

France captain Patrice Evra wants to catch the 'traitor' who leaked Nicolas Anelka's outburst to French newspaper L'Equipe. "The problem for the team is not Anelka but the traitor amongst us," said Evra. "It is imperative we rid the squad of this traitor." Anelka admitted having a "heated discussion" with Domenech, but denied using the words attributed to him. "This should never have

Star
SPORT

DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 21, 2010, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net



PHOTO: REUTERS

THE WALL THAT STOPPED AZZURRI: New Zealand goalkeeper Mark Paston, diving full-length to his right, thwarts a 69th minute shot from Italy midfielder Ricardo Montolivo during their thrilling 1-1 draw at the Mbombela stadium in Nelspruit yesterday. Paston made several brilliant saves as New Zealand pulled off a gutsy stalemate against the defending champions.

White wall keep Italy at bay

AFP, Nelspruit
New Zealand achieved their greatest footballing result here on Sunday with a stunning 1-1 draw against defending champions Italy's in their World Cup Group F match.

The All Whites -- who lost all three of their matches on their previous appearance in 1982 -- took a shock lead through Shane Smeltz in the seventh minute only for Vincenzo Iaquinta to level through a penalty later in the first half.

The draw puts both teams on two points with just a match remaining. The Kiwis will play group leaders Paraguay while the Italians play bottom side Slovakia on Thursday.

the All Whites' goal for most of the second half but a combination of resolute Kiwi defence, brave goalkeeping by Mark Paston and errant passes condemned the reigning cham-

pions to their second consecutive draw of the tournament.

As much as the four-time champions dominated possession they could not come up with the winner

and the Kiwis came close to pulling off an unbelievable victory when substitute Chris Wood fired centimetres wide with seven minutes left.

Rank outsiders New Zealand got just the start they were after when from a Simon Elliott free kick in the seventh minute Winston Reid got a flick onto Fabio Cannavaro's thigh for Smeltz to poke home past goalkeeper Federico Marchetti.

But the Italians hit back when left-back Tommy Smith was yellow carded after he brought down Daniele De Rossi inside the area and referee Carlos Batres pointed to the spot.

Iaquinta sweetly converted for the Azzurri to equalise after 29 minutes.

Coach Marcello Lippi threw all his three substitutes into the action after 15 minutes of the second half in an effort to unlock the determined Kiwi defence.

Riccardo Montolivo drew

a great flying one-handed save from Paston with 20 minutes left as Italy went all out for the winner.

But the All Whites kept their structure and composure repelling continual waves of Azzurri attacks, with skipper and defensive rock Ryan Nelsen outstanding and Paston pulling off some critical saves.

It was New Zealand's first draw with Italy after losing to them 4-3 in a friendly in their only other meeting before last year's Confederations Cup in South Africa.

Italy must now look for a win against Slovakia at Ellis Park on Thursday to ensure they go through to the last 16, while New Zealand have to play Paraguay in Polokwane on the same night.

SCORE BOARD

ITALY 1-1 NEW ZEALAND
IAQUINTA 29 (PEN) MELTZ 7

Italy (4-4-2): Federico Marchetti, Gianluca Zambrotta, Fabio Cannavaro (cap), Giorgio Chiellini, Domenico Criscito, Simone Pepe (Mauro Camoranesi 46), Daniele De Rossi, Riccardo Montolivo, Claudio Marchisio (Giampaolo Pazzini 61), Vincenzo Iaquinta, Alberto Gilardino (Antonio Di Natale 46)

New Zealand (4-3-2-1): Mark Paston, Winston Reid, Ryan Nelsen (cap), Ivan Vicelich (Jeremy Christie 80), Tommy Smith, Leo Bertos, Simon Elliott, Tony Lochhead, Rory Fallon (Chris Wood 63), Chris Killen (Andrew Barron 90+3), Shane Smeltz

Venue: Mbombela Stadium, Nelspruit

KEY STATS

Italy	New Zealand
Shots (on target)	23(5) 3(1)
Corners	15 0
Possession	72% 28%
Yellow Cards	0 3

Portugal v North Korea Time: 5.30pm Cape Town
Chile v Switzerland Time: 8.00pm Port Elizabeth

TODAY'S MATCHES

TODAY'S POLL
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WORLD CUP POLL
Do you think Ivory Coast can stop Brazil?
Yes 52.8%
No 47.2%

TOTAL VOTES: 36

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NOKIA N97

Italy's Alberto Gilardino (C) is under pressure from two New Zealand players during their World Cup Group F match at the Mbombela stadium in Nelspruit yesterday.

High voltage shockers in South Africa, Big Guns on the rack

World Cup South Africa 2010 is emerging as a World Cup of shockers. France seems to be going and only miracle can save them. It must be real hard for Zidane to see the decline of French football. England seems the other team who resembles an oasis in the Sahara desert. With the class and finesse of the English League, much more was expected of Rooney, Lampard, Gerard. Their misery was underlined by Robert Green's slip against USA. But the Englishmen still has some hopes.

The saga of disappointment continues with the Spaniards. It is yet another case of a high profile football league oozing with talents yet unable to translate the same standard into the national team. Losing to the unheralded Swiss, it really doesn't justify the charisma of Torres, Iniesta, Xavi or David Villa. Well, the bull fighters need to buckle up and make sure there aren't any more surprises on the cards against Honduras and Chile.

Among the heavyweights only Argentina and Brazil seems to be glorifying football. Germany started with a bang but was unlucky against Serbia due to the bad day of Podolski. Overall the South American contingent of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile seems to be playing better brand of football. Even Mexico and USA seems to be playing their heart out.

Lots remain to be seen, as the first round action is still some way to go. But the world wants Messi, Kaka, Podolski, Rooney and Torres to score in big numbers, for the love of football.

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