

Argentina manager Diego Maradona has called for critics of the team to apologise following their easy qualification for the World Cup Round of 16. "They (the critics) should apologise to the players, who are 100% professional," said Maradona. "We are doing our duty, which is to defend the Argentina shirt. Sometimes they are wrong, but those who have also criticised are wrong and should

Star  
**SPORT**

DHAKA THURSDAY JUNE 24, 2010, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.com



PHOTO: AFP

**THE ONE THAT MATTERED:** Striker Jermain Defoe (L) stabs home England's winning goal past Slovenia goalkeeper Samir Handanovic during their crunch World Cup Group C encounter at the Nelson Mandela Bay stadium in Port Elizabeth yesterday.

# Capello gamble pays off

AFP, Port Elizabeth

England's World Cup campaign finally took off Wednesday at the third attempt as Fabio Capello's side qualified for the last 16 with a 1-0 win over Slovenia to secure runners-up spot in Group C.

Jermain Defoe started for England in place of Emile Heskey in one of the biggest gambles of manager Capello's career.

And the move paid dividends with the Tottenham striker's 23rd minute goal. An opening 1-1 draw with the United States followed by the lame goalless stalemate with Algeria had left England staring at the possi-

bility of failing to make it out of the group stage for the first time since 1958.

Capello's men turned up

at the Nelson Mandela Bay stadium facing, as Steven Gerrard had so aptly put it, a do-or-die match.

They did it, and now have earned a second round date with the runners-up in Group D.

England started brightly, their passing sharp and accurate, but it was Slovenia who had the first shot on target when Valter Birsa tested David James in the fifth minute.

Wayne Rooney raised the temperature just after when he raced onto a superb through ball and Slovenia's defence had their work cut out to stop Steven Gerrard heading in his cross to the far post.

Capello had called for John Terry to put up a "big performance" after his failed mutiny and the Chelsea defender responded, making a fine robust intervention to rob Robert Ljubicankic of the ball beside

James's near post.

England then took the lead with a superb high ball from James Milner, who started in place of Aaron Lennon, on the right wing into the box for Defoe to volley past Slovenia keeper Samir Handanovic.

In almost a carbon copy move minutes later Milner crossed again, this time Defoe's shot was parried by Handanovic with Frank Lampard pouncing on the clearance only to fire over the bar.

It took a succession of fine saves from Handanovic to prevent England from doubling their lead as the Slovenia keeper kept out

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## SCORE BOARD

**SLOVENIA 0 - 1 ENGLAND**  
DEFOE 23

**Slovenia (4-4-2):** Samir Handanovic, Miso Brecko, Marko Suler, Bostjan Cesar, Bojan Jokic, Valter Birsa, Robert Koren (cap), Aleksander Radosavljevic, Andraz Kirm (Tim Matavz 79), Zlatan Ljubijankic (Zlatko Dedic 62), Milivoje Novakovic

**England (4-4-2):** David James, Glen Johnson, Matthew Upson, John Terry, Ashley Cole, Steven Gerrard (cap), Frank Lampard, Gareth Barry, James Milner, Jermaine Defoe (Emile Heskey 85), Wayne Rooney (Joe Cole 72)

Venue: Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

## KEY STATS

| Slovenia          | England     |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Shots (on target) | 11(3) 14(8) |
| Corners           | 2 11        |
| Possession        | 39% 61%     |
| Yellow Cards      | 3 1         |

**Slovakia v Italy** Time: 8.00pm Johannesburg

**Paraguay v New Zealand** Time: 8.00pm Polokwane

**Denmark v Japan** Time: 12.30am (Friday) Rustenburg

**TODAY'S MATCHES**

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MAX Skin Lightening  
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**TODAY'S POLL**

Who's to blame for the French disaster?

Visit the sports page of [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net) to cast your vote

**WORLD CUP POLL**

Do you think Kaka's red card was justified?

Unfair 59.4%  
Justified 26.6%  
Yellow card 14.1%

**TOTAL VOTES: 64**

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**NOKIA** N900

A diving Algeria defender Rafik Halliche takes the ball away from US midfielder Clint Dempsey (L) during their Group C encounter yesterday at the Loftus Verfeld Stadium in Pretoria.

**More Calculations, More Emotions**

Well the French sealed their final nail in their coffin, the Greeks have bowed out and the host South Africans have gone out with heads high. The vuvuzela honking may now wither down.

Shane Smeltz has already created history for the Kiwis against Italy by scoring the first goal for New Zealand ever in World Cup Football Competition. Well, New Zealand has already created history when they qualified only for the second time in World Cup Football.

The first New Zealanders to be widely known as Kiwis were the military. The Regimental Signs for all New Zealand regiments feature the kiwi, including those which fought in the Second Boer War then with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps in World War I. Much of the interaction between regiments and locals was done under the respective Regimental Sign, and the kiwi came to mean first the men of regiments and then all New Zealanders.

Well, today the calculations of points and goals will come into the scene in Group F, New Zealand plays Paraguay and the Kiwis need a win or will look up to the match of Italy and Slovakia. And the Italians need to win too. Draws in both matches will be a nightmare scenario for the Azzurris and the Kiwis. While Paraguay with a draw, will get through without much discomfort and Roque Santa Cruz will carry yet another South American dream to Round 2.

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