at top 10

INTERNET, undated

the top 10 in the world.

Bangalore," she said.

helps alot.

shape.

said her aim was to make it to

conferred "Doctor of Letters"

(Honoris Causa) by the MGR

University here, she said her

main focus was now to train

hard and get back to her best

life is to live the moment and

now I am going to enjoy my

Doctorate," she said, adding,

"I think I have a few more

years left in me to prove that I

am capable making it to top-

10." She said she was training

for about five to six hours a

coach and a special trainer

with us. The first one week we

were doing just fitness, now

we have started hitting the

we are punishing our bodies

come out of the gruelling

schedule and receive this

honour," Sania added.

It's a nice break for me to

'We have an American

Speaking after she was

De la Red out for season

AFP, Madrid

Real midfielder Ruben de la Red, who collapsed unconscious during a match at the end of October, will miss the rest of the season, the Spanish club's president Ramon Calderon has said.

The 23-year-old is the third Real player to be sidelined for the rest of the season after Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy and Malian international midfielder Mahamadou Diarra, both of whom are struggling with right knee injuries.

"I can't remember a situation like the one we are in right now, with three players sidelined for the entire season," Calderon told Spanish television station La Sexta late on Thursday.

De la Red, part of the Spain squad that won Euro 2008, has not played since he collapsed and was stretchered off the pitch during Real's 3-2 loss at Real Union in the King's Cup on October 30.

Last week the club said a heart anomaly likely caused the player to suffer a "sharp blackout with loss of consciousness" during the match, but further tests were needed to get a more definitive diag-

A panel of eight top cardiologists consulted by the club recommended the player should not resume any physical activity until the results of genetic testing have been

received, it said at the time. Real, the reigning Spanish champions, are currently in fifth place in the league, nine points adrift of leaders and arch rivals Barcelona who they face on Saturday in one of the most anticipated matches of the season.

Johnson confident

CRICINFO, Perth

Mitchell Johnson has no doubt Australia will win the exciting battle of speed with South Africa at the WACA from Wednesday.

Five of the world's top ten bowlers will be on display in the opening Test of the series on what should be the quickest pitch of the contest.

"I back our attack," he said in the Australian. "There's obviously going to be a little bit of niggle there with their pace, our pace, their top order, our top order. They can talk as much as they like but we're just going to go out there and bowl like we've been bowl-

Johnson, who is ranked No. 8, said the attack improved during the 2-0 win over New Zealand and was comfortable in home conditions. "I'm looking forward to the contest," he said. "I know it's going to be a great series. They've been talking up their bowlers a little bit but I think our attack is something to look forward to as well. You've got Brett Lee and Stuart Clark two classy bowlers."

Clark is third on the Test rankings, two spots ahead of Lee. The South Africans have Dale Steyn, who is in second, and Makhaya Ntini (fourth) alongside Morne Morkel, who picked up an ankle injury in the tour opener against Western Australia.

The WACA is now Johnson's home ground after an off-season move from Queensland to Western Australia and one of his new bosses is Dennis Lillee, the man who spotted him as a teenager in Townsville. Johnson saw Lillee on Thursday and asked for advice on dealing with the pitch.

"We just spoke about how things have been going for me at the moment and also just bowling at the WACA," he said in the Sydney Morning Herald. "It's somewhere where you've got to make the batsmen play. If you're bowling outside the off stump, it's pretty easy to leave here. We just spoke about a few little things like

that." It will be the first time Johnson, who has played 15 Tests, will face South Africa in the long form of the game. "I guess it's going to be pretty exciting for me to bowl to their top order," he said. "They've had some good performers there. It's a bit of a look-andsee for them. They've only faced me in the one-day [arena].



balls.

everyday.

Indian tennis star Sania Mirza applauds during a ceremony during which she was awarded an honorary doctorate in Chennai on Thursday.

I've bowled better: Swann

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

Graeme Swann admitted the over which saw him make history in the first Test against India was not the best he has ever bowled.

The Nottinghamshire off-spinner became only the second bowler in Test history - following Richard Johnson's feat against Zimbabwe at Chester-le-Street in 2003 - to claim two wickets in his maiden over as the hosts stuttered to 155 for six at close of play on day two in Chennai.

"It was bizarre. It was a terrible first over," Swann, who finished the day with two for 35 from 12 overs, told Sky Sports.

"It had everything, a long hop, a half-volley and two wickets, so I can't really ask for a lot

Both wickets, those of Gautam Gambhir (19) and Rahul Dravid (three) came from marginal lbw decisions which Hawkeye suggested Darrel Hair got right.

