

Patient Marsh steadies Aussie boat



MELBOURNE, Australia, Dec 27: Australian vice-captain Geoff Marsh played the sheet-anchor role today to beat back a spirited Indian fightback in the second cricket Test here, reports AFP.

The 33-year-old West Australian farmer remained unbeaten at the close of play having scored a dour 79 in 336 minutes to steer his team to safety after early setbacks.

Replied to India's meagre first innings total of 263, Australia ended an engrossing second day's play at 215 for five.

Such a total had looked a remote possibility after Indian seamers creamed off Australia's three top batsmen for just 55 soon after lunch.

But Marsh and Dean Jones pulled Australia out of trouble with a 108-run fourth-wicket stand.

Jones, playing before a supportive 20,257-strong home crowd, made an attractive 59 studded with six boundaries.

The pair took the score to a healthy 163 for three before India struck back for a second time with two quick wickets in the final session.

Jones was caught behind off seamer Manoj Prabhakar and then left-arm spinner Ravi Shastri removed the dangerous Mark Waugh in similar style to make Australia 211 for five.

Waugh took 55 minutes to make a strokeful 34 which included two boundaries and a wristy six over long on off Venkatapathy Raju.

Marsh, who was in danger of losing his Test place after injuring his neck in a mid-field collision last week, has so far hit only two boundaries in his 257-ball vigil at the crease.

Keeping him company is Ian Healy on four. The pair must see off the second new ball on Saturday to raise Australia's hopes of a substantial first innings score.

India were well served again by seamers Kapil Dev and Prabhakar who took two wickets each.

Resuming the day at 243

for nine, India's last pair of Kiran More and Javagal Srinath added 20 more runs in 15 minutes.

More, the dapper wicket-keeper, scored 17 of them including two boundaries off Craig McDermott and one against Bruce Reid.

Reid had Srinath caught at second slip by Allan Border to chalk up his 100th Test wicket in his 25th match.

The lanky West Australian paceman, who missed the first Test in Brisbane due to a back injury, finished with fine figures of six for 66.

More remained unbeaten on 67 after leading a remarkable



GEOFF MARSH

Indian revival which saw the last two wickets add a valuable 112 runs.

Australia made a nervous start, scoring just 43 runs for the loss of opener Mark Taylor's wicket in 23 overs before lunch.

Taylor was snapped up at fourth slip by Sachin Tendulkar off Manoj Prabhakar who bowled an impressive opening spell.

Bowling a good line and swinging the ball both ways, Prabhakar conceded just five runs in his first seven overs, five of which were maidens.

Australia were in deep trouble soon after lunch when Kapil Dev picked up two wickets in one over to make the home side 55 per three.

Kapil had David Boon caught at short leg by Krish Srikkanth for 11 with the first delivery of his ninth over.

It was the 32-year-old

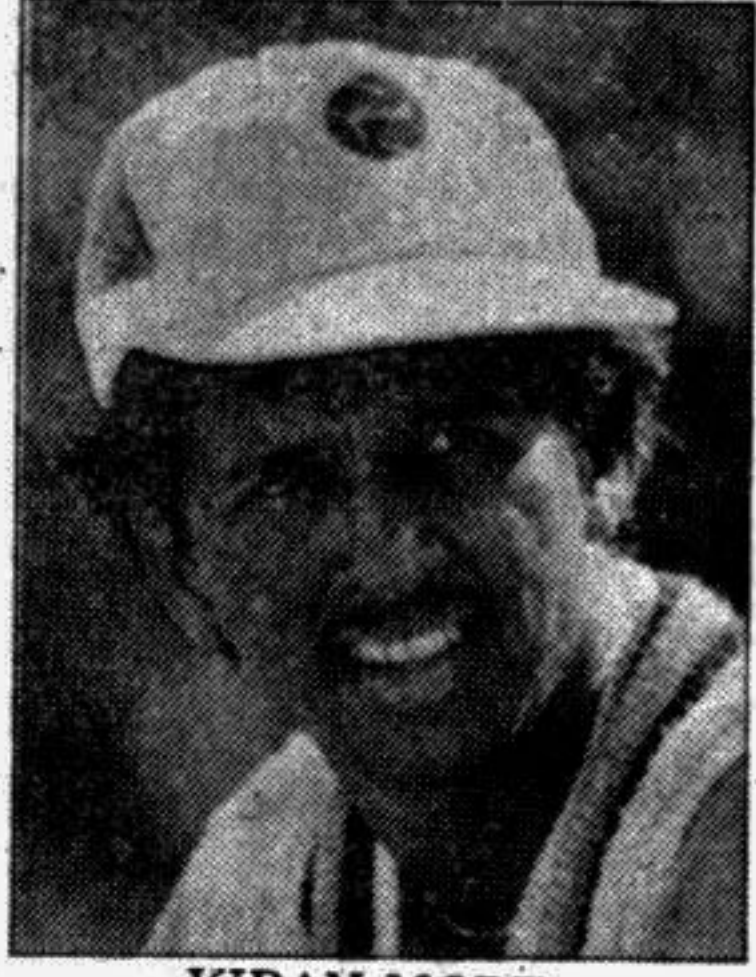
Indian all-rounder's 38th Test wicket, putting him in second place among the all-time Test wicket takers behind Richard Hadlee on 431.

