

## Buck talks up Lee's chances

INTERNET, undated

Former Australia coach John Buchanan believes fast bowler Brett Lee could be Ricky Ponting's trump card on the tour of India next month.

The 31-year-old opted out of the ongoing one-day series against Bangladesh in Darwin because of his separation from his wife, but will return for the four-Test Border-Gavaskar series.

Buchanan, also known as Buck, said: "It is going to be a tough and exciting tour, like any India-Australia series."

"We expect to see some good bowling from both teams, but Lee, knowing the sub-continent well, will be an effective bowler on these wickets."

Buchanan, who is coach of Indian Premier League side Kolkata Knight Riders, reckons the series will be decided by the top-order batting.

"The real crux of the series will be how the top order negotiates the opposition bowlers," he added.

"That will be crucial in determining the result of the match."

## Deccans to probe Laxman, Afridi spat

INTERNET, undated

The management of the Hyderabad Deccan Chargers has decided to take up the issue of the clash between skipper VVS Laxman and mercurial Pakistani player Shahid Afridi.

According to a release from Deccan Chargers Chief Executive Tim Wright from Hyderabad, "following remarks which have appeared in the news media this week attributed to Shahid Afridi and the response to those remarks attributed to VVS Laxman, we will hold a full inquiry to establish the facts."

"In the interest of fairness and of thoroughness both players have been advised of this process and have been invited to contribute to the inquiry."

"When we have established the facts we will take whatever action we consider necessary and appropriate in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Premier League contracts between the players and Deccan Chargers," it said.

It may be recalled that a war of words had erupted after between Laxman and Afridi after the latter had commented to a Pakistani channel that Adam Gilchrist would be a better choice to lead Deccan Chargers and that Twenty20 would not suit Laxman's style of play.

Laxman, in response, had reminded Afridi that it was a collective failure which led to the team finishing last in the IPL and he had no business to blame the captain alone.

"Afridi has no team ethics. Speaking negatively about the team in public, let alone the captain, is just not on. Being an experienced cricketer, he should not be questioning the way the team functions. I am really shocked to say the least."

"He should know that it was a collective failure because he was part of the team. It is unfortunate that he chose to blame the captain for it," Laxman had said.

Deccan Chargers were left holding the wooden spoon in the inaugural edition of the IPL, despite having one of the most formidable sides on paper, including huge hitters like Gilchrist, Andrew Symonds, Herschelle Gibbs and Afridi.

The recent case of Symonds coming to grief with the Cricket Australia authorities would also not help their cause much.

## NZC reports big loss

INTERNET, undated

New Zealand Cricket announced a significant 7.586 million New Zealand dollars loss for the 2007-08 financial year on Friday.

NZC chief executive Justin Vaughan told the ruling body's annual general meeting in Wellington that he expected the money to be recouped in the coming years.

Vaughan said the organisation had planned to make an initial loss as part of their four-year cycle.

He said: "NZC operates on a four-year cycle due to variations in revenue over the four-year period arising from ICC events such as the World Cup and inbound tours from the likes of England and India."

"Overall for the four years ending May 31, 2010, NZC is forecasting a surplus result."

Back pay for players in an agreed lump sum to cricketers saw NZC take a hit, but they are expecting a bumper pay day from next year's incoming tour by India.



Members of the Australian cricket team pose with the Commonwealth Bank trophy in Darwin yesterday after their 3-0 win over the Tigers.

## 'Ashraful close to axe'

FROM PAGE 17

"I asked for contributions, it didn't need to be a super-human effort from anyone," Siddons said. "Everything fell into place today. The pitch spun, it was slow, hard for the batsmen to score. It suited our style of cricket perfectly. It suited our batsmen perfectly as well. But for some unknown reason they all threw their wickets away."

The only man to show real resolve was Tamim Iqbal, whose 63 gave Bangladesh hope of an upset. While Siddons said Tamim would need to start converting his regular starts into centuries, the coach was happy with the opener's aggressive but largely controlled display.

