

Star SPORT

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Gallas threatens to sue FFF

France international defender William Gallas has threatened to take legal action against the French Football Federation (FFF) unless they pay him his World Cup bonuses, his lawyer told AFP on Friday. "Once again we are reaching out to the Federation," his lawyer Jim Michel-Gabriel said. "Mr Gallas plans to take the case before the courts. We haven't fixed a time limit but this case has dragged on too long." The FFF announced in February that the debate over the France squad's forfeit of their World Cup bonuses was "definitively closed".



WE DID IT FOR YOU, BOSS! The World Cup-winning Indian team carry their hero Sachin Tendulkar on a lap of honour around the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai yesterday. It was the fairytale ending the genius has been waiting for, winning his first World Cup on his home ground.

PHOTO: AFP

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MOMENT OF THE DAY



Jayawardene's tiki-taka

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Mahela Jayawardene's batting resembles Spain of the 2010 football World Cup. It is long drawn but comparisons tend to satiate our fantasies, so stay with it. Like the Xavi-inspired world champions, Jayawardene perfects the little things and tends to play beautifully; always looking to walk to a hundred rather than rush into it or lean into showboating. He touches the ball, he rolls it along the ground, squints, finds a little gap and pushes the ball through that. Last night, his World Cup final masterpiece was just that. When he joined Kumar Sangakkara in the 17th over, Sri Lanka were not cruising and neither was the skipper hitting it well. But in Jayawardene's presence, Sangakkara feels safe. The 62-run third wicket stand and another 50-plus with Thilan Samaraweera calmed nerves and made sure it all went to plan into the last quarter of the innings. No shots in the air till the batting Powerplay: check; wickets in hand: check; one set batsman at the crease: check. Jayawardene remained at the crease to fill all those boxes and some more. He didn't give off any nervous tension and through singles mainly, made sure at least one of the big hitters had him for support in the end. He got two -- Nuwan Kulasekara and Thisara Perera -- but remained the more attractive hitter. In recent times, Sangakkara has brushed aside any doubt over Jayawardene, questions bounced back after his quick exit from the semifinal. Sangakkara called him the best batsman of this generation, only comparable with Aravinda de Silva from all-time. Sangakkara remained adamant that Jayawardene would come good, almost laughing off suggestions that he was out of form. He was never, but when a batsman like Jayawardene doesn't score big ones, it is slightly off-putting. It is like Sri Lanka's Ferrari of the 1990s, de Silva always making the biggest contribution on the biggest stages. The two have captained but had better careers afterwards and both are part of the great Sri Lankan tradition of having a senior pair leading the way. Now both these sublime batsmen have World Cup final hundreds to their name and naturally, theirs would impress purists and like finely crafted showpieces, will find a best spot on the mantle piece of great knocks. You can put Clive Lloyd (102 in 1975), Viv Richards (138* in 1979), Ricky Ponting (140 in 2003) and Adam Gilchrist (149 in 2007) on one side as just brutal. Lloyd's effort was the sort that took the wind out of Ian Chappell's Australians. Richards hardly had a sweat when he swung Chris Old and Mike Hendricks for sixes while in modern day cricket, the hundreds of Ponting and Gilchrist are more annihilation than classics. But Jayawardene's would be remembered for its class: the big stride to drive Harbhajan Singh through point, the late taps past MS Dhoni, the leisurely cuts off Sreesanth, Virat Kohli and the rest. He only hit one ball in anger, a tee-off through mid-off against Zaheer Khan

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It finally belongs to Dhoni

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahendra Singh Dhoni doesn't spend too much time on history, records and emotions. He is a figure who gives off a distant air to the media, a cool persona to the public and a calming influence on teammates, be it stalwarts or rookies. What is Sachin Tendulkar's birth-right and what should have been Saurav Ganguly's natural conclusion is now Dhoni's. He has certainly deserved lifting the 2011 Cricket World Cup. His unbeaten 73-ball 75 might be his first half-century in the tournament but like Steve Waugh in 1999, he left his best for the last. His innings was a true reflection of his reign as India

captain. Some call him plain lucky. He has the best batting line-up in the world, an armoury that any captain would love to have. If that is so, Ricky Ponting is perhaps luckier than Dhoni. The Indian captain has to make do with a one-and-a-half man bowling attack and a fielding setup that blows hot and cold. Add to that the pressure of a billion people and a few million TV channels and you have the world's most under-fire captain, even when he's winning. During a press conference in Dhaka before the opening game

against Bangladesh, a female reporter asked Dhoni if the team would feel pressure since they beat New Zealand and Australia in the warm-up games. "Madam, if we win there's pressure and if we lose there's pressure. What can I do?" was his reply. It drew a lot of laughs and experienced journalists can't seem to forget this phrase. Dhoni may be sometimes ridiculed for his ultra-cool behaviour, sometimes bordering on the delusional. Incidents of Dhoni skipping press conferences and giving reporters blank looks are well-documented

but nobody, not even the hoards of former Indian cricketers who regularly pick on him, can take this World Cup triumph away from him. The man who was given the captaincy almost by default in late 2007 and then took over full time from Anil Kumble in 2008, Dhoni has balanced it well. It is sometimes forgotten that Dhoni leads a team that, in all his reign, had the likes of Ganguly, Dravid, Kumble and Tendulkar. In Pakistan, these are known as trouble-spots but for India, it has been the perfect mix in terms of leadership with South African Gary Kirsten being the perfect foil for the skipper. Former England coach Duncan Fletcher commended how Dhoni,

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CENTURIONS IN WC FINALS			
PLAYER	SCORE	OPPOSITION	YEAR
Jayawardene	103*	India	2011
Adam Gilchrist	149	Sri Lanka	2007
Ricky Ponting	140	India	2003
Aravinda de Silva	107*	Australia	1996
Viv Richards	138	England	1979
Clive Lloyd	102	Australia	1975

SAVING THE BEST FOR LAST: Classy Sri Lanka batsman Mahela Jayawardene spreads his arms after reaching a magnificent century while batsmen kept falling around him during the World Cup final at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP