

GTV & MAASRANGA
Bangladesh Premier League
Rajshahi Kings v Khulna Titans
Live from 1:00pm
Dhaka Dynamites v Rangpur Riders
Live from 6:00pm

SONY ESPN
UEFA Champions League
Man City v Feyenoord
Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)

TEN 2
UEFA Champions League
Besiktas v Porto
Live from 11:00pm
Sevilla v Liverpool
Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)

TEN 3
UEFA Champions League
Dortmund v Tottenham
Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)

DAY'S EVENT
Bangladesh Premier League
Rajshahi Kings v Khulna Titans
Time: 1:00pm

Dhaka Dynamites v Rangpur Riders
Time: 6:00pm
Venue: SBNS, Dhaka

Liza to compete against men

National Chess Championship begins today

SPORTS REPORTER



Women's International Master (WIM) Shamima Akter Liza will be the first female player in 16 years to compete against male counterparts when the Omicon Group 43rd National A Chess Championship gets underway at the Bangladesh Chess Federation today.

The 27-year-old Liza, who became WIM in 2011, qualified for the top-tier competition after finishing ninth in national B championship, a qualifying tournament for the national championship.

Liza is the lone female participant against 13 male players for the first time since WIM Rani Hamid took part in the same competition in 2001 as the lone female player.

Her participation also gives her the opportunity to earn a WGM norm. If she can secure 9.5 points from 13 rounds, she will go one step ahead to become country's first WGM.

Apart from Liza, there will be opportunities for the other participants to earn International Master (IM) norms by earning nine points in 13 matches, which will also depend on the rankings of the opponents.



PHOTO: STAR FILE

WIM Shamima Akter Liza will vie against 13 male competitors in the National Chess Championship.

There will, however, be no opportunities for IM Abu Sufian Shakil and IM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagor to earn GM norms as only three GMs out of five are taking part in this championship. However, FM Sheikh Mohammad Nasir, FM Aminul Islam and FM Mehdi Hasan Parag have the opportunity to earn IM norms. Nasir, who earned his second IM norm in the last edition, will get his third and final norm if he can earn nine points. Aminul and Parag have one IM norm each.

However, the reality is that these GM and IM norms are hard to come by through these national championships. GM Ziaur Rahman explained the reasons why the IMs and FMs fail to earn the norms.

"I think the participating GMs are a bit stronger compared to the norm aspirants," said the country's second at a press conference yesterday. "However I think this time the championship will be very competitive as some of the players are in good form."

Sponsors Omicon Group will provide Tk 6.95 lakh out of which Tk 1.5 lakh will be disbursed as prize money.

Bangladesh Chess Federation's general secretary Shahabuddin Shamim, vice president KM Shahidullah, Omicon Group's general manager Ehsan Mahbub and international arbitrator Harunur Rashid were present, among others, at the press conference.



Sevilla players do warm-up exercises during a training session at the Ciudad Deportiva yesterday on the eve of their Champions League group E match against Liverpool.

PHOTO: AFP

Coutinho heals L'pool rifts

AFP, London

Philippe Coutinho's long-term future might lie away from Liverpool, but the Brazil star's ability to focus on the present has helped heal the wounds from his flirtation with Barcelona.

When Jürgen Klopp's side travel to Sevilla for a crucial Champions League clash on Tuesday, they will rely on Coutinho to lead their bid to get the win that would book their place in the last 16.

For Coutinho to be at the centre of Liverpool's season is a testament to the peace-making skills of Klopp and the forward's refusal to let his failed attempt to force a move to Barcelona make him public enemy number one on Merseyside.

Just two months ago, Coutinho's relationship with his club and their fans was badly frayed after he handed in a transfer request while Barca tried to convince Liverpool to sell their prize asset with bids rising to over £100 million (\$132 million).

Klopp cleverly kept both his employers and the player happy by toeing the company line without criticising Coutinho. When he finally returned to action after an injury-hit start to the season, Coutinho repaid his manager for his diplomacy.

Novotna no more

REUTERS, Prague



Czech tennis player Jana Novotna, a Wimbledon champion in 1998 and 16-time grand-slam winner in doubles and mixed doubles, has died at the age of 49 after a long battle with cancer, the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) said on Monday.

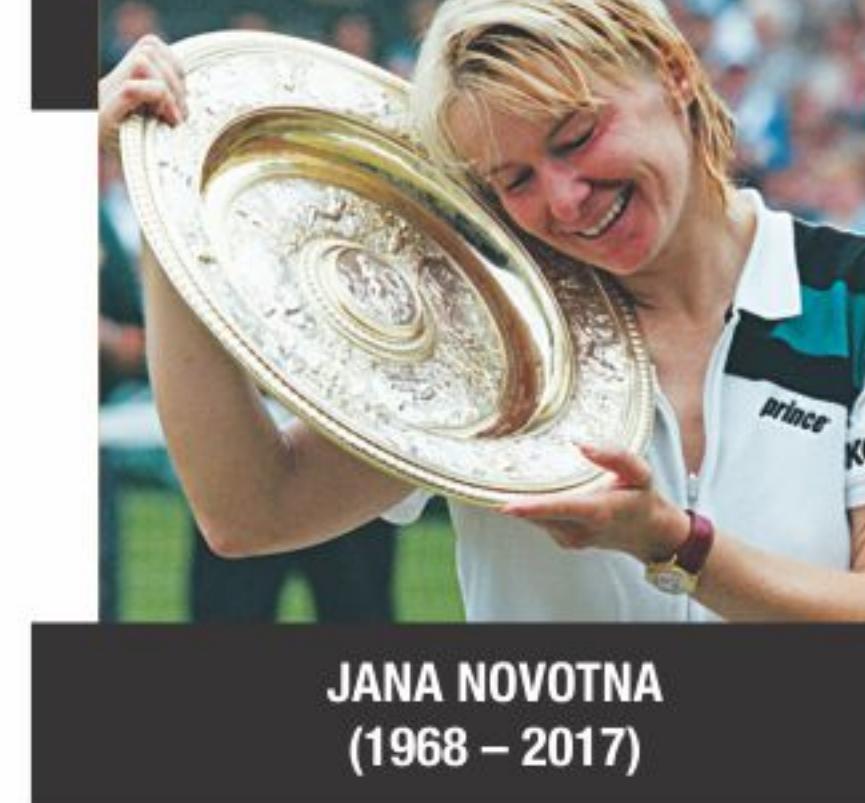
Novotna, who entered the tennis Hall of Fame in 2005, died surrounded by her family in the Czech Republic, the WTA said.

