Ganguly for two-tier Tests

AFP, New Delhi

Indian captain Sourav Ganguly said a two-tier system should be introduced to ensure a level playing field if the International Cricket Council (ICC) increased the number of Test playing nations.

"The ICC is contemplating increasing the number of Tes playing countries, but for the standard of the game to be preserved it would be better to have a two-tier system," Ganguly told reporters

"A two-tier system would ensure more competitiveness and allow weak teams to work their way up gradually," said Ganguly, India's most successful Test captain with 15 wins.

Ten nations have so far been accorded Test status with Kenva next in line after becoming surprise semi-finalists at last year's World

Bangladesh were the last side to be given Test status in 2000, but have failed to register a win in 28 matches.

Zimbabwe too are struggling at Test level since a stand-off between the Zimbabwe Cricket Union and White players over selection issues which led to the firing of 15 cricket-Javawardene.

ICC President Ehsan Mani had indicated at a seminar arranged by the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) at I ahore in Pakistan over the weekend that the ICC was aiming to globalise the game

"The ICC would love more countries to join the Test cricket fraternity but they must be ready," said Mani, who took over the two-year presidency in June 2003.

Only four countries -- Pakistan. Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh -- have been accorded Test status in the past 52 years.

Parreira drops three

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira has released three players for two friendly matches which serve as warm-up fixtures for their 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign.

Sao Paulo striker Luis Fabiano, Palmeiras keeper Marcos and Flamengo midfielder Felipe, called up in a 24-strong squad a week ago, have been released to their clubs and will not play the friendly against France in Paris on May 20 or the match against a Catalan selection on May 25. The players were let go because

of Sao Paulo's Libertadores Cup commitments and as Palmeiras and Flamengo were still battling away in the Brazil Cup. However Parreira said the play-

ers must return to the squad on May 28 for World Cup qualifiers against Argentina on June 2 and Chile on June 6. Parreira has called up Vasco da

Gama keeper Fabio as cover.

Parreira said he was not happy certain Europe clubs, and particularly Bayern Munich where Ze Roberto plays, have been trying to keep their players back for club fixtures.

"That's no good for us," Parreira said. "It's an obstacle in our path as we build-up towards the World Cup

Barua inspires

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Aktel: 143-10 in 47.2 overs (Mawla 38, Kalim 24, Nafis 17, Saikat 15, Shafiul 3-18, Moniruzzaman 2-22).

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Ebrahim keeps hosts afloat

Cricket

REUTERS, Bulwayo

Dion Fbrahim scored his ninth Test half-century to bolster the faltering Zimbabwe batting on the first day of the second Test against Sri Lanka in Bulawayo on Friday.

At tea Ebrahim was unbeaten on 70 out of his team's total of 184 for six after the home side had been put in to bat.

The patient Ebrahim featured in partnerships of 51 for the third wicket with Stuart Matsikenyeri and 52 for the fourth with captain Tatenda Taibu.

Ebrahim, who faced 161 balls and hit 12 fours, kept the innings together by showing the application that was lacking among his team

Left-arm pace bowler Chaminda Vaas drew first blood when he had Brendan Taylor caught behind for five by wicketkeeper Prasanna

In his next over, Vaas induced a sweetly struck but uppish drive from Mark Vermeulen which was smartly caught at extra cover by Muttiah Muralitharan. Vermeulen, playing his first Test since fracturing his skull on Zimbabwe's tour to Australia in February, was out without scoring.

Matsikenyeri and Ebrahim were separated in the third over before lunch when Matsikenyeri drove a ball from off spinner Muralitharan firmly to mid-on and was run out for 45 by Farveez Maharoof's throw.

Taibu, who turned 21 on Friday, was out 13 overs after lunch for 27 when he drove at a delivery from medium pacer Maharoof to be caught by Thilan Samaraweera at short cover

Sri Lanka's domination of the first two sessions was assured when they removed Alester Maregwede and Elton Chigumbura in the space of 11 deliveries.

