PHOTO: AFP

Belgian tennis player Kim Clijsters rejoices after beating Russian Alisa Kleybanova in the semifinals at the Sydney International tennis tournament yesterday.

Stars rally for relief

AFP, *Sydney*

Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal are among the big names in tennis to take part in a special exhibition on the eve of the Australian Open to raise money for the victims of Australia's flood disaster.

All-time Grand Slam champion Federer, world number one Nadal, Kim Clijsters, Lleyton Hewitt, Novak Djokovic and Pat Rafter are among the elite players who will play in the Rally for Relief match at Melbourne's Rod Laver Arena on Sunday.

The heart-rending scenes of Queensland's floods which have left 15 people dead and inundated Australia's third-largest city Brisbane have shaken the international tennis fraternity, gathering in Melbourne for Monday's season-opening Grand Slam.

"Along with many of the other players I was moved by the devastation caused by the floods in Australia," Federer said in a statement.

"We just wanted to do something to help aid the recovery because we know there are thousands of Australians who will continue to suffer as a result of this disaster."

Nadal said he was delighted to be able to contribute in some way to the flood victims.

"This is a terrible tragedy, not only the loss of life but the destruction of people's homes," Nadal said.

"I am pleased to be able to contribute in some way to help bring it to the attention of the world and raise some money for the victims in the process."

Hewitt, Australia's two-time Grand Slam champion, said it was time for the tennis community to do their bit for those affected.

"As an Australian I cannot help but be touched by such an awful turn of events. It is a disaster on a massive scale," Hewitt said.

"If the tennis community can also help play a role in the recovery then we should, both in Australia and internationally. I just think at a time like this it is a case of getting all hands on deck."

Australians Pat Rafter and Sam Stosur officially announced the Rally for Relief at the Sydney International tournament in a major fundraising campaign by the international tennis community.

"The plight of the flood victims has struck a chord with the entire tennis fraternity," Rafter said.

"As a Queenslander I am really heartened by the concern and the keenness from our sport to get in and do something to ease the suffering."

Fellow Queenslander Stosur is already donating Aus$100 ($100) for every ace she serves in Australian tournaments this summer.

Former Australian Test cricketer Shane Warne is also trying to organise a Twenty20 game to aid the flood relief.

Warne said via his social network site Twitter that he was planning a charity match between his XI and a team led by former England captain Michael Vaughan at the Melbourne Cricket Ground featuring ex-cricketers and celebrities.

England's cricketers have also donated a slice of their match fee from Wednesday's T20 international against Australia and star batsman Kevin Pietersen is auctioning bats and shirts he used in the recent Ashes series.

Seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong, in Australia for next week's Tour Down Under, said on his Twitter site that he would be pledging $50,000 to the relief efforts.

Nischintapur's dream comes true

FROM PAGE 16

Dhaka with some 20 to 25 buses, added an extra spice as they roared on to inspire their boys from the outset.

The match itself was an entertaining affair between the two best sides in the tournament and they fought neck-and-neck even as the first half failed to produce any goal.

After the break, Nischintapur grabbed the lead through a goal from Emdad ten minutes into the second half. The lead looked set to make them champions until Narayanganj's Isdair Govt. Primary Sschool bit back in the last minute of normal time.

Selim, who would later be named the best player of the tournament, leveled the margin and the game rolled into extra-time and the dreaded penalty shootout.

Mohammad Nuruddin, head teacher of Nischintapur School, said that they had undertaken a two-month preparation with the help of the Union Parisad and some influential people although they lacked a playground.

"The boys went to Borobill ground far from the school to have practice as the school has a small ground. The boys worked hard and made us proud by winning the cup," said Nuruddin urging the authorities concerned to turn their school into a government one.

Most players of the Sylhet side had never traveled to Dhaka and they enjoyed their tour as well as playing football at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"We never thought we could be champions as our target was to play at the district level but we emerged as champions," said class-V student Rubel Ahmed.

Nevertheless, Narayanganj has a great heritage of producing a lot of great footballers at the national level and there was no surprise when a school from Narayanganj qualified for the final as Narayanganj has won trophies at school, age-group tournament and even the national stage.

However, Isdair Govt. Primary school coach Dolan pointed the finger of blame at the opponents for fielding over-aged player and took out his frustrations on the chilly weather.

Selim, the best player of the tournament, was overwhelmed to see so many spectators as he played for the first time at such a big stage although he had earlier played a tournament in Narayanganj.

Selim, who struck 34 goals, has a dream of playing like Xavi and Iniesta of Spain.

"I love to feed the ball for goals rather than scoring myself," said Selim.