Kapil had begun this Test, his 112th, level with England's Ian Botham on 380 wickets.

He then clean bowled Australian captain Border with the final delivery of the same over to put the home side in a spot.

But it was at this stage that Marsh and Jones got together to deny the Indians another quick breakthrough.

Marsh had to pass a pre-match fitness test for his neck injury but his dogged innings



KIRAN MORE

held the Australian team together.

Australia was struggling at 55 for three before vice-captain Marsh shared a 108-run fourth-wicket partnership with Dean Jones, who made 59.

Jones' innings marked his highest Test score at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and included six fours.

Australian captain Allan Border who was dismissed for a duck suffered an elbow injury in the process, but the injury was not expected to prevent him from batting in Australia's second innings.

Reid finished with figures of six for 66 from 26.2 overs as the tourists were bowled out for 263 after resuming at 243 for nine.

Border took the second new ball at the start of play and More twice slashed balls from Craig McDermott over the slips for four, as well as

despatching Reid down the ground to the mid-on boundary.

Reid became the 25th Australian to reach 100 Test scalps and his haul was his second-best in Test cricket, behind his seven for 51 against England at Melbourne last year.

The Indian total of 263 was more than respectable after the tourists were 109 for six and then 151 for eight.

The match is scheduled to continue through Monday.

