

Sabatini completes the quorum

MELBOURNE, Jan 25: Gabriela Sabatini rose from her sick bed on Tuesday to join Steffi Graf, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario and surprise contender Kimiko Date in the semifinals of the Australian Open.

The Argentine fourth seed, whose participation had been in doubt after she woke up feeling ill, had just enough strength in reserve to beat Wimbledon finalist Jana Novotna 6-3, 6-4 and reach her third successive semifinal at Flinders Park.

Sabatini now meets Sanchez-Vicario, while world number one Graf takes on Date, the first Japanese woman to reach the last four for 21 years following an impressive 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 victory against third seed Conchita Martinez.

Sabatini and Date will both remember the day with pleasure, even though the temperature soared to a sweltering 39 degrees Celsius for a second day in succession.

Sabatini needed to spend only 85 minutes in the hot-house environment of Centre Court, giving her best performance of the tournament, but said later she would almost certainly have had to withdraw if her match had been scheduled during the day.

Sabatini eventually felt well enough to practice after an injection and several hours sleep, before declaring herself fit to play.

Novotna, a finalist in 1991, fought back briefly from 3-0 to 4-3 up in the second set, but failed to serve well enough to

maintain pressure on her opponent.

"She kept me at the back of the court all the time and I just did not make the important points," said Novotna, who said she was unaffected by the doubts over Sabatini's fitness.

"It was a quarter-final of a Grand Slam and I knew that she would play. I did not know how serious it was, but I didn't enter my mind that Gabriela would default."

Graf's win over American Lindsay Davenport took her to her 27th Grand Slam semifinal in 35 appearances and only strengthened the impression her 19th major title is imminent.

The 17-year-old opponent hit the ball as hard as anyone the top seed has faced this year, but her lack of mobility increasingly told in the second set.

"I think she knows physically she can get in better shape and that's probably why she's not moving as good as she can," said Graf.

The 1.88-metre tall Davenport, 13 cms taller than Graf, agreed she has plenty to work on.

"I would like to be a lot faster around the court and improve my consistency. My natural style is to hit the ball back harder which wasn't too smart today because I was making a lot of errors. I played a lot of loose points."

Sanchez-Vicario was still insisting she could give Graf a run for her money despite a scratchy 7-6, 6-4 win over Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere, playing her final Grand Slam tournament before retirement.

The Spanish world number

two has now reached the semifinals in Melbourne for four consecutive years. But feels her first appearance in a final may at last be forthcoming.

Bulgarian-born Maleeva-Fragniere will retire after two tournaments in Japan and hopes to raise a family.

The 26-year-old was a top 10 player for over a decade without winning a Grand Slam title. She had a career-high ranking of No.3 in 1985.

No men's singles matches are scheduled Tuesday, but all the quarterfinals will be played on Wednesday.

MaliVai Washington of the United States, the only unseeded player left in the singles, beat Mats Wilander in a five-set marathon Monday night, ending the veteran Swede's fairy-tale comeback run at the Australian Open.

Washington dominated the final set after the two had traded shots for four hours, winning 6-7 (7-9), 6-2, 6-7 (3-7), 6-4, 6-1.

Washington now will face No.9 seed Todd Martin in an all-American quarterfinal, while two-time champion Stefan Edberg of Sweden will play No.6 seed Thomas Muster of Austria.

In other men's quarterfinal matches, top seed Pete Sampras of the United States will play No.10 Magnus Gustafsson of Sweden and defending champion Jim Courier will play No.5 Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia.

The tournament is sponsored by Ford, played on synthetic Rebound Ace hard courts and continues through Sunday.

BGCC lift KLM Cup

Sports Reporter

Hosts Bhattary Golf and Country Club (BGCC) dethroned Kurmitola Golf Club (KGC) when they beat the Dhaka outfit 5-3 in the team event match play of the KLM Cup at the picturesque but demanding BGCC golf-links, Chittagong last Friday.

Participated by some of the best golfers of the country, the meet, held in a row for the second year, was jointly sponsored by the Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM), Organon and American Express.

Results of matchplay:

1. Shakil Kasem and Sadiq Quddus (KGC) beat Cmdr Mujibur Rahman and S K Ally (BGCC).
2. Shireen Ispahani and Harry Vitjens (EGCC) bt Jalal Ahmed and Maj. Gen M A Rab (KGC).
3. Nasir Khan and Rashed Chowdhury (KGC) bt Shamsul Huda and Kase (BGCC).
4. Taher Jamil and M R Chowdhury (BGCC) bt Manzoor Ahmad and Raiyan Rab (KGC).
5. Aminur Rahman and Salman Ispahani (BGCC) bt Riazur Rahman and Ference (KGC).
6. Lt Col Iqbal Shafi and S S Rahman (BGCC) bt Farooq Ahmad and Brig Imtiaz (KGC).
7. Ashfaq Chowdhury and Masahiro Nakahira (KGC) bt K M Iqbal and Jon Oh Bae (BGCC).
8. Md Ali Khan and Shaker Ispahani (BGCC) bt Showkat-us-Zaman and Saad Rahim (KGC).