Sanath Jayasuriya ran Maregwede out for 24 with a throw from leg gully to bowler Muralitharan and Chigumbura (0) edged Vaas to Mahela Jayawardene at second

Muralitharan came on to bowl five overs before lunch but did not deliver his controversial doosra.

The International Cricket Council has ruled that the doosra, which turns away from right-handed batsmen, transgresses its regulations on throwing and the Sri Lankan cricket authorities have advised Muraliharan not to bowl it.

Zimbabwe, who lost the first Test by an innings and 240 runs, were again forced to select a weakened side after 15 experienced players made themselves unavailable in a dispute with the Zimbabwe Cricket

SCORECARD Scoreboard at tea on the first day of the second Test between Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka at Queens Sports

Club on Friday: **ZIMBABWE**: First innings

Matsikenyeri run out (Maharoof) 45 Taylor c Jayawardene b Vaas Vermeulen c Muralitharan b Vaas 0 Ebrahim not out Taibu c Samaraweera b Maharoof

Maragwede run out (Jayasuriya)24 Chigumbura c Jayawardene b Vaas

Nkala not out				2	
Extras (1lb, 8nb, 2w)				11	
Total (for 6 wkts in 59 overs)) 18	184	
Fall of wkts: 1-24, 2-31, 3-82, 4-134					
5-176, 6-176					
Bowler	0	M	R	W	
Vaas	16	6	33	3	

36 Maharoof 12 50 Muralitharan 18 49 15 Jayasuriya 0 Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (AUS), Billy Bowden (NZL)

Television umpire: Russell Tiffin Match referee: Mike Procter

(RSA) Toss: Sri Lanka

Scolari wants to leave



Portugal coach Luiz Felipe Scolari hinted Thursday he may leave his post once his contract expires in July, after the three-week European football finals which the country will "After, it is another life. I don't

know what will happen," he said in an interview with Portuguese state

difficult for me to stay on and losing also makes it difficult, I will have to think about my future," he added. "If I get some offer from some-

Football Federation, Gilberto

Portugal to Euro 2004 glory.

"If a coach is successful it is



LUIZ FELIPE SCOLARI

Portuguese national team in January 2003 shortly after he led his

native Brazil to a record fifth world title in Japan, winning all seven World Cup matches in the process. He is reportedly being paid a 150,000 dollar (126,000 euro)

monthly salary as Portugal coach. Portuguese media have reported recently that Scolari may take over coaching duties at either

Lisbon-based Benfica or current UEFA champions FC Porto next season but the Brazilian said he has not received any offers from either Portugal have failed in all seven attempts to beat teams which will join them at Euro 2004, held

between June 12 and July 4, since Scolari took the helm of the squad. leading to calls from some fans and sports commentators for him to be The Euro 2004 hosts are in

Group A alongside Greece, Russia and Spain

and against Lithuania on June 5.



"But since at this moment I notice that winning Euro 2004 makes it

one, I will have to examine it. I was not thinking this way before." The president of the Portuguese

Madail, said in an interview published last month in weekly newspaper O Indpendente that it would be difficult to keep Scolari if he leads

difficult to keep them in the role. Because the proposals which they normally receive from football clubs are much bigger than those from a national federation," he said.



Scolari took the helm of the

Portugal have two more friendly matches to come before the start of Euro 2004, against Luxembourg on May 29

Serie A

Inter desperate

Football

Inter Milan can end a disappointing campaign on a high note if they win at relegation-threatened Empoli on Sunday in their final match of the season. Victory in Tuscany will guaran-

tee them the final Champions League qualifying spot and could condemn Empoli to the second Inter defender Fabio

Cannavaro said his team were determined to salvage something from a season that began so

"We have to put all our anger and frustration into 90 minutes because so much depends on claiming fourth place," said the Italy international There is a lot at stake for both

teams, but we have prepared well and are confident of getting three

"To get into the Champions League is of great importance to the club, the board and the fans and would be a great way to finish

Inter, who were knocked out in the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup by Marseille, put themselves in pole position for fourth place with a 1-0 victory over Parma at the San

CRYPTOQUIP

ROYXOLO SCOBESO UIJ SCO PUQSI SH

YXSSYO DUPQ Saturday's Cryptoquip: THE ORCHESTRA HAD A BIG PROBLEM READING THE MUSIC. IT WAS

THROWING TEMPO TANTRUMS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals T

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 give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Siro last weekend.