Tamim was out to what he himself called "a stupid shot" when he slashed at a cut shot off Shane Watson and was caught at third man. He was running out of partners but Tamim was angry with himself for throwing away the team's last remaining hopes and his chances of a century.

He said the batsmen were disappointed to continually let down Siddons with loose strokes. "We're working hard and we have a very

good coach," Tamim said. "He pushes us in everything."

"We are a young side and have to learn a lot of things. The more matches we play, the more improvement will come. We have to listen to him first. At this moment I don't think we are listening to him."

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the third and final one-day international between Australia and Bangladesh in Darwin on Saturday:

AUSTRALIA				
Marsh b Reza	30			
Watson run out	27			
Clarke run out	25			
M Hussey not out	57			
D Hussey run out	11			
Haddin c Kapali b Razzak	16			
White not out	22			
Extras: (lb-1, w-9)	10			
Total: (For five wickets in 50 overs)	198			
Did not bat: Hopes, Johnson, Bracken, Clark				
Fall of wickets: 1-41, 2-84, 3-87, 4-111, 5-150.				

BANGLADESH				
Marsh b Reza	30			
Watson run out	27			
Clarke run out	25			
M Hussey not out	57			
D Hussey run out	11			
Haddin c Kapali b Razzak	16			
White not out	22			
Extras: (lb-1, w-9)	10			
Total: (For five wickets in 50 overs)	198			
Did not bat: Hopes, Johnson, Bracken, Clark				
Fall of wickets: 1-41, 2-84, 3-87, 4-111, 5-150.				

Man-of-the-match: Tamim Iqbal.

Man-of-the-series: Mike Hussey.

Toss: Australia.

Umpires: Peter Parker (AUS), Amiesha Saheba (IND)

Razzak 10 1 22 1

Mahmudullah 4 0 15 0

BANGLADESH

Tamim c Clarke b Watson 63

Zunaid c White b Clark 0

Ashraful c Clarke b Clark 3

Kapali b Johnson 0

Shakib c M Hussey b Hopes 27

Mahmudullah b Hopes 1

Dhiman lbw b Hopes 1

Reza c D Hussey b Watson 0

Razzak b D Hussey 14

Mashrafe not out 8

Shahadat absent hurt

Extras: (b-2, lb-2, w-4)

Total: (For nine wickets in 29.5 overs)

Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-13, 3-22, 4-82,

5-96, 6-98, 7-99, 8-103, 9-125.

Bowler O M R W

Bracken 6 1 19 0

Clark 5 1 12 2

Johnson 4 0 36 1

D Hussey 4.5 0 16 1

Hopes 5 1 30 3

Watson 5 0 8 2

Result: Australia won by 73 runs

and clinched three-match series 3-0.

Man-of-the-match: Tamim Iqbal.

Man-of-the-series: Mike Hussey.

Toss: Australia.

Umpires: Peter Parker (AUS), Amiesha Saheba (IND)

## So close, yet so far

Cricket

CRICINFO, Darwin

The first man to take a one-day international hat-trick for Bangladesh almost repeated the feat this week. Shahadat Hossain rates his three from three balls against Zimbabwe in 2006 as the highlight of his career. It would have been overtaken quicker than a broken-down Kombi van had he reproduced the deed against Australia.

The moment came in the 50th over of the first ODI in Darwin last Saturday, on August 30. Shahadat crashed the ball into Cameron White's off stump from the third delivery and next ball had Mitchell Johnson caught and bowled top-edging an attempted hook. The problem was the batsmen crossed while the ball was in the air, so instead of targeting the debutant Brett Geves, Shahadat was forced to try for the milestone against Michael Hussey.

Sitting on the boundary of the Marrara Cricket Ground after a lengthy session of bowling drills on Friday, a fidgeting, impossibly effervescent Shahadat reflected happily on the opportunity. "With Hussey there I had no chance," he said.