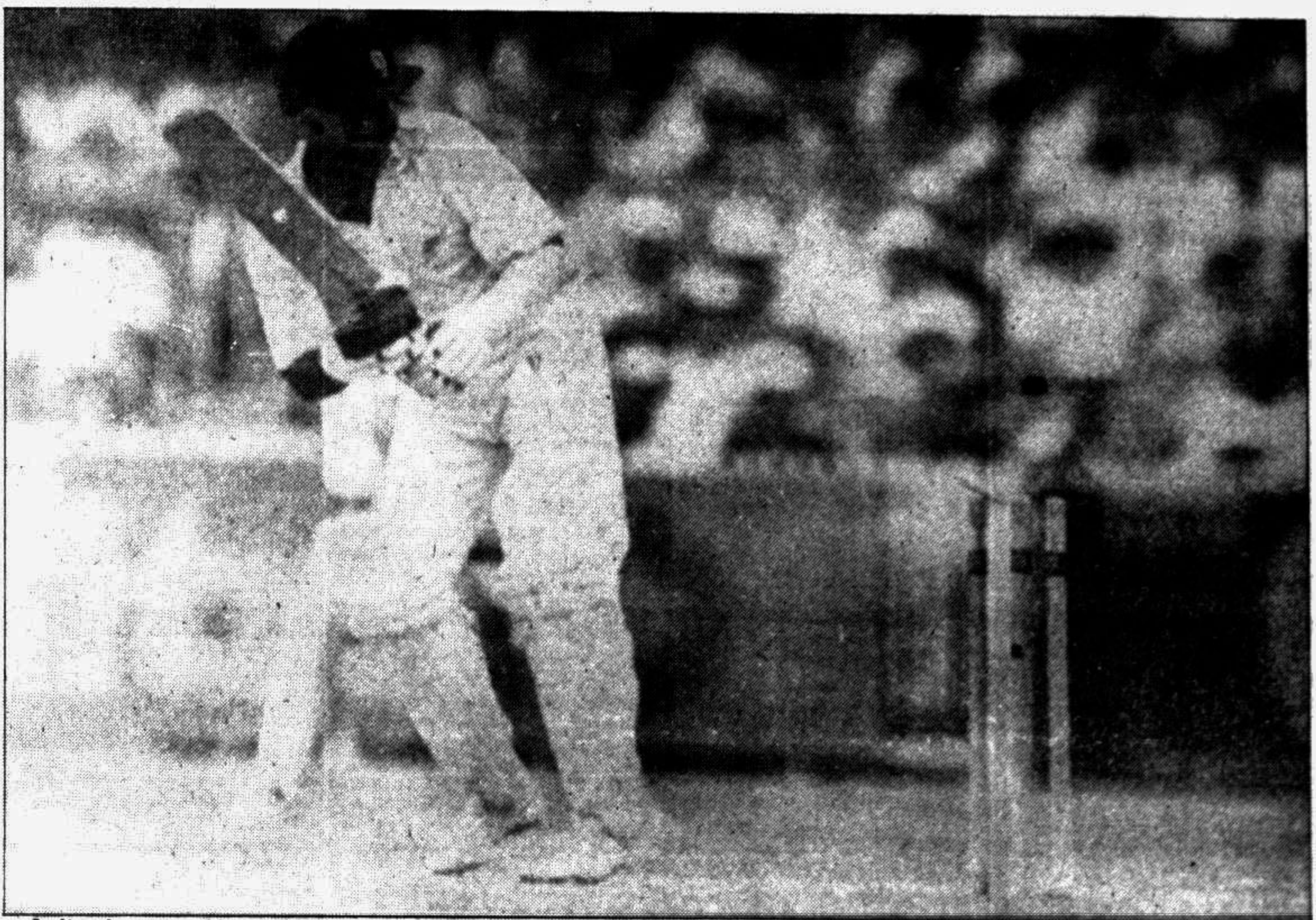
SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the second Test between Australia and India on Friday.

INDIA first innings (overnight 243-9):
Shastri c Healy b Reid 23
Srikkanth c Boon b Reid 5
Prabhakar b Reid 0
Manjrekar c Waugh b Reid 25
Vengsarkar c Reid b Hughes 23
Azharuddin c Jones b McDermott 22
Tendulkar c Waugh b Reid 15
K Dev c Hughes b McDermott 19
More not out 67
Raju c Border b Hughes 31
Srinath c Border b Reid 14
Extras: (b-1 lb-8 nb-4 w-6) 19
Total: (all out) 263

Fall of wickets: 1-11; 2-11; 3-51; 4-64; 5-109; 6-109; 7-128; 8-151; 9-228.
Bowling: O M R W
McDermott 30 6 100 2 (2 nb)
Reid 26.2 7 66 6(2nb, 1w)
Hughes 23 6 52 2 (2w)
Waugh 8 1 16 0 (3w)
Taylor 6 0 20 0

AUSTRALIA first innings:
Marsh not out 79
Taylor c Tendulkar b Prabhakar 13
Boon c Srikkanth b Dev 11
Border b Dev 0
Jones c More b Prabhakar 59
Waugh c More b Shastri 34
Healy not out 4
Extras: (lb-4 nb-11) 15
Total: (for five wickets) 215
To bat: Healy, Taylor, McDermott, Hughes, Reid.
Fall of wickets: 1-24; 2-55; 3-35; 4-163; 5-211.
Bowling: O M R W
Dev 19 6 41 2
Prabhakar 20 6 39 2 (1 nb)
Srinath 19 3 55 0
Raju 14 3 40 0
Tendulkar 4 1 16 0 (2nd)
Shastri 7 1 20 1



Indian batsman Manoj Prabhakar turns around in time to watch his bails fly on the first day of the second Test against Australia on Melbourne on Dec 26. Prabhakar was bowled first ball by Bruce Reid, who took 6 wickets for 66 runs. — AFP photo

Crowe sounds cautious

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Dec 27: New Zealand has not lost a home Test series for 12 years but will go into its upcoming matches against England as an underdog, captain Martin Crowe said Friday, reports AP.