In a career spanning 14 years on the professional circuit that included 24 WTA singles titles and 76 doubles titles, Novotna finally won her only singles grand slam at Wimbledon in 1998 after losing in the final in 1993 and 1997.

She won the hearts of fans around the world when she burst into tears after throwing away victory against Steffi Graf in the 1993 final and was consoled afterwards by a British duchess.

"Jana was an inspiration both on and off court to anyone who had the opportunity to know her. Her star will always shine brightly in the history of the WTA," WTA Chief Executive Steve Simon said in a statement.

Novotna stayed active in tennis after retiring through coaching, television commentary and attending major tournaments



JANA NOVOTNA
(1968 – 2017)

and charity matches.

She mentored players such as 2013 Wimbledon champion Marion Bartoli and fellow Czech Barbora Krejcikova.

Former U.S. Open finalist Pam Shriver said on Twitter: "Jana was as kind as she was athletic, as smart as she was competitive. I can't believe she is gone this soon. Her smile lives forever young."

In 2015, Novotna spoke to Czech newspaper Mlada Fronta Dnes of her love for the sport and said she could not go a day without tennis.

"It would be horrible," she said of that prospect.

Novotna reached world number two in singles and was a number one doubles player multiple times.

She won three Olympic medals, securing a bronze in singles and silver in doubles with Charles Sheringham and Haitian Wedson Anselme, who had shared two goals in their previous match.

"They boys were really upbeat after beating Rahmatganj in the previous match. We could have won this match had the boys availed the chances they created," Arambagh coach Ryan Northmore said at the end of the game.

According to match statistics, Saif SC entered the attacking third nearly 100 times but only managed two shots on target in the entire game.

Arambagh defence was too solid for Saif's English forward Charles Sheringham and Haitian Wedson Anselme, who had shared two goals in their previous match.

"Though we had better ball possession, we could not create clear-cut chances. The defensive organisation of Arambagh was good and they defended well throughout the match," Saif SC coach Ryan Northmore said at the end of the game.

Meanwhile, Muktijoddha Sangsads came from two goals down to hold Rahmatganj MFS to a 2-2 draw in the second match of the day.

Afeez Oladipo and Dawda Ceesay scored one goal each as Rahmatganj took a 2-0 lead before Magalan Awala and Nazmul Islam Rasel made sure Muktijoddha left the field with a share of the spoils. The result left Rahmatganj in eighth position with 12 points and Muktijoddha in 11th position with 12 points.

Saif SC held by Arambagh

SPORTS REPORTER



Newcomers Saif Sporting Club stumbled again in the Bangladesh Premier League as they were held to a goalless draw by Arambagh KS at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Saif SC could have grabbed the third position with an outright win, but they had to be content with a draw to stay at fourth position with 26 points while Arambagh remained at ninth position with 11 points from 13 matches.

Saif SC came into the match on the back of a morale-boosting 2-1 win over five-time champions Abahani and they dominated proceedings, but never exposed the solid defence of Arambagh, who also looked determined following their 2-1 win over Rahmatganj MFS.

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Dimitrov 'locked in'

REUTERS, London

Wimbledon champion Andy Murray on Centre Court, it seemed he was ready.

Dimitrov's run to the semi-finals at the All England Club meant he cracked the top 10 for the first time.

But it proved a false dawn.

Two years later his relationship with Maria Sharapova was of more interest than his tennis and he had slipped down to 40.

Something has clicked though and Dimitrov, now 26, began the year by reaching the Australian Open semi-finals and this time he has backed it up with the most consistent year of his career.

After qualifying for the ATP Finals for the first time, he swept through

round-robin group unbeaten, fought off a ferocious challenge from American Jack Sock in the semi-finals and on Sunday he overcame Goffin to claim the trophy.

He will end the year as world number three -- behind only Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer -- but crucially Dimitrov believes he is now 'locked-in' for an assault on grand slams.

"The important thing is just to stay on the ground and put your head down, work even harder," Dimitrov told reporters.

"I just want to keep the same line. I don't want to get too hyped up because I've done well, now I'm number three in the world. No, this makes me even more locked in, more excited about my work, and for what's to come."

Dimitrov is only the second ATP Finals debutant to win the title since John McEnroe defeated Arthur Ashe in 1978.

Yet rewind two years and he was struggling to play three good points in a row, let alone challenge for big titles.

Out of adversity, however, Dimitrov has finally realised what it takes to put the puzzle together.

"With the right mindset, right people, the right support, things happen. That period really helped me a lot," he said.

"I think I needed that. Those six months were a complete struggle for me. In that moment I realised what I needed to work on, who are the real people around me.

"Little by little, drop by drop, here I am."



Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov lifts the ATP World Tour Finals trophy after winning the final against Belgium's David Goffin in London on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

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