"As soon as it hit Dravid I thought 'that's out', I couldn't see any other way," said Swann of his second strike.

way. I'm just glad they've been given.

England's first-innings total of 316 as they were bowled out in the afternoon session following an impressive half century from Matt Prior had seemed below par.

apiece from James Anderson, Steve Harmison,

Monty Panesar and Andrew Flintoff, now appear to be in the driving seat.

"It's not been easy to accrue runs on this pitch so far," said Swann. "We did well to get to 300 in the end.

"Apart from the opening stand we never really got a partnership together. Matt Prior

could make something happen. "I don't think anyone expected to have them

three down by teatime but once you get that it's important to carry on and the way Fred [Flintoff] bowled at the end with that hostility was very encouraging for us."

Harbhajan Singh and Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Saturday before trying to establish a big second-innings lead.

Swann said: "We've got four wickets to get and they've still got a couple of good players at the crease, especially with Dhoni there so we

"If we can do that, get into a good position and tighten the noose we should be in a very

"It was a good decision looking at it on TV, ery from Harbhajan to be dismissed for just a but it was one which could have gone the other single, admitted he was loving his introduction to Test cricket.

"I thought it was supposed to be boring," he

"I've enjoyed the two days so far - I didn't enjoy getting one that bounced on me when I But the tourists, who also had a wicket was batting but I'd trade that any day for getting two wickets on my Test debut."

The English Premier League plans to help develop profes-Mohammed bin Hammam said here Friday.

football market.

Bin Hammam told a small Premier League had already been engaged in various developmental and social assisand abroad, "especially in play-offs.

support the AFC in technical, said, but added: "Maybe not all organisational and other areas of them are wanted yet at this and "we are counting a lot on stage." their support," he said.

clubs," bin Hammam said.

"There will be a platform for knowledge they have."

success and we are also caring convinced that the Premier about their existence in Asia," League intends to leave a the Qatari said. "At the end of positive "legacy" in Asia rather the day, we found there is a lot than exploit the lucrative of mutual interest between region.

lines of the Club World Cup.

utive Richard Scudamore, speaking alongside bin Hammam, said there would be criteria for twinning between Premiership clubs and Asian clubs of the Champions

federation to steer us in the right direction," he said, such tie-ups.

vations about clubs in China amid disappointments and such as Manchester United, football in the world's most

group of reporters that the Champions League which will be expanded from 28 to 32 teams next year. Thirty teams are from the top 11 leagues and tance programmes at home two come from qualifying

Now the top-flight 20-club (from China) will find partners league has come forward to in England," an AFC official

The partnership accord "There could be or would be followed a recent bust-up over possibly in Asia.

But he changed his mind

He made the remarks as he had always been concerned formally announced a new about whether foreign clubs format for the AFC Champions would "come and collect the League from 2009 on the side- money and go" or if they would leave some legacy.

played really well for his 50. "We knew if we put it in the right areas we

England will have the task of removing

need to get rid of him early on.

strong position."

Swann, who received a nasty, turning deliv-

EPL to help Asian clubs

Football

AFP, Tokyo

sional football clubs in Asia Leaguelevel. through "twinning" partnerships, AFC president The scheme is part of an

agreement on cooperation between the world's leading football league and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), which could give English clubs, better access to a fast growing populous country.

twinning between our clubs in the Premier League's plan to Asia and Premier League play one "39th" round abroad,

our administrators and offi- denounced the idea as he cials as well as coaches to join feared it would further hamper the Premier League for gaining the development of Asia's own experiences they have and leagues and national sides. "They are caring about our and welcomed it after he was

Premier League chief exec-

"We rely on the Asian conadmitting that it could be a

"long process" to establish There could be some reser-

controversy surrounding China are given spots for four clubs in the AFC

"I'm sure these four clubs

Bin Hammam had initially

Bin Hammam said that Asia TV umpire: Suresh Shastri (IND) Match referee: Jeff Crowe

"Now we know there will be benefits for Asian football," he

said. "It's not like an invasion. With the launch of the newlook Champions League, bin Hammam said, "I think the time has come to professionalise our football."

No visa woes

FROM PAGE 17

to India after New Delhi blamed the attacks on its financial centre on "elements based in Pakistan," deepening the rift between the neighbours.

But last week Rauf brushed aside such worries. "I have no concerns at all

about travelling to India,' Rauftold AFP.

"I am happy to be going there. In fact, it is important to go there because we go as peace ambassadors. Sports and these things should not

Rauf has officiated in 25 Tests and 56 one-day matches. His last lest was also in India -- between India and Australia in Mohali -- in

Newbie

October this year.