Fifth-placed Parma, who play at home to Udinese on Sunday, have 55 points from their 33 matches played, one less than Inter.

Should the teams finish level on points, a play-off will decide who takes fourth place with the loser going into the less lucrative UEFA

Lazio, who won the Italian Cup in midweek after defeating Juventus 4-2 on aggregate, still have an outside chance of snatching fourth place, but they would have to win at home to Modena for whom defeat could mean relegation - and hope Inter and Parma

That would leave Lazio level on points with Inter and force a playoff for fourth place

Inter, who last lifted a trophy in 1998 when they won the UEFA Cup, have spent heavily in the past few seasons but have failed to put together a team capable of landing the Scudetto

(All matches kick-off at 1300 GMT) AC Milan v Brescia, Chievo v Bologna Empoli v Inter Milan, Lazio v Modena Lecce v Reggina, Parma v Udinese, Perugia v Ancona, Sampdoria v Roma

Maple Leaf

SPORTS REPORTER

take on Ispahani Girls' High School in the opening match of the Maple Leaf First Mini handball tournament

Fourteen schools will participate in the five-day meet. All the matches will be played at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex, organisers told a press briefing at the Bangladesh Handball Federation

provide Tk 50,000 out of the total budget of Tk one lakh.

BHF general secretary Asaduzzaman Kohinoor, tournament committee chairman Badaruddin Ahmed, vice-principal of Maple Leaf Ali Karam Reza were



Bangladesh Handball Federation general secretary Asaduzzaman Kohinoor (L) briefs the reporters at a press conference at the BHF office yesterday

FA won't block Thaksin bid

REUTERS, London

The English Football Association (FA) and the Premier League will not block Thailand's billionaire prime minister from buying a stake in Liverpool, spokesmen for the two ruling bodies said on Friday.

Thaksin Shinawatra, a former telecoms tycoon, has said his odds of winning a stake in the premier league club are "better-than-even" after Liverpool's board rebuffed a rival bid from British businessman Steve

"There is nothing in our regulations to prevent such a bid from going ahead." an FA spokesman said.

The Premier League, administrators of England's top-flight division, said it did not comment on speculation but a spokesman said: "The Premier League is a global phenomenon and as such we can hardly be surprised that it attracts foreign

Schools h'ball

In yesterday's semifinals, the Bandura boys eliminated Birshreshtha Abdur Rouf School 16-4 while Narinda beat Ansar VDP School 18-13 at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex.

In the girls' final, Viquarunnissa Noon School face Scholastica.

In the semis, Viquarunnissa ousted BIS 12-4 while Scholastica defeated Mohammadpur Preparatory 17-4. The final and the third-place

play-off will be held on May 20. Calypso Cocktail

FROM PAGE 13

"I was the head of the West Indies Cricket Board's disciplinary committee when Lara and Curtly Ambrose were summoned for a hearing for an incident after the 1995 tour to England. And I couldn't

believe my eyes when they arrived. "Lara was wearing a 'three-piece suit *while Ambrose came in a t-shirt which read 'Black & Bad'! It was a sign of total disrespect," said one of the top officials of the WICB who can not be named for obvious reasons.

But love him or hate him, Lara is still the buzz word that fills the

"I don't think there will be as many spectators on Saturday and Sunday. It's a shame 'cause big players always ignore small islands like St Vincent. I only remember seeing Viv Richards two or three times during all the years he played cricket. Now it's the same with Lara." said a frustrated 'Smoker' Alexander when news broke out that the West Indies captain was not

And there are others like the umpire who officiated in Bangladesh's tour opener against the West Indies Cricket Board XI who will tell you that Lara is the king of hearts.

