vision will be demanding. Besides, the culture that Europeans and Americans are talking about for axing will be difficult to eradicate, because in voluntarism one needs a degree of lubrication that is hard to pinpoint and impossible to banish. As Blatter has said, it is not possible for the FIFA president to monitor all the over-two hundred members.

FIFA's current situation can be

likened to at where Juan Antonio Samaranch had left the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in the year 2000, at the epitome of its monetary might and world-wide expansion; but sadly there were many allegations of corruption by IOC members. When Samaranch left, IOC decided to fix terms and age-limit for IOC president and members.

Now that both Blatter and last-week's beaten candidate Prince Ali of Jordan have spoken of fixing terms for FIFA president and executive committee members, this is definitely a good sign. Another reform that should be brought in is that no paid employee be allowed to contest a FIFA election. Prince Ali will definitely be a likely candidate to follow Blatter, or it may be Michel Platini, but one should not write off Sheikh Ahmed Sabah of Kuwait, currently the president of the Olympic Council of Asia, and a member of the FIFA executive committee.

The US, which lost out to Qatar for 2022 World Cup, has a responsibility to the rest of the world to carry on the current investigation in the most transparent and acceptable manner so that nobody thinks that it is on a vendetta-mission. The new president must be alert that no reform takes away the World Cup from Qatar, not to speak of Russia. If the latest US actions can rid the organisation of the 'beautiful game' of its ills, it will have done a marvelous job for hundreds of millions fans the world over for whom football is not just a sport, but remarkably a 'religion'.

The writer is a former member of the executive committee of Bangladesh

Real unveil Benitez

AFP, Madrid



Rafael Benitez was overcome with emotion as he was presented as the new coach of Real Madrid on Wednesday.

The former Liverpool boss has signed a three-year deal to take charge of the club where he began his coaching career in the youth ranks during the early nineties.

"It is a special, emotional day for me. I have worked for many years trying to be successful to be able to return here," said the 55-year-old.

Madrid president Florentino Perez has been heavily criticised for sacking Carlo Ancelotti just a year after he won the club's long-awaited 10th European Cup.

However, he claimed Benitez was the right man for the job, hailing him as one of the world's best coaches.

"We start a new era with the full confidence that the arrival of our new coach will make us stronger," said Perez.

"Your name is a guarantee of hard work. We have one of the best coaches in the world."

Benitez is returning to Spain for the first time in over a decade after making a name for himself with two league titles in three years at Valencia between 2001 and 2004.

Yet, he has failed to land a league title in the 11 years since he swapped Valencia for Liverpool.



Rafael Benitez (L) and Florentino Perez pose with Real Madrid jersey during a press conference at the Bernabeu yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Benitez's greatest achievement in that time came in winning the Champions League in his first season at Liverpool. However, he delivered only the UEFA Super Cup and the FA Cup in 2006 in the five years that followed at Anfield.

A nightmare experience followed at Inter Milan where he lasted only six months as Jose Mourinho's successor and another short-lived unhappy spell at Chelsea followed as he was never accepted by the fans despite winning the Europa League in 2013.

A two-year spell with Italian giants Napoli also came to an unsatisfactory end on Sunday with a 4-2 home defeat to Lazio which ensured they did not qualify for next season's Champions League.

And Benitez is fully aware that he has to deliver success immediately if his stint in his dream job isn't to be a short one.

"Undoubtedly this is the highest quality squad I have coached," he added.

"It is different to when I arrived at Liverpool. There was a project there for three years to compete and try to win something. Thankfully, in the first year we won the Champions League.

"Here we need to compete and win from the first moment. We have to always be competing and we will only be satisfied with victory. The expectations are very different, they are much higher than when I arrived at Liverpool."

Many of Real's stars, including World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo, took to social media to show their appreciation of Ancelotti before and after his dismissal.

However, Benitez is confident that won't manifest itself into a negative reaction towards him and his technical team.

"It is normal that the players show their warmth to Carlo, who is a great coach and person.

"I have spoken with him and I hold him in the highest esteem."

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