FROM PAGE 17 Laxman c and b Panesar Y Singh c Flintoff b Harmison 14 Dhoninotout H Singh not out Extras: (b-2, lb-7, nb-3) Total (for 6 wkts, 45 overs) 155 Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-34, 3-

37, 4-98, 5-102, 6-137. R 29 Harmison Anderson 10 26 2 26 Flintoff 0 35 Swann 2 30 Panesar Toss: England Umpires: Daryl Harper (AUS) and Billy Bowden (NZL)

(NZL)

Chelsea take tough stance

AFP, London

Chelsea have issued a stern reminder to players with ambitions on leaving the club prior to the end of their contract by declaring the club will decide who will be transferred and when.

The statement comes in the wake of speculation that Brazilian defender Alex had demanded a move away from Stamford Bridge during this January's transfer window.

It is claimed Alex, who is behind first choice centrebacks John Terry and Ricardo Carvalho in the pecking order and has played just 12 games this season, told Chelsea of his desire to leave earlier this

Chelsea denied the speculation, but issued a statement nonetheless to affirm their

"Chelsea would like to make clear that no transfer request has been received from any player," said the statement.

"Chelsea will decide the future of any contracted player in the best interests of the club."

AC Milan and Spanish side Sevilla have already expressed an interest in the 10 million pounds-rated defender, who wants to force his way into the reckoning for the 2010 World

Meanwhile, Chelsea's reported interest in Amr Zaki looks set to be tested to the full after Wigan denied they would offload the Egyptian in January.

Zaki has scored eight times since arriving at the JJB Stadium on a season-long loan deal from El Zamalek and the Blues are the latest club to monitor is availability.

But Wigan manager Steve Bruce is confident the highlyrated striker will remain his until the end of the campaign.

"It does become a bit repetitive and boring," said Bruce. "It is Chelsea this week, Real Madrid last week, Liverpool the week before, Man City before that.

"I think the whole thing needs to be addressed really. He is ours for the rest of the season.

"All of this nonsense around him, I do believe gets to him a little bit. But I can't stop this constant speculation about Zaki."

CL Twenty20

FROM PAGE 17 as participating fees from the total pot of US\$6 million. These teams will now have to try and make the cut all over again, officials confirmed.

Apart from Rajasthan Royals and Chennai Super Kings, the IPL finalists, the Western Australia and Twenty20 winners and runfinalists Titans and Dolphin; champions Middlesex; and Sialkot Stallions, the winners of Pakistan's domestic | prettygoodside.' Twenty20 tournament.

Dr Sania aims SA set for Confed Cup

Football Tennis sensation Sania Mirza

AFP, Johannesburg

South Africa says it will be ready to host the Confederations Cup, which kicks off in six months time, in a test run for the 2010 World Cup which is expected to inspire the entire continent.

"We can't fail," said Danny "I am not looking for anything right now. My top prior-Jordaan, head of the local organising committee for the ity now is to get back into best games. shape. I have been training hard in the off-season camp in

an agent of change for Africa," he said. "If we succeed (with local organisers and FIFA say. "Training with Mahesh the World Cup), we'll be Bhupathi and Rohan Bopanna bound together by a common celebration." One thing I have learnt in

remains a black sport, nearly 15 years after the fall of apartnants of the fallen white- tional isolation in sports. minority government.

prefer rugby, the sport of the areas and level the pitch. white minority. Now they're cases, built from scratch.

Public transport is being created in cities, which currently have almost none.

"It's been really hard and one of the highest rates in the security forces "answers all of off from jobs. world, must be tamed for the our questions." 450,000 visitors expected competition.

With a four billion-dollar budget for the Confed Cup and the 2010 World Cup, portation system, the fan ises.

Africa a nation transformed.

Investments made in the name of football, which extend even to the planting of trees in townships, are "part of a bigger programme to restore the dignity of the people of South Africa," said the acting mayor of Johannesburg, Thula

Khoza. For the Confed Cup, which opens June 14 when South Africa's hot-and-cold Bafana Bafana plays Iraq, the four stadiums in Johannesburg, "Our responsibility is to be Pretoria, Rustenburg and Bloemfontein will be ready,

Johannesburg's Ellis Park has particular significance as the venue where South Africa In a country where football hosted the historic rugby World Cup final in 1995, where the Springboks brought the heid, enormous challenges trophy home in a triumphant remain -- many of them rem- end to the country's interna-

Work on the stadiums is in and water canons. Stadiums were long con- full swing to expand the seatfined to the townships and ing, add roofing over the ignored by investors who stands, upgrade the public

being refurbished, or in some for the Confederations Cup. Delivery will be on time," in February at the latest, said FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke.