In the stroke play handicap event, M A Hamid (BGCC) became champion beating his clubmate Sajid Ali Khan.

Best gross went to Dave Anthony.

Zulfikar Ali Khan (BGCC) overcame indifferent form to pocket the best Front Nine, while Kazi Ekranullah (KGC), fresh from his triumph in the Japan Cup at Dhaka, added the Best Back Nine to his growing collection.

Taher Jamil (BGCC) narrowly missed a hole-in-one to win the Nearest to the Pin, while Nasir Khan (KGC) defied treacherous winds to win the Longest Drive in style.

Shaheen Khan won the ladies title.



Spain's Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario plays a double-fisted backhand return to Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere of Switzerland in the Australian Open quarterfinals match in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP photo

Adams clings to life-line

WIJK AAN ZEE, Netherlands, Jan 25: English grandmaster Michael Adams defeated Boris Gelfand of Belarus in his adjourned game on Monday to keep alive a slender chance to qualify for the final stages of the World Chess Championship Candidates matches, reports Reuter.

Gelfand, ranked 10th in the world, conceded his first loss in the match to Adams, ranked in four places below him, after a drawn-out battle lasting 75 moves and almost seven hours.

The game, which began on Saturday, had been adjourned after 60 moves with Adams holding an extra pawn. However, Adams' secret "sealed" 61st move captured another pawn and Gelfand, 25, could provide only token resistance thereafter.

Adams, a 22-year-old from Truro, remains one point behind Gelfand after six of their eight scheduled games and must win at least one of the remaining two games to have a chance to reach the final six of the World Championship.

If the two players are tied after eight games they will play a rapid chess play-off to decide a winner.

Indian Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand was quite optimistic about Adams' chances. "The seventh game will be critical because Gelfand has looked vulnerable playing with the black pieces." The world number three said, "I wouldn't like to put a figure on it but Adams' prospects are quite reasonable. If it comes down to an eighth game, Gelfand's nerves may also be a factor."

Twelve of the world's best Grandmasters are competing in the Dutch coastal town of Wijk Aan Zee in knock-out matches sponsored by the Dutch Steel Corporation Hoogovens.

The candidates matches are the concluding stages of a two year competition designed to find a challenger for world champion Anatoly Karpov of Russia in 1995.

Adams is the only Englishman remaining in the competition, because English number one Nigel Short has been disqualified from official world title play for three years by the World Chess Federation as a consequence of his unauthorised world title challenge in London last year.

The seventh round of the World Championship Candidates matches will be played today.

Date in Aussie Open semis

MELBOURNE, Jan 25: Tennis in Japan may never be the same again.

Kimiko Date's progress into the semifinals of the Australian Open was cheered Tuesday by a large group of Japanese supporters with their faces painted in the colours of the Japanese flag boisterously shouting encouragement as she defeated No 3 seed Conchita Martinez of Spain 6-2, 4-6, 6-3, reports AP.

It was a radical departure from the norm. Polite applause is the most that Japanese players have been able to expect from their fans in the past.

"It was very hot and I really needed some encouragement. They supported the very well," the 23-year-old Date said.

For her young supporters, Date is treading new ground.

She is the first Japanese player to reach the semifinals of a Grand Slam tournament since Kazuko Sawamatsu at the Australian Open in 1973. Sawamatsu upset Virginia Wade but then lost to Evonne Goolagong in the semifinals.

The most successful Japanese player of all time was Jiro Sato, who made four men's Grand Slam semifinals during the 1930s.

Tadahiro Yoshimatsu, a reporter for the Tokyo newspaper Nihon Sports, said Date's success at the Australian Open is the biggest news in women's sports in Japan since swimmer Hiroko Iwasaki won gold in the 100-metre breaststroke at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

Coached at one time by Sawamatsu, Date is a refreshing contrast to the heavy top-spin baseliners who dominate women's tennis. She prefers to hit the ball flat, and that troubled Martinez.

"She plays the ball flat and she didn't miss a lot. She's tough from both sides and runs

for every ball," said the dejected Spaniard.

There's something else that can be more than a little disconcerting to her opponents. Although Date normally plays right handed, she is ready to switch the racket to her left hand if the occasion demands.

