

NSW to turn to Taylor

ADELAIDE, Jan 7. New South Wales will appeal to former Australian captain Mark Taylor for help after their batsmen failed again in a crushing 168-run Sheffield Shield cricket loss to South Australia here Sunday, reports AFP.

Lankans bank on approach

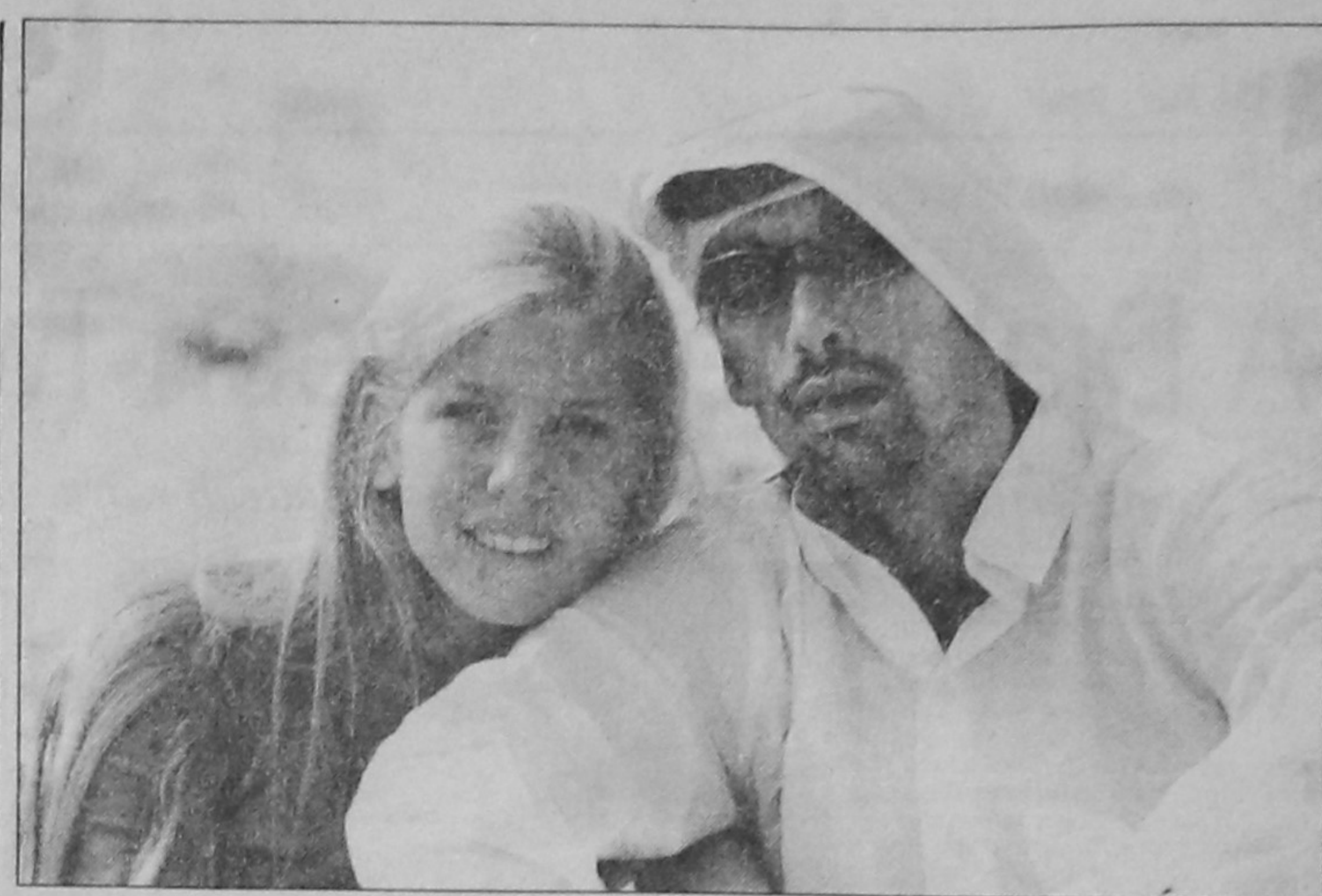
CAPE TOWN, Jan 7. Sri Lanka's all-rounder batsmen will continue to play positive, attacking cricket when they resume a one-day international series against South Africa in Paarl on Tuesday, reports AFP.

innings and 229 runs in the second Test at Newlands last month. There are four more one-day internationals and one more Test.