True, Hussey did easily deal with the hat-trick ball, nudging it from outside off towards deep cover. But

Shahadat got the next best thing; Hussey tried to slog the next one and lost his off stump, giving the bowler three wickets from four balls. The whole scenario brought back memories for Shahadat, whose triple-strike against Zimbabwe was etched in his mind.

"I enjoyed the hat-trick most. Nothing compares to it," he said. "I thought I was in dreamland. Hat-tricks are taken by Wasim Akram, bowlers like that."

He's no Akram just yet but it's successes like that, and his remarkable 6 for 27 in a Test against South Africa this year, that prove he should be known for more than just his trademark delivery grunt. The strange noise, more suited to a tennis player, comes just before he releases the ball and hints at near total exhaustion, which is at odds with his seemingly boundless energy.

Is it outputting for the batsmen? Who knows. Perhaps it is only coincidence that an inordinate number of players misread him and suffer extravagant blows to the head. Even Ricky Ponting felt the full force of Shahadat's bounce in the Fatullah Test of 2006 when he took his eyes off the ball and copped one on the helmet. "He is the best player of the pull and hook shot," Shahadat said, "so that gave me a lot of confidence."

It was not a first for Shahadat, who has been injuring batsmen for a decade. As a teenager Shahadat

developed a reputation in his hometown, where he was the most fearsome wielder of a taped tennis ball. He was the quickest young bowler in the district by far, and his rivals would head home with ugly bruises and swelling after facing his vicious deliveries.

His father, a banker, decided that if Shahadat was going to spend all his time playing cricket anyway, he might as well try his luck at a junior training camp. It was there that he first picked up a proper cricket ball, although because he had no running shoes he would tear in off his long run-up with bare feet.

A couple of years and at least one pair of cricket boots later, Shahadat was training with the Bangladesh Institute of Sports in a set of nets adjacent to those of the national team. When he was invited to send down some deliveries to the Test batsmen, Shahadat duly gained notice by thumping Hannan Sarkar and Mohammad Rafique in the head and hands.

The Under-19 captain of the day was less fortunate. Shahadat struck him so cleanly on the side of the head with a bouncer that the screws from the other side of the helmet flew out. The batsman was in severe pain. "There was blood everywhere," a smiling Shahadat said.

Since then, the 190-centimetre bowler has developed into comfortably the quickest in Bangladesh

and has been clocked at up to 148kph. Importantly, he not only intimidates batsmen, he also takes wickets. His most memorable victim was Ponting, who he trapped lbw in the Fatullah Test, but his 6 for 27 against South Africa in Mirpur this year was a breakthrough effort.

"The year has gone pretty well for me," Shahadat said. "The six wickets against South Africa was one of the highlights. In that series I didn't actually think that I was bowling to [Graeme] Smith or [Jacques] Kallis or anything. I just tried to bowl in the right areas."

Nicknamed Rajib -- he says he has no idea what it means, his sister gave him the title -- he has not been at his best during the Australia series, where he has leaked a few too many runs. Perhaps the absence of one of his fast-bowling role models, Brett Lee, has robbed him of inspiration.

"I did bowl very well in New Zealand and against South Africa back home prior to this series," he said. "I'm trying to repeat everything I have done on those tours; it's just not happening at the moment."

"This tour is very important for Bangladesh cricket overall because if you do well against Australia everyone takes note. The players gain a lot of confidence. I've targeted this series but so far it has not happened for me."

Lucky for Australia.

## Hinds & Strauss sign new deals

BBC ONLINE, undated

England batsman Andrew Strauss and South African Tyron Henderson have signed new contracts with Middlesex.

Strauss, 31, who made his county debut in 1997, his first-class bow in 1998 and was capped in 2001, has been awarded a benefit year for 2009.

His new deal keeps him with Middlesex until the end of the 2010 season.

Henderson, who played a key role in the Twenty20 Cup final triumph, has agreed a new deal through to September 2009, subject to a work permit extension.