Playing with the knowledge that she had overwhelmed Martinez 6-3, 6-0 in their last meeting — at the New South Wales Open in Sydney less than two weeks ago — Date took the first set with ease.

Steady at the back but ready to come to the net when given a short ball, she also benefited from a succession of Martinez backhand errors.

Date made things more difficult for herself in the second set as her tally of forehand errors rose alarmingly. When she held break point at 4-4, she sent a wild forehand over the baseline to let Martinez off the hook.

Grateful for her reprieve, Martinez held serve and then broke Date to level the match at one set all.

Instead of letting her head drop, Date rallied to a 4-0 lead in the final set. Although Martinez pulled one break back and won three straight games, Date won the final two games — clinching victory by tapping an easy forehand down the line.

"After winning the second set I knew I still had to fight," said Martinez. "There was a lot of heat and it was tough, but neither of us was going to throw the third set. I fought to the end, but she won it."

Date has discovered there is a price to pay for her run of victories in Sydney and Melbourne. Her leg muscles are aching and she has undergone a novel form of treatment.

"I have acupuncture in my legs every day," Date revealed. "I have been playing matches for two and a half weeks and it gets rid of the tiredness in my muscles."

Date's check for dhs 80,500 US for reaching the semifinals is small change for a player who decided three years ago to set up her own management company, KD Planning, to handle her affairs.

She is big business, with an income from several major sponsors of nearly dhs 1 million US annually.

Those earnings could rocket further if she were to beat three-time champion Steffi Graf in the semifinals on Thursday.

Shriver to hold centre stage in China

BEIJING, Jan 25: US tennis star Pam Shriver will be the number one attraction in China's first professional women's tennis tournament next month, organisers said Monday, reports AP.

As well as Shriver, who is ranked 21 in the world, the February 12 to 20 tournament in Beijing will also feature world number 30 Wang Siting of Taiwan and Indonesia's Yauk Basuki, who is ranked 43.

Thirty-two players will compete in the singles and the same number in the doubles during the tournament which comes under the World Tennis Association and has prize money of 100,000 dollars from sponsors Nokia, the Finnish telecommunications firm.

Last year China hosted its first men's professional tournament which included US men's star Michael Chang.

Venables is the man

LONDON, Jan 25: Terry Venables is expected to be formally offered the England manager's job on Tuesday after FA chiefs finally completed their selection process, reports Reuter.

A long-awaited announcement that Venables is to be entrusted with turning round the nation's foot balling fortunes is now almost certain to come by Thursday at the latest.

The FA's five-man selection committee met on Monday and chief executive Graham Kelly said: "We have made our final deliberations and reached a decision. There are still one or two loose ends to be tied up, but there is no need for any more meetings."

"We will make an announcement in the next couple of days, and it will be either Terry Venables or a caretaker, which is an alternative."

The option of appointing a caretaker would seem to have been retained in case Venables turns down the terms of a contract.

There have been suggestions that the FA will offer Venables a two-and-a-half-year deal, taking him through to the end of the European Championships staged in England in 1996.

But there could be escape clauses which could be involved in the event of damaging developments over his dealings while chief executive of Tottenham.

Alternatively, Venables could be offered a short-term contract which could be terminated this summer if he was found to have broken FA laws.

If he is appointed this week, his immediate task will be to prepare a team for the friendly against Denmark at Wembley on March 9.

Connection severs hard

MELBOURNE, Jan 25: Old tennis pros neither die nor fade away. Many of them begin a new life as on-air analysts for the TV stations covering the tennis tour, reports AP.

Age is a relative thing; in tennis, you are over the hill when you are pushing 30. So a second career in broadcasting can keep a player in touch with the game and long-time friends for years, even decades.

"It certainly still keeps me involved in tennis," said Vijay Amritraj, commentator since 1991 for Hong Kong-based Star TV, which broadcasts throughout Asia. "I do it because of my love of the game, and love of Asia."

Amritraj's love of the game and success, are well known. He began playing Wimbledon as a junior in the 1960s; he led India to the Davis Cup final in 1974 and 1987, and has 16 singles titles and 13 doubles titles to his credit.

The regular TV sports reporters expertly describe the game, but a former pro who has been on the court can explain why a player is winning or losing, or what he or she is trying to achieve.

Amritraj and his pro colleagues contribute a feeling of what goes through a player's mind when dealing with the heat, the cold, change of surface, new balls, and a thousand other variables.

But over time, "You start to feel that distance" from the

court, said Mary Carillo, who began working with the USA Network in 1980 and has been with ESPN since 1986.