SIX-MONTH suspension for conspiring in match fixing, Gibbs played in the second Test but did not score.

Warne sounds ominous

SYDNEY, Jan 7 (Reuters): Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne says he believes he is bowling as well as ever since returning from injury and expects to play a key role in Australia's Ashes defence in England.



Marcelo Rios of Chile in traditional Qatari garb poses with his newly married wife Juliana Sotela after he stormed into Qatar Open final in Doha on January 6.

Marcelo in full flow

DOHA, Jan 7. Chile's former world number one Marcelo Rios, who is trying to build a top ten place this year as a platform for a return to the top spot, produced a masterful performance to reach the final of the Qatar Open here on Saturday, reports AFP.

Busta Cup scores

TRINIDAD, Jan 7. Discarded West Indies opener Stuart Williams hit his second century of the match as his Leeward Islands side themselves on a victory course Saturday against Trinidad and Tobago after day three of the regional Busta Cup, reports AP.

Greatness depends on India

SYDNEY, Jan 7 (AFP). Steve Waugh says his all-conquering Australian Test team must beat India on the sub-continent next month before they can be compared with cricket's greatest teams.

haven't won there for a long time and this is a great challenge," Waugh said.

to be crucial to the way we perform. "We're going to go over there and give our best shot. If we get beaten India will have to play real good cricket."

Pless forced to quit

MADRAS, Jan 7. Danish teenager Kristian Pless withdrew 0-4 down from the first semifinal against the Czech Republic's Michal Tabara at the 400,000-dollar Indian Open here on Saturday, reports AFP.

Beckers trying to settle?

BERLIN, Jan 7. Boris Becker and Barbara Becker met in their Florida home on Fisher Island Saturday, according to reports in the German press which said Sunday they were trying to reach an out-of-court divorce settlement, reports AFP.

Brett skips first ODI

SYDNEY, Jan 7. Brett Lee will be eased back into international cricket and has been withdrawn from Australia's opening limited overs triangular series match with the West Indies in Melbourne on Thursday, reports AFP.