President Zillur Rahman witnessed the game and distributed prizes among the winners.

"It is essential to arrange sports, physical exercises, entertainment and cultural exercises for children in line with education," the president said. "I am very happy to know that the Bangabandhu Gold Cup Primary School tournament has generated such enthusiasm amongst all the children."

Apart from the primary school, the government has also planned to hold the school tournament at the High School level for both boys and girls.

Biggies roll on in chill

FROM PAGE 16

It was the eighth defeat for the promotees.

SCORES IN BRIEF

MOHAMMEDAN: 259-6 in 35 overs (Nazimuddin 23, Shamsur 100, Shakib 32, Faisal 52, extras 19; Shahadat 2-45, Hasan 2-32)

KALABAGAN: 226 all out in 33.5 overs (Sadat 20, Nasiruddin 25, Ariful 37, Ijaz 24, Wajid 24, Sharif 37, Hasan 21, extras 23; Mahmud 3-46, Shakib 4-32, Nur 3-40)

Result: Mohammedan won by 33 runs.

ABAHANI: 203-7 in 33 overs (Imrul 78, Anamul 21, Marshal 31, Farhad 24 not out, Rafique 20, extras 9; Mosharraf 3-47, Sharifullah 2-32, Sunny 2-30)

BIMAN: 197-9 in 33 overs (Yasir 25, Jahirul 22, Mushfiqur 33, Jeesan 72, extras 3; Tapash 2-36, Hasan 2-46, Saqlain 2-43, Rafique 2-31)

Result: Abahani won by six runs.

VICTORIA: 166-6 in 25 overs (Myshukur 20, Fahadul 32, Mominul 48, extras 11; Abbas 2-31, Nazmul 2-38)

DOLESHWAR: 95 all out in 22 overs (Sumon 23, extras 9; Meer 2-15, Monir 2-15, Mominul 2-10, Tarik 2-24)

Result: Victoria won by 71 runs.

Clijsters-Li showdown

AFP, *Sydney*

Two-time champion Kim Clijsters will play China's Li Na in the final of the Sydney International after a marathon three-set victory on Thursday.

Clijsters struggled early before storming home in a final set tiebreaker to overcome unseeded Russian Alisa Kleybanova, 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/1) in 2hr 39min.

The Belgian third seed will now take on Li, who earlier wore down Serbian qualifier Bojana Jovanovski 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 in 1hr 40min.

Clijsters, 27, who won here in 2003 and 2007, will be bidding for her 41st career singles title in Friday's final, while Li is after her fourth WTA title.

"The last match I played against Alisa was a tough one and I lost to her, so I knew today was going to be tough," Clijsters said.

"She's a very unpredictable player. Her game is very tough to read and it makes it a little bit harder to react at the right time every time."

"We've had some tough matches, but also some matches that were filled with a lot of good tennis."

Li, 28, who will be defending her rankings points from last year's semi-final appearance at next week's Australian Open, was looking forward to her showdown with the world number three.

Mani for harsh punishments for Pak trio

ANI, *Islamabad*

Former International Cricket Council (ICC) president Ehsan Mani has expressed his happiness with the way the anti-corruption tribunal has handled the spot-fixing case against the suspended Pakistani trio, and said he has a 'gut feeling' that 'all the three' will be handed harsh punishments when the final verdict is announced next month.

The tribunal has been constituted to determine charges against the trio-Salman Butt, Mohammad Amir and Mohammad Asif-brought under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code in relation to two Test matches played during August 2010 in the series between Pakistan and England, The Oval Test and the Lord's Test.

Following the hearing that lasted over 45 hours, spread over six days, the tribunal has determined to continue its deliberations, and will hold a further hearing in Doha on 5 February 2011, at which its decisions will be handed down to the parties, and any consequential matters will be dealt with.

Mani backed the tribunal's decision to push the final decision to February 5, contending that this case would have a huge impact on the cricket world, and also rubbished the fears over the tribunal's ability to deal with such a high profile case, the Daily Times reported.

"Anyone questioning the tribunal's credentials or impartiality is totally wrong. All the gentlemen on the tribunal are men of great esteem and from the judicial background. I have no doubt over their ability to give a verdict based on fairness and justice," Mani was quoted as saying.

Unlucky

FROM PAGE 16

and I was not included. So I feel unlucky to miss out on the 2007 team.

DSS: What are your expectations of the 2011 World Cup?

TI: I hope Bangladesh does well. I think it's a balanced side now and they have less pressure than other big teams. There's definitely a good chance for Bangladesh in this World Cup.