Crowe said England's recent form would make it a formidable opponent.

England plays its first match in New Zealand on Jan 2 against Auckland in Auckland. The first Test of a three-Test series begins Jan 18 in Christchurch.

Crowe said England would be a "strong and well-balanced" team despite the absence of injured pace bowler Angus Fraser.

"England look to be a very strong side," Crowe said.

"They'll be fresh and eager after their layoff from the game for a few months. Both Graham Gooch and Robin Smith are in particularly good form and I expect Graeme Hick to get a few runs down here. I see him as a big danger."

Gooch's gang set off for NZ

LONDON, Dec 27: England will be out to put the record straight when they leave here on Friday for a three-month tour which takes

in a Test series in New Zealand and the World Cup, reports AP.

Skipper Graham Gooch will never forget the humiliation of a year ago when his team were hammered by Australia and then beaten by New Zealand during a four-month trip which ranks as one of England's grimmest ever.

"I didn't like what happened to us last winter and it is very important to me that we do well out there this time," said the 38-year-old opening batsman.

Last February Gooch was dejected and disillusioned following a 3-0 Ashes beating, World Series Cup elimination by Australia and New Zealand, plus a 2-1 defeat in the limited over internationals against the Kiwis.

But he flies out to Australia full of hope again following a summer of six victories.

His belief in English cricket was rekindled when West

with victory over Sri Lanka. Three Tests against New Zealand will provide a stiff opener. Helped by a combination of slow pitches and steely resolved not to lose in front of their own supporters, the Kiwis have not been beaten in a home series since 1979.

Indeed, England have not won a single Test there since 1978, though six of the last seven have been drawn.

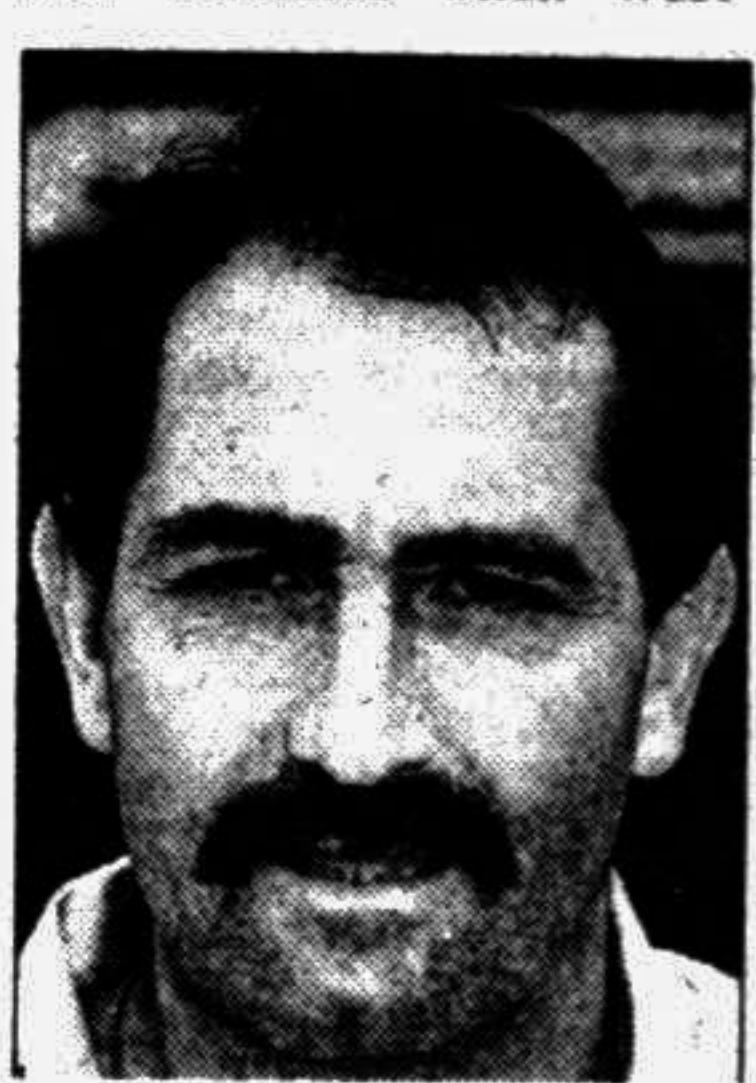
"They will be difficult to beat on their own grounds," said Gooch.