Brett skips first ODI

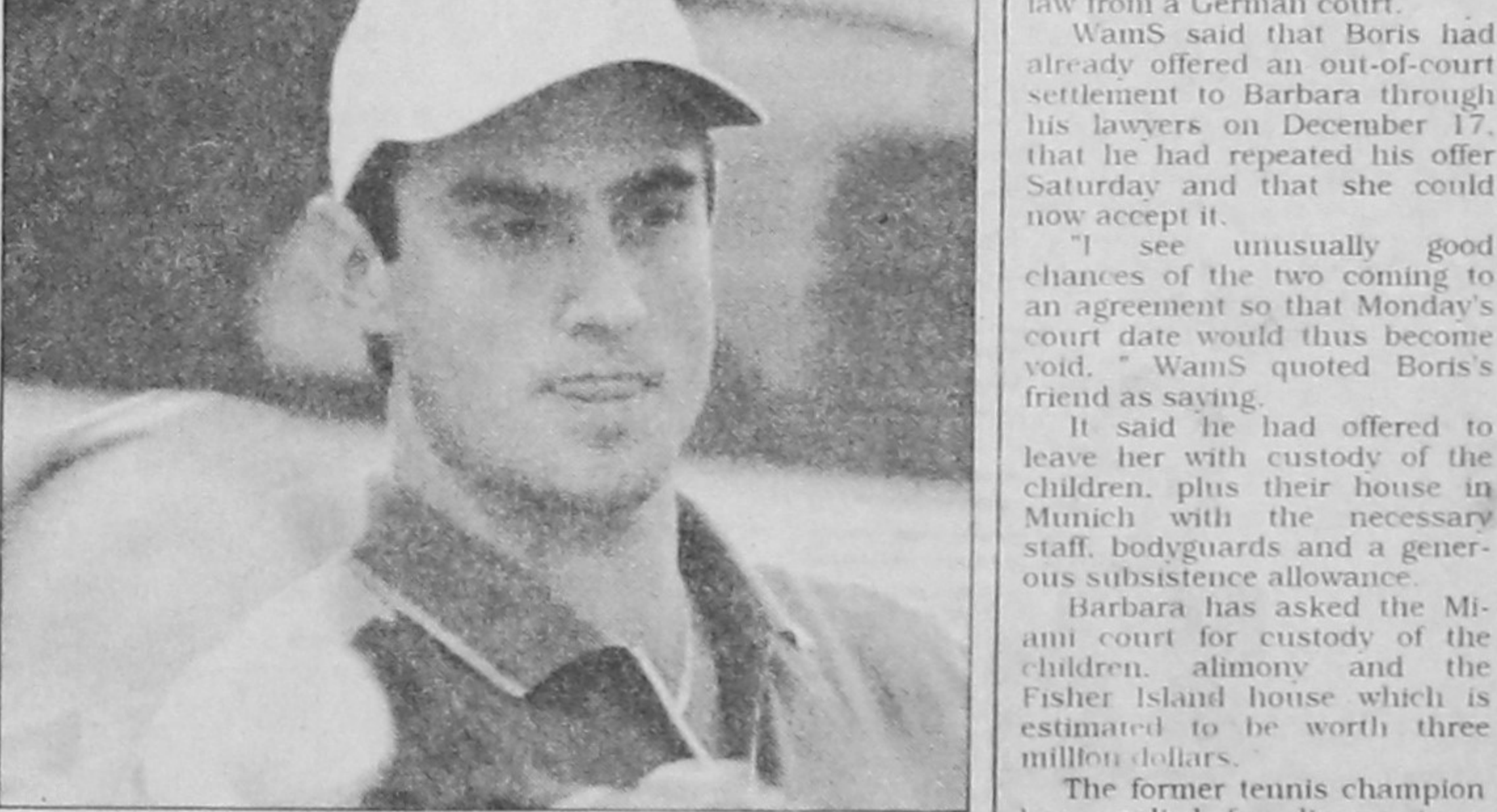
when he was diagnosed with bone stress in his lower back. "If the scans indicate that Brett's okay then he'll be eased back into net bowling first with a view to missing the first game," Australian team physiotherapist Errol Alcott said Sunday.

Alcott said the rest of the Test squad was free of problems as it splits between the Australian one-day squad and an Australia A squad for matches this week.

The top squad gathered in Melbourne on Sunday, with a training session set down for Monday before a warm-up match against Victoria on Tuesday.

Haas happy on hardcourt

ADELAIDE, Jan 7. German Tommy Haas swept aside Chilean Nicolas Massu to win the final of the Australian Men's Hardcourt Tennis Championship here Sunday, reports AFP.



Czech Michal Tabara makes a forehand return to Kristian Pless of Denmark during their semifinal clash of the Gold Flake Open in Madras on January 6.

Serena starts with a win

SYDNEY, Jan 7 (AFP). Serena Williams is convinced she and her sister Venus have taken tennis to a new level. The Williams sisters have taken the tennis world by storm in recent years, with Venus last month signing the richest sponsorship deal in women's sporting history.



Tommy Haas of Germany holds the winner's trophy after beating Chilean Nicolas Massu in the final of the Australian Hardcourt tennis championship yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer. Includes a crossword puzzle grid and a list of clues for across and down words. Also includes a CRYPTOQUIP section with a grid and a cryptic message.