

Looking like something out of the next Mad Max reboot, everybody's favourite Ronaldo -- the husky Brazilian version -- was pictured schlepping through the Nevada desert on his Segway while pooltling his way around the Burning Man festival. "Beep, beep. Coming through!" Looks like he had a jolly good time too. You can go ahead and file that under 'things we weren't even close to



## BKSP reunion tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Alumni Association of BKSP (AAB) is going to celebrate its reunion programme titled Walton AAB Reunion 2015 tomorrow at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan campus in Savar.

The BKSP has been Bangladesh's premier sports development institution since 1986. Some of the most famous BKSP alumni include cricket superstar Shakib Al Hasan, national football captain Mamunul Islam, hockey's Asian All Star Team member Mamunur Rashid, SAF Games gold medalist in swimming Karar Mizanur Rahman, shooting sensation Asif Ahmed and SAF Games 100-metre gold medalist Bimal Chandra Tarafdar.

## The first of many?

AGENCIES, London

Sahr Kabba has become the first player to be charged by the FA under their new law against feigning injury.

At the weekend, Tranmere defender Ritchie Sutton was sent off for an off-the-ball incident involving Kabba during the two sides' National League game. Sutton and his club appealed the decision, with Tranmere boss Gary Brabin saying, "We looked at the footage and there was no contact made."

After overturning the red card, the FA decided to charge the 26-year-old Kabba for "allegedly exaggerating or feigning an injury which directly led to an opponent being dismissed".

This is the first time the new rule has been used and Kabba may now face a three-match ban, although he has until Friday evening to appeal.

## Villas-Boas set to leave Zenit

AFP, Moscow

Andre Villas-Boas will leave his role as coach of Zenit St Petersburg at the end of the season, the Portuguese said on Thursday.

"Talking about a contract extension...the club had made me an offer at the end of last season, I have refused and at the end of the season I will leave the club," Villas-Boas said when pressed on his future at a press conference reported by Zenit's official website.

"But in any case we will continue to work hard, we need to score points, to catch up with those ahead of us, to try to perform successfully in the Champions League."



Roger Federer of Switzerland celebrates after defeating Richard Gasquet of France during their US Open men's singles quarterfinal at Flushing Meadows in New York on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## A Federer masterclass

AFP, New York



Five-time champion Roger Federer put on a tennis masterclass on Wednesday, routing Richard Gasquet to reach his 10th US Open semifinal, where he will face close friend Stan Wawrinka.

The 34-year-old, bidding to become the oldest champion in New York in 45 years, took just 87 minutes to beat Gasquet for the 15th time in 17 meetings, his 6-3, 6-3, 6-1 victory only revealing half the story.

The Swiss fired 50 winners and 16 aces and did not face a single break point.

Federer hasn't dropped a set at the tournament in five rounds and has been broken just twice.

But he will be wary of the danger posed by Wawrinka despite holding a 16-3 career edge.

Wawrinka defeated him in their last meeting in straight sets in the quarterfinals on his way to the French Open title in June.

"I faced the big serves of John Isner in the last round so I felt tonight I had a little extra time," said second seed Federer.

"I stayed aggressive and enjoyed myself."

Also enjoying themselves watching the master at work on Arthur Ashe Stadium were Andre Agassi and Bjorn Borg as well as celebrities such as Justin Timberlake and Bradley Cooper.

"Stan played wonderfully against me in Paris and I was happy for him that he won the title. He really deserved it," added Federer, who was playing in his 46th Grand Slam quarterfinal to Gasquet's fourth.

## A Swiss showdown

### Cilic stands in Djokovic's way

AFP, New York



Five-time champion Roger Federer will prepare for his US Open semifinal clash with close friend Stan Wawrinka by sleeping as much as possible.

The 34-year-old Swiss believes napping, as well as the routine of practice and gym work, is just as crucial as he enters his 10th New York Open semifinal and 20th career clash against his compatriot.

He is so fond of sleep that Federer will look to get in as much as 10 hours a day before Friday's semifinal, where the winner will face either world number one Novak Djokovic or defending champion Marin Cilic in Sunday's championship match.

"Sleeping has become quite important," said Federer, the father of two sets of twins.

"I make sure I sleep enough, as well. Like when I went to bed after the John Isner match (in the fourth round) it got quite late and I couldn't sleep quite as much as I wanted to."

"Because I believe it's really the sleep that gives you energy again down the road. That's why the next two days are very important for me in terms of sleeping."

If the approach for such a high-stakes clash seems risky, then Federer is showing no signs of nerves as he moves two wins from an 18th major and his first in more than three years.

He has reached the semifinals without dropping a set and has been broken just twice.

On Wednesday, he blitzed French 12th seed Richard Gasquet in just 87 minutes, firing 50 winners, 16 aces and facing just a

Djokovic (SRB x1) v Cilic (CRO x9)  
(Djokovic leads head-to-head 13-0)



**NOVAK DJOKOVIC**  
Age: 28  
Titles: 54 (including nine Grand Slams)  
Best US Open: Champion 2011



**MARIN CILIC**  
Age: 26  
Titles: 13 (including one Grand Slam)  
Best US Open: Champion 2014

Federer (SUI x2) v Wawrinka (SUI x5)  
(Federer leads head-to-head 16-3)



**ROGER FEDERER**  
Age: 34  
Titles: 87 (including 17 Grand Slams)  
Best US Open: Champion (2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008)



**STAN WAWRINKA**  
Age: 30  
Titles: 10 (including two Grand Slams)  
Best US Open: Semifinals (2013, 2015)

single break point.

Furthermore, he has a 16-3 record against Wawrinka.

He may have lost their most recent clash in the French Open quarterfinals as Wawrinka swept to the title, but Federer's three defeats have all come on clay.