"I have found him to be one o most generous of persons. He is also one of the fairest of cricketers Once he was playing a regional match and the bowler appealed for a catch behind to which the umpire lifted his finger. As Lara was walking past the official he said; you've embarrassed me Maan (by lifting your finger). I would have walked anywav.

* Which is very unusual in the Caribbean climate

h'ball from today

Maple Leaf International School will todav.

(BHF) office yesterday. Title sponsors Maple Leaf will

place finish in the Premiership. "The next two months are proba-

Liverpool are already committed

Moroccan Prince Rachid Moulay (R) and former Spanish prime minister Philipe Gonzalez (L) are greeted by Moroccan supporters at FIFA headquartes in Zurich yesterday, prior to the presentations of the five African nations

African showdown today

World Cup host will be.

FIFA made a brave decision when they agreed the World Cup would be moved around their confederations rather than alternate

between Europe and South Amer-

South Korea and Japan gave Asia a World Cup to be proud of in 2002 and although the finals in 2006 will be held in the comparatively staid setting of Germany, the African finals of 2010 will be unlike the world has ever seen -- wherever they are

The image of African soccer has changed enormously in the last 10 years. African's best players now play all over Europe from Scotland to Serbia, from Poland to Israel. The African Cup of Nations

media for the first 40 years of its existence, is now shown live on television throughout the world. Of course there are vastly differng standards from those in Europe

and the rest of the world, but players

from the poorest parts of Africa are now competing at the highest levels How the polls go

owest number of votes is eliminated

This procedure is repeated until

from a second round of voting.

the last round when only two countries are left in the running. If the two remaining countries each receive 12 of the 24 votes, FIFA President Sepp Blatter has the

casting vote.

in Europe's top leagues

Development programmes initiated by UEFA, the European confederation, have helped African clubs, players and referees and FIFA's various assistance programmes are also helping to advance the African game.

vote as the slight favourites to win the nomination, but Morocco and Egypt are not far behind and could vet take the prize. Pele might have been wrong

South Africa go into Saturday's

about an African team winning the World Cup by the year 2000 -- but perhaps only by a few years. Africa has already won the 2010

World Cup in one way -- and by the time it is finished who's to say that there won't be an African world champion on the field too.

rarely covered by the European Primera Liga

Only pride left for Real

Football

AFP, Madrid Without a title to their name this season for the first time in five years,

giants Real Madrid will still be play-

ing for pride at bottom club Murcia on Sunday. Real are second, and the ninetimes kings of Europe and have secured their place in next season's Champions League despite having

Valencia last Sunday, but three points will still be vital. They face the relative ignominy of having to play in the Champions League qualifying rounds in July

Such matches would also mean

that they would either have to cancel

and August if they slip further.

to concede the Spanish title to

or drastically revise proposed highprofile tours of the United States or "I'm sad (that Real haven't won anything), but my conscience is clear. I can pinpoint the match when

everything started to go wrong for

us," said Real coach Carlos Queiroz on Thursday. "It was the game against Barcelona last month. Before then, we were playing well but after losing that we lost confidence, our motivation crashed and it has been hard to lift ourselves since," add the

Portuguese coach. Queiroz looks set to leave Real at the end of the season but, while he is still in charge, will have to decide who will replace the susnended Brazilian World Cup winners Roberto Carlos and Ronaldo on Sunday. Murcia have only won four

matches all season but have often

been a better side than their results

would suggest. Sitting on their bench will be their coach John Toshack, a haunting reminder of better days for Real Madrid. The Welshman guided Real to the 1990 league title with a record

"We are really just sorting ourselves out for next season but every game since we got relegated seems to show improvement," said Toshack this week There is also the intimidating

presence of Murcia's Jose Luis Acciari, whose battle with England captain David Beckham was a feature of their first encounter this season when they went down 1-0 in the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

"I did some terrible things to him," admitted Acciari "But Beckham was a gentlemen. After the match he said they were only minor incidents," added the Murcia midfielder who, almost inevitably given Beckham's illstarred history with the nation, is

Barcelona are third but only one point behind their bitter rivals Real, and will be looking to increase the pressure with a win over relegationthreatened Racing Santander on Sunday. Ronaldinho looks set to play

despite a bout of flu' earlier this

week but Edgar Davids is doubtful

with a left hamstring strain.

