Jubilant Italian players celebrate their World Cup triumph in the dressing room after the final against France on Sunday night.

the orbit

Final from

World Cup final fever rose all the way up into orbit Sunday, as astronauts aboard the International Space Station made rival predictions for the France-Italy clash.

Space shuttle Discovery arrived at the ISS Thursday with two foothall aficionados aboard Britishborn US astronaut Piers Sellers and his European Space Agency counterpart Thomas Reiter of Germany.

But it was US astronauts Lisa Nowak and Mark Kelly who guessed right. Italy defeated France 5-3 in a penalty shootout following a 1-1 tie in Berlin.

"We're keeping score and we determined that Lisa and Mark won, and Piers and Thomas lost in their predictions," Discovery Commander Steven Lindsey told mission control at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas. "I would like to note that it was

prediction." Lindsev said. "As is always the case," mission control capsule communicator Lee

Africa

AFP, Johannesburg

the non-soccer players that won the

Archambault replied. The only happy people, barring **Greetings** from South

South African newspapers Monday

hailed Italy's win over France in the World Cup 2006, but eyes were turning on the country's preparations to host the prestigious event in four years' time.

'Roll on 2010, says Mbeki," said the Johannesburg-based daily, The Star, quoting the country's president Thabo Mbeki in an interview in Germany where he attended the official handover.

"It is a challenging thing, but it will be done," Mbeki told The Star after a local news report a week ago questioned South Africa's ability to stage the event, saying that FIFA had a back-up plan to move it to

"There's some people... within South Africa who think they've got a permanent job to paint a negative mage of South Africa," Mbeki said.

"I suspect they are people who essentially were not happy that apartheid came to an end and that South Africa became a democratic country," he added.

The Star in its sport pages paid tribute to Italy, while slating France's Zinedine Zidane for head butting Marco Materazzi. "On the night when the Azzuri

moved to make a mockery of the match-fixing scandal that is threatening to destroy their top status as a footballing nation. Zinedine Zidane contrived to render all he's given to the game useless," the paper said. South Africa in the spotlight," a Business Day newspaper headline

said, "as the curtain came down on the 2006 FIFA World Cup, world attention shifted to South Africa ... amid scepticism whether the country will be ready -- and an insistence by government that the 2010 version will be the best ever.

"Viva Italia!" the daily The Citizen said in a banner headline while on its back page ran a picture of Zidane looking at the sky saying 'France pay the penalty.'

The Sowetan, which has a mainly black readership, ran a picture on its front page saying "Mamma mia!"

Champs Elysees shocked People who had watched the

First there was hope and expectation, then there was undiluted joy, a reality check, exasperation, despair and finally deflation -- that was the Champs Elysees during the World

GERMANY 2006

What was supposed to be a great swansong for a player rightly lauded as the greatest of his generation, ended in disgrace for French star Zinedine Zidane.

And his hoards of loyal fans looked on in disbelief as they watched their talisman head-butt his way -- the victim being Marco Materazzi -- into an inglorious but dramatic retirement -- more Eric Cantona than Zizou.

The wild party expected to go on late into the night never took off, the millions expected to emerge never

pockets of celebrating Italians. seemed to be those for whom the result bore little consequence to their reason for hitting the Champs -Some dejected football fans

wearing the blue shirts of 'Les Bleus' sat on the kerbside, many in tears. smoking cigarettes for the most part and looking fairly lonely and iso-

final at home and trundled off to the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs in search of the party found little to encourage them to stay and wandered like lost souls.

"The match was horrible and tense," lamented 24-year-old student Antoine Leclerc. "We were very expectant. There was a lot of noise throughout the match, people were singing the Marseillaise on their halconies.

"But at the end, no-one was speaking.

"Now there is just consternation," added another student, Alexandra Flick. 19. "I just want to know what was said to Zizou.

"We came here to see what it was like but there's nothing much happening," added Charlotte Leclerc, also 19.

They wandered a little way down the Champs towards Place de la Concorde, turned around and were soon making their way back home.

But while the true football fans found little to keep them from trudging back home, many on foot to distant Metro stations as that of the Champs-Elysees was closed, others were determined to make a

Crowds of blue shirted people headed one way while gangs of rowdy young men headed the other.

Youths waving flags -- not French or Italian but Algerian and Turkish -- ran around shouting and

A couple of groups of people drummed away making music, mostly it seemed to get their faces on television. Crews of cameramen and journalists quickly sparked high spirits and encouraged cheering happy faces.

But there was also a sinister side lurking in the shadows.

Other than around the Arc itself the crowds were hardly heaving but young men loitered in darkened pockets of the Champs, just yards away from riot police.

Up by the Arc itself was the biggest police presence and it did not take long for the first baton charge to be launched.