during the three weeks of that we are talking about cities for 2010, at a cost of one security not only in the stadi- billion euros (1.3 billion dolums but also around," he lars). In June, South Africa will added, including the trans- show if it can keep its prom-

organisers plan to leave South parks where matches will be shown on big-screen TVs, and in all the places where fans

might gather. Andre Pruis, deputy chief of national police, says that security will be ensured during the two tournaments with extra deployments at roads. train stations, airports, hotels and restaurants, as well as the

stadiums. South African authorities have changed their tone on crime. The government once simply insisted "the country will be safe," but in September a new administration arrived that understood it had to come with a plan of action against the

country's 50 murders a day. Police have 100 million euros (131 million dollars) to recruit 55,000 new officers, bringing up forces to 190,000 in 2009, train agents in crowd control, and buy surveillance cameras, drones, helicopters

After 2010, Pruis plans to redeploy the new forces and equipment to fight organised crime and the often violent "The stadiums are on track robberies and carjackings that strike every day.

The World Cup also promises to revolutionise life for the vast majority of the popula-For security, he said the tion that has no transporta-Crime, in a country with plan detailed by South African tion, effectively cutting them

A train and bus network is "We'll have to make sure being set up in the nine host

Ronaldo, aware of the challenge ahead, said

"I have a major challenge in front of me and

"I'm just a player like all the rest here and I

He added that patience would be needed in

I'll do everything I can to meet it head on," said

have the same rights, and the same obligations,

as everyone else. I won't have any privileges."

he expects no special treatment.

Ronaldo unveiled

Football

AC Milan was not renewed.

AFP, Sao Paulo

Brazilian striker Ronaldo was officially unveiled by his new club Corinthians on Friday, but reminded fans that he still faced "a major

challenge" to return to full fitness. The 32-year-old 1994 and 2002 World Cup winner and two-time European footballer of the year has not played this season following a career-threatening left knee injury on which he was operated in February. Months later his contract with Italian side

form, Ronaldo stunned observers by signing for

"It has been nine months since my operation and during my comeback little muscular problems could arise which in themselves may

image rights.

a "gradual" comeback.

the Brazilian.

not be serious but which would be painful and could mean I lose two or three weeks," he said. Reports said Ronaldo will earn a monthly Having spent months training with top salary of 127,000 euros for his one-year deal, Brazilian side Flamengo in a bid to get back to not including bonuses from the sale of his



Brazil superstar Ronaldo waves to supporters wearing his new Corinthians jersey during his official

Hayden ready for Steyn

Cricket

presentation in Sao Paulo on Friday.

CRICINFO, undated

Matthew Hayden is ready to combat the threat of Dale Steyn, the South Africa fast bowler, during the upcoming Test series, starting from December 17 in Perth. Steyn has been the key focus of the media heading into the contest, and his performance

will be watched very keenly. Steyn heads into the tour with 60 wickets at 19.41 in 11 Test this year, but Hayden felt original line-up included | the real test was coming up now. "We'll see won't we," Victoria, Australia's domestic Hayden told sportal.com.au

Hayden faced Steyn briefly best series we've seen out here the Perth Test match."

during the IPL and said the in Australia for a while. bowler was similar to Allan Donald, the legendary former bowling attack and they'll get South Africa bowler, and Brett their shot straightaway in

Allan Donald. "[He's] also very similar to

it'll be very important for us."

"They have got a good fast Lee. "Even though it was a Perth, that's one venue which short stint [in the IPL], it was traditionally aids the fast three or four overs in a row. It bowlers. Hopefully it's fast and was good to get a feel of his bouncy, so both bowling units shape, he does remind me a from South Africa and little bit of a shorter version of Australia have an opportunity to show what they've got."

Hayden, 37, has struggled Brett Lee, so our batters will for form during the home certainly be shaping up summer, with only 32 runs against the world's No. 1 team against Binga [Lee] this week, from three Test innings. He recently played his 100th Test As is almost tradition in Adelaide, but was run out between the two sides, barbs for a record-equalling 12th have already been exchanged time - for 24. "From my point between the two sides, espe- of view I spend hours and cially the coaches, though hours and hours hitting Hayden felt the contest would cricket balls and trying to when asked whether the finally match the pre-series present myself in the best ners-up; South Africa's Pro20 | bowler - yet to play Australia in hype. "We love the on-field and shape that I can when it comes a Test - is as good as his recent off-field banter which we've all to the match," he said. "When England's Twenty20 Cup record. "We'll see, because read about and seen in the that sort of thing happens, an he's obviously going to play press," he said. "I think that the unforced error, it affects your Australia and I think we're a two sides are closely matched momentum, so I've still got a up, it's going to be one of the lot of work to do leading up to