But doing well in the Test series would be the best preparation we could have for the World Cup.

By the time England head for Sydney in mid-February to take part in the opening ceremony, their chances of winning the World Cup for the first time should be a good deal clearer.

Reaching the semi-finals will be an achievement now that South Africa have become the ninth team attempting to qualify.

Indies were seen off 3-0 in the one day international game, restored by that splendid 2-2 Test series draw against Viv Richards' men and sustained



GRAHAM GOOCH

Indian selectors seek more time for WC squad

NEW DELHI, Dec 27: Indian cricket selectors met today to choose a squad for the 1992 World Cup to be hosted by Australia and New Zealand, but decided they needed more time to name a squad, reports AFP.

C. Nagaraj, convenor of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, told reporters in Bombay the selectors could not "make up their minds" and needed more time, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said.

They requested the Cup's organising secretary, David Richards of Australia, to allow India to announce its squad at a later date.

The Indian team under Mohammad Azharuddin is now playing a Test series in Australia. Naming a World Cup squad with possible omissions from the team doing duty Down Under may adversely affect player morale, some cricketers fear.

The selectors felt that with the series in Australia at the midway stage... it would be good to select the team towards the end of January," Nagaraj was quoted as saying.

World Cup organisers have set a December 31 deadline for participating countries to name a team for the February-March tournament, but this was for "administrative convenience only and can be extended," he said.

Indians angry at umpire King

MELBOURNE, Dec 27: India's cricket team wants umpire Len King to be removed from the Test panel after his involvement in a controversial umpiring decision in the second Test against Australia here today, reports AFP.

The Indians are angry that King, 50, did not rule Dean Jones out on two counts either for obstructing the field or for handling the ball — during an

but umpire King remained unmoved. Indian team manager Ranbir Singh Mahendra said he failed to understand why Jones was not given out on both counts.

"Yet he remained unmoved which is shocking," he said.

"I am going to complain to the Australian Cricket Board about King and we don't want him to stand in any more Tests on this tour," Mahendra remarked.

"He obviously does not know the rules well," he said. Mahendra questioned Jones' comment after the incident that the ball had become dead after it had lodged between his wrist and thigh.

"Law 33 clearly states that the ball becomes dead only after it has lodged in the batsman's equipment and this was clearly not the case with Jones," he said.

Earlier in the day, King had warned Indian all-rounder Kapil Dev for running on to the wicket in his follow through.

King is standing in his fifth Test since making his debut during the 1988-89 season. He has also officiated in 17 one-day internationals and numerous Sheffield Shield matches.

No Australian official was available for comment.

incident on the second day's play.

The incident took place 45 minutes after tea when Jones stepped out of his crease to play left arm spinner Venkatapathy Raju.

The ball lodged between the batsman's wrist and thigh, but as wicketkeeper Kiran More moved forward to catch it before it fell to the ground Jones deflected the ball away with his hand.

More and the close-in fielders questioned Jones' action,

Jones' action,

Jones' action,

Jones' action,

Jones' action,

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Jones' action,

V-Day hockey

Sports Reporter

The first semifinal of the Victory Day Shah Sports hockey tournament, between Abahani Krira Chakra and Ajax Sports Club, will now be played today. The match is scheduled for a 3:00 pm start.

The match, which was scheduled to be played yesterday following the marring of the original fixture on Wednesday, once again had to be postponed by a day following the unplayable Dhaka Hockey Stadium ground in the wake of the unseasonal rains over the past three days.

In the other semifinal tomorrow, Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club will meet Bangladesh Army.

The meet has been organized by the Bangladesh Hockey Federation.

Ctg hockey
Sports Reporter

The Navana Metropolitan hockey league in Chittagong began yesterday under the auspices of the Chittagong Metropolitan Sports Association at the Dampara Police Line ground.

Six teams are taking part in this meet.