The 34-year-old Natal-born all-rounder is with Middlesex as a Kolpak player.

He enjoyed a spectacular Twenty20 finals day at the Rose Bowl this summer, hitting seven sixes in an unbeaten 59 from just 21 balls in the semi-final against Durham.

After four fours and two more sixes in his 43 in the final against Kent, he bowled the final over and with four needed he bowled a dot ball then ran out Justin Kemp as Middlesex won by three runs.

That allowed his team to qualify for lucrative events in Antigua and India, prompting him to say: "I'm really looking forward to our winter tournaments and to helping Middlesex achieve more silverware in 2009."

Meanwhile, Derbyshire batsman Wavell Hinds has signed a new contract which will see him play for the county as a Kolpak player in 2009.

The West Indian has made a positive contribution with five half-centuries and 16 wickets for the club since June.

Head of cricket John Morris said: "As well as being an exceptional cricketer, Wavell is a terrific personality to have in the changing room."

"His wealth of experience has been, and will continue to be, invaluable."

There is an option to extend the left-hander's contract until 2010.

The 'Kolpak' term comes from Slovakian handball player Maros Kolpak, who won a ruling in the European Court of Justice in 2004 allowing him to play professionally in Germany without being classed as a foreigner.

It has been tagged on to cricketers from South Africa and the West Indies who are able to come and play county cricket in England without being classed as overseas players.

## Tri-series likely

FROM PAGE 17

"He did say that South Africa's leading players were not interested in playing in a series immediately after their tour of England."

Naghmi, however, admitted that the PCB were also looking at other options.

"We are working on several options and will decide in the next few days as to which idea is the most feasible," he added.

## Sachin to play

FROM PAGE 17

Pradeep Sangwan as well as former Test opener Akash Chopra. Meanwhile, apart from Tendulkar, VVS Laxman, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and Anil Kumble could all feature in the Rest of India squad.

## Warne helps out Clarke

Cricket

CRICINFO, Darwin

Michael Clarke has enlisted the help of Shane Warne as he aims to take on some bowling responsibilities on the upcoming Test tour of India. Clarke's left-arm spin has always been useful and he picked up 6 for 9 in Mumbai on his first Test tour to India in 2004-05 as well as winning January's Sydney Test against India with three late wickets.

Australia are still uncertain on their slow-bowling attack for the four India Tests following the retirements of Stuart MacGill and Brad Hogg. Beau Casson and Bryce McGain are in the frame but both suffered nagging injuries in this week's Australia A match in Bangalore. In any case, both men are inexperienced at international level and Clarke knows his part-timers could be especially important on this tour.

"I spent four days in Melbourne

with Warne before coming here," Clarke said after Australia wrapped up a 3-0 series win over Bangladesh in Darwin. "We did a lot of talking and going through a few field placements for my type of bowling, which I found really helpful."

"I'll be on the phone with him continuously and then I'll be trying to prepare to bowl a few overs. I hope I do get a bowl [in India]. I see my part-timers as having some sort of role to play over there."

Clarke's spin could be even more valuable if his fellow part-timer Andrew Symonds does not make the trip. Although back problems limit the amount of serious bowling Clarke can do in the nets, he said the complaint had not been a major issue in recent months and he expected to send down plenty of overs in the Tests.

"I've always been serious about my bowling," he said. "The one thing I've always made clear to the world is I believe I'm a batsman who bowls. I'm a part-time bowler and I'm not going to try to be a

frontline bowler, but there's a role for me to play as that part-time bowler."

Clarke is confident the one-day series against Bangladesh will hold the team in good stead for the India trip, despite the one-sided nature of the Darwin games. Australia's players now head home for a fortnight before flying out to India for a couple of weeks of preparation including two warm-up games prior to the first Test.

"We're still going to have enough time to prepare either now, when we're back home and definitely when we get to India," Clarke said. "We've got four or five training days and then a four-day practice match and then the lead-in to the first Test in Bangalore."