"I think a lot comes through practice for Stan, because he's worked very hard throughout his career," said Federer in praise of his Davis Cup winning teammate.

"It took him a while to figure out exactly what his possibilities were. I don't think he was a guy

who always had enough confidence. I always thought he was a better player than he actually was, but somehow something was holding him back maybe.

"I think only once when he really started to break through and he had some big wins."

Wawrinka believes he is now the equal of Federer, something he did not quite believe before he won his first major at the 2014 Australian Open.

"I think now we are both nervous when we enter the court. Before it was only me. I was nervous because I knew I wasn't at his level," he said.

"Now I think we can see that he was also nervous every time we play each other the past few years. That's a big difference."

"I'm not trying to do what he's doing. Just the reason why I improve so much the past few years, it's also because I'm looking a lot what the top guys' doing, Novak, Roger, Rafa," said the 30-year-old French Open champion.

"We all see what Roger is doing right now. It's quite impressive. He's doing it against everybody. I saw him play also against Anderson in Cincinnati, and I was surprised how close he was returning."

Wawrinka will be playing in his second semifinal after also making the last four in 2013.

Djokovic takes a 13-0 record over Cilic into his semifinal as he attempts to make the final for the fifth time in six years and sixth in total.

In a rivalry stretching back seven years, the two men have met four times at the Grand Slams but just once at the US Open when Djokovic won in four sets in 2008.

The Serb also swept past the

Croatian in straight sets in the Wimbledon quarterfinals this year on his way to a third All England Club title.

Djokovic had cruised through his first three rounds but then dropped a set apiece to Spanish rivals Roberto Bautista Agut and Feliciano Lopez.

Victory over serve-and-volleyer Lopez was his 55th match win in New York.

But despite his stranglehold over Cilic, the top seed insists that his opponent, on a 12-match win streak at the tournament, remains the dangerman especially with a serve which has yielded 111 aces.

"That serve gets him out of trouble. I know him very well. I have played with him many, many times. We are great friends. Great guy," said the Serb.

Cilic has endured a rollercoaster ride in his title defence as he looks to become the first back-to-back champion since Federer in 2008.

His five-set wins over Mikhail Kukushkin in the third round and Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in the quarter-finals are two of the three longest matches at the tournament this year.

His 4hr 11min battle with Kukushkin was just seven minutes short of the time it took Kevin Anderson to knock out third seed and 2012 champion Andy Murray in the round of 16.

"I came to the tournament knowing that I can play well here, that I just need few matches to get into the rhythm, and that's what happened," said the ninth seed.

Cilic has won just one title -- in Moscow in October -- since his breakthrough in New York 12 months ago but has yet to add to that in 2015.

## Baguette to celebrate

AGENCIES, Paris

Austria secured themselves a spot at Euro 2016 with a 4-1 win over Sweden on Tuesday and, to celebrate, their coach Marcel Koller decided to add a celebratory Gallic twist to his post-match press conference.

Indeed, Koller turned up sporting a French beret to answer the media call before proceeding to gnaw away on a baguette throughout, which he even dipped into a cup of onion soup just to complete the charade.

## Prince Ali launches FIFA bid

AFP, Amman

Jordan's Prince Ali bin Al Hussein on Wednesday launched a bid to succeed FIFA president Sepp Blatter, saying he is the only candidate with the "guts" to confront corruption in football's governing body.

"I stand here in this ancient place in the timeless heart of Amman to once again launch my candidacy for the presidency of FIFA," he told a gathering within the ruins of the Jordanian capital's Roman amphitheatre.

Prince Ali, 39, is a former FIFA vice president who led an unsuccessful challenge as a reform candidate against Blatter for the top job in May, just two days after the arrest of seven FIFA officials in Zurich.

"Let me be clear. I want to finish what we started," he said in a speech on Wednesday before his

## Boos doesn't faze Pique

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona defender Gerard Pique has said he remains committed to playing for Spain and won't change his outspoken ways despite being booed by sections of La Roja's fanbase.

Pique was targeted by the home fans during Spain's 2-0 win over Slovakia on Friday after mocking Real Madrid during Barcelona's treble-winning celebrations at the end of last season.

"The last thing I would do is leave the national team. Whether it lasts a day, a month or a year, I will continue to play as long as the coach wants me," he said on Thursday.

Pique also dismissed suggestions that his support for a democratic vote on Catalan independence had also played a part in the treatment he has received.

The 28-year-old was part of the Spain sides that won the World Cup in 2010 and the European Championship two years later.

He has been widely supported by his colleagues in the national team and coach Vicente del Bosque, who described the boos as "lamentable."

However, Real Madrid captain and international teammate Sergio Ramos said Pique's actions "hadn't helped" the situation given the rivalry that exists between the two clubs.

"I have 70 caps. There are no doubts, I have always given my best in every game," he added.

"I have been world and European champion. I haven't said anything bad and I don't have to defend myself."

In a heated press conference, Pique also pleaded for the rivalry between Barcelona and Madrid to not be a dividing factor when players from both sides come together to represent Spain.

"In the rivalry between Barca and Madrid I will not change," he said.

"When Barca have done well it is because Madrid haven't and the reverse. I always wish that Madrid do as badly as possible."

## Danilo out for a month

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid right-back Danilo is expected to be out of action for up to a month after being diagnosed with plantar fasciitis in his right foot.

"A tear in the plantar fascia has been diagnosed in his right foot," Real Madrid said in a statement on their website on Thursday without stating how long the player will be sidelined.

However, reports in the Spanish media suggest the Brazilian international will miss up to four weeks, ruling him out of Real's Champions League opener against Shakhtar Donetsk on Tuesday and the Madrid derby away to Atletico in La Liga on October 4.

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