On the opening day, Mehediugh Krira Chakra beat Nabayan Club 3-0 in the inaugural match.

Botham in trouble again

LONDON, Dec 27: England cricketer Ian Botham was questioned by police Thursday night after

"suspicious substances" were found at a house he was renting, reports AP.

The sportsman was staying at the house in Poole, Dorset, while starring in the Pantomime Jack and the Beanstalk with Max Boyce in Bournemouth.

Police said today they were called there on Christmas morning after a report of a burglary.

The window had been smashed and on searching the premises a quantity of suspicious substances were seized, a spokesman said.

This will now be sent for analysis and a report will be written.

A police spokeswoman said: "I can confirm that some substances we believe to be prohibited drugs have been seized from that address. We will be carrying out a full investigation."

Police added that the house was "a rented property that has been used by Mr Botham and a number of the people in the past. The substance was found in a part of the house not used by Mr Botham."

The cricketer, who spent Christmas Day with his family

at Alderney in the Channel Islands, met detectives at the house after flying back to Bournemouth.

He said later: "As far as I am concerned I have just been burgled. Nothing was taken, but it is still a bloody nuisance being burgled for Christmas."

He denied any knowledge of substances being found at the property.

Botham, who has moved to

another address, said tonight at his dressing room at Bournemouth's Pavilion Theatre: "The police spoke to me about what had been found, but this has all come as a bolt from the blue."

"I knew nothing about this till I got off the aeroplane. The part where they found the stuff has got nothing to do with me."



IAN BOTHAM

Cherkasov, Zvereva to represent CIS

PERTH, Australia, Dec 27: The newly-formed Commonwealth of Independent States will make its first international sporting appearance at the mixed teams Hopman Cup tennis tournament, starting today, reports Reuter.

Former Soviet tennis stars Andrei Cherkasov and Natalia Zvereva had originally entered the Cup as the Soviet Union team, but will now play as the Commonwealth of Independent States team, tournament chairman Paul McNamee said.

Cherkasov is a Russian, while Zvereva is a native of Byelorussia, two of the 11 republics making up the new commonwealth. Their first match is against Britain on Saturday.

McNamee said the change of team name was made after Australia officially recognised the commonwealth on Thursday and with the agreement of the Russian embassy in Australia.

McNamee said a new flag was being made to fly at the tournament, but an anthem was still to be advised.

"It's all happened very quickly, but everyone is delighted and it is another first for the Hopman Cup," he said.

"Andre and Natalia are very excited although their main concern is still for the people back home."

Ansars women dominate nat'l judo

The two-day long 15th national judo championships got underway yesterday at the National Sports Council gymnasium.

On the opening day seven women's events had been settled with Bangladesh Ansars leading the medal tally with four golds, six silvers and three bronzes.

Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) were running close with three golds and one silver.

The Village Defence Party (VDP) girls trailed a distant third with four bronzes.

In the 40 kg category Mina Akhtar of Bangladesh Ansars won the gold.

Prabhati Sangma of the same team got the silver while VDP's Jyotana Akhtar picked up the bronze.

In the 44 kg category, Nur Nahar Akhtar of Ansars won the gold with Bibha Rani Tripara of the same team won the silver.

aged the bronze. BTMC's Fahmda Rahman won the gold in the 48 kg category.

Mithila Rani Sangma of Bangladesh Ansars got the silver while Pushpa Rani of VDP won the bronze.

In the 52 kg category, Kalpana Akhtar of Bangladesh Ansars clinched the gold while

Jahanara of BTMC settled for the silver.

Dalia Akhtar of Ansars pocketed the bronze medal.

In the 56 kg category BTMC's Nayna Chowdhury snatched the gold.

Nurjahan Nuri of the Ansars won the silver while her teammate Rokeya Yasmin took

the bronze. In the 56 kg category Rahima Akhtar Secma of the Ansars won the gold while teammate Kamala Akhtar picked up the silver.

VDP's Salma Sangma got the bronze.