It could also be the last match in the Nou Camp for Barca's former Spanish international Luis Enrique Martinez, who will celebrate his 300th league game for the Catalans and his 400th in the

top flight of Spanish football. Luis Enrique, 34, is expected to retire at the end of the season, although he has also received offers for a lucrative valedictory

season in Qatar. Valencia fans will be packed into Villarreal's snug El Madrigal stadium, just 60 kilometres away in a game brought forward to Friday because of the new Spanish champions' appearance in next Wednesday's UEFA Cup

Villarreal want revenge in the derby after they were beaten by Valencia in the UEFA Cup semifinals earlier this month and the hosts, who lie seventh, are still nvolved in a six-way scrap for two places in next season's competi-

Saturday (Kick off GMT) Deportivo v Celta Vigo (1800), Betis v Valladolid (1800), Atletico v Zaragoza

Albacete v Sevilla (1530), Mallorca v Espanyol (1530), Osasuna v Bilbao (1530), Sociedad v Malaga (1530), Barcelona v Racing Santander (1730), Murcia v Real Madrid (1930)

Wake up Liverpool

Argentine.

Football

AFP, Liverpool

Steven Gerrard has warned that Liverpool must spend big this summer if they are to become a European force once more, regardless of who wins the battle to secure a major stake in the club.

The club captain refused to be

drawn on the respective merits of

rival cash-injection proposals from

millionaire builder Steve Morgan and

Thai PM Thaksin Shinawatra. But he was more forthcoming about Liverpool's need for an injection of quality on the pitch to make an impact in the Champions League and improve on this season's fourth-

bly the most important in the recent history of the club, so far as I'm concerned," Gerrard said.

"There are a lot of things happening and it's vital we bring the right players in so we're challenging next season. Personally, I will be very disappointed if we don't sign more and put it right for next season.' than three top class players in the

to buying striker Djibril Cisse from Auxerre in the summer.

But the club also need to

strengthen in central defence and midfield, where Dietmar Hamann is no longer the player he once was and Bruno Cheyrou and El Hadji Diouf have failed to make the impact "Over the season we've shown

we've got a squad that can beat

anyone on its day," Gerrard said.

from start to finish.'

"But on the day isn't enough We've got to produce week in, week out, and we haven't done it. Challenging for the title is about performing throughout the season

Liverpool go into the final game of

Saturday, with fourth place and a place in the final qualifier for the Champions League tied up. Gerrard said he would enjoy the celebrations but said the players

should not forget the bigger picture.

the season, at home to Newcastle on

"We're in the Champions League, but the season hasn't gone the way we wanted it to go. I think we've all got to go away over the summer and take a long, hard look at ourselves

Sharma plunders BASHUNDHARA

Sandeep not out Nafees Ibw b Samsul Al-Shahriar not out Extras: (lb-2, nb-4, w-9) Total: (For one in 36.4 overs) Fall of wkts: 1-66

Bowlers 0 21 Mizanur Azad 0 28 Rezauanul 0 10 Shamsul 0 32 Mehrab 37 0 24 Hasu Rafiqul 0 33 Tario 0 Result: Bashundhara won by

PREMIERSHIP FIXTURES AFP, London

nine wickets.

Saturday (1400 GMT) Arsenal v Leicester, Aston Villa v

Man Utd, Blackburn v Birmingham, Bolton v Fulham, Charlton v Southampton, Chelsea v Leeds Liverpool v Newcastle, Man City v Everton, Portsmouth v

Middlesbrough, Wolves v

Douglas

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graphic ously 56 Famous 15 Siciliar lab statistic spouter assistant 9 Under the 30 Region 16 Нарру 57 Past compan 58 Requisite 10 N.J. ion 59 Walden. neighbor 17 Watson's 12 Solo beckoner 60 Tandoori player in 18 Harbor bread three structure **61** "Help! movies 19 Biz DOWN Web site some! 1 From the info 21 Petrol top like game