Hundreds of young men, clearly angling for trouble, squeezed in and around the Arc. A flare was thrown in to the crowd of people, the police braced themselves and the fleeing began, swiftly followed by a charge.

It was just the first of the night and only shortly before midnight. The only crumb of comfort for the police was the lack of numbers.

This was not 1998 revisited, nor even the earlier quarterfinals or semifinals all over again. The numbers simply were not the same

For all the disappointed football fans, there were just as many people who had found an excuse to come and do what they were really interested in: making noise and in some cases making trouble.

It was a feast of modern youth culture, crammed into one street in the heart of a bustling city.

Italians over the moon



Rome erupted in a dam burst of joy, firecrackers, flags and tearful embraces as Italians celebrated their country's World Cup triumph after a nail-biting penalty shoot-out against France

Supporters flocked to the centre of the Italian capital to vent their delight and relief, scenes echoed in piazzas across Italy from Milan in the north to Messina on the island of Sicily, in the deep south.

Hundreds of young people, many stripped to their underwear, frolicked in the Trevi Fountain in Rome, waving Italian flags and splashing onlookers as ecstasy took hold of natives and tourists alike around Bernini's masterpiece.

"We couldn't miss this," said Californian tourist Scott Bern. "We heard the final was on, bought some Italian shirts and here we are. It's great Italy won," Bern said after watching the game in a cafe with his

In Bibo's Bar across the road from Prime Minister Romano Prodi's party headquarters, pandemonium broke out after Italy's full-back Fabio Grosso buried the decisive penalty.

"It's been a match of intense suffering but we've won it now, and everything's great," shouted waiter Carlo Dilizio, 47, above the din as fireworks lit up the moonlit sky.

"I bought an Italian flag in 1982 (the last time Italy won the World Cup) and I took it out of the drawer the other day to show my son. And I said, let's write 2006 on it, and hope," said Carlo, tears of joy filling Italy's 87-year-old President

Giorgio Napolitano attended the final in Berlin with French President Jacques Chirac, and said Chirac had been the first to congratulate

But it wasn't a moment to crow: "At certain times, one has to be a little elegant," he told Italian TV. Prodi, like millions of other

Italians, preferred to suffer at home. "We won by the width of a post," said the prime minister, referring to France's miss during the penalties.

The win, declared a "great vic-

tory for clean football" by right-wing National Alliance leader Gianfranco Fini, will ease the pain over a probe into a match-fixing scandal which has scarred the reputation of Italy's top Serie Ateams

But in the euphoria following the World Cup victory, such gloom has been put to the back of the collective Italian mind. At the ancient Circus Maximus.

the park where Romans once held chariot races, more than 150,000 people who watched the game on giant screens erupted into a cacophony of noisy revelry. It was time to banish bitter memo-

ries of losing the 1994 final to Brazil in a penalty shoot-out. An Italian TV commentator declared that watching the tense match had caused great suffering:

"soffertissimo!" For others, as the match ground on to extra-time and then to the dreaded penalties, the tension was almost too much to bear as old

insecurities came flooding back. "If Zidane scores another goal I'm jumping in the river, I swear," said Francesco Pignolo, 30, watching with friends at an open-air bar on

The final triumph was almost operatic. And like all good opera, there was tragedy as Zinedine Zidane, aged 34 and arguably the month-long competition's finest performer, ended his career with a sensational sending off for headbutting an opponent.

"Red, red, red," shouted the crowd in Bibo's as the referee reached for his card.

But the sending off left a bitter taste with Italians, as Zidane has been idolised in Italy after his years as a player with Juventus of Turin.

"I loved Zidane as a player and a man, but now I take it all back. He's a 'bastardo' for what he's done," said Carlo the waiter, a self-confessed "Juventino" or Juventus supporter.

Leading daily Corriere della Sera, which trumpeted "World Champions" on the front page of its Internet edition, said the veteran Zidane had ended his career "with a header". The wonderful delirium with

which Romans embraced victory, and each other, after the game was a stark contrast to the eerie quiet which swept over the capital's normally chaotic streets during the

Momentary lapses of reason

AFP, Berlin

Zinedine Zidane's sending-off in the World Cup final is the latest in several incidents that showed the darker side of France's inspirational playmaker:

The first round World Cup match against Saudi Arabia saw Zidane's worst side come out as he stamped on Saudi captain Fuad Amin in the 70th minute and was immediately sent-off. He returned from a twomatch suspension and ultimately redeemed himself with two goals in the 3-0 win in the final over Brazil. 2000

Zidane had already been sent off for Juventus in the Champions League against Deportivo La Coruna in September but it was against Hamburg in October that he really saw red. He received his second successive red card of that competition when he head butted Jochen Kientz while they fought on the ground. He received a five match ban for that indiscretion. 2006

His farewell match seemed set for a fairytale ending having inspired France to the final after a shaky start. It looked even more set fair when he slotted home a seventh minute penalty to give them the lead. But the red mist descended again and the fairytale transformed into one of horror as he wheeled round on Marco Materazzi after the Italian appeared to say something to him and headbutted him in the chest. There was no option but for referee Horacio Elizondo to red card him



French talisman Zinedine Zidane goes down into the tunnel after being red carded in his last match for France during the World Cup final against Italy in Berlin on Sunday.