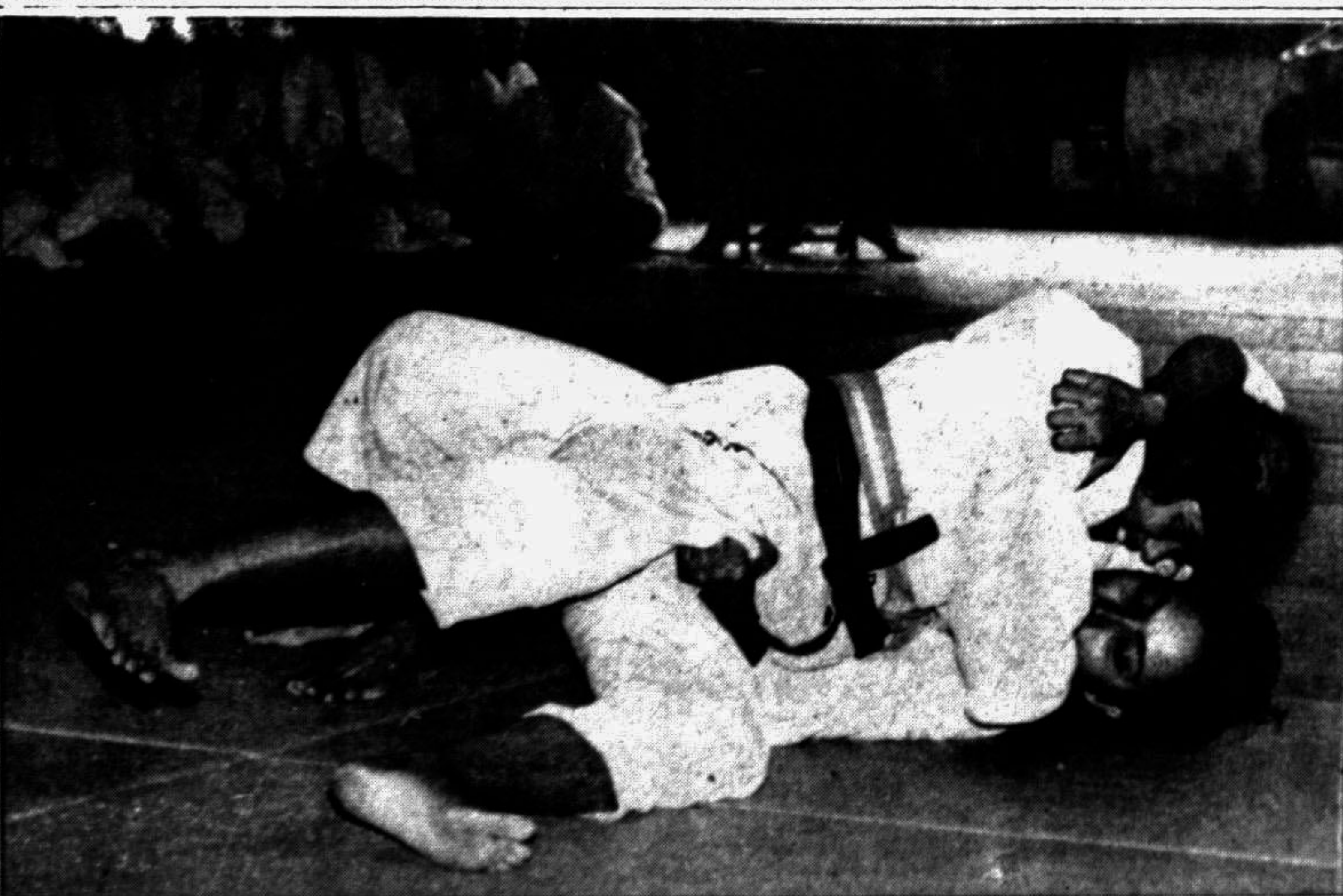
The men's events were in progress at the time of filing this report.

Eighty-seven men and 44 women judokas from nine sports organisations are taking part in this year's competition organised by the Bangladesh Judo and Karate Federation.

State Minister for Education Principal Yunus Khan inaugurated the championship at eight in the morning.

Dhaka City Mayor Mirza Abbas will be the chief guest at the concluding ceremony today and distribute prizes among the winners.

Major General Md Mahabur Rahman, psc, Chairman of the National Sports Council will be present as a special guest.



Opening day action in the two-day 15th national judo championships at the National Coaching Centre yesterday. — Star photo