"I think everyone would be pretty happy with their preparation to date. The next two weeks will be important for everyone to make sure when they go home they're doing some form of training and then use the preparation well in India."

## Serena sets up Jelena date

FROM PAGE 17

since 2002, when she beat Venus. Serena will try for her ninth Grand Slam trophy she's 3-3 against Jankovic overall, and lost to her at the Australian Open this year.

"She has a lot of pressure to win her first Grand Slam," Williams said.

The weather had a definite affect Friday, with winds gusting over 20 mph. Players struggled to keep their shots in play all day, and most every ball that got tossed up for serves had a chance to be blown away.

At one point, the American flag above the video board at one end of Arthur Ashe Stadium flapped so loudly that Safina turned around to stare.

Not nearly as petulant as her brother, former U.S. Open champ Marat Safin, Safina had her moments. She frequently shook her head, admonished herself in English and Russian and once shouted, "I hate the wind!"

"I think I was behaving like a really spoiled girl," Safina admitted later. "I

have to learn from these things."

While Safina often went for big shots and instead sailed the ball far beyond the baseline, Williams was more content to hit to the middle of the court. She overcame a 2-0 deficit in the first set, winning seven of the next eight games to take control.

"I thought, 'OK, if it's so windy, then I'm not going to go for so many winners,'" she said.

The second-seeded Jankovic rallied in both sets, and advanced to a matchup where the winner will emerge as the No. 1-ranked woman in the world.

Like Jankovic, Dementieva has never won a Grand Slam title. She did win the gold medal at Beijing, and was satisfied with her overall results in the last month.

"For me, Olympics was the biggest goal. I have no regrets at all," Dementieva said.

Still, she missed a great chance to reach this final. Ahead early, she

became tentative and skittish and lost five straight games.

As it began to slip away, the fifth-seeded Dementieva began to look more and more at her mom in the family box. Failing to find any confidence, Dementieva made 42 unforced errors; Jankovic won only 66 total points.

"I just was trying to go for the winner and couldn't make it," Dementieva said. "I couldn't close the point."

Jankovic began the day 0-4 lifetime in major semifinals, including losses at this year's Australian Open and French Open. Skidding into the her favorite splits, she ran down returns and won the really long points.

"Mentally, I feel I'm a lot stronger, because I really believe in myself. I really want to do this, and it's about time for me to make that step forward to break that barrier," Jankovic said. "I want to win a Grand Slam, and this is why I came here."

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		DOWN	
1 Cream of the crop	36 Signs off on	1 All —	20 Tin Man's need
5 Super-market supply	37 Rosa feature	2 Verve	22 Kennel sounds
9 Ovine comment	38 Smiles broadly	3 Type — was saying,	23 Census stats
12 Lotion additive	40 Lindbergh book	4 Computer pro	24 Annoy
13 Chills — and fever	41 Run the meeting	5 Soother	25 — was saying,
14 Performance	43 Necktie	6 Past island	26 Bridge-town's
15 Spanish city	47 Cover	7 Pistol	27 Leeway
17 Plato's P	48 Lionel or Drew	8 Movie-house bills	28 Have
18 Country song?	51 Commotion	9 "Familiar Quotations"	29 Plume
19 Clan emblem	52 Hedge-podge	10 Ruin the run	30 — de
20 Actor Rathbone	53 "Desire Under the —"	11 Form's particle	31 Islander's adornment
21 Infant	54 "Cer-tainly"	12 Still, in verse	32 Tars
22 Actor	55 Freeway exit	13 Still, in verse	33 Vinyl shelter
23 Infant			34 Distorted
24 Scott Joplin's genre			35 Sculptor's medium
25 Author			36 Conceal
26 "Born in the —"			37 Cut short
27 Raw rock			38 Meadow mouse
28 Pair			39 Weaponry
29 Lass			40 Criterion
			41 Carte lead-in