Hero or anti-hero?

The French press found it difficult Monday to forgive Zinedine Zidane for his red-card exit in the World Cup final defeat to Italy, bemoaning the "cruel" fate they said had cost

"The Blues' broken dream," headlined the Figaro daily in a merciless editorial, saying Zidane's "final and odious headbutt" had tarnished the final match of a "magical" player. "We were left speechless by

such stupidity," the paper wrote -though it said it had to "thank Zinedine Zidane all the same for all the kicks of pure beauty he has given us over more than 100 matches with Les Bleus.

Most papers were torn between shock and disbelief at Zidane's outburst -- and gratitude both for France's soaring performance over the past three weeks and for Zidane's own inspirational career.

"Bravo all the same," wrote L'Humanite

"Zizou, thank you, thank you for everything," Humanite's editorialist said after France lost Sunday evening's final on penalties in what Zidane had said would be his last ever competitive match.

"Thank you!" blared the front page of Le Parisien. But the paper could not contain its bitterness at the dashed hopes of the French squad, and Zidane's fateful out-

burst. "How cruel to stumble so close to the goal," it wrote. "This exit from football is unworthy of him"

"The hardest thing is not to try to understand why Les Bleus lost a World Cup final match that was within reach." the sports daily L'Equipe wrote, but "to explain to tens of millions of children around the world how you allowed yourself

to headbutt Marco Materazzi." Comparing him to the likes of Mohammed Ali and Pele as sporting gods, the newspaper said none of them "broke the most elementary rules of sport in that way." It was a "stupid" and "irreparable' gesture, L'Equipe added.

"How could this happen to a man like you?" it asked in disbelief. "We still can't quite believe that the last act of an artist's career should have been an assault.

wrote Le Parisien.

The world is Azzurri



AFP, Paris

A triumphant Italian press hailed their World Cup winners as legends Monday, saying their victory over France had deservedly delivered the nation and earned themselves proper

"The world belongs to us," headlined La Repubblica, writing of "emotion, tension and joy" right up to the final whistle in Sunday's final in Berlin. eventually won on penalties after the match finished 1-1 in extra time.

The Corriere della Sera, Italy's biggest-selling newspaper, waxed

"In 25 years time, when the young generation who slept in wonder after a

night of festivities has grown up, there will be memories. In the souvenir album of life, July 9 2006 will be written large," it wrote.

We are champions because we are Italian," its editorialist added, saying that from now on "everywhere on Planet Earth, the white red and green passport of Italy will be stamped with admiration '

"On top of the world," blared La Stampa on its front page, calling it "the craziest month for Italy" ranging from victory in the World Cup to the scandal of alleged match-fixing involving four of the country's top clubs including champions Juventus. La Stampa, like many of the other

newspapers, bore a full-page picture of a dozen hands holding aloft the trophy after the match.

Messaggero. "Italy, a world heart."

the world," titled the Gazzetta dello

"You were magnificent," said II "It's true, we are the champions of Sport. "Fantastic Italy, the world is

yours.' The press also roundly condemned French captain Zinedine Zidane's headbutt on defender Marco Materazzi in the second period of extra time, for which he was sent off.

"Zizou, an inglorious goodbye," wrote the Corriere dello Sport. La Gazzetta called it "a malicious end" to his career, while the Corriere della Sera said it was "the warrior's last act of madness.'

"France, perhaps more than Italy, needed a victory to sweep out the feeling of depression and suspicion crossing the country," the Corriere della Sera went on.

For French President Jacques Chirac, "near to his own goodbye, it would have been a last hurrah in a glorious atmosphere. But in a somewhat unreal silence in the Parisian night, only a few thousand Italians were having a party."



Alessandro Del Piero (R) after the end of the final at Berlin's Olympic Stadium on Sunday

PHOTO: AFF French defender Lilian Thuram (bottom L) is consoled by teammate Patrick Vieira (top L) and Italian forward network

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CRYPTOQUIP

JRZOMKO RHVWUNRJ

KRRZ SK OIR SVVUMZORJ

LSKR HMFIO

KRDFRSZO Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE GIRL USES PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SO MUCH THAT SHE CHANGED HER NAME TO RHODA BUSS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals E

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe