



Between goals from defender Miranda and midfielder Paulinho, Brazilian playmaker Philippe Coutinho coolly slotted home a penalty as Tite's men brushed aside Russia 3-0 in a friendly encounter at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
New Zealand v England
First Test, Day-3
Live from 7:00am

SONY SIX
South Africa v Australia
Third Test, Day-3
Live from 2:30pm

DAY'S EVENT

DPL Super League
Time: 9:00am
Gazi Group v Abahani Ltd
Venue: SBNC

Legends of Ruggonj v Sk Jamal
Venue: BKSP-3
Khelaghar v Prime Doleshwar
Venue: KSOAS

Sabuz hattrick shatters Glass

SPORTS REPORTER



Towhidul Alam Sabuz hit a hattrick to power Bangladesh to a 4-3 win over Thailand Premier League side Bangkok Glass FC in the booters' second and final warm-up match in Thailand yesterday ahead of their FIFA friendly against Laos.

Although the victory came against a club side, it was the national team's first since a 4-2 win over Sri Lanka in the Bangabandhu Gold Cup in January 2016. Since that win, Bangladesh played a lot of international and friendly matches, but tasted no more triumphs, with their last defeat against Bhutan in the Asian Games Qualifiers play-off in October 2016.

Smarting from a 1-0 defeat to Thai Premier League side Ratchaburi Mitr Phol FC, Bangladesh's aim in the second and final practice match was to test the players who did not get a full 90-minute outing in the first game.

Coach Andrew Ord selected a playing XI consisting of Shahidul Alam Sohel, Mamun Mia, Tutul Hossain Badsha, Uttam Kumar, Rahmat Mia, Nasir Chowdhury, Biplu Ahmed, Masuk Mia Jonny, Mahbubur Rahman Sufil and Saad Uddin to get the combination right ahead of the match against Laos on March 27.

The mix of youth and experience did not disappoint; Arambagh captain Sufil gave Bangladesh the lead in the sixth minute after dancing past the opposition goalkeeper. However, Sufil had to leave the Bangkok Glass FC ground after picking up an injury, which paved the way for Sabuz, the experienced Chittagong Abahani striker.

Bangkok Glass found the equaliser in the 17th minute as Surachat Sareepim side-volleyed home from a low cross but Bangladesh hit back strongly, netting twice before the break.

First, Sabuz played Mamun Mia in on the right flank and the bald-headed

right-back whipped in a cross for Biplu, who made space for Sabuz inside the box before feeding him and the Chittagong Abahani striker chipped the ball over the advancing keeper on the half-hour mark. Sabuz struck again three minutes from the break, tapping home a Jafar Iqbal cross.

After resumption, the hosts made a few changes to their line-up and tactics by sending on their foreign recruits and immediately beginning to apply tremendous pressure, which paid dividends as Jakkrit Labtrakool scored twice to make things all square again. Goalkeeper Sohel should have done better and stopped the first effort, a regular low shot from Labtrakool, and the second was also preventable as it came courtesy of a defensive lapse in the 82nd minute.

However Bangladesh took only one minute to restore the lead, Sabuz again provided it through a clever strike, collecting the ball some 25 yards out from a poor clearance from the oppos-

ing goalkeeper before chipping over him to not only complete a magnificent individual outing, but also ensure a much-needed victory for Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh played in a system where the coach taught the players how to defend and attack. In the last match we defended well but could not avail the opportunities, but today our finishing was very good," manager Satyajit Das Rupu said. "Now, we have to bring that coordination between defending and finishing before the match against Laos. I think if we can perform like today, then something good can be expected against Laos."

Sabuz, who has hit just one hattrick in domestic competitions, against Youngmen's Fakirerpool Club in 2008, was ecstatic.

"I never thought I would score a hattrick although my concentration was to score goals. I am really happy because I helped Bangladesh win the match," said Sabuz.



Striker Towhidul Alam Sabuz's (R) hattrick gave Bangladesh their first win in over two years, condemning Bangkok Glass FC to a 4-3 defeat in their warm-up match in Thailand yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Thangaraja trudges towards title

SPORTS REPORTER



Sri Lanka's N Thangaraja shot a resolute four-under-68 to continue the lead for the third straight day at the 50-lac-taka City Bank American Express Chittagong Open yesterday.

Thangaraja, the overnight leader by one shot, extended his lead to two shots at the end of round three to emerge as a prime contender for the title with a total of 16-under-200.

India's Aman Raj brought in a card of 69 to improve his position from overnight tied second to lone second. His three-day total stood at 14-under-202. Aman's compatriot Veer Ahlawat (68) was another shot back in third place.

Kapil Kumar of India shot a stunning course record score of 10-under-62 at the Bhatary Golf & Country Club on Friday to move up 13 places to tied fourth at 12-under-204.

Bangladesh's Sajib Ali kept the local interest alive with his third round of 71 that gave him a share of fourth place.

N Thangaraja (65-67-68), who was in contention in the last two PGTI events but slipped on the final day, will look to turn it around on this occasion.

"I wasn't playing that well at the start of the day but the eagle on the eighth really brought me back in the game. I felt my hitting got better from there on. I then set a target of four to five birdies on the back-nine. However, that didn't materialize since I left quite a few putts short. Nonetheless, I'm quite happy to be two ahead at this stage," said the Sri Lankan.

Aman Raj (65-68-69) kept himself in the hunt with six birdies and three bogeys on Friday. He narrowed the gap with the leader with birdies on the last two holes.

Veer Ahlawat (69-66-68) moved up one position to third after an error-free 68.

Sajib Ali (65-68-71), lying tied second after round two, slipped two spots on day three to tied fourth as a result of his 71. The Dhaka-based golfer is the highest-placed Bangladeshi going into the final round.

Hockey transfers extended

SPORTS REPORTER

The duration of the inter-club players' transfers for the Premier Hockey League has been increased to eight days instead of three days while keeping the starting date as originally scheduled.

The decision was taken at a steering committee meeting of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation after a few clubs including Mohammedan SC and Usha KC appealed for a deferral of the transfers by at least three weeks. The last players' transfers of the premier league were held in January 2016.

The window will now open on March 27 and close on April 3, which was previously supposed to end on March 29.

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

AN INVESTMENT IN WORKING MOTHERS IS AN INVESTMENT IN BUSINESS

Kudos to the Pioneers of Mother & Baby Friendly Workplaces

MOTHERS @WORK

A national initiative to strengthen maternity rights and protect breastfeeding among young working mothers

<https://unicefbangladesh.org/mothersatwork/>