Proteas draw first blood

Cricket

AFP, *Durban*

South Africa's fast bowlers struck early to set up a comprehensive 135-run win in the first one-day international against India at Kingsmead on Wednesday.

Chasing a target of 290, India's hopes were effectively ended when they were reduced to 43 for four in the 11th over. Despite a half-century by Virat Kohli they were bowled out for 154.

"We were outplayed completely," admitted Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

"We are a side that banks on a good start and having wickets in hand to chase eight or nine runs an over . . . it never happened."

Dhoni said the one-day specialists in his team had been restricted in their practice opportunities because of rain.

"As we go into the series we will get acclimatised more and hopefully make the series more interesting."

South African captain Graeme Smith, meanwhile, hailed 'a pretty complete' performance in the opening match of a five-game series, with particular praise for the bowlers.

"We were superb with the ball," he said.

Dale Steyn dismissed Murali Vijay in the first over and left-arm bowler and man of the match Lonwabo Tsotsobe picked up the key wicket of Sachin Tendulkar three overs later.

Morne Morkel, who came on as first change, took two wickets in one over as the Indian batsmen failed to come to terms with the pace and bounce of a Kingsmead pitch with a reputation for being more lively in the second innings of day-night games.

Tsotsobe went on to claim four wickets for 31 runs, while fellow pacemen Steyn and Morkel took two each and left-arm fast bowler Wayne Parnell took one.

Hashim Amla got the South African innings off to a fast start, scoring 50 off 36 balls with eight fours but the home side's total of 289 for nine was built around a 131-run fourth wicket partnership between AB de Villiers and JP Duminy.

De Villiers hit 76 off 69 balls, while Duminy scored 73 off 89 deliveries.

While they were together South Africa looked on target for a total of more than 300 but both fell to the part-time off-spin of Rohit Sharma instead of cashing in towards the end of the innings.

In a departure from their normal tactics, South Africa took the batting powerplay after 27 overs and it seemed to pay off as De Villiers and Duminy added 45 runs in five overs and forced India to use some of their better bowlers early.

But De Villiers holed out to deep midwicket and Duminy was leg before wicket when he missed an attempted reverse sweep, leaving South Africa without a specialist batsman for the last eight overs in which they were restricted to 45 runs while losing four wickets.

Opening bowler Zaheer Khan took two for 44, with both his wickets coming in the last over of the innings, while Sharma's seven overs brought him two for 30.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH AFRICA: 289 for 9 (Smith 11, Amla 50, De Villiers 76, Duminy 73, Botha 23, Parnell 21 not out; Zaheer 2-44, Patel 2-36, Shama 2-30)

INDIA: 154 all out (Kohli 54, Raina 32, Dhoni 25; Tsotsobe 4-31, Morkel 2-12, Steyn 2-29)

Result: South Africa won by 135 runs and lead five-match series 1-0.

Man-of-the-match: Lonwabo Tsotsobe.

PHOTO: AFP

South Africa paceman Lonwabo Tsotsobe celebrates the wicket of Indian maestro Sachin Tendulkar during the first ODI in Durban on Wednesday.

Pakistan eye series win

Second Test against NZ starts tomorrow

Cricket

AFP, *Wellington*

Pakistan will set aside off-field controversies to chase their first series win for four years when the second Test begins in Wellington on Saturday, as hosts New Zealand struggle for form.

Unable to hold international matches at home due to security concerns and beset by corruption allegations, Pakistan have not won a Test series since defeating the West Indies in early 2007.

But after crushing the Black Caps by 10 wickets in the first Test, the tourists are in prime position to go 2-0 up and record a clean sweep in the two-match series.

Coach Waqar Younis paid tribute to his players for maintaining their focus on the pitch as teammates Salman Butt, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer faced corruption hearings in Doha.

"It's not that we've been playing bad cricket, it's just that the controversy has just been following us," he said.

"It's very, very hard for the boys to keep going and keep hearing this but I'm very proud of these boys, they've stuck to the task and every morning they get up and keep positive."

Butt, Asif and Aamer are set to learn their fate when an anti-corruption tribunal into spot-fixing allegations resumes hearings on February 5.

New Zealand coach John Wright has labelled as "unacceptable" the Black Caps' performance in his first Test in charge in Hamilton, when the batting line-up was dismissed for a paltry second innings total of 110.

Critics, including former Test opener Mark Richardson, expressed concern that the focus on Twenty20 had turned New Zealand's batsmen into one-dimensional players prone to wild shots and poor decision making.

Skipper Daniel Vettori denied the accusation in the wake of the Hamilton loss but Wright later conceded the emphasis on short-form cricket could be a factor behind the batting failure.