"It's a living. At first, I did it because I loved tennis. Then I developed a love for the production values of TV. ... You have to learn to be a reporter, to ask 'What is the story of this match?'"

Carillo won a mixed doubles title at the French Open with John McEnroe, who also sometimes provides TV commentary. They have been friends for decades.

Last year, McEnroe turned on Carillo when she was slotted into analyzing a men's match, declaring that women are not qualified to comment on men's tennis. The even-handed Mac also allowed that men should not analyze women's matches.

Enough senior players and retired pros are providing commentary at the Australian Open to make the broadcast booths look like a reunion of many of the greats of the game:

— Frew McMillan, a South African working for Sky Sports TV, is also a commentator for BBC tennis broadcasts. He was one of tennis' greatest doubles players, winning 74 titles in the Open Era. McMillan now lives in Bristol, England.

— Cliff Drysdale, commentator for ESPN and ABC in the United States. Drysdale started with ESPN in 1980. Tennis magazine named him best announcer in 1985-86 and 1991. Born in South Africa, he lives in Wilmington, North Carolina.

— Fred Stolle, an Australian who has been a co-commentator with Drysdale since 1984 for ESPN and Channel 9 in Australia. From 1960-72, he won two Grand Slam singles titles, 10 doubles and six mixed doubles titles.

— John Alexander for Channel 7, a former Australian Davis Cup player and winner of seven titles in 19 titles.

— Virginia Wade for Australia's Channel 7. A Briton and former Wimbledon champion, she also does BBC tennis commentary.

— Allan Stone, who has provided commentary on Australia's Channel 7 for 15 years. He still plays on the senior tour.

— Wendy Turnbull, who also works for Channel 7, who has been a sportscaster since 1989. Born in Australia, she lives in Boca Raton, Florida.

Jackson, Lewis' next opponent

TOTOWA, Jan 25: Lennox Lewis will defend his WBC heavyweight title in May against Phil Jackson, reports AP.

Main Events, which promotes Lewis' fights, said the fight probably will be held in Atlantic City, N.J. or Reno, Nev.

The date will be May 6 or May 14, depending on the site. Main Events spokeswoman Kathy Duva said.

Lewis, 23-0 with 19 knock-outs, will be making his third title defence. In the first all-British heavyweight title bout last October, Lewis stopped Frank Bruno in the sixth round.

Lewis was awarded the title after his second-round knockout of Razor Ruddock in October 1992.

The WBC had stripped Riddick Bowe, who lost the IBF and WBA portions of the title in a rematch with Evander Holyfield last Nov 6.



Norwich City's Chris Sutton (L) and West Ham United's Ian Bishop struggle for possession of the ball during their English league match in London on Jan 24. The match ended in 3-3 draw. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

1 Hearts' charts: abbr.	5 Ill-lit	9 Nora's pooch	12 "Mis-behavin'"	13 Coach Par-seghian	14 Joy ride	15 Access to heaven?	17 Bivouac structure	18 Having depth as well	19 Greek god of the north wind	21 Actor Mineo	22 Writer Bagnold	23 Put two and two together	26 Ginger	28 Commentator Newman	31 Laundry problem	33 Modern music style	35 Hangover? factor	36 Gerald's predeces-sor	38 Madhouse	40 Archery-bow wood	41 The Ship of Fools	43 Mideastern land: abbr.	45 Brunch choice	47 Aegis	51 Cry your eyes out	52 Theater district	54 California town	55 Author Rand	56 Hereditary	16 Harvest	20 Indivisible	23 TV revenue source	24 Guacamole, for one	25 It's a turnoff	27 La —, Bolivia	29 "Got a Secret"	30 Fresh	32 Lattice-work	34 Toxicologist's specialty	37 Mined find	39 — Peak, N.M.	42 Cornered	44 Mountain chain	45 Old Grecian coin	46 Goya subject	48 Pitcher	49 Singer K.D.	50 Turns blue?	53 Bar order
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Solution time: 21 mins.

Yesterdays answer 6-16

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OHIO RAG APEX
SANDBURG NINE
HBO OIL EDGED
SOD PEP
BABAR DELIBES
AVON JUG PARK
HANDLED BENNY
POT JAR
MACAW KEN GAS
ATOP SANDWICH
TIME URN OLLIO
STAR ELY WADE

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CRYPTOQUIP

CTPIIQV BPWFIBRQ FPIJU
PCUBTPRD UYQRQG
UWBPQRQ MRVQW
YPCGPRDC

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE CLOCKMAKER'S GIRLFRIEND FOUND OUT HE WAS TWO-TIMING HER.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: F equals P

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.