SQUADS

NEW ZEALAND: Daniel Vettori (captain), Brendon McCullum, Tim McIntosh, Martin Guptill, Ross Taylor, Jesse Ryder, Kane Williamson, Reece Young, Tim Southee, Brent Arnel, Chris Martin, James Franklin, Daryl Tuffey.

PAKISTAN: Misbahul Haq (captain), Mohammad Hafeez, Taufeeq Umar, Azhar Ali, Younis Khan, Asad Shafiq, Umar Akmal, Adnan Akmal, Saeed Ajmal, Abdur Rehman, Umar Gul, Tanvir Ahmed, Sohail Tanvir, Wahab Riaz.

McKay out of WC

PTI, *Melbourne*

Australia's fast bowling stock has taken another significant blow before next month's World Cup in the subcontinent with paceman Clint Mckay being diagnosed with a stress fracture in his left foot.

With injury to the 27-year-old Mckay, the current world No 1 side in ODIs will now go to the World Cup without two of their top three wicket-takers for the past year with the other being Ryan Harris, who is nursing a stress fracture in his foot that emerged during the Boxing Day Test.

The foot soreness McKay felt during Victoria's Big Bash win over Queensland on January 3 has been revealed as a stress fracture of the navicular bone in his left foot.

Medical staff decided the moon boot Mckay has been wearing to aid healing is not sufficient and instead he will have surgery next week, ruling him out for at least 10 weeks, the Sydney Morning Herald reported.

CROSSWORD *By Eugene Sheffer*

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1 Unhappy destiny
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13 Caustic solution
14 Picnic hamperer
15 Winged
16 Octopus' arm
18 Pertaining to leaves
20 Reduce in status
21 Water (Sp.)
23 Atmosphere
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28 Police officers
31 Actress Gardner
32 Moving about
34 Eccentric
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37 Persistence
39 Annoy
41 Latvia's capital
42 X-rated
45 Boil
49 Urban home, maybe
51 Actor LaBeouf
52 Approach
53 Female deer
54 War god
55 Partner in crime
56 Blunder
57 Discourteous

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5 Unselfish one
6 Coloring agent
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8 Mideastern language
9 Popular pasta
10 Lubricates
11 Leg joint
17 Afternoon social
19 Taj Mahal city
22 Change
24 Bill
25 Adam's mate
26 Across the country
27 Evil
29 Deposit
30 Pigpen
33 Anger
36 Vein counterpart
38 "Your Show of Shows" star
40 A Kardashian sister
42 Sicilian volcano
43 Rod and —
44 Relinquish
46 From one end to t'other
47 Hastened
48 Facility
50 Neither partner

Solution time: 24 mins.

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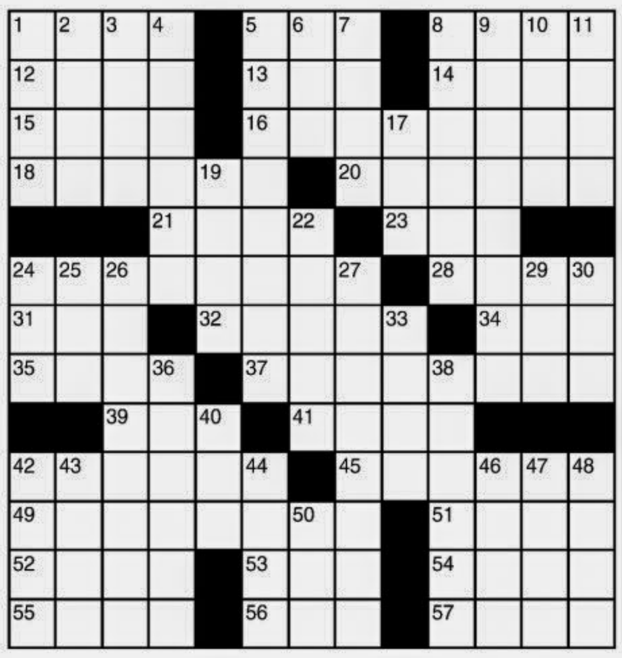

CRYPTOQUIP

HOJY RYCZBJP KFCJ VFHY HRBO Z WJQD KFCCFY WRQZM ZEEMRKBRFY, KFGMV DFG PZD BOZB'P KFY-EMG-JYKJ?

Saturday's Cryptoquip: THIS FILM ADAPTATION OF HOMER'S CLASSIC IS WORTH WATCHING. IT'S AN ODYSSEY YOU OUGHTA SEE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals T